# Text – World on Wi-Fire by Niall Ferguson

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| **Template Overview** | **Reading Rhetorically** |
| Prereading | Getting Ready to Read* Quickwrite –What is your favorite mode of communication? How do you contact your friends? By phone? Text? Why? How often do you communication with your friends?

Introducing Key Concepts* Discussion – Are humans spending too much time on the Internet? Why or why not?

Surveying the Text* Read the title of the article.

Making Predictions and Asking Questions* What do you think about the title, “World on Wi-Fire”? What do you think the article is going to be about? Do you think you will like the article? Why or why not?

Introducing Key Vocabulary* unequivocal (adj.) p.1
* apocalypse (n) p.1
* self-deprecating (adj.) p.3
* Luddite rant (n.) p.3
* unprecedented (adj.) p.3
* exploitation (n.) p.3
* incapacitation (n) p.3.
* equivalent (adj.) p.6
* emergence (n.) p.6
* utopian (adj.) p.8
* contrarian (adj.) p. 9
* plummeted (v) p.10
* obsolescence (n) p.11
* deluging (adj.) p.14
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| Reading | First ReadingAs you read, answer the following questions.* What is the thesis statement? Why do you think he placed his thesis statement where he did? Was it effective or ineffective?
* According to Ferguson, who are the “Lords of the Internet”? What additional title does Ferguson mention? Which title do you think fit them the best? Why?
* What two forces did he identify as great forces that have driven the communications revolution?

Looking Closely at Language* In paragraph 8, Ferguson states, “That’s the kind of sci-fi scenario that gets a true nerd out of bed in the morning. But is it just a bit too utopian?”. What does he mean by that? Do you agree or disagree with his assessment?
* Find all the terms that he uses that can have negative connotations. Then make a list of terms that have positive connotations. Based on the number of these terms, what can you infer about his attitude toward technology? Is he being positive or negative? Why or why not?

Rereading the Text* After reading his article, would you consider Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google as “the Four Horsemen”? Why or why not? What does the author mean by that?
* In paragraph 15, Ferguson says, “We are LinkedIn, but StressedOut. And that ‘cloud’ of downloadable data may yet turn out to be a thundercloud.” Could you identify the reference? Do you think this reference is accessible to many people? Why or why not?

Analyzing Stylistic Choices* Ferguson uses a mixture of technical and casual languages. Why do you think he is choosing to write in this style? Who is his target audience and is it working?

ex) Ask the Lords of the Internet—the men running the companies Eric Schmidt of Google recently called “the Four Horsemen”: Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google—and you’ll get an unequivocal “yes.” ex) I love all that these companies have achieved. I order practically everything except haircuts from Amazon. I write this column on a MacBook Pro. I communicate with my kids via Facebook. It’s 6:55 a.m., and I’ve already run six searches on Google. Did I forget to mention that I’ve already received 29 emails and sent 14?ex) Speaking at a conference in Ukraine in mid-September, Milner asserted that data equivalent to the total volume of information created from the beginning of human civilization until 2003 can now be generated in the space of just two days.ex) We are LinkedIn, but StressedOut. And that “cloud” of downloadable data may yet turn out to be a thundercloud.Considering the Structure of the Text* Ferguson uses question then answer technique throughout the essay. Find several examples of his questions and answers. Do you find it effective? Why or why not?
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| Postreading | Summarizing and RespondingAfter reading the article, summarize Fergurson’s main point. Thinking CriticallyQuestions about Logic* Does this article convince you? Why or why not?
* Are there claims in the article that are weak or unsupported? What are they?
* Has the author left out an argument on purpose?

Questions about Ethos* What does the author’s style and language tell you about him or her?
* Is this author knowledgeable? Smart? Successful?
* Do you trust this author? Why or why not?

Questions about Pathos* Do you think the author is trying to manipulate your emotion? How?
* Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments?
* Does the author use humor? How does this affect your acceptance of his ideas?
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| **Connecting Reading to Writing an Essay****After reading the article, write an essay on the following prompt.****In his recent *Newsweek* article entitled “World on Wi-fere,” Niall Ferguson argues, “the possibility that the global computer network formed by technologically unified human minds is inherently unstable,” and he goes on to declare, “We are LinkedIn, but StressedOut. And that ‘cloud’ of downloadable data may yet turn out to be a thundercloud.”** **Explain Ferguson’s argument and discuss the extent to which you agree or disagree with his analysis. Support your position, providing reasons and examples from your own experience, observations, or reading.** |