TEL 300
Research Proposal Summary
Electronic Commerce

- **Topic and Rationale:**

  Electronic commerce is exponentially rising! At least that is what the mainstream media is telling us. Is this an attempt to hype "e-commerce", as it has been dubbed, or are these claims about its explosion true? We want to find out just *who* is using the net to buy goods and services, what they are buying, and why they choose to shop (or not shop) on the Internet. Focusing on the individuals' transactions rather than corporate business or stock trading, we want to examine how the average consumer is using the Internet to make buying decisions.

- **Research Questions and Hypotheses:**

  RQ 1: Who is using the Internet to buy goods and services?
  HYP: Mostly middle to upper class, younger males, who are computer literate, are using the net to buy products.

  RQ 2: Predominantly, what are these people buying?
  HYP: Consumers are using the net to purchase Books, Flowers, CD's, Computer Goods, Electronic Equipment, and Pornography.

  RQ 3: Why are/aren't they using the Internet?
  HYP: People are buying online because it is more convenient, faster, and often cheaper. The Internet gives one the ability to compare prices more easily and research the quality products that are of interest before making the purchase. People who are not computer literate and those who do not own personal computers are less likely to buy online. Those who choose to abstain from using the net to make purchases often have a fear of fraud and security issues regarding credit card payment. Also, those without credit cards are left out in the cold and are unable to buy online.

  RQ 4: Ultimately, what will the economic role of Internet commerce be in the future?
  HYP: Internet commerce will prosper for many years to come. As technology evolves, e-commerce will become more widely adopted as a way of shopping.

- **Population and Method:**

  Ideally, we would like to quantitatively examine e-commerce on a national or even global level. However, due to the inability to conduct such massive surveys we must settle with a smaller population of Fayette County. Conducting random telephone surveys and interviews of people living in the Fayette County area will provide us with useful data about the local e-commerce trends. As a supplement to the survey, we will include both quantitative data and textual analysis concerning the national and global trends of electronic commerce.

- **Sampling:**
  -Conduct a random sample consisting of 200 Fayette County residents.
  -Gather each telephone exchange in the Fayette county area.
  -Use a random number table to pick the last four digits of the phone numbers.
  -Call the numbers. Some will not work. Some people will be rude. That's O.K.
  -Keep calling until we get 200 valid numbers and the data needed.