I propose to research visual ethics, specifically ethical considerations for the use of illustrations with graphics in technical documents.

Dragga and Voss (2001, 272) argue that technical communicators by training “are in a unique position to help raise the level of ethics in the visual display of technical information.” They note that technical communicators frequently characterize their field as a humanistic field and that their training in rhetoric… They argue that technical communicators have an obligation to humanize the impersonal depiction of human suffering provided in typical graphics.

Edward Tufte (1983) argues that any information not central to the graphing of data detracts from the graphic. Consequently, adding clip art or illustrations to graphics in attempt to humanize those graphics detracts from the clarity of those graphics.

In my research report for Technical Communication (Eng 271), I will argue that the impulse to combine illustrations with graphics is misguided except in certain circumstances.

Problems to be investigated

I will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Question 1
2. Question 2
3. Question 3

My report then will consist of three major sections: 1) first section, 2) second section, and 3) third section.

Methods of research

The list of works cited in the Voss and Dragga “Cruel Pics” article served as the starting point for my research.
I consulted with Kellian Clink, an MSU reference librarian, who directed me to the following sources:

- source 1
- source 2

In addition, I conducted the following searches of the databases for technical communicators:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Database</th>
<th>Search type</th>
<th>Search terms</th>
<th>Limits</th>
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<td>keyword</td>
<td>“visual ethics”</td>
<td></td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will use the documentation style used in *Technical Communication*. The following sources appear particularly useful:


I plan to (phone) interview Sam Dragga, coauthor of the “Cruel Pies” article, professor of English at Texas Tech University. I also plan to (phone) interview Peter Singer, …

**Timetable**

I will provide the following deliverables:

- progress report – May
- draft – June
- final draft – July 1, 2006

**Request for approval**

Please…