

**Abstracts for the  
20<sup>th</sup> Penn State Conference on  
Rhetoric and Composition**

**Rhetorics and Technologies**

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**The Pennsylvania State University**

**State College, PA**

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John Carroll  
Penn State University

### **Narrating the Future**

Technologists, policy makers, and others often try to create the future by specifying plans and designs. Yet well-specified plans and designs are brittle with respect to changing contexts, and often over-articulate issues of little consequence, while missing the big picture. Ironically, these deficiencies have created a cult of specification in many arenas of planning and design. Narration is an outside-in alternative to specification in which descriptions focus on observed and experienced functional relationships, rather than on logical structures. Narratives address some of the deficiencies of specifications; they raise new issues and possibilities for tools and methods in planning and design, including new roles for rhetoric.

Marilyn M. Cooper  
Michigan Technological University

### **The Animal Who Writes**

Haraway speaks of humans becoming cyborgs; Hayles argues that we have become posthuman; this presentation argues, in contrast, that humans originated with technology, and that technology and writing are, as Leroi-Gourhan says, "the expression of the same intrinsically human property." Technology as exteriorization, inscription, writing, defines human living as a particular process of *différance*, the process of making distinctions, deferring closure, endlessly recycling material and semiotic resources and articulating, as Latour has observed, extended biological-technological-social networks.

Johndan Johnson-Eilola  
Clarkson University

### **Unbound: Text in the Age of Artifacts, Gizmos, and Spimes**

Postmodernists conceive of the world as a fluid set of overlapping texts to be read/written, but networks and cheap wireless technologies are quickly making those theories a concrete reality. Emerging technologies such as “spimes” (a networked version of UPC labels) allow nearly any produced object—book, passport, running shoe—to collect and generate data about objects in use throughout lifecycles. Spimes may trigger paranoid fantasies about privacy, but their adoption seems certain given the benefits to manufacturers and distributors for detailed inventory tracking and customer feedback, their low cost, and benefits to users. Users of spime-enabled objects both contribute to and draw on the data generated by objects, literally writing and rewriting those objects in their contexts of use. The rapidly declining opportunity costs of such technologies mean that relatively mundane activities require ongoing, immersive authoring. And in that authoring, we rewrite ourselves in multiple, fantastic, and sometimes troubling ways.

M. Jimmie Killingsworth  
Texas A&M University

### **Appeals to the Body in Eco-Rhetoric and Techno-Rhetoric**

This presentation considers how we represent the way we relate existentially to our technologies, particularly our technologies of writing, and how this representation compares and contrasts to the way we represent our existential relationship to the natural world. The presentation also mounts a critique of the practice of uncritically sharing the terminology of ecology across the boundaries of eco- and techno-rhetoric.

David E. Kirkland  
New York University

### **Digital Underground: Critical Composition in Urban Cyberspaces**

The presentation raises serious questions about long-standing intellectual schisms in composition and rhetoric that directly relate to social and cultural inequities currently plaguing composition classroom. By analyzing the digital composition practices and rhetorical strategies used by urban youth, this chapter seeks to move composition and rhetoric scholarship in directions closer to resolving the barriers that limit how we might imagine composition studies. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to existing knowledge concerning how urban youth practice composition in sophisticated ways, especially in the digital underground of computer screens, cellular devices, and iPods, spaces that researchers and educators seldom venture.

Carolyn Miller  
North Carolina State University

### **Questions for Genre Theory from the Blogosphere**

The rapid development of blogging and the emergence of multiple kinds of blogs challenge the identification of blog as a genre. In addition, the dynamic nature of the Internet challenges our understanding of recurrent situations as the basis of genre. This presentation explores the relationship between medium and genre and the nature of recurrence in an environment of constant change.

James E. Porter  
Michigan State University

### **Recovering Delivery for Digital Rhetoric and Human-Computer Interaction**

It is long past time to revive the rhetorical canon of delivery. Not your father's Buick but an updated vehicle, an expanded and retheorized notion of delivery designed for the distinctive rhetorical dynamic/s of Internet-based communication—aka, digital writing. This presentation provides: (1) A brief overview of the history of delivery in the realm of rhetoric: What role did delivery play in historical rhetoric? What happened to it—theoretically, pedagogically, politically—and why? (2) An outline for a theory of "digital delivery," having five chief components: Body/Identity, Distribution/Circulation, Access/Accessibility, Interaction, Economics.

Geoffrey Sirc  
University of Minnesota

### **Serial Composition**

This presentation discusses some of the serial techniques artists have employed in the Modern era as a way to think about possibilities for contemporary composition. I want to trace the way certain artists used (and theorized) seriality to show shape as a key sculptural, visual value. The purpose is to recuperate a minimalist grammar for working with materials to form text as loose assemblage. Such a grammar becomes an ideal technology for contemporary composition (blogs, mixtapes, sampling).

Anne Frances Wysocki  
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

### **Fitting Beauties of Transducing Bodies**

Since at least the middle of the last century, scholars and theorists have been asking us to attend to the visuality of our communication technologies, to consider consequences of how we usually emphasize only sight—and a limited range of sight's potential—with our book and manuscript pages, film screens, and, lately, computer monitors. Increasingly in the last ten years, digital artists have moved away from those monitors, to build environments that tease out and into other possible sensory relations we might have with each other, with words, and with the pieces of our bodies. This presentation considers several such works, asking after their aesthetic and rhetorical pleasures and implications.

Diane Allen  
Texas Tech University

### **Law, Literature, and Language: Living Metaphors and Living in Angola Prison**

#### Background/Context

Historically, court opinions, though public documents, have not been readily accessible to the general public. This inaccessibility made awareness of the legal proceedings that impact the lives of citizens in powerful ways difficult, making that knowledge obscure, exclusive, and arcane. However, with the evolution of information technologies creating new technological contexts—the Internet, online databases, user-friendly search engines—this is rapidly changing. Today, a court can render an important decision one day, and any individual using Lexis-Nexis can read it the next. Technology has, therefore, opened the door to both opportunity and responsibility for scholars and the public they serve.

#### Central Theme

With the increased exposure of legal writing to public scrutiny by way of new technologies of reception come questions regarding the intersection of language use, ethics, and power. That is, good legal writing—vivid, original, innovative, and, at times, humorous—inspires and determines action. Because of this, questions regarding the ethical nature of legal writing must be addressed. This study asks two questions: can judges and other legal writers, using rhetorical and literary tropes, communicate meaningfully without being deceptive or manipulative? And secondly, can the reader of legal documents read and understand them, including the economical and multivalent language devices, without being deceived and manipulated?

#### Method of Inquiry

In this case study, I use classical rhetorical tropes to analyze the majority opinion in an appeal heard by a panel of the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals in order to elucidate the persuasive mechanisms, both overt and covert, used by the judge to justify his opinion. I analyze the court's holding rather than one of the briefs filed in the case because the judge, by virtue of his hierarchal position, has more discursive latitude. I focus my analysis on figures of speech only. Defining a figure of speech as a generic term to mean "any artful deviation from the ordinary mode of speaking or writing," I use Edward P. J. Corbett's categories of schemes and tropes as filters in my analysis.

In a close reading of the text, I first identify schemes and tropes and then suggest the purpose or effect of each figure. To make these more apparent, I substitute another word or another phrasing, ideally one that is more neutral, or at least less artful, and observe the change in meaning or effect. I describe the results of this exploration, though not necessarily generalizable, but which raise important questions about the nature of ethical legal writing.

#### Conclusions

Because legal language, through deliberate ambiguity, can foster unwarranted judicial discretion, it must be carefully scrutinized in terms of ethics. Language, legal or otherwise, is a source of significant power, which power must be guarded diligently. Scholars, using new contexts provided by changing technologies, must interrogate the nexus of language, power, and ethics in legal writing. Without that scrutiny, we may find that we will shed our rights at the courthouse door.

Jen Almjeld  
Bowling Green State University

Kris Blair  
Bowling Green State University

### **Multimodal Methods for Multimodal Literacies: A Techno-Feminist Perspective**

#### Context

Responding to the impact technology has had upon composition, the field of computers and writing often focuses on unfamiliar and at times uncomfortable new theories and pedagogies for the classroom and scholarship. With new technologies and applications emerging most every day, scholars interested in rhetoric must investigate not only new questions but also new ways to seek answers to those questions. In a recent *Computers and Composition* article, Patricia Webb (2006) calls for an expansion of acceptable research and a move to more multimodal approaches to research in order to “open up new areas for us to research as well as expanding the kinds of answers and results we can achieve” (473). Her argument and advice is compelling, but may be a bit more problematic than Webb expects, especially for young scholars in the field seeking initial publications and attempting to traverse the rigorous terrain of the dissertation. The move to engage in multimodal research – a process many in and outside the field continue to see as a “sort of bastardized version of research” (473) – creates new challenges regarding ways researcher identity is created and how that identity impacts both how we approach questions in the field and what we are willing to question.

Based on our collective research interests and our reciprocal roles as a dissertation writer and dissertation chair, our presentation will focus on the following questions:

- How does techno-feminist research impact our understanding of what constitutes “acceptable” research methodology?
- How can we better educate colleagues about the range of methodologies not only necessary for digital writing research but also to enable more empirical research in this area?

#### Method

Our method combines feminist theory and narrative as one methodology to confront interdisciplinary constraints of techno-feminist research and its emphasis on the need for scholars to acknowledge the ideological limitations of their own methodologies and subject positions as researchers. As part of this process, we ground our discussion in those dialogues in the field that privilege postmodern views of knowledge making.

And while the call for multimodality in composition research is not a new one (Lauer, 1993), a recent experience with a dissertation topic proposal intersecting feminism, technology, and academic and non-academic literacies revealed to us that not all research methodologies are created equal and that blending methodologies continues to cause controversy in the academic community. Using dissertation work as a case study, we will explore ways that continued perception and attitudes about “what constitutes research” control and often constrain the ways we approach academic inquiry.

#### Conclusions

Just as technology complicates the understanding of what composition is or can be, we must complicate theories of research about multimodal literacy practices inside and outside the academy. To that end, we must not assume that our own privileging of multimodal research methods will insulate us from biases against our proposed research, biases similar to those our larger discipline encountered in the eventual shift to qualitative approaches more applicable to the field's emphasis on composing contexts.

Abram Anders  
Penn State University

### **Technology and Composition: Access, Ethics, Interface**

We are all now becoming familiar with the idea that technology, for better or worse, is changing the way work and teach in academia. Concomitantly, technology is also changing the type of students we encounter and the nature of their futures in the global marketplace. Many scholars cite the explosion of information as a primary feature of contemporary technological transformations. Variouslly figured as the infosphere, infolanche, and even the datacloud, these emergent visions foreground the digital, networked, seemingly infinite, dimensions of the unfolding information age.

Regardless of what it is called, it has meant a shift in the demands of workers in the global marketplace. Rapidly proliferating, information overload has produced a strong demand for employees who can sift, cull, and massage complex data sets. Such tasks often require coordinating multiple data streams, technological platforms, interfaces, purposes, and audiences. Multimedia literacies, rhetorical training, and information management skills are prerequisites for this kind of work. Most importantly, these "data workers" must be able to learn, adapt, and incorporate emerging technologies and skill sets throughout their lives and careers. Of course, all of this presents novel challenges for us as educators. How will we address these needs and support student development in the context of an as yet unfolding information age?

My proposed essay will try to respond to this question across three primary areas of investigation: access, ethics, interface, design. First, the question of access will traced as it as developed through a particular itinerary of thinkers culminating in a call for a post-human ethic of the commons. Furthermore, I will argue for understanding interfaces as hosting or providing a surface for the production of technological commons. Ultimately, I will argue that our role in the interface design of our courses and technological environments will prove increasingly crucial in the struggle for transformative access: interfaces are quickly becoming a primary site of ethical responsibility and ethical action.

Dana Anderson  
Indiana University

### **Theuth Brings “Clickers”: Benefit and Risk in the Pedagogy of Classroom Response Systems (CRS)**

#### Background

Teaching seems always to have invited technology. Pedagogy’s history is a history of contexts and instruments devised as aids to effective learning—aids that have inevitably redefined “effective learning” along the way.

The technologies collectively known as Classroom Response Systems (CRS) are one such aid, and one of increasing critical interest in the past three to four years. More colloquially known by students as “clickers” or “remotes,” Classroom Response systems (as defined by Beaty 2004) are instructional technologies that (a) “allow an instructor to present a question or problem to the class”; (b) “allow students to enter their answers into some kind of device”; and (c) “instantly aggregate and summarize students’ answers for the instructor.” Quantitative disciplines have adopted this means of soliciting student responses with particular eagerness, citing its ability to transform the traditional classroom, and especially the large lecture setting—sparking otherwise dormant problem-solving skills, enabling students to contribute “without fear of possible public humiliation,” and ultimately “empowering” students by supplanting one-way models of knowledge transmission (Fies 2005; Davis 2003).

#### Argument and Approach

Almost celebratory in its overall appraisal, this growing literature on clickers in the classroom invites a reading with an eye toward the myth of Theuth. As King Thamus’s ambivalent response to the god Theuth’s gift of the technology of language reminds—and in a spirit that finds expression in this conference’s three grounding assumptions—technologies are always more than the sum of their intentions. In this presentation, I will analyze CRS scholarship as a complex of pedagogical topoi that, in representing this technology’s intended benefits, cannot help but also suggest risks and limitations that accompany its transformative potential. (I will also draw on my own experiences in teaching with CRS and in having served on a university-wide committee for evaluating their use.) Articulating these rhetorical commonplaces proves especially helpful in illuminating assumptions about the nature of effective learning that this literature operationalizes, assumptions about both the drawbacks of traditional pedagogies and the merits of the CRS pedagogies that correct them. Understanding these assumptions also helps to table issues of disciplinarity and knowledge-making that might help to explain why the humanities have comparatively ignored Classroom Response Systems where the sciences and business schools have embraced them.

Considering Classroom Response systems in this way allows for a more robust assessment of their potential pedagogical worth, reminding that this technology is as much an engine of identity and agency in the classroom as it is a well-intended tool.

Virginia Anderson  
Indiana University Southeast

### **Rhetoric Takes a Hostage: Power and Persuasion in the Development of Indiana University's Course-Management Software**

In 1997, Indiana University developed an in-house form of course-management software (CMS), expressly to meet the specific and distinctive needs of the IU community in ways that then-available commercial CMS like Blackboard did not. The creation of this tool, named Oncourse, coincided with an ambitious information technology push at IU. By 2002, more than 65,000 users had adopted the software. At that point, the development team re-assessed commercially available products but concluded that the need to upgrade freely as dictated by discipline-specific needs mandated maintaining Oncourse as the CMS of choice. This re-commitment to Oncourse led to a further decision: to collaborate with other universities to share the costs of continued development, including the creation of open-source software.

This joint venture, which now comprises more than 70 educational partners as well as commercial affiliates such as IBM, Sun, and Unisys was called the Sakai Project. Indiana University developers envisioned increased creativity and functionality from this transition to a new version of Oncourse, including the freedom to respond promptly and specifically to changing faculty needs. But the migration has not been straightforward. The new version, Oncourse CL, was expected to replace the earlier model in Fall, 2005. But as the targeted users—faculty—protested the loss of valued teaching tools and as major systems proved bug-ridden, “dual use” of the old and new versions, allowing faculty to opt out of Oncourse CL, has been extended through the summer of 2007. Delays in adoption have resulted in part from the replacement of the old Oncourse user interface with one that is more complex and arguably less intuitive and less easily navigated.

Through interviews with Oncourse personnel on my home campus at Indiana University Southeast and with members of the university-wide committee in charge of Oncourse, as well as students and faculty, this paper investigates the decision-making process that led IU and Sakai to discard the basic design of the original Oncourse in favor of Oncourse CL. Most importantly, this study reveals the degree to which the ability to claim authority, command attention, and negotiate power structures determines the effectiveness of Oncourse for its users. That is, despite its promise of revolutionary freedom, flexibility, and innovative energy, collaborative, open-source code development like that of the Sakai Project in fact depends for its efficacy on the ability of users to navigate the complex and *traditional* rhetorical channels through which power and influence always flow.

Diana L. Ashe  
University of North Carolina at Wilmington

### **Outer Space, Personal Space, Interpersonal Space: Twentieth-Century Technology and Rhetorical Appeals**

#### Background/Context

M. Jimmie Killingsworth's *Appeals in Modern Rhetoric* invites scholars to reconsider our understanding of rhetorical appeals in an updated manner that takes into account the myriad contexts, constraints, and subject positions that define modern discourse. The system of appeals posited by Killingsworth offers us new ways of understanding rhetorical situations and new ways of understanding the role that technologies play in those rhetorical situations. More particularly, we intend to interrogate the extent to which several transformative technologies of the twentieth century—the space program, the personal computer, and internet social networking—have affected and been affected by our perceptions of individual and collective American identity.

#### Central Theme

Each speaker addresses the cultural and social impact of a specific technology. Speaker 1 explores the rhetoric of space technology at the dawn of America's space program, focusing specifically on its use of appeals to nationalism, the intrepid American spirit, and faith in the untold benefits of space exploration. Speaker 2 considers the controversy over the history of the personal computer during the 1960s and '70s: while some historians and social observers maintain that the PC was developed by engineers and programmers who conform to our image of the "computer nerd," others contend that the counterculture scene not only overlapped with the advent of these technologies but, in fact, helped to create them. Speaker 3 examines Generation Y's unique patterns of Internet usage. While networking capabilities are critical to all kinds of internet users, Generation Y has turned the personal computer truly personal, using networking sites such as MySpace and FaceBook both to display and, more importantly, to construct their identities.

#### Method of Approach or Inquiry

Our panel will use a multimedia approach to illustrate how technologies become both cultural and social phenomena. Using Killingsworth's spectrum of modern appeals, we will show how these technologies mediate and are mediated through rhetorical appeals that serve as, enhance, and complicate our understanding of a cultural moment and define the resulting generation.

#### Conclusions

Technological advances of the twentieth and twenty-first century have created our sense of our own potential and possibility, and have defined each generation's understanding of its place in the world—or even its place in the universe. The rhetoric of space technology between 1957 and JFK's announcement of a moon-landing goal is a fascinating mix of appeals that depend on, and construct, the public's trust in science and government and its sense of America's unique optimism. The invention of the personal computer coincided with counterculture sentiments that challenged that optimism and channeled it toward more eclectic goals and outlets. Once the personal computer had saturated American households and workplaces, the next step of personal social networking has brought a level of abstraction and removal from the larger culture even while enacting and reinforcing it. Each of these generational shifts has taken place in a rich milieu of targeted and powerful rhetorical appeals that reveal and inform our national identity.

Anthony T. Atkins  
University of North Carolina at Wilmington

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Brian Ballentine, Ph.D.  
Case Western Reserve University

### **Epistemic Rhetoric and Software Development: The Role of Technical Communication in the Process of Inventing a New Application**

This paper demonstrates persuasive and epistemic rhetoric discovered in technical documents, specifically software requirement specifications (SRS), written to facilitate the creation of a unique software application for the medical community. My claim is that the language from the SRS, a collaborative document started prior to any actual coding, can be proven to evince itself in the code and the functionality of the software application. The epistemic claim is of course a dangerous one loaded with history and multiple deaths and resurrections. There are many characters to pull from in this particular discussion but I want to quickly isolate Brummett's 1990 "eulogy" where he claimed the idea that rhetoric generates knowledge "faded as a scholarly inspiration because its defenders failed to link theoretical principles to actual criticism or analysis of 'real life' communication." Brummett concluded by insisting that scholars must "apply or die" and my access to both the SRS and the code for this software application enables me to meet Brummett's challenge.

The software examined in this paper was a professionally developed application for the medical industry called IntelliView Web or IVW. IVW is the last major application I had a part in developing when I worked as a software engineer and technical writing manager for Philips Medical Systems. IVW is a web-based, remote radiology or tele-radiology application that enables physicians to query, retrieve, analyze, and report on patient data and scans via a secure internet connection. The general engineering methodology for designing an application such as IVW can be defined as process by which an operational need is converted into a product satisfying the need through the creation, selection, and application of technology. The methodology for software engineering is communicated in many forms, the primary text being the SRS. I have access and permission to use IVW's SRS and application code.

My approach to this paper is to hold side-by-side the language and formatting of the SRS and the code written to meet the expectations outlined in that document. In doing so, I am able to demonstrate how the language and the organization of the SRS become embedded in the code and thus the final material artifact or IVW. For example, it was common for engineers to use tables within the SRS to organize their writing. In one instance, a three column table contains the headings "User Action," "Situation in IVW," and "Outcome in IVW." Each row in this table sought to anticipate and map out all possible end-user activities within IVW based on complex situational possibilities followed by the necessary behavior on the part of the code. To prove my point, I will exchange the language from the SRS tables with portions of code containing names of declared variables as well as function names and processes. With little to no understanding of code it will be clear to my audience how this technical document, the SRS, serves an epistemic function and finds its original, rhetorical content embedded in the design of the final material product.

Jerry Blitefield  
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

### **Wired Will: Ethos in an age of chips and circuits**

Since the advent of the alphabet, technology has evolved along with human need to present and enhance communications delivery alternatives (and then necessities). While technologies serve fruitfully as intermediaries between parties, by the very nature of that intermediary role technology also creates distances, gaps, between rhetor and audience: Much of rhetoric's history has been a pedagogy for closing those gaps via voice and ethos. Sometimes, however, that gap is not abjured but rather explored and exploited, consciously imposed and interposed to veil and even elide the presence of the flesh and blood rhetor. New technologies may create kairotic opportunities for rhetors seeking to remain out of sound or sight, to perhaps startle or woo audiences away from the flesh and blood rhetor toward a rhetorical avatar. Where then does the audience locate the rhetor behind the immediacy of the avatar, and what then satisfies audience appreciation and judgment of that displaced/replaced rhetor's ethos? When wires and chips stand in for flesh and blood, do the measures of ethos change as well? The three papers on this panel will address those questions by analyzing three contentious rhetorical events, each of which deployed its own new technological rhetor to replace what, till then, had been conducted via "traditional" rhetoric.

Panelist #3: Jerry Blitefield, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

#### **Give Us Spock, Not Kirk: Truth, Ethos, and The Limits to Growth**

This paper will analyze the phenomenon surrounding the 1972 publication of The Limits to Growth, a book reporting the results from an array of computer simulations which, combined, forecasted dire future consequences if current (1970s) population growth and consumption rates continued unabated. Weaving a new behavioral theory, Systems Dynamics, into an original computer program, World3, The Limits to Growth posited a series of "truths" based upon the presumably objective – motiveless – analysis of the computer. The published results captured great international attention, having for the first time demonstrated via mathematical terms and graphic representations the prospects of a dismal future. For years prior human prophets of ecology and restraint had been preaching the same claims: why now, did the world suddenly pay attention? This paper will argue that World3 may have succeeded for having *no* will and *no* character, an anti-*ethos*, the ideal *ethos* for a society and an age enamored of technology and that relatively young device, the computer.

Stuart Blythe  
Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne

### **Communication, Technology, and Wicked Rhetorical Contexts**

In the call for papers, the organizers invite participants to describe how technologies of production and reception are used. I will respond to that invitation by drawing from two studies that illustrate how people use such technologies in complex, often “wicked” rhetorical contexts. According to Rittel and Webber, who coined the term in a 1973 issue of *Policy Sciences*, wicked problems are exigencies that defy easy definition or solution—exigencies such as providing adequate health care to all citizens, ensuring a healthy environment, even, to a lesser extent, managing one part of an international organization. Wicked problems involve numerous interdependent systems and stakeholders, which makes finding solutions difficult because an attempt to fix one part of such a problem usually raises a new dilemma. Thus, wicked problems involve significant amounts of time, competing interests, and scope of work.

My studies add to existing scholarly research on rhetoric and technology because so much of it focuses on relatively tame situations. Researchers have studied, for instance, the effect speech recognition software may have on students’ composing processes, how teenagers use a Web-based technology to create an identity, the potential for e-portfolios for assessment, how designers create new software to solve a particular task (as has been the approach for participatory design). In other words, researchers often study tasks that are tame enough to be accomplished with one type of technology, or they focus on the use of one technology in a given context. By studying how people use communication technologies in their efforts to tackle complex problems over time, I have come to recognize that wicked problems require people to switch between multiple technologies because no single one will suffice. Instead of asking, “How do individuals use a particular technology?” or “What effects does a particular technology have on a particular task?” I’ve been learned to ask, “What kinds of combinations of technologies do people use?” and “Why do they use such combinations?”

By drawing from the results of a three-year study of citizens’ resistance to a dredging project and a two-year study of the work lives of managers of technical communication, I will describe how wicked problems require complex combinations of communication technologies. (Both studies have involved on-site observations, interviews, and textual analysis). I will describe how people facing such situations cobble together multiple types of technologies in order to communicate effectively and to track multiple streams of information. The citizens involved in the dredging debate, for instance, use typewriters, telephones (specifically, the strategy of using telephone trees), word processors, databases (usually accessed through public libraries), and microfiche. The project managers use combinations of software (commercial and in-house) and paper-based resources such as three-ring binders and, in one most interesting case, entire walls of double-sided tape on which they plan and arrange large-scale reports and proposals. I will also reflect on what these experiences may mean for us as teachers (for the types of assignments we give and for how we teach students to use communication technologies) and as researchers (for the types of projects we may need to pursue and theory we may use in order to build a richer picture of technology use in complex rhetorical contexts).

J. James Bono  
University of Pittsburgh

## **The Digital Gymnasium: Rethinking the Role of Serious Play in Rhetorical Education**

### Background

Due to the space they provided, the daily practice in preparation for agonistic contests, both rhetorical and athletic, was performed in the gymnasia, one of the few spaces visited by nearly all free Athenian men "seeking to cultivate a citizen *êthos*." The co-location of rhetorical and athletic instruction was not simply the result of a fortuitous architectural anomaly; it represents a tacit understanding on the part of the Greeks that the two forms of training share the common goal of creating the best Athenian citizen and, thus, required physical proximity.

Johan Huizinga (1950) and Debra Hawhee (2004) have contended that ludic activities (whether we call them "sport," "games," or "athletics") have always served an important civilizing function in society. Both connect the civilizing functions of play to Greek notions of *agôn*, a term whose root indicates more than simple conflict, it implies the assembly of people who gather around agonistic events. Agonism, according to Hawhee, has the ability to produce rhetoric as a gathering of cultural, bodily, and discursive forces.

### Theme

Games made possible by contemporary computing and telecommunications technologies offer rhetoric teachers an opportunity to do as the sophists did: to make use of spaces and activities with ludic elements to teach civic and political engagement. Ludic spaces engender communities largely because they are places where students are already undertaking pleasurable pursuits. Both the Athenian gymnasia and contemporary networked games represent promising arenas for a multimodal, rhetorical education that synthesizes ludic activities such as music, performance, athletics, and rhetoric into a productive pedagogy that is simultaneously serious and playful.

### Methodology

Through an examination of "serious" games (games with a clear persuasive agenda beyond the specific mechanics of game play) such as recent Alternate Reality Games, this presentation argues the importance of dynamic play within contemporary rhetorical education. By positioning serious games as part of rhetorical education's history, we will discuss the ludic activities offered by networked games and simulations as tools for teaching an awareness of political and social concerns, critical reading of transmedia texts, collaborative problem solving, civic engagement, multimodal and digital literacies, and rhetorical practices.

### Conclusions

Like the sophists, instead of bringing play into the rhetoric classroom under the guise of "edutainment," we should use already existing ludic structures to demonstrate the importance and power of community interaction, civic engagement, and rhetorical practice. Alternate Reality Games are twenty-first century iterations of Athenian gymnasia—rhetorical spaces from which vast communities of engaged individuals emerge, allowing people "to synthesize everything they have learned in order that they may have a more secure understanding and their views may be better adapted to the right moments" (Antidosis 183-185).

Long gone are the days Charles Bernstein described in 1989 where the "nerdy kid who can't get out a full sentence and whose social skills resemble Godzilla's is the star of the arcade;" he has been replaced by an artful rhetor who must develop the skills necessary to motivate a group, guide their intentions, and see their activities through. In the rhetorical spaces provided by computer-mediated gaming it is not enough to be an athlete; one must be an effective rhetor as well.

Sonya Borton  
University of Louisville

### **Aristotle Meets HCI – the rhetorician’s role in influencing technological design practices at the university**

Many universities invest large sums of money to use and maintain course management systems like Blackboard and GroupWise, particularly as distance learning becomes increasingly necessary. These applications, along with other technological investments universities make each year, often neither meet the needs of our students nor our needs as instructors. Rather than grumbling about the shortcomings of these technologies on our listservs, as we often do, we can begin to use our knowledge as rhetoricians to facilitate changes to these technologies so they will better serve our and our students' needs.

One approach rhetoricians can take in hopes of influencing technological design practices and technological investments at their university is to commit to the use and study of technology in their classrooms. The principles of visual rhetoric and human-computer interaction (HCI) can be natural extensions to discussions of rhetorical theory in composition courses. In this panel presentation, speakers discuss productive ways to apply HCI principles in the composition classroom based on their experience as teachers and students in technology supported environments. This presentation focus on usability studies and multimodal projects, two kinds of assignments that productively weave HCI and rhetorical principles and yield meaningful feedback addressing technological design practices.

Usability studies are designed to encourage students to rhetorically analyze frequently used applications at the university. Students' analyses and results often yield useful feedback to the university about its technological investments and can potentially inform future investments. Moreover, the usability studies may encourage on-site administrators to remedy specific usability concerns, making the application more appropriate for local needs. One such usability study at the University of Louisville focused on the dissemination of official and unofficial graduate program information to students using the English GradWiki. Created as a tool for mentoring graduate students new to the university and the area, the wiki contained information ranging from grad school policies to local restaurant reviews. Researchers discovered that although students enjoyed posting to the informal social pages on the wiki, they were hesitant to edit any part of the more formal policy pages by including their own experiences, offering advice, etc. Recommendations for administrators included making the policy pages appear less formal and offering an additional space on the wiki specifically for topical advice.

HCI and visual rhetoric also work together through the assigning of multimodal projects using technological resources available through the university. By integrating text, images, and sound to create a multimodal argument, students explore benefits and limitations of specific applications for creating convincing arguments. The students' developing expertise enables them to make informed recommendations for improvements to current technological design practices based on the abilities of each application to address their rhetorical goals for their multimodal projects.

The multimodal argument and usability study assignments discussed in this presentation access rhetorical and HCI principals and allow users to become proficient in the use of the technologies while enabling them to critique these technologies. These assignments thereby provide opportunities to create conversation that can inform the university's technological investments and support of these investments.

Lillian Bridwell-Bowles

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Representation/21<sup>st</sup> Century Assessment: The Dialogic Nature of Digital Portfolios**

### Background

Written portfolios in composition programs have historically served as uniform, organized file cabinets from which individual (or sets of) documents could be reviewed. While this type of “repository portfolio” is useful, students often have little agency in their construction, design, and organization. With the advent of electronic portfolios, many traditional assessment approaches were simply transferred from one medium to another. Consequently, other than as authors, students often have only minor roles in representing themselves as communicators in the overall design of such portfolios.

When LSU’s Communication across the Curriculum (CxC) was established in 2004, our primary goal was to develop students’ communication skills in four modes--written, oral, visual, and technological--across all disciplines. To address our need for multi-modal assessment, we designed specifications for CxC Digital Portfolios, required for students we certify as High-Level Communicators and offered to all students. Our portfolios have evolved from digital repositories of required files into websites that students build to showcase their communication skills and themselves as potential professionals. As they build portfolios, students not only learn web design and new software but also, perhaps more importantly, make crucial rhetorical decisions about self-representation (ethos) and evidence. In this decision-making process, students wrestle with audience, navigation, and design.

### Central Themes

Our research tells a story about dialogue and compromise, tensions between the ideal and the practical, and new ways to imagine rhetoric and assessment:

- How do 21<sup>st</sup>-century students want to represent themselves as professionals?
- What do students learn while building a digital portfolio?
- What data satisfy institutional assessment needs?
- How can we teach students communication and technology skills for their portfolios—inside classrooms and in Communication Studios we are building?
- In an “always obsolete” world, which environments and technologies are needed to provide 21<sup>st</sup>-century preparation in communication?

### Methods of Approach

We use quantitative, qualitative, and ethnographic approaches to capture the range of assessment practices and student achievement before, during, and after the experience of building portfolios. We report quantitative findings on pre-/ post-technology skills; qualitative findings from cross-genre rubrics as well as the overall portfolio; and observations of student decision-making. We consider the balance between assessment and technology in terms of what is desired (the ideal) and what can be accomplished (the practical). We report our own (and our students’) second-guessing about platforms and environments--from our “secured” servers using open-source programming; to canned, commercially available e-portfolio programs; and even MySpace. Case studies of students and faculty provide a deep, contextual record of our work.

### Conclusions

Our three-year history of CxC’s Digital Portfolios is a positive story of dialogue and vision, tempered by compromise. We have responded to student needs and desires while meeting the need for institutional assessment.

Cynthia Britt  
University of Louisville

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Jay Brower  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

## **Poeticizing Technology: Early Greek Literacy and the Function of Memory**

### I. Context

Contemporary examinations of technology, particularly those influenced by the work of Martin Heidegger, criticize technology's dislocation of modern subjects from an essential rootedness in poetic experience. Such views situate the question of technology as one of an emergent alienation that arises as the use of tools and techniques increasingly come to determine how humans understand their subjectivity within particular fields of activity. Subsequent notions of technological determinism have pointed to the growth of literacy as one context in which the poetic experience of language is eliminated in favor of correspondence and coherence theories of meaning, which represent now dominate theories of expression. Particular to such views of technology in general, and literacy in particular, is the assumption that "technology" is adequately defined as some variant of "the use of tool and techniques." This view of technology excludes, however, an examination of the forms of consciousness that accompany the shift from orality to literacy by confining inquiry to devices and/or process

### II. Theme

For the purposes of extending inquiry into technology's role in the shift from oral to literate culture, this paper examines how technology, following the work of John Dewey, might be respecified as inquiry into the invention and deployment of cognitive tools. In the context of a shift from orality to literacy, situating technology in this regard makes possible an examination of how we might understand cognitive technologies and how they shape our understanding of the distinctions between oral consciousness (i.e., poetic, rhetorical, embodiment) and literacy (i.e., rationality, correspondence).

### III. Approach

To provide a context for this investigation, I draw upon Eric Havelock's influential accounts of the shift in ancient Greek culture from oral to literary consciousness. Attention is focused on the operative function of memory, with particular emphasis on the role of poetry in oral culture as a form of preserved communication inseparable from the embodied production of its recitation. The purpose of this attention is to draw out the distinctions that arise between the forms of preservation particular to oral culture (i.e., memory) and literate culture (i.e., alphabetic writing) towards an understanding of how cognitive technologies influence these respective forms of consciousness.

### IV. Conclusions

Reconsidering technology as more than mere tools and techniques in the context of an examination of oral and literate cultures enables further inquiry into the ways in which the rhetorical dimensions of communication have been altered by a shift from poetic ways of being in the world towards a modality of engagement that privileges calculative thinking.

James J. Brown, Jr.  
University of Texas

## Hospitable Texts

### Background and Context

Whereas all texts offer hospitality to readers by inviting various interpretations and interventions, a number of web texts take this a step further by offering hospitality to *writers*. Wikipedia, a free content encyclopedia, is such a text. It is radically hospitable in its willingness to allow users to edit articles. While such an approach tempts us to view Wikipedia as egalitarian, it is important to distinguish between the hospitality of Wikipedia and the sometimes inhospitable behavior produced in its name. Technological “have-nots,” dismissed subject matter experts, and the oft ridiculed critics of Wikipedia are just a few excluded groups that indicate the limits of Wikipedia’s hospitality. Wikipedia is not alone in this regard. Political blogs promise hospitality but often only end up creating enclaves of agreement. These gaps between what Derrida would call “*The unconditional Law*” and “the conditional laws” of hospitality provide a space for rhetorical scholars to think through the ethics of online rhetorics.

### Central Theme and Questions

A license similar to the one that allows for the editing of Wikipedia content allows for the editing of the software that lies beneath it. The millions of articles that make up Wikipedia—a text that operates through a constitution of collaboration—sits atop collaborative computer code. Code as constitution begets code as programming code, and vice versa. All codes are shot through with ethical assumptions. Thus, while rhetoricians of technology can and should study the content of Web texts, they might also trace the ethical structures that enable such content. This presentation will pursue such an ethical tracing by asking: What ethical assumptions are built into electronic texts? How do such assumptions get enacted or fail to get enacted? If information technologies have given us hospitable texts, why does much online discourse seem to be lacking in hospitality? What are the ethical problems with and advantages of radically hospitable texts?

### Method of Inquiry

This presentation will focus on the hospitable structure of Wikipedia and how that structure plays out in practice. However, it will also draw connections between Wikipedia and other technologies, such as blogs, to trace how seemingly open, hospitable structures can be simultaneously closed and exclusionary. By tracing the assumptions underpinning web texts—assumptions that are intricately tied to hacker culture and open source software design— I will argue that a certain model of ethics is built in to electronic texts.

### Conclusions

The apparent openness and hospitality of the Web might persuade us to think that Web texts themselves will operate in hospitable ways. But, as I have begun to indicate here, discursive practice does not always follow the rules laid out by enabling structures. For this reason, rhetoricians can pay as much attention to web structures as they do to the discourse that pours out of them. This presentation will be an attempt to look closely at the hospitable underpinnings of Web texts in order to understand how and why such structures succeed or fail.

Kate Brown  
University of Louisville

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Scott Campbell  
University of Connecticut

### **Dead Men's Tales: the CSI Television Programs and the Case Against Narrative**

Often cited as a logical extension of the detective genre, the popular *CSI* television programs actually demonstrate something closer to contempt for the gregarious chatter and human agency so prevalent in crime fiction. Indeed, the *CSI* formula exhibits a radical faith in science and technology and a corresponding suspicion, even fear, of conventional narration. The primary "speaker" in each episode is the corpse itself, a source that usually appears within the first minute and reveals its "tale" as its physical components are processed by a team of scientists with futuristic tools and a laconic conversational style. The true story of the murder—told as a broken series of often-silent flashbacks—proceeds at the speed in which the team can gather the evidence. While we wait, we are treated to stylized portraits of the technology at work. The stories that suspects and characters tell are usually unreliable, but the flashback is verified as true, needing no explanation. It is hard to escape the conclusion that the show imagines a future when crimes can be solved as they happen with *no words needed*.

From at least the time of Thomas Sprat's oft-cited *History of the Royal Society* (1667), modern science has expressed ambivalence about "eloquence," favoring what Sprat called the "close, naked" style. We might see the *CSI* phenomenon as an extension of this Enlightenment manner, a fictional illustration of a longed-for world where deceit is no longer possible. To be sure, the show does resonate with a persistent late Enlightenment irony: where knowledge achieves authority, mayhem is sure to follow. And yet the television program, though it features scientific elements and processes, is of course an entertainment, exploiting but not actually producing "real" scientific rhetoric. What, then, are to make of its zeal for a discourse of pure evidence?

This paper looks at the *CSI* phenomenon as an extreme example of an anti-narrative trend within popular narratives themselves. In examining a typical episode of *CSI: Miami*, I propose to see this implied generic self-loathing as a statement of radical doubt about the value of narrative, with its winding, inefficient, and multi-voiced discourse. Drawing on science studies and my previous work on literary genre, I plan to offer a reading of *CSI: Miami* that foregrounds the series as a significant cultural site for the rehearsal of ongoing debates about the place of story-telling in a technological age.

Christopher Carter  
University of Oklahoma

### **Structures of Trauma: Jacob Riis and the Rhetoric of Urban Photojournalism**

#### Background

From Bolter's explorations of new media to Johnson-Eilola's analyses of postmodern architecture, there runs a conviction that technologies bear the politics of their creators while reflecting and influencing power divisions among their users. Lately, scholars such as Kress have stressed how artifacts rarely make meaning in isolation, tending instead to draw communicative force from their intersections with other rhetorical forms. While much of the discourse on such intersections highlights the multimodal possibilities of advanced communication technologies, I want to situate multimodality in a longer historical context by addressing the photojournalism of the late nineteenth century. More specifically, I connect this multimodal form to its activist roots by focusing on its early manifestation in Jacob Riis's *How the Other Half Lives* (1890).

#### Central Theme

Riis's project is salient not only as an early example of the nexus of photography and prose, but as a sample of how multimodal rhetoric reveals and shapes cultural attitudes. An exposé of the living conditions of New York City immigrants, it mediated audiences' conceptions of city space—and eventually city space itself—in profound and disconcerting ways. Riis's critics often foreground his contradictions as a crusader who tried to improve tenement life through nocturnal raids, invading poor people's homes with his camera so as make urban renovation a social priority. Others point up the tension between his environmentalism—which attributes immigrants' ongoing poverty to the crushing effects of their living conditions—and his essentialist claims about the moral laxity of various ethnic groups. For all the attention to his inconsistencies, however, few have noted his tendency to validate laissez faire ideology while also depicting it as the root of tenement squalor. This contradiction, more than any other, governs the relation between words and photographs in his work, and may be partly responsible for its mixed impact on the urban interior. Although city officials destroyed seven tenement blocks in the wake of *How the Other Half Lives*, the demolition was less an effort to undermine class divisions than a market-driven attempt to mask the visible signs of inequity.

#### Method

I analyze the relationships between Riis's photographs and prose in light of his warring inclinations to promote and resist free market capitalism, looking especially at portions of "imagetext" where he castigates the political economy while blaming the poor for failing to improve their station. Although his pictures offer a purportedly "transparent" view of how city space oppresses its inhabitants, his language inadvertently accentuates the politics of the photographic frame, and the two modes together evoke an uneasy tension between reformist sympathy and surveillance.

#### Conclusion

Reflecting the dominant faith in liberal individualism, Riis's multimodal discourse persuades powerful members of his audience to level a number of the "structures of trauma" that house New York's immigrant population. But even as his discourse aims to render the poor fit for capitalistic competition, it leaves them outside the circuit of decision-making about public space, providing a technological fix for urban deterioration that ultimately displaces rather than empowers its subjects.

Sylvia Stenhouse Church  
University of Louisville

## **Designing Technologies of Mind and Material: A Review of Argument Pedagogy and a Computer-assisted Argument Visualization Software (CAVS)**

### Background or Context

Argument maps or diagrams create a visual-spatial relationship between claims and support. In Ong-ian fashion, the practice of making such maps can be considered a kind of mental technology, which structures a thought process much valued by rhetoricians—argumentation. Though diagrams were used by Whately, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century logician, and advocated by Wigmore, an early 20<sup>th</sup> century lawyer, perhaps the most widely known diagram of an argument is Stephen Toulmin's model which depicts relationships between evidence, warrants, claims, backing, and qualifiers. However, while making diagrams may help students see these kinds of relationships, drawing them by hand produces maps that may be simplistic, difficult to read and tediously frustrating to revise. This fact may explain diagrams' somewhat limited use. Recent developments in computer software, however, have made argument diagramming much easier and increased the number of people taking advantage of this practice. Computer-assisted argument visualization software (CAVS) incorporates color and text into the diagrams, which allows people to see arguments holistically while reducing the cognitive load. The software also makes the maps simpler to produce, revise, and expand than their paper precursors.

### Central Theme

Though argument mapping technology exists, it was developed by logicians, and used in critical thinking classes. The questions this paper deals with arise from the design implications of adapting such software for use in rhetoric and composition classrooms. In this discussion of argument pedagogy and technological review, I will address the following questions: Why should we consider adopting a mapping approach to teaching argumentation? What are the capabilities of the currently available software? And finally, what kinds of functionalities should be designed into argument mapping software to incorporate rhetorical as well as logical concerns for analysis in order to foster students' abilities to create logically sound and rhetorically effective texts.

### Method of Approach or Inquiry

This paper is largely a review of current literature about argument pedagogy in composition classrooms and argument mapping as it is currently used in education, government, and business. It also compares currently available software with a list of features that might support its use to teach rhetorical and logical analysis, evaluation, and invention.

### Conclusions

Though all the programs described in this essay show promise, each seems be suited to different pedagogical foci. Rhetoricians and composition teachers who focus on argument in their courses should consider and assess the potential costs and benefits of incorporating argument mapping into their curriculum. This technology, both mental and material, is neither panacea nor precipice, but heretofore unexplored potentiality for composition pedagogy that deserves careful consideration. Rhetoricians have much to contribute to the development of CAVS argument mapping both as a field of study and an area of practice.

Trey Conner  
University of South Florida, St. Petersburg

### **Tag: Mantra, Mantra: Tag**

#### Background

In discontinuous ecologies of information, the commons has evolved strategies of tagging and emergent classification schemes known as folksonomies. In ways analogous to mantric formula, these practices function to simplify and compress information, and, like any rhythmic practice, they also shortcut and "get in front" of prescribed categories and rationalist tendencies. However, tagging, as a form of audience address, also amplifies the uncertain and probabilistic spaces between our words, sentences, paragraphs, and ideas, and as these probabilities become the driving force behind online composing process, the timing and rhythm of rhetorical performance changes dramatically and usually quite suddenly.

#### Central Theme/Questions

Tagging foregrounds one's assumptions—front-loading premises becomes a necessary trial and error of miscue and synchronization. Cyberneticist Gregory Bateson insisted on "the articulate statement of presuppositions so that they may be improved" (Mind and Nature 24). How can writing teachers, as providers of rhetorical training, provide space for the experimental and experiential rhetorical performances essential to writing in tagging communities? The process of tuning articulate statements in these contexts requires repetitious methods of revision in open, adaptive space. What can the expanded rhetorical practice of tagging learn from traditional mantric practice?

#### Method

This presentation surveys the oldest rhetorical form built on *repetitio*, the mantra, and considers the ways that tagging also functions to compress information, and make it repeatable--and therefore sharable. At the same time, because tagging creates a discontinuous rhetorical context, it creates more opportunities for interruption, and therefore, as writers' presuppositions, definitions, and values resonate and create interference patterns at a high frequency, more affect. The rich harmonics and affective penumbra produced by mantric formula such as AUM opens up more than words can say, semantically speaking. The repetitions of tagging also amplify the asignficatory dimensions of experience, especially when writers attempt to "unpack" the sense and meaning bundled tightly in a tag. The resulting "irrational," affective experience provokes our deepest feelings, makes it necessary and possible to resonate with others, and calls out for rhythm. Wiki can be mapped or thought as a visual and spatial analogue to sonic noise and the rhythms we project into sonic complexity. Therefore, this presentation will also report on composition classroom tagging experiments in wiki to illustrate the ways that tagging, like mantric practice, enjoins both order and disorder.

#### Conclusions

In tagging communities, rhetors find new combinations and transformations in the spaces between repetitious tags, presenting writers with ample and ongoing opportunity to articulate and tune statements of presupposition. When applied to these attention economies, cybernetic formulations of perception and difference echo Aristotle's classic definition of rhetoric, as when Bateson explains how "...perception operates only upon difference. All receipt of information is necessarily the receipt of news of difference, and all perception of difference is limited by a threshold...knowledge at any given moment will be a function of the thresholds of our available means of perception" (Mind and Nature 26). As rhetorical practice expands in the digital commons to include tagging practices, the rhetorical canon of memory must expand to include practices of attention management.

Brittany Cottrill  
Bowling Green State University

### **A New Space for the Commonplace: Social Networking Websites as Modern Scrapbooks**

According to Elaine Hedges “[the] rediscovery and celebration of women’s traditional textile work – the domestic arts of spinning and weaving, sewing and quilting – constitute by now a widespread and peculiarly interesting development in contemporary feminist thinking” (338). This interest has grown to not only include sew sewing but also quilting (Rohan “I Remember”), knitting (Gordon), and scrapbooking. In her 2005 book, *Radical Feminism, Writing, and Critical Agency: From Manifesto to Modem*, Jacqueline Rhodes discuss the use of female web-based communities, particularly web rings, to explore the development of community. She continues by saying that through this literal and figurative linking of like-minded women, a reclaimed agency has emerged where women have taken back the domestic arts and crafts that were forced upon them in the past. Through this literal and figurative linking of like-minded women, a reclaimed agency has emerged where women have taken back the domestic arts and crafts that were forced upon them in the past. In a 1994 article, Linda Brodkey said that “Writing is about following a bias that cuts against the grain because, like sewing, writing recognizes the third dimension of seemingly two-dimensional material” (qtd. in Rohan “Material” 80). This correlation between the domestic arts and writing, however, is not new. I argue that the domestic arts and writing have paralleled one another since at least the early 1900s and that the scrapbooks of the past further parallel social networking websites, such as MySpace and Facebook. In my presentation I will argue that the connection between early scrapbooks and social networking websites can be traced back to early commonplace books, and that these various forms of writing are connected to one another largely through the community-building ability of these arts.

In my presentation I will begin by discussing a brief history of the scrapbook, beginning with the commonplace book and focusing on the scrapbooks of the early 1900s, especially those marketed towards women as discussed by Susan Tucker. I will argue that these scrapbooks were used to both conform and create social identity in young women and discuss how the early twentieth-century scrapbooks both emulate and diverge from the present social networking websites such as MySpace and Facebook. In focusing on the goals of scrapbooks and social-networking sites I will argue that technological advances have given a voice to a new generation and that these advances, with their call for reflection, ask members to do much of the same reflection that is required in scrapbooking.

Dale Cyphert  
University of Northern Iowa

### **Addressing the Rhetorical Issues of Virtual Decision-Making**

#### Background

Theorists and practitioners seem to agree that virtual decision-making environments are unsuitable for the resolution of conflict. Nevertheless, contemporary organizations oblige their members to make decisions and resolve conflicts in asynchronous and geographically dispersed groups.

#### Central Theme

Western discussion procedures can be traced to methods for insuring that armed knights would lay down their arms long enough to reach a truce. In contrast, the goal of creating order in an online environment is not to reduce the threat of violence, but to insure that sufficient participation results in forward progress toward a communal goal. Virtual communities are characterized by weak tie relationships rather than shared geography. Physical violence is impossible, and the challenge is to maintain interest and participation among individuals who can easily shift their attention to another activity. Asynchrony weakens the need for making decisions; the lack of discernable meeting duration offers no limiting structure. Further, membership is tenuous. People in online spaces are much more conscious of their individual identities and less conscious of group membership in a community they can't physically see.

#### Approach

Virtual communities must solve a different set of rhetorical problems than one bounded by geography and shared resources. Any rhetorical culture must concern itself with discourse practices and communication technology. Every group will have explicit rules as well as unstated norms that govern how communication is to be used to make decisions and justify collected action. In the move from collocated to virtual groups, the aim of effective decision-rules remains the same: they must bring order to the interaction, structure information for effective decision-making, and facilitate the group's business effective discourse.

A comparison of the rhetorical requirements in collocated and virtual decision-making groups suggests that more success can be gained by acknowledging face-to-face presumptions of common geography, limited information and shared membership and developing virtual discursive practices that foster inclusion, discursive structure, and reciprocity.

#### Conclusions

The analysis of the contextual needs suggests that effective virtual decision-making is best served with rules that are quite unlike the agonistic model of parliamentary law. Instead, invitational modes of egalitarian dialogue and communication technology that fosters community will be found most useful in for facilitating virtual decision-making processes in diverse, dispersed groups.

Kevin Eric DePew  
Old Dominion University

## **The Shape of Things to Come: Towards a Triangulation Methodology for Studying Distance Education**

### Background

As documented in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, many institutions created steep learning curves for instructors, administrators, and support staff by quickly initiating distance education programs. Consequently many institutional goals for distance education—equivalent education, equivalent retention, higher profits—have rarely been achieved. Institutions are now beginning to catch up to this curve and look ahead to see how the technologies of Web 2.0 will/can further their pedagogical practices for distance education and hybrid courses. With more instructors comfortable with the online classroom and pedagogically experimenting with various technologies, we should take this opportunity to study their courses with the intention of developing best practices or pedagogical heuristics for the next generation of distance education instructors.

### Central Theme

How then do we study computer-mediated distance education? If the classroom is a rhetorical situation, an event that encourages instructors and students to make a series of direct and indirect arguments to other (e.g., You should use this theoretical approach; I am an A student), then rhetorical principles (e.g., the appeals, the canon) provide a framework for examining the classroom. To understand how effectively a course is taught or managed the researcher can triangulate data (e.g., surveys, interviews, document harvests) to isolate specific rhetorical features (DePew, forthcoming). But since the instruction and interaction for most online courses occurs in cyberspace, the researcher loses access to classroom data that traditional classrooms confine. Therefore, heuristics for designing the study of online courses must accommodate these challenges: With these obstacles, is a rhetorical framework still appropriate/possible for studying online courses? What data is lost or gained by the computer-mediation? How do logistical issues, such as limited research budgets and human research guidelines shape one's research practices in this context? And how does a researcher who values critical qualitative (Sullivan & Porter, 1997) or feminist methodologies (Takayoshi, 1998; Lamanna, forthcoming) become an advocate for participants they are spatially separated from?

### Method

I have addressed these questions by critically reflecting upon my own methodological practices while studying two different distance education courses. The first course, an introductory education course, combined an on-campus section with an online section; students in this course were taught how to compose wikis—a new writing technology for most of them—through online communication. The second course, an advanced composition course, combined synchronous and asynchronous communication technologies with video and face-to-face interaction. While each course presented unique obstacles to the methodological process, each one also refined my strategies for triangulating data when studying distance education courses.

### Conclusions

As with teaching, we should not try to map the methodological practices that we have designed for traditional classrooms onto the online classroom. Although the computer technologies that facilitate distance education reduce our access to studying some rhetorical features of the course, these technologies create access to others. With this presentation I will explain how future researchers can use the computer-mediation to their methodological advantage when they design similar projects.

Patricia L. Dunmire  
Kent State University

### **'Space is the Place': Technology & Futurity in National Security Discourse**

This paper is part of a project that examines the future as a site of rhetorical and political contestation. The contestability of the future derives, in part, from its indeterminate nature, which challenges political ideals of stability and control (Grosz, 1999). Indeed, Grosz argues that, in Foucault's conception, power can be understood as "that which functions to dampen or suppress the potentiality and possibility inherent in the future" (p. 16). This Foucauldian theory of power is manifested in contemporary national security discourse, namely the "doctrine of preemptive war." Also known as the "Bush Doctrine", this approach to national defense calls for taking "anticipatory action" against alleged enemies of the U.S. even if "uncertainty remains as to the time and place" of their attack (United States National Security Council, 2002).

In previous work I have examined the implications of this doctrine for conceptions of knowledge and agency with respect to the future (Dunmire, 2005; in press). This presentation will report on my analysis of the intersection of futurity and technology that the doctrine of preemptive war entails. Working with both critical discourse (Fairclough, 1989, 1995) & systemic functional analytic techniques (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Martin, 1993), I examine national security texts produced by both Bush administrations, the Clinton administration, and the Project for the New American Century. Focusing on the representations of technology in these texts, I will demonstrate the ways technology is represented as both a threat to and protector of particular visions of the future. I will then explicate how these representations function to privilege futures that serve prevailing political and economic interests while undermining alternative futures.

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J.S. Dunn, jr.

Indiana University of Pennsylvania & Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti

### **College Writing Assessment as *Technology* and *Rhetoric*: Some Options for Contemporary Policy Reform Drawn from the Rise of the Modern University**

#### Background/Context

Perhaps more than any other issue faced by literacy professionals, writing assessment lends itself to the application of technology. The recent collection *Machine Scoring of Student Writing* (2006) describes various software packages with which student writing can be “read,” scored, and graded. Despite the mixed results reported, administrators and policy makers will likely continue to advocate the use of computer technologies because such innovations promise greater efficiency. As Michael Williamson (1994) argued, in the history of writing assessment, *efficiency* has been the key standard for judging each new technology, whether multiple-choice examinations or holistic scoring. Similarly, this pattern emerges in tentative recommendations floated during the spring of 2006 by the Spellings’ Commission on higher education for a national college graduation exam. Such policy-level reform on a national scale will undoubtedly hinge on the application of recent computer-based assessment technologies and the lure of efficiency they promise.

#### Central Theme

Literacy educators and writing assessment specialists are rightly skeptical of such proposals, and successful resistance calls for documenting, as in Freitag-Ericson & Haswell’s collection, the limitations of current software. At the same time, successful advocacy also entails consideration of writing assessment not only as a *technology* but as a *rhetoric*. That is, the history of assessment technologies suggests that new innovations provide both new tools for doing work in new ways *and* new rhetorical appeals that advocates may draw upon to justify those new ways of doing and being. This analysis raises several key questions: how are education reforms concerning writing assessment promoted? and what developments in the history of writing assessment technology have contributed to the “means of persuasion” currently “available” in education policy debates?

#### Method of Approach/Inquiry

This presentation takes up the origins of a key term (Burke, 1950; Weaver, 1953) in the discourse of education policy reform around writing assessment: *accountability*. Drawing upon Keith Hoskins’ (1993; 2000) scholarship on technological innovations during the early nineteenth-century that introduced numerical grading, ranking of students, and more elaborate writing assignments into American higher education, this presentation describes the changing expectations these technologies fostered on the first American campus where they appeared together: the United States Military Academy during the 1820s and 1830s. Not only did the reforms at West Point significantly advance engineering education, but West Point graduates went on to positions of influence in American education during the nineteenth-century, laying the groundwork of assumptions concerning policies toward assessment and education that have continued influence today.

#### Conclusions

This presentation argues that the origins of appeals to accountability run much deeper than current policy debates and arise from basic assumptions about the modern university, ones that most literacy educators accept. Like Brian Huot’s (2002) call for literacy educators to better recognize the role of assessment in the work of pedagogy so that they might develop more thoughtful ways of integrating assessment into the processes of teaching and responding to writing, I recommend that we acknowledge the role of accountability in our work as college faculty so that we might more persuasively invoke this rhetorical appeal in current education policy debates.

Jeremiah Dyehouse  
University of Rhode Island

## **Blogging Progressivism: Reforming Education and Civic Identity on the World Wide Web**

### Background

In their assessments of democratic communication on the World Wide Web, rhetoricians like Charles Bazerman and Bruce Gronbeck have stressed how citizen use of Internet communications technology remains problematic—sometimes troubling, to be sure, but also open to practical modification and development. In the “blogosphere,” for instance, technology users do not just share messages; they also develop new forms and conventions for civic participation, sometimes with startling effects. This presentation offers a case study in the development of civic identity online, treating progressive education blogs as one site for the cultivation of new forms of civic identity.

In the past two decades, conservatives have defined many of the key terms and attitudes in US debates over education. Today, progressives—and especially Internet progressives—seek to participate more effectively in debates over education, challenging conservative positions on issues such as school standards and reform planning. Like the educational muckraking that inaugurated American educational progressivism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, such progressives often employ unconventional rhetorical strategies to advance their political ends. This presentation investigates those tactics, focusing particularly on how they intersect with contemporary progressives' use of Internet technologies to cultivate a distinctive civic and reform identity.

### Theme

In public discussions, the Internet is sometimes heralded as a global *agora*, a democratic (and democratizing) space. Among academics (e.g., Doheny-Farina, Banks, Hawisher, Selfe), however, such utopian visions appear too simple, neglecting how issues of place, access, race, nationality, culture, and gender complicate the Internet's democratic promise. This presentation considers the Internet as a potential “space” for democratic activity—as a shared site for communication and for developing technological resources. In particular, this presentation examines how contemporary educational progressives are developing the Internet in their cultivation of a particular reform identity.

### Method

Comparing the rhetorical strategies characteristic of historical muckraking journalism with those found in an exemplary education reform-oriented “blog,” this presentation focuses especially on one site for an emerging educational progressivism, *The Daily Howler* (TDH), placing its work on education in the context of other progressive education blogs. This presentation compares historical muckrakers' appeals to space and place with those offered by TDH, evaluating their differing constructions of a reform-oriented civic identity.

### Conclusions

Appeals to space and place figure crucially but differently in both historical and contemporary educational progressivism, with contemporary muckrakers employing claims about the spaces of education (e.g., about actual classrooms) as well as calls for occupying the discursive “spaces” of contemporary education reform (e.g., newspapers, Web sites, and blogs). Today, progressives develop the Internet as a site for democratic activity. But what can progressive Internet activity suggest for rhetorical educators? This presentation argues, with sites like TDH, that the cultivation of effective civic identities requires a commitment to both material and discursive “places.” In the age of the Internet, that is, effective civic identities don't just speak to “having been there”; they also speak of what “having been there” means.

David Dzikowski  
Penn State University

## **Flow and Juxtaposition in the Rhetorical Technologies of Television and Radio**

### Background

Mass Media studies often engage in rhetorical criticism or develop rhetorical theory, even if not using those terms. Raymond Williams' concept of "Flow" as a defining characteristic of broadcasting, for example, considers the composition of television programming across and within programs and notes a strategic design – a rhetoric – that attempts to hold the audience in the flow of programming. A recent effort by Matthew McAllister to rehabilitate the concept of "Flow" (from criticism that has charged it with being so general as to have little use) has focused on the marketing strategies of commercial culture that integrate otherwise discrete discursive components within the overall composition of television's commodity flow. The strategic sequencing of ads, programs, and promotional elements, according to this argument, thus tends to reduce the range of options, choices, and judgments that viewers make, achieving television's ultimate goal of brand loyalty. These studies, without the use of rhetorical labels, describe a kind of rhetorical practice ... and find it wanting, of course.

Rod Hart has argued, similarly, that political rhetoric works to reduce the range of choices for audiences. Traditional, speaker-centered, theories of rhetoric often focus on persuasion as an art of bringing audiences into compliance with the speaker's goals. But I believe that a proper rhetoric increases the range of choices that an audience can consider and can use in making its judgment. This traditional, but audience-centered, approach to rhetoric considers strategic designs of juxtaposition that increase the range of choices audiences can use in making judgments. Although the literature on the rhetoric of juxtaposition is not well-defined, the studies that consider the productive use of juxtaposition all focus on a rhetoric that does not produce easy judgments, but does produce better judgments.

### Central Theme and Method of Inquiry

This essay starts with the evidently valid claims in the literature about "Flow" that describe the formal qualities of television and seeks out the complementary rhetoric for radio. The distinction between non-commercial "juxtaposition" and commercial "flow" is used to critique examples of non-commercial and commercial content. Considering television and radio as technologies of rhetoric, the final question, then, is: what does this help us theorize about juxtaposition and flow of arguments and evidence in rhetoric more broadly?

### Conclusions

Non-commercial speech has more in common with genuine rhetoric than a public service ethos; instead of "flow," non-commercial broadcasting and rhetoric both rely on the strategic juxtaposition of compatible contradictions to increase the capacity of audiences to make judgments. As rhetorical technologies, television and radio, in their commercial and non-commercial forms, have characteristic forms, "flow" in the former and "juxtaposition" in the latter. This essay attempts to describe television and radio as productive technologies in terms of these designs, drawing distinctions between commercial and non-commercial, between persuasion and rhetoric of design. What this teaches us about rhetoric, more generally, is that rhetoric at its best relies on juxtapositions of compatible contradictions to help audiences make judgments.

Christopher Eisenhart  
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

**Wired Will: Ethos in an age of chips and circuits**

Since the advent of the alphabet, technology has evolved along with human need to present and enhance communications delivery alternatives (and then necessities). While technologies serve fruitfully as intermediaries between parties, by the very nature of that intermediary role technology also creates distances, gaps, between rhetor and audience: Much of rhetoric's history has been a pedagogy for closing those gaps via voice and ethos. Sometimes, however, that gap is not abjured but rather explored and exploited, consciously imposed and interposed to veil and even elide the presence of the flesh and blood rhetor. New technologies may create kairotic opportunities for rhetors seeking to remain out of sound or sight, to perhaps startle or woo audiences away from the flesh and blood rhetor toward a rhetorical avatar. Where then does the audience locate the rhetor behind the immediacy of the avatar, and what then satisfies audience appreciation and judgment of that displaced/replaced rhetor's ethos? When wires and chips stand in for flesh and blood, do the measures of ethos change as well? The three papers on this panel will address those questions by analyzing three contentious rhetorical events, each of which deployed its own new technological rhetor to replace what, till then, had been conducted via "traditional" rhetoric.

Panelist #2: Christopher Eisenhart, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

**"The Space for Rhetoric in Law Enforcement Negotiation"**

During the Ruby Ridge law enforcement siege of 1992, following a shoot-out between the Weaver family and US Marshals attempting to take Randy Weaver into custody, the FBI sent a robot to the door of the Weaver's cabin, with a phone in one mechanical claw and a 12 gauge shotgun in the other.

In many ways, this come-to-life caricature is an apt image of the law enforcement negotiator's role. In the relatively brief history of regulated, law enforcement hostage negotiations (a little less than 40 years), the negotiator's role has developed into an institutionalized position and a cottage industry, but an unchanging component of this rhetor's landscape is that the situation is largely mediated through weapons technology. This situation creates all sorts of compelling problems: Can rhetoric exist with a gun in the room, or, in other words, can rhetoric and coercion ever co-exist? If so, what sort of ethos can an armed and procedurally restricted negotiator construct? This paper offers a response to these questions based on a survey of the law enforcement siege, and the role of the negotiator in such situations, over the last four decades

Daniel Ellis  
Temple University

### **Whose Database Is It Anyway? Tutors, Administrators, and the Database as Genre**

One of the central claims of genre theory is that genre is never a neutral, valueless form, but is always the product of the social conditions out of which it arises. In part because of this social nature, a genre is therefore an opportunity for administrative structures to exert themselves and to be resisted either deliberately or accidentally. So genre becomes a marker of the relationships between administrators and those who are administrated, a map of the desires and goals of institutions and the ways those desires and goals are intended to be met. As one pair of writers puts this problem, the "bureaucratic text is a product of equilibrium between . . . other bureaucrats and groups whose behavior it regulates."

In the spring semester of 2005 our university's writing center introduced a computerized database for the entry and storage of its tutoring session reports. Prior to this, tutors had filled out a paper form that documented a number of details regarding a session, but in which the narratives of what happened in the sessions took center stage as tutors addressed an audience of fellow tutors. The database suddenly expanded this audience; while administrators previously had access to the session reports only by looking at individual student files, they could now search through any number of reports in any number of ways with just a few keystrokes. And since the administrators' interest in the reports is often different from the interest of the tutors, the importance of the various data fields has shifted. While the narrative may remain the heart of the report for tutors, for administrators all fields become potential data, and the reports thus become investigative as much as communicative resources. Similarly, because the database functions as a computer system, it therefore reflects two other purposes generally served by computers in education: it acts as a cognitive metaphor and it provides institutional control. From this it follows that the database reports manifest a particular vision of both writing process and tutoring practice; both are cognitive processes and both are institutionally determined.

This paper examines the writing center database as an emergent genre through which administrators and tutors struggle to manifest their understandings of tutoring practice and writing process, and their visions of the writing center. Beginning with an understanding of genre derived from Bakhtin, I use contemporary genre theory, especially that of John Swales, to consider a sample of session reports from the writing center database, discussions with writing center administrators, and my own practices as a writing center tutor and user of the database. Most notably, the database turns out to be as much a tool for tutor self-reflection as it is for administrative regulation of tutor practices; indeed, it is largely by formally directing that self-reflection that the database effects administrative control.

Jessica Enoch  
The University of Pittsburgh

### **Educating for Civic Engagement On-Line: The Possibilities (and Problems) in Taking Rhetorical Education Global**

#### Background

In her recent *PMLA* article, Wendy Hesford defines the “global turn” in rhetoric and composition studies, writing that this “turn” focuses attention on the “intertextuality of local and global cultures” and “requires a comparative-historical frame and a broader understanding of culture, text, and the public sphere than what traditional rhetorical criticism provides.” This presentation considers how traditional ideas about rhetorical education might be implicated and invigorated by the “global turn.” In particular, the speaker examines how a transnational on-line community offers participants a rhetorical education—one that enables them to engage political discussions and enact social change.

#### Theme

Begun in 2000, TakingITGlobal works to “inspire, inform and involve” the world’s youth by providing them with an interactive platform for “expression, connection to opportunities, and support for action.” TakingITGlobal idealistically positions the internet as a site for democratic exchange, civic education, and social change, specifically using the site as a place to teach users how to engage in political discussions. This speaker will interrogate the ways TakingITGlobal articulates and carries out these aims and will specifically focus on how this on-line community offers users a rhetorical education and cultivates in them a politicized identity as global and local citizens.

#### Method

Building on disciplinary considerations of rhetorical pedagogy, on-line communities, the “democratization” of the internet, and the global turn, this speaker will analyze how the site’s educational programs, workshops, on-line magazines, and blogs might extend and complicate traditional ideas about both rhetorical education and civic identity.

#### Conclusions

This presentation will examine how rhetorical education is not only deployed outside the traditional classroom, but also on-line and inside a virtual community geared to civic engagement and social change. It will press definitions and practices of rhetorical education, while interrogating the possibilities and problems of TakingITGlobal’s objectives. In particular, this presentation will address the following questions: What rhetorical strategies does TakingITGlobal identify as necessary for both virtual and flesh-and-bone political engagement? How do members of the community compose a civic/global/transnational identity for themselves? How might the pedagogical and civic practices enacted on the site challenge and reshape conceptions of rhetorical education in the university classroom?

Casie Fedukovich  
The University of Tennessee

## **The Silent Cyborg: The Ontology of the Millennial Generation and its Technology**

### Central Theme

This paper examines the use of personal technologies such as cell phones, Ipods, and laptops by the members of the Millennial generation in creating invisible yet exclusionary perimeters of silence which have implications in the First-Year Composition classroom.

### Background and Context

"The Silent Cyborg: The ontology of the Millennial Generation and its Technology" draws on Donna Haraway's concept of the cyborg identity and Cheryl Glenn's *Unspoken: A Rhetoric of Silence* to argue that these Gen-Mers participate in a complex relationship of silencing through the use of personal technologies, and that these technologies have serious implications in the FYC classroom. Just as a cyborg is a fictive representation of an organic person, a being "simultaneously animal and machine, who populate worlds ambiguously natural and crafted," Haraway builds late twentieth century feminism from non-authentic pieces, describing it as a movement which seeks to encompass but which effectively—and perpetually—denies entry (150).

If we first accept that GenMers fit Haraway's cyborg, then it follows that Millennials' access to fast communication revises antiquated hierarchies as both males and females of any race, religion, ethnicity, or culture can first voyeuristically interrogate and then create unbounded digital bodies. Sites like Myspace, Facebook, and Livejournal offer sites of alternate identity construction where disempowered students recreate powerful digital bodies. The power of the gaze, then, diffuses through three-inch by three-inch screens or a 17-inch monitor where elaborate rhetorical maneuvers occur.

### Method of Approach

I first review existing theories on "the cyborg" and silence to establish definitions and contexts for the proliferation of personal technologies. Then I move from the theoretical to real-time research in a number of FYC classrooms at The University of Tennessee. I collect quantitative data to determine the prevalence of personal technology among Millennials. I then move to personal narratives with five students on their use of these technologies and interactions with their composition classroom experiences.

### Conclusions

I conclude that the integration of technology into our students' lives indicates that instructors should incorporate multi-modal technologies into their FYC classroom to promote, not only the creation of rhetoric through digital mediums, but also to connect with students using their common language—what researchers have termed "digital vernaculars". Further, the use of personal technologies empowers otherwise marginalized students.

Personal technologies offer globalization, entertainment, and the promise of unlimited resources in easy terms, as long as the user is wired. GenMers often retreat into these technologies, trailing the ubiquitous white iPod wires or fully engrossed in text messaging, in favor of interacting one-on-one with classmates or instructors. This silence is not a protestation, nor is it an acceptance of hegemony, nor is it a space for contemplation. Rather, these students learn sophisticated rhetorical moves through their digital body while feeling disconnected from their physical body when asked to write in the FYC classroom. By melding the two sites—physical and digital—FYC instructors can approach issues of audience, exigence, and approach in a format that is both familiar and powerful to first-year students.

T. Kenny Fountain  
University of Minnesota

### **Technological Witness: Beyond Rhetorics of Vision; Or, Henrietta Lack's Multimodal Body**

#### Background/Context

Blood. Piss. Shit. Hair. More than bodily substances, these corporeal materials have long been implemented in the creation of art. Artists have used bodily tissue not merely as a tool – shit instead of paint – but as an indexical object meant to reference the biological matter that it, in fact, always is. This use of the bodily matter foregrounds and testifies to the biological nature of the body as at once anatomical-science and subjective-personhood. Contemporary artists such as Christine Borland have made visible both (1) the technologically-mediated body as a *form of witness* and (2) medical technology as a means of *bearing witness* to a supposedly concealed or invisible “truth” of the body. *HeLa* (2000), her work that incorporates a microscope and computer monitor to display the cells of Henrietta Lacks' cervical cancerous that took her 31-year-old life in 1951, bears witness to both Lacks and her subjectification as specimen data by researchers who concealed from her family the existence and use of Lacks propagating cell line.

#### Central Theme

Borland's *HeLa* evidences what I call technological witness, or the technological processes through which the specimen tissue of the body is mediated and, according to Michael Lynch, “rendered” as science. In bearing witness to both the science and personhood of the body, Borland's art (displayed for an interactive audience) performs a rhetorical function that complicates the logic of representation and notions of subjectivity.

#### Method of Approach

In my presentation, I seek to answer the following questions:

1. How does scientific technology mediate representations of the body?
2. How might this mediation be understood as a form of witness?
3. How might rhetorical studies of technology benefit from a more sophisticated notion of witness?

First, I will provide a brief history of *HeLa*, the exhibit, the cell line, and the African American woman from whom both are derived, before moving on to a textual-visual analysis of the body of *HeLa* and the science on display. My investigation will be shaped not only by science studies accounts of visual practices, such as Bruno Latour's visual inscriptions (1990) and Michael Lynch's rendering practices (1985), but also Kelly Oliver's (1991) and Judith Butler's (2005) work on subjectivity, witness, and the responsibility of recognition.

#### Conclusion

My project seeks to make plain what Borland's work suggests about 1) the complex materiality of the body that undermines conventional notions of vision and 2) the technologies of science that operate as a form of testimony. As well, I argue that (3) notions of witness and testimony are, considering the prevalence of techno-scientific representations, of increasing concern to rhetorical theory -- all of which are marked by an interest in audience, persuasion, and performance.

Elizabeth Gailey  
University of TN, Chattanooga

## **POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN NEW RHETORICAL CONTEXTS: A CASE STUDY OF ROBERT GREENWALD'S USE OF DOCUMENTARIES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE**

### Background

Documentary films have always possessed what Bill Nichols (2001, p. 583) refers to as the "radical potential" both to contest and affirm state power. Yet it was not until the late 1970s that filmmaker activists wrested control over the genre and consistently began to use it to advance social and political causes (*Ibid.*). Today, or so the story goes, documentaries have transformed the political landscape and become vital rhetorical weapons in the arsenals of political advocacy organizations. What tends to be omitted from this story, however, is the role information and communication technologies (ICTs) play in the efficacy of activist documentaries. Like all rhetorical texts, documentaries take place within and are highly sensitive to their technological environments. It is these environments that are the focus of this study.

### Central Theme

The question at the heart of this research is how technological environments contribute to and change the ways in which activist documentary films are created, distributed, and received by the public. I argue that the most effective contemporary activist documentaries are those situated within an intricate rhetorical web consisting of both new digitally based and reconfigured older communication technologies. Among the best examples of this dynamic is the work of veteran filmmaker Robert Greenwald, whose low-budget films (e.g., *Outfoxed*, *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*, *Iraq for Sale*) and unorthodox production, fund-raising, and information and communication technology strategies have succeeded in creating novel rhetorical environments that appear to foster authentic social change. While limited research has been conducted on both documentaries as rhetorical texts and on the potential of new ICTs to promote social change, a need exists for studies that investigate the ways in which technological environments work *in tandem with* and *alter* the rhetorical strategies and meanings associated with activist documentaries.

### Method of Inquiry

A common criticism about the efficacy of activist documentaries is that their reach is limited mostly to true believers. Even Michael Moore has conceded that his films "preach to the choir." Using Robert Greenwald's activist films as a case study, this paper examines how, by using old technologies in new ways (e.g., "screening parties" in homes and churches) along with new digitally based ICTs, political advocacy groups have extended the reach of the political documentary. Under this model, activist documentaries are no longer conceived of as self-contained rhetorical structures, but as part of a larger constellation of "viral media" capable of building new social communities and circumventing mainstream media's monopolistic control over discourse and distribution.

### Conclusions

After analyzing the rhetorical environments within which Greenwald's films operate, the study concludes with an outline of specific steps activists and organizers might wish to consider before beginning documentary projects. This is followed by a discussion of questions, concerns, and agendas related to scholarship on the rhetorical role of ICT environments in the history and outcomes of activist documentaries.

\*\*\*This panel examines the confluence of activism and new technologies. This convergence calls for a re-examination of our conceptions of public participation in democracy and of "the public" itself. All speakers consider the ways that traditional rhetorical and social movement theory speak to or cannot account for these new practices.

Samaa Gamie  
University of Rhode Island

### **Subaltern Rhetorics: Can Cyberspace realize its Liberating Potential?**

#### Background

The emergence of computer-mediated communication marks the creation of cyberspaces as venues for the wide dispersion of the missions of activist groups. Such appeal has led to the creation of cyber communities by Arab women activist groups. Despite the potential for wider exposure for these groups, few virtual communities have been created by Arab women activists, less than half a dozen and all in the late 1990s. However, issues of access, poor maintenance of sites, limited resources, and government censorship of these cyber communities in the Middle East have hindered their multiplication.

#### Theme

Corresponding with the advocated potential of cyberspace as a libratory space for its cyborg users (Gruber, Hawisher and Sullivan, Killoran), much has been said about the reduction, absence or elimination of the technology user's corporeal body from the discourse environment as a source of technological empowerment (De Pew). However, the call for erasing the marked subject has been discursively and visually defied by the online rhetorics of women's groups who affirm their gendered and racialized digital identities (Gruber, Knadler). To investigate the potential of the WWW as the space in which the subaltern as female can create a sense of an empowered civic identity that allows her to protest the rhetorics of silence that have traditionally confined her, this presentation will examine the cyber communities of two Arab women activist groups.

The WWW emerges as a network for connecting with other activists worldwide and an infrastructure for foregrounding a women's group's activist identity, thus, forging an online civic alliance that escapes the limitations of government censorship and physical space. In light of that libratory potential of the WWW, what types of "subaltern" civic identities emerge in these "racialized" and "gendered" cyberspaces? What role has cyberspace played in shaping, cultivating or delimiting that emergent sense of civic identity?

#### Method

A rhetorical analysis will be conducted of two women activist groups' websites: the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA) and the United Nations Development Fund for Arab Women and its Arab States' Regional Office (UNIFEM ASRO). The theoretical lens will explore three rhetorical aspects of these sites. The discursive orientation examines the discourse of that online community; the visual orientation explores the visual nature of the site and its visual rhetorical applications, whereas the interactive orientation illustrates the extent to which the audience is invited to participate in that community's discourse and activities.

#### Conclusion

The subaltern rhetorics fluctuate from a discursive affirmation of the racialized and gendered self while visually erasing the marked body, to a discursive erasure in favor of a highly visual presence of the marked body. The analysis of these rhetorics proves the WWW to be treacherous, filled with abundant restrictions hindering the subaltern's attempts to create empowered civic digital identities, and calls for viewing it as a postcolonial space unexplored in its potential cyber applications and for demanding a critical view of the potential uses and possible abuses of the digital technologies of power.

Jay L. Gordon  
Youngstown State University

### **Recontextualizing Vannevar Bush's "Memex"**

#### Background/Context

Although the name Vannevar Bush and the term "Memex" are familiar to many who work at the intersection of rhetoric and information technology, the context in which their story is told tends to be simplistic and a weak case as history. Those encountering this man and his proposed invention for the first time often read about his article "As We May Think" as though it were a kind of premonition of hypertext and even of the internet. The purpose of this presentation is to recontextualize the Memex in a way that shows that, despite the problems of the "proto-hypertext" framework, there are other interesting ways in Bush's work and vision can be brought to bear on our thinking about the intersection of rhetoric and technology.

#### Central Theme

In this paper, I examine some of the historical details relevant to the material and cultural contexts in which Bush's vision of the Memex emerged. My chief aim is to illuminate some of the ways in which Bush's work was emblematic of important cultural discourses of the time, discourses such as utopianism, nationalism, and capitalism. I thus present the Memex as a *rhetorical* artifact—it was written about but never successfully constructed in the form Bush envisioned—that raises many of the same kinds of questions we now have about information collection, control, and distribution.

#### Method of Approach/Inquiry

My approach is to present primarily historical information in a framework informed by concepts and ideas from social and cultural theory. I use primary sources as much as possible for the historical material and fairly familiar theoretical terminology (capitalism, bureaucracy, utopian/dystopian discourses, etc.).

#### Conclusions

Bush's work is important, I argue, not so much because the Memex contraption's workings are conceptually analogous to hypertext links, but because the cultural context in which it was envisioned is analogous in some important ways to that in which we now live. One immediate lesson I hope we draw from this exploration is that we need to be careful about inventing historical "precedents" and "antecedents"—they may exist, but not in quite the form we presume. A more general conclusion is that we need to be wary about the realities facing utopian visions of technologically-enhanced information-sharing. Utopian rhetoric about information-sharing in the 1930s and the 1990s sound remarkably similar; the realities—appropriation by large corporations, the military, and the state, for uses having little to do with the original visions—do as well.

Meredith Graupner  
Bowling Green State University

### **Timely or Untimely? Moving Beyond the Binary in the Kairos of Scholarly Weblogs**

The prominence of digital media is undoubtedly changing the ways we view and value scholarly text. In *Writing Space*, Jay David Bolter suggests that over time “we may come to associate with text the qualities of the computer (flexibility, interactivity, speed of distribution) rather than those of print (stability and authority)” (3). Traditional values of print publication tend to reside in books and periodicals and are still preferred by scholars and academic departments for sharing and publishing research in composition, but is this the only type of text we should value for scholarly work? Currently, members of the field use a variety of digital media to publish texts, but due to its ease of use and general accessibility it is the weblog that seems to raise the most controversy pertaining to scholarship and intellectual property. This controversy is complicated further by the timeliness of weblogs as they serve as spaces where moments of kairos can facilitate a more free market of ideas than scholarly print texts.

To suggest a means for how weblogs can be critiqued as spaces for scholarship in the field at large I re-appropriate and apply both the spatial and temporal dimensions of kairos to a case study of three weblogs from both tenured and non-tenured members. Through this analysis and application of kairos I show the complicated nature of the concept and how it can be used to reflect the rhetorical value of weblogs, therefore making weblogs opportune spaces and worthy of scholarly merit. By addressing weblogs through continuing research, we can begin to consider their potentially prominent roles in creating and disseminating ideas for discussion in the field at large.

Letizia Guglielmo  
Kennesaw State University

### **Teaching and Learning Together: Feminist Approaches to the Online Writing Course**

#### Background or Context

In the field of Computers and Composition, research generally focuses on the use of computers within the traditional classroom, whether students meet in a lab during each class session or periodically throughout the semester. Scholars have theorized and investigated the effects on writing and the writing process of everything from the machine itself, the software, the Web, the role of the instructor, and even the layout of the computers in the classroom to understand how to facilitate and to foster significant experiences for students in these courses. Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe call us to be realistic in our discussions of computers in writing, reiterating that “it is not enough for teachers to talk about computer use in uncritical terms,” especially if “the use of computers in these classes [. . .] come between the teachers and the students, pre-empting valuable exchanges among members of the class, teachers and students alike” (135, 132). Although “Collaborative activities increase along with a greater sense of community in computer-supported classes,” the authors explain that “constructing such spaces so that they can provide room for positive activities—for learning, for the resistant discourse characteristic of students thinking across the grain of convention, for marginalized students’ voices—requires a sophisticated understanding of power and its reflection in architectural terms” (132, 137).

Considering the growth in many English departments of exclusively online writing courses—those taught at a distance and facilitated by course web sites or Course Management Systems (CMS)—we are forced to consider how many of these discoveries apply to the online or *virtual* classroom. While Hawisher and Selfe focus primarily on teaching writing in the computer-supported classroom and not specifically on exclusively online writing courses, they do offer a number of cautions that become essential for instructors in the virtual classroom, primarily the potential for the computer to become a tool through which students receive and produce static content as the result of an isolated experience that fails to meet the goals of the writing process.

#### Central Theme (questions to be answered)

In this paper and presentation I plan to investigate how feminist pedagogy and feminist administrative strategies can help the online writing instructor to design a course that will meet the fundamental goals of first-year writing while still offering students the kind of flexibility essential to the virtual classroom.

#### Method of Approach of Inquiry

Grounded in a review of literature that draws from online teaching, feminist pedagogy, feminist writing administration, and computers in writing, this study will consider the ways in which our approaches to teaching first-year writing should and can be adapted for exclusively online writing courses.

#### Conclusions

Heeding and Hawisher and Selfe’s advice and considering current research in online teaching, I argue that the online writing instructor can begin to redefine her perceived role as the course administrator and to create a student-centered learning environment through feminist approaches to teaching.

Hayes Hampton  
University of South Carolina Sumter

### **Transformative Chaos: Towards a Rhetoric of Nonsense**

#### Background

One of the conference's "Questions for Inquiry" is "How does rhetoric, as it has been traditionally mapped out, both illuminate and fail to illuminate the design and use of literacy technologies?"

My paper addresses this question by looking at nonlinear, nonsensical rhetoric, a technology of literacy that is not meant to instruct, delight, or persuade, but rather to enchant, intoxicate, and alter consciousness. Gorgias was well aware of this aspect of rhetoric, as was his adversary Plato, who, as Jacqueline de Romilly has shown, had a horror of enchantment and other non-rational states of consciousness. Plato won the day in the Western tradition—or did he? From the Second Sophistic until today, nonlinear rhetoric as employed by artists, mystics, and magicians has abetted consciousness alteration. However, this shadow side of rhetoric, when discussed at all, is most often put in contexts of sociology or religious studies that, while informative, fail to acknowledge its textual strategies. In other words, its status as *techné* is still in doubt.

#### Central Theme

But *can* such a rhetoric have rules? Romilly famously outlines the rehabilitation of rhetoric in the immediate wake of Plato, pointing out that "In order to save rhetoric as a *techné* ... one had to ignore all connection with magic" (*Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* 43). But as Kenneth Burke, John O. Ward, William Covino, and Joshua Gunn have demonstrated, magic and rhetoric seem to be inseparable. I argue that a *techné* does exist for nonlinear rhetoric, but it is one based on a magical view of the world, not a material, instrumental view; thus, nonlinear rhetoric emphasizes, among other things, praxis over correct belief, body over mind, evolution over stasis, and sound over sense.

#### Method of Approach

I will read a text central to 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century occultism, the "Bornless Invocation," against the above-mentioned scholars (mostly Covino and Gunn), in part to critique the current state of the rhetorical study of magic, and to show how a text made up primarily of nonsense words can have a stable and profound meaning within a certain discourse community. The "Bornless Invocation" derives from a Hellenistic magical papyrus that even in its original Greek consists largely of nonsense words. It was appropriated first by the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and then by Aleister Crowley, whose followers have continued to reinterpret it. I will discuss the origins of the papyrus and its magical use, contrasting the layers of "meaning" imposed on the papyrus by various magicians. I will then elaborate the rule system (*techné*) by which practicing magicians obtain meaning from and employ this text.

#### Conclusions

Nonlinear rhetoric as used in magic can be modeled, though traditional rhetorical theory needs augmentation to do so. Burke and Covino have done much to provide us with models, but Burke's inherent linearity and Judeo-Christian bias hobble his understanding of magic. Gunn, too, provides a solid model for magical rhetoric, but the rhetoric of magic still lacks a way to understand (dis)order; I theorize this based on the work of Roland Fischer and others who have modeled language along the lines of nonlinear dynamics.

Joleen Hanson  
University of New Hampshire

### **Acquiring Multiliteracies Through "Non-Educational Use" of Computers: The Construction of Personal Profiles on "Myspace.com"**

#### Background

In this paper I will discuss a specific element of internet communication, the personal profile, in order to understand it as a literate activity and a means of rhetorical education. People create personal profiles for different kinds of internet communication, including instant messaging, blogging, and participating in social networking websites. Early studies of identity construction on the internet focused on text-only exchanges such as email, bulletin boards, and MUDs (Baym, 1995; Crawford, 2002; Hellerstein, 1985; Matsuda, 2002; Turkle, 1985). More recently, researchers have looked at personal websites, chat, and instant messaging (Anolli, Villani, & Riva, 2005; Arnold & Miller, 2002; Gross, 2004, Papachirissi 2002; Valkenberg, Shouten, & Peter, 2005; Vazine & Gosling, 2004). This presentation will focus on multimedia personal profiles created by members of "Myspace.com", a 27 million member social networking website that has only in been existence since 2003. Myspace.com profiles offer authors a rich palate for identity construction, incorporating text, image, music, video, blog, email, and instant messaging functions.

#### Central Theme

As James Gee, Deborah Brandt, and Anne Ruggles Gere have shown, educators can gain valuable insights from studying the literate activities that people pursue outside of school. In 2005 the Pew Internet and American Life Project reported that 87% of American teenagers between the ages of 12 and 17 had access to the internet, most on a daily basis These teens spend many hours presenting themselves and their ideas in multimodal formats on Myspace.com and other websites. In this paper I will discuss some of the educational implications of the popularity of Myspace.com. Using categories suggested by Stuart Selber (2004), I argue that when people participate in Myspace.com, they develop functional, rhetorical and critical literacies.

#### Method of Inquiry

The project I will present investigated how students use and interpret Myspace.com personal profiles, and how they learn to create them. The study used an on-line survey of a diverse group of thirty myspace.com members and in-depth interviews with two teen-aged myspace.com members to find out how they created and used the profiles and how they evaluated the truthfulness of other peoples' profiles. In addition to summarizing the study results, I will discuss some positive educational implications of using Myspace.com, specifically how it contributes to student literacy development.

#### Conclusions

Myspace.com members create personally meaningful, interactive, multimodal texts. They become familiar with manipulating electronic text, sound, and images, and with using and modifying online templates. They develop a sophisticated awareness of how their own multimodal texts might affect a reader, and they learn to be critical readers of other peoples' multimodal texts. In other words, they gain literacies that are valuable in today's "internet saturated" culture. Although I do not advocate using Myspace.com in the classroom, I argue that teachers and researchers need to be aware of the literacies of Myspace.com and the impact these literacies might have on the theory and practice of rhetoric and composition.

Jill Hawkins  
Kent State University

### **Sounds Write: Embracing Oral Forms as Literate Composition**

Glynda Hull and Mark Nelson, in their 2005 article "Locating the Semiotic Power of Multimodality," call for further research into semiotic function of isolated, yet co-present modalities. Their study prompts them to call for a reconceptualization of writing—one that embraces multimodality in the composition of texts. Hull and Nelson admit that, "looking back at our analysis, we are still intrigued by what we did not capture, especially around sound and music and the intersection of these modalities with language and image" (p. 252). In a similar vein, Tara Rosenberg Shankar (2006) argues that literacy values assigned to writing can be achieved in the domain of the oral and that oral forms might fruitfully be revalued as literate composition. One emerging writing form, the *audio* essay, uses digital technology to stretch the traditional essay assignment across the two modalities of speech and writing. Although the audio essay is becoming increasingly common in writing classrooms, we as yet know little about how this new form is understood, either by students or by teachers.

My project examines the challenges encountered by two writing instructors as they attempted to integrate digital audio recording technology into freshman writing. Specifically, these teachers had to adjust pedagogically to assigning compositions based on an audible rather than a written alphabetic signifier, even as they managed incorporating digital recording software into the writing classroom. The instructors were studied over the course of a full semester, with a focus on how the audio essay was assigned and how it was negotiated with students over time. Methods include analysis of taped class sessions, interviews with teachers, and retrospective accounts by the teachers of practices involved in creating and teaching the audio essay. The implications for this project include understanding how what we understand as "writing" continues to undergo change in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### Works Cited

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Paul Heilker  
Virginia Tech

### **The Rhetoric of Online Advocacy by Verbal Autistics**

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are developmental disabilities which affect social and communication skills. Since 1994, the number of children being classified as having an ASD has increased six-fold. We do not know what causes ASDs; there is no known cure.

Autistics and their caregivers have long taken advantage of the internet to form support networks. But autistics' patient-to-patient discourse has recently moved beyond support to advocacy. Autistics are now using the internet to organize and advocate for their perspectives on the "proper" treatment of autism and the autistic in civic and workplace settings, engaging in vigorous public debate on such questions as:

- Who is ethically empowered to "speak" for the autistic?
- Who is ethically empowered to "speak" for the non-verbal autistic?
- Is autism a disease, a disability, or a diversity issue?
- Do those with autism need to be "cured"?
- Are the rights of autistic people being violated, especially in the name of "curing" them?

Those engaged in these debates seem to fall into two starkly opposed camps: the neurotypicals who care for non-verbal autistics versus the "high-functioning," verbal autistics.

This paper examines the online rhetorical practices used by high-functioning, verbal autistics as they seek to organize and advocate for their perspective on the proper treatment of those with ASDs. Specifically, this paper presents a case study of the rhetoric used by one organization, *Aspies for Freedom*, to represent autistics as "freedom fighters" as they work to protect their human rights around the world. This paper examines the exigencies, the ethical, pathetic, and logical appeals, the primary tropes, and the visual rhetoric used by *Aspies for Freedom* as they work to secure legal protection for autistics against discrimination, to gain recognition for autistics as an official minority group from the United Nations, to take action against ammonia and electric shock aversion "therapies" still being used on autistic children, and to generate public understanding of a planned prenatal test for autism as "genocide" (since it will lead to the eradication of future generations of autistics).

The text then examines the efficacy and long-term effects of autistics employing such a martial rhetoric, self-representation, and identity in their "war" with organizations like "Cure Autism Now!" At what point does this self-empowering representation of autistics as warriors become unhelpful, even harmful, to those who invoke it?

This paper concludes by arguing that rhetoricians have important contributions to make in the transformation of patient-patient online health communication as it moves increasingly from support to advocacy for all manner of diseases, disorders, and disabilities: we have the expertise patients' groups need to help make their heartfelt but perhaps misguided and counterproductive discourses of advocacy more fully effective in achieving their medical/ethical and political aims.

Ian Hill

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

### **Entropy and Feedback: The Doom and Gloom of Norbert Wiener's Apocalyptic Rhetoric of Technology**

This paper analyzes the rhetoric of Norbert Wiener in his famous text on cybernetics, *The Human Use of Human Beings: Cybernetics and Society*, to explore the rhetorical techniques that philosophers and popularizers of technology use to navigate the speculative and apocalyptic ramifications of technology. I argue that Wiener takes an ambivalent stance toward the apocalyptic by succumbing to a neutral attitude toward technology while prophesying the doom it will bring upon humans through entropy. In turn, I develop the idea of ambivalent rhetoric characterized by an author's failure to make a decisive choice between two opposed ideas and the display of an author's coexistent negative and positive feelings about a topic.

Wiener performs a rhetoric of technological apocalypse by describing cybernetic society as governed by the laws of entropy—he equates the natural destruction of the earth through heat death, millennia in the future, to imminent manmade technological suicide via nuclear weapons. Wiener thus displays his pessimistic attitude regarding technological progress. He knows it will destroy us, yet he does not advocate any change in the neutral attitude toward technology that imbues technology with unlimited symbolic authority. He calls for action to be taken in response to dangerous technologies, yet his position is actually passive because the action he calls for takes place in the same technological paradigm that produced the problems in the first place. Wiener's own breakthrough engineering of cybernetic weapons systems during World War II demonstrates his conflicted interests: he comprehends the contradiction in his position, but instead of calling for a revolutionary change that would alter humanity's conception of technology practice, he does not offer any solution outside his own technological orientation. Therefore, Wiener's rhetorical style relies on *figures of control*: like cybernetic communication between machines, Wiener's rhetoric depends on the asymmetric control of people via communication.

To explore the continuing relevance of this genre of persuasion, I will compare Wiener's apocalyptic rhetoric of technology to a similar current example: Stephen Hawking's recent speeches advocate both colonizing outer space and altering our genetic code as means of species survival. These technological fixes assume looming catastrophe, like Wiener's, yet they direct innovation toward similarly problematic technology or complex inventions too far distant to be practical, such as matter/antimatter annihilation and photon drive energy production. Hawking advocates these far-flung innovations in lieu of developing convivial technology to save our planet from its many problems, including the many potential disasters that may arise from current technology practice, like the widespread diffusion of nuclear radiation and toxic chemicals.

Wiener's ambivalent rhetorical techniques demonstrate his contradictory attitudes, and his use of apocalyptic cataplexies in *The Human Use of Human Beings* displays both apathetic and fatalistic attitudes toward doomsday machines. Such a view abandons humanity to extinction, while placing a weak hope on speculative technological salvation—a type of *deus ex machina*. Thus, I claim that the speculative and apocalyptic ramifications of technology imbue this genre of rhetoric with a dangerous attitude: if Wiener's rhetoric is successful, it strips any potential world-saving agency from humans by consigning our collective fate to inescapable doom.

Jennifer Hitchcock  
Virginia Tech

## **Composition and Communication: Why Aren't We Working Together to Repair the Split?**

### Background

As John Dewey and many successive educational theorists have argued, one of the foremost goals of American education should be to prepare students to be citizens who can and will be active participants in a democratic society. Although our 21<sup>st</sup> century technological democracy looks a little different than in Dewey's day, educators today realize his goal is as important as ever. While this goal remains the same, the pedagogical strategies necessary to educate students to become active citizens in what is surely a media-saturated, technology-rich world have changed. If educators expect students to be able to sift through this sea of information, make decisions, and acquire agency as citizens, then we need to be educating students in the rhetoric of verbal and visual media texts.

While many scholars in Composition and in Communication understand the importance of a rhetorical education, and many in both fields also believe incorporating popular mass media texts into the classroom alongside written texts is an essential component of 21<sup>st</sup> century education, these two disciplines are not currently collaborating in a significant way to develop pedagogical strategies. In the past, these two disciplines have found points of convergence in the subfields of Rhetoric and Cultural Studies, and while some interdisciplinary connections do exist, many of these former interdisciplinary associations have been lost. This split between Composition and Communication has caused many teachers and researchers in the different disciplines to lose sight of what each field has to offer the other pedagogically. If this split were to be seriously addressed, a variety of interdisciplinary projects could be developed in order to realize common goals and enhance student learning.

### Central Theme

I will briefly examine why Communication and Composition split in the first place, what has been lost in this gap, the common pedagogical goals of these two fields, and what interdisciplinary collaborations could be possible with a repair of this rift.

### Approach

In order to explore these questions, I review some of the important work from both fields regarding incorporating popular media texts into instruction in order to demonstrate the commonalities between movements in these two separate fields. I also discuss the cultural studies movement and the study of rhetoric as important points of connection in the past and as potential points of connection in the present and future. I further argue that some answers to why these two fields remain separate may lie in the history of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) as discussed by Diana George and John Trimbur in their College Composition and Communication (CCC) article, "What Ever Happened to the 4<sup>th</sup> C?" And, lastly, I describe collaborative research and pedagogical projects made possible through when the two fields talk with rather than against one another.

### Conclusions

Interdisciplinary collaboration between Composition and Communication can take many forms and should be more of a priority if scholars in both fields see this pedagogy as essential to both student learning and a functioning democracy in our postmodern, mediated culture.

Michael R. Jackson  
University of New Hampshire

### **Wired Will: Ethos in an age of chips and circuits**

Since the advent of the alphabet, technology has evolved along with human need to present and enhance communications delivery alternatives (and then necessities). While technologies serve fruitfully as intermediaries between parties, by the very nature of that intermediary role technology also creates distances, gaps, between rhetor and audience: Much of rhetoric's history has been a pedagogy for closing those gaps via voice and ethos. Sometimes, however, that gap is not abjured but rather explored and exploited, consciously imposed and interposed to veil and even elide the presence of the flesh and blood rhetor. New technologies may create kairotic opportunities for rhetors seeking to remain out of sound or sight, to perhaps startle or woo audiences away from the flesh and blood rhetor toward a rhetorical avatar. Where then does the audience locate the rhetor behind the immediacy of the avatar, and what then satisfies audience appreciation and judgment of that displaced/replaced rhetor's ethos? When wires and chips stand in for flesh and blood, do the measures of ethos change as well? The three papers on this panel will address those questions by analyzing three contentious rhetorical events, each of which deployed its own new technological rhetor to replace what, till then, had been conducted via "traditional" rhetoric.

Panelist #1: R. Michael Jackson, University of New Hampshire

#### **"They're Censuring Videos of the Hanging: The Ethos of the Camera Phone"**

This paper will examine the role and reputation of the camera phone in the documentation of Hussein's execution. In the commentaries of journalists, officials, and moralists in both the U.S. and Iraq, the ethos of camera phone technology is broad and promiscuous: sometimes it looks like the freedom fighter's courage; sometimes it looks like the terrorist's evil; sometimes it looks like the art photographer's heroicness and taste; sometimes it looks like a schoolboy's lust. In the Saddam Hussein execution, the camera phone exhibits the full range of its ethos.

Carol Siri Johnson  
New Jersey Institute of Technology

### **Traditional vs. PC Learning: Comparison in the Technical Communication Classroom**

In 2004 faculty teaching the undergraduate service course in technical writing began teaching technical communication within a digitally mediated environment. Students were required to learn basic graphics and layout, for example, as well as make a simple website for an online portfolio. When we made this change, we defined a new construct of skills that we expected them to gain, including creating relevant content, tone, audience awareness, graphic cohesion and citation. In order to assess the new construct and discover whether we were meeting our goals, we created an analytic assessment that tested each criteria separately (as well as providing an overall, holistic portfolio score). The results were that the separate criteria were highly correlated to each other and to the overall portfolio score. Since the fall of 2004, we have been holding an online portfolio assessment every semester.

Some of our instructors teach in a traditional classroom with limited technology and others teach in PC labs where every student has a computer. In one of our meetings, an instructor raised the question of which environment was better for student learning. The question suggested that a formal investigation would be of value to our instructors. Thus, we analyzed the data. At our first assessment, the scores in the traditional classrooms were higher. However, over time, the PC labs began having higher scores. This presentation will be a comparison of PC vs. traditional classroom scores across four semesters (fall of 2004 to spring 2006). Overall, the scores for the students in the PC lab (n=159) were higher than those from the traditional classroom (n=216). The difference was significant, however, in only seven of the criteria: understanding assignments, relevant content, rhetorical response, graphic cohesion, parallel structure, basic graphics and citation.

This presentation will describe the assessment process and analyze the data in order to demonstrate which parts of digitally mediated communication are most enhanced by teaching in a PC lab. It will also present data from two subsequent semesters, fall 2006 and spring 2007, in which distance learning and face-to-face learning can be compared and evaluated. This additional data will also allow me to extend the comparison of computer-mediated and traditional classroom environments (i.e., the results may show different patterns).

**A Comparison of Traditional vs. PC Learning in Student Technical Writing Portfolios  
(Fall of 2004 to Spring 2006): Independent Samples t-test for Equality of Means  
(equal variances not assumed) for Criteria**

	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>Std. Error Difference</b>
Clear Style	-1.302	364.372	.194	-.234	.180
Accurate Usage	-1.567	350.084	.118	-.294	.188
Understanding Assignment	-2.151	370.654	.032*	-.378	.176
Relevant Content	-2.116	367.252	.035*	-.367	.173
Rhetorical Response	-1.997	363.877	.047*	-.357	.179
Adapt Content	-1.532	362.416	.126	-.266	.173
Adapt Tone	-1.300	364.789	.195	-.229	.176
Graphic Cohesion	-2.447	358.482	.015*	-.456	.186
Parallel Structure	-2.341	368.922	.020*	-.412	.176
Basic Graphics	-3.930	367.228	.000**	-.641	.163
Citation	2.663	91.599	.009**	1.220	.458
Research	-1.943	101.531	.055	-.825	.425
Overall Portfolio Score	-1.941	366.643	.053	-.356	.183

\* the change is significant at the 0.05 level (95%)

\*\*the change is significant at the 0.01 level (99%)

**Mean Averages for Criteria in Student Technical Writing Portfolios (Fall of 2004 to Spring 2006) Showing a Comparison of Traditional vs. PC Learning**

	<b>Classroom</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>
Clear Style	Trad. Classroom	216	7.76	1.872	.127
	PC lab	159	7.99	1.605	.127
Accurate Usage	Trad. Classroom	216	7.44	1.852	.126
	PC lab	159	7.73	1.756	.139
Understanding Assignment*	Trad. Classroom	216	7.86*	1.892	.129
	PC lab	159	8.24*	1.507	.120
Relevant Content*	Trad. Classroom	216	7.69*	1.828	.124
	PC lab	159	8.06*	1.523	.121
Rhetorical Response *	Trad. Classroom	216	7.77*	1.856	.126
	PC lab	159	8.13*	1.598	.127
Adapt Content	Trad. Classroom	216	7.83	1.787	.122
	PC lab	159	8.09	1.558	.124
Adapt Tone	Trad. Classroom	216	7.71	1.833	.125
	PC lab	159	7.94	1.566	.124
Graphic Cohesion *	Trad. Classroom	216	7.66*	1.891	.129
	PC lab	159	8.11*	1.699	.135
Parallel Structure *	Trad. Classroom	216	7.59*	1.873	.127
	PC lab	159	8.00*	1.530	.121
Basic Graphics **	Trad. Classroom	216	8.07*	1.720	.117
	PC lab	159	8.71*	1.434	.114
Citation **	Trad. Classroom	100	5.47*	2.887	.289
	PC lab	40	4.25*	2.250	.356
Research	Trad. Classroom	100	5.55	2.840	.284
	PC lab	40	6.38	1.996	.316
Overall Portfolio Score	Trad. Classroom	216	7.85	1.926	.131
	PC lab	159	8.21	1.615	.128

\* the change is significant at the 0.05 level (95%)

\*\*the change is significant at the 0.01 level (99%)

Jenell Johnson  
Penn State University

### **Psychosurgery and the Rhetoric of American Personhood**

"It is our hope that today's hearing will air both sides of the controversy and help us as a society come to understand and master this new technology so as not to become the victims of it."

-- Senator Edward Kennedy, 1973

In 1973, after a number of widely-publicized bioethics scandals, the United States Senate held hearings before the Subcommittee on Health on the topic of human experimentation. In 1972, a pre-talk show Geraldo Riviera exposed the despicable living conditions at the Willowbrook State School for children with cognitive disabilities. The 1972 public also bore witness to the public revelation of the Tuskegee syphilis study. In addition, after *Roe v. Wade*, a number of concerns were raised about the possibilities of experimentation upon aborted fetuses, especially after rumors of fetal vivisection started to circulate among the general public. 1973 was a ripe time for public debate about governmental intervention into biomedical research. However, one subject of the hearings was unlike the others. While the broad mandate of the hearings was to investigate the ethical nature of biomedical research, particularly upon vulnerable populations, the subcommittee also heard testimony on a particular psychiatric treatment: psychosurgery.

Psychosurgery is most commonly associated with its most infamous incarnation: prefrontal and transorbital lobotomy. By 1973, these forms of psychosurgery were no longer a part of the psychiatrist's armamentarium; however, other forms of psychosurgery using new stereotactic techniques were gaining in popularity among neuropsychiatrists. After the publication of Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* in 1964, the development of the anti-psychiatry movement in American and France, and a growing association in the popular media between lobotomy and mind control, the issue of psychosurgery had so inflamed public concern that it warranted a congressional investigation.

In this paper, a condensed version of my dissertation's third chapter, I examine testimony from the 1973 hearings (which included psychologist B.F. Skinner, bioethicist Willard Gaylin, and anti-psychiatry activist Peter Breggin) with a particular focus on the exchanges between Breggin and Skinner and Breggin and Senator Edward Kennedy. Breggin's major argument was that psychosurgery poses a grave threat to the core values of conventional American identity: individualism and autonomy, both of which are "removed" through psychosurgery. I am particularly interested in how these values, (which I discuss in the aggregate as the primary features of American personhood) come to be biologically reified and are rhetorically deployed as a particular kind of bio-rhetoric (to use John Lyne's term).

Although thought by many to be a relic from the pre-pharmacological days of psychiatry, psychosurgery currently is experiencing another resurgence in popularity due to the development of another technology: Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI). In addition, recent attempts to legislate the use of electroconvulsive therapy, and the similar bio-rhetoric of these debates (threats to personhood), suggest that it is not long before psychosurgery once again becomes a matter of political concern.

Rebecca Jones  
University of TN, Chattanooga

### **SMART MOBS AND THE (NEW?) PUBLIC**

#### Background

The prime difficulty, as we have seen, is that of discovering the means by which a scattered, mobile and manifold public may so recognize itself as to define and express its interest.—John Dewey from *The Public and Its Problems*, 1927

Smart mobs emerge when social networks use mobile communication devices, pervasive computation, peer to peer and reputation management methodologies to coordinate collective action - political, social, economic. —Howard Rheingold from *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution: Transforming Cultures and Communities in the Age of Instant Access*, 2002.

In theorizing the practice of a liberal democracy, Dewey realized that communication among the “scattered, mobile and manifold public” was a necessary. John Dewey’s problem in 1927 has one answer today in smart mobs. The term was coined by Howard Rheingold in his 2002 book and refers to the use of internet, computer, and mobile technologies to reach a large number people simultaneously in order to encourage participation in a public act. This method of public communication and action was used most famously during the WTO protests in Seattle. Smart mobs are part of a larger phenomenon of bottom up politics, the masses speaking, the masses acting smart.

#### Central Themes

This study examines conceptions of “the public” in rhetorical and sociological studies and asks how (or if) these new technologies require a rethinking of these conceptions. Understanding the relationship between democracy, rhetoric, and tech savvy activism begins at the confluence of Habermas’s coffee shop, Nancy Fraser’s reconceptualization of this space, crowd theory, the canons of delivery and of invention, the hope of liberal democracy and its belief in deliberation, and the explosion of new media technologies. For most traditional rhetorical theory, smart mob is a paradox and so begs inquiry into the dimensions of its power to offer viable alternatives to more familiar ideas about how citizens act.

#### Methods of Inquiry

Beginning with Howard Rheingold’s definition of smart mobs and subsequent revisions, this analysis will examine both documented smart mob events as well as groups like MoveOn.org and current political campaigns that attempt to use these strategies or are affected by them. Additionally, the presentation will examine state and corporate entities that are beginning to worry about the power potential of these strategies of public discourse to disrupt the status quo. The analysis will yield a sketch of the rhetorical workings of this phenomenon in concert with and/or opposed to traditional rhetorical conceptions of “the public,” democracy, and methods of public discourse.

#### Conclusion(s)

If Dewey’s liberal democracy requires that many citizens not only communicate but also deliberate, the question becomes: do smart mobs answer this call? Does technology offer a more democratic method of participation, a false sense of deliberation, or something in between? This project will argue that smart mob rhetoric made available through new technologies exists in a liminal space (theoretically and practically) with the potential to create new kinds of public discourses, conceptions of democracy, and activist actions as well as the potential to call into question some of our basic beliefs about how these things function.

Debra Journet  
University of Louisville

### **New Forms of Literacy in Convergence Culture: LOST as Transmedia Narrative**

My presentation will examine the television show LOST as an example of what Henry Jenkins (2006) calls "convergence culture": a phenomenon characterized not only by "media convergence" (flow of media over multiple platforms and the resulting migratory behavior of media audiences), but also "participatory culture" (interaction between consumers and producers) and "collective intelligence" (collaborative pooling of resources and skills). Convergence culture, Jenkins argues, creates new forms of "transmedia storytelling," in which the narrative experience is so large it flows over multiple media and so complex readers/consumers must work together in "knowledge communities" to understand its full detail and coherence. In this presentation, I will draw on my experiences as a LOST viewer and as a participant on various fan sites in order to examine the special literacies needed to participate in this new form of narrative.

The television series LOST is complex multimodal and multimedia "text" (Kress) for those viewers willing to follow its story over multiple platforms: e.g., internet sites tied to the plot; novels supposedly written by characters; and, most prominently, "The LOST Experience," an alternative reality game that spanned blogs, internet sites, 800-phone numbers, and podcasts. Moreover, engaging with this transmedia LOST requires active response by viewers/readers who hunt down clues and share textual, audio, and visual information on fan forums, blogs, and wikis. These new "migratory" demands create challenges for participants that are both logistical and hermeneutic. Viewers must engage in such activities as discriminating between counterfeit and legitimate information, identifying a LOST "author" and discerning authorial intent, organizing the complex temporal structure of the show to construct an accurate chronology, hunting down allusions, and speculating on cultural parallels. This careful viewing is enhanced by digital technologies that allow viewers to go through bits of story, often frame-by-frame, zeroing in on particular details that are not apparent in a casual viewing. Interpretations are then built collaboratively, as participants pool knowledge and test theories in media-rich media environments.

LOST represents an early attempt to construct the kind of narrative genre that media convergence may foster. Like other transmedia narratives (e.g., video games), it suggests the sort of future narrative texts our students may engage in as "readers" as well as "writers." Responding to transmedia LOST requires new forms of literate action that are both connected to and different from the way we teach students to respond to conventionally written narratives, such as novels. These new literate practices include moving among multiple media, discerning how information is shaped by media and mode, retrieving and sharing information and analyses in virtual environments, and building interpretations collaboratively in communities of participants. LOST, both as a narrative text to be viewed and read and as a prompt for viewer and reader response, suggests one form storytelling may take as media and cultures converge.

Sonia Kane  
Hunter College (CUNY)

### **Teaching the Rhetoric of Eighteenth-Century Women's Novels Through Technology**

In my junior-level class on eighteenth-century British women's novels, I seek to familiarize students with the characteristics and tropes common to the emerging genre of the novel, with particular attention to the problems and issues women writers faced. Students consider what it meant to be a woman publishing her words during a time when standards of modesty and propriety dictated not only a woman's behavior but the types of expression she might be permitted in public—the kinds of words a woman writer (or character) might properly be allowed to use, and the kinds of situations and feelings her characters might be allowed to experience and express. Because I am interested in how the women writers' choice of words reflects their strategies of expression, my approach emphasizes rhetoric. A common situation in many of the novels we study is that the women characters are warned not to openly express their desire for a male object. I ask students to consider how this constraint affects not only the language and behavior of the characters, but also the indirect language of the female narrators.

To examine words, one must use the technology of the dictionary. Because I want students to become familiar with the invaluable resource of the Oxford English Dictionary, in particular the online version, I have made work with the dictionary an ongoing component of my course. I explain to students that words in an eighteenth-century text often have quite different meanings than the ones we ascribe to them today, and that the narrative of their transformation, along with a range of possible meanings in the context of the particular passages we are studying, can be found in the OED. I introduce the online version of the OED early in the semester during a class session held in the computer lab, where we look up together words from the novels that students have defined as unusual or puzzling in their context. We discuss possible definitions and the implications of those definitions for the themes of the novel.

The continuing part of the OED project, once students have been introduced to the OED in the computer lab, is that each student is assigned a day to report on a particular word (of his or her choosing) from the portion of the text that we are discussing that day. The student is expected to present to class a brief narrative of his or her research in the OED and how that research affected his or her perception and understanding of the passage in question. Students are asked to hand their narratives in as short papers, and at the end of the term the papers are compiled to form a handbook of eighteenth-century terms and their changing meanings.

My presentation will report on the impact of the students' experience with the online OED. In particular, I will be interested to note whether their work with the dictionary does indeed enhance their understanding of and engagement with the rhetoric of eighteenth-century novels by women. I will also be eager to report on whether the online aspect of this scholarly resource—its relationship to the venue in which students already conduct much of their social life and their research—will work to enhance students' comfort with what some of them might otherwise be perceive as a cumbersome or difficult-to-understand reference source.

\*\*\*Our panel explores multifarious uses of technology in a variety of English classrooms, from developmental and composition classes through upper level college literature classes, in an urban college setting. Panel presenters will address topics related to teaching with technology using a variety of approaches: Blackboard, Toolkit, the O.E.D. On-Line, and scholarly web sites.

Kendall Kelly  
Texas Tech University

### **Rhetoric for End Users: A Heuristic for Better Computer Documentation**

In a casual conversation about his job, a computer-support analyst lamented that he spent at least 10% of his time just reading the manual over the telephone to customers. Observations like these have led industry to conclude that customers don't read documentation—at least in the United States. Consequently, many manufacturers of computers and software are attempting to alleviate the need for documentation altogether through better usability. When documentation is necessary, less is more. Many computer manufacturers and distributors have adopted a policy known as "manual lite," an attempt to make manuals little more than chapbooks. While everyone benefits from improved usability, industry's "manual lite" policy may be misguided particularly when supporting complex, commercial hardware and software applications. The \$400 million secondary manual industry (documentation that's produced and sold by third party vendors) would seem to indicate that consumers will pay for and presumably read some types of documentation. This paper demonstrates that by returning to our rhetorical roots, we can create documentation that consumers will read. If manufacturers can produce primary documentation that entices consumers to read it, they could potentially save millions of dollars in computer support costs, while improving their customers' product satisfaction.

To describe the characteristics of this more rhetorical, successful documentation, I conducted a literature review of research performed in the last twenty years examining software and hardware documentation as well as "white goods" documentation. I examined work done by researchers such as Bazerman, Coney and Chatfield, Horton, Steehouder as well as Spinuzzi, Zachry, and others. From this review I developed a heuristic that describes successful documentation. Then, I applied the heuristic to three different documentation sets for the same product, a commercial tape drive, sold by three different computer hardware sellers. By applying this heuristic, we can see that more rhetorical documentation is more effective and satisfies current users' needs for flexible, open information systems. Documentation that users read isn't brief so much as engaging, organized, and easily accessible.

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Donna Kessler-Eng  
Bronx Community College

### **Creating Community: Technology in an Interdisciplinary Freshman Learning Community**

My presentation will explore how freshman students who are members of an interdisciplinary learning community benefit from utilizing technology in their developmental writing course. My students meet on a weekly basis in a computer lab where they compose and revise their essays for my course. Students also have access to Blackboard where course assignments are posted. In my presentation, I will discuss how students benefit from creating their own personal websites for their learning community's final project by using Toolkit. The theme of the learning community that I teach in is "Searching for Selfhood in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The content courses of this learning community are Sociology and Developmental Writing. Students write autobiographical essays and essays in response to readings with sociological themes exploring the issues of identity and gender, race, ethnicity, class, and family. At the end of the semester, students select their strongest piece of writing to post on the websites they have created for themselves. These websites provide a showcase for what they feel is their best work, and reflect what they have learned about themselves as individuals and as writers. My goal is to give students the opportunity to be proud of their work and themselves.

As with any new approach to teaching, there is always resistance to change and the fear of failure. In my presentation, I will discuss the challenges of implementing new technologies in a freshman learning community and I will present what my students, colleagues, and I have discovered, observed, and learned from this teaching experience. I believe that technologies such as Blackboard and Toolkit will strengthen the integrated learning experience that already exists in a learning community.

\*Our panel explores multifarious uses of technology in a variety of English classrooms, from developmental and composition classes through upper level college literature classes, in an urban college setting. Panel presenters will address topics related to teaching with technology using a variety of approaches: Blackboard, Toolkit, the O.E.D. On-Line, and scholarly web sites.

Loel Kim  
The University of Memphis

### **Rhetoric, Technology, Ethics, and Aesthetics: Striking the Right Balance in an Informed Consent Interface**

Twenty-five years after the Belmont Report, the U.S. healthcare community still struggles to recognize and act on the principles of beneficence, justice, and autonomy that protect patients in the context of research medicine [1]. This struggle is most obvious in pediatric trials where the research subject is often not the one giving permission for the research. The U.S. Congress passed legislation in 1997 (extended by the President to 2007) which provides incentives to drug companies to include children in studies of new drugs, and many of these drugs find their way to the clinical setting first through Phase I studies. While such acts offer promise for developing safer drugs for children, they also increase the potential for harm to children who serve as research participants, thus reinforcing the need for further research into the process of informed consent in pediatrics [2]. A number of recent studies have begun to assess the obstacles to such informing [3, 4, 5, 6]. One problem is that parents are often unfamiliar with the culture of clinical research [7, 8], and one of the least familiar, but most important research concepts is that of the Phase I study [9]. Because these trials offer such a low likelihood of benefit to its participants, and at the same time expose children to more than minimal risk, improving the ability to provide adequate information to parents and, when appropriate, to children, is an urgent task.

When parents of pediatric cancer patients must decide whether or not to enroll their child in a Phase I research trial, their ability to understand technical information can be impaired by the extent of their familiarity with medical culture, time pressures, the abundance of information, the weight of responsibility, and heightened emotional states. Providing the legally required and scientifically accurate information necessary for making healthcare decisions, but doing so in as humane and supportive an environment as possible, would meet the intent of informed consent process guidelines in the U.S.

Improving the informed consent process means improving the actual *informing*. An interdisciplinary team from St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the University of Memphis has taken on this communication and bioethics challenge by developing a multimedia handheld device to support the process, the "Informed Consent Team Link" (ICTL).

Multimedia enables a rich medley of information delivery that is seemingly ideal to support the complex, highly rhetorical communication that would improve informing; however, more complex interfaces and purposes pose more complicated information design and testing issues. Hallnäs and Redström, 2002 [10], note that we must expand our approaches towards usability as we shift our view of a computer interface from that of a tool to an "everyday thing[s] present in our lives, [and for which] we have to change focus from design for efficient use to design for meaningful presence" [p. 108]. Although early studies have increased our understanding of the role that aesthetics play in usability, most have examined commercial settings [11,12,13]. The design challenge to implement appropriate aesthetic qualities in a healthcare multimedia interface is a complex endeavor with serious implications.

Rhetoric, technology, ethics, and aesthetics 3 Kim

Complex design problems such as these would benefit from valid, reliable instruments for measuring aesthetic features that could inform design choices. In this usability study, scaled measures of aesthetic constructs relevant for this healthcare setting were identified and incorporated into usability testing the ICTL. How individual scale items supported aesthetic constructs and how they compared to user satisfaction ratings from usability testing are discussed.

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Jennifer L. King  
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### **Swinging Along from Link to Link: Hypertext's Potential for Employing Formal Identification in Electronic Texts**

#### Background/Context

Burke's view of form offers a useful way of considering rhetorical moves. He says that "form is the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite" (C-S, 31) and that "a work has form in so far as one part of it leads a reader to anticipate another part, to be gratified by the sequence" (C-S, 124).

Burke's concept of form is valuable in our efforts to better understand how texts *work*. Burke's accompanying notion of identification is also relevant groundwork in such an inquiry. His explanation of identification extends to include more than mere assent to an idea: he talks of an idea of Longinus, which deals with, that kind of elation wherein the audience feels as though it were not merely receiving, but were itself creatively participating in the poet's or speaker's assertion. Could we not say that, in such cases, the audience is exalted by the assertion because it has the feel of collaborating in the assertion? (Rhet Motives 58)

Burke shows how this kind of consumer production is accomplished through form. He says "we know that many purely formal patterns can readily awake an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us" and that as an audience, "once you grasp the trend of the form, it invites participation regardless of the subject matter. Formally, you will find yourself swinging along" with the form, that "for the duration of the statement itself you might 'help him [the author of the text] out' to the extent of yielding to the formal development, surrendering to its symmetry as such" (Rhet Motives 58) even if you disagree with the claims made in the argument.

Burke argues that this willingness to "swing along" with the form is highly persuasive, not only because it promotes the "exalted" feeling of being a "co-creator" of the argument's form but also because "a yielding to the form prepares for assent to the matter identified with it" (Rhet Motives 58).

#### Central Theme

How can websites better employ forms that allow for audience co-creation of and identification with texts?

#### Method of Approach

In hypertext we see potential for use of many forms that might encourage identification. These forms are worth examining as we consider how hypertext can be structured to allow the audience to identify with and even become co-creators of digital texts. To that end, this paper will explore Burke's theories of form and identification and will examine how Burke's concepts both explain and inform our understanding of hypertext forms, particularly those operating in wikipedia, amazon, and myspace.

#### Conclusions

Burke's notions of form and identification work well together, helping us better understand the balance between producers and consumers of texts and urging us to recognize the rhetorical importance of allowing audiences to fill that role of co-creator. Hyperlinks open great potential for allowing readers increased authorial contribution and for encouraging increased reader identification with texts.

Carol Kountz  
Grand Valley State University

### **Credible and Incredible Sources: Analyzing the "Works Cited"**

#### Background

Students today face an incredible array of sources, including the electronic "wired" library of e-journals, e-books, and databases, in addition to Internet resources of encyclopedias, search engines, commercial and public websites, blogs, and film.

#### Central Theme

What do first-year composition students choose from among this wealth for their academic essays? Are they relying on commercial search engines—Googling—as often as on peer-reviewed literature? If they rely on commercial websites or encyclopedias, do they select substantive information of academic quality that enhances their writing?

#### Method of Approach

I analyze "works cited" pages in writing portfolios of 28 first-year composition students (with their permission), each of whom had minimal requirements or restrictions on source material and access in a computer classroom to the Internet as well as a university library with substantial database and e-holdings. I analyze for the number and category of sources chosen—print or online, popular or scholarly, primary or secondary, and commercial or public-interest, including government sources. Of course, many listings defy neat categorization. Results will show the patterns of sources that emerged and in what way various categories of source were integrated into essays. Each portfolio includes three essays, at least one of which, if not all three, is MLA-documented. These portfolios were graded by a normed faculty grading group.

#### Conclusion

The analysis will indicate the research methods that help students succeed as academic writers and the pedagogical methods that instructors should emphasize. While it seems obvious to say that writing teachers must continue to re-invent the teaching of the research process, my preliminary analysis suggests that we might look at it in a different way as the writing—and the reading—of the bibliography *per se* as an art. This position is, of course, open to discussion in what I hope will be an interactive session among concerned teachers.

Maureen Kravec  
Empire State College, SUNY

Marina Privman  
Empire State College, SUNY

### **Supporting Our Troops, Rhetorically Speaking: Using Technologies with Soldier-Students**

#### A. Context

While an array of pundits and politicians admonish us to “support our troops,” the soldiers themselves have access to more communications media than in any previous war. Furthering their education is cited as a major incentive for joining the contemporary armed forces; yet current deployment schedules create challenges for those pursuing higher education. Through its Center for Distance Learning, as well as a site at Fort Drum providing individualized independent studies and academic counseling, SUNY Empire State College serves several hundred active duty troops through E Army U, a program that offers Internet access and academic resources including an online writing center and an academic library. However, access depends on where and how a student is assigned at any given time.

We are two Empire State College faculty (Dr. Marina Privman, who coordinates the Fort Drum Unit((site)), and Dr. Maureen Kravec, who teaches writing and literature at the nearby Watertown Unit) who serve our students both through enrolling them in on-line Web based studied and through working with them individually at a distance. Fort Drum hosts the often-deployed Tenth Mountain Division, many of whom have done multiple tours in Afghanistan and/or Iraq. We also host National Guard Units. Colleagues teaching fifteen-week on-line studies, open to all ours students, civilian and military, often can accommodate students who need extensions due to maneuvers or training; however, many troops prefer the flexibility of independent study.

#### B. Central Theme/Research Questions

The work of Walter Ong and others has important implications as we explore our troops’ and dependents’ learning experiences. Through gathering statistics on course completion, through talking with students and reading their compositions, we are finding:

- Many students do complete courses successfully while deployed;
- Others begin work while in Iraq or Afghanistan but need time extensions so they can complete major projects when they return;
- Because of rapid rotations, we also offer six-week classroom-based courses between deployments;
- In personal tutorial sessions in our offices, military and their families seem to have a “safe haven” to communicate, sometimes in longhand, through persuasive essays, personal narratives, and creative writing about their experiences and feelings. Technology sometimes plays a role in their narratives.

#### C./D. Analysis/Conclusions—Work in Progress

We are sorting through our soldiers’ experiences as they narrate them through many media: email, telephone, and their conversations and work written between deployments. We will compare our students’ writings for us with the more public Internet discourse through which military and their families can blog, or share more crafted personal narrative on websites such as Gary Trudeau’s Sandbox. We are also interested in contrasting students’ Internet communications, which are really public property and can be read or censored, with work using traditional media.



Bonnie Lenore Kyburz  
Utah Valley State College

### **Beyond Words (on a page)**

*An artist is someone who produces things that people don't need to have but that he—for some reason—thinks it would be a good idea to give them.*  
-- Andy Warhol

Multimodal work has some compositionists worried. They worry that multimodal productions are merely “hobbies” rather than serious intellectual work (see Jay Wooten’s 2006 CCCC’s address).

In this 20 minute presentation, I will screen one or more short films that explore and argue for the validity of multimodality as a textual disposition. The films, contextualizing paper presentation, and Q & A session want to encourage teachers of writing, rhetoric, and composition to consider the promises and vulnerabilities of multimodal text production as writing, as art, as end-text, as rhetorico-kinetic sculpture. The session wants us to think about the promising pedagogies that guide multimodal work as well as the “troubling” erosion of print text as standard academic currency.

In the recent history of Rhetoric and Composition, leaders in the field have attempted to articulate a sense of urgency about shifting emphases—from the exclusionary domain of expository prose and words-on-a-page, in general, to a more expansive multimodal universe. In their respective CCCC’s Chair’s Addresses, both Kathy Yancey and Doug Hesse have wondered about the nature of what we teach, how we teach it, and who does the teaching. Yancey wonders about writing going on outside the academy, the vibrant literacies that inflect everyday lives via new media technologies (blogs, texting, etc.). She notes that “no one is making anyone do any of this writing” (2004 CCCC’s Chair’s Address). Yancey wants to motivate students within the academy similarly. 2005 CCCC’s Chair Douglas Hesse worries about the widespread attention our field receives, not all of it good. Hesse wants to think about how “writing in the civic sphere is now manifest as a self-sponsored activity to a greater extent than it ever has been” and what this means for writing as “institutionally sponsored, as if there were extractable principles, guidelines, and rules.”

What appears to be at stake as we recognize the increasing availability of technologies that make multimodal text production possible? What of the ways in which textual production—text as film, website, blog—is *desirable* to our students? What does this mean for the ways in which we claim to “own” writing? It may mean that we might, at least in part, join our students in learning to *enjoy* (multimodal) text production as never before. A retrogressive rigidity with regard to the ostensible superiority of words-on-a-page seems, as Geoff Sirc suggests (in his recent CCCC’s presentation), “cranky and wrongheaded.” Such stasis may erode composition as a field; how do we feel about this? How can we evaluate this in ways that move beyond self-interest and toward expansive possibilities for learning?

Exploring questions involving multimodality in the context of a film screening (a multimodal event), we may find new ways of considering the nature of text production in the contemporary composition classroom.

Lenore Langsdorf  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

### **"We Don't Think That Way": Argumentation Within Secondary Literacy**

#### Background or Context

My title is a quotation memorably stated by a student in the midst of a class devoted to producing and analyzing texts that advocate, and more specifically, to the value of the Toulmin Model for developing and criticizing argumentative texts. Reflection on that remark, in later conversation, confirmed my suspicion that contemporary writing and reading practices—which I call, with homage to Walter Ong, "secondary literacy"—discourage reflexivity directed at the Backing and Warrants that inform texts, even as they focus attention on their Data and Claims. Ong's interest in how consciousness changes as populations move among dominant technologies included attention to "secondary orality," for which (given the time at which he was writing) television provided the primary example. Language itself (as Walter Ong reminded us) is a technology. The current prevalence of email, blogs, and instant messaging suggests that contemporary technology's influence, via "secondary literacy," has some identifiable effects on reading and writing abilities.

#### Central Theme (questions I address)

What issues of identity, subjectivity, and agency may be present in teaching the composition and criticism of argumentative texts to contemporary students whose everyday communicative practices (both production and reception) are influenced, and perhaps dominated, by computer mediated communication?

How might email, blogging, instant messaging, and "word processing" (in contrast to handwriting, typing, and reading the printed page) influence students' readiness to discern and use Backing and Warrants?

May these technologies render those elements of argumentative text less transparent than is likely in primary orality, or in what may be recognized, retrospectively, as "primary literacy"; that is, reading and writing in material rather than "virtual" media?

#### Method of Approach or Inquiry

Paul Ricoeur's proposal that we consider social action as text informs my approach. Interpretive approaches such as Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology orient researchers toward seeking out diverse, and less than immediately evident, interpretations of human action. Thus, beginning from the assumption that cultural particulars influence the constitution of subjectivity, identity, and agency, I use a hermeneutic phenomenological method to investigate the possibility that computer mediated communicative practices—a particular sort of "action"—favor a particular sort of "text": a subjectivity that resists analytic practices.

#### Conclusions

The technology of secondary literacy is no less reliant upon specifics of identity, subjectivity, and agency than is primary literacy. However, the very rapidity of contemporary globalized culture's movement to secondary literacy serves to conceal a gap between students and teachers that, I propose, adversely affects what we do in learning and teaching. In response to my identification of material (technological) conditions informing text production and reception, I propose strategies for instituting awareness of those conditions and accounting for them in teaching and learning. I should note that I propose a response—but not, a cure.

Michael Little  
King's College

### **Outer Space, Personal Space, Interpersonal Space: Twentieth-Century Technology and Rhetorical Appeals**

#### Background/Context

M. Jimmie Killingsworth's *Appeals in Modern Rhetoric* invites scholars to reconsider our understanding of rhetorical appeals in an updated manner that takes into account the myriad contexts, constraints, and subject positions that define modern discourse. The system of appeals posited by Killingsworth offers us new ways of understanding rhetorical situations and new ways of understanding the role that technologies play in those rhetorical situations. More particularly, we intend to interrogate the extent to which several transformative technologies of the twentieth century—the space program, the personal computer, and internet social networking—have affected and been affected by our perceptions of individual and collective American identity.

#### Central Theme

Each speaker addresses the cultural and social impact of a specific technology. Speaker 1 explores the rhetoric of space technology at the dawn of America's space program, focusing specifically on its use of appeals to nationalism, the intrepid American spirit, and faith in the untold benefits of space exploration. Speaker 2 considers the controversy over the history of the personal computer during the 1960s and '70s: while some historians and social observers maintain that the PC was developed by engineers and programmers who conform to our image of the "computer nerd," others contend that the counterculture scene not only overlapped with the advent of these technologies but, in fact, helped to create them. Speaker 3 examines Generation Y's unique patterns of Internet usage. While networking capabilities are critical to all kinds of internet users, Generation Y has turned the personal computer truly personal, using networking sites such as MySpace and FaceBook both to display and, more importantly, to construct their identities.

#### Method of Approach or Inquiry

Our panel will use a multimedia approach to illustrate how technologies become both cultural and social phenomena. Using Killingsworth's spectrum of modern appeals, we will show how these technologies mediate and are mediated through rhetorical appeals that serve as, enhance, and complicate our understanding of a cultural moment and define the resulting generation.

#### Conclusions

Technological advances of the twentieth and twenty-first century have created our sense of our own potential and possibility, and have defined each generation's understanding of its place in the world—or even its place in the universe. The rhetoric of space technology between 1957 and JFK's announcement of a moon-landing goal is a fascinating mix of appeals that depend on, and construct, the public's trust in science and government and its sense of America's unique optimism. The invention of the personal computer coincided with counterculture sentiments that challenged that optimism and channeled it toward more eclectic goals and outlets. Once the personal computer had saturated American households and workplaces, the next step of personal social networking has brought a level of abstraction and removal from the larger culture even while enacting and reinforcing it. Each of these generational shifts has taken place in a rich milieu of targeted and powerful rhetorical appeals that reveal and inform our national identity.

John Logie  
University of Minnesota

**ANATOMY OF A MEME: Why We All Watched Michael Wesch's "Web 2.0 . . . The Machine is Us/ing Us" (and what we did once we watched it).**

In early February of 2007, a little-known assistant professor of anthropology named Michael Wesch posted a four-and-a-half minute video on YouTube, outlining his own understanding of the features available in so-called second-generation websites, especially those leveraging XML (eXtensible Markup Language) to share data. Though Wesch identified the posted video as a "2nd draft" and paired the posted video with a call for "comments on what could be changed or improved" as he moved toward a planned final draft later that month. By mid-February, the video has been circulated widely, especially in academic circles. Typically, the video circulated without any reference to Wesch's identification of the video as a draft, and usually without his call for comments.

This project starts by analyzing the rhetorical features of Wesch's video, in hopes of explaining how thousands of scholars were persuaded to view and distribute the video, and how these discussions often treated Wesch's work as a "finished" argument, rather than a draft-for-comment.

Additionally, this project hopes to shed light on the means by which "Web 2.0 . . ." rapidly arrived in the top-rank of Internet-based memes (defined as a "mind virus" or a highly transferable unit of cultural information). Within two weeks of its initial posting, the YouTube page hosting Web 2.0 had recorded over 1,000,000 viewings of the video, and this number does not take into account many additional viewings of free-standing versions of the video that were embedded in e-mails and delivered in toto. On February 7, 2007, Wesch's video was the #1 most-viewed item on YouTube.

By the time of the Penn State Conference, Wesch will likely have delivered the "final" version of his video, and this will trigger another round of circulation, discussion, and critical evaluation,. At this point, one cannot help but wonder whether the "final version" can hope to rival the success of its draft version.

This project will be informed by scholarship in rhetoric addressing reception and reader/viewer-response, particularly Steven Mailloux's approach to reception histories (albeit adapted and repurposed for the compressed timelines common to the Internet and the World Wide Web). Additionally, this project will draw upon recent scholarship on visual rhetoric, in particular the work of J. Anthony Blair and Charles Kostelnick.

While the abbreviated timeline between the posting of Wesch's work and the conference deadline preclude anything beyond preliminary readings of the rhetorical dynamics now in play, one point seems clear. Wesch's concluding argument states: "Web 2.0 is linking people . . . people sharing, trading, and collaborating." The video triggered significant debates over whether the aggregation of applications and techniques known as "Web 2.0" offer anything truly novel, but if we choose to understand Wesch's claim as, instead, referring to the title of the video itself, his claim is absolutely demonstrated by the subsequent sharing, trading, and conversation about his work.

Rebecca Wilson Lundin  
Penn State University

### **The Laptop Myth: Technological Determinism in Humanitarian Aid**

#### Background or Context

In 2003, Nicholas Negroponte rethought humanitarian aid for the digital age. He proposed the quest to design a \$100 laptop that could be sent to countries in the developing world, giving children access to the Internet, to virtual textbooks, and to learning experiences far exceeding their local boundaries. The One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) foundation that resulted from Negroponte's idea quickly gained economic and political support (common examples are Google, Apple, and Kofi Annan), and in 2006 the first XO laptops were produced. In 2007, OLPC will begin distributing these cheap, efficient laptops as a means to facilitate education in underprivileged countries.

#### Central Theme

OLPC's mission statement justifies its approach to aid by arguing that computers encourage "learning learning," that is, the ability to understand one's own learning process and thus control it. The concept of "learning learning" complements recent work in the field of new literacy studies, where James Paul Gee argues that literacy acquisition is never merely a result of skills-based instruction but inevitably comes from students' larger understanding of school cultures (*Social Linguistics*). In other words, students must learn how to learn. OLPC's "learning learning" goal meshes nicely with this framework.

What is *not* supported by current scholarship, however, is OLPC's assumption that laptops will automatically facilitate "learning learning." OLPC claims that by using the XO, "children in emerging nations are opened to both illimitable knowledge and to their own creative and problem-solving potential." The utopian determinism in this quote (as well as its passive characterization of students) represents a larger attitude within the program: OLPC is built on Negroponte's belief that children will naturally like laptops and that such affection will spontaneously translate into increased literacies and economic success for developing countries. Such technological determinism makes invisible not only the network infrastructure and teacher support needed to encourage educational uses of the XO, but also the ideologies embedded in humanitarian educational goals. This deterministic rhetoric, which pervades discourse about OLPC, threatens to undermine the extraordinary possibilities inherent in OLPC's mission.

#### Method of Approach or Inquiry

I evaluate OLPC by a close reading of the program's official literature as well as the teaching, learning, and technology philosophies that literature draws on. This reading is informed by studies of educational laptop uses (e.g. Warschauer), criticisms of technological determinism (e.g. Winner), and explications of educational ideology (e.g. Gee, Street), as well as attention to the rhetorical tropes and appeals traditionally used by humanitarian aid organizations.

#### Conclusions

I find that OLPC uses rhetorics based on technological determinism and the literacy myth to support its approach to educational humanitarian aid. To reach its fundamental goals of increased educational opportunities, OLPC must deploy more critical views of both technology use and literacy education. Without this critical approach, OLPC will merely reify existing educational divides; only with such attention to the larger contexts of learning and technology use can this potentially remarkable program succeed.

Lisa McNair  
Virginia Tech

Marie Paretti  
Virginia Tech

### **Intercultural, Interdisciplinary and Virtual: Practicing Agency and Identity in Student Collaborations**

As texts such as *The World is Flat* have made clear, organizations increasingly operate through globally distributed human networks – networks mediated through rapidly developing communication technologies. Yet even as the technologies grow increasingly sophisticated, communication breakdowns persist as a result of the complex interplay of diverse cultural identities and the challenges of subjectivity and agency in cyberspace.

A useful way to theorize these issues, and thus inform pedagogy, is to approach a distributed workplace as an activity system in which students can develop flexible, context-driven understandings of rhetorical spaces. To connect this theoretical base to actionable pedagogies, we report on a two-year case study of engineering students in the U.S. collaborating with digital media students in Sweden. In this study, the engineering students were conducting senior design projects, while the digital media students were exploring the mediation of identity through network technologies. The students combined portions of their course activities to produce white papers and websites that publicize the engineering projects. These documents functioned as sites for distributed work in which collaborations were complicated by physical distance as well as divergent cultural and disciplinary identities.

While these collaborative exchanges are complex, the problems that have surfaced have more to do with establishing “relational space” – and particularly issues of identity construction – than with the technology used to surmount physical barriers of cross-continental collaboration. That is, in the first year of the study, the failure to effectively construct and understand one another’s personal and professional identities led to the absence of trust, shared goals, and motivation. These difficulties, expected in multi-disciplinary collaborations, were clearly aggravated by lack of a rhetorically constructed relational space to facilitate establishing identities, sharing information, and building consensus. Students struggled with questions of agency and ownership of the collaborative texts, and focus groups suggested severe limits in team members’ understanding of their collaborators’ identities. Thus while the idea of collaboration emphasizes the social dynamic of human agency, virtual work environments can undermine the collective function of a group by privileging a “divide and conquer” approach in which the identities of one’s collaborators become almost irrelevant, replaced by the product of their work alone.

To address these issues, pedagogical interventions were added in the second year of the study to direct students toward intentional communication behaviors for consciously constructing cyber identities, and consequently increasing team cohesiveness, shared goals, and motivation. Students were specifically assigned tasks that were designed to establish personal, institutional, disciplinary and cultural identity in order to enact a social space in which agency would be more networked. Also, students were put in leadership roles and required to organize interactions toward both concrete work goals and enhanced relational space. The results from these pedagogical interventions, observed in online discourse, draft stages, focus groups and surveys, show that students on both sides of the collaboration seem more aware of the constraints and identities of their collaborators, more willing to ask for and provide information about the projects, and more interested in each other’s work.

Brian J. McNely  
University of Texas at El Paso

### **Racial Projects/Spatial Projects: Exploring Agency and Subjectivity through GIS Mapping Technologies**

This study employs a panoramic approach to the spatial formations of subjectivity and the enlargement (and subsequent restriction) of agency by examining the rhetorics of geographical placement. I will trace the development and proposed dissolution of a racially marked housing project in the East Bay city of Dublin, California. In doing so, I foreground the politics of place and its impact on collective subjectivity, and I explore how agency is both garnered and frustrated by the impositions of economic development, primarily through the encroachment of hegemonic spaces. By examining the historical trajectory of this housing project, we can see that places shift, and that these rearticulations of spatial normativity may significantly inhibit discursive agency, disrupting subjectivities.

Advances in Geospatial Information Systems (GIS), combined with the increased flexibility of such tools through Web 2.0 repurposing capabilities, give scholars and researchers in Rhetoric and Writing Studies a tremendous resource with which to examine spatial rhetorics. In this study, GIS software is deployed in two important ways: on a practical level, satellite imaging and data mapping frustrate the hegemony of the map, destabilizing the typical view of the city, and the housing project's place within it. The invisible rhetorical choices of the city map are exposed and repurposed, and the tacit politics of placement are explicitly examined. More importantly, GIS software itself is used as a hermeneutic of spatial negotiation. I explore how GIS maps are constructed through the complex layering of connected, yet discrete data. Seeing maps as fundamentally rhetorical, and seeing *layering* as a powerful metaphor of social construction, this study posits a notion of *rhetorical stratigraphy*, a means by which we can interrogate the complexity of subjectivity and agency, through the discrete yet interconnected *layers* of geographical placement, racial formation, and discursive agency.

Informed by postmodern notions of rhetoric and geography, I investigate the collective agency and subjectivity of the Arroyo Vista housing project by drawing upon the work of scholars in both disciplines to examine how space, place, and discourse are mutually constitutive. More importantly, by deploying GIS mapping technologies as both a tool to rewrite the politics of place and as a hermeneutic of spatial formation, I examine the rhetorical stratigraphies of the housing project itself, unearthing the many layers of social sedimentation that comprise subjectivities, and that both enable and restrict discursive agency. Through an analysis of historical maps, city planning documents, repurposed GIS maps, and my own intimate knowledge of the area, I posit a new approach to rhetorics of space and place.

For scholars and researchers in Rhetoric and Writing Studies, GIS mapping technologies are a means to interrogating discursive formations. While this study employs a macro perspective on rhetorical stratigraphies by examining the vicissitudes of a self-contained housing development, the tools available can help researchers approach and rewrite spatial rhetorics on varying geographic scales. This study examines the historically situated politics of placement, posits a new approach to agency and subjectivity through exploring rhetorical stratigraphies, and ultimately suggests tools and methods for future research.

David A. Menchaca  
Washington State University Vancouver

### **Technical Work as Rhetorical Activity: The Construction of Symbolic Technologies**

I intend to show that a symbolic technology is a rhetorical construct that results from the invention and selection of information about a material technology by applying a concept of rhetoric as a machinery of meaning-management. Symbolic technologies exist parallel with, and separate from, the material technologies they represent. In fact, a symbolic technology may exist whether or not the material technology it represents exists. The creation of symbolic technologies is dynamic and influenced by multiple and disparate communicative and ideological operations ranging from the writing and reading of technical manuals to processes of cultural indoctrination. As such, no two persons will ever create the same symbolic technology when encountering a single material technology.

Whenever an agent interacts with a material technology either in development (e.g., technologists, such as engineers, machinists, technical writers, usability testers, and so on) or through use, he or she necessarily interacts with a symbolic technology. Through this interaction, symbolic technologies continually undergo a process of dialectical reformation, with each successive version influencing the creation of future versions as they travel across social networks, carrying with them facets of the internalized ideological structures of agents. Some facets are shared and transfer easily from agent to agent as they encounter technologies. Other facets are not shared but have the ability to shape an agent's ideological structures in minute but profound ways. Symbolic technologies, then, are able to influence much more than the representations of material technologies and must be attended to. The negotiation of symbolic technologies during technical production and utilization opens up spaces for rhetorical activity on the parts of technologists and users alike.

Bernie Miller  
Eastern Michigan University

### **War and the Rhetorical *Techne*: Words as Power and Betrayal**

Hannah Arendt says that violence in war is nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of a power whose source and ultimate expression abide in nature, in that "wholeness" of the terrestrial and divine the ancient Greeks called *physis*. In this perspective *physis* harbors not only the essential mysteries of life and death but our deepest fears of each, of our being at the mercy of forces beyond our control. Yet, curiously, *physis* was also to the ancient Greeks the source of language, and in this sense was therefore a power we assume to express through ourselves by means of a *techne* allowing us to seize or channel this power of *physis* in our very openness to it.

As this power exerts itself as tellingly in terms of hard and fast realities as language, the rhetorical *techne* of war is then precisely as Paola Vivante describes it, a connection of words and reality where the peal of thunder and burst of militant eloquence are not only of the same source but of the same nature, two aspects of the same phenomenon. Instances of this power are the staple of the bellicose speeches of the *Iliad*, *Aeneid*, *Beowulf*, and numerous other ancient tracts, as they are of the many maledictions of the Bible, especially those in the Book of Psalms, the 23<sup>rd</sup> notwithstanding.

Indeed, such strategies are hardly limited to the distant past, as similar invocations to grant us the power and prerogative to kill our enemies are not only apparent in the modern day rhetoric of war but in *technai* bearing the same inherent flaw as those of the past. It is evident in the belief that through a *techne* we finesse or restrain the intransigent realities of war, and in the separation of language and *physis* that results, we are utterly given over to the illusion of "command and control." So it is the case in the language of the technocrats who conduct(ed) the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. Here, in the technological thinking of abstraction, detachment, and calculation, words alone are thought to prevail in lieu of reality. But, of course, *physis* brooks no such prejudice, and we are betrayed in the presumption that we inevitably channel its power, as we end up wielding only language without substance, modern day affirmations of the bellowing and boasts of the mead hall.

So the point of this presentation is that the rhetorical *techne* of war is as much a source of betrayal as power, often proving to be not just ineffectual but, as we see in examples from the *Iliad* to Iraq, having a tendency to turn upon its users, being as destructive towards them as their adversaries. This seems true in particular as we realize, as did the ancient Greeks, that *physis* goes its own way, that words and reality are not responsible to us but we are responsible to them.

Matthew Mroz  
University of Connecticut

### **Pathos, Polyvocality and the Pop-Culture Marketplace: Towards a Rhetoric of Livejournal**

#### Background

In his book *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print*, Jay David Bolter announces that we are in “the Late Age of Print,” that is, we have entered into an era wherein the print culture of books is being challenged by various electronic media (Bolter 3). For many, electronic texts have gained ascendancy over print texts, as witnessed by the continual decline in newspaper and magazine readership, and the rise of CNN.com and the proliferation e-versions of many print titles. However, perhaps the most interesting developments in electronic writing have occurred not in the areas of information management and delivery, but in interpersonal communication. Both e-mail and instant messaging have become widespread, if not ubiquitous, and in the last 5 years there has been a dramatic growth in online writing spaces—Facebook, Myspace, and Livejournal—that provide an online voice and presence to millions of users, particular young people.

#### Central Theme

These developments aren’t surprising to the tech-savvy. But it is troubling how little scholars of writing understand these phenomena. In this study, I investigate the rhetorical implications of a particular popular online writing forum—Livejournal.com—to begin to theorize about how electronic writing situations allow ordinary people to do more than just broadcast information, but rather to make a human connection in a virtual world.

#### Method of Inquiry

In my considerations of Livejournal, I focus on how the technology behind the writing space impacts the rhetorical possibilities of writers. I explore Livejournal as a technological hybrid, analyzing the rhetorical situations of its constituent parts (standard webpages and threaded-discussion forums), and examining how their features combine to create a new rhetorical situation that enables the growth of online communities. I then use Bakhtinian theories of dialogic language and Pierre Bourdieu’s econo-linguistic theories to describe and analyze these social relationships, and to lay a groundwork for understanding the rhetorical moves that prove successful in this medium.

#### Conclusions

The development of applications like Livejournal has encouraged the evolution of new kinds of dialogic textual communities and the development of more complicated online rhetorics. I contend that in a writing space like Livejournal, the Aristotelian modes of persuasion—*ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*—are problematized. While not altogether absent, appeals based on *ethos* and *logos* often collapse into a kind of *pathos* due to ways that the dialogic/hypertextual aspects of the hybrid space work to subvert the singular and linear basis of these appeals, thus privileging that which is collective and multi-linear—that which demonstrates the pathetic qualities of shared human needs and feelings. Additionally, the pathetic operates both (in Bakhtin’s terms) centripetally (relying on common connections to something, often pop cultural) and centrifugally (relying on the fragmentary nature of language that allows the same text to speak to different users using different voices, thus broadening its appeal), and that users often take advantage of one or more different aspects of the pathetic in their efforts to maintain online relationships.

Andrea Murphy  
Old Dominion University

### **PowerPoint Orphans: How do PowerPoint Slides Continue to Rhetorically Function after the Presentation is Done?**

On the first day of February, 2003 the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated in re-entry over the southwestern states of America. Only one week earlier the Debris Assessment Team, tasked with assessing the possible damage from a foam strike on Columbia's left wing, had formally presented their findings to Columbia's Mission Management Team representative Don McCormack using PowerPoint. During that presentation, engineers attempted to convey the message that their analysis was based on assumptions made due to a lack of information and that their conclusions were likewise uncertain. In their final report, the Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) eventually concluded that the ubiquitous use of PowerPoint within NASA's organization was symptomatic of their internal communication problems; furthermore, in the course of their investigation, they were often surprised to receive PowerPoint presentation slides in place of technical reports from NASA personnel.

The use of PowerPoint presentation orphans at NASA is not an uncommon practice in United States agencies nor is likely uncommon in the private sector either. PowerPoint files, minus their oral component are often circulated as e-mail attachments or posted on the internet for those who miss a presentation or as a substitution for the presentation itself. However, little is known about how these orphans continue to function as visual documents in the absence of their creators.

Given the popularity PowerPoint, it is essential to understand how these visual orphans continue function rhetorically after a PowerPoint presentation is re-purposed as an email attachment or published as a report alone. We can understand the rhetoric of these PowerPoint slides, but only if with view them from a larger rhetorical framework that can encompass oral, text, and images. Originally presented in 2003 at a conference held in Romania, George R. Bockosh's PowerPoint file "Issues in United States Mining," was preserved and published without the oral component on a CD-Rom as a part of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's 2003 Annual Report NATO/CCMS Pilot Study Prevention and Remediation Issues in Selected Industrial Sectors: Non-Ferrous Mining. A close reading of this presentation, which was based in part on a pre-existing RAND Corporation report, reveals that the message and technical data undergo a rhetorical transformation that affects its appeals to ethos, its enthymemes, and ultimately causes a simplification of the message by stripping away uncertainty and complexity from the information.

In the end, we discover that the real problem with PowerPoint is not so much its visual limitations in displaying information, but our unrealistic expectations of the visual orphans left behind after the oral speech has passed out of memory. PowerPoint is first and foremost multimedia. As such, it straddles the worlds long artificially separated: the oral, the textual, and the purely visual. What is more disconcerting is that despite the widespread existence of technology to record and preserve the oral component, organizations and audiences alike continue to believe that the slides alone can substitute for the entire presentation.

Fawn Musick  
Texas Tech University

### **Private Bodies in Public Spaces: Rhetorical framing of the Body Worlds Exhibit**

The public display of real human bodies through the Body Worlds Exhibitions has created a dichotomy between art and science, education and sensationalism and private and public expectations. The rhetorical framing of the Body Worlds Exhibit creates two distinct virtual environments for the visitor. The official frame of the museums and science centers attempts to create an educational environment in which the displayed bodies are solely used for knowledge building. This is reflected by both the website of the Body Worlds Exhibit and the websites of the Science Centers hosting the exhibit

The Body Worlds Exhibit uses *logos* with a dash of *ethos* to persuade the millions of viewers to come see the plastinated cadavers on exhibit, while the visitor comments are filled with *pathos*, much of it in the negative. I will look at the rhetorical frames created by the official websites and press releases coming from the exhibition halls. Then, I will focus on and look at personal blogs that describe this visual event to determine what types of frames visitors of the exhibits construe.

Elia Nelson  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

**Multimedia and multi-author:  
Electronic communication as a communal act of creative recombination**

Context

Walter Ong's work explores the first technologizing of the word, detailing differences between oral and literate cultures, differences that evolved from the implementation of the technology of writing and, later, typography. Ong posited that the technology of the electronic age has generated a new orality which, like primary orality, is participatory and communal, concrete and formulaic.

Building on that foundation, this paper seeks to expand the framework used to understand the technologies of language so that it also accounts for other communicative technologies such as the visual and the musical. A framework for understanding how technology affects communication should apply not only to the printing press but also to the camera, not only to e-mail and wikis but also to iPods and YouTube. Examining parallels between epics and folk music and the arts and crafts of oral cultures enables a view of oral culture as based on variation and conservation. Similarly, from looking at the literary tradition, the classical music tradition, and the history of Western art the creative acts of a literate culture can be seen as emphasizing individual invention (although not to the exclusion of other kinds of creativity). Electronic technology, with its impacts on communication and social organization, suggests a third distinct premise.

Central Theme

Due to societal immersion in electronic technologies, an emphasis on recombination as a primary creative act is emerging. Recombination is essentially a communal process, as authors draw on the texts of their predecessors. Acknowledging the central role of non-verbal media in the process of recombination enables better understanding of emotional and cultural responses to communication.

Method of Inquiry

To make the discussion of recombinatory creativity more concrete, examples from hypermedia, digital music sampling, and digital photograph manipulation are presented. These instances depend on non-verbal communication for transmission of information about emotional affect, cultural values and traditions, and holistic experience. Each example is discussed in terms of how regarding it as recombinatory communication allows interpretation of these kinds of information.

Conclusions

The technologization not just of language but of all communication practices has considerable impact on artists, designers, technical communicators and all who use emerging technologies to communicate on any scale. The decisions made by a communicator in the process of creating depend on knowing the audience's expectations. Are they relatively passive or expecting active participation? How is the new communication related to already-familiar works? The prevalence of recombination as a communicative tool in electronic media requires a different understanding of the experience of the audience, especially because that audience is likely to consist of creators themselves.

Matthew Oliver  
Old Dominion University

### **Digital Rhetoric and Digital Classrooms: Transforming the Traditional Writing Scenes.**

Using technology is not enough to transform traditional notions of writers and writing; we must create technological spaces conducive to and productive of that transformation. Despite the inherent technological component, teaching composition from a distance tends to reinforce antiquated notions of writing as an individualized, isolated activity. Furthermore, interactive technological space in traditional classrooms can appear to students as a forced and artificial separation.

How do we establish productive shared technological spaces most effectively?

Stuart Selber points out in *Multiliteracies for A Digital Age*, that writing teachers need to expand our ideas of text and author, "for computer-based texts not only accommodate automatic intertextual mechanisms but also encourage writers to function as designers of spatialized literacy environments" (Selber 2004). I would add that we need to expand our ideas of the physical spaces in which we attempt to teach.

Connecting Selber's spatialized literacies to Burke's scene-agent ratio provides some idea of how these spaces can work. Burke suggests, "by the logic of the scene-agent ratio, if the scene is supernatural in quality, the agent contained by this scene will partake of the same supernatural quality."

Using two-way audio and shared interface technology to facilitate synchronous peer group activities modifies the writing scene. When writers share a digital text, we engage in a collective revision, actual cutting and pasting, a kind of revision that enables us all to see more possibilities for our texts. This process also undercuts many of our basic assumptions about text, authorship, and authority.

In a scene that destabilizes traditional ideas of authorship and textual fixity, writers synecdochically share in that instability. Conversely, students writing in fixed, traditional scenes—such as the traditional writing classroom—synecdochically share in that fixity and tradition. Mastering digital media has little to do with combining audio/visual elements with text—these tasks still occur in isolation—writers must learn to inhabit digital spaces.

Moving writing from stable, fixed scenes to unstable dynamic scenes can make writers feel as if their peers and or instructor are invading a private space. Others are drawn to these scenes precisely because it draws them out of a sense of isolation. Distance students tend to view this shared space as a connection to classmates, teachers, and their institution.

Thus, the distance itself makes the digital medium a more attractive and productive rhetorical space than it might appear to be in traditional classrooms. Establishing a classroom most conducive to providing students the tools necessary for twenty-first century writing scenes, may require re-imagining and deconstructing the traditional classroom altogether and moving toward a distance model based entirely on shared digital spaces.

Stacy Pigg  
Michigan State University

### **Check Yes or No: Ebonics, Survey Memes, and Viral Subjectivity in the New Blogosphere**

The Oakland School Board's 1996 use of the term "Ebonics" to describe the language of struggling African-American students unleashed a flurry of attention across print, television, radio, and even the fledgling Internet media. While "Ebonics" as a term, a concept, and an ideology has never enjoyed favor in the media, research conducted after the Oakland controversy showed that many personal Internet websites depicted Ebonics in ways that rejected rational debate in favor of racist and oversimplified portraits of African-American Language (AAL) and those who speak it (Ronkin and Karn, 1999; Baugh, 2000; Kirkland, Austin, & Smitherman, 2001; Rickford & Rickford, 2001).

However, the years following the so-called Ebonics controversy brought a decentralization of Internet content creation fostered by shifting Internet demographics and changing communicative media. In particular, scholars have lauded the democratizing potential of blogs for changing the shape and directionality of online discourse (Lessig, 2000; Barton, 2005). Yet the question remains: have new media like blogs opened up spaces for discourse on/in Ebonics that allow for more diverse discussions than those scholars have previously seen manifested in mainstream Internet sites?

To address this question, I investigated how bloggers at LiveJournal.com invoked the term "Ebonics" over a five-year span. After examining and coding a sample of 100 public blog postings and associated comments, I am prepared to show that members of today's "new" diary-style, socially networked blogosphere are engaging Ebonics in different ways from those noted in earlier scholarship. Specifically, bloggers repeatedly proclaim the use (or nonuse) of Ebonics by completing and posting survey memes, or viral surveys that circulate through online social networks.

Even while they ensure that Ebonics remains relevant to online writers, survey memes often act as heuristics that structure oversimplified discourse about Ebonics, encouraging bloggers to construct online identities resting on binary assumptions and categorizations. Although scholars in new literacies have suggested possibilities of web memetics for online social action (Lankshear and Knobel, 1999; Knobel, 2005), I show how viral meme rhetorics related to Ebonics rarely jumpstart dialogue about the complex politics of language diversity and instead perpetuate a labeling or "check yes or no" mentality that discourages rational debate even while ensuring that Ebonics is constantly invoked as a superficial terminology and binary identity category.

This paper contributes to ongoing discussions about the democratization of communication and rational debate in online spaces, about the intersections of race and language online, and about the construction of subjectivities in digital writing environments. My findings suggest that scholars not only should continue to challenge utopic narratives decrying the democratizing possibilities of online spaces, but also should pay closer attention to what might be negative aspects of the subjectivities developed through participation in online social networking. The repeated labeling and categorization that takes place through "check yes or no" survey memes may in its most benign moments discourage hybridity and complexity, and in its worst, may contribute to attitudes of normative whiteness and the passive acceptance of racist language online.

Karen Powell

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Representation/21<sup>st</sup> Century Assessment: The Dialogic Nature of Digital Portfolios**

### Background

Written portfolios in composition programs have historically served as uniform, organized file cabinets from which individual (or sets of) documents could be reviewed. While this type of “repository portfolio” is useful, students often have little agency in their construction, design, and organization. With the advent of electronic portfolios, many traditional assessment approaches were simply transferred from one medium to another. Consequently, other than as authors, students often have only minor roles in representing themselves as communicators in the overall design of such portfolios.

When LSU’s Communication across the Curriculum (CxC) was established in 2004, our primary goal was to develop students’ communication skills in four modes--written, oral, visual, and technological--across all disciplines. To address our need for multi-modal assessment, we designed specifications for CxC Digital Portfolios, required for students we certify as High-Level Communicators and offered to all students. Our portfolios have evolved from digital repositories of required files into websites that students build to showcase their communication skills and themselves as potential professionals. As they build portfolios, students not only learn web design and new software but also, perhaps more importantly, make crucial rhetorical decisions about self-representation (ethos) and evidence. In this decision-making process, students wrestle with audience, navigation, and design.

### Central Themes

Our research tells a story about dialogue and compromise, tensions between the ideal and the practical, and new ways to imagine rhetoric and assessment:

- How do 21<sup>st</sup>-century students want to represent themselves as professionals?
- What do students learn while building a digital portfolio?
- What data satisfy institutional assessment needs?
- How can we teach students communication and technology skills for their portfolios—inside classrooms and in Communication Studios we are building?
- In an “always obsolete” world, which environments and technologies are needed to provide 21<sup>st</sup>-century preparation in communication?

### Methods of Approach

We use quantitative, qualitative, and ethnographic approaches to capture the range of assessment practices and student achievement before, during, and after the experience of building portfolios. We report quantitative findings on pre-/ post-technology skills; qualitative findings from cross-genre rubrics as well as the overall portfolio; and observations of student decision-making. We consider the balance between assessment and technology in terms of what is desired (the ideal) and what can be accomplished (the practical). We report our own (and our students’) second-guessing about platforms and environments--from our “secured” servers using open-source programming; to canned, commercially available e-portfolio programs; and even MySpace. Case studies of students and faculty provide a deep, contextual record of our work.

### Conclusions

Our three-year history of CxC’s Digital Portfolios is a positive story of dialogue and vision, tempered by compromise. We have responded to student needs and desires while meeting the need for institutional assessment.

Jeff Pruchnic  
Wayne State University

## **On the Genealogy of Mortals: Rhetoric, Biotechnologies of the Self, and the Ethics of Immortality**

### Background/Context

This presentation addresses the growing interest (in both scientific and populist domains) in the prospect of “material immortality” – the possibility that humans might live “forever” in material form through advances in biotechnology (e.g., organ transplantation, cryonics, cloning, nanomedicine, and the possible “uploading” of human consciousness into informatic or machinic realms). Although the promise of an immortal soul or eternal life beyond physical existence has historically been a driving force in ethics and politics, it is only in the past several decades that the potential for material immortality has attracted billions of dollars in venture capital for biotech firms and the attention of hundreds of thousands of individuals associated with such collectives as the Immortality Institute, the World Transhumanist Association, and the Alcor Life Extension Foundation. My presentation foregrounds the rhetorical potentials of such an interest in relation to contemporary controversies over ethics and ethical praxis.

More specifically, this talk first considers the “primal scene” of conflicts and connections between rhetoric, technology, and immortality in early Greek thought and the origins of Western rhetoric and philosophy (particularly the Platonic dialogues Gorgias and Protagoras as well as ancient Greek law). I then read contemporary considerations of material immortality in both technoscience and popular media as in many ways a return to these earlier tensions. Drawing on Foucault’s concept of “technologies of the self” — rhetorical practices in ancient Greek thought and early Christianity through which dedication self-improvement or self-mastery can lead to an ethical concern for others — I argue for a consideration of “biotechnologies of the self” that similarly might help us think through ethical action that need not rely on transcendent principles or normative obligations.

### Central Theme

My primary theme is that the pursuit of material immortality demonstrates a rhetorical strategy particularly appropriate for contemporary ethics. On the one hand, such a pursuit shares many vectors with the messianic ethos of both theological treatments of eternal life and a contemporary trend in American politics toward deferring questions of today due to an investment in the “promises” of tomorrow (such as the belief that technological advancements will outpace the potential catastrophes promised by oil depletion or global warming). However, on the other hand, such a pursuit can also model a rhetorical strategy for encouraging an ethical concern for other individuals based not on altruism but a certain “selfish” personal investment in the future of the planet and the populace.

### Method of Approach/Inquiry

This talk proceeds first through a cultural/historical reading of the conflicts between theories of technology, rhetoric, and immortality in the origins of Western rhetoric and philosophy. It then assays their possible applications to our responses to current developments in biotechnology and contemporary controversies over the nature of ethics and rhetoric.

### Conclusions

My conclusions argue for a understanding of the relationship between rhetoric and (bio)technology that not only considers the applications of the latter (technology) in the future but the need for rethinking strategies of the former (rhetoric) for the ecological, political, and ethical crises of today.

Jon P. Radwan  
Seton Hall University

### **Addressing the Rhetorical Issues of Virtual Decision-Making**

#### Background

Theorists and practitioners seem to agree that virtual decision-making environments are unsuitable for the resolution of conflict. Nevertheless, contemporary organizations oblige their members to make decisions and resolve conflicts in asynchronous and geographically dispersed groups.

#### Central Theme

Western discussion procedures can be traced to methods for insuring that armed knights would lay down their arms long enough to reach a truce. In contrast, the goal of creating order in an online environment is not to reduce the threat of violence, but to insure that sufficient participation results in forward progress toward a communal goal. Virtual communities are characterized by weak tie relationships rather than shared geography. Physical violence is impossible, and the challenge is to maintain interest and participation among individuals who can easily shift their attention to another activity. Asynchrony weakens the need for making decisions; the lack of discernable meeting duration offers no limiting structure. Further, membership is tenuous. People in online spaces are much more conscious of their individual identities and less conscious of group membership in a community they can't physically see.

#### Approach

Virtual communities must solve a different set of rhetorical problems than one bounded by geography and shared resources. Any rhetorical culture must concern itself with discourse practices and communication technology. Every group will have explicit rules as well as unstated norms that govern how communication is to be used to make decisions and justify collected action. In the move from collocated to virtual groups, the aim of effective decision-rules remains the same: they must bring order to the interaction, structure information for effective decision-making, and facilitate the group's business effective discourse.

A comparison of the rhetorical requirements in collocated and virtual decision-making groups suggests that more success can be gained by acknowledging face-to-face presumptions of common geography, limited information and shared membership and developing virtual discursive practices that foster inclusion, discursive structure, and reciprocity.

#### Conclusions

The analysis of the contextual needs suggests that effective virtual decision-making is best served with rules that are quite unlike the agonistic model of parliamentary law. Instead, invitational modes of egalitarian dialogue and communication technology that fosters community will be found most useful in for facilitating virtual decision-making processes in diverse, dispersed groups.

Jesse L. Rauch  
Mincom

### **Addressing the Rhetorical Issues of Virtual Decision-Making**

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Julia Romberger  
Old Dominion University

### ***Memoria, Interface Design, and the Trope of the Theater***

Discussion on WPA-L from mid-February of this year makes it clear that the inquiry into rhetoric of writing technology design is still relevant. Selfe and Selfe's "Politics of the Interface"(1994), made an early examination into some of the rhetorically determined aspects of the Macintosh. Yet a decade later, Microsoft imposes a standard literacy that goes largely unexplored even while we rail against it. The rhetorical design of writing technologies help users determine what they can and cannot do with the technology and can create boundaries through expectations of particular previous experiences and roles. In an effort to develop rhetorical means of examining interfaces and by taking a cue from Classical and Renaissance texts, this presentation uses the trope of the theater to examine the articulations of the canon of *memoria*. The trope of the theatre as a means of artificial memory has precedence in the Renaissance memory theatre of Guilio Camillo and Robert Fludd. Camillo's theory was materialized in an object that essentially functioned as a device to stimulate recall through the use of metaphors inscribed upon gates each of which contained particular speeches based upon Cicero (Yates, 1966). Fludd's work focused on the importance of real spaces for their familiarity.

Brenda Laurel in *Computers as Theatre* (1993) used Aristotelian theories of theatre as her central trope for understanding user interaction with a graphical user interface (GUI). The advantage to the theater trope over the common house metaphor used to discuss the canon of memory is that the stage is more overtly interactive and users can be designated as actors with all that implies. As most interfaces are currently configured, the toolbars, menus, and palettes are intended as a series of associations that work upon the memory of the user to facilitate composition. However, in an ideal interface, the user can both create and utilize the space as a place of memory, if given access, to shape the usage of metaphor and the spatiality of the interface. The house cannot work with you to create memory, but the other actors on the stage and the space of the set can.

To demonstrate how the canon of memory can be applied as part of a rhetorical examination of the interface, Microsoft Word 2003 and 2007 will be analyzed utilizing the theater trope. For example, icons that are meant to provide metaphorical resonance with real world experiences for the users can be problematic if they have never fulfilled the roles that the metaphors are drawn upon additionally, the spatial arrangement of information in the layout of the interface changes dramatically. As icons and terminology are meant to serve as mnemonic devices for the user, the shifting the placement of these within the frame of the interface and taking away certain cues can disrupt the memory that users have built over time.

Better understanding of the rhetorically determined nature of the interface can assist us to teach students how to best utilize, critique, and advocate for more rhetorically sound GUI design.

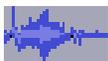
Michael J. Salvo  
Purdue

### Editing Sound as Text: Waveform Alphabet as Rhetorical Technology

While using Audacity to clean up a recorded lecture, I realized that I was visually manipulating sound files. Okay, that sentence doesn't sound as fantastically moving as the realization that inspired it.

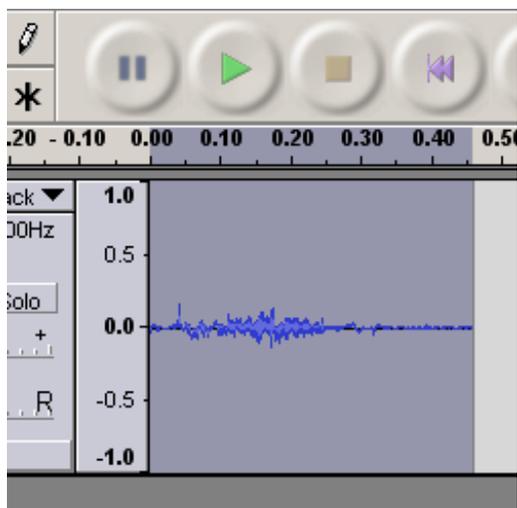
I was editing visual sound-wave form representations of speech in Audacity. I realized that I had stopped *listening* to the sound files, and was *visually* removing speech stammers -- all the "um," "uh," "oh," "er," and pauses that had become visually distinguishable from words and other sounds, sounds that I wanted to save as *content*. I was, techno-visually, playing with sound and editing text, actually, editing speech. Later in the day, I was able to clean up the tense inconsistencies by recognizing the addition of "ess" or S.

Audacity is but one example of a



class of sound-manipulation tools, Garageband among them, that create a visual representation of the sound waveform to aid in sound editing. Visually representing this sonic waveform adds another in a series of symbols for the spoken word, another layer of the technologized word. Ong might be excited, might be puzzled, but certainly would be *interested* in this new waveform alphabet that Audacity and Garageband use to enable the further symbolization of the word, offering a new waveform alphabet for the manipulation of speech, a new alphabet alongside ancient symbol systems. From one phoneme emerges a tale of secondary orality, a further site of the technologization of the word, and an alphabetic system supporting multimodal composing. This is a post-textual literate symbol system.

This presentation will introduce Audacity as a site for the development of this waveform alphabet, as an example of the further technologization of the word, as we move towards multimodal, post-textual literacy, where rhetoric and technology are acknowledged as inseparable—as we have known them to be all along.



Brandy Scalise  
Pennsylvania State University

### **Giving Voice: Computer-mediated Voices and Assistive Technology**

Long before the development of the cochlear implant, members of the Deaf community debated the appropriateness of various media of communication. Should individuals with hearing impairments be taught to sign, sustaining the Deaf as a distinct community? Or should they be taught to read lips and speak English, encouraging their assimilation into mainstream society? Recently, the debate over cochlear implants has both renewed this controversy and reified it as an issue of identity.

However, besides the cochlear implant, assistive technologies for people with disabilities have rarely aroused much controversy. Instead, the debate in technology studies over merging technology and the body has focused on visions (and realities) of the cyborg. Rather than "assistive," the technology of the cyborg is enhancing, making an individual more or less than human. Will enhancement technologies make us all we can be, or will they cause us to lose control?

While seemingly similar to enhancement technologies, assistive technologies raise a quite different set of questions, making their relative absence in technology studies scholarship problematic. Current work in disabilities studies encourages us to view disability not as a contingency but as a unique epistemic location, a distinct worldview. Therefore, the central issue with respect to assistive technology becomes whether it will act as a normalizing factor or preserve this worldview. Will assistive technology make us all we can be, or will it make us different from who we are?

The debate over cochlear implants has indeed been expressed in these terms – as a question of identity. Yet motorized wheelchairs, readers, and other assistive technologies have not inspired such consideration or controversy, as scholars and users generally view them as tools. Therefore, I want to expand this view by looking at computer-mediated voices as an assistive communications technology.

Computer-mediated voices might raise many of the same concerns as cochlear implants. Some individuals, like Stephen Hawking, lose their ability to communicate verbally after years of speaking in English, but many others with a physical disability say their first words in Bliss symbols or a similar language. A person who communicates in Bliss symbols, like a person with a hearing impairment, undoubtedly has a unique way of experiencing the world. So if an individual with a physical disability adopts a computer-mediated voice, why does their choice arouse minimal controversy? Why don't these voices raise the same questions of identity as cochlear implants?

Using work in both technology and disability studies, my paper will attempt to articulate our assumptions about computer-mediated voices – assumptions which have led to our view of these voices as an innocuous technology. I will argue that we approach computer-mediated voices as a neutral medium of expression, rather than a socially and politically situated interface. Moreover, uncritical approaches to assistive technology have only reinforced this supposed neutrality. Ultimately, I will call for a more fully developed understanding of assistive communication technologies and how they shape and support the identity – the voice – of those who use them.

D. Michael Sharp  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Jon Bidwell  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

### **Invitational Rhetoric and a New Interface for Procedural Instructions**

#### Background or Context

In light of Ong's teaching that language and text are forms of technology, we believe that the technological contexts and mediation used in information design or technical communication overdetermines mediation and removes agency from the users as well as the technical communicators. Arguably, rhetoric informs technical communication, certainly in regards to writing style and textual consistency, such that the technical communicator as rhetor tends to be viewed as "correct." Little interaction or agency is allowed to the readers.

Additionally, today, images in technical communication are usually carefully *pre-prepared* 45-degree angled images. Most technical communicators don't create the images they use, so they probably don't think about the value of the information and agency conveyed by the images.

#### Central Theme

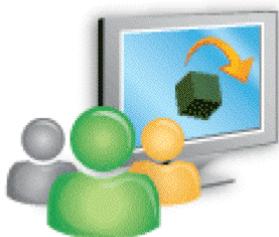
With regard, then, to how information designers or technical communicators present images in printed or online procedural instruction for users to identify and use the graphical information *to do* something, can an interactive, graphical mediation be a useful tool for rhetorical performance? Might there be benefits to giving users agency in how graphical information is presented?

Additionally, are there preferred or canonical viewpoints for performance? Is there a canonical view in which to present graphical information that generalizes to a majority of users, or might users prefer graphical views on an individual basis? Is there any value to giving more agency to the users (performers of a task)?

#### Method of Approach or Inquiry

This paper describes the collection of data from observing a new mediation method for procedural information. The mediation is accomplished with experimental software designed by the researcher, called *SphereView*<sup>®</sup> that allows users to experience *embodied interaction* (Dourish, 2001). We follow a protocol informed by:

- Horst Rittel's concepts of *wicked problem solving* (1967),
- Suchman's situated action (1987), and
- Foss's *invitational rhetoric* (2002) to observe individual users performing purposeful action, *in situ*.



Examined will be the user effects of delivering information via a human-computer interaction (HCI) with interactive, 3D images, as the users follow that information during an assembly task. The data from this research may reveal new insights into users' exploratory behavior, when they are presented with interactive, 3D graphical instructions, as a tool. Data about user image angle preferences may help re-inform 2D presentation of information. Visual data may inform us about the users' experience of reading *to do* something.

#### Conclusions

The authors will present data to show how user preferences for image angles may help re-inform 2D presentation of information. They will also discuss how their visual data collection may inform about the users' experience when reading *to do* something. Among other dependent measures, time to build and accuracy rates will be compared. The data from this research may reveal new insights into users' exploratory behavior, when they are presented with interactive, 3D graphical instructions, as a new tool.

Charles Sheaffer  
University of Washington

### **The Democratic Source-Code: Ulmer's 'Heuretics' and the Civic Promulgation of Expertise**

#### Background

My paper explores democratic ethos as a site of tension between the technical writing curriculum and the civic, academic, and commercial domains across which technical expertise promulgates. Commentators note the coalescence of discrete bodies of research around key terms accessible only through a contortion of adjacent streams of reasoning. At the same time, however, the technical writing curriculum continues to ground itself upon a premise of linguistic transparency (a perpetuation of Enlightenment universalism which assumes the ultimate resolvability of fundamental questions through recourse to an overarching objectivity).

While a growing body of research explores the epistemological limits of our literate educational apparatus in the face of the academy's digital-age contexts, my work on democratic ethos addresses the *intrinsic* margin between literacy and its curricular codifications (a margin which I hold to have imbued the production of institutional discourse from the beginning, despite this margin's accelerating growth under the auspices of globalization). More specifically, my paper explores the application of Gregory Ulmer's principle of conduction to the utilization of established technical formats. Ulmer defines "conductive" logic as the repetition of signifying material across otherwise contexts, an augmentation of inductive and deductive methodologies which Ulmer derives from the domains of art, advertising, and comic affect and which he has developed, in turn, through an array of experimental genres. Yet my application issues by way of caveat: In applying conduction to the conception of present-day technical writing, I challenge Ulmer's commitment to a literate aftermath (a commitment which risks retention of the teleological epistemology which subtends the literate apparatus). Given this impasse, my interest lies with the conceptualization of "proto-digital" potentialities endemic to the civic community since its early-modern inception.

#### Central Theme

My paper considers comic affect as the present-day index of an obfuscated democratic ethos. Comic interchange and democratic intervention share an "aberrant" temporal architecture, an invocation of contexts in the here-and-now as the revelatory settings of foundational disturbances. Issuing from this temporal homology, my paper demonstrates the potential application of this proto-democratic structure to the formulation of civic and technical issues.

#### Method of Inquiry

Drawing on Freud's delineations of the joke-work as well as Jacques Ranciere's formulations of the democratic "non-part," I establish the aforementioned homology. Oscillating between my experiences as a policy writer with the U.S. Department of the Interior and as a lecturer in technical communication in a college of engineering, I then focus on the function of the organizational mission statement as a tertiary arbiter forcing the precipitation of technical insight through the incursive repetition of extraneous civic values. In turn, I link the mission statement's curricular invisibility to the retention of a false opposition between vocational aptitude and political acumen.

#### Conclusions

Citing the development of a management plan for a key tract of federally designated wilderness, and invoking, in turn, the written input of my undergraduate engineering students, my paper demonstrates the utility of the democratic ethos as a "source-code" which *depends* upon its implicit differences from the coordinates comprising its literate codification.

Jessica Sheffield  
The Pennsylvania State University

### **Mediating Nature: Technological Interactions with America's National Parks**

In 1872, an act of Congress declared Yellowstone to be America's first national park. The first tourists arrived in the park by train, toured by stagecoach, and left with vivid written descriptions, drawings, and the occasional photo to share with people back home. In the intervening 135 years, as the landscape of America's national park system has dramatically expanded, so too have our ways of experiencing the parks. Park tourists now read about the parks on the National Park Service website, watch webcam views of Old Faithful, make campground reservations online, and plan their routes on downloadable maps—all before even packing the car. They take thousands of digital photos and blog about their trips. They share their park stories with other enthusiasts in online message boards. In short, technology—which has always been a mediating influence on national park tourism—has become inextricably intertwined with this “natural” experience.

This paper examines technological interactions with America's national parks, focusing specifically on technological artifacts as mediators of experience. I first look at the ways in which technology helps form preconceptions of the parks. In this section, I examine the National Park Service's (NPS) website and the planning practices it engenders. By presenting a romanticized vision of the parks as oases of natural beauty, park websites encourage visitors to plan trips which focus on an authentic experience with nature. The rhetorical experience of visiting a national park, according to the rhetoric of the NPS, is about a shared experience as a park tourist in a quintessentially American place. Yet it is also about escaping the “real” America—bustling cities, traffic, crime, and the like—in search of a sublime experience with a world that is wild and free.

In the next section I investigate the practice that most park visitors share: automobile touring. I examine how this experience influences park visitors' perceptions of the natural landscapes the parks preserve. I argue that particular technological artifacts—park roads and the cars that traverse them, as well as the maps and cell phone driving tours that aid in navigation—serve to frame our perception of the parks, casting them as landscapes to be viewed, rather than lands to be experienced.

Finally, I explore the ways park visitors share their experiences with others through online photo galleries and weblogs. Asked to “take only photographs and leave only footprints,” national park visitors also take away an individualized version of a shared, defined memory. The NPS' motto, “Experience Your America,” suggests that park tourism is part of the American experience. Sharing memories online then becomes an act of public citizenship.

The essay concludes with an examination of the intersections of technology, rhetorical experience, and nature. At issue are two apparent contradictions: first, between the “natural” state of the parks and our technological impositions on them, and second, between the desire to “get away” from technology and the technological interventions which are necessary for that to happen. Through my analysis, I hope to offer some insight into how national parks—quintessentially American landscapes—are mediated and remediated through technology.

Michelle Sidler  
Auburn University

### **Visual Rhetorics at the Nanoscale: Understanding and Critiquing the Unseen World of Nanotechnology**

#### Background

Nanotechnology, the science of near-molecular level engineering, is often touted as the next great wave in technological development. The National Nanotechnology Initiative is a government-sponsored “big science” program, much like the Manhattan Project and the Human Genome Project, whose goal is to push forward our research and development of structures whose size is one-billionth of a meter, or  $10^{-9}$  meters. However, this technology involves a world unavailable to the naked eye; in fact, it requires computer-assisted microscopes that digitize and simulate the surface of nanoscale structures. A major challenge for researchers and educators has been the representation of nanoscale structures: how to create visuals that allow us to comprehend the minute, esoteric shape and function of nanoparticles.

Representing nanotechnology has also been a challenge for organizations who critique and resist this scientific research. Non-government organizations such as the Nanoethics Group and the ETC Group who believe that nanotechnology will bring significant health and environmental risks have called for a moratorium on nanoscale research, arguing that nanoscale particles are so small, they can penetrate conventional safety guards such as safety masks and laboratory gloves. In an effort to call attention to the potential hazards of nanotechnology, ETC Group sponsored a contest to create a Nano-Hazard symbol like the symbols representing nuclear waste, biohazard materials, toxic chemicals, and other hazards. This campaign has taken place largely online through their website, enlisting the promotional help of several other NGOs and their websites while collecting all entries through an online gallery. Although largely considered a promotional campaign for the anti-nanotechnology causes of the ETC Group and an illegitimate attempt to actually establish an official nano-hazard symbol, the contest became well known within both the conservationist movement and the scientific community, even garnering a mention in the journal *Nature*.

#### Inquiry

My presentation will overview the digital context in which such a campaign could begin, the technologies used to publicize it, and the graphic design capabilities necessary to create and enter a submission to the contest. These technological elements point to the contradictory—and often effective—tactics of conservationist, reactionary groups who goal is to reign in the persistent march of technology while at the same time, exploiting 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies toward their cause.

#### Method

My presentation will approach this situation as a rhetoric of science case study, a contemporary example of rhetorics that employ one form of technology to critique another, like Plato’s arguments against writing and Thoreau’s arguments against the telegraph.

#### Conclusions

The ETC Group’s media savviness illustrates the political and scientific importance of visual rhetoric in a time when new scientific knowledge is so esoteric and removed from human experience, it is nearly incomprehensible. Affirming Roland Barthes’ analysis of cultural imagery, the case demonstrates the pathetic power of images to invoke fear and action among the electorate, even when faced with a technology whose basic principles and potential human effects are still largely unknown.

Elizabeth H. Smith  
Bronx Community College (CUNY)

**Using Technology to Negotiate Freedom, Oppression and Identity in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Siddiq Barmak's *Osama***

In the second semester freshman composition course I teach, Khaled Hosseini's novel *The Kite Runner* and Siddiq Barmak's Golden-Globe Award winning film *Osama* provide a foundation from which students explore the issues these texts raise: freedom and oppression, parent-child relationships, childhood friendships, power, religion, emigration, suffering. The two texts take specific rhetorical stands with regard to, among other issues, the situated identities of children in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime in the 1990s. In my presentation, I will investigate how technology intersects with some of these central issues and themes. In particular, I will discuss how I prepare students to ground their research papers and portfolios using an Information Literacy Exercise. This exercise is a crucial component of our work because it ensures students have the necessary research tools to successfully complete a variety of assignments, including their research papers and portfolios. Led by a college librarian in our Learning Center, students learn to find, retrieve, analyze and use Internet information; in particular, they learn to access Internet sites that provide useful information. These documents include maps of the regions; critical reviews of *The Kite Runner* and *Osama*, an Internet site that shows students how to cite sources in MLA style; a *New York Times* article on an issue related to *The Kite Runner* or *Osama*; digital photographs of Afghanistan; and biographical data on the authors we are engaging in the course: Hosseini and Barmak as well as authors Nafisi, Rushdie, and Seierstad.

Pedagogically, this activity provides students with a context to gather materials related to their research papers and portfolios, to work independently within the perimeters of the course, to learn more about databases our college provides them (eg. the world beyond Google), and to examine digital photographs of Afghanistan's people and landscapes. The pedagogical directions and priorities of the Information Literacy Exercise raise myriad questions not only about the historical, political, cultural, institutional and economic forces that direct the lives of individual Afghan families, but also, for many students, it brings this faraway land and people into our classroom and our lives. Students are often captive to the stories told in the novel and film and are engaged by the supplementary texts that talk back to the central texts. Ultimately, students use the technology to probe more deeply into the issues raised by the material they are reading. As a teacher, the technology has shifted the ways I teach as well as the ways my students learn because technology, and the Internet in particular, makes accessing information immediate, more possible. I will explore some of the ways technology intersects and influences students' perceptions of the realities portrayed in the texts we study and will showcase some of the students' research portfolios. I will also address some of the tensions I experience as a teacher with her own subjective, situated perspectives on these issue.

\*Our panel explores multifarious uses of technology in a variety of English classrooms, from developmental and composition classes through upper level college literature classes, in an urban college setting. Panel presenters will address topics related to teaching with technology using a variety of approaches: Blackboard, Toolkit, the O.E.D. On-Line, and scholarly web sites.

Madeleine Sorapure  
University of California at Santa Barbara

### **Visualizing Information in Multimedia Compositions**

#### Background

Andrew Vande Moere's weblog, "Information Aesthetics" (<http://infosthetics.com>), lists hundreds of projects in what he describes as an evolving field of "creative information visualization." He writes that as "information access enters the everyday life of users and becomes increasingly ubiquitous and pervasive, novel approaches are required that take into account considerations of user engagement and visual aesthetics." Some of these novel approaches incorporate multiple media and interactive elements to supplement the text/image combinations we typically see in visualizations such as maps and diagrams. Indeed, artists and authors working in new media are increasingly creating projects aimed at helping users grasp patterns, relationships, and ultimately meaning in the information that inundates us.

Compositionists interested in the graphical representation of information can draw on research in visual rhetoric and technical communication to provide students with theoretical background and guidelines. New media researchers and teachers can contribute to the development of our students' skills at graphically representing information by devising strategies and assignments that ask students to produce information visualizations that are interactive and multimodal.

#### Central Theme

My primary focus is on understanding how to effectively incorporating information visualization into composition courses, and particularly into new media courses. I'm interested not only in teaching students to read and understand visualized information but also in asking students to produce these kinds of compositions. How we can teach students to apply their knowledge and skills to create engaging, meaningful, and dynamic representations of information?

#### Method of Approach

My presentation is structured around examples of new media works by students and professionals. In these works, the primary interface and/or goal is a visualization of information; it might be in the form of a geographic or conceptual map, or a diagram or graph that incorporates text and images. These works also include interactive and multimedia elements in order to enhance the communication of information.

#### Conclusions

Recent works in information aesthetics make a strong argument for having our students produce new media that is dynamic, engaging, and multimodal. Importantly, the visualization of information opens an exciting avenue for combining creative and technological literacies.

Karen Springsteen  
Michigan Technological University

### **Rhetorical Analysis of Visual Texts in Sound: Practices, Problems, Production**

#### Context

Having recognized the problematic tendency to make writing a default or naturalized way of demonstrating competence in school, scholars in rhetoric and composition have emphasized the importance of multimodality in creating classes that are more inclusive and responsive to literacy practices of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Scholars have argued that visual representation should no longer be considered subservient to writing, and that the role of sound in composition should not be ignored (George 1996; Wysocki 2003; Rice 2006; Shankar 2006). As the scholarly trend toward multimodality gathers force, there is a need to implement what we learn about modalities in pedagogically sound ways. Practical advice is needed about how to successfully integrate varied modes of communication into different classes, with different kinds of students, and to diverse purposes.

#### Central Theme

In response to this need, my presentation will focus on the challenges and possibilities created by having students use the sound-editing program Audacity to produce rhetorical analyses of visual texts. In an upcoming Visual Media Analysis course, students will be asked to create audio compositions in which they analyze historically important or controversial images. Students will be expected to use the theoretical vocabulary of the course to explain their ideas, test out the theories with interviewees, paying explicit attention to deep features of history, context and rhetoric.

This kind of activity is not necessarily all that different from what students do when they write, so we need not completely divorce sound from writing. However, this assignment provides ways for students to both replicate and complicate the form of analysis that most often accompanies images in real life: speech. My assumption is that while images and other kinds of visual media permeate our lives and are subject to constant analysis, more of that analysis happens in spoken dialogue than in academic writing. Therefore an audio analysis, particularly one in which students interview others about images, can capture the spoken language of analysis that surrounds visual media. The benefit of this may be twofold. By creating audio-only analyses of visual media, students may be forced to articulate dimensions of images that often appear so readily visible they are left unsaid. In the process, students may develop more sophisticated uses of pervasive and familiar oral/aural modes.

While the fruitfulness of modal interplay in this assignment may point toward the pedagogical value of multimodality, many questions remain yet to be answered. What kinds of opportunities will this assignment afford in practice? What kinds of problems will arise? How will students respond? How does this work compare to the work of writing? What does it require of me as a teacher? What kinds of support are needed to incorporate the modality of sound into a visual media class? Why bother?

#### Method of Inquiry & Conclusions

I will use qualitative case study research methods to generate conclusions about the following issues:

- ▶ student response
- ▶ collaboration with support staff
- ▶ assumptions about the teacher's and students' roles
- ▶ effectiveness of assignment design
- ▶ necessary revisions and future work

Dmitri Stanchevici  
Texas Tech University

### **Technicism of Stalinist Science: Rhetoric of Technical Omnipotence in the Writings and Speeches of Agrobiologist T.D. Lysenko**

This paper focuses on the scientific and political rhetoric of T.D. Lysenko, founder of Lysenkoism, an agrobiological movement in the Soviet Union of Stalin's time. Despite its crude scientific methods and flawed theorizing, Lysenkoism greatly influenced Soviet biology. It has been described as the greatest scandal in twentieth-century science because it led to an official ban on Soviet classical genetics. Commentators of Lysenkoism argue that it prevailed over classical genetics not due to superior scientific results, but due to shameless use of political and ideological leverage. The polemical struggle for dominating Soviet biology between Lysenkoists and classical geneticists reveals the significance of technology in shaping Soviet ideology and politics.

This paper argues that Lysenko's victory over genetics was due to his ability to provide a scientific justification for what philosopher Dominique Lecourt calls Stalinist technicism. Resulting from a deterministic interpretation of Marx's theory of technology, Stalinist technicism was a belief in the absolute power of method (or technology) to shape both nature and man. For example, Stalin's collectivization of peasants (depriving peasants of their land and uniting them into collective farms) was not only to introduce scientific method and modern equipment into Soviet agriculture, but also turn Russian peasants into ideological allies of the Soviet regime. Thus, technical revolution was to produce an ideological revolution. When collectivization proved an economic failure, Stalinists did not consider it their mistake in evaluating social and political relationships of the peasantry with the state, but rather a technological malfunction. In their conception, technology, if chosen and applied correctly, was capable of overpowering natural, social, and economic forces.

Lysenko's science supported this conception. A rhetorical analysis of Lysenko's theoretical writings and polemical speeches reveals that they, if indeed based on crude theorizing and wishful thinking, consistently argued for man's technological omnipotence to transform nature. This argument is obvious in Lysenko's rejection of the genetic concept of chance mutations in organisms: chance implies unknowability and therefore freedom from technological control. Yet Lysenko's argument for the omnipotence of technology also operates through subtler rhetorical moves, subordinating his scientific discourse to the logic of the dominant political ideology. To uncover these moves, I use critical tools developed by Kenneth Burke, especially constitutional dialectic and pentadic analysis.

This study is valuable because the historical context on which it focuses demonstrates that political, economic, ideological, and intellectual forces determine and are determined by technology. The rise of Lysenkoism coincided with the drastic move to (technical) modernization in the Soviet Union. The popular slogan of the time, "We cannot wait for favors from Nature; we must wrest them from her," illustrates Heidegger's view of modern technology as "challenging" nature. Similarly in the vein of Heidegger's conception, Stalinist technicism turned humans into a "standing reserve" on call for the technological modernization. Lysenko's rhetoric, in turn, gave this process a scientific legitimation because it discursively constituted man as a master of nature, but also as a tool.

Mary Elizabeth Sullivan  
Kent State University

### **Embodied Knowledge and the Virtual Body: Operating on the Cartesian Split**

Multimodality has been theorized as a way of actively engaging learners in literate activities of the classroom and workplace (Gee; Takayoshi, Hawisher, and Selfe), and of illuminating our current methods of composing (Wysocki et al). In internationally networked digital environments, texts must be able to carry meaning across geo-political, linguistic, and cultural borders. Similarly, ways of representing texts, ideas, and bodies (Bordo; Haraway; Hawisher and Sullivan; Hayles) have been opened up, and show new opportunities for objectifying and signifying bodies. Yet, as scholars have begun to research and theorize modes of communication, some scholarship has considered the role of the body in composing (Emig, Haas, Perl), but none has considered the role of the potential audience's body in composing and representing.

As a panel, we argue that research and engagement that considers the lived experience of composers *and* audiences is an important basis for our profession, as it helps to clarify the relationship between mind and body. Building on the relationship between cognition and our bodies, this project examines how our representational practices may reinforce the Cartesian split and the implications for such a division in Composition Studies and technological change.

#### **Speaker #2: Lessons from a Dis/Embodied Cyber-Patient: A Feminist Posthuman Approach to Research**

Despite the centrality of studying the body in its material, postmodern and performative forms, and the insistence that the body matters in knowledge production, the role the body plays in knowledge making is often ignored. I consider representations of the contemporary body by not only critiquing how the posthuman, physical body may appear, but by also examining the deliberate, rhetorical design involved in representing a female "cyber-patient" found in an online "Interactive Bionics Tour." I conclude by offering a "feminist posthuman" approach as a research method for studying embodiment, multimodality and technology, and consider the impact of embodied knowledge on multimodal communication.

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Christa Teston  
Kent State University

### **Embodied Knowledge and the Virtual Body: Operating on the Cartesian Split**

Multimodality has been theorized as a way of actively engaging learners in literate activities of the classroom and workplace (Gee; Takayoshi, Hawisher, and Selfe), and of illuminating our current methods of composing (Wysocki et al). In internationally networked digital environments, texts must be able to carry meaning across geo-political, linguistic, and cultural borders. Similarly, ways of representing texts, ideas, and bodies (Bordo; Haraway; Hawisher and Sullivan; Hayles) have been opened up, and show new opportunities for objectifying and signifying bodies. Yet, as scholars have begun to research and theorize modes of communication, some scholarship has considered the role of the body in composing (Emig, Haas, Perl), but none has considered the role of the potential audience's body in composing and representing.

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#### **Speaker #3: Paper-Patients: Embodiment in the Patient Profile**

I propose a wholistic, integrated view of the body, and its role in knowledge making when considering a patient's outcomes. I argue that only when all material, medical and theoretical perspectives are taken into account, can knowledge about the patient, her care and bodily repair be understood. I suggest that in their fractured, partial perspectives, data is only information until all perspectives are integrated into a more dynamic and encompassing patient profile. Examining the role embodied knowledge plays in understanding how people—patients, practitioners, audiences—use technology as tools ultimately provides a way for scholars in rhetoric and technology to think about the possibilities multimodality presents for expanding the nature of composition and understanding the role of text in the contemporary world.

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Heather Urbanski  
Lehigh University

### **Blurred Borders: The Thin Rhetorical Line Between Audience and Text in Participatory Entertainment**

With the recent explosion of participatory digital media, rhetorical reality is quickly catching up with rhetorical theory. The idea of audience participation in texts is at least as old as Aristotle; now that theory is made manifest by digital media. We have long accepted a rhetorical view of reading as a transaction in which we re-create, or even re-write, a text each time we read it, but today's "Digital Generation" students take that theory to an entirely new level, often actually creating the narratives as they experience them. While the impact of music downloading on contemporary views of intellectual property is well-documented, the Internet and other digital media offer a related realm that is just as rhetorically powerful: participatory entertainment. Under this rubric, we see such active digital engagement with popular culture as fan fiction, Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs), and even Fantasy Football. As Jane Espenson, formerly a writer on *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, suggested at the 2006 World Science Fiction Convention, "there is a thin line between fan and pro" when it comes to Internet fandom, reflecting this rhetorical blurring between receiver and sender.

Today's digital technology allows an unprecedented variety of participatory entertainment to flourish, calling into question the traditional Rhetorical Triangle that separates sender, receiver, and message. Key to my argument is a typology of the Digital Generation, a description of the five main types of participation in popular entertainment, at the intersection of fandom, rhetoric, and technology where we find a growing cultural insistence on participatory entertainment as fans of all kinds demand to be actively involved. Of course, not all members of the Digital Generation have had the same experiences. Based on the cultural factors I discuss in this paper, however, we are likely to see one or more of the following types among our students: 1) The TV Fan; 2) The Sports Fan; 3) The Gamer; 4) The Filmmaker; and 5) The Chronicler.

Even when we aren't directly appropriating characters for our own online fiction, today's fans are not content to simply spend an hour in front of the television, receiving the writers' storylines, nor are we content to be passive spectators on Sundays, or even merely readers of the Sports Section. Instead, we blog, post on discussion forums, and run sophisticated Fantasy Football leagues, effectively blurring the boundaries between fan and writer/professional. This increasing desire to actively participate in our entertainment has significant rhetorical implications inextricably linked with the technology that makes it possible, implications that need to be considered by, among other institutions, First-Year Composition programs. Thus, my paper ends with a preliminary discussion of the impact of that blurring of rhetorical theory in the First-Year Composition classroom from pedagogical, theoretical, and cultural perspectives.

Dr. Kim van Alkemade  
Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania

### **Resisting the Digital Archive: The Challenge of Technology in Establishing the Ethos of the Creative Nonfiction Writer**

In creative nonfiction, primary research is an essential aspect of the genre, marking it as “true” despite its novelistic structure and recreated scenes. Conducting primary archival research indicates the dedication of the writer to the truth of the subject matter. But what happens to the ethos of the nonfiction writer when historical archives become digitized and widely available online?

In my paper, I address the central question of how people are currently working with technologies of production and reception by considering the implications for creative nonfiction. In a genre lately under attack for misrepresenting the truth, research is a defense against accusations of exaggeration and fabrication. But the conversion of primary historical archives to digitized, searchable online databases is changing the nature of research. For writers of creative nonfiction, the research narrative, a story in which the writer travels to obscure locations to sift through dusty documents, is a persuasive argument supporting the ethos of the writer and the veracity of the nonfiction work. Without this narrative, research loses its emotional appeal and the writer is seen as merely checking facts instead of engaging in a quest of discovery.

I approach this question in two ways. First, I use Martin Heidegger’s discussion of technology in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (William Lovitt, ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1977) to theorize the online researcher as “nothing but the orderer of the standing reserve” (27) who is in danger of losing other perspectives on historical research by being restricted to only what is digitally available. I then interrogate Heidegger’s conjectures by contrasting my experience using the *New York Times* online archive with my experience conducting primary research of historical documents at the New York Public Library. The searchable online archive made it possible for me to efficiently and affordably gather numerous sources on my subject, while it took an expensive research trip of three days to spend a single hour with one box of materials at the New York Public Library. The materials I handled at the library, however, were original and provided me as a creative nonfiction writer with more than the information contained in the documents: a research narrative that will prove an important element in establishing my credibility.

My experience supports Heidegger’s argument that the “Enframing” effect of technology limits a researcher’s experience to only that which can be revealed through the digital archive and “drives out every other possibility of revealing” (27). I concede the counter argument that digitizing historical archives has a democratizing effect through which physical disabilities, economic disadvantages, and constraints of time are alleviated as technology allows the home-bound, those without travel funding, and the overworked, to conduct primary archival research. In a creative endeavor where the ethos of the writer as careful researcher is essential to assure the audience that a work of creative nonfiction is essentially “true,” I conclude that the digital archive threatens to deprive the writer of a powerful argument: the research narrative.

Joyce R. Walker  
Western Michigan University

James P. Purdy  
Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania

### **Making a Case for Digital Research in the First-year Writing Classroom**

The continuing expansion of different tools and environments for conducting digital research (both within and outside of the confines of digital libraries), is having a significant effect on the research identities available to students as they interact with processes of knowledge creation, both inside of and beyond the various boundaries of academia. However, the digital research identities that students develop are often based on search activities that seem, on the surface, to be at odds with the tools and strategies for research that are valued in academia. This is evident in current research in both composition studies and in library and information science, where a focus on specific kinds of academically-oriented skills leads to a perception of students, particularly incoming freshmen at the university level, as deficient in the necessary skills for effective research.

This presentation offers data from a continuing research project that seeks to understand the complex and widely varying self-identities (as researchers and scholars) that students bring to the first year writing classroom. The goal is to use this increased understanding to design instruction for first-year writing programs that works with, rather than against, students' existing knowledge about the activities of digital research. An approach to research instruction that focuses on shaping identities rather than teaching a set of concrete acontextual skills allows student researchers to incorporate specific researching skills into a larger framework adaptable to what they need to know and the various ways they can go about finding it.

The speakers will discuss the construction of research identity in a range of media (print and digital) used to train students to make use of research materials in the academy. Their study of these instructional materials reveals that there is a significant dis-connect between the identities that students bring to the classroom (and use outside of the classroom), and the identities that are assumed and constructed by these teaching texts.

The presentation will then move to a discussion of how this information can be used to help instructors in introductory composition courses interact with and shape the research identities of students. This presentation speaks to professionals about the ways they might incorporate conversations about digital research into their composition classrooms. It is also relevant to administrators interested in creating introductory writing classrooms that incorporate the concept of research in ways that match and stimulate the development of students' existing identities.

Tiffany N. Walter

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Representation/21<sup>st</sup> Century Assessment: The Dialogic Nature of Digital Portfolios**

### Background

Written portfolios in composition programs have historically served as uniform, organized file cabinets from which individual (or sets of) documents could be reviewed. While this type of “repository portfolio” is useful, students often have little agency in their construction, design, and organization. With the advent of electronic portfolios, many traditional assessment approaches were simply transferred from one medium to another. Consequently, other than as authors, students often have only minor roles in representing themselves as communicators in the overall design of such portfolios.

When LSU’s Communication across the Curriculum (CxC) was established in 2004, our primary goal was to develop students’ communication skills in four modes--written, oral, visual, and technological--across all disciplines. To address our need for multi-modal assessment, we designed specifications for CxC Digital Portfolios, required for students we certify as High-Level Communicators and offered to all students. Our portfolios have evolved from digital repositories of required files into websites that students build to showcase their communication skills and themselves as potential professionals. As they build portfolios, students not only learn web design and new software but also, perhaps more importantly, make crucial rhetorical decisions about self-representation (ethos) and evidence. In this decision-making process, students wrestle with audience, navigation, and design.

### Central Themes

Our research tells a story about dialogue and compromise, tensions between the ideal and the practical, and new ways to imagine rhetoric and assessment:

- How do 21<sup>st</sup>-century students want to represent themselves as professionals?
- What do students learn while building a digital portfolio?
- What data satisfy institutional assessment needs?
- How can we teach students communication and technology skills for their portfolios—inside classrooms and in Communication Studios we are building?
- In an “always obsolete” world, which environments and technologies are needed to provide 21<sup>st</sup>-century preparation in communication?

### Methods of Approach

We use quantitative, qualitative, and ethnographic approaches to capture the range of assessment practices and student achievement before, during, and after the experience of building portfolios. We report quantitative findings on pre-/ post-technology skills; qualitative findings from cross-genre rubrics as well as the overall portfolio; and observations of student decision-making. We consider the balance between assessment and technology in terms of what is desired (the ideal) and what can be accomplished (the practical). We report our own (and our students’) second-guessing about platforms and environments--from our “secured” servers using open-source programming; to canned, commercially available e-portfolio programs; and even MySpace. Case studies of students and faculty provide a deep, contextual record of our work.

### Conclusions

Our three-year history of CxC’s Digital Portfolios is a positive story of dialogue and vision, tempered by compromise. We have responded to student needs and desires while meeting the need for institutional assessment.

Shannon Walters  
The Pennsylvania State University

### **Facilitative Rhetorics and Communication by People with Disabilities**

The open digital hand that adorns the banner for Penn State's 20<sup>th</sup> Conference on rhetoric and composition invites us to think about the tactile nature of our experience with rhetorics and technologies. In my presentation, I propose to examine this interaction by way of the area of assistive technologies for people with disabilities and for people with a wide range of abilities. In this presentation, I focus on what I term "facilitative rhetorics" used by people with disabilities, which I characterize as practices taking place across a wide range of rhetors of varying abilities, often including the aid of facilitators. I define these facilitators as human and non-human, stretching across boundaries to include technologies, animals and people.

While I argue for a broad definition of facilitative rhetorics, my attention to the notion of facilitation is occasioned by the practice of facilitated communication. Facilitated communication (FC), pioneered by educators such as Rosemary Crossley and David Biklen, typically employs a combination of technology and physical aid in order to help people with disabilities communicate via a keyboard, speech synthesizer, computer or picture board. The method is controversial because of conflicting research about the role of the facilitator. Some research demonstrates that facilitators inadvertently cue people to produce communication that is not their own while other research demonstrates that facilitators simply provide emotional and physical support to a communicator who authors their own messages. I take a different methodology to engage with this debate, stepping back from the questions about authenticity and instead examining why the sense of touch, in connection with technology, might elicit such suspicions about the nature of rhetoric. I also redefine facilitated communication and broaden it to the wider category of facilitated rhetorics by examining the other ways in which people with disabilities achieve communication by using the sense of touch to interact with human and non-human facilitators. These rhetorical accomplishments derive from what I term to be "strategies of facilitation," or practices by which people with disabilities collaborate and exert rhetorical agency by interacting with others.

In addition to the practice of touch or facilitation, rhetors with disabilities also combine other sensory practices in order to augment their communication. These strategies allow them to reshape many of our basic notions about rhetoric, transforming the appeals, the canons, the communication process and the rhetorical situation. I explore current scientific research on the sense of touch and pair it with accounts from people with disabilities who demonstrate the productive ways in which sensory experiences can be combined with technology to enhance communication. I conclude that more attention to multi-modal and multi-sensory ways of interacting with facilitators—human, animal, or technological—can enlarge the means of persuasion for a wide range of rhetors across a spectrum of abilities.

Scott Warnock  
Drexel University

## **Online writing instruction and the disappearing educational interface**

### Background or Context

The iPhone and the multitouch screen are two recent efforts to improve the interface between us and our digital machines. The concepts driving innovations such as these are instructive in helping us re-think students' experience with the construct of writing education, building from seminal ideas about interface by those such as Turkle and Papert.

### Central Theme

I will discuss an idea I am developing about online instruction as a means of reducing the profile of the writing education interface. Perhaps paradoxically, the introduction of layers of technological infrastructure to students' writing education may not complicate their learning but instead place it within contexts with which they are comfortable and familiar. Teachers often view technology as distraction, but the e-environment is an increasingly natural, text-based environment for students. Lavazzi talked about "pedagogic 'happenings'" while students surf the Web; in short, we can teach them while they are there.

Selfe and Selfe looked at the "politics of the interface," pointing out that computer use in writing classrooms may—even if our intentions are good—marginalize students and have us "participating in a cultural project that [...] seems to support racist, sexist, and colonial attitudes." However, they looked at the *computer* as an interface; instead, I am attempting to formulate writing education itself as the interface: the structure and apparatus (including teachers) between students and the knowledge/experience/expertise they seek. I do not want to elide or oversimplify the political implications of computer use for writing. But after I taught a course as part of the Sloan-C relief efforts for students affected by hurricane Katrina, I realized how online learning helped writing students bypass the traditional educational interface; I needed no greater lesson than seeing how learning occurred when that traditional interface was all but destroyed.

### Method of Approach or Inquiry

While I am attempting to develop a theoretical approach, true to composition's mission, I will analyze several student texts from online courses, demonstrating that students' writing is often "better"—in many ways, including correctness—in online message board settings when compared with the "official" papers and essays that they write, which are often stilted and forced. I will also try to show that the online writing environment satisfies theoretical ideas about ideal writing settings.

### Conclusions

As students interact via writing in the e-environment, we are helping them do what they always do. In fact, for them, the unnatural part of learning is increasingly the static classroom, where they sit and listen—computers forced off—to a sage purporting to enlighten them. Writing in electronic environments for many "screenagers" seems to naturalize writing for them. If we re-conceive writing education as an interface and accept that that some interface must exist between our students and their education—blackboards, desks, history, teachers, traditions, paper—then we may unlock better—fairer and more humane as well as more effective—ways of understanding and using online writing pedagogy.

Susan Wells  
Temple University

### **Photo-Offset Printing and the Alternative Press: Vernacular Print Literacies, 1965-1980**

During the 1960's and 70's, hundreds of "underground" and "alternative" papers were published in cities across the United States. These papers varied in political orientation and cultural emphasis: some papers emphasized local politics, the anti-war movement, or music, or drugs. Papers served specific audiences, such as GI's active in antiwar coffeehouses, or the emerging women's movement, or high school students. Some papers lasted for years, while others published a few issues and quietly folded. And these papers sponsored other, more substantial publishing projects, such as "How Harvard Rules" and many similar pamphlets.

The underground press almost universally used new processes of photo offset printing. During the fifteen years in question, photo offset technologies became cheaper and simpler. The pace of technological innovation created a secondary market in used presses, encouraging the organization of movement print shops. And the simplicity of photo offset technology encouraged a do-it-yourself ethos: newspapers sponsored "paste-up parties;" photography and color were used liberally, differentiating alternative from conventional papers; headlines and other graphic elements could be hand drawn, promoting a distinctive alternative graphic style.

In this paper, I will examine printing and paste-up manuals from the sixties and seventies and the records of the underground and alternative press, conveniently available in a comprehensive microfilm collection. I will show how these technologies encouraged the development of a pool of skilled amateurs who understood the basic skills of layout and pasteup, and who were therefore willing to undertake unconventional publishing projects. The paper will focus on two Boston groups: the newspaper *The Old Mole* and the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, writers of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*. I will analyze the relation between photo-offset printing and three aspects of alternative publishing: a do-it-yourself aesthetic; loose, egalitarian organization of work; and emphasis on images, particularly found images.

William J. White  
Penn State Altoona

### **Blogging as Epideictic Rhetoric: The Case of Lawrence Summers**

The emergence of political “blogging” as a speech genre coupled to a technologically enabled mode of communication has begun to attract the attention of communication scholars, who are interested in how blogs (i.e., web logs, or Internet-based on-line journals, diaries, and running commentary) exercise their influence in political discourse, how they achieve credibility and present authorial personae, and how they will affect patterns of civic and political engagement. Despite the rhetorical dimensions of these questions, little of this research has proceeded from a self-consciously rhetorical perspective.

This project will develop a rhetorical account of the blog-borne commentary surrounding remarks made in January 2005 by Lawrence Summers, then-president of Harvard University, at a conference exploring the continued underrepresentation of women and minorities in mathematics-, science- and technology-related professions. His remarks, which emphasized innate brain-based biological differences between men and women over sociological causes as the reason for the disparity, attracted considerable attention in the press, from Harvard’s faculty, and in the “blogosphere,” the Internet-based domain of running on-line commentary about current events.

This analysis will contribute to an understanding of the conventions of an emerging rhetorical genre (the weblog or “blog”) that is the product of a technologically enabled speech situation. The analysis is thus relevant to the rhetoric of technology, particularly with respect to questions about the impact of technology on communication and argumentation. Additionally, the specific case under examination is doubly relevant to the rhetoric of science and science studies more generally, having at its root questions about the sociological constitution of science as well as the deployment of scientific knowledge in public discourse.

The work will describe the ways in which praiseworthy and blameful attributes are variously associated with rhetorical objects, and how those associations produce in aggregate more-or-less coherent systems of beliefs. In other words, the analysis will produce a schematic mapping of the actors identified in the commentary, the attributes associated with those actors, and the epideictic valences assigned to those attributes. Additionally, because the differential location of actor-attribute-valence sets in different blogs is itself data, a reading of the degree of conceptual disagreement among blogs can be obtained, thus providing an indication of the extent to which polarization is a feature of the new medium/genre.

The results of preliminary exploration of this data lend support to those critiques of the blogosphere that see it as being associated with the fragmentation of a mass audience and the formation of ideologically homogeneous, and correspondingly insular, discourse communities. Specifically, whereas commentary in print on op-ed pages was about evenly split between epideictics of blame and absolution and stases of freedom and truth, blogs were more likely both to absolve Summers than to blame him, and to argue that the issue was freedom than to say that it was truth or accuracy. The more systematic investigation proposed here will interrogate this finding and examine the rhetorical articulation of contrasting systems of belief in the blogosphere.

Carl Whithaus  
Old Dominion University

Joyce Magnotto Neff  
Old Dominion University

### **Writing Across the Curriculum as a Rhetoric for Distance and Distributed Learning**

The increasing use of technology for delivering college courses raises questions about how technologies shape pedagogy and vice versa in hybrid, face-to-face, and distributed environments. In this presentation, we draw on our recent research (2006) to explore connections among writing across the curriculum, distance learning, and local contexts. We argue that several characteristics of WAC (reflective teaching, learning as a social process, cross-campus alliances, writing one's way into a discourse community, outcomes assessment, and participatory pedagogy) have potential for positively influencing distance education. WAC practitioners are well-suited to assess which technologies support good pedagogical practices. At the same time, WAC faculty who teach in distributed environments are well-suited to use their experiences to reevaluate their face-to-face pedagogies. We support our argument by presenting the findings of case studies from four disciplines—physics, pharmacology, photography, and management writing—to show how WAC has served as the impetus for pedagogical and technological revision in distributed learning. For example, in a management writing course delivered over interactive television, creating 'liveliness' via talk about writing proved important to student success. Consultations among the instructor, an instructional designer, an IT engineer, and students led to more opportunities for synchronous talk. In a pharmacology curriculum that prepares students for the PCAT exam, an asynchronous writing tutorial provides the faculty in all courses the technological means to emphasize writing as a vital part of the entire curriculum. We conclude our presentation by explaining a collaborative decision matrix that invites stakeholders to contribute to the design of distance and hybrid programs, and we theorize about WAC's potential as a rhetoric for re-imagining distributed pedagogies.

Scott Wible  
West Virginia University

## **Dis-“Content” With Access to the Information Superhighway**

### Background or Context

Politicians, policymakers, and CEOs have characterized the digital divide as a threat to American prosperity, but their discourses on how to bridge this divide have been overly idealized. Collectively, government initiatives such as those proposed by the U.S. Department of House and Urban Development seem to suggest that the digital divide can be addressed simply by getting more computers into low-income households and communities. These policies are predicated on the belief that the Internet is a space in which people, once they have technical access to it, can transcend the limits imposed upon them within offline environments.

Recently, however, many theorists of technology, such as Adam Banks, Andrew Herman, John H. Sloop, and Mark Warschauer, have critiqued this particular discourse of the digital divide, exposing the problems inherent in conceiving of “access” to the information superhighway solely at a technical level. These concerns effectively trouble the notion that there are no barriers limiting the ways that people can put the information superhighway to use once they log onto it.

### Central Theme

In order to apply pressure to purely technical understandings of the digital divide, this presentation explores one particular grassroots approach to providing online content for communities too often on the wrong side of the digital divide. My presentation aims to deepen our understanding of how spaces on the World Wide Web can address the specific social and cultural needs of communities that, because of language, literacy, and economic barriers, have largely been overlooked as actors on the Internet.

Specifically, this presentation focuses on HarlemLIVE, a critically acclaimed web magazine produced by teens from low-income neighborhoods throughout New York City. HarlemLIVE offers its readers investigative reports, opinion pieces, photographs, and video documentaries on a wide variety of political, social, and cultural topics that shape New York City. Teenagers run every aspect of the on-line publication and are guided through the process by mentors from leading news outlets in the city. My presentation focuses both on the content and the production process of HarlemLIVE as a means of deepening our awareness of how members of underserved communities themselves are taking central roles in both assessing their communities’ resource needs and presenting meaningful content in appropriate and effective ways that account for users’ education, language, and literacy differences.

### Method of Inquiry

My project involves a close reading of the print, visual, and multimedia content on the HarlemLIVE website as well as an analysis of institutional structure of the HarlemLIVE project’s training and staffing procedures. To articulate the significance of this online project, I draw upon theories of technological literacy offered by Banks, Warschauer, Stuart Selber, and Cynthia Selfe that shift attention away from narrow conceptions of access and onto the diverse ways in which users can operate via the Internet to advance their interests.

### Conclusions

Through my analysis, I demonstrate how the HarlemLIVE project provides an extra-institutional literacy education that allows students to read and view other Harlem youth’s artistic and technological talents, assess the community’s online information needs, and design materials that not only meet the community’s needs but also showcase their talents in terms of

functional digital literacies. Ultimately, I argue that HarlemLIVE, as a project devoted to presenting communally significant online content, illustrates ways to expand the policy and educational discourses of the digital divide to account more directly for the different barriers to access that face minority and low-income communities once they get within online spaces. In so doing, I add depth to discussions about ensuring digital access for marginalized groups as I shift the lens to focus not on what such communities are receiving but rather on what they are producing.

Marsha Olsen Wiley  
Kent State University

### **Embodied Knowledge and the Virtual Body: Operating on the Cartesian Split**

Multimodality has been theorized as a way of actively engaging learners in literate activities of the classroom and workplace (Gee; Takayoshi, Hawisher, and Selfe), and of illuminating our current methods of composing (Wysocki et al). In internationally networked digital environments, texts must be able to carry meaning across geo-political, linguistic, and cultural borders. Similarly, ways of representing texts, ideas, and bodies (Bordo; Haraway; Hawisher and Sullivan; Hayles) have been opened up, and show new opportunities for objectifying and signifying bodies. Yet, as scholars have begun to research and theorize modes of communication, some scholarship has considered the role of the body in composing (Emig, Haas, Perl), but none has considered the role of the potential audience's body in composing and representing.

As a panel, we argue that research and engagement that considers the lived experience of composers *and* audiences is an important basis for our profession, as it helps to clarify the relationship between mind and body. Building on the relationship between cognition and our bodies, this project examines how our representational practices may reinforce the Cartesian split and the implications for such a division in Composition Studies and technological change.

#### **Speaker #1: Anatomy of Knowledge: Embodiment, Composition, and Technology**

I present Merleau-Ponty's and Polanyi's challenge of the traditional mind | body split and their understanding of how one comes to know *through* the body, and not just in spite of it, as foundational to the claims of contemporary theorists in embodied knowledge and materiality. By surveying scholarship on embodied knowledge across disciplines, I consider claims about the role of the body in composing and constructing knowledge (Lakoff and Johnson; Haas; Perl; Sauer; Wilde). Moreover, I argue that a link between embodied knowledge and multimodality necessitates a more wholistic, integrated understanding of composing, interpreting and using technology.

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## **IMAGE EVENTS AFTER TELEVISION: EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES OF MEDIATION AND DISTRIBUTION**

### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTS

In 1999, Kevin DeLuca published *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* and extended previous discussions of media spectacles, telespectacles, and similar phenomena to account for the new and evolving rhetorical strategies of four environmental activist organizations. DeLuca's focus on the image event ("staged acts of protest [that are] designed for media dissemination"), however, emphasized the mediation and distribution of image events through only one screen-based technology, the television.

### CENTRAL THEME

Although an admittedly short time has passed since the publication of *Image Politics*, the technological and media landscape has changed so dramatically that "do-it-yourself" protestors and activist organizations now have increased control over the mediation and distribution of their message. That is, they now gather their own footage, edit their own work, select from multiple tools available for mediation and distribution, and ultimately circulate their messages on the periphery of mainstream media. This presentation addresses the rhetorical function of image events as they play out on screens other than the television screen. In doing so, this presentation highlights new rhetorical strategies, new technologies and new sites of distribution that contribute to our understanding of image events specifically as well as our understanding of visual rhetoric.

### METHOD OF INQUIRY

The presentation will begin with a review of the scholarship on image events, along with select scholarship on visual rhetoric, in order to provide background. Once this background is established, I shall then turn toward new technologies, *i.e.*, Flash, weblogs (blogs) and podcasting, as well as new sites for distribution of image events, *i.e.*, MySpace and YouTube. In doing so, this presentation will highlight specific examples of image events as they appear on YouTube. This query is complemented by questions including: Is it enough to study new/evolving technologies or new sites for the distribution of rhetorical messages under the traditional canons of style and delivery? Or do we imagine new tactics and new strategies pulling up along side the rhetorical tradition—*i.e.*, new strategies that simply cannot be explained through conventional models of persuasion? And if we regard technologies of mediation and distribution as important in social movement or in the strategies of activist organizations, how important are these technologies?

### CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this presentation offers possible answers to those questions identified above. Additionally, the conclusion calls for analysis of visual rhetoric that is disciplined and focused on close readings of images, icons, and pictures—including the ways in which those socio-cultural artifacts function rhetorically.

\*This panel examines the confluence of activism and new technologies. This convergence calls for a re-examination of our conceptions of public participation in democracy and of "the public" itself. All speakers consider the ways that traditional rhetorical and social movement theory speak to or cannot account for these new practices.

Madeline Yonker  
Syracuse University

### **Network Literacy: Definitions, Implications, and Practices**

In the November 2006 issue of *College English*, Jeff Rice argues that "college English should *be* new media," that college English should be "the network." My essay will define what this network will be. I will build on Rice's argument to show that digital literacy, the use of new media in the writing classroom, and the advent of Web 2.0 have pushed us into a new realm of literacy, network literacy. Network literacy goes beyond technological literacy to emphasize writers' multiple, simultaneous roles as they use text and image to represent themselves in media environments; it also stresses that these decidedly non-virtual connections made between writers/readers are elemental in the construction of both individual identity and of the network itself.

This essay will describe the definitions of network literacies that are enacted in specific digital environments of Web 2.0. In *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age*, Stuart Selber carves digital literacy into three constructive segments: functional literacy (users can operate computers as tools), critical literacy (users understand computers and software as artifactual and therefore subject to critique), and rhetorical literacy (users understand how the tools shape and inform meaning and are able to both manipulate meaning and reflect on their manipulation). For Selber, digital literacy is not merely a component of English education; instead (as Rice argues), digital literacy should be something that English departments consider an organic component in that it comprises "interpretation, contingency, persuasion, communication [and] deliberation." If we situate Selber's and Rice's arguments within the framework of Web 2.0, we must reexamine how particular digital environments invite (or mandate) that users be aware of their ever-shifting role as **both** reader and writer, and we must be able to prepare students to do so as well.

Possibly best described by Tim O'Reilly, the notion of Web 2.0 began as a discussion in response to the dot com break down in 2001, when many of Internet(-based) businesses suddenly found themselves bankrupt. Even as start-ups and investors saw money and dreams suddenly up in smoke, the World Wide Web still appeared to be burgeoning, teeming with activity. O'Reilly observed that this activity was notably different from what conventional Internet use "looked like." Essentially, Web 2.0 "harnesses collective intelligence" and acknowledges users of applications as "co-developers." Web 2.0 makes the beta version king; monolithic releases are eschewed for periodic updates that take user experience into close consideration. The traditional producer/consumer (or writer/reader) dichotomy is conflated; questions of audience and genre (in addition to Selber's list of considerations for digital literacy) are further complicated; and writers/readers must revise their conventional rhetorical approaches based on their new, dual-direction role. This project will flesh out Rice's argument of the field as network by describing the rhetorical strategies of identity and network construction that compose network literacy in Web 2.0, as well as possible implications and practices network literacy brings to the classroom.

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**Rhetorical Strategies, Context, and China English:  
A Rhetorical Study of an Electronic Bulletin Board Forum**

When English is used in traditionally non-English dominant contexts, inevitably it will be localized, taking on features of local cultures, languages, and rhetorical practices. During the last several decades, the wide use of modern information technologies accelerated the localization of English in different parts of the world. However, the mediation of technology in the worldwide spread of English has been little explored in rhetorical studies. For example, in studies of the Chinese variety of English, or China English as it has been called, scholars have largely adopted an inference model for studying its rhetorical strategies, i.e., they explain or predict these strategies based on Chinese discourse and cultural preferences. This model, I argue, falls short in studying China English because, first, it essentializes both China English and Chinese, treating their discursive strategies as two easily generalizable, static entities; second, it neglects context that determines the meaning potential of China English. I propose an alternative model that studies China English with context being treated as the main variable. Following the new model, I examine how Chinese youths use English to foster a community and realize their particular goals on an electronic bulletin board forum. It has been found that they develop patterned rhetorical strategies in the contexts of requesting opinions, seeking advice, sharing experiences, and expressing feelings. These strategies demonstrates China English's growing meaning potential in cyber space because they are somewhat different from those identified in other contexts by previous scholarship, and they cannot be easily labeled as traditional Chinese. The Internet has created an alternative space for Chinese youths to invent and experiment new rhetorical strategies for communicating between themselves. As China English finds its way into more contexts and domains via the mediation of modern information technologies, I suggest we adopt the alternative model to fully unveil the language's expanding meaning potential.

James P. Zappen  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

### **Kenneth Burke's Collaborative Form as an "Information Technology"**

#### Context/Overview

Kenneth Burke developed a complex concept of collaborative form, which evolved over a period of more than thirty years. Burke begins by exploring how the rhetorical agent works his or her effects upon an audience and subsequently explores the potential role of the rhetor as an observer of rhetorical conflicts and then as a facilitator who seeks to resolve these conflicts by identifying an order or symmetry that encompasses competing points of view. Burke initially conceived form as a counter to scientific approaches to communication that emphasize plain language and the simple transfer of information. This concept retains its currency as a model for the design of contemporary information technology—in particular the World Wide Web—as a dynamic and interactive medium of communication, which enables designers and users to become collaborators and co-creators of their own texts.

#### Theme/Question

How can rhetoric re-envisioned as collaborative form facilitate the development of Web technology as a vehicle for collaboration?

#### Conceptual/Analytical Framework

In his early *Counter-Statement*, Burke complains about the scientific approach to communication, which he calls the "psychology of information," and proposes in its place a "psychology of audience," which emphasizes not the mere transfer of information but a fulfillment of the expectations of the audience. Much later, in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke elaborates the psychology of audience as a collaborative form in which the speaker or writer invites the audience to participate by "swinging along" with the form. In the last long section of the *Rhetoric*, he re-envisioned the role of the rhetor not as a speaker or writer but as an observer of the unifying order by which the disparate points of view of competing rhetorical partisans might be brought together in an explicitly Platonic "dialectical symmetry." He reiterates this view in the recently reconstructed *Essays toward a Symbolic of Motives*, where he describes the Platonic dialogue as a sequence of steps toward a "common spirit," which generates catharsis "by refutation of error, and by transcendence." Finally, in *Language as Symbolic Action*, Burke envisions the rhetor as a dialectician who transcends the fray of the human barnyard by erecting a "speech-of speeches" and a "speech-of-speech-of-speeches" and who thereby becomes the Platonic facilitator whose unifying vision of an order or symmetry encompasses a diversity of individual points of view.

#### Application/Conclusion

The development of the World Wide Web has followed a similar trajectory, from the original conception of the Web as a vehicle for the transfer of scientific information to the development of novel design features that encourage interactivity and user participation in the production of users' own texts. Guided by Burke's concept of form as a dialectical symmetry that encompasses multiple points of view, our work with a youth-services information system for a local community shows how some of these novel design features, including a dynamic web interface and interactive web galleries, can invite youth-services organizations, families, and children to collaborate in the design of their own self-representations, with rich textual, visual, and audio components.