In his book *Smarter Than You Think*, Clive Thompson writes, “...[T]ools matter: Good ones help us think well and bad ones do the opposite.” He cites PowerPoint as an example of a bad tool (“the cesspool of data visualization that Microsoft has visited upon the earth”).

Select a tool associated with modern digital technology, identify it as either good or bad (as regards the notion of “thinking well”), and in a research paper of about 1500–2000 words (five to seven pages, not including references), argue in support of your opinion with scholarly research to back it up.

The definition of “tool” can be fairly general: a special-purpose device (e.g., a Kindle e-book reader), a piece of software (e.g., Google Calendar), one small item in a larger piece of software (e.g., a spell-checker), a “way of doing things” (using your word processor as a “scratch pad” where you can write, delete, re-write to your heart’s content without the need for crossing things out, erasing, using correction tape or White-Out), or perhaps even a way of thinking (when faced with a hard decision, what do you do first—try to write down a list of pros and cons, or visit a help site on the Web, or ask your friends via texting?)

Choose a tool with a narrow and fairly focused purpose, not something with many general uses like “computers” or “smart phones.”

While it is easy to come up with positive and negative aspects about many tools, the focus here is on “thinking well.” Again, you may interpret this freely, but the emphasis here is on the mind—problem-solving, decision-making, creativity, or whatever falls under your definition of “thinking.”

As in previous papers, you must adhere to the guidelines for formal writing as discussed in class. References should be cited correctly according to whatever style (MLA, APA, Chicago) you choose and references should be formatted according to the same style.

Please be sure to double-space and to number your pages. Please choose an appropriate title. Please hand in both a hard-copy and an electronic Sakai version by the deadline.