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## CIM210.1 Media Studies Example 1

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CIM 210.1 Future Jam  
October 5, 2023

ARIA

By

**Figure 1**  
*Voice Threats*



(Kuksov, 2017)

### Creative Summary (197 words)

"ARIA" is a short film set in a futuristic metropolis, where digital technology in the form of an AI assistant ARIA dictates all aspects of life. This narrative plays into the theme of surveillance and its profound impact on individuals' choices and free will. In this speculative society, our protagonist Sarah, enjoys a life meticulously managed by ARIA, her perfect all-seeing assistant. But when a chance encounter with the free-spirited street performer, Damon, disrupts her automated existence, Sarah begins to question her path of convenience. She decides to turn ARIA off and try a life without constant technological supervision. On her journey Sarah discovers newfound freedom while also facing consequences, like missed meetings, getting lost in the city, and ARIA's constant badgering. Ultimately, she challenges the surveillance mechanisms in place, confronting ARIA and questioning the limits of her liberty. The story ends with Sarah and Damon, now a couple, embracing their newfound freedom and a future where they control their destinies, away from the watchful eyes of AI. "ARIA" engages viewers in a compelling narrative that explores the delicate balance between the convenience of AI and the fundamental human need for autonomy in an increasingly digital world.

## Annotated Bibliography

Brooker, C. (Writer) & Tibbetts, C. (Director). (2014). White Christmas (Season 2, Episode 4) [TV series episode]. In A. Jones (Executive Producer), *Black Mirror*. Channel 4 Television Corporation.

*Black Mirror's* "White Christmas" explores power, privacy, and surveillance in a future context. It depicts technologies that enable real-life blocking, connoting power dynamics in relationships. The episode also delves into creating AI clones for various purposes, raising moral and psychological questions. Like many other *Black Mirror* episodes, the show challenges viewers to ponder the ethical implications of technology's impact on humanity. This aligns with the creative summary's perspective on the role of surveillance in power imbalances and control. It serves as a cautionary tale for potential future cultural and technological shifts, eroding privacy and human connections due to surveillance. "White Christmas" emphasises the need to critically analyse the impact of surveillance in an interconnected world, a central theme in "Aria".

Eldred, M. (2013). Brave new cyberworld. In R. Capurro, M. Eldred, & D. Nagel, *Digital Whoness: Identity, Privacy and Freedom in the Cyberworld* (pp. 281–287). De Gruyter Inc.

Eldred's chapter discusses the continuous emergence of digital technologies that shape our interconnected world, extending to ambient computing, AI, and e-commerce. These technologies offer convenience but also ensnare individuals in a digital system. The text introduces challenges and ethics, including surveillance and privacy issues. It aids my

understanding of surveillance by showing how digital tech leads to data collection, used for purposes like targeted ads and behaviour manipulation. It connects to “Aria” by depicting the consequences of surveillance and advanced technology in the future. It explores how cultural and technological shifts, like AI and digital surveillance, influence individuals' lives and choices.

Gates, K. (2017). Surveillance. In J. Gray & L. Ouellette (Eds.), *Keywords for Media Studies* (pp. 186–188). New York University Press.

Gates explores the multifaceted nature of surveillance, tracing its historical roots and evolving meanings. She covers activities from monitoring to data analysis, emphasising the interplay between state and private actors. The chapter notes the cultural significance of surveillance in literature, cinema, and popular culture. It addresses technological determinism, urging critical media studies to challenge deterministic beliefs about a highly surveilled future. This chapter aids my surveillance understanding, offering a historical, cultural, and technological overview. It shows the broader societal and cultural impact of surveillance beyond the watchful eye. Regarding the creative summary, the resource underscores the pervasive presence of surveillance and potential implications for cultural and technological change in the future. This aligns with the narrative of advanced technology and constant monitoring shaping lives in a speculative future.

Jonze, S. (Director, Writer). (2013). *Her* [Film]. Annapurna Pictures.

Spike Jonze's *Her* provides valuable insights into the concept of surveillance. The film's protagonist, Theodore, forms a complex emotional connection with Samantha, an AI

operating system. Their relationship explores a more intimate effect that digital surveillance can have in our lives. Samantha constantly observes Theodore's thoughts and emotions, blurring the lines between humans, technology, privacy, and intimacy. This narrative aligns with my creative summary's exploration of future cultural and technological shifts resulting from AI and surveillance integration into human lives. *Her* envisions a society where AI technology can surveil and emotionally engage with individuals, leading to unintentional consequences. The film hints at technology's ability to both enhance and challenge human relationships and personal boundaries. It serves as a prescient commentary on the consequences of surveillance and technological progress in a future society, fitting the themes of convenience and autonomy in an increasingly digital world presented in "Aria".

Lyon, D., & Trottier, D. (2011). Key features of social media surveillance. In A. Albrechtslund, K. Boersma, C. Fuchs, & M. Sandoval (Eds.), *Internet and Surveillance: the Challenges of Web 2.0 and Social Media* (pp. 89–104). Routledge.

Chapter 4 of *Internet and Surveillance* by Lyon and Trottier explores surveillance practices on social media platforms, particularly how users collaboratively shape their identities and share personal information. Users engage in mutual surveillance by scrutinising each other's content, photos, and interactions. The chapter emphasises the liquidity of surveillance in the digital age, where personal data flows constantly, serving various purposes like marketing and social sorting. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for comprehending online media platforms' roles in both empowering and exploiting practices. This source illuminates the complexities of user-generated content

and its impact on visibility and privacy. It mirrors broader cultural and technological changes in a digitally connected world where personal information remains accessible and constantly recontextualized. This chapter aligns with my creative summary's themes of surveillance, technology, and cultural change. It emphasises social media's surveillance dimensions and their influence on individuals' choices and privacy, which echoes the narrative of "ARIA" set in a future controlled by AI.

Reiberg, A. (2022). Transparency and surveillance of end users on social media platforms. In P. Laidler & L. A. Viola (Eds.), *Trust and Transparency in an Age of Surveillance* (pp. 165–178). Routledge.

Reiberg studies the intricate relationship between transparency and surveillance on social media platforms, primarily driven by economic factors. He explains how transparency can precede surveillance, often entailing power imbalances. The chapter underscores how surveillance capabilities concentrate with platform providers due to market centralization stemming from economies of scale. These platforms amass extensive personal data, enabling surveillance by various actors, including the providers themselves. Using Facebook as a prominent example, the chapter illustrates how its multi-sided market strategy fuels its interest in surveillance. In summary, it sheds light on the economic foundations of surveillance and transparency on social media platforms, elucidating why platform providers promote these dynamics. Looking forward, Reiberg suggests researching additional platform economy aspects and factors countering platform surveillance, reflecting evolving cultural and technological changes in this domain. This chapter provides a nuanced perspective on surveillance, exploring economic incentives,

power dynamics, and technological centralization. It urges a critical assessment of these factors' impact on privacy and surveillance practices.

Spielberg, S. (Director). (2002). *Minority report* [Film]. 20th Century Fox; Amblin Entertainment; DreamWorks Pictures.

The film *Minority Report* is a compelling example of a futuristic concept of police surveillance and its nefarious implications. The movie portrays a society in which a specialised police department uses premonitions to prevent crimes before they occur, essentially employing a predictive surveillance system. This concept allows viewers to explore the ethical, legal, and social ramifications of surveillance technology. The film encourages a critical analysis of the trade-offs between safety and personal freedom. The film aligns with the perspective on mass surveillance in “Aria” and its harmful effects on societal power balance and individual free will. Like the film, my creative summary seeks to underline the consequences of a society that values security and convenience over privacy, offering a warning of the cultural and technological changes that may await us in the not-so-distant future.

Image Reference:

Igor Kuksov. (2017, February 28). *All ears: The dangers of voice assistants*. Kaspersky.com; Kaspersky. <https://www.kaspersky.com/blog/voice-recognition-threats/14134/>



Mid-Project Reflection:

### **Process**

I believe that developing project management and time management skills is crucial for academic success as well as career development. I started by clearly identifying the project's objectives, deliverables and scope. This involves understanding what is expected, breaking the project down into smaller tasks, and setting achievable goals. I then proceeded to set a realistic timeline, prioritised critical tasks and created a simple project plan to stay on top of my assignment. A strategy I use for managing my time is simply tracking how much time is spent on each task. Not only does the strategy help with meeting deadlines, it also promotes efficiency as I become highly conscious of the value of time. In the second half of project 1, I think my use of technology, stress management and self-care could be improved. I need to be wary of burnout risk and overreliance on automated bibliography generation.

### **Person**

Upon reflection, I can see notable progress in both my written and verbal communication abilities. This is the result of responding to feedback from facilitators and peers, as well as diligently completing pre-class activities and readings. The strategy I have used to enhance my communication skills is by completing tasks and preparing the arguments and opinions in advance. This simple strategy has proven to be highly effective. While there is always room for improvement, I am able to engage in class discussions and articulate my views comprehensively. One area for improvement for the second half of the project would be diversifying peer feedback. By seeking the opinion of individuals with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, I may receive a broader range of insights and perspectives that can inform my work.

## **Proficiency**

Throughout the first half of the project, I utilised critical thinking and research skills to synthesise media studies concepts and creative media ideas. By way of practice, these skills have developed to accommodate the learning outcomes and SAE's particular academic requirements. According to Gates (2017), "[Surveillance] implies efforts to govern or control the activities of individuals under observation, and in this sense always signifies a power relationship... it can also connote efforts to encourage, enjoin, or even manipulate people into taking certain actions..." (p. 186). This research provides a concrete definition and framework for understanding and identifying new forms of surveillance in the digital realm. Eldred (2013) discusses the dual nature of technological advancement, which provides convenience whilst simultaneously "ensnaring us more and more in its ever-further-spun digital web that we can no longer do without" (p. 282). This research has been instrumental in helping me better understand the double-edged sword of surveillance, its benefits and drawbacks. To develop my critical thinking skills, I have employed strategies such as comparative analysis of multiple scholarly sources, questioning my assumptions, and evaluating the implications of research findings. These strategies have been effective in fostering critical thinking. For the second half of project 1, I aim to engage in peer discussions to enhance my critical analysis of the texts.

## Reference List

- Eldred, M. (2013). Brave new cyberworld. In R. Capurro, M. Eldred, & D. Nagel, *Digital Whoness: Identity, Privacy and Freedom in the Cyberworld* (pp. 281–287). De Gruyter Inc.
- Gates, K. (2017). Surveillance. In J. Gray & L. Ouellette (Eds.), *Keywords for Media Studies* (pp. 186–188). New York University Press.

Project Completion Reflection:

### **Appraisal**

Overall, I believe my project achieves the grade of Distinction or Higher. I am proud of the work completed within the time frame and did my best to exceed all learning outcome requirements.

The project was successful as an exercise for developing an annotated bibliography using APA7 referencing conventions and conducting scholarly research. What worked: Creating a project plan, tracking time spent on tasks, and prioritising the deliverables. These steps worked to ensure that I completed a first draft ahead of schedule and allowed ample time for feedback and revision. What did not work: Week 2's in-class feedback session. The quality of feedback provided and received was limited due to the session's timing. There was not enough work done to allow for peer evaluation and suggestions. The project exceeded my expectations in terms of time and difficulty. In particular, writing concise annotations took a lot more effort than planned and I ended up spending a significant amount of time reviewing and revising them.

### **Challenges**

While investigating contemporary media studies concepts and crafting a future-set story, I faced several obstacles. These challenges include grappling with the conceptual abstractions of power, media bias, privacy and surveillance, as well as the integration of these concepts into a coherent narrative. I had to navigate the complexities of research, finding credible scholarly sources and evaluating the relevance of chosen evidence. Writing a compelling story that effectively engaged with the key concepts and correctly annotating the bibliography were also hurdles. To overcome these obstacles, I built conceptual frameworks through class engagement, improved my research skills, and practised creative storytelling and annotation techniques. Through this process, I

acquired valuable lessons in research, critical thinking, creative writing, time management, and interdisciplinary thinking.

### **Future Goals**

To improve my skills for future projects, I will continue the proactive learning approach. Firstly, I will set SMART goals to increase my research proficiency and source evaluation. I aim to spend an hour each week of this trimester (time-based) researching and summarising scholarly articles and books related to project 2 and 3 deliverables (measurable, attainable and relevant). Additionally, I will refine my storytelling abilities by working on personal projects besides SAE deliverables. Furthermore, I will continue to reflect on my experiences, assessing what worked well and what did not, which will help me make informed adjustments in future projects. Lastly, I will repeat my practice of engaging in class discussions and seeking facilitator feedback, as this has consistently proven valuable in improving my understanding and project outcomes.