

**16-871 / 17-899: Technology for Developing Communities
Fall 2006**

Homework 1: Development

Assigned: September 12, 2006

Due: September 21, 2006

*Submit homework via the course bboard drop-box:
login at <http://www.cmu.edu/blackboard/>*

Before you begin to do development activities responsibly, you need to know about the community that you will be working in—from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The goals of this assignment are 1) to help you become aware of what kind of information you should collect and where you should find it; and 2) to encourage you to seek out and make use of cultural hybrids who know about the places where you will be working.

Assignment: Choose a developing country that you have never visited and know very little about. The only qualification is that you must know someone who is either from this country or has spent a significant amount of time there so that you can ask them for information about the country.

The scenario is that you have been contacted by an NGO in this country and asked to help to help develop a technology that doctors and nurses can use to track the medical history, treatment, and progress of patients in a busy public hospital located in a densely-populated city.

You plan to visit the hospital for the first time in a few weeks, but need to know something about the city and country where you will be going. Your first step is to decide what information might be relevant for such a project and to begin to figure out how you might go about finding it.

You obviously will want to know something about both the country where the city is located, and the city itself, from a quantitative perspective. But a bunch of numbers is not enough. You should also do some background research on what life is like in that country and that city. Further, there are things that you need to think about for your own safety and sanity. What is the culture like—is there anything special that you absolutely need to know about personal interactions or work culture before arriving?

Obviously you won't be able to answer all aspects of these questions, but you should try to do some research on all of them. Some are obviously more important than others, and you need to prioritize. Your friend/cultural hybrid might be very helpful in this regard.

WHAT YOU WILL TURN IN: You are expected to turn in a 2-3 page document (12-point font, 1" margins, appropriately spaced). The first page will be a factual report listing the information you found. The CIA's *World Factbook* provides a nice format for you to use in structuring this part of your report. The template can be found here:

<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/docs/profileguide.html>

As usual, you are expected to accurately reference every single piece of information that you use, whether quantitative or qualitative. Please contact Jay (aronson@andrew.cmu.edu) if you have any questions about citations *before* you turn in this assignment.

The next page or two will be a narrative account of your research process. This section will be the most important component of your grade. You need to tell us a) why you decided that certain information was important; b) where you looked for this information; c) whether you had trouble finding any information that you thought was relevant; and d) what you learned from your friend/cultural hybrid that could not be found in any of the reference material that you consulted.

You should spend about 3-4 hours on this assignment.

HELPFUL HINTS:

The CIA *World Factbook* (<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>) is an excellent starting point for doing research on the country or region you are interested in. Other good sources of information include the various agencies of the United Nations (e.g., UN Development Program, UN Development Group, UN Division for the Advancement of Women, etc.), and the World Bank country reports.

Qualitative information is harder to find, and requires more creativity in research methods. We expect to see that you put some effort into finding useful sources of qualitative data. Some good places to start are Lonely Planet Travel Guides and other similar guidebooks that are geared to experienced travelers. There are also numerous websites with travel information, although, as always, you should be wary of what you read on the net.