

RESEARCH PACK

SET W03

DUE W05 · TUE 6 OCT

PART OF 20%

RESEARCH + DISCOVERY

Go and talk to people in your domain, and come back with something a model could not have told you.

WHAT THIS IS

Two weeks of primary research in the domain you claimed at W03, written up so that someone else could check it. You saw at W03 what happens when you ask a model for the unmet needs of a group of people it has never met: it returns something fluent, humane and entirely invented. This assignment is the other half of that lesson.

It is also the raw material for everything after it. The W04 payoff exercise runs on this. Your W06 proposal is only as good as this is. Thin research here is not a bad grade in isolation — it is a thin term.

WHAT TO SUBMIT

INTERVIEWS

At least two of your own, in your domain, beyond the pair exercise we ran in class. Semi-structured, captured as transcript or structured notes. Recording is not required and not everyone will want to be recorded — written notes are fine.

OBSERVATION

Optional but valuable. What people do, where it differs from what they say, and how you know.

SOURCES

What you read, why it mattered, and what it actually claims. Primary sources over reporting about primary sources.

SYNTHESIS

Two to three pages. What you now believe about this domain that you did not believe two weeks ago, and what changed your mind.

research.md

Committed, with visible version history. This is where the traceability lives and it is read as part of the notebook too.

AI STATEMENT

One short section. See below.

THE TRACEABILITY RULE

Every claim in research.md carries a primary source, or is explicitly marked [unverified]. That mark carries no penalty and never has. What is penalised is an untraced claim presented as settled, which is treated the same way as an uncited quote.

The rule exists because a model will hand you a fact-shaped sentence with no origin, and the sentence looks identical to one you verified. Marking the difference is the whole skill.

WHAT MAKES THIS GO WRONG

- Interviewing people who are convenient rather than people who are relevant. One genuinely hard-to-reach conversation is worth four easy ones.
- Asking “would you use this.” People are polite and bad at predicting themselves. Ask what they did last time.
- Collecting sources instead of reading them. A link with no note about what it claims is not evidence that you read it, because it is not evidence that you read it.
- Resolving contradictions. If two participants disagree, that is a finding. Keep it.
- Leaving the domain. The moment the pack becomes about the technology in general rather than about care, or waste, or dying, it stops being yours.
- Waiting. Two interviews take two weeks to arrange and forty minutes to run.

TIMELINE

THIS WEEK

Line up your interviews. This is the part that takes calendar time, not work time, and it is the only part you cannot compress.

W04 · 29 SEP

You will use this material live, in class, for the payoff exercise. Arrive with something — anyone who turns up empty spends seventy minutes watching.

W05 · 6 OCT

Due at the start of class. The domain swap window also closes today.

HOW THIS IS MARKED

This is checked, not scored on a criterion matrix. The question is whether it was done and done properly. I tick the list below, then band the section in one of four bands. The same sheet goes out with this brief and it is the one I mark on.

- Research Pack submitted at W05, in the shape the brief specifies
- Two or more interviews of your own in your claimed domain, beyond the W03 pair
- Captured usefully — transcript or structured notes, not recollection
- Every claim carries a primary source or an explicit [unverified] mark
- Each note says what the source actually claims, not just that it exists
- Discarded material is recorded, with the reason it was discarded
- Says who you could not reach, and why that absence matters
- research.md is dated and accumulates — the history shows a term, not a weekend

THE FOUR BANDS

4 Complete and rigorous

3 Complete

2 Partial

1 Not done

REQUIRED TO PASS — NOT SCORED

- AI Use Statement attached — including what you rejected, or where you chose not to use it
- research.md kept somewhere with visible version history

ON AI, PLAINLY

I will not run detection software on your work, and I will not treat a detector score as evidence of anything. If I have a question about your process I will ask you to walk me through your decisions.md, and that conversation is the evidence. You may bring someone with you. What I do require is the AI Use Statement, and the part of it I actually read is: what did you reject — output you turned down, or places you chose not to use it at all — and why. A student who used none can answer that completely and score full marks.

IF SOMETHING HERE DOES NOT WORK FOR YOU

Any live presentation can be a recorded presentation with live Q&A, or a one-on-one defence. On request, no documentation required. A missed live event is rescheduled in the assessment period and the late penalty does not apply to it. If a tool, sensor, library or device does not work on your machine or your body, there is a declared alternative for every hands-on in this course — take it, no explanation needed. And you can complete this course without using generative AI: tell me and we will set up the equivalent path.