

mic
4
2001
pt. 1
56956969

This is to certify that the
dissertation entitled

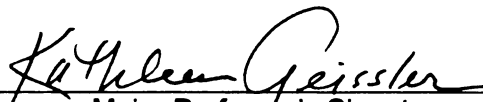
SYNERGISTIC ETHOS: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF
UNIVERSITY WEB SITES IN THE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

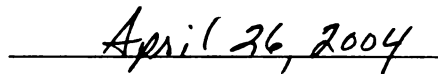
presented by

KERITH A. DUTKIEWICZ

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Ph.D. degree in English


Major Professor's Signature



Date



PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

**SYNERGISTIC ETHOS: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY WEB
SITES IN THE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK**

By

Kerith A. Dutkiewicz

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

2004

ABSTRACT

SYNERGISTIC ETHOS: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY WEB SITES IN THE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK

By

Kerith A. Dutkiewicz

This dissertation builds on existing analyses of the ethos of web sites, including studies investigating representations of subjectivity in individual “personal” web pages (Cheung (2000), Hawisher & Selfe (2001)), upon recent work analyzing the design and development process for departmental web sites (Spinuzzi et al 2003), and upon Aristotelian ethos to analyze select university web sites and take the first step towards the development of a rhetoric-based theory that more clearly explains how ethos functions online. Specifically, I examine the ways in which the online context surrounding web sites impacts audience perceptions of online ethos.

To do so, I apply the methodology of rhetorical analysis to complete close readings of web sites published by Departments of English, Composition and Rhetoric, Professional Writing, and related programs at the University of Texas at Austin and Purdue University. I apply the theoretical lens of information ecologies (Nardi & O’Day 1999, 2001) to define the online context surrounding individual web sites as a knowledge network-- the constellation of web sites to which a particular web site is connected (both literally and figuratively). I also draw upon research being done by the Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab on the credibility of web sites (Fogg 2002) and existing research on effective web site design (Spinuzzi et al 2002, Enos and Borrowman 2001)

that connects specific design choices to ethos. My analysis focuses on analyzing multiple components of web texts, including navigation, graphics, and textual content to better understand how these components work together to shape ethos.

To understand how the multiple elements of a web site work together to create ethos, I engage in a two-tiered analysis that first examines the ways multiple elements of departmental and program web sites interact to shape perceptions of ethos. The second tier of my analysis focuses on understanding how reading faculty sites against and through these departmental and program sites shapes the ethos of the departmental, program and faculty web sites. My conclusions offer synergistic ethos as a theoretical concept that reconceptualizes online ethos. Synergistic ethos is the perception of the overall (terminal) ethos of both the knowledge network *and* a particular site within the knowledge network at any given moment.

The knowledge network shapes derived and terminal ethos through the process whereby design choices become institutionalized (via templates) and/or accepted as part of the appropriate design for a particular industry, discipline, and/or genre of web site (the process of conventionalizing specific design motifs into the accepted canon of web design). In so doing, the knowledge network impacts both content and design expertise—both required factors in establishing ethos online. Differentiation between initial, derived, terminal and synergistic ethos helps explain that the question, “How does context impact online ethos?” does not have simple answer; relationships between site elements and different sites of a knowledge network function as complex, continually evolving ecosystems.

Copyright by

KERITH A. DUTKIEWICZ

2004

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research project is the result of nearly 4 years of thinking, “surfing” and endless revising; a hectic work schedule in senior management where I did most of my work on red-eye flights followed by my first full-time academic teaching job with a 4-4 load left little intellectual energy for completing my degree. I have gone from one idea to the next, written countless drafts of what may some day become additional studies on digital rhetoric, and tried the patience of many, including myself. But, in the end I hope I have achieved my goal—I wanted to develop the patience and attention to detail, both intellectual and spiritual, required to complete a work of this magnitude. I also wanted to engage my creativity and penchant for seeing connections between what may appear to be disparate, unrelated concepts. This process was, for me, a success, in that I became the first person in my family to earn an advanced graduate degree. As I move forward in efforts to integrate my corporate management experience, my interests in digital rhetoric, and my passion for teaching, I hope that this process will enable me to leverage my creativity and perseverance to help build strong, centered, humane programs, departments, and institutions that reflect my commitment to hard work, positive intention, and intellectual and personal risk taking.

I would like to thank all those who lent their support and guidance on this journey that many times felt as though it would never end, including Kathleen Geissler, James Porter, Patricia Stock, Dean Rehberger, Danielle DeVoss and my colleagues at Lansing Community College who provided the moral support to sit in a windowless room dissertating for hours on end. Most importantly, I would like to thank my husband,

Daniel, who spent many hours keeping me company and listening to me talk through ideas; this wonderful man convinced me not to quit by buying me a horse named Sunny to bring light at the end of the tunnel when I was feeling most overwhelmed and incapable. Our three dogs sat up late into the night and awoke before the crack of dawn to keep me company and inspire patience as I sat at the computer day after day. I could not have mustered the perseverance to complete this dissertation while working full-time, making a career transition and confronting life's inevitable curve-balls without this wonderful community of friends, family, colleagues, and various four-legged Buddhas. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1 ONLINE ETHOS IN THE KNOWLEDGE NETWORK.....	6
CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY.....	55
CHAPTER 3 RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF ETHOS ON SELECTED SITES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN.....	89
CHAPTER 4 RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF ETHOS ON SELECTED SITES AT PURDUE UNIVERSITY.....	189
CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS.....	271
CHAPTER 6 SYNERGISTIC ETHOS: IMPLICATIONS, APPLICATIONS, AND CALLS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	305
APPENDIX A.....	322
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	340

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1.1 McCroskey and Teven's Semantic Differential Scales to Evaluate Ethos (qtd. in Constantides and Swensen).....	18
TABLE 1.2—Fogg's 10 Guidelines for Increasing Web Site Credibility and Connections to Aristotelian Ethos.....	29
TABLE 3.1—Diagram of the Segment of the UT Knowledge Network Addressed by Chapter Three.....	90
TABLE 4.1—Diagram of the Segment of the Purdue Knowledge Network Addressed by Chapter Four.....	190
TABLE 5.1—Summary of Locator Links in Footers on UT Sites.....	292
TABLE 5.2—Summary of Locator Links in Footers on Purdue Sites.....	295
TABLE 5.3—Summary of Narrative Voice on UT Sites.....	298
TABLE 5.4—Summary of Narrative Voice on Purdue Sites.....	299
TABLE A.1—UT Site Map.....	325
TABLE A.2—Diagram of the Segment of the UT Knowledge Network Addressed by Chapter Three.....	332
TABLE A.3—Purdue Academics Site Map.....	334
TABLE A.4—Diagram of Purdue University Knowledge Network Addressed in Chapter Four.....	338

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1.1—Sample Graphical Representation of Knowledge Network of a University Web Site.....	48
FIGURE 2.1—Diagram Showing Focus and Gaps of this Research.....	80
FIGURE 3.1—UT Department of English Older Version “Splash” Screen.....	93
FIGURE 3.2—UT Department of English Web Site Logo.....	95
FIGURE 3.3—UT Department of English Older Version Welcome Page.....	96
FIGURE 3.4—UT Department of English “Who We Are” Page.....	99
FIGURE 3.5—Revised UT Department of English Main Page (Welcome Page)...	103
FIGURE 3.6—Revised UT Department of English Undergraduate Studies Page..	106
FIGURE 3.7—Revised UT Department of English Sample Content Page.....	106
FIGURE 3.8—Older Version CWRL Web Site Main Page.....	110
FIGURE 3.9— Older Version CWRL “What is CWRL” Page.....	113
FIGURE 3.10— Older Version CWRL Web Site Critical Tools Page.....	114
FIGURE 3.11—Older Version CWRL Web Site Roadmap.....	115
FIGURE 3.12—Revised CWRL Main Page.....	117
FIGURE 3.13—Revised CWRL Content Page “About the CWRL”	119
FIGURE 3.14—Most Recent CWRL Home Page.....	121
FIGURE 3.15—Most Recent CWRL Page Alternate Skin.....	122
FIGURE 3.16—Revised CWRL Technology Page.....	125
FIGURE 3.17—Old Version DRC Main Page.....	127
FIGURE 3.18—Old Version DRC About the DRC Page.....	130
FIGURE 3.19—Updated DRC Main Page.....	135
FIGURE 3.20—Updated DRC Web Site Header.....	136

FIGURE 3.21—Updated About the DRC Page.....	137
FIGURE 3.22—Most Recent Revision DRC Home Page.....	139
FIGURE 3.23—Close Up of Most Recent Revision DRC Revision Graphic.....	140
FIGURE 3.24—Most Recent Revision DRC “About the DRC” Web Page.....	141
FIGURE 3.25—Sample Resource page on SWC Web Site.....	143
FIGURE 3.26—TLC Web Site Main Page.....	145
FIGURE 3.27—TLC Web Site Header.....	148
FIGURE 3.28—TLC Graphical Header with Interpretive Key.....	149
FIGURE 3.29—TLC “About TLC” Web Page.....	150
FIGURE 3.30— Sabrina Barton’s UT Department of English Template-Driven Web Site.....	155
FIGURE 3.31— Brian Bremen’s UT Department of English Template-Driven Web Site.....	156
FIGURE 3.32—Rosa Eberly’s DRC Template-Driven Web Site.....	159
FIGURE 3.33—John Ruskiewicz’s Faculty Web Site.....	160
FIGURE 3.34—Revised DRC Faculty Directory Page.....	162
FIGURE 3.35—Revised UT Department of English Faculty Template—Larry Carver.....	163
FIGURE 3.36— Revised UT Department of English Faculty Template—John Trimble.....	165
FIGURE 3.37— Revised UT Department of English Faculty Template—John Ruskiewicz.....	167
FIGURE 3.38—Melinda Turnley’s Faculty Web Site.....	171

FIGURE 3.39—Melinda Turnley’s Faculty Web Site Rollover Graphic.....	171
FIGURE 3.40—Peg Syverson’s Faculty Web Site.....	174
FIGURE 3.41—Peg Syverson’s Teaching Philosophy Page.....	176
FIGURE 3.42—Lester Faigley’s Faculty Web Site.....	178
FIGURE 3.43—Lester Faigley’s Faculty Web Site “About LF” Page.....	179
FIGURE 4.1—Purdue Department of English Older Version Main Page.....	192
FIGURE 4.2--Purdue English Graduate Studies Older Version Main Page.....	197
FIGURE 4.3—Revised Purdue Department of English Web Site Main Page.....	200
FIGURE 4.4—Purdue Department of English Revised Undergraduate Studies Page.....	201
FIGURE 4.5—Revised Department of English Graduate Studies Site.....	202
FIGURE 4.6—Purdue PW Main Page Older Version.....	206
FIGURE 4.7—Purdue PW Documentation Menu Older Version.....	210
FIGURE 4.8—Purdue PW Sample Online Technical Documentation.....	211
FIGURE 4.9—Purdue PW Revised Main Page.....	212
FIGURE 4.10—Sample Dynamic Drop Down on PW Revised Site.....	213
FIGURE 4.11—Revised PW Web Site Documentation Index.....	217
FIGURE 4.12—Older Version Purdue R&C Main Page.....	219
FIGURE 4.13—Older Version R&C Web Site Program Description Page.....	222
FIGURE 4.14—Purdue R&C Concentration in Rhetoric, Technology, and Digital Literacy Page.....	224
FIGURE 4.15—Purdue R&C Web Page Revised Version.....	228
FIGURE 4.16—Purdue R&C Revised Site Sample Content Page.....	229
FIGURE 4.17—Purdue Introductory Writing Program Web Site Older Version...	231

FIGURE 4.18—Computers and Composition Site Linked to IWP.....	235
FIGURE 4.19—Introductory Composition at Purdue (IcaP) Revised Version.....	237
FIGURE 4.20—ICaP Sample page from Student Guide Illustrating Textual Links.....	238
FIGURE 4.21—ICaP Instructor and Advisor Resources.....	239
FIGURE 4.22—Department of English Faculty Index Showing Dynamic Menus.	242
FIGURE 4.23—Michael Salvo’s Templated Web Site Sample Purdue Faculty Template with Minimal Information.....	244
FIGURE 4.24—Janet Alsup’s Templated Web Site Sample Purdue Faculty Template with Photograph.....	245
FIGURE 4.25—David Blakesley’s Main Page.....	248
FIGURE 4.26—David Blakesley’s Course Page with Link to “Dr. B’s Homepage”.....	250
FIGURE 4.27—Patricia Sullivan’s Class Materials Page.....	253
FIGURE 4.28—Patricia Sullivan’s Faculty Web Site Main Page.....	256
FIGURE 4.29—Patricia Sullivan’s “Work” Page.....	258
FIGURE 4.30—Purdue SLA IT Web Site.....	266
FIGURE 5.1—UT University Main Page Sample #1.....	273
FIGURE 5.2—UT University Main Page Sample #2.....	274
FIGURE 5.3—Purdue University Main Page.....	276
FIGURE 5.4—Locator Links in Revised DRC Web Site.....	293
FIGURE 6.1—Cyclical Relationship Between Initial, Derived and Terminal Ethos in a Knowledge Network.....	311
FIGURE A.1—UT Main Page.....	324
FIGURE A.2—UT Colleges and Academic Units.....	329

FIGURE A.3—UT College of Liberal Arts Menu.....	330
FIGURE A.4—Purdue University Main Page.....	333
FIGURE A.5—Purdue School of Liberal Arts Home Page.....	336
FIGURE A.6—List of Academic Departments within Purdue School of Liberal Arts.....	336

Introduction

Project Overview and Goals

This dissertation will build on existing analyses of the ethos of web sites, including studies investigating representations of subjectivity in individual “personal” web pages (Cheung 2000, Hawisher & Sullivan 2001), upon recent work analyzing the design and development process for departmental web sites (Spinuzzi et al 2003), and upon principles of ethos from classical rhetoric, Composition, and Speech Communication (Aristotle, Welch 1999, Johnson 1984, McCroskey 1999, 2001, and Swearingen 1994) to analyze select university web sites and take the first step towards the development of a rhetoric-based theory that more clearly explains how ethos functions online. Specifically, I will examine the ways in which the online context surrounding web sites impacts audience perceptions of the ethos of web sites.

To do so, I will read academic program, department, and faculty web sites as connected texts that reference and modify each other within their online context. In this vein, I will complete rhetorical “deep readings” (Birkerts) of the individual sites comprising knowledge networks, the term I use to describe the networked online context of web sites. These deep readings focus on web sites selected from two institutions: the University of Texas at Austin and Purdue University. In these readings, I will focus on context both in terms of the online, networked knowledge network comprising the online context and in terms of kairos, or the choice of appropriate ethos for a given situation and rhetorical occasion.

I will apply the theoretical lens of information ecologies (Nardi & O'Day 1999, 2001) to define the online context surrounding individual web sites as an online knowledge network-- the constellation of web sites to which a particular web site is connected (both literally and figuratively). I will also draw upon research being done by the Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab on the credibility of web sites (Fogg 2002) and existing research on effective web site design (Spinuzzi et al 2002, Enos and Borrowman 2001) that connects specific design choices to ethos. I will complete detailed rhetorical analyses of selected web sites, paying close attention to the ways ethos functions online and the ways that reading sites through and against each other shapes perceptions of ethos. My analysis will focus on analyzing multiple components of web texts, including navigation, graphics, and textual content to better understand how these components work together to shape an ethos. The end result of this work is the development of two theoretical constructs, the knowledge network and synergistic ethos, that provide the vocabulary necessary for continued research into the ways web sites convey an ethos.

Who Am I and Why Am I Studying This?

Although I am writing this piece from within the field of Composition and Rhetoric and although I draw primarily upon existing research and thinking about ethos, persuasion, and rhetorical methodology from within this discipline, some of the ideas for this research project (as well as my understanding of the ways ethos functions in an online environment) have been shaped by my time as a member of the senior management team for an e-learning, web application development and corporate training company. In addition to this corporate experience, I have worked as a graduate student

and faculty member in Composition, literature, and interdisciplinary humanities at a large state university, a small liberal arts college, a business school, and a community college. Currently, I am a faculty member at a community college where I teach world literature and assist the college in decisions regarding instructional technology.

In these varied experiences, I have been lucky enough to have had direct involvement with the design, development, implementation and evaluation of web technologies used for education, corporate training, and marketing. But in moving between the corporate and academic spheres, I was forced to recognize that tactics used to establish credibility in one industry, community, or institutional ecology did not necessarily transfer to another. For example, the level of detail required to support an idea and the presentation style for delivering ideas at an academic conference are generally not appropriate in a strategic consulting session designed to convince potential clients to move forward with a complete overhaul of their corporate intranet. Establishing credibility within these two realms requires different presentation styles or different presentations of ethos in order to be successful.

Why do some web sites, which look professional, fail to establish a credible ethos? And, why do some web sites with a professional look and feel establish credibility even when their subject matter knowledge is lacking? This dissertation will touch upon these questions but focus on the relationship between context and ethos to better understand the extent to which reading a web site against other web sites that are connected via links and institutional affiliation impacts audience perceptions of ethos. I chose this focus because my research yielded little information about the ways the networked structure and multimedia components of the web shape rhetorical

understandings of ethos. Focusing on the relationship between online context and ethos and basing my investigation on a definition of ethos that includes all three core components of Aristotle's ethos (arête, phronesis, and eunoia) will hopefully help bridge gaps in current work and raise additional questions for future research.

I hope that by more carefully considering the online context within which a site operates and examining the ways this context shapes perceptions of ethos, web designers may be able to avoid the juxtapositions and contradictions between messages, between constituent elements of a knowledge network, that can undermine ethos but which can be difficult to detect. To this end, my intended audience includes web designers, marketing managers, and administrators responsible for web site presence as well as faculty and graduate students in Rhetoric and Composition. My audience also includes interdisciplinary researchers like B.J. Fogg at the Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab and people working in what Watts calls "the emerging science of networks," like Duncan Watts and Albert-Laszlo Barabasi (Watts 2003). Finally, my audience includes colleagues in Composition and Rhetoric, Professional Writing, and English seeking to enrich their understandings of how to conceptualize and research online ethos in order to design more effective web sites for themselves and their institutions and in order to develop more nuanced theories and methodologies for understanding and teaching about online ethos.

Organization of this Text

Chapter One begins with an analysis of Aristotelian definitions of ethos in order to provide readers with a richer understanding of ethos and its importance to web site

design. Chapter One also includes a discussion of selected pieces of existing literature on the ethos of online texts in order to better situate this project in the context of other scholars pursuing similar work. Then, in Chapter Two, I overview my methodology for rhetorically reading web sites as complex systems and introduce the concept of the knowledge network.

In Chapters Three and Four, I move on to rhetorical analyses of web sites from the University of Texas at Austin and Purdue University. In these chapters I examine multiple program, departmental, and faculty web sites in order to present a rhetorical analysis that pays close attention to the ways ethos is impacted intratextually by the multiple elements of a web site and intertextually by reading web sites against and through each other. Chapter Five offers a summary of these rhetorical readings in which I tabulate key factors from my rhetorical readings in order to compare and contrast the types of ethos asserted by my selected web sites and the ways in which the web sites develop ethos. I also attempt to summarize the core patterns and relative impact of different design strategies on ethos as revealed by my rhetorical analysis.

In my conclusion (Chapter Six), I reflect upon my more nuanced understanding of ethos that resulted from these readings and explain my concept of synergistic ethos. In so doing, this concluding chapter explores the theoretical and practical implications for understanding ethos as it functions in a networked online environment. This final chapter ends with questions for further research in the area of online ethos, kairos, and the study of knowledge networks as rhetorical systems.

Chapter 1

Online Ethos in the Knowledge Network

Although the study of ethos as a Western rhetorical concept dates back at least to Aristotle, ethos remains a generative rhetorical construct, one that serves contemporary scholars analyzing web sites as effectively as it did classical scholars analyzing funeral orations. Because contemporary understandings of ethos rely so heavily upon Aristotle's conceptualization of the term, I begin my discussion with a brief overview of Aristotelian ethos before demonstrating how Aristotle's theoretical construct has continued to be useful to rhetorical critics of discourse, including analysts like me who are interested in the rhetoric of web sites. This discussion of Aristotelian ethos will give readers a more thorough understanding of the core concepts about ethos from Aristotle used by contemporary researchers and referred to in this study.

Arête, Phronesis, and Eunoia: Three Components of Aristotelian Ethos

Aristotle studied spoken rhetoric as used in Athenian democracy; in ancient Greece, rhetors most frequently spoke in the agora, the public gathering place, or in the courtroom. Specifically, he studied the rhetoric used when people gathered to make civic decisions, reach judgments in court cases, and offer epideictic speeches for ceremonial occasions. Contemporary definitions of ethos are based, to large extent, on Aristotle's understanding of ethos. In On Rhetoric Aristotle discusses ethos as one of the means of persuasion available to rhetors. Aristotle explains that ethos is important to establishing the credibility necessary for persuasion because

It makes much difference in regard to persuasion that the speaker seem to be a certain kind of person and that his hearers suppose him to be disposed toward them in a certain way (On Rhetoric 2.1.3).

What Aristotle says, in effect, is that ethos depends upon both how the speaker conveys her character in the rhetorical act and how the audience perceives the character of the speaker as presented in the rhetorical act. Ethos is not a one-way transmission from speaker to audience, but a more complex interchange where rhetorical signals, physical appearance, and prior knowledge of the speaker shape how an audience perceives the speaker's character. As Aristotle suggests when he writes that ethos "hearers suppose him [the speaker] to be disposed toward them in a certain way," ethos is based (at least in part) on assumptions made by the audience about the correlation between speech patterns, word choices, manners of dress, etc. and the speaker's relationship to the audience and intentions towards the audience. The speaker has partial control over ethos by shaping her rhetorical style and presentation of self to adhere to what she believes will appear credible to her audience, but audience perceptions are as important as speaker's intent in shaping ethos. To this end, Aristotle's writings on ethos help to explain to rhetors how and why an audience trusts (i.e. is *favorably* disposed towards and therefore more likely to believe) certain rhetors and distrusts others.

Aristotle's discussions of ethos in On Rhetoric explain that ethos is comprised of three components: eunoia, arête, and phronesis (2.1.5-6). Nan Johnson, in her overview of ethos published in The Encyclopedia of Composition and Rhetoric, defines eunoia as goodwill, arête as moral character, and phronesis as good sense. She writes, "effective ethos must inspire the audience's

confidence in the speaker's good sense, moral character and good will" (243).

But Johnson's translations, while commonly accepted, are not the only possible translations and understandings of these terms. For example, *arête* is often translated as virtue.

Aristotle explains *arête* (here excerpted from Kennedy's translation that uses "virtue" for *arête*):

Now virtue [*arête*] is an ability . . . for doing good in many and great ways, actually in all ways in all things. The parts [or subdivisions] of virtue are justice, manly courage, self-control, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, and wisdom. Since virtue is defined as an ability for doing good, the greatest virtues are necessarily those most useful to others. (On Rhetoric 1.9.4-6)

Welch points out that *arête*, as used by the ancient Greeks, "does not and cannot mean a contemporary English-speaker's idea of 'virtue'" because the cultural contexts and societal expectations are so different between the two cultures (16). *Arête* literally translates as "excellence" and is usually used as a descriptor; translating *arête* as "virtue" can mislead contemporary readers who think of virtue as a predefined set of culturally-specific characteristics when in actuality *arête* means a demonstrated excellence of character appropriate for the rhetorical situation.

Phronesis, the second core component of Aristotle's *ethos*, is often defined as a particular kind of intelligence or competence, and is referred to as "practical wisdom" by Kennedy (On Rhetoric 2.1.5). This idea of practical wisdom suggests a developed ability to act appropriately in accordance with the situation. A wise person, for example, would

not intentionally offend an audience by making jokes that this audience may consider inappropriate. The concept of phronesis is important for all rhetors, including scholars completing and publishing research. According to Sullivan and Porter (1997), phronesis, or “prudential reasoning,” is important for ensuring that rhetorical research results in useful, pragmatic “know-how” not just theoretical “know *about*.” Both these definitions of phronesis help locate phronesis as an important aspect of ethos—a rhetor must be able to demonstrate a kind of “hands-on” expertise in developing an effective ethos. Purely theoretical knowledge that is not connected to the daily realities of the audience is unlikely to be as convincing as expertise that balances practical good sense with theoretical understandings.

Finally, Aristotle’s concept of *eunoia* is typically translated as goodwill or good intentions towards the audience. However, translations that replace the term “*eunoia*” with “goodwill” can often be misleading. Just as *arête* is not character in general, but a specific type of character accepted as moral and/or virtuous by the cultural context within which the rhetorical act occurs, *eunoia* is not just goodwill in general, it is a specific kind of goodwill wherein the rhetor demonstrates that she has the audience’s best interests in mind and is not trying to mislead for the purposes of doing harm. For example, Simons (1970) and McCroskey and Teven (1999) use the term goodwill to explain how a rhetor makes an audience member feel that he is a part of their community and thereby shares the core values, perceptions, and beliefs that lay the foundation for trustworthiness. In their work, *eunoia* is equated with similarity in terms of shared interests, beliefs and feelings which implies membership in the same community (Simons et al 2).

The task of understanding Aristotelian ethos is complicated by the fact that the theoretical concepts of *arête*, *phronesis*, and *eunoia* have not remained static—they have been “redefined and reformulated countless times since the classical period in response to changing social-intellectual milieu” (Johnson 1984, 98). The problem of translating Aristotelian conceptualizations of ethos to a contemporary time period is further complicated when scholars recognize or take into account that Aristotle was writing about spoken rhetoric while studies like this one address the rhetoric of web sites. The issues of translating and defining Aristotle’s concepts about ethos in ways appropriate for my research on university web sites is the subject of the remainder of this chapter. To do so, I first discuss Aristotle’s concept of *kairos*, which helps to clarify that rhetorical context and timing are extremely important in understanding the ways ethos functions in any rhetorical situation, including the web.

Kairos: Contextualizing Ethos

Throughout the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle stresses “the importance of adaptation, context, and subject” required for successful persuasion (Johnson 1996, 243). Kennedy’s gloss on Book 1, Chapter 9 of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*, for example, explains that in order to assert an excellent character the speaker needs knowledge of *tokalon*, the honorable, fine, or noble (and, to a lesser extent, its opposite, the shameful) in order to “secure the trust of the audience so that they will believe what is being said” (Kennedy 78). Because different cultural contexts define *tokalon* or the characteristics of an excellent character differently, the successful demonstration of ethos requires an understanding of cultural expectations. Nan Johnson helps explain this concept further:

. . . Aristotle stresses the importance of the orator's assessment of "subject," "persons addressed," and "occasion." Such an assessment is a major factor in the presentation of an effective ethos and is synonymous with an identification of the relative "Good" involved. . . . the Good is not prescriptive but rather relativistic and subjective, in that it must be evaluated along a continuum of human values and situational particulars (Johnson 1984, 102).

According to Aristotle, analysis of each rhetorical situation requires attention to three elements: a need, an audience, and various constraints such as the facts of the topic, the time available for the rhetorical act, the speaker's assumptions, and the physical setting of the rhetorical act (*On Rhetoric* Book I Chapter 5). In Aristotle's time rhetorical events commonly took place in the agora, the public assembly place that often served as courtroom and site for debates about public policy. The concept of *kairos* applies equally to the agora of the ancient world and the web sites of the modern world because *kairos* is not simply the geographical or technical setting —Aristotle's concept of *kairos* requires that the rhetor recognize the values and expectations of the community as well as the timing and goals of the rhetorical act and shape her presentation to take these factors into account.

According to Aristotle, analysis of each rhetorical situation requires attention to three elements: a need, an audience, and various constraints such as the facts of the topic, the time available for the rhetorical act, the speaker's assumptions, and the physical setting of the rhetorical act (*On Rhetoric* Book I Chapter 5). James L. Kinneavy defines *kairos* as "right timing and due measure" and stresses the rhetorical functioning of the

term: how timing and sense of appropriateness to the occasion (what he calls propriety) generate or impact a rhetorical act. Kinneavy argues for the ethical, epistemological, rhetorical, aesthetic, and civic educational dimensions of a dual notion of *kairos* as right timing and due measure (224). Similarly, Welch defines *kairos* as the “opportune moment” (1990). Fogg also addresses *kairos* in his explanation of the importance of adapting presentations of *arête* and *phronesis* to the specific rhetorical situation. He writes, “persuasion techniques are most effective when they are interactive, when the persuader adjusts his or her influence tactics as the situation evolves” (2003). Ultimately, *kairos* deals with “the appropriateness of the discourse to the particular circumstances of the time, place, speaker, and audience involved” (Kinneavy 224).

In the contemporary moment, for example, a rhetor in an online environment must take into account the cultural context which includes technology, design expectations, and assumptions about what constitutes appropriate design for a particular genre of web site. Just as with spoken and print rhetorical acts, standards for the presentation of information online evolve over time and reflect the assumptions, values, and beliefs of the cultural context (or institutional context) within which the web site is composed and received. As standards and expectations evolve over time, the rhetor must adapt new strategies appropriate for this changed context. Furthermore, because an audience may hold varied expectations for the web site based on differing opinions about appropriate design and the purpose of a web site, perceptions of *ethos* may vary from reader to reader. Aristotle’s concept of *kairos* reminds us that *ethos* is context-sensitive and requires a rhetorical strategy that is “on target” for the rhetorical situation at hand. Since

the web is such a large component of the rhetorical situation in 2004, it is the contemporary rhetoric of web sites that interests me and that is the subject of this study.

Web sites, like other rhetorical texts, require attention to ethos to effectively persuade and present a credible character. For example, Enos and Borrowman (2001) explain that credibility is a key concern online and write:

Concern over questions of authorship and authority on the internet develops out of a key concept in the traditionally defined history of rhetoric: ethos. Because the internet is a virtual agora in which any rhetor with a small amount of technological know-how and in possession of minimal hardware can make her or his voice heard, our preoccupation with this new technology turns, very naturally, to questions of credibility and authority-to classical notions of ethos (93).

Web site designers, like the rhetors of ancient Greece of whom Aristotle writes, need their audience to trust them (i.e. they must be able to develop ethos on their web sites) in order to persuade effectively. As I will explain throughout this research project, web sites, like other rhetorical texts, require attention to ethos to be effective, and, as in spoken and print texts, the design, arrangement, and style of a web page shape the ethos of the web page.

Web sites need credibility because, for example, web sites published by institutions that are selling a product or service must persuade their audience that the product or service is valuable and worth consumer investment. University web sites, the focus of my research, are an interesting place to study how ethos is constructed because, while other types of web sites must demonstrate expertise in order to sell products or

services, the idea of the university itself is predicated on the creation and transmission of expertise in various forms. In addition, university web sites are marketing tools that can be used to help increase enrollment.

Core Areas of Inquiry into Online Ethos: Review of Existing Research

Although researchers in Composition and Rhetoric and Human Computer Interaction (HCI)¹ have studied many different facets of ethos and investigated how ethos functions in print-based and spoken communication, members of these fields (and, specifically, the field of Composition and Rhetoric) have not fully explored how ethos functions for online writing, specifically web sites. Current work on online ethos from these disciplinary perspectives does, however, affirm that design is an important aspect of online ethos (Fogg 2002, Enos and Borrowman 2001) just as style and delivery are important aspects of print-based and spoken ethos. In addition, work being done within the discipline of Speech Communication investigates how ethos functions in contemporary spoken rhetoric (McCroskey and Teven 1999). In addition to shaping understandings of ethos, this research from Composition and Rhetoric and Speech Communication provides examples of research methodologies for the investigation of online ethos and raises important questions for further research into the relationship between web sites, context, and ethos.

Much of the existing research on the ethos of web sites can be classified into four primary categories:

¹ The field of Human Computer Interaction (HCI) is an interdisciplinary area that incorporates principles and methodologies from Rhetoric, Professional Writing, Speech Communication, and Social Psychology. Fogg himself studied rhetoric at the graduate level before moving to the Stanford interdisciplinary think-tank focused on understanding how technology is used to persuade.

1. Translations of Aristotle's concepts of ethos to contemporary rhetorical situations into heuristics for evaluating ethos (McCroskey and Teven 1999).²
2. A focus on features of web site design and attempts to correlate design features with ethos (Fogg 2002; Enos and Borrowman 2001, Nielsen 2000, 2001, 2002; Krug 2000; Horton and Lynch 2000; Garrett 2002) in order to better understand which design decisions have the greatest impact on audience perceptions of ethos.
3. A focus on the presentation of identity online (Hawisher and Sullivan 2001; Cheung 2000; DeVoss 2000, 2002; Takayoshi and Blair 1997, 1999) in work that seeks to uncover relationships between socio-cultural power structures and online ethos.
4. A focus on the design process involved in the production of web sites (Spinuzzi et al 2003) which examine production issues and their impact on ethos.

The following review of selected pieces of existing literature on the ethos of web sites and my subsequent explanation of how I apply this research to define ethos for my work on the ethos of web sites will help explain these areas of inquiry. My presentation of this research and thinking about online ethos is intended to offer a brief introduction to research that illuminates understandings of online ethos in order to more clearly locate my research within the ongoing conversation and thinking about the ethos of web sites.

Please note that many researchers and scholars not directly addressed by this brief review of selected examples of relevant scholarly literature concern themselves with components of online ethos. Web design consultants, for example, make their living advising individuals and institutions how to best present the type of ethos (the type of

² Additional work on translating Aristotelian understandings of ethos abounds. See, for example, Nan Johnson (1984), Welch (1990, 1999), and Kennedy (1991) whose work to translate classical understandings

character, relationship with their audience, and expertise) that will make them most persuasive to their audience. However, to accommodate space constraints and maintain my disciplinary focus on the state of current understandings of online ethos in Composition and Rhetoric³ this literature review does not address the multiple kinds of texts targeted at web developers or a specifically corporate audience.⁴

A Heuristic for Evaluating Ethos: Source Credibility and Aristotelian Concepts of Ethos

Writing from within the field of Speech Communication, McCroskey and Teven (1999) examine how Aristotelian concepts of ethos, specifically *eunoia*, apply to contemporary spoken rhetoric situations. Their article, “Goodwill: A Reexamination of the Construct and Its Measurement,” focuses on trying to understand how goodwill is created in a speech act. Like other researchers in this field, McCroskey and Teven refer to ethos as source credibility. Source credibility⁵ was first defined by Andersen and Clevenger (1963) as the “attitude toward a source of communication held at a given time by a receiver—either a person or a group” (59). Rather than focusing on the technique practiced by the rhetor, investigations into source credibility define ethos from the

of ethos into modern languages was discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter.

³ While Fogg works within the field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) I include his work in this review because his recent research into persuasive technologies makes explicit connections to Aristotle and a rhetorical approach to examining the ethos of web sites.

⁴ With the exception, that is, of Fogg. As will be explained in the pages that follow, Fogg’s work explicitly brings together research and thinking from rhetoric, social psychology, and corporate web marketing and design.

⁵ Although the terminology differs among researchers, most constructs of source credibility reflect the three dimensions of Aristotelian ethos—*phronesis* (intelligence, expertise, competence), *arête* (excellent character), and *eunoia* (goodwill towards the audience) although different studies may focus on one or more of these three dimensions (Andersen and Clevenger 1963; Berlo, Lemert, and Metz 1969; McCroskey and Young 1981).

perspective of the audience and help reinforce the necessary role of the reader in shaping ethos.

As Table 1.1 illustrates, McCroskey and Teven attempt to gauge perceptions of ethos by measuring attitudinal change as a result of a speech act. This example demonstrates how researchers in this field may use both Likert-type⁶ and semantic differential type⁷ tools (Table 1.1 is a semantic differential type measure) to attempt to measure the relative level of credibility by calculating the change in audience perceptions of the speaker between initial and derived credibility. These researchers claim that this focus on measuring the type of ethos as perceived by the audience reinforces the fact that ethos is a perception held by the audience, not merely a rhetorical “trick” or device employed by the rhetor. Due in part to this focus on quantifying the amount of ethos, this research is of limited value to my work. However, their measurement tools (see, for example, the semantic differential scale in Table 1.1) can be helpful in illustrating how the components of Aristotelian ethos can be translated to a contemporary rhetorical situation.

⁶ A Likert scale is a unidimensional scaling method that presents a set of attitude statements and then asks subjects to express agreement or disagreement of a five-point scale. For additional information refer to William M. Trochim’s web site on Research Methods at Cornell University (<http://trochim.human.cornell.edu/kb/scalgen.htm>).

⁷ A semantic differential type measure is a multidimensional scaling method that ranks items on three scales: activity, evaluation, and potency. This type of measurement tool usually asks participants to choose between pairs of terms, hence the name semantic differential. This measurement device was first used by Osgood, who was trying to understand differences between individuals’ connotations for words. Today, the semantic differential scale is most often used to determine attitudes. For additional information, refer to Mick Underwood’s CCMS (Communication Studies, Cultural Studies, and Media Studies) online database (<http://www.cultsock.ndirect.co.uk/MUHome/cshtml/index.html>).

Table 1.1 McCroskey and Teven's Semantic Differential Scales to Evaluate Ethos
(qtd. in Constantinides and Swenson 3)

Competence	Trustworthiness	Goodwill
Intelligent- Unintelligent	Honest- Dishonest	Cares about me— Doesn't care about me
Trained- Untrained	Trustworthy- Untrustworthy	Has my interests at heart— Doesn't have my interests at heart
Expert- Inexpert	Honorable- Dishonorable	Not self-centered— Self- centered
Informed- Uninformed	Moral- Immoral	Concerned with me— Unconcerned with me
Competent- Incompetent	Ethical- Unethical	Sensitive— Insensitive
Bright- Stupid	Genuine- Phony	Understanding— Not understanding

In their study, McCroskey and Teven translate *phronesis* as competence, *arête* as trustworthiness, and *eunoia* as goodwill. While the translation of *arête* as trustworthiness is somewhat problematic, since trustworthiness and credibility are used by other researchers to mean the overarching concept of ethos, the list of terms underneath the headers in Table 1.1 serves to suggest different types of competence, trustworthiness, and goodwill and implies that each of these terms carries multiple shades of meaning.

Rather than simply translating *eunoia*, *phronesis*, and *arête* into single words or even short phrases, this study more carefully examines what is meant by goodwill, competence, and trustworthiness. While their work is focused on understanding the amount of goodwill evident in a speech act, McCroskey and Teven's measurement scale

displayed in Table 1.1 can be used as a heuristic to help rhetoricians make judgments about the type of ethos exhibited in a rhetorical act. For example, a speaker could be seen as presenting an insensitive but genuine ethos, or, a speaker could be seen as uninformed but ethical and understanding. By defining the three components of Aristotelian ethos with binary pairs of evaluative terms, McCroskey and Teven open the door for a more nuanced understanding of phronesis, arête, and eunoia.

Web Site Design Features and Ethos: Reading Web Design from a Rhetorical Perspective

In the first part of this section I briefly discuss a small sampling of web design manuals focused on usability in order to explain the ways in which these manuals indirectly correlate eunoia and usability. The second part presents work done in the fields of Composition and Rhetoric and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) that also correlate design features with ethos, but in a more direct manner than the web design manuals examined in part one.

Web Design Manuals

Web site design manuals and instructional web sites offering prescriptive recipes for appropriate graphical user interface (GUI) design abound, each with particular preferences and guidelines based upon assumptions regarding readers and site goals. Among the many alternatives, Jakob Nielsen's work on web design (2000, 2001, 2002), Sarah Horton and Patrick Lynch's popular Web Style Guide: Basic Design Principles for Creating Web Sites (2000) offer advice and design principles for web sites. These web

style manuals approach the question of online ethos in helping web designers build effective, credible sites. For the most part, the design guidelines offered in these texts stress the importance of user-centered design to establishing effective online ethos.⁸ I address Horton and Lynch and Nielsen in my brief discussion of web style and design manuals because they were the initial trendsetters for thinking and research into online style. They provided what were perhaps the first conversations about the relationship between online style, web design, usability, and credibility. Even four years later, traces of this initial work are still very visible.⁹

Horton and Lynch define user-centered design as providing clear navigational aides, giving users direct access to the information they want to review, offering methods for getting feedback from users, and enabling access by the disabled. They also argue that user-centered design organizes information within the site in terms of the hierarchy of information importance, relationship of a particular piece of information to other sections of the site, and intended function of the site in order to ensure that the information architecture of the site is easy for users to understand and navigate. For example, Horton and Lynch explain that

⁸ While the type of advice offered by Nielsen and Horton and Lynch is commonsense advice that could increase ease-of-use for many readers/ viewers, these recommendations, like the other recommendations and standards in web design guidebooks, impose a judgment about the kind of relationship a site should have with its reader/ viewer(s) and tend to recommend layout, organizational strategy, and GUI. Carlos Salinas, in his dissertation, explains that these design gurus typically “develop and discuss theories of visual design that focus primarily on production techniques for charts, tables and graphs, page layout issues, and/or cognitive perception. . . rhetoric tends to be cast as a categorical set of prescribed design principles to be universally applied” (14). These prescriptive directions on how to compose and organize a web site, although they may seem, “user-centered” in actuality tend towards homogenization of users.

⁹ Newer work, like Garrett’s (2002) *The Elements of User Experience: User-Centered Design for the Web*, retains traces of these earlier analyses in the ways that Garrett synthesizes the ways conversations about web site design have tended to focus the web as hypertext system or as software interface. By tracing these two parallel streams of thinking, Garrett talks about visual design, information design (which he breaks into two components, interface design and navigation design), interaction design/ information architecture, and functional specifications/ content requirements in efforts to summarize current understandings of web design and synthesize terminology used to discuss web site design.

The success of your Web site as an organization of information will largely be determined by how well your actual organization system matches your user's expectations. A logical site organization allows users to make successful predictions about where to find things. Consistent methods of grouping, ordering, labeling, and graphically arranging information allow users to extend their knowledge from pages they have visited to pages they are unfamiliar with. If you mislead users with a structure that is not logical (or have no comprehensible structure at all), users will be constantly frustrated by the difficulties of finding their way around (http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/sites/site_structure.html).

My reading of this work by Horton and Lynch uncovers an implied connection between user-centered design and the demonstration of phronesis and eunoia in a web site. As the preceding quotation illustrates, to Horton and Lynch phronesis means an information architecture that is so easy to use (i.e. “natural”) that it becomes invisible to the audience.¹⁰ Similarly, in this example eunoia is correlated with easy-to-use navigation; Horton and Lynch’s explanation that an illogical navigation “misleads” audience members can be read as suggesting that poor navigation is read by some readers as an intentional attempt to deceive the audience.

As do Horton and Lynch, Jakob Nielsen exhorts designers to consider the site from the user’s perspective. For example, Nielsen advocates adherence to a standard page “header” (what appears along the top of the screen) that includes company (or school) name/logo and search, encourages designers to include only relevant links, and

¹⁰ The debatable issue, though, is how to define “natural” and easy-to-use. As briefly hinted at in my discussion of kairos, this is not a simple matter.

insists that designers not assume that site viewers came to a particular page in one particular way (Alertbox 2002). According to Nielsen, including company name and logo on the site builds credibility by establishing an affiliation between the web site and a larger institution whose expertise, character and goodwill may have more public recognition than that of an individual.¹¹ By addressing credibility, Nielsen is talking about ethos, albeit in somewhat simplified terms.

While Nielsen's work is several years old (ancient by web design standards) it continues to be referenced and used today. In addition, other work from this time period, like Steve Krug's (2000) Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability, echoes the examples I give from Horton and Lynch and Nielsen to assert a similar point about the importance of usability. For example his "trunk test" uses the metaphor of being bundled blindfolded into the trunk of a car, driven about a bit then plopped onto a web page. According to Krug, the test of web site usability is to be able to identify: What site is this? What page am I on? What are my options at this level? Where am I in the scheme of things? based on information available to you on that web page. As in work published by Horton and Lynch and Nielsen, Krug suggests connections to ethos in discussing usability although he does not directly reference ethos.

Web design manuals, like the examples cited here, may not explicitly focus on ethos and instead tend more towards discussions of the effectiveness of web sites in a more general sense. However, as this brief overview has shown, these general discussions connect to conceptualizations of ethos in suggesting that ethos is established

¹¹ Work done by other researchers in Composition and Rhetoric, namely Spinuzzi et al (2003) and Hawisher and Sullivan (1999), as does this work by Horton and Lynch and Nielsen, indirectly raises the issue of the relationship between individual and institutional ethos. Refer to the later section of this chapter on online identity and ethos for more information.

through user-centered design. The specifics of what constitutes user-centered design may differ between authors, but the correlation between user-centered design and credible design that demonstrates goodwill towards the audience and appropriate expertise with web design remains constant. Specific research into online ethos from within the discipline of Composition and Rhetoric builds on findings and assertions in these web design and style manuals to begin to unravel the complex relationship between design and Aristotelian understandings of *phronesis*, *arête*, and *eunoia* as three facets of ethos.

Web Design and Ethos: Examples from Composition and Rhetoric and Human Computer Interaction

Scholars in Composition and Rhetoric and HCI pay attention to *kairos* in examining the connections between ethos and the socio-cultural context within which a rhetorical act occurs and have also sought to develop rhetoric-based methodologies for analyzing the ethos of web sites. This section overviews research by Enos and Borrowman (2001) and Fogg (2002) that closely analyzes web site design features to understand how these features impact ethos.

Focused research into the ethos of web sites is a relatively new area; as a result there is not a great deal of published work specifically addressing online ethos from within the disciplinary perspective of Composition and Rhetoric. I selected Enos and Borrowman and Fogg's pieces as my focus for this section because they focus directly on ethos and make reference to Aristotelian concepts of ethos in their analysis. In so doing, they translate Aristotle's ideas to the rhetorical space of the web and enable the ongoing conversation about how ethos functions online. Furthermore, these scholars offer

templates for researching online ethos that directly shape my own research and thinking about the relationship between web design and ethos more than directive “cookbook” style web design manuals, research on information architecture, or research on increasing web site “stickiness.”¹²

Enos and Borrowman (2001) explain that all facets of a web site (design, interactivity, content, graphics, links, multimedia etc.) “construct ethos in the traditional print-based ways, but move beyond that construction as well. [Web site designers or implied authors] demonstrate credibility through their scrupulously maintained site, a site that is easy to navigate and easy on the computer-tired eye” (98). They explain that online ethos can be impacted by the design and layout of the graphical user interface (GUI) in the links, navigational strategy, and connections to other sites that present or display the content as well as by the content itself, both textual and graphical. Enos and Borrowman argue that paying attention to all these aspects of web site design is important because web sites “move beyond” the printed page and establish ethos at the intersection of text, graphics, multimedia, content, format, and online and “real-world” context.

Enos and Borrowman differentiate online context from socio-cultural or “real-world” context in that online context is comprised of other web sites, not the socio-cultural power relationships and gender roles in the “real” non-digital world that shape the production and reception of these web sites. As later sections of this chapter will explain, Hawisher and Sullivan (1999) and Cheung (2000) also hint at online context by including readings of multiple sites in their research; Enos and Borrowman, however, focus more directly on online context by offering a more in-depth comparison of two web

¹² Stickiness denotes the amount of time an audience member spends surfing a particular site. It is one of the key measures used to determine the effectiveness of web sites.

sites and by discussing multiple aspects of the web sites' design in comparison to each other.¹³

To do so, Enos and Borrowman analyze two web sites published by individuals claiming the Holocaust never happened. Choosing a controversial topic that most educated readers will disagree with makes it easier to identify the ways in which site designers use language and web site design to attempt to create a credible personal character. In their analysis, Enos and Borrowman focus on the interrelationship between their understanding of the different components of Aristotelian ethos. They translate *eunoia* as goodwill evidenced by the tone of the textual content and the ways in which tone presents what they describe as an inclusive character. In addition to *eunoia*, Enos and Borrowman also address the other components of Aristotelian ethos and translate *arête* as character and *phronesis* as content expertise.¹⁴ Their article investigates how the design, navigation, and content of a web site shapes work together to present a credible ethos.

For example, Enos and Borrowman explain how a web site claiming the Holocaust never happened asserts a virtuous, excellent character by positioning the implied author(s) of the site as very inclusive, unbiased, and tolerant through a variety of textual and design strategies. They explain how this positioning occurs in the text, in the layout and navigation, and in the graphical presentation of the site. For example, in

¹³ In so doing, Enos and Borrowman lay out a methodology similar to the one I will use to complete my analysis of the ethos of several connected university web sites. As does my research, Enos and Borrowman complete a rhetorical analysis of the web text and are not directly focused on the production issues shaping the ethos of web sites. Enos and Borrowman also model my strategy of comparing multiple sites; their work compares how their two selected web sites use different tactics to establish ethos and by reflecting on which tactics are more effective for them as readers.

¹⁴ As with most other work on ethos, these definitions of the components of ethos overlap. *Arête* and *eunoia* both require an "excellent" character. Enos and Borrowman define the particular type of excellence

reading the Institute for Historical Review (IHR) web site, Enos and Borrowman point out that the site's blunt statement that "the Institute for Historical Review is non-ideological, non-religious, and non-political" is an attempt to establish unbiased character. They connect this statement to the IHR's motto of "Bringing history into accord with facts" to make the following assertion:

The group is, it seems, above the petty squabbles of the material world—squabbles over political, moral, and social beliefs. . . the Institute is concerned only with the "facts" that fail to support the commonly taught history of the Holocaust (100).

The textual content of this site develops a character based on higher moral principles and, in so doing, positions the group's controversial ideas about the Holocaust as an altruistic endeavor to right historical and educational oversights and intentional cover-ups. While this web site relies mainly on textual content to develop this ethos, Enos and Borrowman also analyze another web site (published by the Committee for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH)) which uses the web medium more fully in the construction of an ethos.

In their analysis of the CODOH site, Enos and Borrowman explain that this web site presents an appropriately excellent character by focusing on inclusiveness; this site offers links to versions of the site published in more than a dozen languages. Enos and Borrowman explain that this "multilingual feature of the site is an excellent way of demonstrating the group's all-inclusive approach to their topic" by suggesting that this web site is published for the world, not just one country (104). Furthermore, the CODOH

they see as required to shape an effective ethos in the rhetorical situation of Holocaust denial web sites as an inclusive character.

site uses a counter to tell the web reader how many other people have entered this site previously—this counter can be read as an attempt to establish inclusiveness because it demonstrates that many people have read this site, and it can also be read as creating a form of ethos by affiliation. The counter lends an aura of credibility because, although it only demonstrates how many people have entered the site, it insinuates that this number of people believe in the site content. Enos and Borrowman sum up their analysis of the CODOH site by explaining that CODOH site authors “demonstrates credibility through their scrupulously maintained site, a site that is easy to navigate and easy on the computer-tired eye. They demonstrate character through their inclusiveness, and through their clear desire to transcend political and linguistic barriers” (107).

Enos and Borrowman also discuss how character is presented as “scholarly”; their analysis of these web sites demonstrates how web sites can create the perception of a scholarly character that builds ethos by affiliation with a university and the credentials provided by advanced degrees. They explain that these Holocaust deniers are able to present their work “in a scholarly guise”¹⁵ and cover their bigotry with what Enos and Borrowman call “a patina of scholarship (and pseudo-legitimacy)” that may be effectively convincing to the general public (108). These different examples of the type of character shaped by web site design and textual content help to explain that *arête* means a character which is appropriately “excellent” for the rhetorical situation at hand. In so doing, Enos and Borrowman’s rhetorical analysis clarifies the kinds of virtue used

¹⁵ For example, Enos and Borrowman explain that Arthur Butz “portrays himself as a scholar engaged in a Platonic search for the Truth . . . as a good man, one facing an uphill battle against the prejudices and ignorance of others but determined to succeed regardless, a good man” (98). On his web site, he makes it clear that he is an associate professor at a major institution and that he is a published author/ “expert” on the Holocaust.

to shape an ethos and connects these kinds of virtue with web design and textual rhetorical strategies.

Fogg's work on online credibility completed at the Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab—a research center focused on Human-Computer Interaction—takes Enos and Borrowman's research in a slightly different direction by conducting surveys to gather multiple perceptions of the relative credibility of web sites. Like McCroskey and Teven, Fogg helps provide terms for defining the kind of ethos on a web site; like Enos and Borrowman, Fogg helps explain the ways design strategies correlate to perceptions of ethos.

Fogg's October 2002 study completed in partnership with Sliced Bread Design and Consumer WebWatch, for example, compares how experts in health care and finance and non-expert consumers evaluated the credibility of health care and finance web sites. Medical sites included in the study are MayoClinic.com, WebMD, InteliHeath, and the National Institute of Health sites, while the finance sites selected include Fidelity, Schwab, Merrill Lynch and E-Trade (among others). After asking consumers to complete a web-based survey tool, Fogg compiled data and compared responses in order to come up with a table listing a "variable score ranking ordered from items that made a site much more believable to those that made the site much less believable" (32) (see Table 1.2).

Fogg advances thinking about online ethos by collating perceptions about ethos into recommendations for web site design. In order to help designers assert ethos in an online environment, Fogg and his colleagues used the results of their study of health care and finance sites to publish the following list of ten guidelines for building the credibility

of a web site. Although he does not always make connections to Aristotle, Fogg’s list of guidelines, like the semantic differential scale published by McCroskey and Teven (see Table 1.1), can be understood as translating the Aristotelian conceptualization of ethos to an online environment. A close look at each of these ten suggestions reveals that many of them correspond to *arête*, *phronesis*, and *eunoia*. To indicate the correspondence, I have included a brief explanation of the connection between these points and Aristotelian concepts of ethos in the right hand column of Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Fogg’s 10 Guidelines for Increasing Web Site Credibility and Connections to Aristotelian Ethos

Fogg’s 10 Guidelines for Increasing Web Site Credibility Quoted from Fogg et al. <u>The Web Credibility Project</u> – online	Connection to Aristotelian ethos: phronesis (expertise), <i>arête</i> (character), and/ or <i>eunoia</i> (goodwill towards audience)
#1 Make it easy to verify the accuracy of the information on your site.	Demonstrates <i>phronesis</i> , specifically subject area expertise, because if information can be easily verified, users are convinced as to its validity. Also connects to <i>eunoia</i> by increasing usability.
#2 Show that there’s a real organization behind your site.	Corresponds to <i>phronesis</i> because connection with a “real” organization like a corporation or university verifies that the implied author(s) of a site are

	knowledgeable. Also referred to as ethos by affiliation.
#3 Highlight the expertise in your organization and in the content and services you provide.	Demonstrates phronesis -- both technical (in terms of web design) and subject matter expertise.
#4 Show that honest and trustworthy people stand behind your site.	Corresponds to arête by demonstrating two components of an excellent character.
#5 Make it easy to contact you.	Demonstrates eunoia by showing that author(s) want to make themselves (or their representatives) accessible to readers.
#6 Design your site so it looks professional or is appropriate for your purpose.	Corresponds to phronesis by demonstrating design expertise; references kairos.
#7 Make your site easy to use and useful.	Demonstrates eunoia by creating a user-friendly site while confusing design strategies suggest a lack of goodwill towards audience. Also demonstrates phronesis, specifically technical expertise in web design.
#8 Update your site's content often (or at least show it has been reviewed recently).	Corresponds to phronesis by demonstrating that site content is up to date and also displays eunoia by showing that site authors care enough about audience to keep

	site up to date.
#9 Use restraint with any promotional content (e.g., ads, offers).	Demonstrates <i>arête</i> and <i>eunoia</i> by “proving” that site author(s) are not just trying to make money off the web site and instead are focusing on communicating with the audience.
#10 Avoid errors of all type, no matter how small they seem.	Demonstrates <i>phronesis</i> , <i>arête</i> , and <i>eunoia</i> —errors can be the result of lack of expertise, lack of attention to detail, or disregard/ not caring.

As Table 1.2 demonstrates, my reading of Fogg’s ten guidelines identifies correlations between Aristotle’s three core components and some of the design recommendations Fogg offers to web site designers wishing to improve their credibility. For example, *phronesis* is manifested in the demonstration of technical or design expertise through effective navigation, site architecture, graphical user interface, and appropriate use of searchable databases and other online tools. *Phronesis* is also demonstrated in the way content layout, accuracy, relevancy, and quality demonstrate subject matter expertise. *Arête* is seen in the way a web site uses tone and voice to create a sense of an institutional or authorial character appropriate to the site’s genre, content, and institutional affiliation. Similar to Aristotelian *ethos*, in Fogg’s research, *eunoia* (which he defines as goodwill towards the audience), overlaps with both *phronesis* and *arête* because goodwill is demonstrated by the care with which audience needs (in terms

of navigation, information access, and interactive tools) are considered and the tone or character of the relationship the site establishes with the audience. As in the web design manuals discussed earlier, Fogg's work correlates the relative usability of a web site to goodwill; he believes that a user-centered web site demonstrates a sense of consideration towards the audience which is one way of understanding Aristotle's concept of *eunoia*.

In Fogg's work, Aristotle's notion of *phronesis* is translated to mean the demonstration of technical expertise in web site design and the convincing assertion of subject-area or disciplinary expertise (which Fogg also refers to as content-area expertise). Expertise, for Fogg, means "knowledgeable, experienced, competent" (3). Fogg differentiates between technical (web design) expertise and content-area expertise; this distinction is helpful in discussing online ethos because a site that demonstrates excellent content-area expertise does not necessarily demonstrate web design expertise and vice versa. Fogg's division of *phronesis* into two sub-categories reflects the particular rhetorical context of web sites and offers an excellent example of the ways Aristotelian understandings of ethos can be applied with minor modification to web sites.

In sum, Fogg's 2002 study found that "consumers tended to rely heavily on overall visual design when assessing web sites, including layout, typography, and color schemes" (Fogg, Stanford, and Tauber 3). Although expert readers (defined in Fogg's study as readers with content expertise, not technical or web-design expertise) focused on content quality and less on design aspects, non-expert readers evaluated web sites largely on design features including layout, navigation, and color schemes while paying less attention to content quality (Fogg, Stanford, and Tauber 4).¹⁶ Fogg's studies

¹⁶ Fogg explains: "More than half (54.6%) of the comments by the consumers regarding [the credibility of] finance sites referred to design look, which relates to the visual appeal of a site's design, as being very

demonstrate that effective use of appropriate web design strategies and techniques establish technical credibility or expertise and shape interpretations of whether or not content is credible for non-expert readers.¹⁷ Like Enos and Borrowman, Fogg's work helps to explain the relationship between web design and ethos and helps to explain that design features are important in understanding online ethos because the design of a web site can undercut or support attempts at establishing ethos.¹⁸ Both Enos and Borrowman and Fogg contribute to understandings of online ethos by offering helpful terminology for discussing ethos online as well as methodologies for researching ethos within the context of the web. Researchers working in Composition and Rhetoric who focus on online identity extend this conversation on the ethos of web sites by analyzing the ways institutional and social context shapes identity and, I would argue, ethos.

Online Identity and Ethos

important compared to only 16.4% of finance expert comments [on credibility] of these sites. Likewise, 41.8% of consumer comments regarding [the credibility of] health sites made note of a site's design look, compared to 7.6% of surveyed health experts' comments which mentioned this topic" (Stanford, Tauber, and Fogg 4).

¹⁷ Fogg's work uses the terminology of "credibility" to discuss ethos. Other researchers, including McCroskey and Teven (1999) and Nicolas Burbules (1998) also use the term credibility as a stand-in for ethos. Burbules, for example, discusses credibility as established by affiliation/ validation by trusted third-party sources, timeliness, and comprehensiveness. The use of the term credibility instead of ethos seems to occur most frequently in research from the social sciences (Speech Communication and Education for the examples given above) designed to quantitatively measure the amount of credibility rather than analyze how different types of ethos/credibility are established. While Fogg's use of the term credibility positions his work in the tradition of social sciences, his definition of the term explicitly references Aristotle and a rhetorical approach to understanding credibility as ethos. For this reason, I read Fogg's use of the term credibility as equivalent to ethos.

¹⁸ On the other hand, Fogg's work differs from Enos and Borrowman's (as well as much of the other research reviewed in this chapter) not only in methodology, but also in terms of its goal and his authorial ethos. Fogg's work purports to be focused on helping consumers develop strategies for accurately evaluating the credibility of web sites. However, because his work is funded by web design companies and the companies publishing the web sites he is studying, the results of his research may more often be used to persuade consumers (and, in fact, much of his work reads as if targeted at web designers and institutions using the web as a marketing and sales tool) rather than educate them. To my mind, the funding of his work by web design companies impacts his ethos as a researcher because it undercuts his stated goal of

Two articles written from within the discipline of Composition and Rhetoric address ethos more indirectly than Enos and Borrowman and Fogg and provide a useful lens on work being conducted in Rhetoric and Composition on online identity and ethos. Both these pieces, one by Hawisher and Sullivan (1999) and the other by Cheung (2000) assume that representations of self in an online environment translate, at least indirectly, to subject positions in the “real” (i.e. non-digital) world. However, at the same time that the correlation of online and non-digital subjectivity may be somewhat problematic, this correlation enables the investigation of how the socio-cultural context impacts representations of self online by connecting online representations of identity to the political context in which the individuals represented online act. These two articles also focus, at least in part, on university web site and frame my research and thinking about faculty web sites.

Hawisher and Sullivan’s “Fleeting Images: Women Visually Writing the Web” (1999) is one of the earliest Composition and Rhetoric articles focusing on identity and self-representation on web pages that use graphical user interfaces (GUIs).¹⁹ This article develops a methodology of close rhetorical readings of selected web sites and connects the design of web sites to the socio-cultural context surrounding the design and reception of online texts. The authors’ investigation of commercial, institutional, and personal web sites strives to address how

helping consumers--- if he is helping consumers, why aren’t consumer groups paying him to do this research?

¹⁹ In addition to these pieces, see also work by DeVoss (2000, 2002) as well as Takayoshi and Blair (1997, 1999) on the subject of women’s online identities. DeVoss’s work addresses online identity and the ways in which women are graphically portrayed online. See, for example, *Women’s porn sites--Spaces of fissure and eruption or “I’m a little bit of everything”* (2002) and *re-reading cyborg(?) women: the visual rhetoric of images of cyborg (and cyber) bodies on the World-Wide Web* (2000). Blair and Takayoshi’s *Who’s Gaze is it Anyway? Navigating the Image of Women Onlin.* in *Three Commentaries on “Gender and Electronic Discourse* (1999) also examines visual representations of women in web texts.

women and others represent themselves visually on home pages . . . particularly . . . how these representations position women within society and what subject positions are available to them in order to answer the key question: “As women visually construct themselves online, what issues of representation should they consider and how do they understand others’ online construction of them?” (Hawisher and Sullivan 269).

While Hawisher and Sullivan’s study examines the extent to which the web sites under investigation replicate or resist socio-cultural patterns of representation of women that foreground “homogenized representations of ‘femaleness’ and serve to reproduce the age-old stereotypical relations among the sexes” (275), their discussion of the representation of faculty online is also very relevant to understanding the ethos of university web sites.

By connecting the graphical representation of faculty on university-sponsored web sites with the institutional context of the university, Hawisher and Sullivan assert that faculty mug shots (like the one of Susan Hilligoss discussed in their research) represent an administrative view of faculty as interchangeable, non-individualized, sets of credentials. They compare these university representations of women with commercial online representations like those on the Victoria’s Secret web site. In so doing, Hawisher and Sullivan uncover a relationship between the amount of relative control over the online representation the female subject has and the type of female identity created online (which is one way of conceptualizing the type of ethos forwarded by a particular web site). They write:

When others control the Web images, we see women represented commercially in ways that seem familiar to us—as objects to be ogled, objects to stimulate, commodities to be bought and sold—and represented institutionally as serious, if smiling, heads that are interchangeable across schools and disciplines (287).

Hawisher and Sullivan then contrast these homogenized images of female models and female faculty on the university-sponsored web sites with self-sponsored, female-authored web sites, which offer a more multi-faceted view of female identity. For example, they describe Eve Anderson’s self-published faculty web site, where she has resisted the categorization of the university mug shot by inserting an altered photo in which she appears as an alien (285). By altering photos and “playing with the visual in ways that blur the boundaries between physical selves and virtual selves,” Hawisher and Sullivan explain that individuals like Eve Anderson are forging “new social arrangements by creating a visual discourse that startles and disturbs” (287). Their assertion that websites can reinforce existing social arrangements or promote new social arrangements presents web sites as a powerful rhetorical vehicle for social change.

By connecting web sites to social critique or complicity, this article seeks to understand the relationship between web sites and the social context within which these sites are designed and read. This line of inquiry shapes further research into ethos by explaining that web sites are not always spaces apart from the power relationships governing social interactions. For example, as a later section of this review will demonstrate, Spinuzzi et al (2003) address how the design of web sites affects the type and amount of participation in departmental activities. Hawisher and Sullivan’s

investigations of online self-representation address character (arête) by discussing the ways in which representations of self demonstrate resistance to institutional control, such as Eve Anderson's portrayal of her institutional self as an alien, but they do not examine expertise or goodwill, the other two components of Aristotle's ethos.²⁰ While these subtle connections to ethos are not highlighted by the article itself and are not correlated to persuasion or trustworthiness, I see interesting issues of the interaction between personal and institutional ethos emerging from their research. For example, male faculty are commodified by institutional faculty web pages that present faculty as "interchangeable" sets of credentials in the same ways that Hawisher and Sullivan describe the commodification of female faculty, yet Hawisher and Sullivan portray this commodification as a women's issue. Perhaps this issue is not solely based on gender but is more a question of the relationship between individual and institutional ethos. Also, the Hawisher and Sullivan piece implicitly criticizes universities for representing (and treating) faculty as commodities. But, how does the online representation of faculty in this way impact perceptions of the ethos of the department? Of the university? Of higher education web sites in general? The Hawisher and Sullivan piece raises many questions

²⁰ Hawisher and Sullivan's article is more focused on online persona and the ways representations of online personas reflect the power structure of the social context within which the web sites are composed and read rather than ethos. Although persona is often used interchangeably with ethos, Roger Cherry's article, "Ethos Versus Persona," published in *Written Communication* in 1988, explains that the two concepts "provide different perspectives on self-representation in written text" because ethos refers to a "set of characteristics" that can enhance credibility while persona, coming from the literary tradition, refers to the "roles authors create for themselves in written discourse given their representation of audience, subject matter, and other elements of context" (Cherry 101). Persona is very similar to Aristotle's character; the role an author creates for themselves is very similar to the character a rhetor or author presents. Persona, then, is a component of ethos, not synonymous with ethos. Persona helps to explain how a rhetor creates an image of himself in his communication (or, in the case of Hawisher and Sullivan, how a web designer creates an image of someone else) that impacts audience perceptions of arête, phronesis, and eunoia. But examining persona, or representations of identity, in order to better understand socio-cultural- technical matrices of power and control is not the same as examining ethos as a means of persuasion. Hawisher and Sullivan explore persona when they focus on the extent to which self-published web sites create different online roles which are different than the institutional or social roles these people embrace offline.

about the ways these individual faculty web sites impact the ethos of the web sites and institutions with which they are affiliated, some of which I hope to answer in later chapters.

Cheung's article, "A Home on the Web: Presentations of Self on Personal Homepages" (2000) also focuses on the ways the personal (i.e. self-published) homepage where the subject has control over their online representation can enable resistance to social expectations and control, especially for those who "feel they have difficulty presenting themselves in face-to-face interaction" and for those who "want to present 'hidden' aspects of themselves—things they are cautious to reveal in 'real life' because of fear of rejection or embarrassment" (48).²¹ My reading of Cheung (2000) uncovers a tacit agreement with Hawisher and Sullivan. While Hawisher and Sullivan discuss the commodification of female faculty members, Cheung writes that "the problem of self-censorship may be most prominent in the staff homepage section of institutional websites, because the company must insure that self-presentations do not run counter to the organization's carefully cultivated corporate image" (50). In discussing the relationship between institutional usages of the web and the individual presentation of subjectivity online, both Hawisher and Sullivan and Cheung seem to assume that the institutional context surrounding the design and development of web sites does not encourage or allow for creativity and individualism.²² Cheung, for example, directly

²¹ In so doing, Cheung echoes earlier research on email communication and online learning that examines how technology shifts the balance of power in a classroom that has been questioned and re-examined by contemporary researchers.

²² Ruth Ray and Ellen Barton's 1991 article, "Technology and Authority," investigates the institutional context surrounding the use of technology (although, due to the time period in which they were writing, they did not directly address graphically-based web sites). This article differentiates between an institutional imperative (which uses top-down decision making and technist thinking to increase technical literacy and technological control of managers while decreasing employee literacies and access to control

recognizes that the need to present a “unified corporate image” impacts the ways individuals are represented and represent themselves online. When the idea of a “unified corporate image” is read as the ethos of the corporate web site, Cheung’s research can be reframed as an investigation into the relationship between the ethos of individual web sites and the larger institutional web sites within which individual sites are published.

Like Hawisher and Sullivan and like Cheung, Spinuzzi et al (2003) are concerned with the relationship between web sites and the power relationships in the social context surrounding the web site. However, while Hawisher and Sullivan and Cheung focus primarily on the web site as rhetorical text, the Spinuzzi et al article addresses both the design process (i.e. the act of creating the rhetorical text) and the impact of the design process on the web site as rhetorical text. All three of these pieces are important to understanding online ethos because they encourage a systems-based thinking about web sites and online ethos that integrates the digital and the social by examining how power hierarchies are repeated in the web design process and the web text.

Web Site Production Process and Ethos

Spinuzzi et al’s 2003 article reports on and analyzes an effort to introduce a new kind of web design process to faculty in the Department of English at Texas Tech University. Although ethos per se is not the focus of the work, Spinuzzi et al extend current understandings about the relationship between ethos and design by correlating the power relationships of the design process with the ultimate success (i.e. ethos) of the web

mechanisms) and an institutional interaction approach that is more collaborative and seeks to increase access to technology and technical literacy for all. Both the Hawisher and Sullivan and the Cheung pieces assume an institutional imperative climate. Reading Ray and Barton’s work against newer pieces, like the

site. While Hawisher and Sullivan and Cheung suggest that a non-participatory design process results in the presentation of disempowered selves online, Spinuzzi and his colleagues test this theory. The article offers a case study of what Spinuzzi et al label the conversational approach to web site design whereby faculty members of the English department formerly labeled as “users” (a term Spinuzzi considers derogatory due to the disempowerment it suggests) become “participatory citizens who continually produce knowledge.

The authors’ analysis of the original departmental web site focuses on both faculty perceptions of the web site as online representation of the department and on the relative ease of updating and maintaining the site for these primarily non-technical faculty. The new conversational design process applied in the case study attempts to re-design the departmental web site and simultaneously empower department members to more easily add or update online information. Perhaps because the database-driven administrative tools provided to faculty for updating site information themselves were perceived as hegemonic by the department members, changing the design process to enable the democratic empowerment of multiple citizens in the design of the web site did not result in the large scale involvement in the web design process for which the authors had hoped. Spinuzzi et al state that “we cannot report clear success, primarily because the technical aspects of our design did not successfully address the social challenges of making the web site part of the department’s social fabric” (188).

Although the case study itself did not result in wide-scale success, Spinuzzi and his co-authors’ research is important to understanding online ethos because it presents

Spinuzzi et al article, can help flesh out the challenges of building a web site within an institutional culture that may not be receptive to or ready for radical democratizing of web spaces.

terminology helpful to discussions of web site design and the institutional context shaping design decisions. For example, Spinuzzi et al offer a pair of terms for discussing the rhetoric of web sites when they differentiate between monologic sites that transmit information to a largely passive audience and open system sites in which the audience shares in control of the design and the continual evolution of the web site.²³ The article uses the term brochureware to describe a web site which is nothing more interactive than a print brochure; as such, brochureware is focused on the transmission, not interactive creation, of knowledge and information. Finally, this text offers the idea of the conversational approach to web site design wherein end-users (not just web developers) are part of the design, development, and maintenance of the site.

In addition to offering terminology, this article confronts the real-world complexity of “inclusive” web site design that seeks to balance individual and institutional ethos. This article implies that an effective institutional ethos requires consistency across the many web sites affiliated with the university while the ethos of the site itself (and, indirectly the institution) depends more upon usability.²⁴ In discussing their experiences re-designing a departmental web site, Spinuzzi and his co-authors relate the difficulties in balancing the competing rhetorical demands of ensuring ease-of-use for the varied audience of faculty, staff, and students, as well as the general public, against the individualized creative license desired by the department members participating in the design process. As such, this piece offers insight into the real difficulty in “moving past the brochureware model so typical of department web sites while retaining a unified

²³ The authors refer to this shared design approach as a conversational approach to web site design.

²⁴ These ideas about web site design, usability, and consistency are echoed in the web design manuals discussed earlier in this chapter. This example illustrates just one of the ways these web design manuals impact rhetorical analyses and theorizing about digital rhetoric.

image, ease of updating, and strong organizational and navigational features important to establishing ethos and making the site accessible to users (175, 169).

Finally, this piece extends the conversation begun by Enos and Borrowman and Fogg about the relationship between eunoia and web site design. Spinuzzi and his co-authors argue that positioning audience members as “users” (as non-participatory bystanders) negatively impacts audience perceptions of the site—what I would refer to as user perceptions of eunoia (175). The authors explain that poor web site design “tends to be hegemonic, assuming a grossly asymmetrical power relationship in which the citizen is obliged to use the artifact according to the dictates of the designer and simply be a user” (175) and caution against homogenizing audience members (176) in order to preserve both perceptions of institutional ethos and the individual freedom necessary to create individual ethos online.

By examining both the production and the reception of a web site, Spinuzzi et al problematize rhetorical readings of web sites and encourage rhetoricians to be more generous in considering the impact production issues have on the design and development of web sites. Specifically, this article presents the real difficulties involved with attempts to create inclusive sites that build knowledge instead of simply transmitting information. These difficulties must be kept in mind during readings of faculty and department web sites. For example, a web site that appears less technically advanced or robust may not be evidence of a lack of technical expertise, but a lack of time or a different focus.

The Impact of Context on Ethos: From Agora to Knowledge Network

As the preceding review of existing literature and discussion of *arête*, *phronesis*, *eunoia*, and *kairos* demonstrates, researchers have begun the process of investigating online ethos by completing rhetorical readings and survey-based research of the ethos of web sites that compare and contrast the ethos of several sites (Hawisher and Sullivan, Enos and Borrowman, Fogg). Current on facets of online ethos also demonstrates that web sites are connected to the socio-cultural and online or textual context within which they are created and read (Spinuzzi, Cheung, Hawisher and Sullivan). As these articles illustrate, much of the existing work on online ethos tends to look at web sites in isolation or complete rhetorical readings of small groups or pairs of web sites. However, careful thinking about the Hawisher and Sullivan and Spinuzzi (and, to lesser extent, Cheung) pieces unveils a common thread of discussing the ways web sites function as part of a social ecology. Research on information ecologies offers a useful theoretical lens for understanding the ways in which web sites operate as part of a complex ecology comprised of web sites and the social context surrounding these web spaces.

Research on information ecologies emerges from the fields of Information Technology (Hasenyager 1996), Organizational Behavior (Nardi and O'Day 1999, 2001), and Composition and Rhetoric (Syverson, online). Bonnie Nardi and Vicki O'Day, for example, define an information ecology as "a system of people, practices, values, and technologies in a particular local environment" (13). Nardi and O'Day (2001) use the term ecology to reference the ways that each local context is different in important and systemic ways, just as forests and deserts and tropical estuaries each constitute a different system. Their study of informal and formal communities of practice within private sector corporations and government entities explores how formal structures (organizational

charts, geographical location, office layout) and informal structures (friendships, gender, etc.) jointly influence the way communities form and the way knowledge is shared.

Nardi and O'Day also explain that successful ecologies of information can be defined by the extent to which they (among other things) practice co-evolution. Co-evolution means that because all components of a specific information ecology are connected, modifications or "evolutions" of one component will impact all other components (49). For example, if salespeople learn a new consultative selling technique relying on in-depth knowledge of competitors' products, marketing staff will need to change their work processes and sales tools to provide salespeople with this knowledge. Eventually, marketing research into competitors' products and sales conversations with clients could result in large-scale modifications to the company's products. Groups and individuals practice co-evolution by responding to each others' changing needs and to new developments in the industry.

The concept of co-evolution can be applied to research on the ethos of web sites if the concept is adapted from something people or institutions do to an analytical tool for understanding how generations of web sites impact ethos. Generations of web sites is a term used to describe the ways that web sites are revised over time. A generation is equivalent to an "edition" in print; first generation web sites represent the first time an organization or individual creates a web site, like the first edition of a printed text. The second generation is the second "edition" of the web site and so on. The revisions between generations, like those between print editions, reflect the learning and increased sophistication with both the content and the form of the particular web site that designers gain with experience. The concept of generations of web sites can be applied to specific

instances, as the print editions correspond to specific texts, and they can also be applied more generally as a descriptor or value judgment that reflects the ways that expertise in web site development and assumptions about what constitutes appropriate site design change over time.²⁵

Generations of web sites reflect the process of co-evolution in the ways that they evidence the struggles to adapt social and technical goals and processes to each other, as both are simultaneously changing. Because generations reflect different decisions about what constitutes good design, a comparison between generations of web sites reveals how individuals try to integrate web site technologies “into settings of use in such a way that they make sense” (Nardi and O’Day 53) for the particular locality in which they are used and which they are representing. Nardi and O’Day explain that:

Even when tools remain fixed for a time, the craft of using tools with expertise and creativity continues to evolve. The social and technical aspects of an environment co-evolve. People’s activities and tools adjust and are adjusted in relation to each other. . . (53).

²⁵ David Seigel, author of Creating Killer Web Sites (online), uses the generation label in a slightly different way to classify the relative evolution of a web site. He explains that “A third-generation site uses typographic and visual layout principles to describe a page in two dimensions. Third-generation site designers carefully specify the position and relationships of all elements on the page, retaining fine control of the layout. Third-generation sites use metaphor and visual theme to entice and guide, creating a whole experience for surfers from the first splash screen to the exit” (<http://www.killersites.com/core.html>). This description explains that third generation sites evidence greater control over layout, creativity, and a desire to produce a “new” experience for users. Seigel’s definition of third-generation web sites could be applied to describe a specific web site, whether or not it was actually the third revision and re-publication of the web site, if the web site in question displayed these attributes. Generations of web sites are important both in the literal sense of the changes that occur on a specific site via revisions and re-publication and in the sense that the concept of generations of web sites reflects the growing literacies and familiarity with the web as an informational technology. For example describing site designers as “third generation” would indicate that these people have experience with web design; this experience may result in greater literacy in shaping and connecting the textual, visual, and navigational structures in ways that reinforce their rhetorical goals. Likewise, readers also gain experience interacting with web sites as the web becomes part of the daily lives of many people.

Just as kairos dictates that rhetoric must be timely and appropriate to the situation, co-evolution attempts to describe the process whereby technologies are adapted so that they are appropriate to a specific situation.

Nardi and O'Day thus offer a basis for understanding how ecological concepts like co-evolution can help increase awareness of the dynamic nature of web sites and the ways in which modifications to one site may be echoed by other sites. However, Hasenyager's (1996) work helps translate the concepts of information ecologies more directly to the web. Nardi and O'Day discuss multiple forms of technology, including cell phones, pagers, computers, and software, primarily as a communication tools. Hasenyager, though, goes beyond examining technology as communication tool and focuses on the ways IT networked systems shape work processes and institutional culture. He asserts that a shared relationship to a particular technical infrastructure is what defines the boundaries of and participants in an information ecology.

For example, Hasenyager explains that information ecologies in large organizations are made up of combinations of very large systems:

In our modern computing environments, everything depends on everything else directly or indirectly, intentionally or potentially . . . machines and programs are not the only participants in the ecology. Humans dominate. They run the machines, write and maintain the programs, design the functions, operate the terminals, share or hoard information, allocate funds to one part of the ecology or another, and praise or complain about the way it all works (Hasenyager 1-2).

To effectively manage these interrelated and complex ecologies, Hasenyager argues, is to balance between the impulses to sustain (i.e. maintain status quo) and the impulses to transform (i.e. change), both of which are connected to emotions, relationships, and identity. Hasenyager's work scaffolds studies of online ethos like Spinuzzi et al's that position web sites as balancing (in different ways and to different degrees) the impulse to sustain a standard institutional web presence, disciplinary conventions, and graphical design appropriate for the rhetorical situation against the impulse to transform these standards and expectations in order to assert a specific, differentiated ethos. In so doing, Hasenyager, like Spinuzzi and Hawisher and Sullivan, hints at underlying issues regarding the relationship between individual and institutional ethos of web sites.

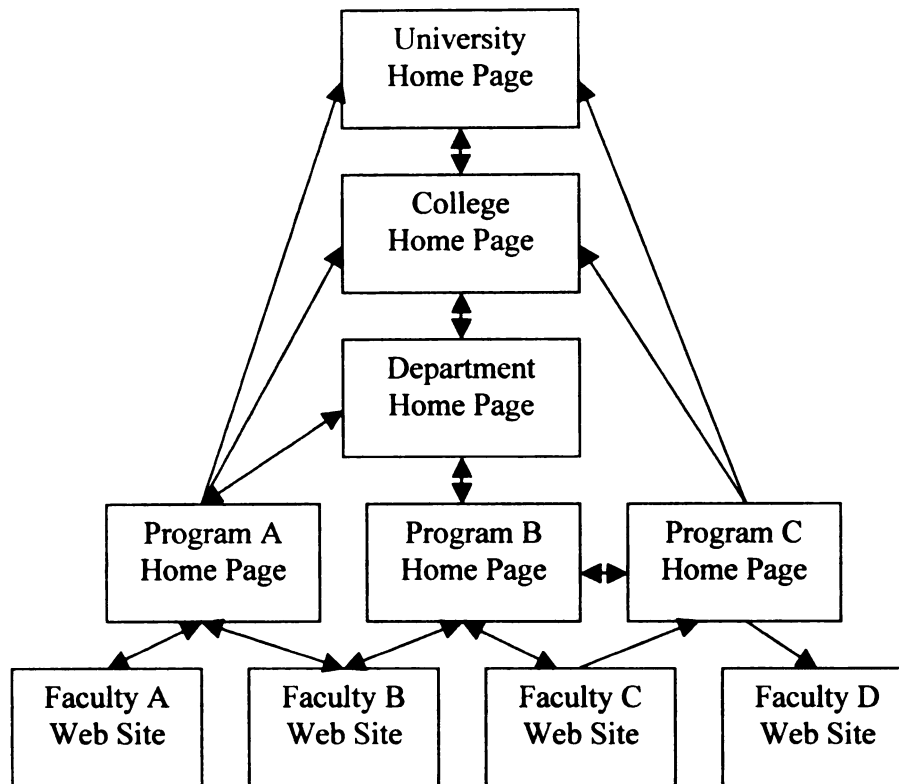
To differentiate the online context comprised of web sites from the socio-cultural context surrounding and impacting these sites and to define more specifically the rather amorphous concept of "online context" a new term is needed. In this study, I refer to this online context as a **knowledge network**. My thinking about online knowledge networks emerges from this earlier thinking about information ecologies. While this earlier work does not focus on web sites, I use the ecological approach to more clearly understand:

- 1) the complex relationships between individuals and groups of individuals both formally and informally (as evidenced by links and representations of specific roles, programs, departments, and individuals) on university web sites,
- 2) the diversity in web design strategies used to create different types of ethos and that rely, to greater or lesser degree, on membership in a specific knowledge and/ or disciplinary network, and

- 3) the continual co-evolution of the network itself (through generations or revisions of web sites and the ongoing process whereby design strategies become appropriate) and the changing perceptions and understandings of audience needs, preferences, and characteristics these revisions evidence.

Figure 1.1 offers a simplified view of one constellation of connected web sites and sub-sites that I refer to as a knowledge network.

Figure 1.1: Sample Graphical Representation of Knowledge Network of a University Web Site



The bi-directional arrows in Figure 1.1 indicate links on both sites that connect the two, while unidirectional arrows represent one-way links. So, in this sample diagram, the department home page does not link to Program C, but the Program B home page and Faculty C home pages do offer links to Program C. This sample diagram does not

capture all possible links between sites, such as links from faculty web sites back to the University home page, and does not include the numerous content pages beneath each home page that also offer links to other sites; the diagram serves merely as a model to help illustrate the overarching concept of a knowledge network of connected web sites.²⁶

However, although the idea of a knowledge network is based on Nardi and O'Day's and Hasenyager's prior work on information ecologies, my choice of the term knowledge in place of information signals an important difference. I use the term knowledge instead of information to describe the ecological context I see operating in an online environment because, as Peg Syverson explains, "The real issue is how information becomes knowledge, and how it connects with existing knowledge to expand or reorganize what we know and do. Knowledge is information in use, applied in specific contexts for particular purposes" (<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~syverson>). Spinuzzi et al's work on the conversational design process and the need to include audience members in the design of web reflects a similar attention to information in use and communal knowledge making rather than information transmission.

Syverson's differentiation between knowledge and information is key because the term information typically connotes static and factual while the term knowledge reflects a process of education and the shaping of information over time within a specific context. Nardi and O'Day explain that ecologies are continually co-evolving in response to changing internal and external stimuli like new technologies or changing economic conditions. Similarly, Syverson argues that knowledge ecologies must be understood as

²⁶ It is important to also note that this diagram does not attempt to capture all possible user paths (called clickstreams); instead, the diagram charts some of the possibilities for navigation.

dynamic, constantly changing systems, through which information flows and knowledge is constructed. Knowledge that is constructed is directed back into the system to inform the development of more knowledge; and all of this knowledge is part of how activity gets accomplished in a particular environment, whether it is the operating room of a hospital, a second-grade classroom, a high-tech business, or a government agency (<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~syverson>).

Since ecologies are continually co-evolving in response to changing internal and external stimuli like new technologies or changing economic conditions, I use the term “knowledge” to more accurately reflect the ecological *usage* of information to produce and inspire yet more knowledge. As Spinuzzi et al (2003) argue, the ability to participate in the construction of knowledge is central to the mission and goals of academic departments; access to knowledge making tools or lack thereof impacts community power relations, whether or not the medium for knowledge making is face-to-face or online.

I chose the term network rather than ecology to describe and define online context because, like a network, online context is a connected series of web sites navigated by the reader and enabled or restricted by the web sites themselves. Connections between sites can be literal links and others are more figurative. For example, links and connections between sites can be A) direct links to other web sites; B) design-based echoes of other web sites (i.e. common design patterns, the use of templates); or C) connections to industry or disciplinary communities of practice made through the use of discipline-specific terminology, through the ways the voice and tone of a web site’s textual content

establish a relationship with readers of the web site, and through textual references to established pedagogical strategies, curriculum standards, and the like.

I also use the term network in place of ecology to connote the digital context of the knowledge network; the knowledge network, although it reflects and intersects with the information ecology or socio-cultural context of the institution, exists online. The term “network” reflects the idea of a networked group of web sites that together form a complex system that functions like an ecology. For example, just as information ecologies co-evolve, so do knowledge networks (as evidenced in part by the preceding discussion of generations of web sites). While the term network may at first seem to reflect a static arrangement of texts, this study will explain and demonstrate how a network that functions as a system contains ecological complexity, diversity, and continual co-evolution. Because web sites are interconnected both through hypertextual links and through conventions of web design, genre of web site, and institutional affiliation, this research project will examine web sites not as isolated rhetorical acts, but as part of a connected system.

However, the concept of a knowledge network raises the problem of defining the boundaries of a particular network. The boundaries of the knowledge network as a theoretical construct are defined by disciplinary affiliation, genre, and program or department mission and goals, not just institutional affiliation. The knowledge network, then, is a fluid term that describes the manner in which a group of sites interacts as an ecology rather than a definition of specific boundaries. A web site may belong to more than one knowledge network—a Department of English page could be seen as belonging to the knowledge network comprised of other Department of English sites, the network

comprised by web sites affiliated with a particular institution, or even to the larger knowledge network of sites published by universities. In addition, the knowledge network surrounding this Department of English page could be defined as the sub-set of sites published within the same university whose disciplinary affiliations overlap with English studies, such as Composition and Rhetoric, Professional Writing, and Freshman Writing programs.

The idea of knowledge networks as a theoretical construct for reading and thinking about web sites could be the subject of another study specifically looking at how connections are formed; this study could build off existing work on online communities and genres of web sites to develop a more nuanced understanding of context online. But in this investigation, I apply the idea of the knowledge network as a theoretical concept to help understand how ethos takes shape online. Just as literary theorists explore intertextuality and the ways responses to and interpretations of texts change when texts are read through and against other texts, this investigation into the ethos of web sites will consider the ways perceptions of ethos change when texts within a knowledge network are read through and against each other. In other words, I focus on the ways reading faculty, program and department web sites as part of an interconnected online system shapes understandings of ethos of each site and the knowledge network as a whole. Furthermore, the rhetorical approach scaffolds my focus on the reader's perceptions of ethos rather than on the rhetor's strategies; this is not to say that my analysis will not address the construction of ethos, but my focus is on understanding the reader's perceptions of ethos.

Online Ethos: Terms Used in My Research

The preceding discussion of the concept of ethos and existing research into online ethos leads us to current thinking about ethos that informs my understandings of how the construct of ethos may be used to analyze the web. In this research project, I apply Aristotelian understandings of ethos as a tri-part rhetorical concept; in applying Aristotle's understanding of ethos as comprised of *arête*, *phronesis*, and *eunoia*, I retain his belief that these aspects of ethos overlap and influence each other. My translations of Aristotle's concepts to the web rely mainly upon terms used by Fogg and Enos and Borrowman but re-define these terms to more accurately enable an Aristotelian examination of the *type* of ethos on a web site, not just whether or not a site is credible. For example, whereas Fogg explains that an effective digital rhetor projects an honest and trustworthy character, I hope to better understand what constitutes an honest and trustworthy ethos online, specifically on university web sites.

To translate *arête*, I rely upon Enos and Borrowman, whose analysis of Holocaust denial web sites explains that trustworthiness can be defined as inclusive and demonstrating good intentions towards the audience. Throughout this study, I use the word character with a descriptor (i.e. an approachable character, a scholarly character, a teacherly character) instead of the original term *arête*. To refer to *phronesis*, I use the term expertise, but I retain Fogg's approach and separate *phronesis* into technical and content-area expertise because these more specific terms help to explain the kind of *phronesis* a web site develops. Finally, to discuss and analyze *eunoia*, I use the term goodwill and look to McCroskey and Teven's research on ethos to define goodwill as a type of character that has the audience's interests at heart, that is sensitive to audience

needs and perspectives, and that is not simply forwarding a self-serving agenda. This research project is devoted to increasing understandings of the ways these components of ethos are shaped by web design techniques and content in an online environment.

The next chapter overviews the methodology I have selected to investigate the extent to which reading a web site within its online context of a knowledge network impacts perceptions of ethos. In this chapter, I define *arête*, *phronesis*, and *eunoia* more specifically for the rhetorical situation of university web sites. As this chapter will explain, the rhetorical analyses that follow in Chapters Three and Four explore how reading these sites against and through each other illuminates understandings of how ethos is constructed and what types of juxtapositions between web sites and different elements of sites affect audience perceptions of technical expertise, content expertise, and character. In my rhetorical analysis of selected web sites, I will address co-evolution in comparing and contrasting generations of web sites to uncover the ways that updates and modifications to a web site can enhance or undermine ethos. Finally, my readings will examine the relationship between navigation, graphics, and textual content to understand the ways these factors which shape perceptions of online ethos impact and are impacted by the context of the knowledge network.

Chapter 2

Methodology

In this research project I am focusing on web sites published by departments, programs, and faculty affiliated with state-funded, research-based universities. While I do believe that university web sites function simultaneously to market, teach, advise, and support research, this project is not focused on defining the characteristics of what could be called the genre of university web sites nor is it focused on uncovering common design strategies used in university web sites, although I will indirectly be addressing design in terms of how design conveys an ethos. Instead, I focus on examining how ethos works online using university web sites as my texts to test the extent to which the theoretical construct of the knowledge network furthers understandings of online ethos. This chapter overviews the research and analysis methodology I use to analyze these university web sites as well as the selection process by which I decided to focus on web sites in English, Composition and Rhetoric, and Professional Writing from the University of Texas at Austin and Purdue University.

Aristotle Online: Ethos on University Web Sites

Online, ethos is shaped by the type of character, intention (i.e. goodwill towards the audience), and type of expertise the site conveys. My interpretations of textual and graphical content and navigation consider the ways these elements of a web site convey a particular type of ethos based on the perceptions of character, intention, and expertise these site elements engender. As explained in Chapter One, to interpret these web sites I

apply an Aristotelian understanding of ethos; while Aristotle examines ethos from the production or speaker's point of view, I continue research by Fogg and Enos and Borrowman in order to analyze ethos as it is perceived by an audience. My application of Aristotle's concepts of *arête*, *phronesis*, and *eunoia* to the web relies mainly upon terms and concepts used by Fogg (2002) and Enos and Borrowman (2001) but I re-define these ideas to more accurately enable an Aristotelian examination of the *type* of ethos on a web site, not just whether or not a site is credible.

Arête

I understand and use the term *arête* to mean an appropriately excellent character for the rhetorical context of university web sites. Throughout this study, I use the word character with a descriptor instead of the original term *arête* to enable a more in-depth discussion of the type of character presented online. Because I am examining university web pages, I use the terms teacherly, scholarly, and administrative to describe different types of character conveyed by university web sites.¹ Teacherly, scholarly, and administrative character types overlap with different types of expertise. A web site may focus on faculty research and publication to stress a scholarly expertise, or a site may focus on philosophies of teaching, classroom facilities, and pedagogy to stress a more teacherly expertise. Similarly, a web site can present detailed strategic plans, evidence of grant awards, and involvement with larger university projects to demonstrate administrative expertise in gaining institutional support and in managing program

¹ This concept of an appropriate "teacherly" tone emerges from existing literature on the relationship between perceived levels of goodwill and student learning. For example, James McCroskey explains how his research project with Teven indicates that "students who perceived their teachers to have higher levels

resources. In the university setting, all these types of expertise are required to succeed professionally; in my analysis I will be investigating the extent to which these types of expertise and character types convey ethos.

I use the term teacherly to suggest a rhetorical approach where the implied author is presented as a mentor or a guide with a genuine interest in helping audience members find the information they need to make their way through university and program requirements. Teacherly sites may avoid undefined disciplinary specific terms or make sure to define these terms clearly so that non-expert readers can understand them; these types of sites may also tend towards first person or first person plural narrative voice to literally include the audience in the “we” of the program. A more teacherly character is established by focusing on graphics or photographs that present implied audience members, like students, working together and by offering links not only to verify academic credibility but also to provide information of interest to the audience. A teacherly character may suggest a focus on students as the primary audience for a site, as opposed to other faculty, but not always.² A teacherly character can also be conveyed by offering helpful information to the general public, not just enrolled students.

This idea of a teacherly character is also related to perceptions of goodwill. For example, McCroskey and Teven’s research on the relationship between perceived levels of goodwill and student learning explains how “students who perceived their teachers to have higher levels of goodwill/ caring had higher cognitive and affective learning and evaluated their teachers more highly than those with lower levels of goodwill/ caring”

of goodwill/ caring had higher cognitive and affective learning and evaluated their teachers more highly than those with lower levels of goodwill/ caring” (McCroskey 86).

² However, a web site can also use a teacherly approach to shape an ethos where the program or department positions itself as a leader in the field functioning as teacher to other faculty.

(McCroskey and Teven 86). Based on this work by McCroskey and Teven, teacherly sites could be expected to focus quite strongly on establishing positive intention or goodwill towards the audience. A teacherly character may also reveal the process involved in acquiring academic knowledge or web design expertise to demonstrate to the audience that the teacher is, in fact, always learning, and to model the process of acquiring new skills and knowledge.

As Gregory points out in his article “Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Teacherly Ethos,” “a teacherly ethos that suggests that the teacher, like his or her students, not only did practice but still has to practice in order to improve . . . both models what students need to see in order to learn themselves and shows them how to assume that model on their own” (76-77).³ Relatively speaking, a site conveying a teacherly character focuses on demonstrating goodwill to shape a credible ethos. For a web site to effectively suggest a teacherly character also requires that the implied author demonstrate a facility with pedagogical or teacherly expertise. As mentioned earlier, teacherly expertise can be presented online by defining terms clearly in order to include audience members in the conversation or by providing detailed and easy-to-follow resources to help readers educate themselves.

A scholarly character differs from a teacherly character in that a scholarly character relies more heavily on the demonstration of disciplinary or content-area expertise to build credibility, as opposed to a teacherly character which focuses more strongly on conveying goodwill and establishing a mentoring relationship with the readers. This is not to say that conveying a teacherly character does not require

³ Note that Gregory references a teacherly ethos, not a teacherly character. As discussed in Chapter One, ethos is often translated as the character of the implied speaker.

demonstrating content-area expertise; the difference between teacherly and scholarly character is not a matter of either a focus on content-area expertise or a focus on goodwill, but a matter of the degree of emphasis and focus. In addition to demonstrating disciplinary knowledge, conveying a scholarly expertise also requires demonstrating a practiced literacy with the conventions of academic research and publication. Web sites convey a scholarly character by using formal language (often in third person) that echoes traditional assumptions of the appropriately formal tone of academic publication; highlighting professional-looking graphics or photographs that focus on the buildings, the equipment, and the faculty; and offering links to affiliated institutions and other colleagues in the discipline-specific community of practice to validate academic credibility. Just as with the idea of a teacherly character, the idea of a scholarly character overlaps with a scholarly expertise. A scholarly character requires the demonstration of an expertise in conducting scholarly research and in communicating the results of this research in a manner appropriate to the discipline. Providing detailed, accurate, and insightful resources and reference tools online may also support perceptions of scholarly expertise because to build effective reference tools the implied author must have a clear understanding of the topic at hand.

University web sites that foreground administrative activities as opposed to teaching activities or scholarship could be described as conveying a more administrative character. An administrative character is created when a web site references or suggests administrative expertise in strategic planning, budgeting, grant writing, hiring and staffing, etc. An administrative character is conveyed by the relative foregrounding of strategic planning documents and by the ways in which the web site presents a defined

program mission statement. Again, an administrative character overlaps with administrative expertise in organization, clear marketing and program definition and of realistically addressing budget constraints, organizational politics, and other concerns shaping the decision making processes of senior university administrators.⁴ Administrative character may also be suggested by a more direct focus on marketing a program or department since ensuring enrollment is an important aspect of managing an academic department or program.

However, while it may be helpful to consider and define these types of character and expertise individually, the ethos of a university site (department, program or faculty site) relies upon conveying all three of these different characters and expertise-- in order to teach, university faculty (and the departments and programs within which these faculty operate) must possess the scholarly credentials earned through demonstrating content-area expertise and must also be able to effectively convey this material to students by establishing relationships with students that facilitate learning. Administrative expertise is needed because education professionals at the university level need to ensure that programs remain fully funded, need to attract new faculty, and need to manage classrooms and teaching; administration is interwoven with the practice of teaching and scholarship.

Because teacherly, scholarly, and administrative character types overlap and because they signify differences in focus rather than entirely different persuasive strategies, interpretations of the ethos of web sites must account for the ways these

⁴ This awareness of the decision-making process of senior university administrators is important because if a department or program cannot communicate their needs in a manner that makes sense to these senior administrators, the program or department may struggle to obtain funding and institutional support for program initiatives.

different characters co-exist in textual content, navigation, and graphic design. For example, presentations of cutting-edge technology enabled classroom facilities on a web site may evidence a focus on teaching and an ability to work administratively within the university context to obtain funding, among other things. A web site could focus on demonstrating an expertise with teaching by foregrounding links to sample syllabi, workshops for teachers, or instructional web resources for students but, in a department of education, these kinds of teacher resources are an important part of demonstrating scholarly expertise in the field of education. Scholarly expertise may be evident in, for example, information on disciplinary conferences hosted by the department, but these conferences also suggest an administrative expertise in securing funding to host high-profile events. Finally, an administrative expertise could be highlighted by the inclusion of strategic plans that demonstrate effective budgeting, decision-making, and lobbying for university resources but these same documents could be presented in a teacherly manner designed to make the workings of a university department transparent to the audience.

Phronesis

In Fogg's (2002) work on the credibility of web sites, Aristotle's notion of phronesis is translated to mean both the demonstration of technical expertise in web site design and the convincing assertion of subject-area or disciplinary expertise (which Fogg also refers to as content-area expertise and which I define in the preceding section as scholarly expertise). To have expertise, for Fogg, means to be "knowledgeable, experienced, competent" (3). Fogg's distinction between technical (web design) expertise and content-area expertise is helpful in discussing online ethos because a site

that demonstrates excellent content-area expertise, teacherly expertise, or a scholarly facility with academic research does not necessarily demonstrate web design expertise (or vice versa). Fogg's division of phronesis into two sub-categories reflects the particular rhetorical context of web sites and offers an excellent example of the ways Aristotelian understandings of ethos can be applied to web sites with minor modification.

I adopt Fogg's terminology and divide phronesis into technical expertise and content-area (or disciplinary) expertise, but, unlike Fogg, I follow the Aristotelian tradition to qualify and describe the type of technical expertise or the type of content expertise evidenced by a particular web text. As discussed in the preceding section on teacherly, scholarly, and administrative character, web sites affiliated with universities shape an ethos that is also based on teacherly, scholarly, and administrative expertise. Each of these different types of expertise requires both content area and technical expertise.⁵ Because I am analyzing web texts published by departments and programs which may claim to teach digital literacy and web composition and which also use computers extensively in the classroom, an expertise with the technologies related to web publication is perhaps the most noticeable and relevant type of technical expertise to the ethos of these sites. When I reference technical expertise I am referencing an expertise with web design and instructional technology.

Content-area expertise overlaps with technical expertise most directly in programs purporting to teach digital rhetoric, professional writing, or other skills that involve digital literacy with web design. A web site published by a program teaching digital

⁵ For example, as discussed in the preceding section on *arête*, a teacherly expertise requires both content knowledge and an ability to apply pedagogical knowledge to create effective learning environments. Pedagogical knowledge itself requires technical expertise to use educational technologies effectively in the classroom and for online instruction.

rhetoric needs to demonstrate effective design to support assertions of content-area expertise. Content-area expertise also exists in the ways a site presents scholarly research and publication, awards, and reputation in the field.

Eunoia

In my research, I understand eunoia as goodwill or having the audience's best interests in mind. In so doing, I reference existing research on ethos to define goodwill as a type of character that has the audience's interests at heart, that is sensitive to audience needs and perspectives, and that is not simply forwarding a self-serving agenda.⁶ Enos and Borrowman's (2001) understand goodwill as the presentation of an inclusive character while Fogg (2002) assumes that goodwill correlates with an off-line or production intention. Enos and Borrowman identify tracings of goodwill in the ways a web site presents itself as inclusive, as reaching out to offer a service to the audience. In Enos and Borrowman's work, this kind of inclusiveness exists in the textual content as well as the graphical design and navigation of the site.⁷

A web site may be inclusive, but may be using a veneer of inclusiveness or mask an intent to deceive or mislead, as Enos and Borrowman's research on the web sites of Holocaust deniers demonstrates.⁸ Their concept of inclusiveness is helpful because it offers researchers like myself one possible method of examining the ways

⁶ According to McCroskey and Teven (1999) audience perceptions of eunoia result from perceived similarities in motivation, community, and values between the audience and the rhetor.

⁷ For example, the web site published by the Community for Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH) offers site content in multiple languages. Users can click on different national flags to access the site in the language site authors deem appropriate for this country. According to Enos and Borrowman, this rhetorical move demonstrates "the group's all-inclusive approach to their topic. This site is not for one group of people; it is for all people" (104). Counters, lists of links, and accessible navigation are other markers of credibility that Enos and Borrowman identify in their work.

web sites convey a relationship with the audience that correlates with perceptions of goodwill. By examining the ways a web site presents an inclusive or exclusive (in the sense of not be available to or easily read by multiple audience types) relationship with the audience, my analysis of eunoia becomes one way to examine the type of character a web site creates and how this type of character leverages goodwill to shape an ethos.

As discussed earlier, goodwill overlaps with a teacherly character since teachers are assumed to have their students' best interests at heart; a teacher who desires to intentionally mislead or misinform students would not demonstrate goodwill towards the audience or a teacherly ethos. Similarly, a scholarly ethos requires demonstrating goodwill towards colleagues and students, as well as members of the general public who may be interested in research findings on a particular topic. A scholar who falsifies information in order to deceive an audience into overvaluing the contributions to the field is not demonstrating goodwill and would not be considered to possess a scholarly character. An administrative ethos also requires conveying goodwill in the sense of working for the greater good of the program, department, university, or higher education in general, and not just working for individual career advancement.

Because, as later sections of this chapter more fully explain, I am not focusing on the production process and myriad behind-the-scenes decisions, motivations, and constraints impacting the design of web texts, I cannot assume, as Fogg does, an intention of goodwill (or lack thereof) on the part of site authors and designers. But, I can examine web sites for the ways in which site design, navigation, and content convey a relationship with the audience and whether or not this relationship is

⁸ As explained in Chapter One, Enos and Borrowman's 1999 study on the ethos of Holocaust-denier web sites explains how inclusiveness can be used to create the impression of goodwill and credibility when, in

characterized by goodwill towards the audience. For example, while I disagree with Fogg that poor navigation automatically correlates with lack of goodwill towards the audience, my analysis investigates navigation as one component among many that shape perceptions of expertise and character, including the relative goodwill this character displays towards the audience.⁹ Examining the relative ease-of-navigation of a web site (which I refer to as usability¹⁰) allows me to analyze potential audience perspectives on the function, goals, and character of the site.¹¹

Just as the web site design manuals discussed in Chapter One explain that user-centered design is important in allowing readers to access site content, my analysis views navigation as one way a site can establish a positive relationship with the audience and convey an inclusive approach to web site design. A poor navigation may not be evidence of lack of actual goodwill towards readers, but a confusing navigation does interfere with reader access to site contents and may even prevent some readers from finding important information on the site, effectively excluding them from the site. Methods of enabling reader access to content are key to understanding the ethos of web sites because different navigational structures highlight content in different ways and anchor user readings of the site.

By positioning readers as passive followers down a pre-ordained path or as active participants in meaning-making, web sites establish a relationship with readers

fact, scholarly credibility is lacking and when the intent is to mislead an audience.

⁹ Poor navigation can result in perceptions that the site does not have the users' best interests in mind, but it may not correlate with an intention to mislead or be confusing. For example, poor navigation can be the result of a lack of technical expertise in web design even if a program has good intentions and is trying to publish a user-friendly site.

¹⁰ I use the term usability as a synonym with easy-to-use navigation, from the perspective of the researcher; I do not intend to imply a connection with formal usability studies evaluating how actual users experience and move through a web site.

¹¹ In so doing I make no absolute claims as to the intention of the designers and/or authors.

that may shape audience perceptions of character. Ann Wysocki explains that the visual aspects of navigational structures “work to compose us [as viewers]” by making “assertions about what kinds of readers we should be” (2001: 159). A navigational structure that is not self-evident to a novice user defines the intended audience of the site as readers who are familiar to web conventions. Also, many university web sites organize content according to user role-- student, faculty, parents, corporate sponsor, etc. When a user comes to a site and does not find an appropriate role for her needs, or when a user discovers that the content collated under the role she identifies with (like student or faculty) does not include the information she needs, this user may perceive that she is not included in the site audience, the site itself could be perceived as not being relevant, or the user could simply experience frustration in trying to navigate the site. Inclusiveness and navigational strategy are both components of goodwill, but in my research I also define goodwill as including a broader sense of intention towards the audience such as a teacherly concern with educating students.

Web Sites as Complex Systems: Reading Rhetorically in the Knowledge Network

My methodology for completing rhetorical readings of web texts that pay close attention to ethos is based on the premise that web texts are complex systems comprised of mutually interdependent elements that work together to signify or create meaning and to shape ethos. The elements of a web site work like signifiers to create meaning and shape ethos. Signifiers on the web, like signifiers in printed text, do not correspond with a single, pre-determined meaning; different aspects of the elements of a particular web site, including navigational strategy, content, and graphical layout, among other things,

can contradict each other and interact to create new, unintended messages, which may undermine attempts to create a particular ethos. I hypothesize that in order to understand why some web sites create an effective and appropriate ethos while others-- which seemingly adhere to all the same rules for design-- fail, the different media comprising web content and working together to shape ethos cannot be considered in isolation. This approach is important because if a particular component of the web site is considered in isolation as inherently representing a specific meaning, the remediation of media, the ways the multiple media comprising web sites interact to shape a meaning that is the result of synergies and contradictions between the multiple media and elements of a web site, is lost.

Building on work done by Hawisher and Sullivan (1999), Enos and Borrowman (2001), and Fogg (2002), the close rhetorical readings in this research project pay attention to the ways navigation, graphics, and textual content remediate each other to create online ethos. In the web sites I analyze, I focus my reading on graphics (logos, splash screens, and supporting graphics, including navigational icons), textual content (especially the mission or vision statement and explicit discussions about technology), and navigational strategy (including links) as signifiers that work together to create meaning and shape online ethos.

To understand how these multiple elements of a web site work together to convey an ethos, I engage in a two-tiered analysis that first examines the ways navigation, design and textual content of departmental and program sites interact to shape perceptions of ethos. In this analysis of program and departmental web sites, I examine the ways that graphics shape audience perceptions of character and goodwill through perspective (i.e. is

the reader positioned at eye or door level or is the reader looking up at a tall building or over a wide vista), composition (the content of the graphic), and style (photographs, illustrations, cartoons). I also look at the narrative point of view (typically first person plural, first person singular, or third person) to better understand the kind of character and overall ethos because point of view impacts perceptions of the relationship between the implied author and the audience.

Textual content and navigation are read to understand how the site positions its audience and conveys site goals, as well as to understand the ways expertise, character, and goodwill are conveyed online. In these readings, I mirror the process of reading the multiple components of a single web site against and through each other to read multiple sites against and through each other. For example, how does reading a site with excellent content but an outdated and rather confusing navigation against a more updated site shape the ethos of both sites? In working to answer this type of question, I analyze the intersections and interactions among both the multiple components of a web site and the multiple sites within the knowledge network to better understand the ways ethos functions online.

The second tier of my analysis focuses on understanding how readings of faculty sites against and through the program and department sites shapes the ethos of both these faculty sites and the program sites. This process of reading navigation, design, and textual content against and through multiple sites is scaffolded by a semiotic approach which reads rhetorical acts as signifiers with multiple meanings. I analyze how the presentation of faculty online impacts the ethos of the program or department web site with which these faculty are affiliated. For example, do faculty sites focus on scholarly

publications, teaching experience, or both? How do faculty sites that focus on demonstrating scholarship impact the ethos of a program site that conveys ethos by demonstrating a teacherly character more than content-area expertise? To help answer these questions, I apply Barthes' concepts of anchorage and relay as theoretical constructs that help clarify the relationships between site elements and provide insight into the ways ethos functions online.¹²

By now the insights from Roland Barthes' (1977) work analyzing how multiple, culturally specific meanings exist in all signifying media of a rhetorical artifact is a commonly accepted way of reading and analyzing rhetorical artifacts. Barthes' "Rhetoric of the Image" (1977) explains how multiple, culturally specific meanings exist in both graphics and text on advertising posters. Barthes explains that his analysis of advertising posters reveals "three messages: a linguistic message, a coded iconic message, and a non-coded iconic message. . .the viewer of the images receives at one and the same time the perceptual image [literal, denotative] and the cultural [symbolic, connotative] message" (36).¹³ He also explains that a rhetorical analysis of an image must involve studying the inter-relationship of these three types of messages. Rather than engage in a discussion of the value of a semiotic approach to rhetorical analysis, I specifically would like to reference Barthes' concepts of anchorage and relay as

¹²Please note that I am not trying to discuss the most recent work in semiotics—I reference Barthes because I will use his theoretical frames of relay and anchorage to help explain how multiple elements of web sites work together as an interconnected system. My conclusion discusses how the ethos of a knowledge network is shaped by the relay of elements of ethos (arête, eunoia, phronesis) between sites within the knowledge network.

¹³ In the context of this article analyzing a poster advertising an Italian brand of pasta, the coded iconic message is the totality of all of the messages that are connoted by the image itself: those of freshness, of plenty, of Italianicity (in the yellow, green, and red of the tomato and peppers). The noncoded iconic message is simply the literal "what it is" of the photograph, the vegetables and sack and pasta that we "see" when we look at the image. While I am examining web sites, not advertising posters, the relationships between the multiple elements of the printed advertising poster analyzed by Barthes are similar to the relationships between multiple elements of a web site.

potentially valuable theoretical concepts to help explain how multiple elements of web sites work together as an interconnected system shaping the ethos of web sites.

To Barthes, the text (the linguistic message), overlaps the iconic message just as perceptual and cultural messages overlap and intersect to create meaning (Barthes 36). Barthes identifies two key functions that shape the relationship between the linguistic message and the coded and non-coded iconic message(s): anchorage and relay. Anchorage explains how, "the text *directs* the reader through the signifieds of the image...remote-control[ing] him towards a meaning chosen in advance" (39-40, italics in text). For example, in Barthes' analysis of advertising posters, he explains that the text anchors the meaning of the images by shaping how readers interpret iconic messages. This kind of anchorage directs the reader to choose the "correct" level of perceptions and focuses not only the reader's gaze but her perception of the images.

In a system of relay between text and image, "text...and image stand in a complementary relationship...and the unity of the message is realized at [the] level of the story, the anecdote, the diegesis" (41). In the relay function, text provides meaning not found in the image, much like a comic strip or a textbook illustrated with images. In the relay relationship, both text and image present fragments of meaning that cannot be understood in isolation from each other. Although Barthes differentiates between these two functions of anchorage and relay, he also states that most systems are actually a combination of anchorage and relay.

Web sites too use anchorage and relay to create meaning and convey an ethos. However, whereas Barthes defines anchorage as a textual anchorage that directs interpretations of graphics, perhaps web sites can be "anchored" by any component—

graphical design, layout, text, or navigation (for example). In a web text based on a graphical user interface (or GUI) the site's navigational strategy may play a much stronger role in anchoring meaning than text because navigational icons literally "direct" readers' progress through a web text and control access to textual content. For example, content-based navigation is based on an information architecture that classifies content according to subject matter while role-based navigation classifies information based on the designers' definition of the appropriate or relevant audience for a particular piece of content. These classifications impact audience interpretations of text by offering subject headings under which the textual and graphical content is interpreted. This sort of anchoring by the navigational strategy may impact ethos. Sites which operate with shared web design templates which call continual attention to affiliations with a larger institutional context could be read as using navigational patterns to anchor interpretations under the umbrella of credibility offered by affiliation with the university or other institution.

At the same time that navigation may anchor meaning by shaping access, meaning can also be "relayed" between any two or more components of a web site, not just between text and images. The relevancy and placement of links, the textual content, and the graphical style of the GUI all work together to relay meaning online. Even if the navigation provides the signifying anchor, the graphical content, textual content, placement of links, tone and voice all work together to create meaning. For example, even if the GUI anchors meaning by directing user navigation and interpretation of content, the tone of the content and graphics as well as the placement of links all shape

ethos. While each element of a web site can be understood at some level in isolation, the overall ethos of the site depends upon the interaction of all these elements.

Writing about CD-Roms as digital texts, Wysocki explains that “if we understand content as words and understand visual presentation as theme or emotion of use only as pointers or to supporting information—then we remain unable to see or explain what is asserted in the visual compositions [presented in digital media]” (2001: 140). Like Barthes, Wysocki is arguing that the visual presentation or design of a text makes meaning and should be considered content, not merely decoration or eye candy. While she is focusing on CD-Roms, not web sites, her interpretive arguments apply equally to the web because web sites, like CD-Roms, have a navigational pattern and utilize a blend of multiple media like web sites. However, CD-Roms are not networked and connected to each other by hypertextual links to other CD’s; they offer *intratextual* linkings but not *intertextual* linkings.

Both Barthes and Wysocki inform my perspective that web sites should be read as integrated texts, where the graphics, text, and navigation form a system of meaning-making. I apply their ideas about the interconnected nature of textual and media-based elements in rhetorical artifacts (both digital and non-digital) to readings of web sites in order to explain that perceptions of online ethos are influenced not only by the ways individual site elements scaffold *phronesis*, *arête*, and *eunoia*, but by the relationship between site content, navigation, and design.

Reading Web Site Content for Denotations and Connotations: Interpreting Text and Graphics as Interrelated Signifiers

To analyze the relationship between content, navigation, and design, I analyze web texts as complex systems of multiple signifiers and signifieds which both denote and connote meanings that shape perceptions of ethos. I espouse a non-traditional view of denotation and connotation that extends beyond interpretations of text to include interpretations of graphics, design, and navigation (and, theoretically, other media elements like audio which, although missing from the university sites I examine, are common features on other web sites).

As I use the terms here, a denotative reading focuses on what the rhetorician can perceive in the text itself while a connotative reading connects these perceptions to the local cultural context within which the rhetorical act occurs. This concept of denotative and connotative meanings overlapping just as different media overlap (and remediate) each other in web sites scaffolds my analysis of graphics and textual content because it requires attention to the ways meaning is both anchored and relayed by the graphics and text of each web site that I analyze. For example, in the case of university web sites, the image of a campus clock tower or spire is very common. A denotative reading would first identify the building as a photo of a campus building and could then explore the metonymic relationship between the building in the photo or graphic and the university institution as a whole. A connotative reading would discuss the significance of the symbolic image of the building as “ivory tower” and the ways in which the graphic positions readers in relation to the building (i.e. whether the reader is looking up at the building or is at eye level) in order to uncover a more symbolic meaning in the graphic.

To analyze the denotations and connotations of the multiple media and components of a web text and to examine the relationship between these elements, my

readings of program, departmental, and faculty sites examine navigation, graphics, and textual content. As mentioned several times, I read textual and graphical elements of the web as inter-related signifiers that can anchor and/or relay meaning. In my analysis, for example, I will examine the GUI to understand how the web site is anchoring meaning and whether text or graphics provide the interpretive guidance that “directs the reader through the signifieds” of the rest of the site (Barthes 39). I will also evaluate and analyze the ways in which arrangement of graphics and text shapes meaning, paying close attention to the ways arrangement itself focuses a reader’s attention on particular site elements. Rather than examine every piece of site content, I will focus on the areas foregrounded by site design and on representations and discussions of technology. I focus on technology because I hypothesize that a careful reading of the ways a web site presents technology may anchor reader perceptions of technical and content area expertise (phronesis).

Andrew Feenberg (1991) explains that philosophies of technology can be instrumental, substantive, or critical. According to Feenberg, the instrumental view is the dominant view of modern governments, holding that technology is a neutral tool, based on verifiable causal propositions. Because it is neutral, technology can be applied equally in any context. Unlike the instrumental view where technology is a tool to be used by mankind, the substantive view holds that we cannot really control technology; the very employment of technology does more to humanity than its ostensible goals because it restructures the entire social world as an object of control. Humans are degraded to objects and therefore have no subjective power over technical objects. In the

substantive view, this “instrumentalization” of society is a destiny from which there is no escape except a total return to nature/avoidance of technology.

Feenberg’s critical theory of technology rejects the fatalism of substantive and the neutrality of instrumental views. Instead, a critical theorist of technology is able to see the process wherein the values and interests of the dominant class are installed in the very design of technology even before it is assigned a goal (14). Technology is not destiny but a scene of struggle where alternatives are debated and decided and it is up to us, as subjects, to make these decisions.

In the academic web sites I analyze, I look at philosophies of technology not simply to classify them according to Feenberg’s structure, but to understand how each program conveys a view of the relationship between digital web technology and education and how each program website defines the program mission in regards to the incorporation of technology and the type of technical literacy the program teaches (if any). A program’s stance towards web technology may be directly stated, implied, or both; I will specifically investigate the extent to which the site’s stance on web technologies is reflected in web design choices. This analysis focuses on examining potential synergies or disjunctures between textual and graphical statements of philosophies of technology and the ways users actually interact with the technology of the web site; my comparative readings of sites within the knowledge network explores how philosophies of technology, demonstrated expertise in technologies of web site design and publication, and representations of technology in graphics selected to illustrate the work of a particular program impact perceptions of ethos, especially phronesis, for the site and the entire knowledge network. My reading of philosophies of technology

occurs both at the level of the web site and at the level of the analysis and cross-referencing of multiple sites within the knowledge network.

Because many of the program and faculty sites analyzed in the following two chapters focus on technology as a writing and research tool, technical expertise overlaps with content or disciplinary expertise in many but not all of these sites. While my belief is that technology is an integral part of all disciplines since it is such an important facet of research and communication today, I try to remain objective towards programs that hold (or at least appear to hold) a different view.

Knowledge Networks as Complex Systems: Intertextual Readings of Multiple Sites and Ethos

In reading multiple sites against each other, I replicate the process of reading the denotations and connotations of the different components of web sites against each other to uncover juxtapositions that may impact perceptions of ethos. By applying the theoretical construct of the knowledge network I hope to understand if individual sites anchor or relay ethos within a group of interconnected web sites. Whereas my analysis of the interconnections between multiple elements of a web site is an *intratextual* reading focusing on the connections within a web site, my analysis of multiple sites in the knowledge network moves to an *intertextual* reading examining connections across texts, across different web sites. Derived from the Latin *intertexto*, meaning to intermingle while weaving, intertextuality illuminates connections between and within texts. Intertextuality corresponds to the concept of knowledge network in that it posits a web of connections between, within, and across texts. For example, Foucault writes that

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network . . . (23).

Like books, web sites are “caught up” in a system of references. As explained in Chapter One, I refer to this system of references, this online context, as the knowledge network. The knowledge network surrounding a web site permeates and is permeated by individual web sites. The concept of intertextuality helps to explain the ways in which my analysis will look for and examine traces of the system of references within which every web site operates. In my readings of sites in their context, I build on my understanding of the ethos created by each site to investigate the extent to which the ethos of web sites is impacted by the knowledge network and the extent to which a knowledge network can be said to present an institutional ethos when read as a whole.

Generations of Web Sites as Evidence of Co-Evolution in the Knowledge Network

The rhetorical analysis of web sites in the knowledge network is complicated by the fact that web sites are continually updated. To address the impact of these multiple generations of web sites on ethos, my analysis (when possible) includes readings of prior generations of web sites and the subsequent updates (published as revised web sites) to examine the extent to which these updated versions of a web site present a new or a more effective ethos. I will also examine the extent to which generations of web sites shape ethos when sites that have been recently updated are read against sites that have not been revised or that do not reflect changing standards and increasing capabilities of web

technologies. When a recently updated, flashy site suddenly is juxtaposed with a rather outdated, less technically adept site, how are perceptions of ethos of the sites in question and the institution impacted? By analyzing generations of web sites, I am examining the impact of co-evolution on ethos.

As explained in Chapter One, co-evolution occurs in an information ecology when different departments or individuals within the information ecology evolve or change in response to changing needs or practices of another department or individual. Online in the knowledge network, generations of web sites represent the same sort of co-evolution. In trying to understand the ways in which perceptions of ethos of the static (in the sense of not modified or updated) sites are impacted as a result of the implicit comparison with updated or later generation sites that occurs when sites in a knowledge network are read against each other I am, in fact, studying the ways co-evolution functions online and the extent to which co-evolution shapes perspectives of ethos.

A Necessary Pragmatism: Limitations and Gaps in My Research Methodology

As detailed in this chapter, this research into the ethos of web sites is a rhetorical reading. As such it is not a formal usability study, or an interview-driven analysis of the production factors shaping web design and reception. I analyze selected faculty, program, and department web sites affiliated with the discipline of Composition and Rhetoric and do not include other types of web sites published by universities.

Extenuating circumstances, politics, technical glitches, available time, and institutional constraints are but a few of the myriad factors impacting the design and ultimate reception of web sites. While my rhetorical approach is beneficial in laying the groundwork for understanding how ethos functions in the knowledge network, it does not

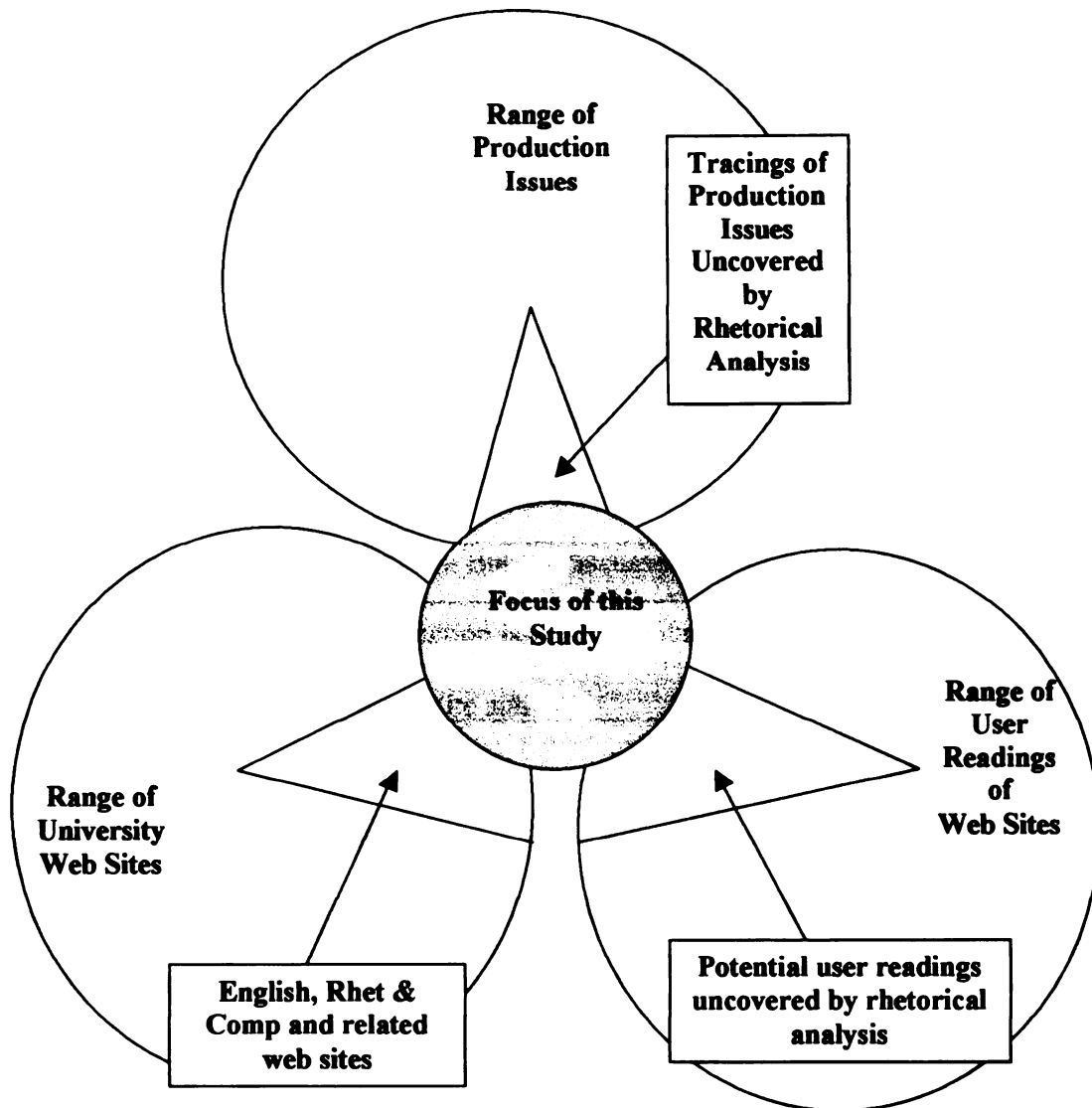
address the process of production of these web texts. My research does not investigate how these web sites are created and managed (as Spinuzzi et al's research project does, for example). Because I did not complete interviews with those involved in the production of these web sites, I cannot claim to understand the realities of the specific production process behind the sites that I analyze. However, in completing a rhetorical analysis of the web sites as texts I will discuss the ways that web site design, navigation, and content can reveal a great deal about the character conveyed by what is published online.

In addition, this research project is not a formal usability study; I do not examine, interview or otherwise study real users accessing these sites. However, my rhetorical analysis does predict usability of the sites in the context of examining the ways an audience could perceive relative ease-of-use in relation to ethos (as described earlier in this chapter in the section on *eunoia*). For this reason my analysis cannot and does not encompass all possible reader perceptions of these sites. As explained earlier, I present rhetorical analyses of these sites that assume a range of user perspectives, but these analyses are not based on data collected from multiple users.

While I do analyze a multiple program, department, and faculty sites, this research project is not a longitudinal study where I collect data on a large number of web sites. Instead, I have chosen to examine a relatively small sample of web sites in order to offer more in-depth and detailed analysis.¹⁴ Figure 2.1 illustrates how my research addresses a small subset of possible university sites, a small range of production issues, and an equally small subset of possible audience readings of these sites.

¹⁴ See Appendix A for additional information on the selection of sites for analysis.

Figure 2.1: Diagram showing Focus and Gaps of this Research



The gray circle in the center of Figure 2.1 represents the narrow focus of my research.

This focus is a result of my methodology of rhetorical readings (as opposed to a usability analysis or survey-based project) and the practical need to publish my analysis and findings in a document of reasonable length. Within the possible range of all university web sites, sites affiliated with English, Rhetoric and Composition, and Professional Writing are only one small subset; by selecting sample English, Rhetoric and

Composition, and Professional Writing sites from just two universities, this research addresses just a subset of this subset of all university web sites. Furthermore, as Appendix A explains, the web sites I analyze are just one small segment of the web sites published in affiliation with UT and Purdue. The same narrowing of focus occurs with the range of reader responses to web sites—because my research is not survey based, I address only a small percentage of possible audience readings of these sites that emerge from my rhetorical analysis. Finally, the top circle demonstrates how rhetorical analysis cannot reasonably make claims about production issues. The triangular subset of this top circle indicates the possible percentage of production issues that can be inferred from a careful reading of the web site itself. But, as discussed earlier, my readings, while attempting to be generous to production issues, cannot make definite claims about these issues since I did not interview the site authors.

Selection of Sites for Analysis

My analysis includes sites selected from the University of Texas at Austin and Purdue University; web sites from these institutions were selected after I completed a pre-research review of approximately 50 web sites affiliated with colleges and universities located in the United States. This informal review took place in the summer and fall of 2001 and consisted of “surfing” and exploring academic web sites. In this initial review I examined a variety of institutional web sites from community colleges, small liberal arts colleges, large research institutions, and online institutions.

I selected the University of Texas at Austin and Purdue University because they both offer multiple programs in English, Composition, and Technology and Writing (under various names) and they are both large, four-year, public institutions. I selected

institutions that were similar in terms of size, number of degree options, and available departmental, program and faculty web sites so that I could compare and contrast the ways ethos is created online and the impact of the knowledge network on ethos without having to make unwarranted assumptions about the connections between specific traits of knowledge networks at a particular type of institution (public, private, research or liberal arts, etc.) and web site features.

I use web sites selected from Composition and Rhetoric, Professional Writing, and English programs and departments to try to understand how the context surrounding websites impacts ethos and image. This focus was selected because my disciplinary background in Composition and Rhetoric and Comparative Literature helps me understand the perspectives (disciplinary terminology, core questions, and program objectives) more easily than if I were approaching, say, a biochemistry program. This focus is also important because it reduces the amount of data, allowing for a more in-depth study of a particular facet of a specific digital knowledge network, as opposed to a more inclusive but necessarily less detailed investigation.

While Writing Centers also focus on the teaching of writing and while Writing Centers use web sites in innovative and interesting ways to offer online resources and online peer consulting services, my research project does not include either the UT or the Purdue Writing Center web site. While this exclusion could be seen as a serious oversight, Writing Center web sites are, in some ways, an independent genre in and of themselves. As such, a detailed analysis of the online ethos of Writing Centers would require additional discussion of the purpose, theoretical underpinnings, and administrative function of Writing Centers as compared to more traditional departments

and academic programs. To keep this research of a manageable size and to retain my focus on the knowledge network as theoretical construct for understanding online ethos, I decided to wait for another research opportunity to more thoroughly analyze the ethos of Writing Center web sites. As detailed in Appendix A, the web sites I analyze are but one small segment of the larger UT and Purdue web sites. If this project did not focus on a particular sub-set of web pages within the larger university web presence, the sheer number of web pages published at one university would prohibit the kind of in-depth rhetorical reading offered in Chapters Three and Four of this project.

Furthermore, because I wanted to study the ways ethos is impacted by reading multiple, connected sites against each other, I needed sites that contained multiple programs in the knowledge network of Composition and Rhetoric, like Professional Writing, English, Digital Rhetoric, etc.. For the most part, larger 4-year research institutions had higher numbers of these types of programs and departments focused on Rhetoric, Composition, English and Professional Writing.

I focus the majority of my analysis on department and program web sites because they function as the connector joints in the web of sites comprising a university web presence; online, program and department sites link individual faculty members to the college or school within the university itself. At the same time, program and department sites are potentially rich places to study ethos because they balance the individual ethos of the program or department and each program or department's unique web representation of this image with the institutional ethos and image of the larger university and the individual faculty members comprising a particular department.

I focus exclusively on university web sites instead of a variety of sites (i.e. governmental, corporate, etc.) because these sites may have similar rhetorical purposes and goals. Since evaluations of appropriate ethos are culturally specific and dependent on a reader's assumptions about the rhetorical situation within which the text (or web site) is read, selecting sites that are more likely to have a common purpose allows me to analyze the relationship between the design and ethos of web sites more effectively. As Spinuzzi et al (2002) explains, the specific techniques used to build ethos and the type of credibility required shift depending on site purposes.¹⁵ Clay Andres (1999) further explains that site design should be based on site goals, such as information dissemination, marketing, and establishing identity. For example, a web site dedicated to information transmission needs to establish that it is a trustworthy source that presents information accurately while an entertainment site may build ethos by asserting its cutting-edge creativity and new-technical advances that allow for even greater levels of interactivity. These rhetorical purposes (information, entertainment, marketing, etc.) indicate not only how the site designers intend the information to be used, but are also assumptions about what users expect and want from a particular web site.

A web designer's rationale for design choices and a reader's reaction to the navigation and design of a particular site evidence values-based assumptions about the best way to organize and present information, user characteristics and roles and site goals. These values may change based on the knowledge ecology; for example the banking industry may be more likely to adhere to "safe" design than the web design

¹⁵ While I use the terminology of site goals and purposes, the application of genre theory to web sites is another area of study that further examines the connections between site purpose, structure, and content.

industry.¹⁶ By focusing on university web sites my research is better able to focus on ethos since the goals and purposes of my selected sites are similar, at least at first glance. As my readings will show, there are important differences between UT and Purdue web sites which reflect the local context of the knowledge networks I examine.

A Final Note about the Reader

Each reader brings to interpretations different meanings based on “the different kinds of knowledge—practical, national, cultural, aesthetic—invested in the image” and, I would argue, the web site (Barthes 46). As the researcher, I need to pay attention to how my own experiences and preferences impact my research stance, differentiate my perceptions from those of non-expert or non-practiced readers, and shape my analysis of my selected web sites, my research practices, and my hypothesizing.

My role is not just that of ordinary “reader” surfing the web to find a phone number or a course list—my current status as faculty member working at the interstices of Digital Rhetoric and Comparative Literature and my years as a graduate student in a large, four-year institution create a researcher role akin to what Fogg refers to as an “expert” reader fluent in the content of the web site. I also bring the stance of web application consultant and researcher in digital rhetoric to analyze sites from a technical perspective that reflects my practiced understanding of what many web readers need in order to be able to effectively use a web site.

My background in corporate web application design, my personal experiences reading multiple web sites and my research on aspects of digital rhetoric increases my

¹⁶ This assertion requires additional research to support. While it is based on Fogg’s findings in his 2000 and 2002 research on the credibility of web sites, it is offered merely as an example and not as documented

awareness of the multiple possibilities for web site design. For example, while my experience interacting with digital texts may enable me to navigate a confusing site, my training and experience in working with large groups of users to test usability heightens my sensitivity to the potential pitfalls of confusing navigational structures. My work as marketing and sales director has helped scaffold my belief that public, informational web sites like those within the knowledge network of university web sites are simultaneously informative and marketing tools; I firmly believe that information architecture is inseparable from marketing an image or creating a defined experience with the institution¹⁷ that the web site represents or re-creates digitally.

Likewise, my experience and education have taught me that balancing between visual intensity and fast download time is just as important as ensuring that a site uses deep linking and dynamic menus to minimize the click stream between the main page and specific content pages. My background has made me appreciate the theoretical convenience of role-based navigation but also question most implementations of role-based linking because of the difficulties in defining and labeling roles and identifying content with the appropriate roles.

In completing my rhetorical analyses of the design, content, and navigation of web sites, I leverage these varied experiences to position myself as a “student of the web site”—I read and analyze these web sites with an awareness that multiple audience types access and use these web texts. For example, students, administrators, faculty,

fact.

¹⁷ By defined experience with the institution I mean the ways that a web site, like other marketing tools, may work to create a carefully pre-defined user experience with the company. A company may want to present itself as being very friendly and welcoming to customers in order to overcome bad press about customer service. In this case, the web site, and other marketing strategies may focus on the assertion of a friendly and approachable character to attempt to ensure that customers’ experience with the company is positive and works to overcome the charge of poor customer service.

government officials, K-12 teachers, and members of the general public may all be accessing university web sites. These users bring varying degrees of technical expertise, web access, design preferences, and experience navigating web sites. The audience group of students, for example, contains multiple types of students: potential students, current students, MBA students, Ph.D. students, male students, female students, students with broadband access, students with 56K modem access, etc. Due to the complexity and multiplicity of web audiences, I am not going to read from one defined audience perspective.

This being said, my analysis emerges from a United States-centric perspective. I do not directly focus on issues of accessibility (by the blind, color-blind, deaf, or non-native speakers of English). While this topic is certainly an important issue, my research is focused on ethos, not on accessibility of web texts. But, when my analysis reveals a web feature, a particular style or navigational strategy that I believe may prove especially interesting or problematic for a particular audience, I will discuss this aspect of the site.

Finally, my rhetorical readings, like any research project of this nature, inevitably risk presenting personal preferences and assumptions instead of objective, necessary readings. Throughout my readings of the online “discourse” or design of web sites and throughout my presentation of my analysis and conclusions, I will continually try to recognize and explicitly address the ways in which my preferences and assumptions impact my analysis in order to directly address the ways my experiences, values, and viewpoints shape my readings and my results. I hope that by doing so my analysis will result in useful, ethical results that will contribute new understanding about online ethos.

Ethics is of special concern in this project because, in much the same way that articles published in scholarly journals are reviewed, I am examining and critiquing web sites published by institutions and individuals whom I admire and respect. However, because not much work has yet been done to rhetorically analyze academic web sites and because web sites, especially individual faculty web sites, feel more personal, more private, than journal articles, I desire to be especially careful and sensitive to the tone and process I use in completing my analysis. Also, because this is a rhetorical analysis, I am cognizant that the results of this study are based on my readings and interpretations and are told in my voice—the voices, rationale, constraints, and decision-making processes at Purdue and UT that shaped these web sites are not included in this project. I desire to establish an ethos as a scholar that balances between detailed and descriptive analysis that strives to honestly communicate at least one potential reading of these web sites with a continual recognition of the effort and resources dedicated to designing and publishing these web sites.

Chapter Three focuses on the web sites from the University of Texas at Austin and Chapter Four reads sites affiliated with Purdue University. While Chapter Five summarizes the results of these rhetorical readings, this project concludes with my theories about synergistic ethos (in Chapter Six) that may help increase understandings of the ways ethos functions in a complex, interconnected system like that of a knowledge network.

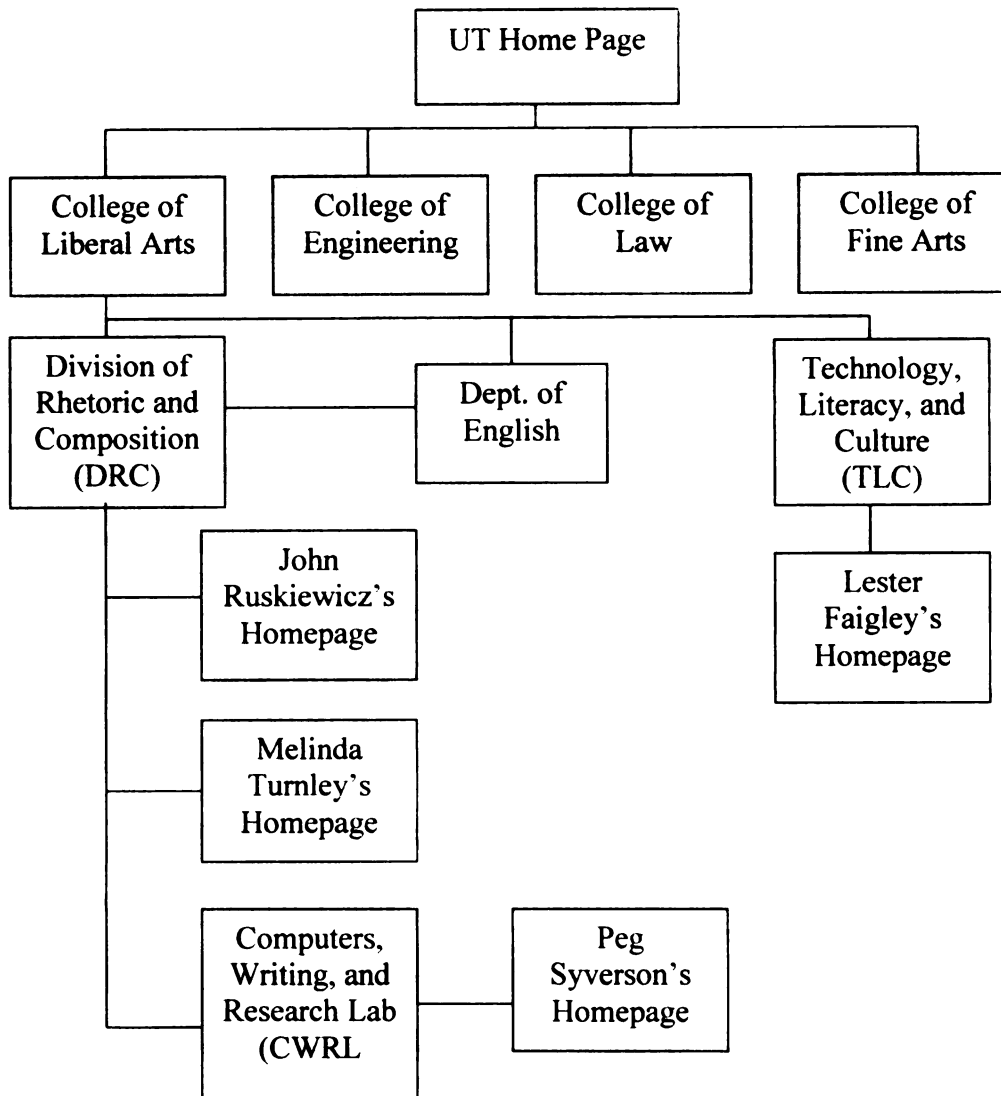
Chapter 3

Rhetorical Analysis of Ethos at The University of Texas at Austin

Introduction

The University of Texas at Austin (UT) is a four-year public research institution with established programs in English, Technology and Culture, and Rhetoric and Composition. My analysis of web sites at UT is broken into two sections. In Part A, I offer analyses of the ethos of select departmental and program sites affiliated with the Department of English comprising the knowledge network at UT. In Part B, I explain the impact reading these sites against and through faculty sites has upon the ethos of both the program sites and the faculty sites. This chapter concludes with a brief summary of the ways character, technical expertise, and disciplinary expertise shape the ethos conveyed online. Throughout, I use screen shots taken in 2002 and 2003 to help illustrate my points. The following graphic (Table 3.1) illustrates the knowledge network that this chapter will analyze. For additional information on the relationship between these sites and the larger UT web presence, refer to Appendix A.

Table 3.1: Diagram of the Segment of the UT Knowledge Network Addressed by Chapter Three



Please note that this diagram does not represent all linkages between sites because the links between sites have changed over time as sites have been updated and revised. However, this diagram does show general affiliations between sites.

Part A

The Ethos of Academic Web Sites: Readings of Departmental and Program Sites

This section includes analyses of the Department of English web site, the Division of Rhetoric and Composition (DRC) web site, the Computer, Writing, and Research Lab (CWRL) web site, and the program in Technology, Literacy, and Culture (TLC) web site. These program sites are all affiliated with the Department of English at UT. The DRC is a separate department in the School of Liberal Arts formed in 1993, but it cooperates with the Department of English to teach required writing classes and to offer a minor in rhetoric to undergraduate students. The DRC also has a separate graduate program with multiple concentrations available. As my analysis of faculty web sites will explain, as of the 2003 revisions to the DRC and Department of English sites, faculty teaching in the DRC are listed on the Department of English page, but identified with a “DRC” after their name to clarify their affiliation.¹

The DRC also operates the CWRL, which serves students and faculty affiliated with the Department of English, the DRC, and other disciplinary areas. The TLC is an interdisciplinary concentration available to students from a variety of departments and not under direct administrative supervision by the department of English. Although Lester Faigley, a professor in English and the DRC, was the director of the TLC in the time I gathered my research data, he has since become director of the Writing Center, and Elizabeth Keating, a faculty member in anthropology, has taken over as the director for

¹ As will be discussed later in this chapter, this re-organization can be seen to result in a shift in audience perceptions of the character of the UT Department of English, the DRC, and the overall knowledge network on which this chapter is focused.

the TLC. As explained in Chapter Two and Appendix A, my analysis will not consider the UT Writing Center web presence.

In addition to offering rhetorical readings of these program and departmental sites, I examine several faculty web sites published by faculty affiliated with these programs and departments. In all of these readings, I look at the ways in which navigation, design, and content (both graphical and textual) shape ethos. To do so, I rely upon an Aristotelian definition of a tri-part ethos to discuss the ways in which these sites convey an ethos by demonstrating technical and content expertise, character, and goodwill towards the audience.

UT Department of English <http://www.en.utexas.edu/>

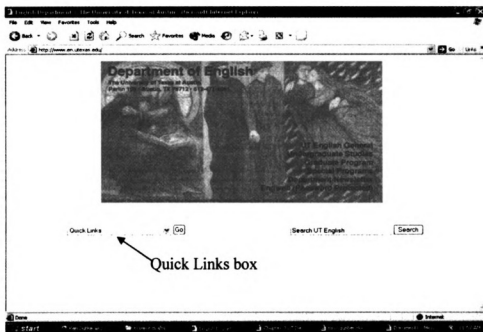
In the time I have been completing my research, the UT Department of English site has been revised with a new GUI design. Although much of the underlying site content did not change significantly, the presentation and contextualization of content on several key pages within this site is significantly different than on the older version. The following analysis will address first the older version of the web site and then the updated new generation in order to examine the ways this GUI redesign and changes in content presentation shape ethos.

UT Department of English Older Version

The older version of the UT Department of English site is comprised of an opening splash screen and multiple content pages. As Figure 3.1 illustrates, the opening splash screen is dominated by a digitized Rossetti painting. In addition, this page contains links to UT English General, Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Program, Special

Programs, Department Newsletter, and Engweb (password protected) in the lower right corner of the painting. Below the painting are a drop down menu of “Quick Links” (on

Figure 3.1 UT Department of English Older Version “Splash” Screen



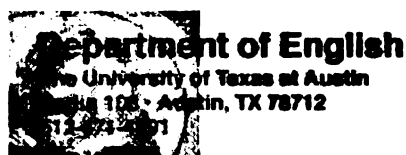
the left) and a search feature (on the right). This image is also the basis of the departmental logo that exists in the upper left corner of content pages (see Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3 where I have placed an arrow pointing to this logo).² The painting itself is an 1855 watercolor by Dante Gabriel Rossetti that portrays the love affair of Paolo and Francesca da Rimini. This painting is loosely based on the story of Lancelot and Guinevere as well as Dante's story of the two lovers who were condemned to the second circle of hell for engaging in an adulterous affair and (<http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~fl3min4/6/inferno/characters.html>).

The lack of textual content on this opening splash screen foregrounds the Rossetti painting. Because the audience is not given a text-based description of the English department, its explicit goals, or the goals of this affiliated web site, perceptions of the department's ethos are shaped primarily by this painting and by the noticeable absence of textual content. Furthermore, the online graphical representation of the painting is a remediated image which foregrounds the continual internal reduplication and cross-referencing that occur in literature, visual art and on the web. The use of this painting

² The departmental logo that appears in the upper left corner of site content pages is a small segment of the painting that includes the two lovers' torsos and that is overlaid with the Department of English geographical (as opposed to digital) address (see Figure 3.2).

connotes a focus on analyzing and re-interpreting (remediating) canonical texts in the same way that Dante reinterpreted the story of Lancelot and Guinevere and that Rossetti then reinterpreted Dante's version; now the department of English at UT is placing a digital version of this painting on its web site as graphical content. The fact that this painting is from a Western European cultural context indirectly shapes perceptions of research focus; the department forwards an image of itself as focused on more traditional "canonical" texts from the Western tradition by using this kind of painting. Because the

Figure 3.2 Department of English Web Site Logo



logo, the graphical representation of the department, includes the painting and the geographical address, the painting, as the primary graphical content of this page, metonymically represents the department, both literally and symbolically. This logo also brings the motif of the Rossetti painting to all other site content pages, which creates coherence throughout the site and which reminds the reader that the ethos of the UT Department of English site is based, at least in part, on an expertise in the study and interpretation of artistic artifacts (see Figure 3.3 for sample content page that displays the logo in the upper left corner).

Figure 3.3 UT Dept of English Older Version Welcome Page



Because it holds such a primary place in the site GUI (being both the foregrounded image on the splash screen and part of the logo), the Rossetti painting reflects the “collective cultural imagination” of the image of the Department of English as held by the web designers and those responsible for approving this web design (Sosnoski 12). The use of the painting and the muted, warm “traditional” color scheme foregrounded by a cream background and rust/burgundy headers creates a scholarly, museum-like atmosphere, reinforcing the department’s dedication to the serious study of artistic artifacts. These colors are also permutations of the UT school colors, and reinforce that this department is affiliated with UT.

The fact that the main Department of English splash screen (Figure 3.1) lists the physical address and telephone number for the Department of English and does not include an e-mail link or any sort of “contact us with questions” or other text that reaches out and speaks directly to audience members also shapes the type of ethos conveyed by this site. The lack of direct communication to the audience creates a relationship between

site visitors and the departmental site that is more focused on information transmission from the department to users than other sites (such as the revised Department of English site discussed next) which open with a greeting addressing site users directly and giving the appearance of a dialogue rather than a one-way transmission of information.

Even the titles of links on this opening screen fail to address or include users directly. For example, there are no “Where am I?” or “FAQs” or “So you want to study English?” links that directly address the audience. In contrast, links titled “English General” and “UG Studies” are informative and descriptive (to a limited extent) but do not reach out to the audience in the same way as other types of links would.³

While the graphical look and feel is coherent due to the consistent use of the Rossetti painting as splash screen and as logo throughout the site, the navigation of the web site is disjointed and could prove difficult for site audiences to use. Clicking on the “UT English General” link on the splash screen brings the reader to a page titled “Welcome to UT English” (see Figure 3.3). The Welcome page is subdivided into five main categories: General Information, Listings, Programs, Teaching and Scholarship, and Services. Next to each of these categories are several links connecting users to information about departmental location, faculty and staff directory, course listings,

³ Like the opening splash screen, the welcome page (Figure 3.3) has links instead of more in-depth textual content. But, as with the opening screen, the wording of these links impacts the ethos created for the Department of English on this site; the textual content on the site establishes a relationship with the audience based purely on information transmission. Interestingly, this header is not titled “English General” as the link off the opening screen would indicate. The tone of the phrase “English General” is very different from the “Welcome to UT English.” The header, “Welcome to UT English” reaches out to users; because this page title takes the form of a common greeting, site visitors may feel that they are being welcomed into the site. “English General” is a condensed descriptor with no emotive connotations. The fact that the first two links on the Welcome page use “we” (i.e. “Where We are Located” and “Who We Are”) creates an implied collective authorial voice and enables the site to “speak” for the Department of English as a whole.

graduate and undergraduate programs, departmental activities, and the like.⁴

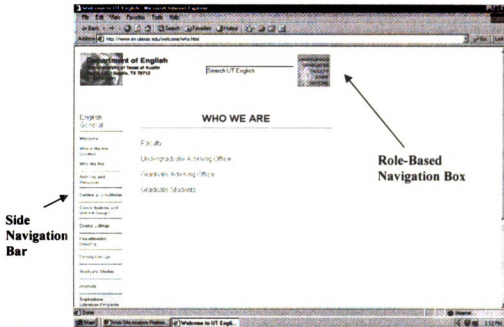
The UT Department of English site includes well-written information about the administrative requirements for the program which could be especially helpful to a student audience and somewhat helpful to faculty who may need to act as informal advisors to students. For example, the site lists the requirements for graduating with an undergraduate degree in English that includes an overview of the major, details exam information and gives relevant contact information (among other things). Throughout, the site presents information in a direct manner, and does not contextualize this information or directly market the program.

For example, the Who We Are page (Figure 3.4) doesn't include any textual explanation, mission statement, or other details describing the department. Instead, this page gives readers a list of links to faculty, the English department's undergraduate advising office, the department's graduate office, and general information on graduate studies in English (in that order from top to bottom). The order and selection of these links foregrounds faculty as the primary "content" online. This list of links privileges graduate studies by omitting a link to undergraduate studies, but, like the opening screen, these links also shape an ethos based on providing services to students (including undergraduates) online. In so doing, the UT Department of English content pages position an administrative ethos whereby the site purpose seems to be providing access to information.

⁴ As the Welcome to UT English page illustrates, the Department of English site contains information targeted towards undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty. The site contains links to undergraduate major information, the sophomore literature program, graduate studies, special programs, journals, course listings, faculty listings (which is a faculty directory), and general information on the department's location and mission.

On this site, the “objective” informative approach combined with the clarity of

Figure 3.4 Department of English “Who We Are” Page



textual content and the large amount of content offered online do present the Department of English web site as available to serve users' needs for information access. Having taken the time to place this amount of content online, the department can be seen as trying to make access to this information more convenient for students and faculty and other site visitors, which shapes perceptions of goodwill towards the audience. This older version of the UT Department of English site effectively presents many details important to the formal study of English at UT including degree requirements, concentration options, courses available, etc. However, the lack of clear navigation and information architecture ultimately undermines users' abilities to effectively navigate and use this information. The quality of the information is overshadowed by irritation and frustration users may feel with the navigational difficulties. When the purpose of the site

seems to be information transmission and access, difficulties in accessing information may undermine perceptions of ethos because readers cannot effectively access the information made available online.

Continued navigation of the site reveals significant inconsistencies in navigational strategy which were frustrating and confusing to me as a site reader and which may be equally frustrating to other audience members. The department splash screen and content pages use a drop-down navigation box titled “Quick Links” (see Figure 3.1) to link to major content categories and simultaneously implement a role-based navigation in the small olive-colored box on the top right, next to the drop down menu (see top of Figure 3.4).⁵ Clicking on any one of these user roles in the drop down menu brings the reader to a separate index page of links. In addition, the department content pages (for the most part) include a navigational menu bar on the left side of the screen replicating links offered on the Welcome to UT English page (see Figure 3.3), but here listed under the header “English General” (see, for example, Figure 3.4 Who We Are Page). If the user clicks on the “English General” she returns to the Welcome page. While the Welcome page subdivides these links by category (General Information, Listings, Programs, etc), when listed in the left side menu the links appear without category headers and in a different order than on the Welcome page. This lack of consistency can easily create the perception that the left menu bar leads to different information than the Welcome page. The drop down menu navigation lists different categories and links than either the Welcome page or the left side navigation menu.

⁵ Note that the Quick Links box appears at the top of the Welcome page but at the bottom of other content pages. This Quick Links box is not visible in Figure 3.4 and other screen shots of content pages because readers must scroll down to view this Quick Links box.

Drop-down navigation is considered by some web design experts to be a user-friendly technique that allows readers to jump immediately to the information they want rather than clicking through several pages. Likewise, role-based navigation is a frequently utilized navigational strategy believed to simultaneously increase usability and give the appearance of personalization. As such, both drop down menus and role-based navigation can be seen as part of the established canon of “appropriate” web design. As this older version of the UT Department of English site demonstrates, however, the application of these “appropriate” standards does not necessarily increase usability or audience perceptions of technical expertise. For example, the drop down menu boxes on the main page are an attempt at providing role-based navigation, but ultimately this navigational structure is flawed because once visitors enter the site, the left hand side navigation bar and the top right role-based navigation menu they encounter on content pages contain different categories of users and different links; there is no consistency. The fact that the different navigational aids do not present the same list of links creates confusion because the site reader may think that there are two different pages (i.e. an “English General” page and a “Welcome” page) when in fact there is just one page with two different names. Or, the reader may be unable to find certain pages using the drop down menu even though these same pages can be easily located using the left navigation bar.

In summary, the older version of the UT Department of English web site's navigational structure is problematic for two primary reasons:

1. The user has to click through a minimum of three pages to get to substantive textual content (splash screen, then menu page, at times a second menu page, and then content). Furthermore, because the reader has no reliable way of predicting what content is on a particular screen, she may need to return frequently to main index pages (including the Welcome page) that list links in order to keep investigating other pages in an effort to find a specific piece of information.
2. The multiple navigational aids (drop down menu, role-based navigation, and side menu bar) are not consistent in ordering or grouping, label pages differently (i.e. refer to the Welcome page as the Welcome Page and the English General page) and do not all include links to the same places.

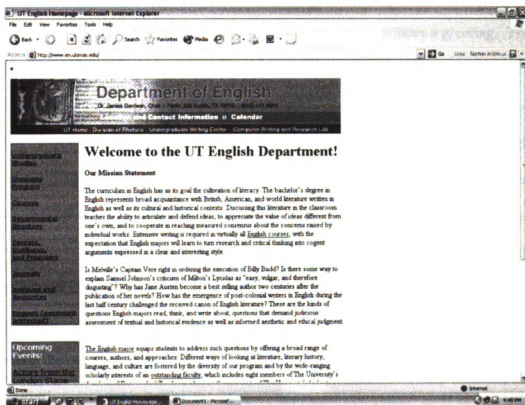
The Department of English web site thus applies too many different navigational strategies that contradict or overlap each other in confusing ways. The end result is a web site that does not provide clearly defined navigational pathways or predictability, both of which are important characteristics in making a site usable (Sano 87-89). The navigational structure of the older version of the UT Department of English page impacts ethos by decreasing perceptions of technical expertise in web design and by frustrating readers so that they may be less inclined to view the character and expertise of the Department of English as positive, appropriate, or effective, even though the focus on Western artifacts and the informative character conveyed by the site seem to be appropriate and relevant for a university Department of English web site. The traditional, European artwork used as graphical motif on the old version of the site and the

impersonal encyclopedic approach to presenting information convey an ethos of a department focused on “traditional” Western European literary texts and evidencing a rather stereotypical character of a scholar passionately studying canonical texts and not wishing to be bothered too much by undergraduates.

Revised Version UT Department of English Web Site

The revised UT Department of English site retains most of the same content and the graphical layout of the content frames underneath an updated graphical header.

Figure 3.5 Revised UT Dept. of English Main Page (Welcome Page)



splash screen with the Rossetti painting has been removed and the Welcome to UT English page has become the first page that users encounter when they enter the

departmental site (see Figure 3.5). The new graphical header retains the focus on European art by including an excerpt of what looks like an old illustrated book in old English. The small graphic at the top left of the page is difficult to read even online; it presents a man reading a text, perhaps out loud, which suggests an appropriately “English” focus on texts and on their communication and dissemination. However, the logo on the bottom of content pages has not been updated and remains the same segment of the Rossetti painting.⁶

Compared to the older version of the Welcome to UT English site (Figure 3.3) this updated site creates a more personal relationship with the audience and thereby establishes a different kind of ethos. On this new site “Welcome to UT English” is presented as a greeting, not a header which merely connotes or echoes a greeting. The change from “Welcome to UT English” to “Welcome to the UT English Department!” is significant on two fronts. First, whereas the old site welcomed users to the UT English web *site* (as separate from the department) which perhaps reinforces the perception that the old site is an online database of information rather than an online representation of the department, the new greeting welcomes users to the department, not simply the web site. Secondly, the addition of the exclamation point brings emotion and a clearer authorial voice to the page. The older version presented information in a dry, non-emotional “objective” manner. The exclamation point thereby relates an enthusiastic character not present on the older version.

Furthermore, by including the mission statement in paragraph form and by using embedded links (links listed in the textual paragraphs as opposed to links listed in a

⁶ This logo appears in the bottom right corner of all updated content pages except the “Welcome” page (and hence is not visible in Figure 3.5).

navigational menu) the revised page contextualizes information.⁷ When compared to the “Who We Are” page on the older version of the site (Figure 3.4) that simply lists links, this mission statement frames the department in a more contextualized manner. The new mission on the updated welcome page is much more focused on undergraduate students than the older home page that did not include a link to undergraduate information and instead only offered a link to the undergraduate advising office.

The revised welcome text on the second version of the Department of English web site reaches out to the audience, using questions to interact with site visitors and give the audience a taste of what English classes are about. For example, the second paragraph on this revised welcome page includes questions such as: “Is Melville’s Captain Vere right in ordering the execution of Billy Budd? . . . How has the emergence of post-colonial writers in English during the last half-century challenged the received canon of English literature?” The texts referenced by these questions convey a teacherly ethos – these are the kinds of questions teachers ask to open and frame discussions of literature. Furthermore, the use of questions rather than simple provisions of information changes the way the UT Department of English site approaches readers. Asking questions is a way of inviting readers into a two-way conversation, even if these readers cannot respond directly. While the new mission statement conveys a departmental ethos that is more involved with undergraduates, it retains, for the most part, the focus on the study of literature evident in the older version.

⁷ The page retains a left side navigational menu to offer easy access to this information should readers prefer not to be forced to read the paragraph each time they came to look up some bit of information.

In addition to offering a more contextualized welcome page, the navigation has also been slightly modified. The role-based navigation box that used to appear in the upper right hand corner has been removed and the drop down menu of “Quick Links” has been moved to the footer of most (but not all) content pages. The left hand menu (as

Figure 3.6 Revised UT Dept of English Undergraduate Studies Page

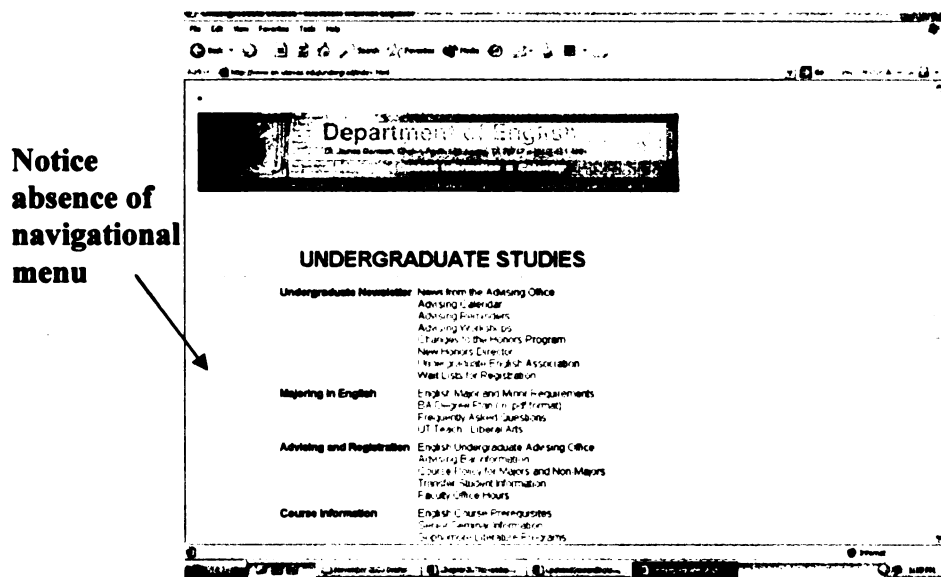
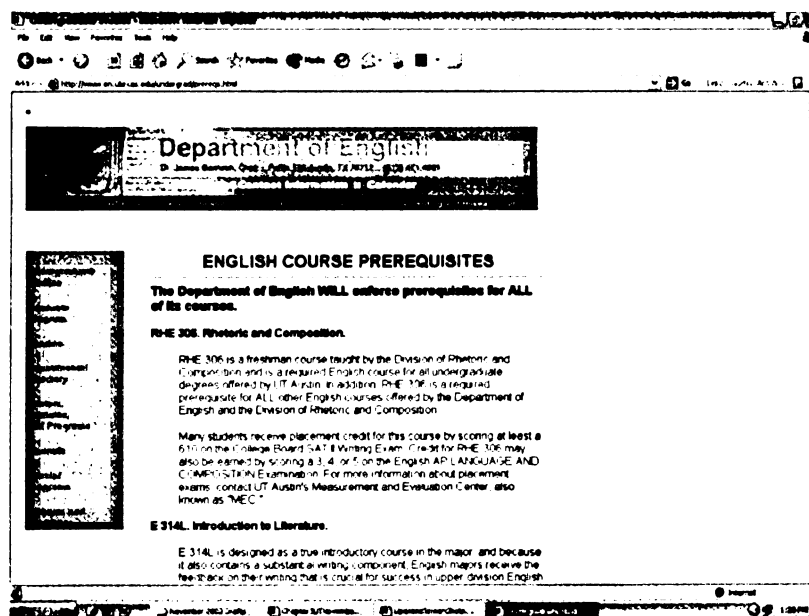


Figure 3.7 Revised UT Dept. of English Sample Content Page



illustrated in Figure 3.5 and 3.7 and conspicuously absent from Figure 3.6) includes links to Undergraduate Studies; Graduate Studies; Courses; Departmental Directory; Centers, Institutes, and Programs; Journals; Special Programs; and Archives and Resources. In this updated version, the links in the drop down menu are the same as those in this left hand menu. However, as with the older version, the reader has no way of knowing what is included in each of these content areas, which can create navigational frustration. For example, if a user is looking for information on freshman composition, does she select Undergraduate Studies or Special Programs? To find out, the reader must click on the link, wait for it to download, then read the subsequent list of links that comes up and then, if the information he is looking for is not there, click back to the main page and try another content heading.

Furthermore, the site still suffers from a lack of standardization in navigation. For example, many pages within this site contain a footer with the departmental logo on the left and the Quick Links drop down navigation box on the right. But some pages, notably the Courses and Departmental Directory pages, do not contain the drop down navigation box at the end of the page. Also, on some pages the left side navigation menu from the main page is continued (see, for example, Figure 3.7, a sample content page displaying English Course Prerequisites which is a link off the Undergraduate Studies page) while on others this left side navigational menu is missing (see Figure 3.6, the Undergraduate Studies page, for example).

Overall, the revisions to the UT Department of English site convey a more approachable and teacherly character than the older version. The removal of the splash screen in favor of taking readers immediately to a content pages shifts the focus of the

site from the presentation of information and artifacts (like the Rosetti painting) to a more teacherly discussion of the study of English. In addition, by contextualizing information through the creation of a more emotive voice and by offering more textual content on the opening page, the character portrayed by the site shifts from a disembodied and impersonal encyclopedia of information to more of a collective departmental voice. For me as a reader, however, the navigation problems continue to undercut perceptions of technical expertise. Even if the site contains a great deal of information helpful to students and other audience members, the information is useless if a user cannot find it. And yet, because the Department of English makes no claims for digital rhetoric or web design expertise on its web site, perceptions of content expertise are neither hindered nor improved by these navigational issues. But the lack of discussion of technology and poor navigation impacts the ethos of the UT Department of English web site—this revised web site conveys a more teacherly character, but the ethos of the site remains rooted in the study of literature in a traditional sense.

UT Computer Writing and Research Lab (CWRL) <http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu>

The mission of the UT Computer Writing and Research Lab (CWRL) is to work “within the framework of a collaborative community to explore and develop innovative ways to use computers in teaching and learning about writing and literature.” The CWRL offers resources to teachers as well as students and provides classroom spaces, a high-end computer lab staffed with people who can help teachers and students complete projects, and a library of reference materials on using computers for writing and research. The CWRL’s explicit focus on computers in practice as well as pedagogy calls for an

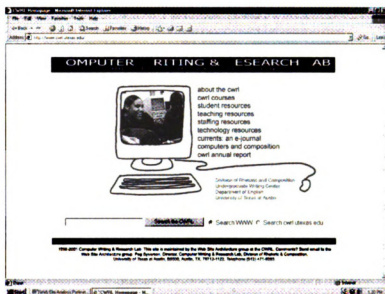
ethos more closely linked to technical expertise and a teacherly character than that of the UT Department of English. To demonstrate a technical expertise appropriate for its mission statement, the CWRL needs to evidence both a hands-on literacy in using technology and a more robust literacy of technology that enables the creative thinking and innovation central to the mission of the center. Because the CWRL has published two new sites during my data gathering phase, this section discusses all three generations of the site and attempts to explain the ways the different design, navigation, and content of these site versions impact perceptions of technical expertise, content expertise, character, and goodwill. The very fact that the CWRL has published three different versions of its site reinforces program assertions that faculty and staff in the center are actively engaged with the design and implementation of new web technologies, which itself shapes a credible ethos.

Version One of the CWRL Web Site

The splash screen of the first version of the CWRL main page (see Figure 3.8) displays a graphic of students working together with each other and with technology; this splash screen suggests the program focus and shapes ethos just as the Rossetti painting shaped the ethos of the Department of English site. While the photo is represented on the sketch of the computer monitor, the color of the photograph and the fact that it is projected on the screen of the monitor keeps the focus on the students displayed on the virtual screen while addressing the ways that technology mediates communication, writing, and teaching. The coded iconic message of this graphic is that people come first at the CWRL but that the center's work is mediated by computers. Quite literally, the

graphic shows people working on a computer; it is a representation of technology as humanized—rather than bytes or data on the screen there are people working together with technology. This graphic creates an ethos where technology is presented not just an instrument or tool to achieve a specific purpose, but as a method of communication and thinking that impacts the formation of community.

Figure 3.8 Version One CWRL Web Site Main Page



As with the older UT Department of English site, this main page (Figure 3.8) does not contain textual content per se. Instead, it offers a variety of links. Furthermore, the wording of these links is reminiscent of the Department of English (older version)—both are very straightforward and do not directly address the audience. However, the usage of all lower-case letters on the CWRL page suggests an informality and playfulness not present on the Department of English site. The leading graphic, too, is much more focused on technology and students than the Rossetti painting or the revised Department of English header. The computer itself is cartoonish, again connoting an informal and

playful character, while the photo of students portrays the CWRL as a place where students can work together with each other and with technology.

Site content on version one of the CWRL site both reinforces and challenges my reading of the presentation of character and ethos on the splash screen. For example, the Center's self-description located behind the link "about the cwrl" (see Figure 3.9 for the About the CWRL page) explains that:

The Computer Writing and Research Lab is a group of graduate students and faculty working within the framework of a collaborative community to explore and develop innovative ways to use computers in teaching and learning about writing and literature.

This description focuses on the scholarly value of the CWRL and, by not including undergraduates as "members" of the CWRL community, positions the center as a teacher network studying teaching with technology, writing, and literature. Going back to the opening page graphics, the presentation of students on the computer screen can be reframed in the context of the preceding description as placing the practice of teaching and learning with and about computers as the focus of research at the CWRL more than providing a community space in which students and faculty may collaborate.

Content on the rest of the "What is the CWRL" page continues this focus on scholarly research and contributions to the discipline of Composition. For example, this page describes how the CWRL "was instrumental in bringing a new field—Computers and Writing—into being." This discussion reveals a pattern on this site of talking about students rather than talking to students. But, whereas the older version of the Department of English site talks about students even in sections seemingly targeted at undergraduate

readers, the CWRL site does not seem to focus on undergraduate students as a primary audience. Instead, even though descriptions of the center describe the resources available to undergraduate students, this first version of the CWRL site appears targeted at faculty and graduate students.⁸

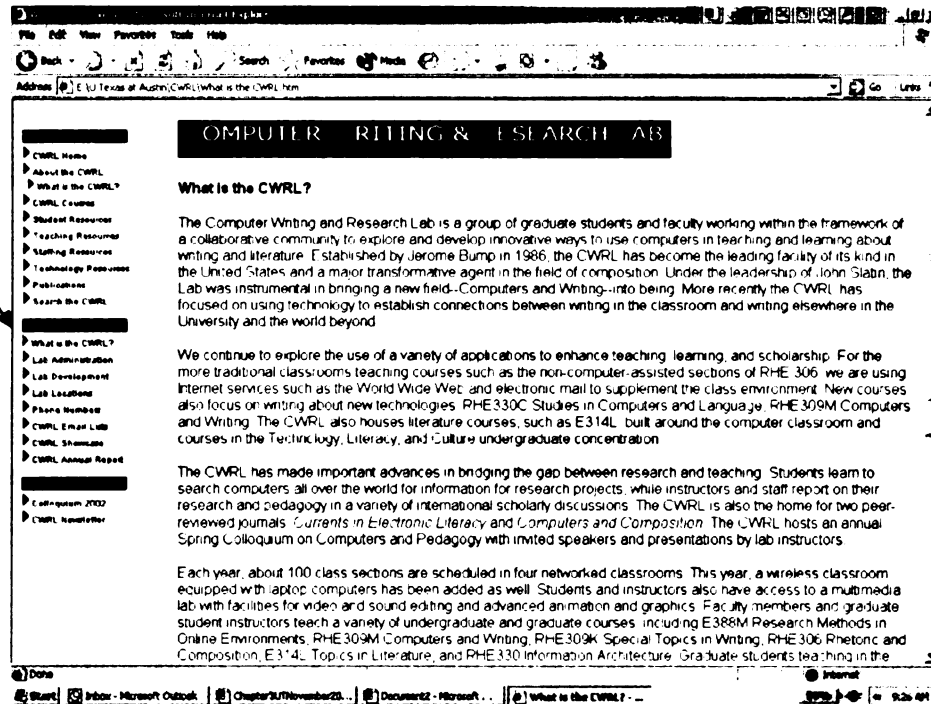
Compared to the Department of English site, the first (and oldest) version of the CWRL site addressed by my research more effectively follows the principles of web design set forward by Horton and Lynch and others without overusing multiple contradictory recommendations for web design (as the Department of English does with its plethora of navigational aides). Navigation on this version one CWRL web site is very user-focused and specific, allowing for immediate access to a particular page.

This first version of the CWRL web site uses a clear menu listing (about the CWRL, CWRL courses, student resources, teaching resources, staffing resources, technology resources, currents: an e-journal, CWRL annual report, computers and composition), a search feature, and a footer graphical navigation bar that includes links to contacts, lab locations, lab hours, and student facts (see Figure 3.8). This navigational menu is consistently labeled and implemented across the site. For example, as Figure 3.9 (Version One “What is the CWRL”) illustrates, the content pages replicate the main menu in a left hand navigational frame. This left navigational aid first shows the user where he is by listing the content page currently displayed on the screen indented under the main content header to which it belongs. Then, the next group of links lists the sub-pages under each main content header. On Figure 3.9, the user is on the page “What is the CWRL” so this page title is indented with a lighter colored arrow under the “About

⁸ However, as explained in my analysis of the CWRL’s online resources demonstrates, the site does not exclude an undergraduate audience.

Figure 3.9 Version One “What is CWRL” Page

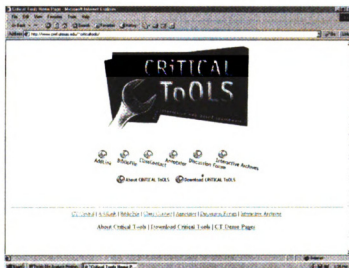
Dynamic
Menus



CWRL” link in the top group of links on the left hand menu. This top grouping of links is titled “Where are you?” an informal label that speaks directly to the audience and that shapes the character of the site. This heading would present a very different character if it were labeled “Location” (to give but one possible example). The second segment of the navigational menu is titled “About” (an abbreviation for About the CWRL) and lists all eight content pages included in this section. In this second segment of the navigational menu, the “What is CWRL” link is highlighted to show the reader that he is on this specific content page.

This clear, user-focused navigation respects viewers' needs to know where they are and to locate information quickly and easily. In so doing, the CWRL site not only offers clear pathways to locate information but also lets users know where they are currently located and reinforces textual claims of technical expertise. The online resources offered by the CWRL web site further demonstrate technical expertise while conveying a teacherly character. The CWRL web page titled "Technology Resources" offers in-depth detail on technology available at the Center; Critical Tools is one possible link off the Technology Resources site (see Figure 3.10). The critical tools header graphic is used to iconically represent these technology resources. According to the

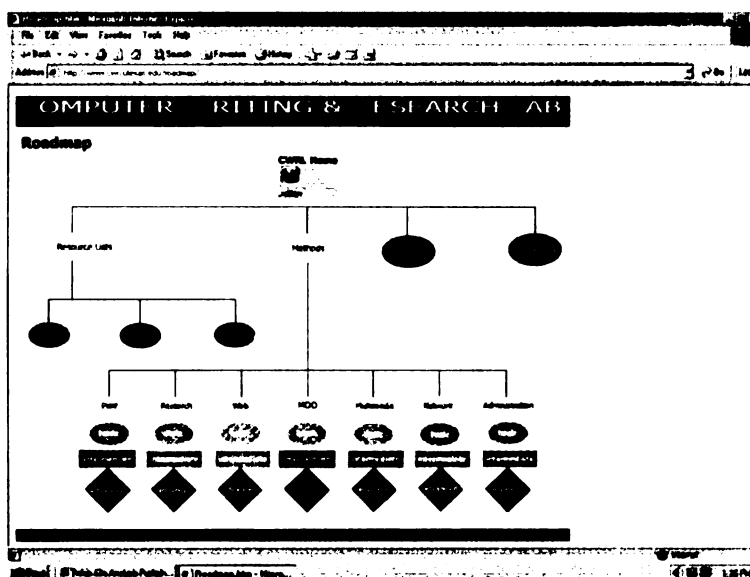
Figure 3.10 Version One CWRL Web Site Critical Tools Page



CWRL web site, "Critical Tools offers a suite of seven courseware modules designed primarily for Literature and Composition courses but which can be used for courses across a wide range of disciplines." These tools provide detailed and practical directions

that focus on building a hands-on programmer literacy⁹ in using software to construct web sites and other digital texts. These resources establish the CWRL's expertise in applying technology as a tool in higher education. These instructional modules also establish a pedagogical expertise in teaching technical skills by demonstrating that the CWRL can create easy-to-follow directions and technology assistance to help students and teachers improve their technical literacy.

Figure 3.11 Version One CWRL Web Site Roadmap



This practical advice on using technology is supplemented by the CWRL Roadmap (Figure 3.11): “Still under construction, the Roadmap represents an effort to “map out” the learning curve for users of lab hardware, software and computer-assisted pedagogies” which suggests that these technology tools are published for teachers as well as students. The screen shot overviewing the Roadmap demonstrates how these competencies are carefully presented using colors and shapes to denote type of

⁹ Programmer literacy is defined as the ability to use software to build web sites as opposed to the ability of only being able to use software to access or browse sites.

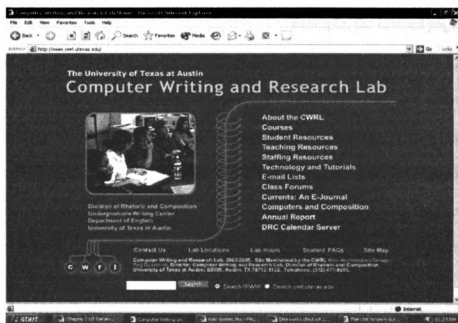
competency and level of mastery required at each phase in the CWRL's program for building technical literacy. These competencies place technical skills within a context of education and help individuals assess their current skills and develop plans for improving technical literacy. Both Critical Tools and the Roadmap may also enhance audience perceptions of goodwill by establishing that the CWRL wants to help site visitors improve technology skills and that the CWRL has done a great deal of hard work to develop these resources and make them accessible for free to any reader wishing to use them. These technical resources demonstrate that the CWRL knows how to teach technical literacy as well as use technical skills to build effective web sites and instructional tools. As such, their presence on the web site reinforces content-based claims that the CWRL understands technology to be integral to its mission and to the practice of writing and research in a university setting for both faculty and students.

Version Two of the CWRL Web Site

The second version of the CWRL web site applies a new look and feel that presents the CWRL as a group whose expertise in web design has evolved to embrace changing standards and trends in visual display. The content of the site is nearly identical to that of the older site—slight changes in wording and organization of information are present but do not radically re-position or re-define the program. The updates to the CWRL web site revolve primarily around developing a new logo and a new look and feel that shift the ethos of the CWRL slightly.

Because the CWRL is a center dedicated to using computers in teaching and learning, a poorly designed or outdated web site could suggest that the program is not

Figure 3.12 Version Two CWRL Main Page



able to keep up with evolving standards in web design due to lack of time, technical difficulties, or any number of production-related factors. If the CWRL web site is outdated how can the CWRL claim that it teaches current technical literacy skills? The revised site balances between demonstrating a desire and commitment to staying current with emerging practices in web design and retaining usability for users already familiar with the older version of the site.

This revised site retains the same navigational pattern as the previous version. As explained in the preceding analysis of the first version of the site, this navigational pattern offers deep linking and interpretive assistance to help users understand both where they are and where they can go. Returning users comfortable with the old site can easily adapt to the new site and find information quickly and easily because the site retains the same core links in much the same placement.

The changes to navigation on this main page are limited to renaming links, adding links, and changing the textual header slightly. For example, the revised page adds links to e-mail lists, class forums, DRC (Division of Rhetoric and Composition) calendar server, and a site map. The addition of these links on the main page reveals a shift in the purpose of the web site more towards providing resources for students and teachers that go beyond technical directions to build community and to share expertise. Whereas the first version of the CWRL site seemed more focused on teachers and graduate students, the second version of the site includes undergraduates more directly in the intended audience.

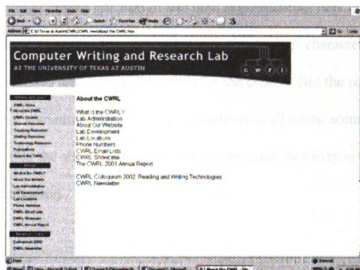
Furthermore, the technology resources link has been renamed “Technology and Tutorials” and the Critical Tools suite is no longer available in its old form.¹⁰ Instead, in this version, the CWRL has organized resources by type, arranged under headers like HTML; it also includes more resources for web publishing. This shift makes the Technology and Tutorials section more of a database or library of resources rather than a pre-defined curriculum of seven modules. By updating the Critical Tools, the CWRL not only eliminates outdated information but presents an evolving technical expertise and awareness of audience technical needs.

The new main page (Figure 3.12) also renames “Contacts” (located in the bottom menu bar) as “Contact us.” This slight change in wording clarifies that this link leads to information on how to reach the CWRL (as opposed to listing, say, a complete faculty

¹⁰ The removal of Critical Tools from the updated page slightly diminishes goodwill because these tools provided such a helpful resource to users and because many links to technology resources on other UT sites are broken due to the removal of the Critical Tools web resources from the updated CWRL page. The result of these content and navigational changes on the main page is that the CWRL web site creates an ethos that is balanced combination of both a teacherly and scholarly ethos.

directory or list of contacts in Computers and Writing). Finally, the header on this revised main page now lists the University of Texas at Austin first, followed by

Figure 3.13 Revised CWRL Content Page “About the CWRL”



Computer Writing and Resource Lab. Inversion of order contributes to fluidity of the layout by eliminating dead space while the difference in font size preserves the focus on the CWRL.

On version two of the CWRL main page (see Figure 3.12) the leading photograph, which changes periodically, retains the image of people working together and individually with technology present on the first version; again, the focus is on people using technology, not technology in and of itself. The use of multiple photos on version two connotes an understanding of the multiple audiences and educational settings within which the CWRL minimizes the framing connotation of the first version (with the computer screen) that the people presented on the computer screen are the object of the CWRL's research. Instead of focusing on the work of students, the CWRL now presents itself as reflective community of practice that includes students. The fact that the graphic

changes regularly shapes an online ethos of the CWRL based on an inclusive multiplicity and diversity of communities and practices, not just technical expertise.

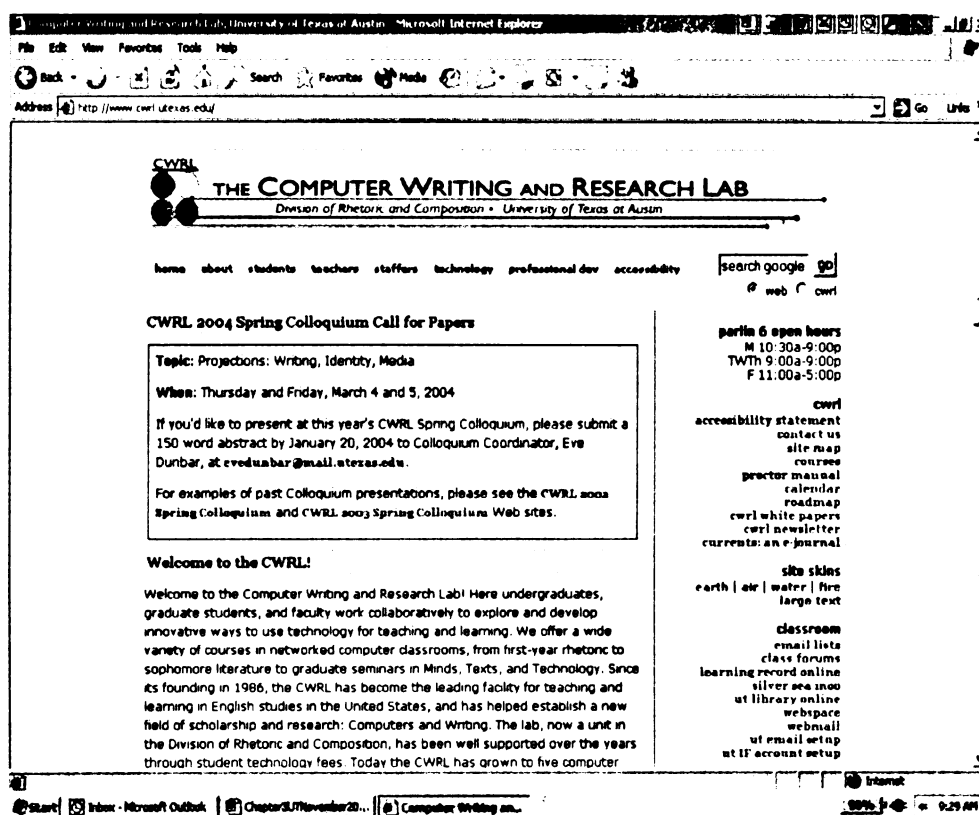
The revised GUI also suggests that the character of the CWRL embraces a need for continual learning by showing that CWRL staff devoted time and energy to learning about new directions in web site design and then implementing new ideas appropriately.¹¹ Because the CWRL is focused on digital literacy, this type of character is essential to conveying an effective and appropriate ethos for the center. But the revision of the CWRL site is not something that would be important to all users; some users may not even recognize that the site is updated frequently because they may not continue to use the site after graduation.

¹¹ The same could be said about the UT Department of English, except the Department of English redesigned only once, and the redesign did not drastically improve the site's pervasive navigational issues.

CWRL Version Three Revision (as of October 2003)

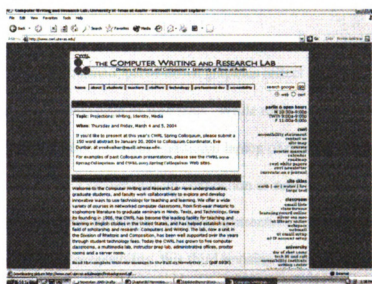
The CWRL site was updated again in the Fall of 2003 (see Figure 3.14). As noted in the CWRL's welcome message, the CWRL is, as of this revision, now a unit in the Division of Rhetoric and Composition (DRC). This note could signal an administrative reorganization or just a formal recognition of what was

Figure 3.14 Version Three CWRL Home Page



previously an informal working relationship. Changes to the site may or may not be the result of this shift in the relationship between the CWRL and the DRC. This newest generation of the CWRL site illustrates evolving capabilities of web publication technologies including cascading style sheets and XHTML.¹² These new technologies enable the CWRL to offer “skins” or different color schemes with the same content and navigation (see Figure 3.15 for an alternate skin) and to

Figure 3.15 Version Three CWRL Page Alternate Skin



make the site more accessible.¹³ This new site demonstrates a heightened

awareness of accessibility issues by making the site more compatible with site

¹² This version of the CWRL web site includes a page addressing the production and goals of the web site. One section of this page reads: “After months of hard work by the Summer Staff, the CWRL is proud to present their new Web page, one that is inspired by the kind of innovative, creative, and pedagogically sound work done every day by teachers and students in the Lab. Motivated by a desire to move the page out of Cold Fusion, and a mandate from the university to make all Web pages accessible to people with disabilities, the Summer Staff went several steps further:

- the site has a completely new organizational structure, with new accessibility and professional development sections
- it utilizes the very latest in CSS and XHTML design
- it offers users more control over the visual appearance of the site
- it is accessible according to Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Priorities 1, 2, and 3, of the W3C Accessibility Guidelines

¹³ While changing standards and the implementation of cross-platform standards that allow web sites to be read by varied handheld, laptop, and desktop hardware is a fascinating and important topic, it is not the focus of this study.

readers (for blind audience members), accessible to readers with varying types of color-blindness, and portable to handheld PDAs (i.e. palm pilots).¹⁴ The addition of a page titled “Accessibility Statement” (see footnote) supports the CWRL’s efforts to include all site visitors. These efforts to make site content more accessible demonstrates goodwill towards the audience; just as an effective teacher attempts to include all students in classroom activities, the CWRL web site enables multiple kinds of users to interact with the web site through multiple hardware devices. This inclusiveness shapes an ethos based on goodwill towards the audience.

Furthermore, the refined, pared-down graphics reflect a common user concern with the download speed of web sites. While many users may use high-speed LAN or ISDN connections and traditional laptop or desktop computers, some users may be using a slower dial-up connection or may be viewing the web site on a Palm pilot or other handheld. By paying attention to download times, system requirements and accessibility, this third revision of the CWRL site further increases perceptions of technical expertise and goodwill by suggesting a real concern with audience accessibility absent from both versions of the Department of English sites.

¹⁴ The revised CWRL web site includes information about the intended increased accessibility of this site. The site reads, “Computer Writing and Research Lab (CWRL) web site is structured to make navigation as easy as possible for all users. All images include ALT text, and more complex images have an extended description that opens in a new page. Users are informed when links open in a new browser window. The site is structured using validated cascading style sheets (CSS) and XHTML. So the user may enjoy viewing the page at their own preference, the site has five different skins, or designs: air (the default), earth, fire, water, and large text. These skins are created using alternate style sheets, and do not require downloads or opening a new page. To make printing more convenient, the site employs a printer-specific style sheet, which strips all navigation links and presents a serif text, Times, instead of the Verdana that is used online.

In addition to conveying goodwill through the CWRL site's increased concern with accessibility, the new text-based GUI includes a new navigational strategy and updated content. For example, just as on the second version of the Department of English site, the CWRL welcome text is now presented in condensed form on the main page instead of on a separate page. This description of the CWRL has been revised to read: "Here undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty work collaboratively to explore and develop innovative ways to use technology for teaching and learning." While this mission and function of the CWRL is not new, the ways in which the web site enacts this mission is different from that in the prior versions.

With version three, undergraduates are now explicitly included in the CWRL community and undergraduate and graduate course offerings are highlighted. The welcome text also explains that the CWRL offers "a wide variety of courses in networked computer classrooms, from first-year rhetoric to sophomore literature to graduate seminars . . ." These revisions in the description of the CWRL reposition the CWRL as a service center for undergraduate and graduate education while continuing the focus on faculty collaboration in the service of new disciplinary knowledge begun in the earlier two versions of the site.

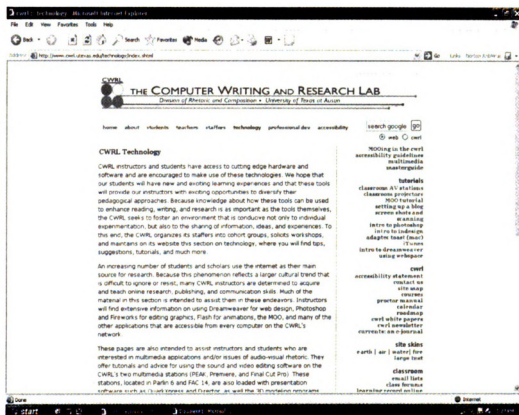
The revised navigation menu located on the right hand side of the screen (see Figure 3.14 and Figure 3.15) also reflects an increased focus on accessibility and courses. The first link on the main screen is "accessibility" and the navigation menu includes a whole section titled "classrooms" under which

multiple educational projects, sites, forums, and technical resources are listed.

This shift of focus (or, rather, expanded and more inclusive focus) creates a character and an ethos that is more teacherly and more focused on a student audience. However, the navigation bar across the top of the screen includes teachers and staffers as core members of the CWRL community.

This updated version of the CWRL web site also expands the technical

Figure 3.16 Version Three CWRL Technology Page



resources available on both previous versions. The site offers numerous tutorials on hardware and software related to instructional technology including MOOs, classroom AV stations, burning CDs, scanning, making screen shots, etc. But, unlike the earlier versions, on this third revision of the CWRL site these

technology resources are prefaced by a statement about the CWRL's goals in offering these resources. The main text on the technology page (see Figure 3.16) explains that

Because knowledge about how these tools can be used to enhance reading, writing, and research is as important as the tools themselves, the CWRL seeks to foster an environment that is conducive not only to individual experimentation, but also to the sharing of information, ideas, and experiences. To this end, the CWRL organizes its staffers into cohort groups, solicits workshops, and maintains on its website this section on technology, where you will find tips, suggestions, tutorials, and much more.

This statement about the purposes of the technology tools further reinforces the CWRL's goodwill towards the audience. Overall, these three versions of the CWRL web site illustrate an evolution in the ethos conveyed by the site—in each version goodwill is foregrounded more strongly as the site evolves to enable greater accessibility for a more inclusive audience.

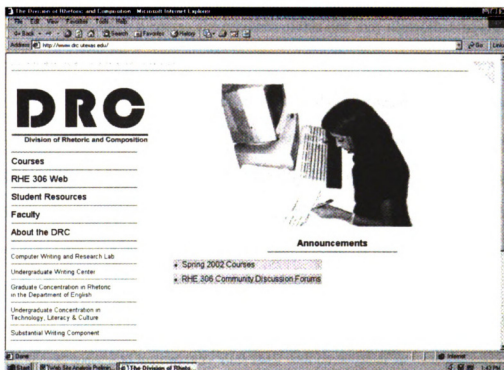
UT Division of Rhetoric and Composition (DRC) <http://www.drc.utexas.edu>

Like the CWRL web site, the Division of Rhetoric and Composition (DRC) web site has undergone significant revisions during my research period. This analysis will examine three generations of the DRC web site in efforts to better understand the ways in which the type of ethos portrayed by a web site is impacted by the GUI design.

Version One DRC Web Site

The first version of the DRC web site foregrounds the use of technology in an educational setting with the graphical image on the main screen (Figure 3.17). This graphic holds a primary position on the web site and captures user attention because it is

Figure 3.17 First Version DRC Main Page



the only graphic (besides the DRC logo) on the page. The image of a solitary writer working with pen and paper next to (not typing on) the computer suggests a “transitionary” writing process¹⁵ of individual authoring of text by hand then translating to digital format. This image conveys an ethos wherein the DRC may be seen as

¹⁵ In other words, a writing process that is transitioning into technical fluency with writing on a computer.

uncertain about how to incorporate technology; this site presents the DRC as operating in a liminal, transition zone moving from pen and paper to digital composition.

Similar to version one of the CWRL site, this first version of the DRC site uses a basic menu system for navigation. The main page contains a list of links in a left-hand menu under the DRC's text-based logo that includes: Courses, RHE 306 Web, Student Resources, Faculty, and About the DRC. The inclusion of a main menu link titled "RHE 306 Web" suggests that this site is designed at least in part for current DRC students and faculty. However, since anyone experienced with higher education would be able to deduce that RHE 306 is a course, the presence of this link may signal that the site is intended for members of the larger community of postsecondary students and faculty.

The announcements section of the site (directly underneath the leading graphic on this main page) connotes BlackBoard online instructional software. In BlackBoard, announcements typically are displayed on the right hand side of the main page and navigation is on the left, similar to the layout of this site. The design echoes of the BlackBoard software impact ethos by reinforcing a potential focus on teaching and students. In addition, by importing online instructional conventions to the public web space these design echoes may indicate that the DRC may not conceive of the web as a public access space and instead may view their web presence as an instructional space rather than an online brochure to talk about the program. Version one of the DRC site presents a more teacherly ethos by focusing on instruction and student work more than faculty accomplishments and research.

On all content pages in this first version of the DRC site, the left side navigational bars use the same the pattern established by the CWRL of helping the reader understand

where she is and indicating other possible sub-pages in the same section. Just as on the CWRL menus, these menus change to show readers where they are, to give them direct links to sub-sections of the particular content area, and to provide easy links to other content areas (see Figure 3.18). Every content page has a small logo in the upper right hand corner that simply identifies the page as belonging to the DRC (see the small beige triangle in the upper right corner of Figure 3.18).

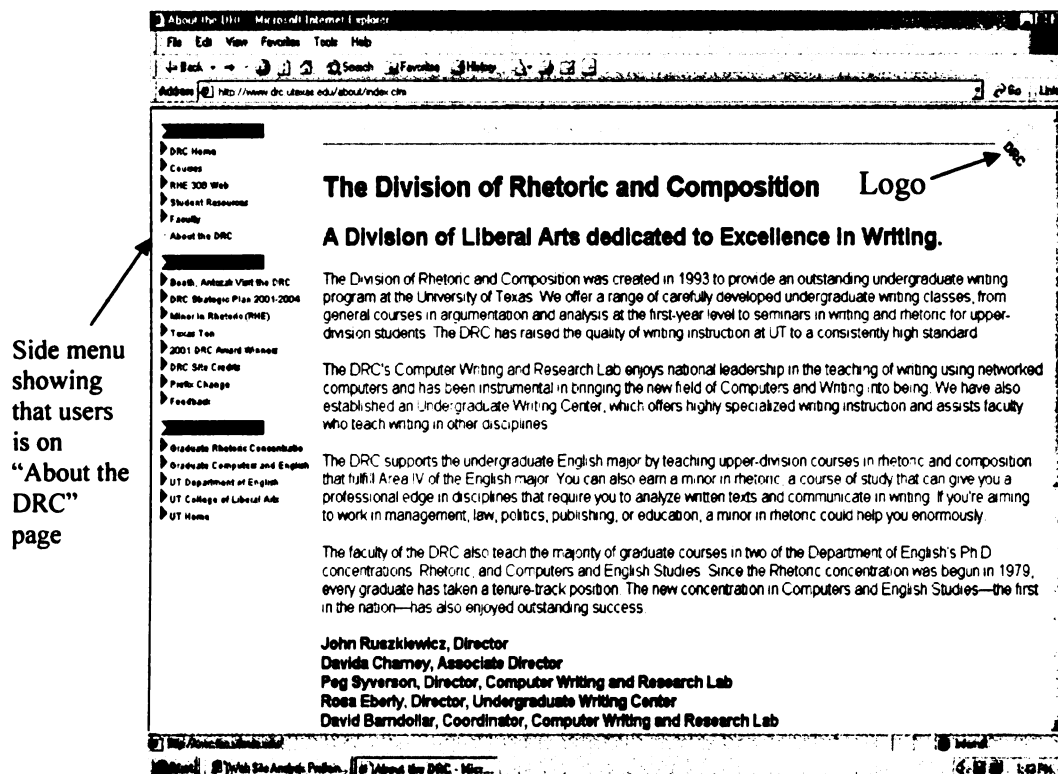
The textual content on the “About the DRC” page reinforces a teacherly ethos by directly addressing students. The third paragraph on the “About the DRC” page explains that

You can also earn a minor in rhetoric, a course of study that can give you a professional edge in disciplines that require you to analyze written texts and communication in writing; if you’re aiming to work in management, law, politics, publishing, or education, a minor in rhetoric could help you enormously.

This is in direct contrast to the Department of English homepages and the CWRL, neither of which directly address undergraduate students. Furthermore, the tone of this address to students is relatively informal, using the contraction “you’re” in stead of the more formal “you are” to create an ethos that could be more approachable ethos for undergraduates.

Version one of the DRC balances between a teacherly ethos and a more scholarly ethos and an administrative ethos by including links to the strategic plan focused on scholarly excellence, program development, university responsibilities, community outreach, and facilities. While all of these areas of the plan discuss technology in one facet or another, the rest of the textual content on this version of the DRC site does not mention technology in depth, except in relation to the CWRL. This discrepancy suggests

Figure 3.18 Version One DRC About the DRC page



that the DRC recognizes the importance of technical expertise in conveying a persuasive ethos but that the division has perhaps not fully embraced technology as an integrated part of the DRC. Instead of explaining how the division embraces and utilizes technology, the first version of the DRC web site locates technical expertise in the CWRL. These connections between the CWRL and the DRC web sites mitigate the relative lack of discussion of technology on the DRC site by indicating that the CWRL site, which includes a great many technical resources, should, in effect, be read as part of the DRC site.

While the DRC may not be explicitly focused on technology, the common use of word processing, internet research, and email as teaching and learning tools used in composition classrooms, plus the emergence of scholarly research into digital rhetoric establish connections between the field of Rhetoric and Composition and technology. The presence or lack of discussions of technology on a Rhetoric and Composition site shapes an ethos that is more or less connected to technical expertise and these newer directions in rhetorical research. Besides the opening splash screen graphic, links to the CWRL and Technology, Literacy and Culture page (TLC) on the main page, and a link to the CWRL in the second paragraph on the About the DRC page (see Figure 3.18), the DRC home page does not refer to technology except in linking to other programs. In so doing, the DRC positions itself not as an expert on digital web technologies but rather as a place that is connected to experts in this area. The DRC web site presents the division as focused on the integration of technology with education via the CWRL. If these connections to the CWRL and TLC were not included on the DRC site, the complete absence of discussion of technology and the absence of technical resources could be perceived as a

serious weakness in a site claiming to focus on all aspects of writing, including writing with computers.

Also, unlike the mission statement of both the Department of English and the first two versions of the CWRL web site, the DRC's self-definition includes references to other programs, notably the CWRL and the Writing Center. This linkage helps to define the scope and impact of the DRC by linking to centers that support writing instruction and conveys an ethos that values the services provided by these centers. Also, by linking to these sites the DRC web site demonstrates goodwill by making information about these resources easy to find for the audience.

The opening two paragraphs on the "About the DRC" page (Figure 3.18) describe the founding of the division and continue to emphasize the CWRL, echoing wording on the CWRL page itself: "The DRC's Computer Writing and Research Lab enjoys national leadership in the teaching of writing using networked computers and has been instrumental in bringing the new field of Computers and Writing into being." This echo of similar phrasing emerges only when these two sites are read next to each other and gives rhetorical clues about potential political and administrative structures impacting the ethos of these web sites. By referring to the CWRL and the Writing Center, the DRC establishes itself here as "owning" these other programs. For example, the CWRL is referred to as "The DRC's Computer Writing and Research Lab;" the site also explains how "We [the DRC] have also established an Undergraduate Writing Center."

These claims are not heavy-handed--- version one of the DRC web site does not say "We are in charge of these other programs . . ." which would forward a different character. The site instead clearly establishes the relationship and positions the DRC as

the leader or home division for these programs through the sentences cited above and through the listing of administrators of the DRC listed at the bottom of the page. This listing includes the Director of the DRC, the Associate Director of the DRC, the Director of the CWRL, the Director of the Writing Center, the coordinator of the Writing Center, and administrative assistants. By including the directors and coordinators of the other programs as well as administrative assistants the DRC web site forwards an inclusive administrative character that recognizes the contributions of others while letting the audience know that all these programs are formally affiliated with the DRC. Of course, including administrative assistants could also be a purely practical move to direct callers to these folks rather than the director.

The textual markers of the relationship between the DRC, the CWRL, and the Writing Center and the design similarities between version one of the CWRL and this version of the DRC impact the ethos of the DRC and the CWRL. As explained above, my reading of this first version of the DRC site uncovers clues that present the DRC as more focused on undergraduate students than either both versions of the Department of English site or version one of the CWRL site. At the same time, this older version of the DRC web site presents an administrative ethos that is “teacherly” in its approachability and inclusiveness.

Version Two DRC Web Site

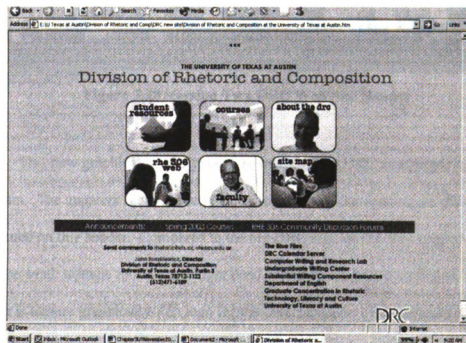
The updated DRC web site retains the same textual content as the older version, but displays this content within a new GUI. Version two of the DRC site main page (see Figure 3.19) is completely redesigned; rather than offering a menu of links and a graphic

on a white background, the page presents a more graphically rich interface with multiple colors and photographs. The six photos each link to different sections of the site: student resources, courses, about the DRC, RHE 306 web, faculty, and site map. These links are the same as the links on version one, with the addition of a site map. This addition is a new feature that suggests an increased familiarity with web design and navigation as well as changing conventions of web design. The new graphical layout places the link to the student resources in a primary position (the top left, which is where a reader accustomed to reading left to right print naturally goes following conventions of print¹⁶) but the “about DRC” link is on the same top level on the right hand side, an equally visible location.

¹⁶ This assumption about the upper left corner functioning as a “primary position” assumes an audience with enough expertise in English (and related languages) to identify this textual convention. As such, it is inherently biased against languages like Arabic and classical Chinese which arrange texts in different ways.

The second version of the DRC site adds a graphical bar beneath the grouping of photos with links to Announcements, Spring 2003 Courses, and RHE 306 Community Discussion Forums. This horizontal menu bar seemingly contains information mainly for students or faculty members currently involved with DRC activities. Finally the site includes a consistent footer with contact information on the left and related links and a revised DRC text-only logo on the bottom right (see Figure 3.19). This footer is included on every content page in the new site, building consistency across the site. This new GUI evidences the DRC's willingness to invest time and resources to revise and republish the web site and contributes to perceptions of goodwill for those readers who notice the

Figure 3.19 Version Two DRC Main Page



update. The addition of multiple photographs presents a more diverse community and diverse activities, rather than the single image of the solitary writer. But even though there are multiple people now pictured, the relative lack of racial and ethnic diversity

hints to a cynical reader that this is an effort to present the appearance of a diverse program more than a reflection of an actually racially and ethnically diverse community.

The site content pages on version two offer navigation with the left side menu that indicates where users are in the site and offers sub-page links in the middle section of the three-tiered menu. The content itself is very textually dense, following the same layout as the content on the older version of the site (see Figure 3.18). The content remains largely the same as that on version one of the DRC site with the only significant difference being the addition of a new graphical header on content pages (see Figure 3.20—Version Two DRC Web Site Header).

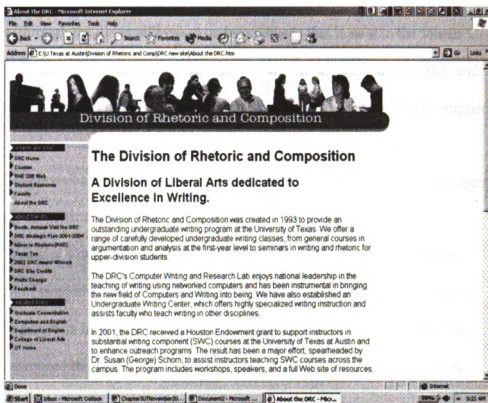


Figure 3.20 Version Two DRC Web Site Header

This new graphical header creates an image of the DRC as a people-centered program. The apparent racial and ethnic homogeneity of the opening six photos is continued on this header. Compared to the old DRC logo on the first version of the DRC site (the small triangle in the upper right hand corner as illustrated on Figure 3.18), this header is a more graphically-rich logo for the DRC; as such, it incorporates a textual logo (the letters DRC in watermark fade-out in the background) with the fully spelled-out program name and a directly stated affiliation with the University of Texas. This new header alters the character and tone of the DRC web site. This logo literally puts people first; the photographs of people are in front of the repeating DRC in the background.

Both connotatively and literally, the DRC is portrayed on this web site as comprised of multiple people engaged in multiple activities; the resulting ethos is of a collaborative, interactive, busy place.

Figure 3.21 Version Two About the DRC Page



As Figure 3.21 illustrates, the content page “About the DRC” has not changed much. The new GUI has been applied and a new third paragraph has been inserted after the paragraph describing the DRC’s affiliations with the CWRL and the Writing Center and before the paragraph addressing undergraduates directly. This new paragraph announces that “In 2001, the DRC received a Houston Endowment grant to support instructors in substantial writing component (SWC) courses. . . .” This paragraph focuses attention on the ways the DRC is working to provide faculty development and support.

In so doing, it extends a teacherly goodwill focused on providing information and needed resources to faculty, not just to undergraduates. This virtual reaching out to faculty and the revised GUI reinforce that the revised DRC site is targeted at a diverse audience comprised of administrative colleagues (through the links to different program directors, coordinators, and administrative assistants that remains on the bottom of the page), students (through the direct address to undergraduates that is now in the fourth paragraph), and faculty not directly affiliated with administration of the DRC and associated programs (through this new outreach program to provide faculty support to those instructors teaching writing in other disciplines in SWC courses).

This revision also modifies the opening paragraph slightly. The older opening paragraph on version one of the DRC site read:

We offer a range of carefully developed undergraduate writing classes, from general courses in argumentation and analysis at the first-year level to seminars in writing and rhetoric for upper-division students. The DRC has raised the quality of writing instruction at UT to a consistently high standard.

The opening paragraph on version two of the site reads exactly the same but the final sentence has been deleted. Deleting this final sentence shifts the tone of this paragraph and the character of the program as established on this page by eliminating what could be perceived as inappropriate boasting.¹⁷ The removal of this sentence rhetorically correlates with other textual and graphical evidence that the DRC is reshaping the ethos

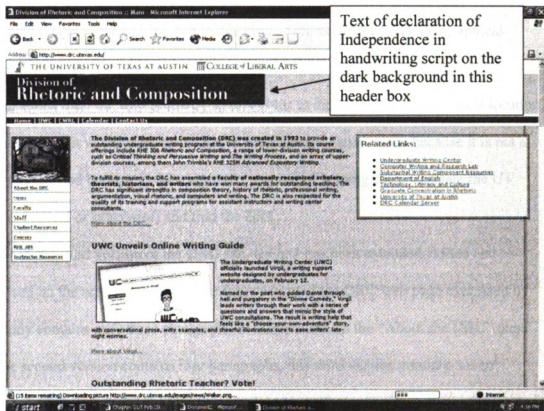
¹⁷ This final statement is a very large, wide-reaching claim that the DRC is solely responsible for improving quality of writing instruction at UT. While it may be true to some extent, this type of sentence could offend and alienate non-DRC affiliated groups and faculty working hard to incorporate writing into their courses and improve the overall quality of student writing at UT.

conveyed online to highlight the connections to and contributions of other faculty and programs.

Version Three Revision of DRC Web Site

The third (and most recent) revision of the DRC site (Figure 3.22) applies yet another new GUI that includes an updated standard footer, a new header, and a revised navigational strategy. The header (see Figure 3.22) is a graphical presentation of the handwritten text of the Declaration of Independence on a blue background overlaid with

Figure 3.22 Third Version DRC Home Page



the words “Division of Rhetoric and Composition.” The header also includes links to Home, UWC, CWRL, Calendar, and Contact Us on the left side of the red border

separating the header from the main page content. The right side of this border includes a link for easy printing of the page. The small graphic just above the left hand menu bar is a building (see Figure 3.23); the reader may assume, as I did, that this building is the

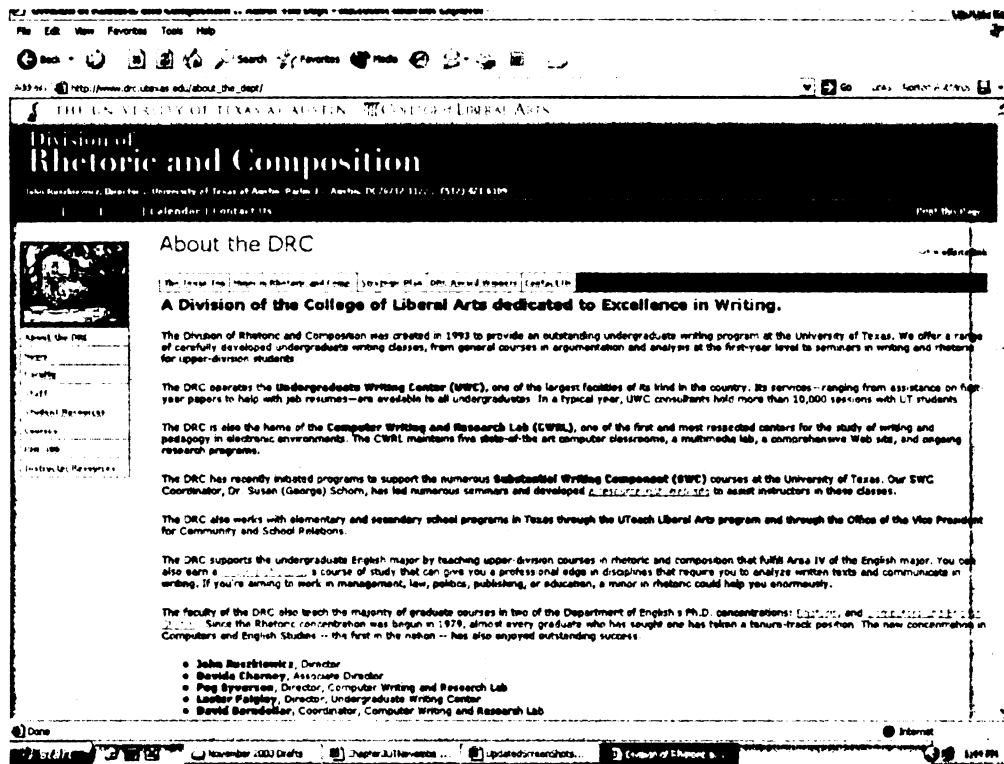
Figure 3.23 Close Up of Third Version DRC Graphic



institutional home of the DRC. While this kind of reproduction of the geographical location on the web site can be reminiscent of the early days of the web when organizations used the web primarily as brochures to direct users to the physical location, in this instance it works well as an icon to head the navigation menu because it is not a large graphic and because it does serve the purpose of helping users navigate the UT campus (virtual or otherwise) and find the DRC.

In the third version of the DRC site, content has been extended, edited and re-organized on the screen. Whereas the first version of the DRC web page examined by this study contains only three paragraphs of information on the “About the DRC” page and the second version contains four paragraphs, this third version contains seven paragraphs (see Figure 3.24). This increased number of paragraphs in the third version is due in part to breaking up content into smaller paragraphs needed for readability given the increased length of the text—the two sentences identifying affiliation with the CWRL and the Writing Center have, for example, been broken into two small separate

Figure 3.24 Third Version DRC “About the DRC” Web Site



paragraphs. But this third revision has also added some new content that reshapes ethos; for example, the page has added a paragraph explaining how the “The DRC also works with elementary and secondary school programs in Texas through the U Teach Liberal Arts program and through the Office of the Vice President for Community and School Relations.” The new “About the DRC” page also directly references graduate coursework:

The faculty of the DRC also teach the majority of graduate courses in two of the Department of English's Ph.D. concentrations: Rhetoric, and Computers and English Studies. Since the Rhetoric concentration was begun in 1979, almost every graduate who has sought one has taken a tenure-track position.

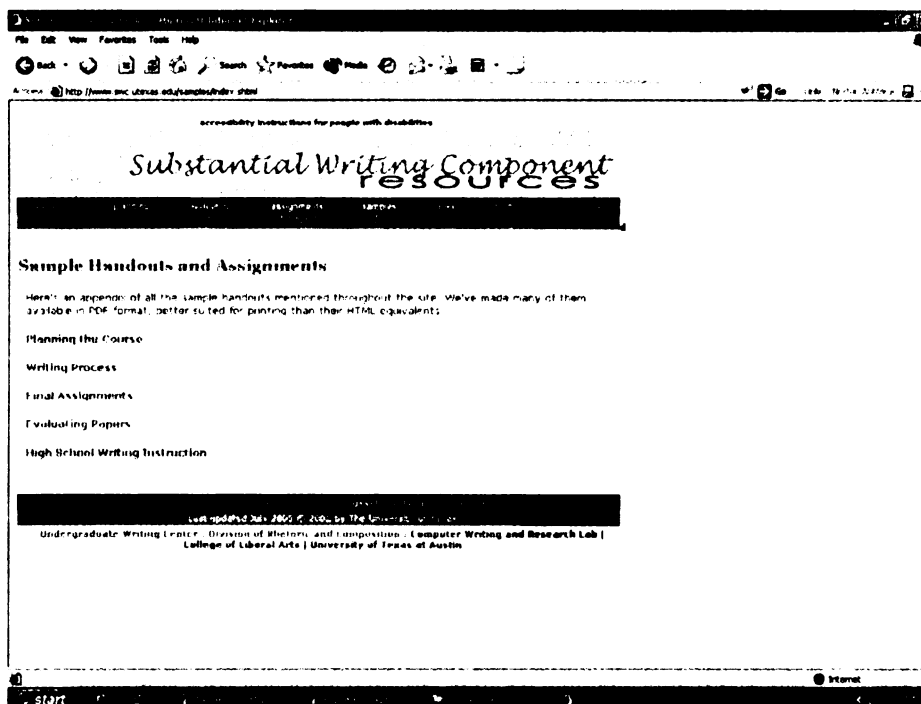
These additions reinforce the DRC's scholarly expertise and reputation as well as demonstrate goodwill through participation in community service activities.

Finally, this newest version condenses the statements about the Substantial Writing Component (SWC) faculty outreach briefly mentioned in my analysis of the second version of the DRC site. This condensing makes sense from the perspective that time has elapsed and more people know about the SWC research. It also accomplishes a similar change in tone as removing the sentence about the DRC being responsible for improving student writing instruction at UT from the prior revision of the site. The DRC no longer needs to advertise its accomplishment in winning the grant (or, perhaps, the grant period is over) and instead needs to focus on demonstrating how the division is using this money to make a difference to faculty. As on the previous version, this reference to the SWC program includes a link to another web site containing resources for faculty teaching writing.

This SWC Resource page connects itself to the DRC by echoing the graphical header on the new DRC site (See Figure 3.25 for a sample resource page on the SWC web site). But instead of having an official government document in the background, this version uses an excerpt from a student essay as background text. The SWC web site includes information on planning, evaluating student writing, making assignments, and even posts sample documents to use in a secondary writing component course. Just as the Critical Tools and Technology Resources links off the different versions of the CWRL web page suggest an expertise and a willingness to offer help to the general public, the inclusion of these kinds of resources on the DRC site similarly conveys an

ethos based on both expertise and goodwill. Because the SWC is a component of the DRC, the presence of these resources reinforces the DRC ethos focused on providing

Figure 3.25 Sample Resource Page on SWC Web Site



resources to the community of faculty and teachers, on providing a valuable service to undergraduates, and on offering graduate students access to world-class expertise in the teaching of writing. And, as with the CWRL, the sheer number of site revisions to the DRC web presence in such a relatively short time demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement that could be interpreted as both goodwill towards audience needs and a desire to improve the division's expertise in web publication and design. As stated earlier, new visitors to the site won't know this and so these revisions will not have an impact on ethos for these new visitors.

Technology, Literacy, and Culture at U Texas Austin (TLC)

<http://www.tlc.utexas.edu/index.html>

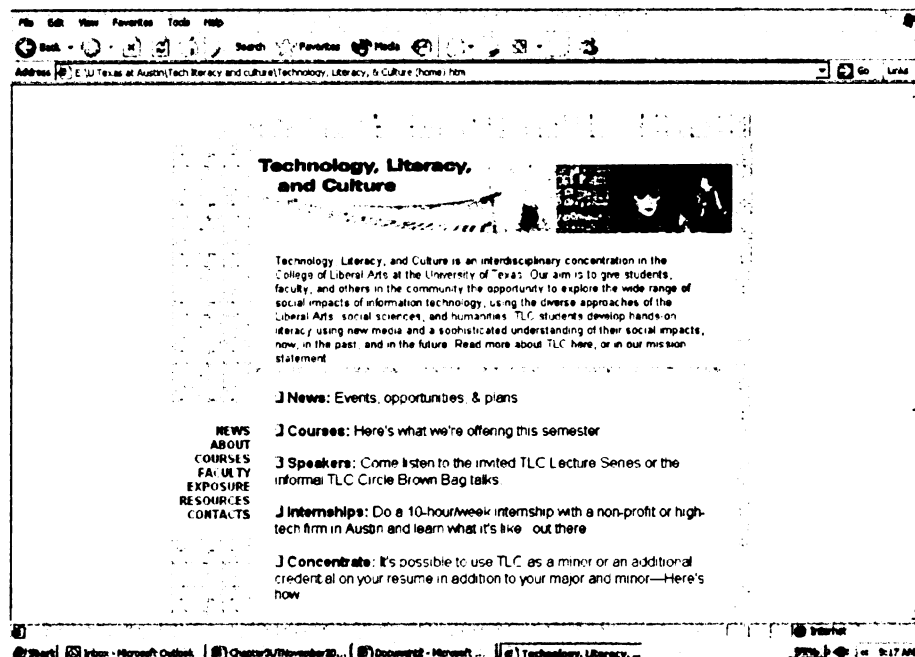
Unlike the DRC, CWRL, and Department of English sites at UT, the Technology, Literacy, and Culture (TLC) web site has not been revised in the time I have been completing my research. When the TLC site is read in the context of these other sites, this lack of revision may suggest a relative lack of resources or less commitment to maintaining an up-to-date site. But as the following analysis will explain, the TLC site conveys an effective ethos based on technical, disciplinary, and administrative expertise and on a teacherly character.

The TLC web site's navigational approach does not incorporate any dynamic or drop down menus; instead, it uses a series of eight content category links in the left hand frame to allow readers access to information about the TLC (Home, About, and Courses), news on the TLC (News and Exposure), faculty information, and resources. As Figure 3.26 illustrates, this main page is a blend of textual content, links, and graphical representations of the program mission. The textual content right underneath the header begins with a paragraph describing the mission and focus of the TLC:

Technology, Literacy, and Culture is an interdisciplinary concentration in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas. Our aim is to give students, faculty, and others in the community the opportunity to explore the wide range of social impacts of information technology, using the diverse approaches of the Liberal Arts, social sciences, and humanities. TLC students develop hands-on literacy using new media and a sophisticated understanding of their social impacts, now, in the past, and in the future.

This mission statement clearly identifies the importance of technical literacy to the program objective; to establish a credible web presence the ethos of the TLC web site must demonstrate an ability to implement the technical literacy with new media (like the web) that the mission claims the program teaches. While this mission statement speaks from an authorial third person and the first person plural, it does not directly address the

Figure 3.26 TLC Web Site Main Page



audience. This lack of direct audience address creates a more formal tone compared to sites using a direct address to an audience (for example, the DRC's direct address to students). This lack of direct address creates a sense of separation between the implied authors (speaking as everyone within the TLC by using the authorial "our") and the audience of the site.

Similar to the CWRL's statements, the TLC mission statements claim to want to develop both "hands-on" literacy as well as critical technical literacy skills. Whereas the CWRL focuses more on developing expertise through the inclusion of technology guides and resources, the TLC focuses on demonstrating expertise through the graphically and symbolically interesting header and the simple site design. In the case of the CWRL, the development of tools to help students and teachers demonstrates a community focus while at the TLC, the interpretive key for the header described later in this section and the simple site design present a site that is respectful and conscious of user needs without being condescending. The last two versions of the CWRL site and the TLC sites convey a teacherly character that is genuinely dedicated to educating readers, albeit in different ways.

The main header of the web site works in conjunction with the mission statement to represent and define the program. The graphics selected for the main header form an interesting juxtaposition of multiple images which connotes the interdisciplinary nature of the program as expressed in the mission statement and which also, literally, places various aspects of the liberal arts tradition next to each other. A close reading of the graphical collage-style header further reinforces the mission statement's reference to the multiple literacies the TLC seeks to promote; these graphics, similar to the mission

statements discussed earlier, do not essentialize or simplify technology and the relationship between technology, society, and culture. Instead, the juxtaposition of images presents the simultaneity and the complexity of the relationship between remediated technologies and cultures and connects this study of technology to the liberal arts traditions of sociology, painting, archeology, and translation.

Whereas the initial DRC web site published an instrumental view of technology as tool (i.e. the woman using technology to write), the TLC's mission statement and header graphic present technology as part of the socio-economic fabric of life, part of multiple disciplinary endeavors and, thereby, builds an ethos of a program that has embraced a critical theory of technology. Andrew Feenberg explains that a critical theory of technology understands that technology is complexly interwoven with political and economic systems and choices. This critical theory of technology portrayed on the web site matches TLC program goals of increasing critical literacies of technology to enable sophisticated understandings of the ways in which technology, literacy, society, and the arts are interconnected. The program strives to develop both a hands-on (programmer) literacy and a critical literacy of technology that teaches a "sophisticated understanding of [technology's] social impacts, now, in the past, and in the future" (TLC web site). As mentioned earlier, this theoretical stance impacts identity and ethos; the TLC must demonstrate, through its web page, that the program is able to apply these theoretical understandings of technology to web site design in order to establish a credible ethos.

A close reading of the literal denotations and culturally based connotations of the images in the header reinforces this critical theory-based philosophy of technology. The DaVinci drawings evoke both a technological design focus and artistic creative expression. The purple block with hieroglyphic writing from the Rosetta Stone connotes languages from different times, different cultures and different technologies and represents the “key” to translating from one language to another. It also connotes the

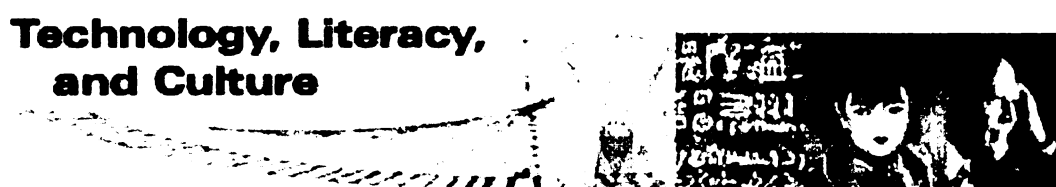


Figure 3.27 TLC Web Site Header

thrill of intellectual discovery and finding, quite literally, the missing piece of the puzzle. Just as the engineering drawings by DaVinci are intended to communicate technology as artistic/engineering endeavor, the hieroglyphics communicate that writing, the act of representation, is a multi-modal, multi-media effort. The selection of an image from the Rosetta Stone can be read as a reference to the self-conscious acts of translation that occur when transposing images into digital media as well as the development of technologies that enable more effective communication. The photograph of DuBois connotes the intellectual and scientific study of race and culture, while the Chinese painting is a remediating image, like the DaVinci drawings, that calls attention to the power of digital media to reproduce and connect digitized images. The Leonardo DaVinci drawings are apparently remnants of an earlier version of the site “developed by

Lisa Hernandez, based on drawings by Leonardo DaVinci” as stated on a page devoted to explaining the history of the TLC web site.¹⁸

The interpretive “key” provided to help users understand the header demonstrates a simultaneous focus on education and a teacherly character as well as an insinuation that site visitors need this explanation to make meaning from the header. However, for me as a reader, the presence of this interpretive key can be read as an effort to minimize the implied separation between the implied collective author and the audience hinted at by the mission statement and header graphic. The presence of an interpretive key to help

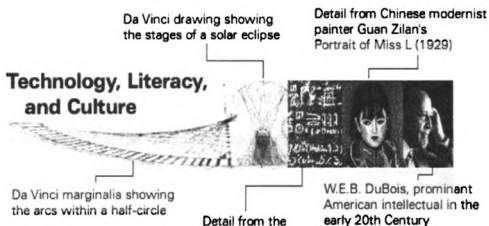


Figure 3.28 TLC Graphical Header with Interpretive Key

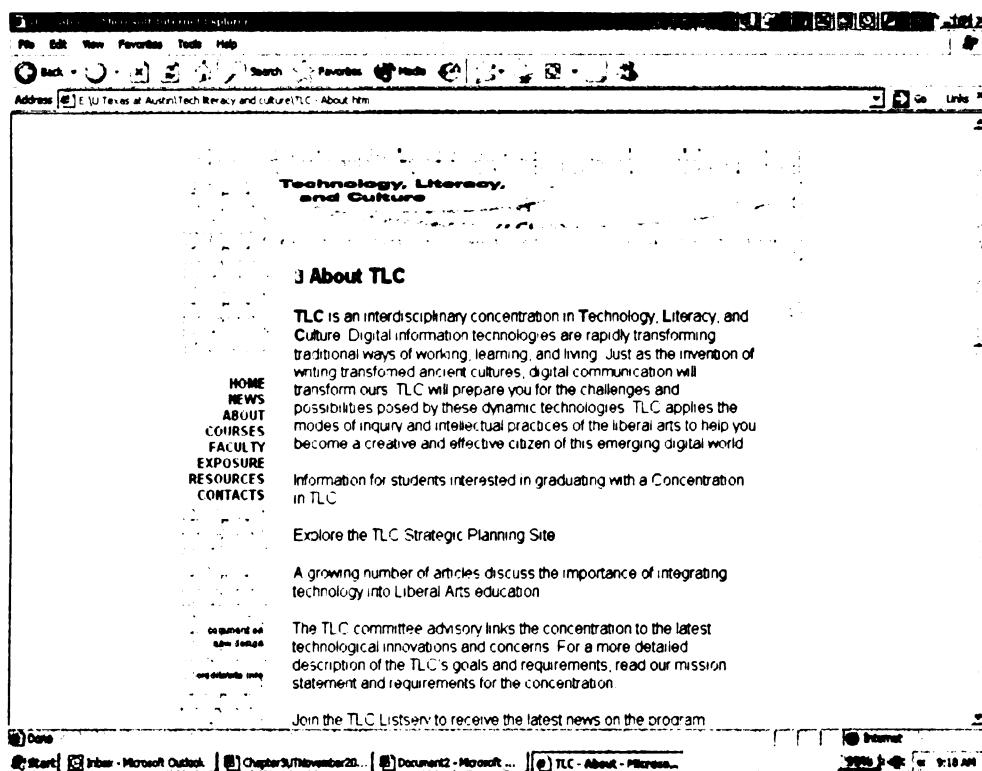
readers understand the header shapes an effective “teacherly” character (and does not insult the audience) because the site provides the details about the various graphics compiled into this header but does not provide a summary of what the juxtaposition of

¹⁸ The existence of an entire page dedicated to the history of the website presents an image of a program that is studying its own evolution, that has a sense of self-awareness, and that maintains detailed records, all of which demonstrate that the TLC is applying stated goals about investigating the role information technology plays in human societies to their own work, which establishes credibility.

these graphics means. Readers are left to make their own meaning and put these artifacts together in their own way. This header successfully balances on the fine line between treating readers as incapable of interpretive, associative thought and not giving readers enough information to understand that key graphics are consciously selected to reinforce a particular image. In this way, the instructional key teaches site visitors how to read web pages critically at the same time that it re-affirms TLC program goals and mission. In summary, the header on the TLC page connotes and denotes technical expertise in effectively using software to create a custom graphic as well as an overlapping content area expertise in building meaningful graphics with coded iconic messages that reinforce the program mission.

Just as on the main page, content pages utilize the same blue-block border,

Figure 3.29 TLC “About TLC” Web Page



creating a sense of continuity in all site pages. Content pages, including the “About TLC” page (Figure 3.29), also reproduce the same navigational menu on the left side but display a graphically simplified header. Rather than the multi-colored graphics on the main page, the header on content pages is just a red and white “swoosh” without the collage of pictures. This header does not contain all the semiotic significance of the header on the main page, but it does remind the reader of this main header while reducing download speed and improving printability of these pages. Continuity is further increased by the re-use of key content; the text on the “About TLC” web page defines the mission of the Technology, Literacy, and Culture (TLC) at UT by repeating the mission statement on the opening page.

The title “About TLC” is significant in that it is not labeled “About *the* TLC”—the absence of “the” connotes that this site is about technology, literacy, and culture in a more general sense and is not just explaining this particular program at UT. This subtle difference may shape reader expectations for the site by signaling that this site will contain actual content information about the study of the interstices between technology, literacy, and culture instead of or in addition to program information. The site itself fulfills these expectations by offering links to previously published scholarly articles about “the importance of integrating technology into Liberal Arts education” but does not contain other information about the overall disciplinary focus directly published by the TLC for the web site. The presence of these links creates a balanced ethos between teacherly and scholarly—the TLC site offers these resources to help educate site visitors but these resources are all written from the perspective of scholars and targeted at an

audience of other scholars. The articles themselves are not “teacherly” even though the intention behind including them may well be.

Color is used to signal links and key pieces of information on both the main page and the content pages (see Figures 3.26 and 3.29). Red is used to indicate headers and links while a dark blue is used for non-linkable descriptive text. This use of red does catch readers’ eyes but would be problematic for a visually-impaired audience. The TLC site does not demonstrate the attention to inclusiveness (both in terms of hardware and user limitations) as the third version of the CWRL site. But compared to other sites examined so far, the TLC site contains a greater number of textual links (except perhaps when compared with the most recent version of the DRC page).

The first textual link is a descriptive link for “students interested in graduating with a Concentration in TLC.” Although it still talks about students rather than to students, this descriptive link is much more helpful than a general link labeled “students” (i.e. those links present on other web sites discussed in this chapter). Other links from this “About TLC” site include the TLC Strategic Planning Site, TLC Advisory Committee links, and the TLC Listserv. These links present an administrative expertise in providing documentation about the ways the TLC manages financial resources, staffing, and relationships with university level administrators. Likewise, the links to strategic plans and other sorts of administrative documents on the DRC and on the CWRL establish a necessary administrative expertise for these program and divisional sites. Administrative expertise is necessary for any academic program or department because a poorly run program will not be able to effectively sustain high-quality

scholarly research or teaching due to eventual lack of funding and turnover (to list just two possible outcomes).

The TLC program enacts its mission effectively in this web site, building content-area expertise in the multiple ways technology impacts cultural artistic and literary production and interpretation. This web page demonstrates expertise in hands-on technical web design skills, a disciplinary expertise in theoretical understandings of the relationship between technology and education (and society in general), and an administrative expertise.

Part B

Ethos in the UT Knowledge Network: Reading Faculty Web Sites

The faculty sites analyzed here are selected from the Department of English, the CWRL, the DRC, and the TLC. These faculty sites represent only a small portion of the faculty sites published by faculty affiliated with the Department of English, the CWRL, the DRC and the TLC; however, these sites have been selected because they each impact the ethos of the program sites in interesting ways that illuminate how ethos functions when web sites are read as part of an interconnected knowledge network. My discussion and analysis of these sites will make reference back to the preceding examinations of the program sites in order to explain how faculty sites, as part of the knowledge network within which program sites are read, shape the ethos of the program site. I will also examine how program affiliation, as presented or suggested online, shapes the ethos of these faculty sites. As in my readings of the program sites, I will address the three components of Aristotelian ethos in order to understand how these faculty use their web

sites to forward an ethos based on evidence of technical expertise, content-area expertise, type of character, and suggestions of goodwill towards the audience.

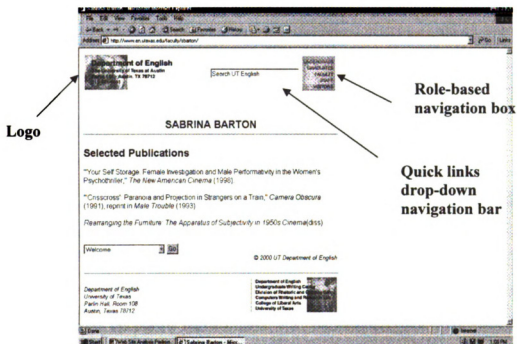
Please note that just as many of the program sites have been revised, so have some of the faculty sites analyzed in my study, most notably the faculty templates. The faculty templates accompanying the older versions of the DRC and Department of English sites were fairly different from each other. However, with the re-design of these two sites, all faculty templates were standardized and moved to the Department of English. As part of this revision, the most recently revised DRC site still offers a list of faculty with contact information, but the website links point to Department of English templates or individually published non-template driven-websites; the DRC template for faculty pages no longer exists. While it seems that DRC faculty continue to have joint appointments in the Department of English and the DRC, the changes to the templates for faculty web sites and the collation of faculty sites under the Department of English connects the ethos of the Department of English, the DRC, and affiliated faculty.

Template-Driven Web Sites on the Older Version of the UT Department of English Web Site

The template-driven faculty web sites on the older version of the UT Department of English site use a primarily text-based GUI, as Figures 3.30-3.31 illustrate. This GUI replicates conventions established by other content pages in the first version of the Department of English site, including the logo, the role-based navigation box, the quick links drop down navigation bar, and the footer. For the most part, these faculty pages are online CVs focusing on publications, education, and courses taught. The only required

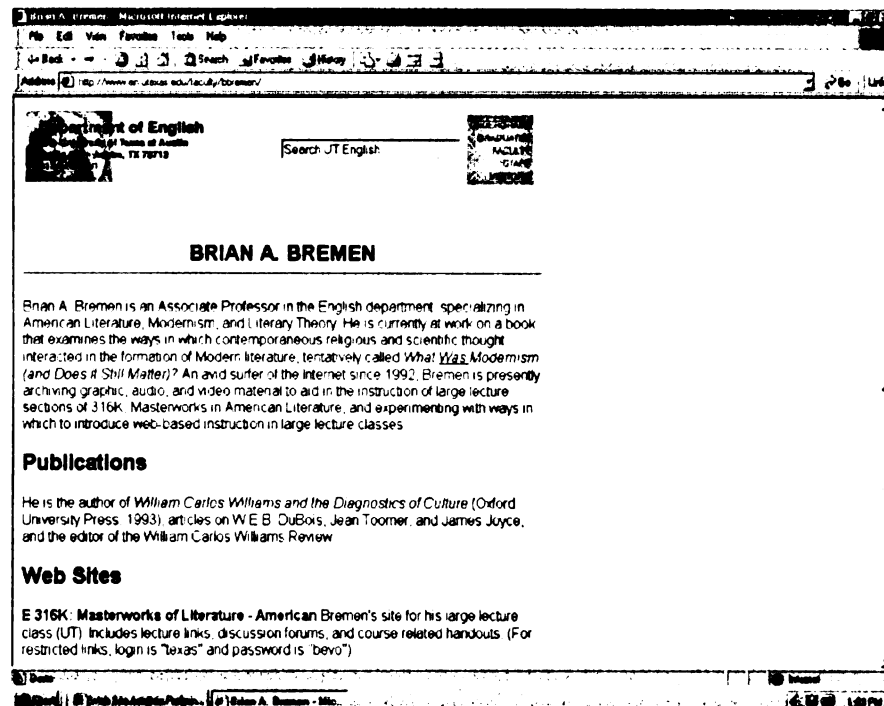
text appears to be publications, since some pages, like Sabrina Barton's (see Figure 3.30), only list publications, but every faculty page has at least a placeholder for publications even if no publications are listed. This focus on publication reinforces the scholarly character of the UT Department of English web site especially noticeable in the older version of the site but also present in the updated version. The fact that the publications header remains in place even when publications are not listed heightens audience awareness of the lack of publication on some faculty pages.

Figure 3.30 Sabrina Barton's Dept. of English Template-Driven Web Site



Another sample faculty page published in this template, Brian Bremen's page (Figure 3.31), includes web sites and a brief introduction in addition to the standard list of publications. Bremen's page illustrates another convention of these template-driven web

Figure 3.31 Brian Bremen's Dept. of English Template-Driven Web Site



sites—most of them are written in third person. The use of third person creates a more formal tone that reinforces the scholarly character of this template. On all the template-driven pages, the faculty member name is in red, which helps highlight this faculty name; at the same time the faculty template clearly presents the departmental affiliation of the faculty by the echoes of the Department of English GUI and the stylistic requirements of the template that so clearly envelop and frame the faculty.

As Figures 3.30 –3.31 illustrate, these template-driven web sites are framed by the Department of English logos (which are placed in the header and footer of each page), the

same cream-colored background, and the same drop down menu box (located in the top right hand corner of the page). As a result of using the departmental GUI, web site design expertise becomes almost a non-factor in differentiating between these faculty sites as readers quickly realize that the design and layout reflect the department or program's technical expertise, not that of the individual faculty members. The use of third person and lack of supporting graphics or photographs (with the exception of the departmental logo) re-create the tone of what Hawisher and Sullivan refer to as the faculty "mug shot" pages that effectively homogenize faculty (2001). The focus of these pages is to highlight the scholarly expertise of the English Department by demonstrating the scholarly achievements of faculty. The faculty themselves are reduced to lists of credentials which are dominated by publications.

My re-framing of Hawisher and Sullivan's work on the use of these homogenized templates finds that these templates, as deployed on the UT site, shape departmental ethos more than the ethos of faculty members. The template itself is not user-friendly as evidenced by the lack of useful sorting tools and the lack of contact information for faculty. Users browsing this online faculty directory may find it difficult to locate a particular faculty member and may furthermore be frustrated by the absence of contact information on some faculty pages. These faculty templates do not allow for personalization; there are no photographs and no links to non-template driven faculty sites, even though my research uncovered numerous non-template driven faculty web sites linked to other program sites. The standardization of a template that does not include contact information and focuses only on "traditional" publications (as opposed to digital media work) emphasizes the traditional, scholarly character begun in the main

Department of English web site. While impressions of faculty are most likely impacted by these templates, I anticipate that most readers will identify the template and realize that the faculty member is limited by the restrictions of this template.

It is in the ways faculty members extend or limit template capabilities that differences between them are established. For example, Brian Bremen's page gives a much more complete faculty portrait than Sabrina Barton's page. While I cannot be certain why some faculty have more information published in their template, I speculate that lack of available time or unwillingness to work within the template framework that shapes relative completeness of content may be factors.

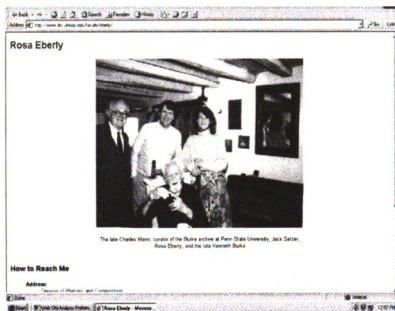
Template-Driven Faculty Web Sites on the Older Version of the DRC Web Site

Like the faculty pages published as part of the older UT Department of English web site, the older version of the UT DRC web site provides a template for faculty web sites; however, this older version of the DRC faculty template is much less structured than that of the Department of English. The old DRC template lists the faculty member's name in red at the top of the screen, as does the older version of the Department of English template discussed previously, but rather than include (at minimum) a list of publications, this older version of the DRC template includes at minimum contact information (titled "How to Reach Me" on the template). The use of first person in "How to Reach Me" combined with a focus on contact information shapes a different character and ethos for the DRC and for DRC faculty than the Department of English templates. Whereas the faculty template for the Department of English reinforces the departmental scholarly character and focus on demonstrating disciplinary expertise through publication

record, the faculty template for the DRC reinforces a focus on faculty as teachers and a concern with usability by providing contact information.

The pictures range from the expected mug shot to photos conveying relationships with leading scholars. As Rosa Eberly's site (Figure 3.32) helps to illustrate, photographs can be used to convey scholarly expertise and professional connections. The photograph on her faculty page shows her with Kenneth Burke and other professional colleagues. Since Kenneth Burke is such a well-known name in the field, a photograph showing Dr.

Figure 3.32 Rosa Eberly's DRC Template-Driven Web Site



Eberly standing behind Burke literally foregrounds Burke and presents an image of Eberly as a connected member of the field. Furthermore, the fact that she is standing close to him holding on to his chair connotes a personal relationship by echoing photographs of family where the elderly grandparent is seated and the younger generation stands behind the elder. In this way, Eberly's choice to include this photograph presents

her as a member of the family of Burkean scholars. While Eberly adheres to the template, her choice of photograph creates a unique ethos that stands out from the typical mug shot photos presenting isolated scholars and that establishes scholarly expertise through affiliations with Burke. Tracings of the template are visible in the “How to Reach Me” title at the bottom left of the screen in Figure 3.32.

While Eberly uses the photograph to convey an ethos of scholarly affiliation, some faculty use additional textual information to shape ethos; as Figure 3.33 demonstrates, John Ruskiewicz’s site retains the red title and the same font as Rosa

Figure 3.33 John Ruskiewicz’s Faculty Web Site



Eberly's template-driven site, but he includes a good deal of textual information about himself, his teaching, and his scholarship. For example, the opening text gives a chronological account that positions Ruskiewicz in terms his students can understand. He describes where he went to undergraduate school and how he started teaching

composition—rather by accident that is. He lists courses he teaches and recent publications, as well as publications in process. He also gives an in-depth personal profile and links to pictures of his dogs (further on down the site). Ruskiewicz’s site establishes an ethos based on an approachable, “teacherly” character through the friendly tone and voice of the site which is targeted at undergraduates. Compared to the Department of English faculty template-driven sites with an emphasis on publications, Ruskiewicz’s site does not as effectively demonstrate a traditional scholarly expertise (as defined by publications), but he does create a teacherly character and establish an ethos based on his pedagogy and ability to connect with students.

Furthermore, the variation between Eberly and Ruskiewicz’s sites demonstrates the wider variety possible within the older version of the DRC template as opposed to the Department of English template (refer back to Bremen and Barton’s pages in Figure 3.30 and Figure 3.31). These faculty samples illustrate how individual faculty can work within the template yet still convey a personalized ethos with photographs and textual content. While the faculty template for the Department of English clearly positions faculty within the frame of the Department seemingly focusing on demonstrating the departmental quality through faculty publication, the DRC template focuses on faculty themselves and on enabling readers to contact faculty. This difference in focus has a fairly large impact on the type of ethos established by each program.

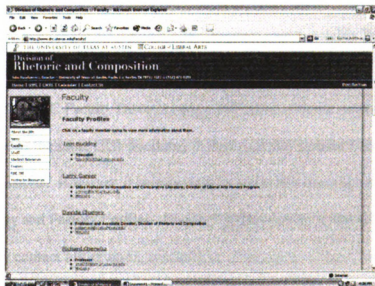
As explained earlier, reading the Department of English homepage in the context of these faculty templates reinforces perceptions of the departmental character as scholarly and focused on establishing ethos by virtue of content-area and scholarly expertise. When the DRC program site is read in the context of these faculty templates,

the program character is seen as balanced between teacherly and scholarly types of ethos. While individual faculty may focus more on conveying a scholarly or a teacherly ethos, the variations between faculty present the DRC as having a blend of both scholarly and teacherly ethos. Furthermore, the wide variations in faculty web sites possible even within the confines of the DRC template suggest a program ethos that allows faculty the freedom to represent themselves as unique individuals online. The relative freedom of self-expression allowed in the faculty templates suggests that perhaps the DRC enables this same kind of self-expression in faculty scholarship, teaching, and administrative responsibilities. The Department of English, on the other hand, is perhaps perceived as more rigid and less tolerant of diverse perspectives on the primary focus and responsibilities of faculty.

Revised Faculty Templates Collated on Updated Department of English Web Site

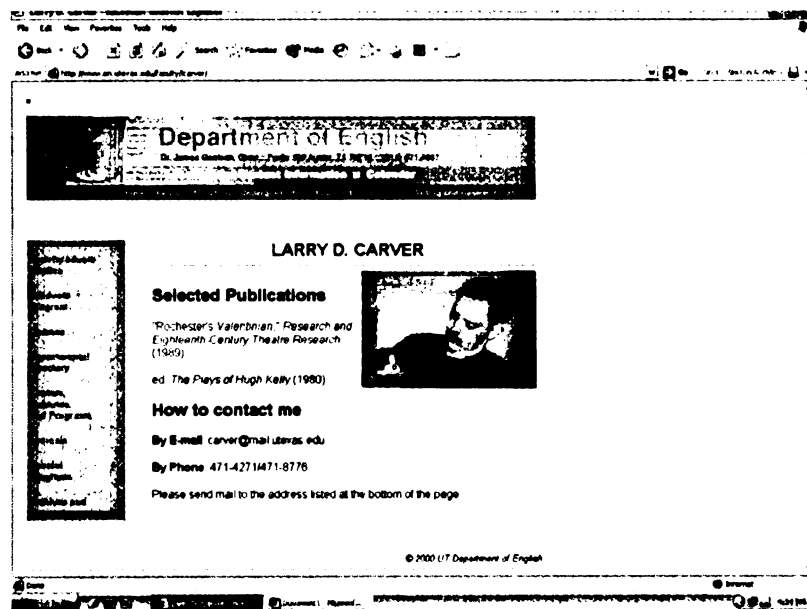
With the revisions to the Department of English and DRC sites, faculty templates

Figure 3.34 Revised DRC Faculty Directory Page



were updated and collated in the Departmental Directory located on the Department of English site (Figure 3.34). The newest generation of the DRC web site includes a list of faculty profiles, but these profiles list only the name, title, link to a web site (if one exists) and email address. The links to web sites bring users either to non-template driven

Figure 3.35 Revised UT Dept. of English Faculty Template—Larry Carver



faculty pages or to the revised templates on the Department of English site. However, not all faculty web sites available through other program pages, notably Peg Syverson's site, are listed on this DRC faculty directory page.

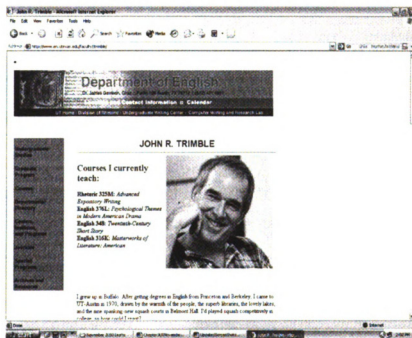
Because the DRC Faculty Directory page published with the most recent update to the DRC site uses the same GUI discussed in Part A of this chapter I will not re-iterate these same discussions. However, it is important to notice that this page effectively has two titles: Faculty and Faculty Profiles. Faculty Profiles connotes that these are not just listings of faculty contact information, specialty or other types of basic, brief information typically located in a departmental directory. Instead, the use of the word profile may

lead readers to expect that these sites contain more information that creates a sense of the faculty member as an individual, as a teacher, and as a scholar. The revisions to the Department of English template offer photographs, which fit with the descriptor “profile,” and also offer a greater degree of flexibility more reminiscent of the old DRC templates.

The Department of English templates continue the pattern of presenting faculty as framed by the department as Figures 3.35-3.37 illustrate. The template continues to list faculty name in red and then list information in black type on the same cream-colored background. As on the older DRC template, the only standardized component of these Department of English templates is the “How To Contact Me” header and information (both email and phone as well as a reference to the departmental mailing address listed on the logo in the bottom right corner of every page). The variety in terms of content and organization is wide. Compare, for example, Larry Carver’s page (Figure 3.35) with John Trimble’s site (Figure 3.36) with John Ruskiewicz’s new site in the updated template (Figure 3.37).

While all three faculty include pictures of themselves in the same position on the screen, the ordering and focus of the textual content is very different. In a situation like this where the graphical design is apparently standardized, textual content may have a greater impact on ethos because it is the one area where the individual character of each faculty member can come out. For example, Ruskiewicz's site is more formal this time, using third person to describe "John Ruskiewicz," the faculty member, in an opening paragraph and following with a focus on degrees. John Trimble's page uses first person and starts with "Courses I currently teach" which creates a very different, more informal tone and focus for the site. Finally, Larry Carver adheres to what appear to be the minimal requirements of listing publications and contact information-- he includes no

Figure 3.36 Revised UT Dept. of English Faculty Template—John Trimble



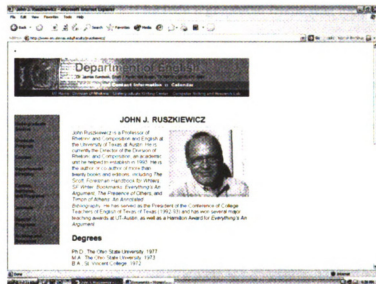
insert a portrait (i.e. mug shot) photo, slight variations in the photos selected for each faculty page reveal that the photograph does in fact differ between sites and that this difference impacts ethos.

For example, the photographs of all three men are very different. Carver's photograph shows him holding his cat in a seemingly casual pose; the fact that he isn't looking at the audience gives the impression that he has been caught off-guard and that this photograph therefore presents the "real" Carver. This photo counters the formal tone and use of third person on the site to present Carver as more than his publications. Trimble's photograph is also somewhat informal—the hand to the cheek, the smile at someone other than the photographer, the pen in hand, and the informal, open-collar shirt suggest that while he may be at work, he is also not posing for a photograph. This photograph, like Carver's gives the impression that Trimble has been photographed while engaging in an activity rather than posing for a picture. The ethos conveyed by this photo is of a relaxed, confident, friendly professional. Ruskiewicz's photo is different. Of the three his is the most traditional portrait; he is looking directly at the photographer/audience and is standing against a wall seemingly not engaged in anything other than getting his picture taken. This photo, when combined with the use of first person on Ruskiewicz's site, conveys an ethos based primarily on presenting facts about Ruskiewicz's professional successes and activities.

These differences in the photographs and the textual content shape the ethos of the faculty members in different ways. Ruskiewicz's new page no longer appears as teacherly or as focused on students as his older DRC page, especially when compared to Trimble's page. Compared to Carver's page, Ruskiewicz's appears equally scholarly but

apparently establishes an ethos based on a well-rounded expertise that includes teaching and administrative experience more than Carver's page because Ruskiewicz's site presents more information than a list of scholarly publications (while Carver's site includes no information about teaching and administrative work).¹⁹ But Carver's photograph establishes a sense of Larry Carver the person and suggests that the lack of content on his page may be due to lack of time or lack of concern with the web space rather than a desire to maintain a distant relationship with site readers.

Figure 3.37 Revised UT Dept. of English Faculty Template—John Ruskiewicz



These revised templates and the collation of faculty templates on the English site also shape the ethos of the DRC and Department of English.²⁰ Compared to the older

¹⁹ Ruskiewicz shifts his approach to presenting himself online when the faculty pages are collated on the Department of English site; he uses third person and presents less personal information. Perhaps this change reflects the different presumed audiences of these sites or the different organizational cultures of the DRC and the Department of English. The DRC site, as discussed earlier, is apparently more focused on undergraduate students while the revised Department of English site attempts to balance between graduate and undergraduate education. Furthermore, the earlier faculty templates published by the DRC and Department of English reveal that the DRC is perhaps a less controlling environment.

²⁰ While all three of these sites evidence important differences, they are all published by white male faculty. This selection was intentional to stabilize the data and attempt to examine how faculty pages with this similarity might differ. It would be interesting and worthwhile to conduct a larger examination of the ways

version of the Department of English faculty pages, this new template allows for a more equal privileging of teaching and scholarship. Faculty can present their contributions and personalities using the new template by choosing first or third person and by deciding how much and what kind of information to present. The diversity in the content and approach on these template-driven faculty pages presents the Department of English as valuing teaching and collegiality as well as scholarly publications while the consistent graphical frame clearly establishes affiliation with the department. The DRC appears more embedded within the Department of English and within UT because the older version of the DRC templates did not include a graphical frame that located the faculty web pages within the context of the department or the university.²¹

The fact that these templates are now all located under the Department of English signals an important change in markers of affiliation. In the prior version, the DRC and Department of English presented faculty as belonging more clearly to one department/division or the other. These earlier versions of faculty pages affiliated with the DRC and the Department of English presented each area as being fairly autonomous and independent, at least in terms of formal administrative linkages. However, the revision and collation on the English page highlights the formal affiliation between the DRC and Department of English that separate faculty templates and web sites tends to

male scholars represent themselves and the ways these faculty are represented in order to compare this data with other research on women's presentations of identity online by Hawisher and Sullivan (1999), DeVoss (2000, 2002), and Blair and Takayoshi (1999).

²¹ Remember that the DRC faculty template examples give the faculty member name and then faculty information—there is no header or side menu bar. The revised faculty directory on the Department of English presents faculty in the center frame of the page and uses the header to affiliate each faculty member with the department and the knowledge network of UT, the Division of Rhetoric, the Undergraduate Writing Center and the CWRL (all links on the header bar).

overshadow.²² Due to this level of interconnection, the online ethos of the DRC and Department of English are more closely intertwined, just as the ethos of the CWRL and DRC are intertwined (see earlier discussion on DRC's link to CWRL as a way of establishing technical expertise). While the revised DRC and Department of English web sites still look very different, the shared faculty directory establishes connections between the programs and requires readers interested in the DRC to move between the DRC and Department of English sites.

As explained in the preceding analyses of the revised UT Department of English site and the revised DRC web site, these sites are similar in their use of a header to establish ethos by affiliation with the University of Texas at Austin, the use of detailed explanatory text on the main page, and references to affiliated programs and centers. Moving between the updated DRC and the Department of English sites is not a jarring experience for readers because the general approach to web design is similar on both sites. The connection between these sites serves to enhance the ethos of both the Department of English and the DRC because the detailed information on each site clarifies the educational and research focus of both. Furthermore, because both the DRC and the Department of English revised sites make reference to each other, this kind of overlap or sharing of online resources (in the shared online faculty directory) is not surprising to readers.

The sections that follow analyze three faculty web sites published by Melinda Turnley, Peg Syverson, and Lester Faigley to more closely examine the ways non-template driven faculty sites shape the ethos of both the faculty member and the

²² Further research reveals that DRC faculty members have joint appointments in both the Department of English and the DRC, which reinforces perceptions that the DRC is a semi-independent division within the Department.

program(s) or department(s) with which he or she is affiliated.

Melinda Turnley's Web Site <http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu>

The primary graphic on Melinda Turnley's web site (Figure 3.38) is a green and blue geometric pattern, positioned where the "mug shot" pictures are typically located on other faculty web sites. This graphic incorporates a mouse over that changes the graphic to a picture of Turnley. From a rhetorical standpoint, the fact that the primary visual content of the main page is simultaneously a computer generated graphic and a picture of Turnley can be interpreted in multiple ways. For example, this combination of graphic and photograph could be seen to examine and play with the relationship between photographic representations and "reality" enabled by the advent of advanced digital cameras and software programs that allow manipulation of photographic images. In this interpretation, Turnley's somewhat cyborgian move could be interpreted as the author/subject presenting herself as a visual element on the screen, a visual element with no content behind it, as if it were present purely for display. But this graphic could also be interpreted as a creative adaptation of the expected mug-shot photograph on the web site or as a statement of a shy but playful personality in which Turnley "hides" behind the digital graphics. The fact that this combination of graphic and photograph presents so many possible interpretations to the audience and the fact that this presentation differs from the expected straightforward mug shot helps to shape an enigmatic, somewhat mysterious character.

In the photograph revealed on the mouse-over (Figure 3.39), Turnley is gazing back at the site visitor; she is not smiling or scowling, but rather presents an enigmatic,

Figure 3.38 Melinda Turnley's Faculty Web Site

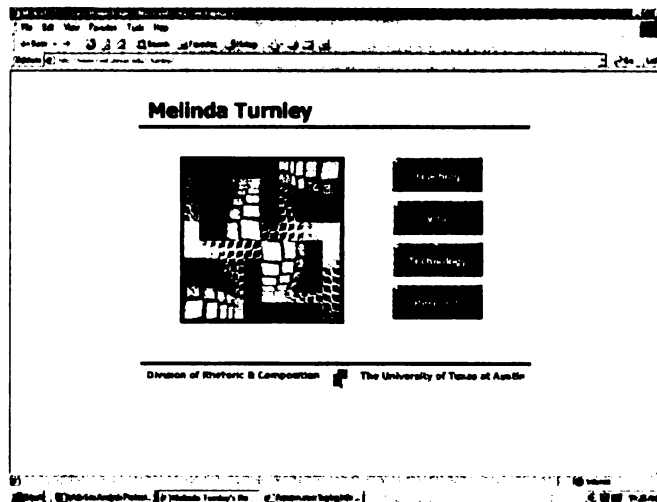
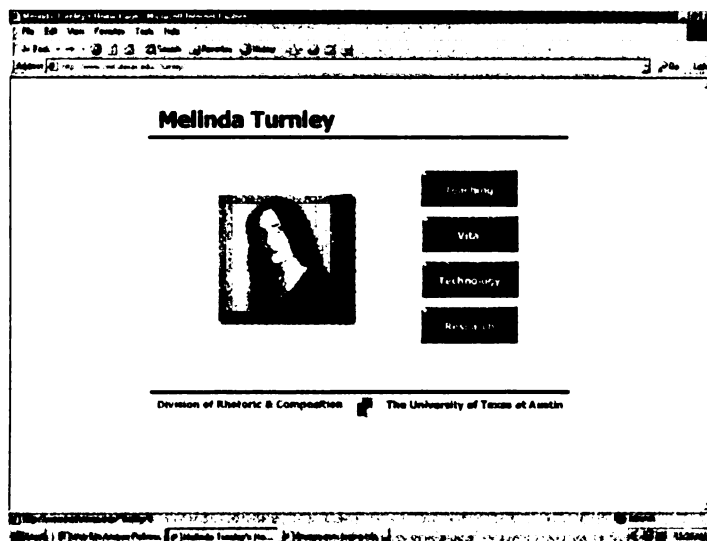


Figure 3.39 Melinda Turnley's Faculty Web Site Rollover Graphic



Mona-Lisa style expression that could be interpreted in multiple ways. She looks simultaneously serious, direct, playful, sincere, and maybe even annoyed. This gaze, because it is not the stereotypical smiling mug shot, creates a sense of individualized character and allows for a shifting ethos, depending on reader interpretation and the way the reader's perception of this photograph intersects with other aspects of the site.

The navigational icons listed to the right of the graphic read (in descending order): Teaching, Vita, Technology, and Research. The footer at the bottom of the page lists the DRC and the University of Texas at Austin and offers links to the DRC main page and the UT home page. As with some of the other sites analyzed in this chapter, the lack of more in-depth textual content emphasizes these links and the graphic. The selection of the main content areas for the right-side links suggests a blended and a self-conscious approach to creating ethos online. These subject headings are the key areas of competence required of a university professor; professors should have teaching expertise and competence, should be actively engaged in research, and should have knowledge of the appropriate technologies for their discipline. For Turnley, and others working in digital rhetoric, the connotations of “technology” may be somewhat different than for, say, biology professors because a focus on digital rhetoric implies a technical expertise with web design.

Perceptions of the ethos of Turnley’s site differ depending on whether her site is read primarily as affiliated with the DRC or the CWRL. The URL on Turnley’s site indicates affiliation with the CWRL, but her title and the locator links at the bottom of the splash screen to the DRC and the UT main site place her in the DRC. Links to her faculty page exist from both the CWRL and the DRC (because she left UT before the consolidation of faculty sites onto the Department of English faculty directory, she does not have a standardized faculty template). Reading her site as part of the knowledge network surrounding both the CWRL and the DRC impacts the ethos of both these program sites and Turnley’s site. When read in the context of the DRC site, Turnley seems to have a great deal of technical expertise as well as an ability to integrate visual

components of rhetoric effectively into her online text. The link to Turnley's site from the DRC enhances perceptions of technical expertise on the DRC web site; she brings understandings of the relationship between technology and writing to the DRC. When read in the context of the CWRL, her site reaffirms the technical expertise of the CWRL. While the CWRL program site effectively presents an ethos based on a blend of technical expertise and "teacherly" character, a faculty site could undermine this ethos if it did not evidence the expertise or character the program claims. Turnley's site is technically sound and the order of links on her main menu (see Figures 3.38 and 3.39) lists teaching at the top of the list.

As of Fall 2003, a link to her page is not included on the newly updated faculty directory of the new Department of English site because Turnley has transitioned to a new job at New Mexico State University. Her web site is still available on the UT servers, but presents the following message to readers:

Thank you for visiting my home page!

My site, however, is down as I transition from UT Austin to the Rhetoric and Professional Communication Program at New Mexico State University.

Please feel free to email me at my new address <mturnley@nmsu.edu> or contact me through NMSU's English Department.

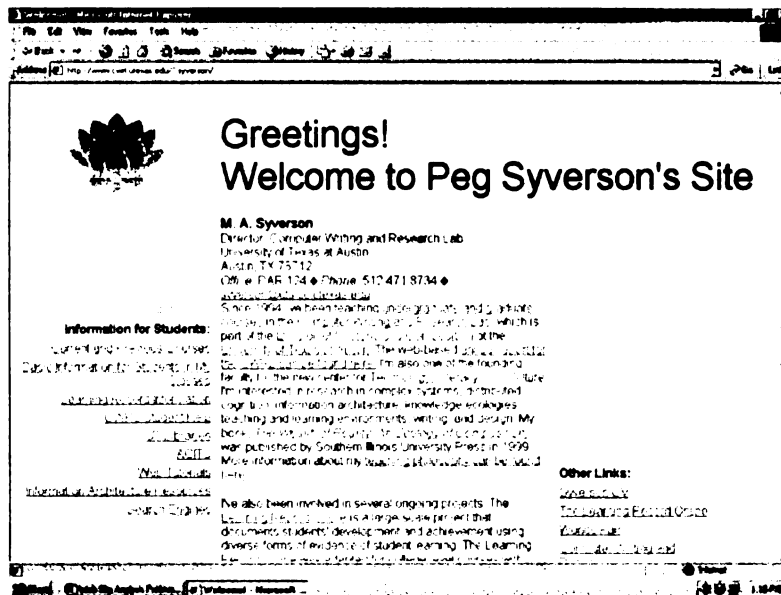
The presence of this message shapes the ethos of the CWRL and the DRC more than that of Turnley. The fact that the CWRL continues to host a web site for her, even though she has moved on demonstrates collegiality and goodwill to both Turnley and the audience. By providing this message and contact information for Turnley, the CWRL provides a service to readers who may not be aware that Turnley has moved to a different institution. In addition, the publication of this transition message demonstrates an understanding of

the ways the web functions as a communications network—if this site were not published, the CWRL and the DRC might receive numerous phone calls or emails from people looking for Turnley. This web message eliminates these calls and instead directs readers to email Turnley directly.

Peg Syverson's Web Site <http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~syverson>

Peg Syverson's web site relies mainly on text to convey ethos. As Figure 3.40 illustrates, the main page of her web site is primarily text-based. Syverson opens her site (Figure 3.40) with contact information and then introduces herself using the first person.

Figure 3.40 Peg Syverson's Faculty Web Site



This introduction starts with the topic of teaching and begins “Since 1994 I’ve been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in the Computer Writing and Research Lab” and goes on to describe her role in founding the TLC, her research interests and her recently published book. This first paragraph also contains a link to her teaching

philosophy page (see Figure 3.41). This introduction locates the site as a primarily professional site since it talks mainly about her role at UT. The main menu to the left of the text is titled “Information for Students” and lists courses taught, basic information for students in her classes, a link to the UT Library page and other student resources. The existence of these links for students conveys goodwill towards students; Syverson’s site is not targeted exclusively at students, but the site does provide easy access to student information through the left hand menu.

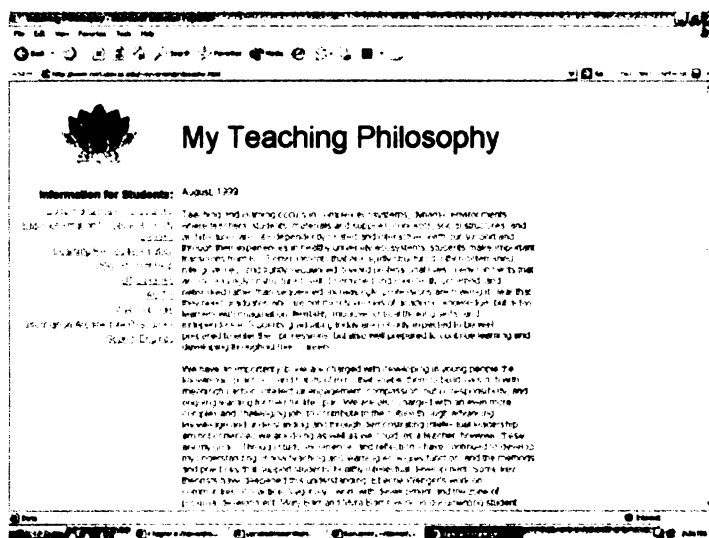
The main graphic on her homepage (see Figure 3.40) is the lotus flower in the upper left hand corner. The lotus flower is not explained, linkable, or seemingly connected to her research and teaching. However, on closer look this lotus flower is intimately connected to the ethos of the site established by Syverson’s protest page. On this protest page she changes the background of her site to all black to protest “the methods by which George W. Bush and his campaign subverted the democratic process and seized presidential power.”²³ This protest page uses color to make a clear statement and shapes an ethos wherein Syverson is not only a teacher and scholar, but a politically involved citizen. In this context, the lotus makes sense— in the yogic tradition, the lotus flower is a symbol of peace and the strength to rise above the muddy waters of life with spiritual awareness. The lotus position in yoga is a well-known meditative posture wherein the practitioner sits with legs crossed, ankles up in the hip joint. In the context of Syverson’s protest page, the use of the lotus as symbol suggests an ethos of political activism borne out of strong moral beliefs in peace and the democratic process.

²³ This protest page is effectively a site “skin” like that used by the latest revision of the CWRL page. Because it is the same as Syverson’s main page with a black background, it does not reproduce well—for this reason I did not include a screen shot of this protest page.

Syverson's statement of teaching philosophy as published on her web site (see Figure 3.41—Teaching Philosophy Page) bolsters the committed, teacherly, politically active character established by the opening page. Her statement of teaching philosophy uses first person plural to address other teachers and academic professionals:

We have an important job: we are charged with developing in young people the knowledge, practices, and habits of mind that enable them to build lives rich with meaningful action, intellectual engagement, compassion, public responsibility, and ongoing learning for their full life span. We are also charged with an even more complex and challenging job: to contribute to the culture through advancing knowledge and understanding and through demonstrating intellectual leadership. . . I can't imagine more challenging, creative, satisfying, and important work.

Figure 3.41 Peg Syverson's Teaching Philosophy Page



In this statement of teaching philosophy, Syverson explains in great detail her motivations for teaching, her personal commitment to individual student growth, her conviction that the liberal arts are an essential aspect of education, and a belief in specific

pedagogies of collaboration and the use of technology in the classroom. These statements strengthen the ethos of her web site by revealing her passion and commitment to her work and by presenting ideas of meaningful action and public responsibility that echo the involved citizen ethos of her protest page.

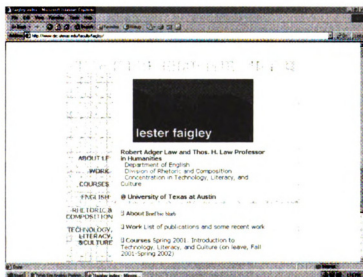
Syverson's web page also creates goodwill and the perception of credibility by talking openly about her challenges with web design; she reveals a somewhat fearful recognition that her design abilities and time availability hinder the design of her web site. These revelations establish a connection with the audience; many audience members may know from experience how difficult it is to carve out time to dedicate to building a personal web site. According to Aristotle, one of the best ways to establish character is to assert a character with which the audience can identify. Syverson's web site succeeds in doing this. This discussion of the production factors impinging on the web site design works to mitigate critiques of the GUI design and focuses attention on Syverson's intention to convey a straight-forward character more than demonstrate hands-on technical expertise with web design.

Because this site is linked to the CWRL both through direct links and through the fact that she is the director of the CWRL, Syverson's assertion of a teacherly, politically engaged character on her faculty site strengthens the CWRL's presentation of the center as a student-focused, collaborative space. The end result is that her site somewhat shifts the ethos of the CWRL site away from an emphasis on technical expertise and towards a focus on a teacherly commitment to collaboration and the education of citizens equipped to participate in a democracy.

Lester Faigley's Web Site <http://www.drc.utexas.edu/faculty/faigley>

As his web site indicates, Lester Faigley is a faculty member in the Department of English and the DRC. He functioned as the director of the TLC during part of my research gathering phase but has since moved on to the Undergraduate Writing Center. His web site (Figure 3.42) establishes an ethos based primarily on an approachable character that interweaves the personal and the professional in a seamless manner. The page opens with his name, in all lowercase, superimposed on a desert scene. The fact that there are no pictures of him on this first page coupled with the bold title “Robert Adger Law and Thos. H. Law Professor in Humanities” could lead to the assumption that this is

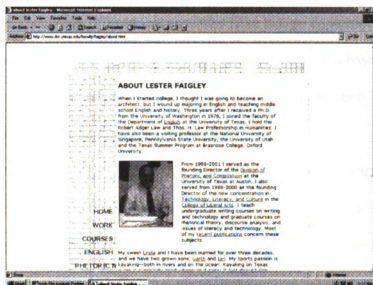
Figure 3.42 Lester Faigley's Faculty Web Site



a very formal site that does not address aspects of Faigley's identity other than his professional qualifications and experience and instead offers a “scenic view” of his professional credentials. However, the tone of the text on even this first page implies a friendly, conversational site. For example, he says “some recent work” instead of “professional publications” and instead of the standard “contact information,” he uses the

friendlier “get in touch” to link to his email. Furthermore, he refers to himself as “LF” which is technically the third person but by using his initials the formality is mediated; it is as if LF is his nickname and in letting the visitor in on this nickname, he is treating them as friends not strangers, thereby creating a more approachable tone.

Figure 3.43 Faigley’s “About Lester Faigley” Page



In comparison to other individual faculty pages, Faigley creates a more balanced blend between a teacherly, scholarly, and more personal ethos by using rhetorical frames. While Syverson’s political beliefs are suggested through the motif of the lotus flower, the protest page, and her statement of teaching philosophy, these incursions of the personal are more of a skeleton underlying the site’s construction of ethos. On Faigley’s site, the personal is not directly politicized and does not overlap as clearly with his professional work in academia; his personal interests revolve more around his outdoor hobbies and family. Lester Faigley the professor frames Lester Faigley the father/husband/outdoor enthusiast (in terms of overall site navigation). The two realms of personal and

professional are connected but, with the exception of the “About Lester Faigley” page, do not directly overlap.

Faigley’s personal and professional selves are interwoven to create a character of a faculty member who is comfortable with technology, comfortable with the ways that technology weaves in and out of his life, and comfortable with the way his professional and personal life are interconnected. His demonstration of technical expertise as opposed to a purely textual discussion of technical expertise (like that on Syverson’s page) and the fact that he is a distinguished professor of Humanities create an ethos based on technical and content area expertise in addition to a realistic character that presents Lester the person as well as Lester the academic professional.

The “About Lester Faigley” page (see Figure 3.43) is framed by the same blue borders as the TLC page, establishing a visual connection to the program even though he is no longer the program director. The textual content of this page is framed by personal information; he opens with a friendly story about how he used to be an undergraduate too and how he taught middle school. Overall, the language he uses is college-student friendly prose that is also appropriate for a peer or university administrator; his diction and style present a character that could be deemed appropriate by many different audience members, including students, colleagues, members of the general public, senior university administrators, etc. This is important in conveying ethos because while Faigley’s web site conveys an ethos based on a combination of an approachable, realistic, well-rounded character and scholarly expertise, an inappropriately informal tone or style could suggest to some readers that the online character he presents is not appropriate for a senior university faculty member.

Faigley's web site is most closely connected to the TLC concentration because the design of his site mirrors that of the TCL web site (or vice versa, I don't know which site was developed first) but, unlike Syverson and Turnley's his site also indicates his affiliation with the Department of English. As a result, his site impacts the ethos of all these sites, including the TLC (even though he no longer works as director of the program). His informal tone counters the formality of the Department of English home page and his technical and content area expertise enhances perceptions of both on the DRC, the TLC, and the Department of English.

Reading Faculty Sites as Part of the Knowledge Network: Summary of Impacts on Ethos

The impact of these faculty sites on the ethos of the program and departmental sites varies depending on the program mission and on the faculty web page. Just as the look and feel and navigation of a program web site are read in the context of the knowledge network within which the site is read, these faculty web sites are also read within the context of the program sites. Likewise, the faculty sites are part of the knowledge network within which program, department, and divisional sites are read and interpreted. Overall, non-template driven faculty web sites shape perceptions of the character of the program sites with which they are affiliated by demonstrating that faculty are willing to invest the time required to build a non-template driven site. Faculty willingness to invest time in building a site suggests a teacherly character committed to providing information online for readers and a spirit of scholarly inquiry into the practice

of web design, not simply theoretical readings about web design.²⁴ A department or program that allows individual, self-published web sites in addition to or instead of template-driven web sites suggests that the department or program is flexible in allowing for a diverse web presence and trusting of faculty to produce appropriate web sites that will reflect positively on the program, department, and university as a whole.

As compared to the template-driven faculty web pages on the revised Department of English departmental directory, Turnley's, Syverson's, and Faigley's web sites are more in-depth and offer significantly more information, including links to publications, teaching philosophies, course web sites, family photos, complete vita, etc. The juxtaposition of these in-depth, detailed, sites against fairly high-level template-driven sites creates the impression that these faculty willing to invest time in their web presence have more available resources, are more concerned with meeting reader needs for accessing information online, or are more interested in experimenting with web publication. Both the templated sites and the non-template driven sites require attention to textual content, to voice and tone but the self-published faculty web sites are more complex to design and build than filling in the blanks on a standard template and require a different type of expertise to effectively convey a credible ethos. For example, the template-driven web sites do not have graphics beyond the photograph and do not use varied layouts to present information; the non-template driven faculty sites incorporate graphics (even if it is just a lotus and black protest page, as on Syverson's site) and require in-depth thinking about the layout of site content that is not required of those faculty utilizing the templates.

²⁴ Demonstrations of a willingness to engage in web publication are relevant to the ethos of these web sites because the Department of English, the CWRL, the DRC and the TLC are all programs which purport to be engaged (at some level) with digital technology, digital rhetoric, and the use of computers in education.

On both templated and non-templated faculty sites demonstrations of technical expertise and content expertise are important mainly insofar as the faculty sites enact the type of expertise the UT program and department sites claim. The template-driven web sites affiliated with the Department of English that do not evidence technical expertise do not hinder the ethos of the Department of English because the department page itself is not focused on technical literacy. However, Syverson's site may slightly undermine the CWRL's claims for technical expertise because her web site is not as technically robust as the CWRL homepage (at least for the older version of the CWRL site where a link to Syverson's site is prominently featured on the main CWRL page).

In my reading and analysis, it is primarily the faculty templates that shape perceptions of departmental ethos because the structure and content of the templates reveals at least one aspect of departmental character. As discussed earlier, the older version of the Department of English templates focusing on publications reinforces perceptions of a traditional academic character and focus on research. The fairly rigid templates and lack of faculty photographs also convey a hierarchical and traditional character for the department by enacting centralized departmental control of the web presentation of the department and of faculty. This structured template may also reflect earlier assumptions about the appropriate design and content for a faculty web site. On the other hand, the updated templates that combine the relative flexibility of the DRC templates with the more effective navigation and layout of the English templates create a more balanced character that enables individual expression, that presents pictures of faculty (which help to bring their human differences online merely by showing different facial expressions, poses, etc.), and that allows for greater flexibility in site content. But

a larger reading of the re-organization of these faculty templates to all exist within the English Department can send a contradictory message; while the Department is being more flexible in the templates, the span of control of these templates has widened.²⁵

Character, Technical Expertise, and Disciplinary Expertise: Three Facets of Ethos

In the UT knowledge network, different sites use textual content, navigation, and graphics to convey different types of ethos. For example, Syverson's page relies most heavily on demonstrating an engaged, committed character to convey an ethos that also includes expertise in rhetorical scholarship, teaching, and administration. On the other hand, the Department of English relies most heavily on presentations of scholarly expertise to suggest an ethos based on a traditional academic department. The CWRL relies most heavily on technical expertise to present an ethos of a technically literate program that, seemingly due to the goodwill the program holds towards the audience, is willing to share this technical knowledge with readers. The revised DRC site includes graphics of people in both the header and the main navigational menu on the homepage, which suggests a collaborative program character. Other sites, like the TLC, use textual content to demonstrate administrative proficiency by discussing competencies, budgets assessment initiatives, connection to university goals, and the like.

While these readings of the UT sites demonstrate that navigation, graphics, and content work together to convey an ethos, these readings also help explain the

²⁵ Again, remember that because my research does not include interviews, any discussion of production issues cannot be verified and is open to multiple interpretations. For example, in the case of the Department of English templates, the collation of templates into the English Department could indicate the Department of English seeking to extend political control or it could indicate other departments not wanting to worry about faculty templates anymore and deciding to let English dedicate the resources to such a big job. Or, perhaps the Department of English and the DRC decided that the teaching of literature and composition needs to be a complementary, collaborative endeavor, and agreed to revise the web site to reflect a new commitment to working together.

importance of consistency and coherence across a program or department site. The lack of a consistent voice throughout the Department of English site allows the confusing navigation of the site to dominate the reader's experience. Analyzing the ethos of the Department of English site and the ways tone and voice connect to this ethos reveals the impact of the juxtaposition of multiple voices on a single site. Baumlín explains that, "Far from displaying a unity of voice, even the driest, most objective text contains within itself a multiplicity of voices—as Foucault argues, a multiplicity of "selves"—each of which functions at a different location or level of argument" (xxvi). The UT Department of English site does contain multiple voices as evidenced in the differences between the graduate and undergraduate programs.

For example, the main page for "Undergraduate Studies in English" on both versions of the Department of English web site is a list of links with no additional information. On the older version of the Department of English site, the lack of an opening welcome message contrasts with the other programs which open with a welcoming overview of the program and a description of what the program offers. Only the graduate studies section of the English site contains a description of the English program. For example, the Graduate Program in English site begins

The English Department at The University of Texas at Austin offers a stimulating graduate curriculum and intellectual community. With a diverse, engaged, and accomplished faculty, this ninety-person department covers a rich array of traditional fields of literary and rhetorical study and

also reflects contemporary theoretical and cultural approaches that cut across these fields.

While this introduction to the graduate studies section of the English web site uses a collegial voice that is a blend of teacherly and scholarly tone and voice, the undergraduate section is a more distanced, administrative voice. These scholarly, teacherly, and administrative voices correlate to the type of character presented on the web site which in turn shapes the type of ethos. The lack of connection, in terms of the voice used, between the undergraduate and graduate sections portrays the multiple pieces of the English program as puzzle pieces that do not fit together. The confusing navigation increases this sense of multiple pieces that don't fit together. However, rather than leaving the reader only with a sense of confusion, the end result of these disjunctions is the creation of a character not focused on readers and usability. The problem is not so much that these multiple voices exist in the Department web page but that they are not explained or connected.

A preliminary conclusion that emerges from this investigation of select UT web sites affiliated with the Department of English is that implementing graphics, navigation, and content to create a sense of unity that helps readers understand how the multiple aspects or voices within a program or faculty web site fit together to shape the character of the program or individual is important to establishing ethos. Syverson, Faigley, the CWRL, and the TLC (and, to a lesser extent, Ruskiewicz, Turnley, and the DRC) all succeed in interweaving the multiple voices in ways that reinforce the ethos of these sites. These sites convey a credible ethos by suggesting both an appropriate, excellent character that incorporates elements of a teacherly, scholarly, and administrative character and an

appropriate, balanced expertise in teaching, administration, and scholarship. These sites also convey an appropriate blend of technical and content area expertise. While the exact methods for demonstrating expertise vary with the type of expertise required for a particular program or faculty member, what matters is not so much the type of expertise or character as the appropriate fit between program mission, discipline, and the type of expertise conveyed online.

Representations of Technology and Ethos

Based on my readings of this selected group of UT sites, representations of technology seem to be important in establishing ethos because they shape character, color perceptions of content and disciplinary expertise, and shadow readings of technical expertise when technical expertise is defined as expertise in web publication and design. In the case of the CWRL, representations of technology increase perceptions of both content and technical expertise because the web site design supports the technical expertise discussed in the textual content. For Syverson, discussions of technology increase perceptions of content expertise and character by establishing a relationship with her audience and by asserting good intention. For the TLC and revised DRC sites representations of technology enhance character, technical expertise, and content expertise by offering an integrated ethos where graphics, content, and web design reinforce the mission of the program.

Preliminary Conclusions Based on Analysis of the UT Knowledge Network

When reading these sites against each other, I began to understand that, in accordance with Fogg's finding, the design of the web site was the most noticeable difference between sites. Like Fogg's sample users, I found myself judging sites based on my preferences and in comparison to newly updated GUIs. It was difficult to not discredit the TLC, for example, for not updating its GUI when other programs had done so. I was struck by the number of times the DRC and CWRL revised their program web sites; to me as a researcher, the fact that these departments took the time to engage in the work necessary to successfully revise their web sites multiple times builds a perception of character dedicated to practicing what these programs teach by continually striving to improve usability and web design literacy skills. But as the preceding sections indicate, it seems that it is coherence between elements of design, content, and navigation that presents the greatest impact on ethos. My analysis of the UT sites suggests that a site can be relatively weak in one of these areas if it establishes a rationale for doing so, or, better yet, uses the relative weakness as an opportunity for building credibility (by talking directly about the weakness) and for establishing a relationship with the audience.

In the next chapter I examine web sites from Purdue University. In this analysis I pay attention to coherence between the multiple voices on site and the impact of multiple site revisions on ethos to help increase understandings of the extent to which coherence and site revisions impact ethos.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 02551 6869

7.773

4

2.0001

pt. 2

56956865



PLACE IN RETURN BOX to remove this checkout from your record.
TO AVOID FINES return on or before date due.
MAY BE RECALLED with earlier due date if requested.

DATE DUE	DATE DUE	DATE DUE

Chapter 4

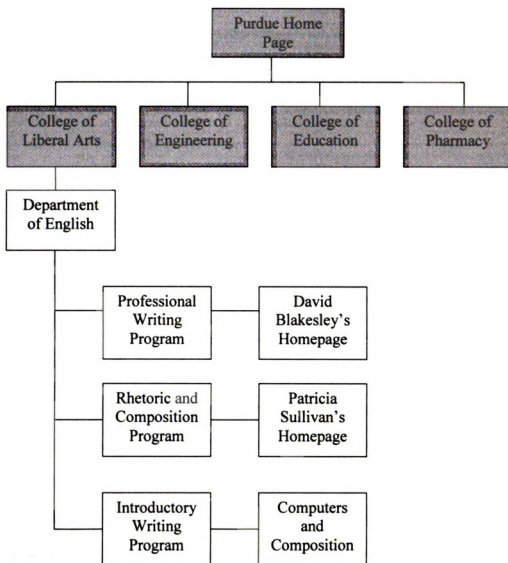
Rhetorical Analysis of Ethos at Purdue University

Introduction

Purdue University is a 4-year research institution offering multiple programs in English, Rhetoric, Composition, and Professional Writing. In my analysis of Purdue web sites, I will examine the Department of English web site as well as web sites published by programs formally affiliated with the Department, including Professional Writing, Rhetoric and Composition, and the Introductory Writing Program (all these programs administratively fall under the English Department).¹ As with the preceding chapter focused on the University of Texas (UT), this analysis of web sites affiliated with Purdue University will include readings of both individual web sites and re-readings of these sites within their online context. Table 4.1 graphically summarizes the sites I will analyze in this chapter. For additional information on the relationship between these sites and the larger Purdue web presence, refer to Appendix A.

¹ The Purdue OWL website (the website for the Purdue Writing Center) is not included in this analysis. As explained in Chapter Two and Appendix A, I do not include Writing Center web sites in my analysis because Writing Centers have a unique theoretical and pedagogical approach that merits a separate study focused explicitly on Writing Centers. Please note, however, that the Purdue OWL site is a nationally recognized site that has led the way for other writing centers interested in establishing an online presence and writing support program.

**Table 4.1: Diagram of Purdue University Knowledge Network Addressed by
Chapter Four**



Please note that this diagram does not represent all linkages between sites.

In addition, my readings will incorporate comparisons to the prior analyses of UT sites in order to point out similarities and differences in the ways site navigation, design, and

content impact online ethos. In comparing and contrasting the ways ethos works on these web sites, I attempt to unravel some of the complex issues related to the overlapping influence of navigation, GUI design, and content on ethos. As with my analysis of the UT sites, I continue A) my usage of teacherly, scholarly, and administrative as descriptors for generalized types of character (and overall ethos) and B) my examination of the ways character, technical expertise, content expertise, and goodwill work together to shape an ethos on these web sites.

Part A

The Ethos of Academic Web Sites: Readings of Departmental and Program Sites

Department of English at Purdue <http://www.sla.purdue.edu/academic/engl>

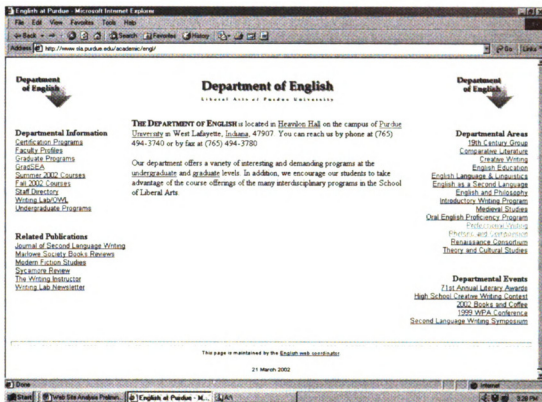
The URL for the Purdue Department of English positions the department as closely aligned with the School of Liberal Arts (SLA); in fact all departmental sites within the SLA share the same URL with the last segment denoting department (i.e. engl, aus, phil, etc.). Like many of the sites I researched, this site has been updated with a new GUI. As this analysis will demonstrate, the new GUI does not substantially change the content or design of the site because the primary change is in the addition of a graphical header.

Older Version Purdue Department of English Web Site

The older version of the Department of English web site is a very basic site with few graphics and two horizontal lists of links on the left and right margins (see Figure

4.1). Two short paragraphs are centered between the horizontal lists of links. Each list of links is subdivided into two headers. The top left list contains departmental information;

Figure 4.1 Purdue Department of English Older Version Main Page



the sub links under this header include, among others, direct links to information about graduate and undergraduate programs, courses, and a link to the Writing Center. Beneath this list is a header titled “Related Publications.” The sub links under this publications header are arranged in alphabetical order; the alphabetic order of these links calls attention to the fact that the sub links under “Departmental Information” header are not in any easily recognized order (such as alphabetical order). The right hand menu is likewise split—the top right list of departmental areas is alphabetized while the lower right list of departmental events is in neither alphabetical or chronological order. While this lack of

consistent organizational pattern may appear minor, it impacts perceptions of ethos by creating a sense of disorder and slight confusion. The reader is not clear why the links are listed in this order; although the menus are relatively short, a reader may still have to scan through the entire list to find what she is looking for since the site menus lack a predictable pattern. While the site is relatively easy to use because it is so basic, for a basic site it is not very user-friendly.

The ethos of the older Department of English web site is also impacted by the conspicuous absence of the university logo. This was the only page I visited at Purdue that did not display the university logo, instead showing two blue arrows pointing downwards, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. This older version of the English department page also does not have any links to the rest of the university-- there is not even a link back to the main Purdue site. This lack of connection to other sites could decrease the usability of the site for some readers, because readers need to use the browser back button to return to the university pages. Furthermore, this lack of connection to Purdue undermines ethos by affiliation with the university and could also be seen as shaping a departmental character that is seemingly not concerned with establishing connections to other departments and disciplinary areas.

The welcoming text on the page (located in between the two blue arrows) also shapes ethos because it suggests a lack of technical literacy and an audience focus on other faculty. The paragraph reads,

The Department of English is located in Heavilon Hall on the campus of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, 47907. You can reach us by phone at (765) 494-3740 or by fax at (765) 494-3780. Our department

offers a variety of interesting and demanding programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, we encourage our students to take advantage of the course offerings of the many interdisciplinary programs in the School of Liberal Arts.

The paragraph opens with a direct reminder that this is not a virtual department; by focusing on geographic location (by placing information about the department's non-virtual location first) site designers position the web site not as an information sharing and community building tool, but as an online brochure (to reference Spinuzzi et al's term "brochureware") that directs viewers to the main department office where they can have "real" conversations. This text also lacks an email contact link, heightening perceptions that the Purdue Department of English may not have embraced web technology as a communication tool and continuing the trend of creating an isolated character. The lack of an email link could isolate this department page from readers who prefer to use email as a primary communication method.

The tone of the paragraph is conversational. The Department of English at Purdue uses an authorial "we" to connote a sense of a communal voice and to create a "teacherly" voice, especially in the last sentence. The wording "our students" directly positions the author(s) of this web site as faculty and staff working with students. But, the fact that the paragraph is talking *about* students rather than *to* students hints that the intended audience for this web site may well be faculty and administrators rather than (or in addition to) students themselves.²

The content on the site continues the pattern established on the main page—it is

² The intended audience could also include parents of prospective or currently enrolled students. The point here is that because students are the subject of the text, the implication is that the audience may be another group of people with an interest in the ways the Purdue Department of English works with students.

primarily text-based, first person plural, and conversational. However, the content published on this site (as opposed to content available on program sites linked to this site) is minimal. Content is primarily basic departmental information, including lists of courses, lists of faculty, an online undergraduate handbook and pages advertising departmental events (like conferences). For example, clicking on Undergraduate programs off the main page (Figure 4.1) displays the table of contents for an online student handbook (see Figure 4.4 for this page as displayed in the revised site GUI).³ The text on this manual is informative in conveying the rules and regulations involved in obtaining a degree in English. However, like the two versions of the UT Department of English site, the lack of content welcoming students, defining the program mission or explaining how the department is structured, shapes an ethos that relies primarily on information access. At the same time, when compared to the UT Department of English sites, this Purdue Department of English site does offer more context that helps the audience contextualize the information presented online and that also shapes a more teacherly ethos.

For example, while the undergraduate student information on both versions of the Purdue site is similar to that at UT in that both are very directive, the tone of the two sites is very different. The Purdue site includes more context around the directions, which establishes a more encouraging, teacherly ethos. For example, the Purdue undergraduate information page (the first link on the table of contents) opens with the following:

Welcome to Purdue's Department of English. Our goal is to give you the best education possible. This handbook is designed to help you understand

³ Unfortunately I do not have a screen shot of this manual as it existed in this older version of the Purdue Department of English web site. However, the manual itself has not changed, and the presentation of the manual on the new site mirrors that on the old site, with the exception of the new graphical header.

the core requirements for the School of Liberal Arts, complete the requirements for your English degree, and acquaint you with organizations that are related to your study of English.

By talking directly to students instead of using the more formal “students must” that the UT Department of English site uses, the Purdue site establishes a relationship with students and forwards a more approachable, conversational character than the UT Department of English site.

In addition, this page includes information about why advising is important; the online manual explains that advisors are focused on helping students identify potential pathways to graduation that will prepare them for their intended careers. UT did not give this explanation in terms that validated the rationale for the process and merely told students that advising was available. Instead, the UT Department of English undergraduate page lists requirements and repercussions for not following these requirements. The Purdue site, as demonstrated by the preceding examples, takes a different approach and explains the rationale first and weaves the requirements in with the rationale to craft a less direct, more affectively-based, message.

However, although the undergraduate information page opens with a welcome message, the main undergraduate page contains no welcoming text immediately viewable by readers—to access any content readers must select one of the links in the table of contents for the online undergraduate student manual.⁴ In fact, the undergraduate page itself is nothing more than the table of contents of the online manual. There are no other navigational links, no connections to other programs, not even links back to the main

⁴ The Purdue Department of English site offers an undergraduate page that is a table of contents with no additional text. However, when readers click on the items on this table of contents, several of the sub-pages listed (including the undergraduate information page) contain more contextualized information.

Accessed via a link titled “Graduate Programs” in the upper left menu of the main page (Figure 4.1), the older version of the English Graduate Studies web site (Figure 4.2) offers a more up-to-date GUI design than the older version of the English Department main page. Like the Purdue Rhetoric and Composition page (see Figure 4.12) discussed later in this chapter, this version of the graduate program site displays a picture of the Purdue bell tower to suggest, perhaps, the scholarly tradition and history of Purdue. The

[illegible]

header frame locates English graduate studies within the Department of English and the School of Liberal Arts; the header text is literally within English Graduate Studies and just below the Department of English watermark in the background. This Graduate Program web site has a navigational menu on the left side of the screen that remains consistent across all content pages and enables the reader to move easily between segments of the site. This kind of navigation is absent from the older Department of English main site; on the department main site there is no consistent menu or navigation strategy present on content pages.

This Graduate Program web site is significant in that it highlights the different voices and communities within the Department of English. The Purdue Department of English site presents itself online as a collage of voices, programs, and web sites without a strong common mission or integrated web presence. Even the introductory text on the main page (Figure 4.1) describes how the Department of English “offers a variety of interesting and demanding programs” but doesn’t explain how or why these program are all affiliated with the department. For example, while the Department of English graduate program is clearly part of the larger Purdue Department of English, the strikingly different GUIs of the older versions of these two sites, portray these two communities as being very separate. Unlike the undergraduate studies page which has no content, just links to sections of the online manual, this revised graduate studies page includes a statement about the goals of the web site:

This website is designed to offer easy access to procedures, policies, degree-granting programs, and other relevant information pertaining to

graduate study in English, with the click of a mouse. We hope it provides answers to your basic questions.

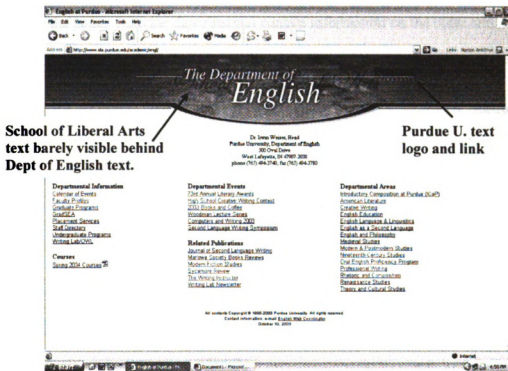
This paragraph establishes a helpful student-centered ethos, just as the opening text of the online undergraduate manual does. But unlike the undergraduate manual, this text is on the main page; users are not confronted with seemingly endless lists of links with no contextualizing information.

The overall online ethos of the department is impacted by the discrepancy in design quality between the Department of English main site and the Graduate Program site because this discrepancy suggests a privileging of the graduate student program. Reading the graduate studies program against the undergraduate student information on the main department page highlights the relative lack of content and outdated design on the rest of the department site. While there is more to the Purdue Department of English site than the undergraduate manual and the Graduate Program web site, the majority of content on the main departmental pages is focused on undergraduate educational programs. The revised Department of English site remedies this division between graduate and undergraduate programs by applying a new GUI design to both the graduate and undergraduate sections of the site.

Revised Version Purdue Department of English Web Site

As Figure 4.3 illustrates, the new graphical header on the revised Department of English web site is more visually rich, more stylized, and presents a more updated look and feel for the site. The updated header on the new Department of English site more

Figure 4.3 Revised Purdue Department of English Web Site Main Page



clearly connects the department with the School of Liberal Arts (written in an auburn scroll text behind the white letters of Department of English) and the university (Purdue University text-based logo is included in the upper right corner of the header) than the older version of the site did. As explained in the prior chapter on UT, this sort of institutional affiliation bolsters ethos, specifically perceptions of content expertise, by demonstrating that the department is connected to a reputable academic institution. The

header also demonstrates a facility with graphic design for the web that was missing from the older version of the site.

The updated site contains the same menus that used to exist on the left and right margins of the older site, but they are spread out across the page, rather than aligned on the margins around the introductory paragraph, which has been removed. Instead of the introductory paragraph, information about the chair of the department is centered and at the top of the page. Like the departmental contact information on the older site, this contact information does not include email capabilities. So, while the updated GUI

Figure 4.4 Purdue Department of English Revised Undergraduate Studies Page



reflects improved web design expertise, the lack of email contact information for the chair or department in general reduces usability of the site for users who are accustomed to email as a primary communication tool and suggests what Spinuzzi calls the

brochureware model for web design. This brochureware model assumes a one-way transmission of information from author to audience.⁵

The content, other than the changes to this main page, remains very much the same as the content on prior version, with only some minor edits and updates. Just as on the older version of the site, the new undergraduate page (see Figure 4.4) is an online version of a student handbook containing the rules, guidelines, curricula and the like for undergraduate English majors. The content of this handbook has not been updated as part of the site re-design.

As Figure 4.5 illustrates, the revised graduate studies program site uses the same new header as the main Department of English site focusing on undergraduate programs

Figure 4.5 Revised Department of English Graduate Studies Site



⁵ Spinuzzi et al's article uses the term brochureware to describe a web site which is nothing more interactive than a print brochure; as such, brochureware is focused on the transmission, not interactive creation, of knowledge and information.

with a slight modification—while the header on the main Department of English page and the undergraduate sections is an ochre color, the header on the graduate studies pages is an aquamarine blue. The design decision to use a common header in different colors presents the two programs as “separate but equal” in terms of web presence. But the graduate studies program has a web site, not just an online manual. A closer look indicates that while the common header suggests greater cohesion and equality between the two web sites, the site content and navigation reveals a continued disparity between the Purdue Department of English undergraduate and graduate program web sites.

Similar to the older version, the revised graduate studies page has a left side navigation bar with links to detailed information about financial support, department areas, programs, graduate newsletter, downloadable forms and documents, and course lists. In addition, the site includes information for prospective students with information about applying, making contact with current graduate students, and financial support. However, the shared header only serves to highlight the fact that the graduate studies information has been formatted and organized as web pages while the undergraduate information is an online manual. The revised Department of English site, like the older version of the site, seems to dedicate more resources to the graduate student section of the site. When these two components of the site are read against each other, the undergraduate online manual looks and feels like a paper manual that has been scanned in and had a few links added to it. As with the older version of these sites, this difference impacts ethos in that the graduate studies segment of the overall department web presence demonstrates a technical expertise with web design missing from the

undergraduate manual and the main Purdue Department of English site which, like the undergraduate studies page, contains no content except a list of links.

As the following site analyses of sub-programs located within the Department of English at Purdue will demonstrate, the revised main departmental web site is perhaps the least technically innovative among the web sites affiliated with the Department of English at Purdue. This conspicuous difference impacts the ethos of the Department of English when these multiple sites are read against each other because it suggests to the audience that the Department may lack the time and/or technical resources required to publish a more complex web site, that the Department has a different vision for the goals of its web site than other affiliated programs, or that this Department suffers from an institutional and cultural fragmentation between department programs. The fact that these other programs, like Rhetoric and Composition, are all officially part of the Department of English yet evidence such widely varying technical expertise and design could contribute to perceptions of a fragmented department.

This perception of fragmentation impacts ethos in two somewhat contradictory ways. First, by enabling a variety of web design templates the department creates an ethos of an inclusive administrative unit that enables individual creativity and does not engage in overt centralized control over the web spaces published by all components of the department. But, secondly, this lack of centralized web standards connotes an accompanying lack of coherence, communication, and consistency across and between programs that suggests a lack of concern with the usability of the sites when usability is understood as reducing cognitive dissonance so that users can easily find the information

they need.⁶ The remaining sections of this chapter will explore the ways this lack of standardization shapes the ethos of the multiple programs affiliated with the department and of the department itself.

Professional Writing at Purdue <http://flansburgh.english.purdue.edu/pw> OR

<http://pw.english.purdue.edu/index.shtml>

The Professional Writing Program at Purdue (PW) completed a major site update and re-design in the time I have been compiling research. Because I was able to access both versions of the site, this analysis will first examine the older version and then analyze the new generation of the PW web site to understand how the new site layout and design impacts ethos.

Older Version Purdue Professional Writing Program

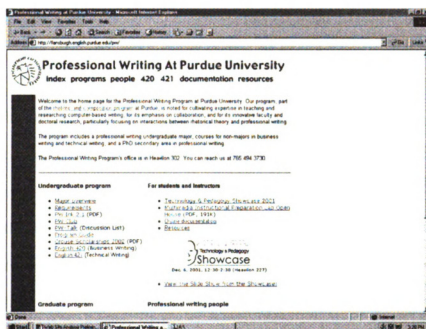
Both Professional Writing Program sites look completely different than the Department of English web site. The old site at first appears similar to the Department of English main site in that they are both heavily text based. But, a closer inspection reveals multiple significant differences between the Department of English site and the Professional Writing (PW) site. First of all, even this older version of the PW site (see Figure 4.6) demonstrates an expertise in web site design; the site is easy to use and follows clear organizational patterns. The design of the PW site is very important to

⁶ Cognitive dissonance refers to the ways that a confusing or non-standardized web site can cause users to expend intellectual energy just figuring out how to use the site instead of focusing their energies on reading and processing the information they seek. Non-standardized navigation increases cognitive dissonance because users have to re-learn the navigational pattern of each web site rather than applying lessons learned about how navigation works on one web site to the successful navigation of another site.

establishing ethos; because professional writers must utilize technology on the job, the PW site's demonstration of technical expertise overlaps with content expertise.

This older version of the PW site includes a friendly “welcome to our site” greeting. Whereas the older version of the Purdue English site put location and contact information first, the PW program lists this information at the end of the introductory

Figure 4.6 Purdue PW Main Page, Older Version



paragraph on the main page (Figure 4.6), choosing instead to foreground the qualities of the program in a short introduction to the program.⁷ This program overview is written in a persuasive tone:

Our program, part of the rhetoric and composition program at Purdue, is noted for cultivating expertise in teaching and researching computer-based writing, for its emphasis on collaboration, and for its innovative faculty

⁷ This lack of focus on geographical location would not be as noticeable if the site were not read in the context of the online knowledge network that includes the Purdue Department of English.

and doctoral research, particularly focusing on interactions between rhetorical theory and professional writing.

The site's focus on the program itself, rather than on its geographic location of the program office (like the Department of English at UT) increases perceptions of technical expertise of the program by presenting a program more comfortable with the web as a means of communication. This paragraph helps to contextualize information; by offering details that may assist readers in identifying key program strengths, the PW site frames the information presented online so that readers are paying attention to the program strengths from the very beginning.

The footer of this site contains more information than that of the English main page. It contains text-based links echoing links in the top menu bar underneath the title, a full URL, the date of last update, and, unlike the main English page, this site lists the name of the current web coordinator (Erin Karper). The director, David Blakesley, is also mentioned and there is a link to information on him. Just listing these names as email links creates a tone that invites readers to give feedback and, moreover, can contact a real person, not just a role. Although this information is only listed on the main page, not all site pages, it impacts perceptions of the online character of the program by establishing PW as a place that is open to communication through email or in person.⁸

As Figure 4.6 illustrates, the main menu of links underneath the title contains typical site information that any visitor to this site would understand (index, programs,

⁸ Remember, the main Department of English web site does not encourage email communication and instead directs people to the physical department office. As mentioned earlier, when email is such a commonly used communications technology, the lack of email capabilities on the Department of English web site creates the perception that the department is not technically literate enough to add the functionality or that it is not concerned with being responsive to those students who prefer to communicate using email.

people, resources) as well as links that only members of this community would understand (420, 421). Readers unfamiliar with academic web sites may not recognize these as links to courses. The link to “documentation” is similarly confusing for anyone who has not visited this site before. It is a familiar term, but it is used very differently in different contexts; documentation could be a technical manual, the html source code, documentation about the program, etc. In this Professional Writing Site, “documentation” refers to technical help and how-to documents collected by the program for the benefit of faculty, students, and staff, not documentation on this web site. The use of this terminology in the navigational menus positions site readers as members of the Purdue community who are already familiar with this context-specific usage. In this sense, the use of context-specific textual “code” like 420 and 421 functions as role-based navigation in that only current students or faculty would know what these links point to. Also, the use of context-specific text to describe where links lead (i.e. using 420 and 421 as link titles) impacts ethos by indirectly excluding non-members of the community.

If these links were listed under “current students” or “current faculty” (in a role-based navigational system) other readers would be excluded not because they do not know these terms, but because they are not members of these communities; it might seem more natural to visiting readers that they did not know what the links meant on a section of the site clearly intended for another audience. But by not associating these context-specific links with a particular audience, this version of the Professional Writing site implies that all readers should know what they mean. However, since it is easy to just click on the link and Figure out that it is a link to a specific course, this indirect exclusion does not completely exclude visiting users from understanding the site.

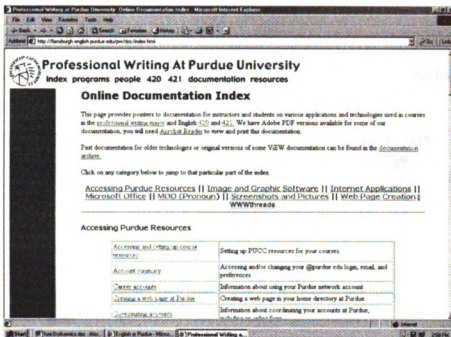
Expanding on the program description offered on the program's main screen, this version of the PW site presents five core strengths of the program in the undergraduate major overview page:

- Reader Awareness and Ethical Responsibility
- Computer-Based, Internetworked Writing
- Collaborative Interaction/Planning and Project Management
- Visual Writing
- Research

This section defines writing as being able to use software and hardware in an ethical manner to accurately, fairly and professionally present information using “drawing, page layout, and web authoring programs in conjunction with word processing programs.”

This definition of writing connects technology, society, and writing by drawing in ethics, visual literacy, and digital literacies required to use multiple software programs to author texts. The ethos established by this statement is one of a program which understands the crucial connections between technology, society, and the act of writing and which recognizes that software programs, while used as tools, must be used in an ethical manner to avoid undesirable consequences. This listing of five core strengths contributes to the perception of both content expertise and technical expertise and demonstrates the overlap between these two core components of ethos. In contrast to the Department of English undergraduate studies online manual, this PW undergraduate studies page does not simply direct users to the requirements for the degree; instead, the PW site draws the reader in and “sells” the program, conceivably to students who are still deciding upon a major.

Figure 4.7 Purdue PW Documentation Menu Older Version

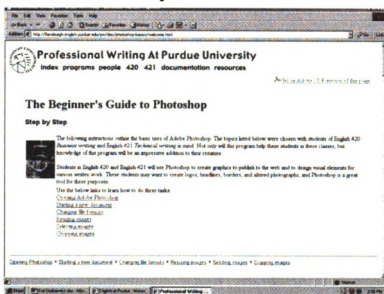


The PW documentation section of the site (Figure 4.7) is an extensive and well-organized array of links to Purdue resources on technology, many of them authored by members of the Professional Writing Program. Like the Critical Tools and Roadmap on the CWRL web site at UT, the PW technology resources demonstrate expertise and goodwill towards the audience in both the quality and pedagogical style of the resources. For example, the beginners guide to Photoshop (Figure 4.8) explains that “the following instructions outline the basic uses of Adobe Photoshop. The topics listed below were chosen with students of English 420 Business Writing and English 421 Technical Writing in mind. Not only will this program help these students in these classes, but knowledge of this program will be an impressive addition to their resumes.” These instructions explain the educational context for this online resource and carefully establish a character

that retains a teacherly concern for student learning and career success while subtly promoting the PW program.

Both the CWRL and PW online resources are easy to follow, clearly written, and helpful (see Figure 4.8). As with the CWRL online resources at UT, the Purdue PW

Figure 4.8 Purdue PW Sample Online Technical Documentation



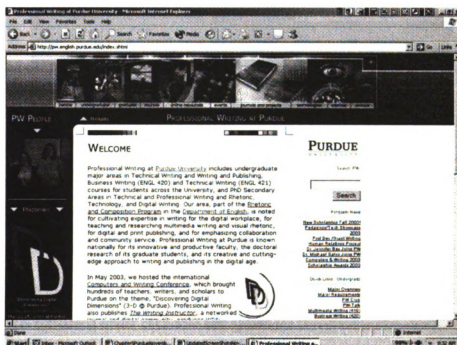
online technical documentation conveys an ethos based on dedicating considerable time and resources to develop technical aids and make them available free of charge not only to students, but to the general public. This act of goodwill towards the general public extends the teacherly character outside the boundaries of the Purdue campus and English classrooms. Although the Professional Writing program at Purdue establishes an ethos of a program dedicated to teaching the complex and varied technical and non-technical skills and competencies required to function as a professional/ technical writer in the workplace, and although the resources listed under “documentation” establish a level of

technical expertise, the text-based design of the older site somewhat undermines this type of ethos when read in comparison to the revised PW site.

Revised Purdue Professional Writing Program Web Site

The revised PW site, completed in fall of 2002, offers an updated GUI, a new role/ category-based navigation, and a more detailed program introduction that clearly positions the program within the Rhetoric and Composition program and the Department of English. As Figure 4.9 evidences, the new GUI contains more graphics, more colors, and photographs of people in the Professional Writing program.

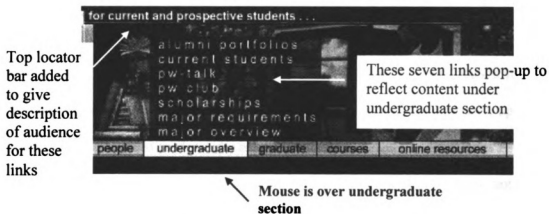
Figure 4.9 Purdue PW Revised Main Page



The main header bar of the updated PW site offers a visual representation of the Purdue Professional Writing program and uses rollover dynamic menus to provide one-click access to site contents. Users can select from the following main links: people,

undergraduate, graduate, courses, online resources, events, journals and projects, technologies, site map, and contact. When the mouse rolls over these different headers, the sub-pages pop up in a clickable box; at the same time, a new red-colored text box appears at the top of the header which gives a more complete label for each section. For example, when the user rolls her mouse over “online resources” the red text box at the top of the header explains that this section contains “resources for teachers... students...

Figure 4.10 Sample Dynamic Drop Down on PW Revised Site



and professional writers.” The menu that pops up lists the following options that she can then select from: software documentation, 420-421-business and technical writing, professional writing resources, and teacher resources (see Figure 4.10).

This technique of combining role-based navigation with dynamic rollover menus mediates the disadvantages of traditional role-based navigation by allowing users to see exactly what is contained under each role and access the information they want, regardless of what role it is in. But, at the same time, this technique offers the roles as contextual guidance for interpreting what the link titles mean and for making more informed guesses about the type of content behind each link. Although this technique still requires the inevitable assumptions made during the design process of what each role

“needs” (i.e. what links fit with what role), the PW site offers a consciously transparent view of these assumptions in presenting a preview of what is “behind” each role with the dynamic drop downs. Furthermore, this revised navigational strategy is more inclusive because it re-labels the somewhat confusing links to “420,” “421” and “documentation.” Now, these links are defined as “software documentation” and as “business and technical writing” courses. Any reader coming to this site can now understand what is included in these and any other link off this main menu.

By using categories (courses, online resources, people, journals and projects, technologies and events) in addition to user roles (undergraduate and graduate) as navigational aids in this header, the site establishes an image of a user-focused site that provides information in a clear and concise way to users and, simultaneously, opens up the content on the site to readers who are not necessarily current or prospective students or faculty. For example, the fact that online resources is listed as a category, not a sub-menu item under, say, graduate students, implies that any visitor to the site could benefit from this information.

The header graphic is not only a navigational aid but a visual representation of the program. There are excerpts that look like classical oil painting, modern art, and new digital artwork – the combination of which connotes an embrace of different styles of authoring and producing meaning, text, and images that correlate with digital publishing. Also, the fact that these different images all suggest a celebration of the ways that reading and writing can expand and frame perspectives reinforces the focus of the PW program on the acts of producing and interpreting texts and artifacts from different genres and media. The GUI also positions the program as a place that is simultaneously focused on

technology and people—it is less sterile and more eye-catching than the older version of the site.

The left hand frame (on Figure 4.9) contains two sections, “PW People” and “Rhizomes.” The “PW People” section displays continually updated photographs of people. The section on “Rhizomes,” immediately below the People pictures, contains links to the Computers and Writing Conference, *The Writing Instructor* journal, and the web site *Professional Writing Online*, as well as a text authored by Purdue faculty and used in several of the Professional Writing courses. The use of the term “rhizomes” immediately conjures up Deleuze and Guattari for members of the discipline.

Furthermore, unlike other terms that may be more unintelligible, the fact that the word “rhizomes” is commonly understood to be the root like structures of plants helps even unfamiliar readers to make the metaphorical connection between the term and the fact that it is used to indicate related links. In this way, the PW site exposes readers to relevant theoretical terminology used in the field and asserts a character that is conscious of the multiple audiences reading this site, concerned with educating not only enrolled students but site visitors, and knowledgeable about relevant theory in the discipline.

The GUI of the updated Professional Writing web site brings together the core ideas of interpretation and production of artifacts/ texts, people, technology, and theory. The revised program mission on this page reinforces these connections and builds a greater sense of disciplinary expertise. It states:

Our program, part of the Rhetoric and Composition Program in the Department of English, is noted for cultivating expertise in writing for the digital workplace, for teaching and researching multimedia writing and

visual rhetoric, and for emphasizing collaboration and community service.

The Program is known nationally for its innovative and productive faculty, the doctoral research of its graduate students, and its creative and cutting-edge approach to writing and publishing in the digital age.

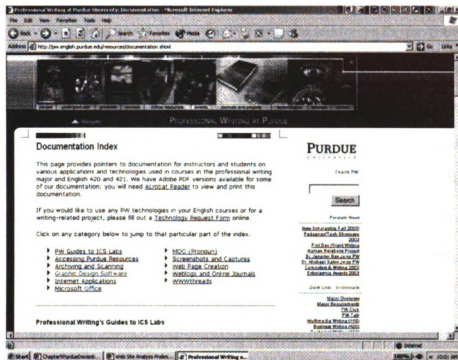
The earlier version of this statement focuses on “computer-based writing,” not “multimedia writing and visual rhetoric”; this updated version adds community service to collaboration and more explicitly calls attention to the program’s national reputation.

These modifications are significant in that they expand the scope of the program to include more than “computer-based writing” a term which has, over the years, come to mean a very specific sub-set of work focused on word processing, email, and hypertext as opposed to the newer, more inclusive and theory-based terminology of “multimedia writing and visual rhetoric.” This revised self-definition melds very well with the new online image of the site and works with site features like the GUI and navigation to position Professional Writing as a “creative and cutting edge” program working on developing the critical literacies required to author and interpret multimedia texts. Like the initial version of the PW site (and like most other sites in this chapter), the revised PW web site uses a collective first person voice that establishes a connection to the audience and posits a collective implied author more strongly than the use of third person would.

Even with these differences, both of these versions of the Professional Writing site talk a great deal about technology and about the relationship between technology and

writing—presenting it as an object of study for students as well as a communication tool and research device. Technology is understood to be part of the organizational

Figure 4.11 Revised PW Web Site Documentation Index



framework within which professional writers work and an essential aspect of literacy. As such, technology is not a mere tool, nor is it something completely separate from the “real” work of learning to write. The revised PW site, as mentioned earlier in the discussion of the header, continues to offer online software documentation and help resources online. This documentation section is easier to use than the older version because technical resources have been subdivided both by topic and by user group (see Figure 4.11). As with the older version, the depth and breadth of technical documentation on software, web publishing, hardware, sample syllabi, and internet applications enhances perceptions of a teacherly character dedicated to providing educational resources to the Purdue community and the general public. Both by talking

about the relationship between technology and writing and by demonstrating a facility with web publication the updated PW site presents a more convincing ethos by establishing that the program can produce as well as critique multimedia professional writing artifacts like a public web site.

The new site design of the Purdue PW web site reinforces the program assertion that it cultivates “expertise in writing for the digital workplace, for teaching and researching multimedia writing and visual rhetoric” and that its graduates take a “creative and cutting-edge approach to writing and publishing in the digital age.” By establishing a more expansive context and by improving site design, the new Professional Writing website suggests a more relevant program ethos because the new site content and design demonstrates a coherence and design that outshines many of the other sites in the Purdue Rhetoric and Composition knowledge network. In summary, this revised PW web site shapes an appropriate ethos more effectively than the older version because it more forcefully combines technical expertise with web design, a “teacherly” goodwill towards the audience, and subject matter expertise. On the old site, perceptions of online content expertise were undermined by the lack of professional (or simply outdated) web site design. Here, on the revised site, the updated GUI reinforces program assertions and establishes expertise in professional web site design, an essential component of the critical digital literacy the program purports to teach.

Rhetoric and Composition (R&C) at Purdue

Old site: <http://flansburgh.english.purdue.edu/rc/>; new site <http://rc.english.purdue.edu/>

Like the Professional Writing program, the Purdue Rhetoric and Composition (R&C) program has revised its site in the time that I have been completing this project. However, as the following analysis shows, the revision of the R&C web site is less extensive than the Professional Writing site redesign. Whereas the Professional Writing site developed a new navigational structure, new GUI, and a fair amount of new or revised content, the R&C program (like the Purdue Department of English) places a new

Figure 4.12 Older Version Purdue R&C Main Page



GUI “wrapper” or frame around the old site and does not change content or navigation in significant ways.

Older Version Purdue Rhetoric and Composition (R&C) Web Site

The older version of the main R&C page includes both the Purdue University logo (the University seal) and a picture of the Purdue bell tower. As in the use of the tower picture on the old Department of English graduate program web site (Figure 4.2), the use of the Purdue bell tower creates a graphical link to the history and geographical

location of Purdue at the same time that it connotes the long tradition of university education. The photo is next to text that welcomes the visitor to the Rhetoric and Composition graduate program and then gives contact information for Patricia Sullivan, Director of the Rhetoric and Composition graduate program. The opening text was changed in the course of my research. At first the paragraph read: “Welcome to Purdue’s Rhetoric and Composition Graduate Program web site. Though this site is currently under construction, there are many completed pages within the site that will help orient you to our program. Please use the links at the bottom of the page to look around.” Then, the updated, complete version reads: “Welcome to Purdue’s Rhetoric and Composition Graduate Program web site. We invite you to use the links below to look around.” Both of these openings establish a friendly tone but do not provide much information. This introductory paragraph does not give readers the same kind of detailed overview about program strengths that the PW main page does nor does it offer textual links to other programs or the Department of English.

This main R&C page functions much like the Department of English online manual—it is a list of links with no “content” per se framing these links. This main page presents little more than a friendly voice and the name of the graduate director, Patricia Sullivan. By positioning the picture of the academic building next to the name of the graduate director, the site implies that studying with Dr. Sullivan is one way to enter this beautiful tower of academia and also equates Dr. Sullivan’s reputation in the field and within Purdue with an ivory tower. Equating Dr. Sullivan with an ivory tower is one way of suggesting her strong professional reputation and position as a leader in the field of Composition and Rhetoric. Links below the photograph and contact information for Dr.

Sullivan include program description, curriculum, Purdue R&C community, teaching opportunities, funding, professional resources, and r/c notes (a program newsletter). These links shape an ethos focused on marketing the program to potential graduate students. Potential graduate students would most likely be interested in teaching opportunities, funding, and the larger R&C community. There is a tiny link for comments & questions at the bottom that at first glance is not clearly a clickable link because it is not underlined as most links are. Convention dictates that if you click on this you can submit comments, which is true. The lack of clear link demarcation (i.e. underlining) could serve to discourage non-experienced web users from submitting comments or questions.

Due to the arrangement of the site and relative lack of contextualizing content, the ethos of this older version of the site relies heavily on Dr. Sullivan's reputation in the field. Rather than the typical form of ethos by affiliation in which an individual seeks validation in demonstrating affiliation with a larger institution, here the ethos by affiliation works in reverse. The program seeks validation through affiliation with a well-known name in the field. The site foregrounds physical location by listing the "snail" mail address for the program as it would appear on a letter sent to Dr. Sullivan but also allows for email if a reader clicks on her name. This aspect of the R&C site balances between the older version of the Purdue Department of English web site's use of the web site to direct users to the departmental office and the creation of a purely virtual space that is seemingly not connected to a geographic location. A total lack of connection to a bricks and mortar institution could undermine ethos. For example, Fogg's 2002 study found that listing the organization's physical address was ranked second in importance

only to prior positive experience with the site in predicting credibility; institutional web sites selling a service (like universities) need to verify their reliability and quality by demonstrating connections to geographical location (Stanford-Makovsky Study, 10).

The Program Description page (Figure 4.13) opens with a paragraph explaining

Figure 4.13 Older Version R&C Web Site Program Description Content Page



that the R&C program focuses on the study of “written discourse” in a variety of academic and non-academic settings. This paragraph also mentions that graduates work not only in academia but as editors and professional and technical writers/managers. The page is written in first person plural, but does not directly address students, even though the content is seemingly focused on potential graduate students. The rest of the page lists facts about how many people are in the program, how many faculty members there are in English, how many total graduate students in English, what classes need to be taken to receive a graduate degree in Rhetoric and Composition, other degree requirements, and “Interdisciplinary Studies in Composition,” a bi-annual “lecture/discussion series.” At the bottom of the page is a notice stating that “Purdue requires an online application” but

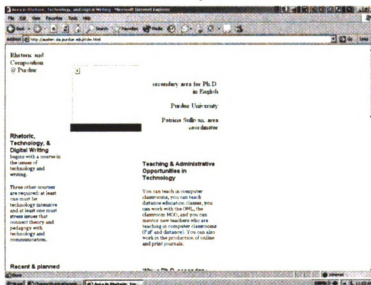
there is no link offered to bring students to this online application. Instead, students are given someone to contact with questions about the online application. The lack of a link to the online application diminishes usability—including a link would both streamline prospective students' efforts to apply and would minimize questions about where to find this online application.

Content pages (like the Program Description page) on this old R&C web site use a left side navigational bar, including links to Program Description, Curriculum, R&C Community (with sub-links to faculty, graduates, students, and gallery of photos showing faculty relaxing and working together), Teaching Opportunities, Funding, Professional Resources, R/C Notes. Notice that these links are similar to but not exactly the same as the links from the main page; on the main page R&C Community is called Purdue R&C Community. The lack of consistency in these menus could create some navigational confusion because users cannot access curriculum from the content pages and need to go back to the main menu and then select the link to curriculum to find course lists. Furthermore, the graphic design of the links is a bit odd, the selected link (the page the reader is on) is grayed out and the others remain the gold/brown color. This color strategy is counter-intuitive because the grayed out link typically means something that is not available. Finally, at the bottom of the Program Description page and all other content pages (but not on the main page) are four graphical links to Rhetoric & Composition Home, Department of English, Purdue University, and Living in Lafayette—arranged left to right across the bottom of the screen. This navigational strategy shapes an ethos that is attentive to user needs but that may be constrained by lack of time and available resources. This possibility is suggested by the fact that Dr. Sullivan

is not only the lead faculty for the R&C but is also listed on all the program sub-sites as the main contact person. This could indicate that she is building all these web sites herself.⁹

As will be clarified in subsequent discussions of faculty web pages (in part B of this chapter), it is almost as if it is Patricia Sullivan's voice speaking on this web site. When the R&C program web site is read in conjunction with Sullivan's individual and course web sites, the similarities between the two sites are obvious. Both her individual

Figure 4.14 Purdue R&C Concentration in Rhetoric, Technology, and Digital Literacy



web site and the program web site use the same template, both are friendly and not overly formal in tone, both are focused on “traditional” composition courses but offer connections to other, secondary areas housed within the Department of English.

⁹ As Chapter Two details, my methodology of rhetorical analysis does not enable in-depth discussion of production issues shaping the design and development of these web sites. However, I do think it is important to recognize the constraints under which faculty and administrators operate and read with an understanding of these potential constraints.

Unlike the PW site, this R&C site does not talk about or link to any technology resources except to list Writing, Technology, and Digital Literacy as a possible concentration in rhetoric (on the program description page) and to list several courses in this area. A link available to the concentration in Writing, Technology, and Digital Literacy brings readers to another site (see Figure 4.14) that seems to be under construction. For example, the graphic on this page has been broken for the entire time I have been conducting research. However, this page dedicated to explaining the Concentration in Rhetoric, Technology, and Digital Literacy (Figure 4.14) is rhetorically significant in that it directly addresses graduate students as a specific audience. The page reads: “You can teach in computer classrooms, you can teach distance education courses, you can work with the OWL . . . you can also work in the production of online and print journals.”¹⁰ The tone is similar to that on the main R&C page in that it blends a teacherly approachability with carefully selected details which foreground the concentration’s strengths for potential graduate students.

The content page on teaching opportunities connected to the R&C main site discusses the availability of computer networked classrooms and funding opportunities in distance education, the online Writing Center, and an online newsletter. Furthermore, the R&C site publishes a list of dissertations completed by graduates, which presents both content expertise and a blend of scholarly and teacherly character. Highlighting these completed dissertations demonstrates a teacherly commitment to helping graduates complete their advanced degrees, and the variety of topics demonstrates a scholarly expertise for both the program faculty and these graduate students. The multiple

¹⁰ Remember that although the Purdue OWL is not included in this project, it is one of the leading online Writing Centers in the United States.

technology-focused dissertations also convey a technical expertise in digital rhetoric in an indirect manner. However, the relative lack of direct discussion of technology resources, support, and research coupled with an assertion that technical literacy is desirable for funding and the existence of a concentration in Rhetoric, Technology, and Digital Writing sends a mixed message to readers. Technology and the web design skills that can help demonstrate a proficiency in digital literacy seem to be a focus of the program based on the list of dissertation topics and the Concentration in Rhetoric, Technology and Digital Literacy. However, this focus is stated indirectly by the R&C web site, not directly as on the PW page. The PW site demonstrates technical literacy in the design of the site and which more directly presents the PW program's expertise in working with web texts and theories of digital rhetoric.

Rather than build an ethos focused on the demonstration and discussion of expertise in digital writing and publication, the R&C web site (Figures 4.12 and 4.13) and the linked page on the Concentration in Rhetoric, Technology, and Digital Literacy (Figure 4.14) establish an ethos of a friendly, welcoming community populated by knowledgeable faculty. This approach to ethos is different than focusing on scholarly achievement alone. An ethos more singularly focused on scholarship would list dissertations completed by graduates as this site does, but it might not include an online scrapbook of photos from conferences showing colleagues sharing ideas and having fun (like that present under the R&C Community link). The links to the Lafayette area reinforce this ethos focused on community relationships and community building. Overall, the older version of the R&C web site creates an ethos of a friendly, welcoming program that may not have the resources required to publish more complex or detailed

web sites. As the initial version of the “Welcome” message on the main R&C web page indicates, this older version seems to be the first R&C program web site published (i.e. in the reference to the site being under construction) which may explain the possible relative lack of resources for web design.

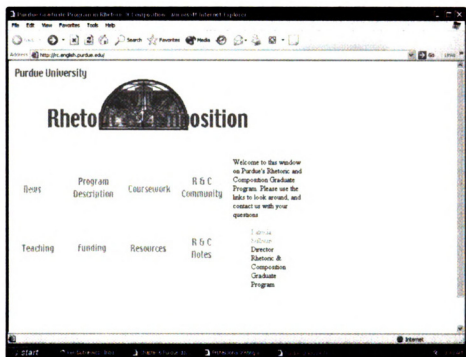
Revised Version Purdue Rhetoric and Composition Web Site

On the revised R&C site, the updated GUI removes the bell tower motif and instead offers a window looking out from inside a building on Purdue’s campus towards another building on campus. The accompanying text reads “Welcome to this window on Purdue’s Rhetoric and Composition Graduate Program. Please use the links to look around and contact us with your questions.” This opening text anchors readers’ interpretations of the graphical motif of the window; the window is read as a consciously selected metaphor for the web site as window on the program. It also directly addresses users and welcomes them into the web site by suggesting that they “look around.”¹¹ The graphical motif also connotes that the program itself is a window or way of looking at the larger university community since the reader is positioned within the R&C site looking out at the rest of the Purdue campus. This window imagery and the accompanying text establishes an ethos of a friendly place that can offer access to the university and that is comfortable using technology to communicate. Rather than portraying an outside picture of only the top of the ivory tower of academia, this new image positions the reader inside the building, inside the institution itself, which suggests a greater inclusiveness of

¹¹ This updated opening text is very similar to the text on the older version of the site but adds the description of the R&C web sites as a “window” on the program and also adds the concluding “contact us with your questions.”

character.¹² It is as if the R&C program has already made the reader part of the R&C community.

Figure 4.15 Purdue R&C Web Page Revised Version

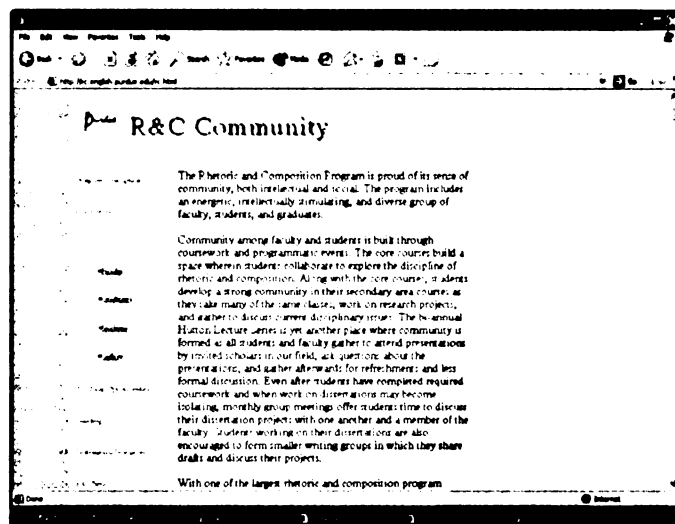


The new GUI retains the same links to program description, R&C community, teaching, funding, resources, and r/c notes, but the link to curriculum is now called coursework and a new link titled “News” has been added. The change in title from curriculum to coursework implies an increased informality that may be more approachable to a student audience. The site also lists Patricia Sullivan’s name right under the introductory paragraph and next to the links, continuing the ethos by affiliation trend established on the older site. The site establishes ethos by affiliation with the link

¹² I use the term inclusive in the same way as Enos and Borrowman use the term to explain how a web text can position an ethos of goodwill. On this site, the reader is positioned as a member of the community, not outside looking up at a tower, but inside looking out a window.

to Purdue University in the top left corner. In addition, by making this reference to Sullivan on the main page, the site builds ethos based on Patricia Sullivan as administrative head and recognized leader in the discipline.

Figure 4.16 Purdue R& C Revised Site Sample Content Page



Site content is the same as that on the older version, with the exception of the modified GUI, as Figure 4.16 illustrates. The header has been changed to use a different font and to present a unique Purdue “logo” that looks like a spiral on a yellow background. The site background is white lined with light yellow, which (to me) hinders readability slightly. The spiral motif is repeated at the bottom of the page with the footer links (which are the same as those on the older version). This updated GUI is actually more difficult to read on screen than the old version due to the colors and lines. As in the older version, the Purdue logo is not clickable, but here the “logo” is not immediately recognizable as affiliated with Purdue. Replacing the Purdue seal with the spiral and the rather difficult to read lettering somewhat disconnects the R&C program from the rest of the university, at least graphically.

The end result of the updated GUI is that the ethos of the site remains unchanged to most readers. This new GUI does not improve navigation or usability and, in some instances reduces usability. Read out of context of the other sites in the Purdue knowledge network, the R&C site offers relevant information in a relatively easy to navigate architecture. When read in the context of the revised Professional Writing Program site, the navigation of the site does not offer readers the kind of detailed information or the one-click access to site contents that the Professional Writing site does. In comparison, the R&C web site is decidedly less technically sophisticated than the newly revised PW site or the revised CWRL site at UT. The ethos of the R&C program site is impacted by the PW web site in that the R&C web site builds an ethos primarily through presenting a welcoming and academically successful community established through face-to-face interactions (i.e. the scrapbooks of photos from dinners at CCCC's) and the documented evidence of the R&C program's commitment to helping graduate student complete the dissertation. (i.e. the lists of previously completed dissertations) rather than on technical expertise evidenced by web design. The R&C site also establishes content expertise through foregrounding Patricia Sullivan's affiliation with the program.

Introductory Composition at Purdue Web Site (previously called the Purdue Introductory Writing Program)

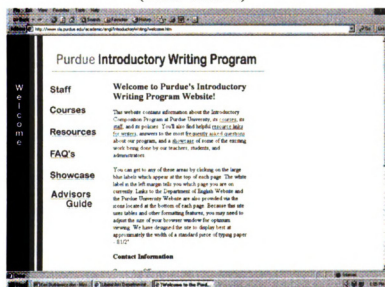
old site: <http://www.sla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/IntroductoryWriting/welcome.htm>

new site: <http://www.sla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/ICaP/home.html>

Like many other sites at Purdue, the Introductory Writing Program has undergone a site revision in the time I have been completing my research. However, the site update for this program is a bit different in that it also involves a renaming of the Introductory Writing Program to Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICaP). This renaming could suggest that the site was revised as part of a larger reorganization of the Introductory Writing Program, a component of the Department of English focused on undergraduate writing instruction.

Older Version Purdue Introductory Writing Program Web Site (IWP)

Figure 4.17 Purdue Introductory Writing Program Web Site (Older Version)



The Purdue Introductory Writing Program (IWP) site is a clear and straightforward site (see Figure 4.17). The navigational options on the left navigational menu on the main page include: courses, resources, FAQs, showcase, and advisor's guide. The Advisor's Guide, accessible from the left side menu, is not mentioned in the

introductory text (as are the other menu links, which gives the impression that the site itself is targeted towards students while the link to the advisors guide was put up to help advisors understand the introductory writing program. The textual links embedded in the first paragraph work to contextualize the links on the left side menu. For example, the link titled “Resources” is defined as “helpful resource links for writers.” This explanation of links accomplishes what the PW site does with dynamic drop downs—it gives readers an increased ability to predict the content under each link.

This introductory writing program site is the only site among the Purdue sites that I analyze that gives navigational assistance in a direct address to the audience on the main page. After listing the main components of the site (courses, staff, policies, resources, FAQs, and showcase) the text on this welcome page explains that

You can get to any of these areas by clicking on the large blue labels which appear at the top of each page. The white label in the left margin tells you which page you are on currently. Links to the Department of English Website and the Purdue University Website are also provided via the icons located at the bottom of each page.

This overview establishes a teacherly character. Interestingly, while the program itself is focused on providing undergraduate writing instruction, the opening text is written for a wider audience, not just undergraduate students. For example, the first paragraph on the opening page (Figure 4.17) states,

You’ll find helpful resource links for writers, answers to the most frequently asked questions about our program, and a showcase of some of the exciting work being done by our teachers, students, and administrators.

The “you” in this sentence is not exclusively undergraduate students since the text refers to “our teachers, students, and administrators.” Instead, the directly addressed audience (you) could be anyone—a parent, a prospective student, a composition teacher looking for resources, or a current student.¹³ Also, this sentence establishes an inclusive community comprised of teachers, students and administrators. By placing these three groups together, the IWP site somewhat levels the differences between the type of work being done by these three different groups of people and instead focuses on the fact that all these groups are working on interesting projects. The text focuses on the diverse community involved in the IWP.

Also, by providing resource links for all writers, not just student writers, the IWP program extends the boundaries of its community to include all writers and establishes goodwill by demonstrating a commitment to develop resources and provide them for free to those outside the program (as do the resources on the PW site). However, the quantity of resources offered by this page is minimal compared to the resources offered by the PW site. Under contact information the site lists campus address, director, assistant director, and web page coordinator; this feature allows users to make contact with individuals while advertising the inclusive character and technical expertise of the program.

At the bottom of the page is a link to the Computers and Composition site (<http://flansburgh.english.purdue.edu/candc/candc.htm>) and a graphical link to the Department of English site. This Computers and Composition (C&C) site uses a

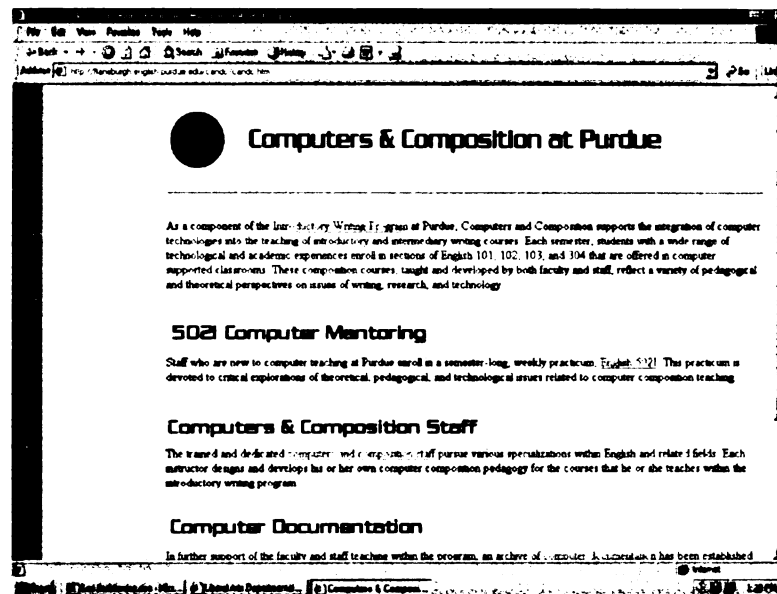
¹³ However, on a practical level the audience for this site is most likely limited to educational professionals and students who come to the Purdue web site looking for information on composition instruction.

“techie” looking font which is difficult to read (see Figure 4.18). The C&C site lacks the sidebar navigation found on the Introductory Writing Program site and instead offers only embedded links. The Computers and Composition site first defines itself with the following text:

As a component of the Introductory Writing Program at Purdue,
Computers and Composition supports the integration of computer
technologies into the teaching of introductory and intermediary writing
courses.

This description includes a recognition of diversity in student technical literacy and in

Figure 4.18 Computers and Composition Site Linked to IWP



instructor “pedagogical and theoretical perspectives” about using computers in the composition classroom.

The lack of links to and from any programs except the introductory composition program may suggest that the Computers and Composition component is not a highly valued contribution at Purdue, at least not in 2000 when the site was last updated. In this specific instance of the Computers and Composition site, ethos is undermined not by

dire

wh

any

abs

im

on

th

of

IV

as

pr

in

h

s

a

li

m

E

c

direct connection to other sites but by lack of connection. The astute reader may wonder why this site, if it really does offer interesting and valuable information, is not listed on any other web sites in the Rhetoric and Composition knowledge network at Purdue. The absence of links from other programs to this site discredits this program because it implies that peers do not value the web site enough to link to it.

However, the C&C site is important to the ethos of the IWP site because it is the only direct reference to technology on the site. The fact that technology is listed only in this sub-link and that this C&C page is outdated and difficult to use suggests that the use of technology as a resource for undergraduate student writers is not a priority for the IWP. The ethos of the IWP is affected by this lack of reference to technology because, as with the Purdue R&C web sites, technology literacy is an implied requirement, yet the program web site does not present a program focused on providing technical resources or information about web access on its web site.

Introductory Composition at Purdue (revised version)

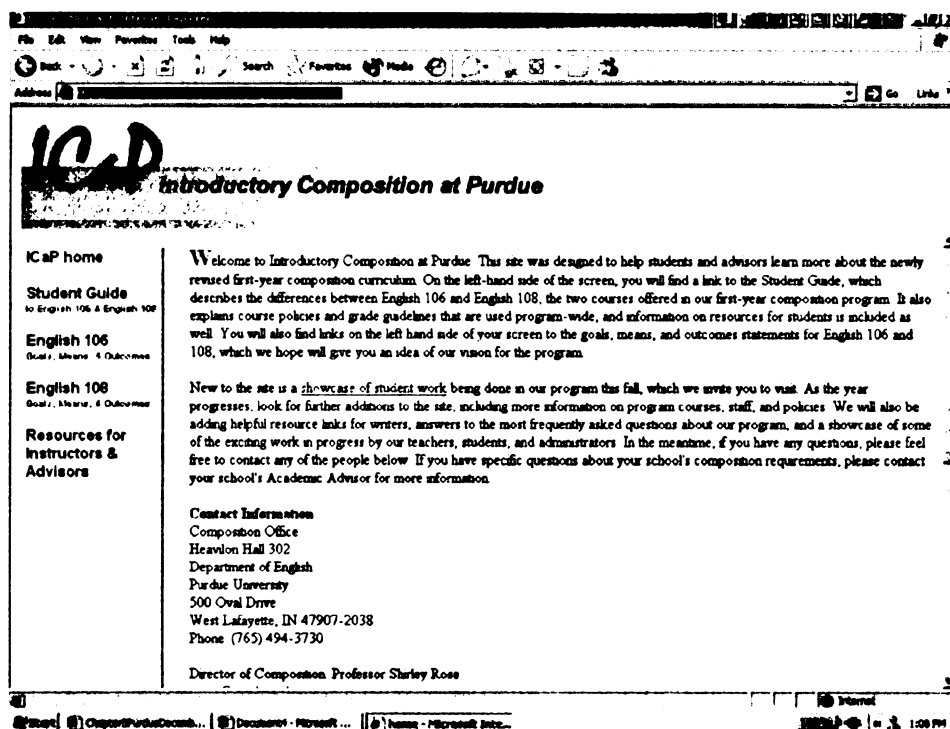
The revised IWP site is renamed the Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICaP) site to reflect a name change for the program itself. This revised site applies a new GUI as Figure 4.19 shows. The main site retains the same basic navigational structure with links on the left, a header, and text on the right side; however, the links have been modified slightly. The new site links to: ICaP home, Student Guide, English 106, English 108, and Resources for Instructors and Advisors. For each of the links to English courses (106, 108) the link is described as including “goals, means, and outcomes.”

However, the change in title and focus from Resources for Writers to Resources for Instructors and Advisors hints that the new ICaP site is targeted more clearly at an

audience within the Purdue community. The first paragraph on this page reads: “This site was designed to help students and advisors learn more about the newly revised first year curriculum.” Then, the second paragraph explains that as the year progresses “we will also be adding helpful resource links for writers, answers to the most frequently asked questions about our program, and a showcase of some of the exciting work in our program by our teachers, students, and administrators.” These sentences clarify that this site was, in fact, published as an educational tool for members of the Purdue community and also explains that the site revision is ongoing. This explanation may mitigate any audience questions regarding the disappearance of these pages that used to exist on the

older version of the web site (resources, showcase, FAQs) but that are missing from the updated site.

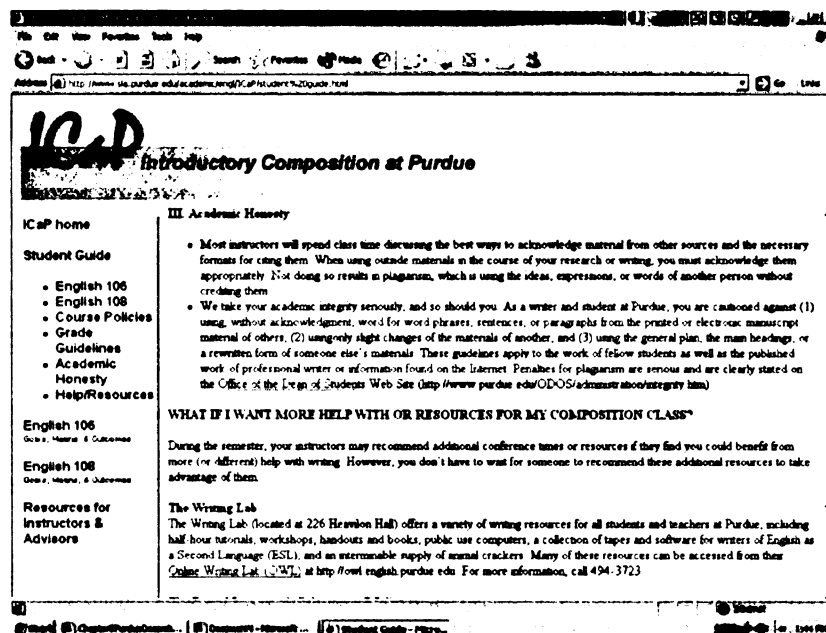
Figure 4.19 Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICaP) Revised Version



Content pages replicate the navigational pattern, with the exception of the Resources for Instructors and Advisors (see Figure 4.21). The navigational menu on the left side dynamically expands as users navigate to different content pages. For example, as the online Student Guide (Figure 4.20) illustrates, users viewing the page on English 106 see links to goals, means, and outcomes indented under the main link to English 106. Users can click on these sub-links to jump to the relevant space on the long scrolling page. Like the main Department of English online undergraduate information, this course information is text-based and reads like an online manual. There are no embedded links or graphics, just text. Other content pages, notably the “Student Guide” and the

main page still retain the print-based formatting, but include textual links to places like the Writing Center and Adaptive Programs office as well as samples of student work (see Figure 4.20).

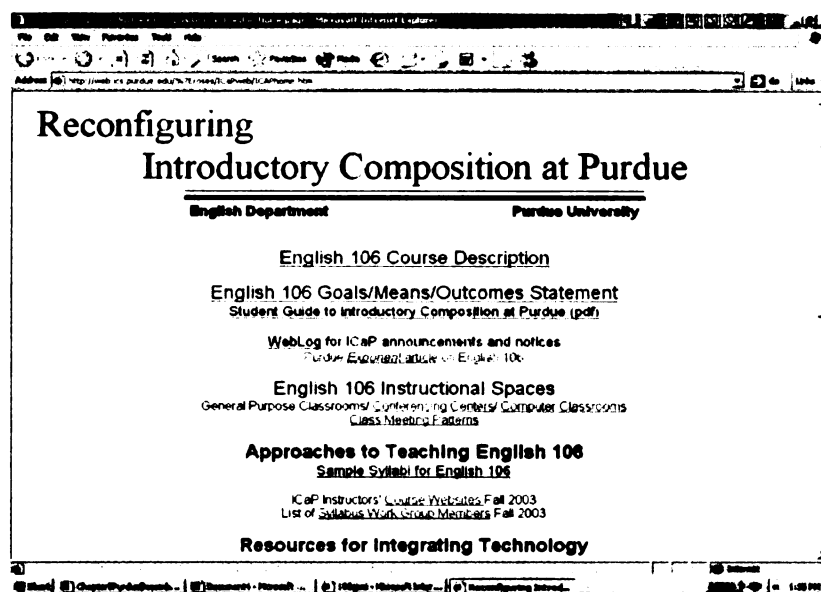
Figure 4.20 ICaP Sample Page from Student Guide Illustrating Textual Links



The Resources for Instructors and Advisors page is not displayed in the common GUI and is a purely text-based site listing multiple types of resources in a seemingly random order. Unlike the other content pages, this resources page opens up in a new window so that users can still see the ICaP site in the background. This difference in presentation and the fact that the page opens up in a separate window reinforces the title of the link by suggesting that while most content on the pages collated under the new GUI is targeted at students, this page is focused on instructors and advisors. So, while the rest of the site is “public” in the sense of being written for an audience outside the teaching and administration of the program, this site is a more internal site used to share

information more informally about the apparent changes in the teaching and implementation of freshman writing at Purdue. But even though the lack of consistency and relative disorganization of the site can be understood in light of this different audience, its impact on ethos still influences reader perceptions of the rest of the site

Figure 4.21 ICaP Instructor and Advisor Resources



This site reinforces user perceptions about the “teacherly” character of the ICaP program because this site demonstrates that the program is trying to distribute information to help all instructors and advisors succeed in managing the program’s transition. The site looks and feels like an informal bulletin board of shared documents used by a team working to together on a project, namely the reconfiguring of the introductory composition at Purdue (as the title indicates); the site even includes a link to the “WebLog for ICaP announcements and notices.” This page also includes resources for integrating technology. These resources were missing from the earlier site, which included an advisor’s manual about course requirements and registration, and online

resources for writers, but no actual teaching information. So although this site seems at first glance to reveal a lack of technical expertise in consistently applying the revised GUI, upon closer examination this resources page enhances perceptions of a teacherly, inclusive character based on a desire to share information and resources with students as well as with faculty and advisors. The fact that designers built the link to this page to pop up in a new window indicates awareness of the lack of navigational options on this page because by displaying this page in a pop-up users can still see the ICaP site in the background and easily return.

Part B

Ethos in the Purdue Knowledge Network: Reading Faculty Sites

This section of my analysis reads sites within the Purdue knowledge network against each other, trying to understand the extent to which and methods by which the digital context of the knowledge network enhances or undermines the ethos established by each site individually. By reading these individual sites against one another, I discuss the ways that ethos is impacted by the similarities and differences between sites and by the very act of positioning a site within a knowledge network. Specifically, I examine the construction and definition of a knowledge network at Purdue, compare and contrast representations of technology on these sites with those at UT, and explore the ways that character and expertise are used to establish ethos in the Purdue knowledge network.

Faculty Web Sites at Purdue

In the analysis of faculty web sites that follows, I first examine the template-driven sites on the updated Department of English web site and then look at two representative faculty web sites (published by Patricia Sullivan and David Blakesley) that do not adhere to this template. My readings of the template-driven sites and the index page that accompanies these templated sites focuses on analyzing how this presentation of faculty impacts the ethos of the Department of English and affiliated programs as well as how these individual faculty templates construct an ethos for the faculty they represent. I hope this analysis will help increase understandings of the ways faculty pages that are directly affiliated with specific programs impact the ethos of these programs and leverage the ethos created by the program web sites to build ethos on their individual site.

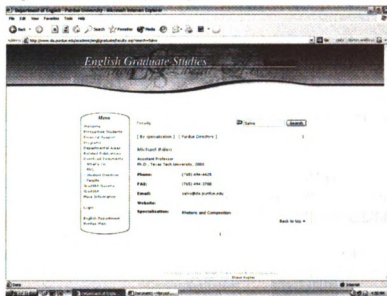
David Blakesley's site was selected because he is affiliated with the Professional Writing program, and I wanted to see if his web site displayed the same convincing ethos of a program that understands the theoretical implications of technology on writing and that can demonstrate a technical literacy with the types of hands-on technical skills required in a modern, web-enabled workspace. I chose to focus on Patricia Sullivan's site because, as explained earlier, the ethos of the R&C web site is so closely elided with Dr. Sullivan's professional reputation. I also wanted look for further rhetorical connections between the design, content, and navigation on Sullivan's home page and on the R&C pages in order to better understand the extent to which the ethos of the R&C site overlaps with Sullivan's personal ethos, as presented online. My readings of these faculty sites replicate the overall process used in this chapter—first I analyze the ethos of

links to faculty names, this page is a scrollable compilation of multiple faculty profiles, listed alphabetically. To locate other faculty, readers can use the drop down menus (see Figure 4.22).

The faculty profiles page is an index page using drop down menus to help users sort faculty by concentration (see Figure 4.22). Users can also scroll down the page to see all faculty listed in alphabetical order. There are some problems with the navigation on these faculty index pages; some of the links are misdirected or non-functioning (for example, the link to access Shirley Rose's faculty profile from the dynamic drop down menu takes the user to Minrose Gwin's information instead). These kinds of errors impact perceptions of ethos because they could be interpreted as a relative lack of regard for the usability of the site or a lack of attention to detail. A reader coming looking for information on Shirley Rose will not be able to find it on this site. But, overall, this faculty index is easy to use and helps the reader locate specific faculty members as well as understand the different concentrations into which faculty are grouped.

Each faculty's space on this index is not an individual web page per se; instead, each of these faculty "pages" is an online profile within a larger faculty directory that allows users to scroll down and see information about several faculty members on any one web page. Like the template-driven web sites examined at UT, these faculty profiles contain standard headers and space for a graphic that may or may not be used by faculty. However, while each faculty member seemingly has the same templated space assigned to him or her, individuals' use of this space varies. As Figure 4.23 illustrates, some faculty do not provide a photograph and list only publications and degrees while others (see Figure 4.24) include photos and more extensive professional information. There is

**Figure 4.23 Michael Salvo's Templated Web Site
Sample Purdue Faculty Template with Minimal Information**

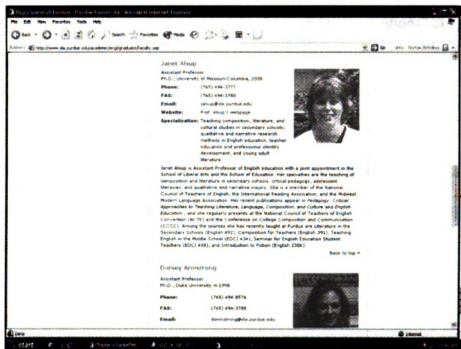


also a space on these templates for a link to more complete web site or web site published outside the template. Faculty with links to this alternate web presence all present a unique GUI and content—there seems to be no template for these more complete web sites, as the following analysis of Blakesley and Sullivan's site will illustrate.

These faculty index pages impact ethos of the department and faculty. By allowing for individual faculty to complete as much or as little of the online content provided by the template (i.e. to include simply a phone number, fax, email and title, as Michael Salvo does in Figure 4.23, or to include a more detailed explanation of specialization, a photograph, degree information and the like, as Janet Alsop does in Figure 4.24 and as Thomas Adler does in Figure 4.22) these department templates push some of the responsibility for establishing ethos to the faculty. Salvo's page (Figure 4.23) does not use the web to establish a detailed self-portrait and instead focuses

primarily on providing contact information. His site uses the template primarily as an online directory for listing contact information. The lack of any textual content leaves the reader in a vacuum—users do not get a clear sense of Salvo’s character, expertise, focus, and the like and instead are left to read the absences revealed by implicit comparisons to other sites. When compared to Adler’s entry on the faculty index (Figure 4.22) and, to lesser extent, to Janet Alsop’s (Figure 4.24) Salvo’s ethos is less

**Figure 4.24 Janet Alsop’s Templated Web Site
Sample Purdue Faculty Template with Photograph**



approachable because the lack of information could create the appearance of a more stand-offish character.¹⁴

The content and structure of these templates also impacts the ethos of the Department of English overall. First of all, the fact that these templates are included in

¹⁴ It is important to note, however, that it is not clear whether the faculty wrote and published their own profiles in this faculty directory or whether they were composed by a third party.

the graduate studies GUI and not the main Department of English GUI shapes a departmental character focused on graduate work or that assumes undergraduates will not be using the web site to locate and contact faculty. Secondly, the prioritizing of contact information shapes a character focused on usability, convenience and establishing personal connections. The inclusion of an email and web site link presents the department as fairly tech savvy, although many faculty choose not to utilize the link to a more complete web site. Unlike the templates for faculty at UT, publications are not highlighted in the Purdue Department of English template. Publication information is included for many faculty in the larger text box beneath “specializations” but publications do not have their own header. This difference in focus continues the trend of Purdue establishing a more teacherly ethos to build community while UT relies more upon a scholarly ethos to build credibility.

Establishing the implied author or speaker of a web site is important to conveying an ethos. Horton and Lynch explain that one component of usable web design is to clearly establish the speaker on the site. They write:

Who is speaking? This question is so basic, and the information is so often taken for granted that Web authors often overlook the most fundamental piece of information a reader needs to assess the provenance of a document: who is saying this to me? Whether the page is from an individual author or an institution, always tell your reader who created the Web page. (Horton and Lynch accessed online <http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/interface/interface.html> interface design introduction).

On the program and department sites at Purdue, the speaker is clearly positioned as the collective voice of the program or departmental administrators and faculty. Whether or not all faculty and staff were actually included in site authoring is another question, but the sites imply this collective speaker quite clearly through use of graphics and collective first person. But here, on the faculty index web site the speaker is not always clear.

Are these sites the faculty members “speaking” to the audience online or are they information compiled and delivered by a third party? The use of third person suggests that the sites were authored and are being delivered by someone other than the faculty member who is the content or subject of the web site. This confusion around the speaker may help to explain why the template driven faculty web sites at Purdue and at UT impact the ethos not only of the faculty member but of the department or program itself. The question of the implied speaker is important to understanding ethos because the ethos being established online (if in fact the speaker is not the same as the faculty member being presented) may well be the ethos of the speaker and not the faculty member. So, the ethos of these templated sites is simultaneously the ethos of the speaker (i.e. the department that created the templates) and the faculty member (i.e. the subject being represented). This idea will be explored more in the concluding chapter.

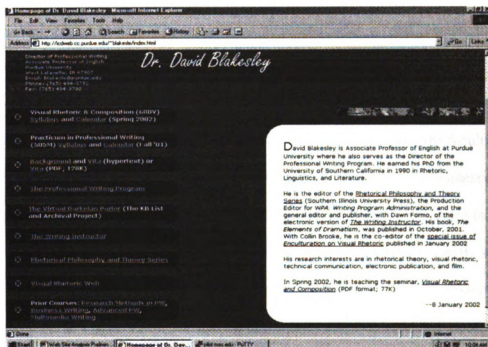
The overall impact of this Purdue faculty index on the ethos of the Department of English is to reinforce the prioritization of graduate studies, but by making this site available to all students, and minimizing the impact this separation between undergraduate and graduate programs has on the accessibility of information to undergraduates, an inclusive ethos is preserved. The next section examines two sample

individual web pages published by Patricia Sullivan and David Blakesley, both of which are linked to these faculty index pages.

David Blakesley's Web Site (<http://icdweb.cc.purdue.edu/~blakesle>)

David Blakesley is the director of the Purdue Professional Writing Program. Compared to the PW home page, David Blakesley's site is written in a much more formal

Figure 4.25 David Blakesley's Main Page



tone and style; he refers to himself in the third person, clearly states his title in the header of the page ("Dr" David Blakesley) and does not include any personal information, welcome, or introduction to the site that would establish an approachable character. For example, the site begins with the following paragraph:

David Blakesley is Associate Professor of English at Purdue University where he also serves as the Director of the Professional Writing Program.

He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Southern California in 1990 in Rhetoric, Linguistics, and Literature.

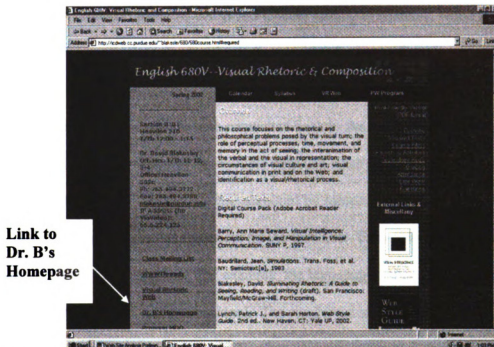
Compared to the friendly collective authorial voice of the PW and other program sites in the Purdue knowledge network, the use of third person voice here stands out.

The design of Blakesley's website is easy to follow although the color choices of a dark blue and black background with yellow and white text make the text on the buttons somewhat difficult to read. The design, like the text, is fairly formal, with no photographs, and no opening welcome. The formal tone and layout are contrasted by his name, in cursive handwriting. The signature implies familiarity, a "real" person; the signature also suggests a verification, an authentication that he has "approved" or sanctioned this web site as an appropriate representation of him. Although the tendency on faculty sites written in the first person is to elide the site narrator with the faculty member, the use of third person on Blakesley's site calls this assumption into question.

On Blakesley's site, the formal tone and third person seem at first glance to contradict the way he refers to himself on his class web sites, where he is "Dr. B" and where he refers to his web site as Dr. B's Homepage (see link at lower left corner of orange menu bar in Figure 4.26). The text on Blakesley's course sites uses a more informal first person and collective first person to talk directly to students (he addresses students directly via the use of "you"). For example on the site for English 203 he writes: "This semester, we will focus [class research projects] on our role as a consulting group for the Human Relations Commissions of West Lafayette, Lafayette, and Tippecanoe County." By using the phrase "our role" Dr. Blakesley creates a class community and places himself within this community. The voice on his course web sites, however, is not

as informal as other course websites, like Patricia Sullivan's (investigated in the next section on the Rhetoric and Composition program), where students are warmly

Figure 4.26 David Blakesley Course Page with Link to "Dr. B's Homepage"



welcomed, encouraged to refer to the faculty member by their first name, and where emoticons, those little symbols like winking smiley-faces ;-), are inserted to designate emotion. The voice on Blakesley's course web sites is in first person and he does, on these sites refer to himself as "Dr. B." rather than the "Blakesley" he uses on the homepage.

These differences between Blakesley's homepage and "Dr B's" course pages create a sense of multiple voices targeted at different audiences; similarly the Purdue Department of English page presents two web sites targeted at the different audiences of undergraduates and graduate students. In a slightly schizophrenic rhetorical move,

Blakesley's site presents two separate Blakesleys—Blakesley the teacher (Dr. B) and Blakesley the scholar (Blakesley). Just as Bakhtin explains that the image of the narrator in a story is distinct from the "I" of the author who created it (Speech Genres 109) the persona and voice on a web site may be distinct from the "I" of the author/ designer of the web site. In Blakesley's case, there are literally two different characters that are also narrators—Dr. B and Blakesley. Dr. B is a teacher talking to students, while Blakesley is a scholar who is being described to the audience either by himself or, possibly, by a third party author.¹⁵

These two characters are both connected back to the same implied authorial "I" (which, as explained earlier may be multiple speakers since the use of third person on the main site could suggest that the site was authored by someone else) but they function in different realms with different audiences on the web site. These two characters establish slightly different kinds of ethos. For example, the homepage focuses on an ethos of expertise, both technical and professional. The site layout and content is seemingly designed to prove Dr. Blakesley's qualifications and credibility in matters of professional writing, including web design. The course sites retain this focus on expertise through the professional layout and through the clearly-written syllabi that present a solid pedagogy founded on current thinking about digital rhetoric and professional writing. The course sites shape a more approachable character and a more teacherly ethos through the use of first person and the use of "Dr. B."

Ethos is impacted in that reading both the course web sites and the homepage (professional information) gives a more complete picture of David Blakesley than either

¹⁵ While the assumption is that Blakesley composed his web site, a reader cannot be certain that a third party did not write and publish this site.

one alone and, in so doing, offers a more persuasive ethos based on both expertise and character. The common design of the sites creates unity between these different voices and allows the web site to establish both a teacherly and a scholarly ethos if the sites are read together, as part of the same online portrayal of Dr. David Blakesley. However, at the same time, reading these sites against each other reveals a somewhat confusing binary division between the personal/ teacherly and the formal/ scholarly that reflects the ways in which these two realms overlap and intersect but that does not overtly discuss this overlap in a way that helps the reader make sense of this unique rhetorical strategy.

As the following section will demonstrate, Blakesley's strategy for developing ethos on his homepage is very different from that used by Patricia Sullivan. The differences between these two individual faculty sites help clarify similar differences between the ways the program homepages of PW and R&C establish and frame program ethos.

Patricia Sullivan's Home Page

Faculty site: <http://austen.english.purdue.edu/omni/omniwelcome.html>

Teaching site: <http://austen.english.purdue.edu/>

Sullivan has separate pages for her own "footprints" of her teaching work (Figure 4.27) and her "professional work at Purdue University" (Figure 4.28), similar to Blakesley's separation between the Dr. B and "Blakesley" pages on his web site. Both Sullivan's and Blakesley's web sites share a desire to make it easy for students to find class-related information quickly and easily from the main site; in so doing they both establish a clear sense of concern with usability for a student audience. As this analysis

“Welcome to the course-related activity site evolving out of classes I teach at Purdue University.” This welcome message creates a friendly tone and a sense of an approachable character while allowing the author to guide the readers’ expectations and interpretation of the site. For example, on the class materials site, she does not say “welcome to the class materials page” in general but chooses instead to focus on specific activities, on interaction and evolution, while leaving space for other topics that are not exactly course materials but are related to or inspired by her experience teaching classes. The fact that the main R&C page links to this site and not her more scholarly site (Figure 4.28) reinforces perceptions that the R&C page may be aimed at a student audience.

The look and feel of this class materials site is completely different than the other sites in the Purdue knowledge network surrounding the Department of English in terms of graphical presentation. The graphics are literally scattered around the site in a creative pattern and not organized into traditional headers or menu bars. The site used bold bright colors like red, lime green and bright yellow which attract the eye and yet do not create a core visual focal point. Sullivan’s site does use menus of links-- on the left are links to “course projects” and on the right are links to different “course syllabi.” The welcoming text appears further down the page (depending on browser settings this welcome may not even be visible without scrolling). This text reads: “Welcome to the course-related activity site evolving out of classes I teach at Purdue University. ~ Pat Sullivan.” This text is in bold and is a bigger font than the links; this layout of this welcome presents it as a quote from Dr. Sullivan, as if she is speaking directly to the reader. Below this welcome are two more columns of links without titles—again, one is on the far left and another on the far right. When viewed as a whole, the layout of this site is like four sets

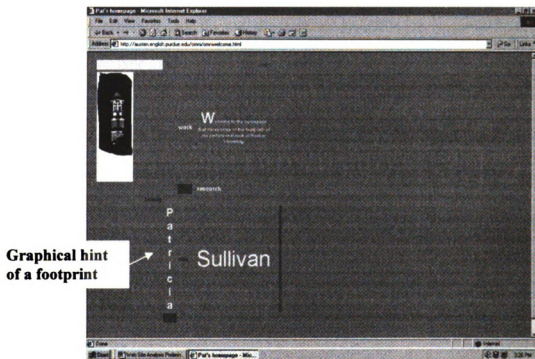
of menus connected by the bold welcome statement by Dr. Sullivan. She literally is the connector holding these varied lists of links together.

This web site, as a course materials site, is focused on a primary audience of students currently enrolled in Sullivan's courses and a secondary audience of students and colleagues who are interested in learning what Sullivan is doing in the classroom. However, it is not a traditional "professional" faculty homepage in that it does not include links to a CV, discussions of graduate degrees, publications and the like. A link fairly hidden at the very bottom right hand corner labeled "Pat's partially reconstructed omni web page" is the only way to access Sullivan's more traditional academic homepage that contains this type of information.¹⁶

¹⁶ This link is not visible in Figure 4.27 since it requires scrolling down to be visible.

The ethos of this course materials site is based on providing access to course materials for students, which this site does very well. Students can quite easily find a specific class project or syllabus. The unique graphic design of the site makes this course site stand out visually from other similar sites, like that published by Blakesley and like both versions of the R&C web site. The use of the blocks and the bar-code like rectangles creates a “technical” and playful sensibility, the fact that the welcome text is moved down to the center of the scrollable page (instead of appearing at the top) subverts

Figure 4.28 Patricia Sullivan’s Faculty Web Site Main Page



web conventions in a playful manner. While this non-traditional arrangement subverts typical web design, it is still easy to use because, by leaving the center between the two thick vertical lines framing the list of links blank, the design draws the reader’s eye downward to the welcome message. The resulting ethos is of a playful and approachable

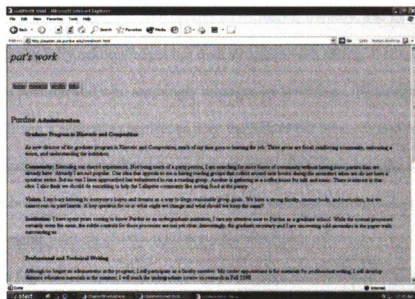
professional who understands the conventions of web design but who chooses to subvert them while still maintaining usability.

Like her course materials site, Patricia Sullivan's unfinished individual homepage (Figure 4.28) is very personable; she includes personal information and uses first person singular to present an image of an approachable and extraordinarily well-qualified teacher-scholar. Because this homepage is clearly labeled a work in progress, the fact that links are not always fully functional and the pages themselves are drafts in mainly text-based format does not immediately impact perceptions of technical expertise in web design. This main page gives many signals about Dr. Sullivan's representation of her relationship with technology and the way she positions herself in the academic field, both of which impact the type of character created by this web site. For example, Sullivan opens her homepage with the following text:

Welcome to the homepage that traces some of the footprints of my professional work at Purdue University. I am constructing a new page at this time. Please visit my teaching site for the time being.

Even this redirect (in the sense of redirecting users to a different page) creates a friendly character. She uses the same “welcome” convention on her course web site, but chooses the word “site” instead of “homepage” to describe her teaching page (Figure 4.27)—implying that the site represented in Figure 4.28 is really *her* page and the other site is a collection of teaching materials.

Figure 4.29 Patricia Sullivan’s “Work” Page



Pages focused on “work” reveal a pattern of blending of the personal and the public that exists throughout Sullivan’s web sites. For example, on the “pat’s work” page (see Figure 4.29), administrative experience heads the list, followed by teaching. This page is written in a very informal tone, uses the first person (as opposed to third person) and is very open about the fact that she is learning a new job at the R&C program. She also mentions working with the graduate secretary and writes, “Interestingly, the graduate secretary and I are uncovering odd anomalies in the paper trails surrounding us.” This humorous jab at the difficulties of administration helps bring a defined voice and

per
bet
and
app

inf
na
pu
ch
ad
hig
Th
pla
tea

de
dif
act
the
gra
ma
bui
hov

personality to the site. Sullivan's ethos is persuasive because she builds connections between herself and her audience; everyone knows what it is like to learn something new, and by openly talking about her own learning process, Sullivan creates an honest and approachable character.

Furthermore, the title of this page (in the upper left corner) is "pat's work," an informal title (both in terms of not using capitals and in not using her title or even full name) that continues efforts to establish approachability and blend the personal and public. On this "work" page, Sullivan creates an inclusive, friendly, and knowledgeable character who playfully acknowledges her own struggles with taking over a new administrative position and who seemingly manages by inclusion. This page also highlights Sullivan's content expertise, as does the link to her research and publications. This scholarly character is mediated by an informal title which reminds the reader to place these scholarly achievements next to Sullivan's personal approachability and teacherly character.

But as Figure 4.29 also illustrates, this work page may not at first glance demonstrate technical expertise with web design. It is comprised primarily of text, mixes different fonts, and is difficult to read due to the rather dark background. Although the actual technical expertise demonstrated by this site is not as immediately visible as that of the new PW program site or Blakesley's home page, Sullivan's use of meaningful graphical metaphors (i.e. the footprint) and design (i.e. the playful design of her course materials site) increases perceptions of technical literacy; she may have chosen not to build a traditional, complex site with dynamic drop-down menus, but she understands how graphics and text come together to shape both denotational and connotational

meaning. Her site is anchored (to use Barthes' term) by her creative use of graphics and arrangement of screen elements.

Overall, Sullivan's two sites blend the personal and the professional in the same way that a footprint blends the public and the private. Whereas Blakesley's site separated the teacherly from the scholarly in subdividing his sites, Sullivan's page uses textual content and graphic layout to combine the two on her home page. For example, the positioning of the link to "Vita" between her first and last names also suggests that professional work is an integral part of her identity. The concept of footprints too is an interesting trope echoed by the placement of words "walking" across the page. The whole arrangement of the site hints at an actual footprint with the heel at the bottom of the vertical "Patricia" and large red block next to "research" the big toe. The footprint is a very personal graphical motif; the site's connotation rather than direct presentation of footprints creates a nuanced sense that the personal is always visible, paralleling the relationship between the teacherly and the scholarly in Sullivan's web presence.

Footprints connotes history, a past, a journey—as if this page is a story about her experiences, a collection of information that taken together gives the reader a sense of her professional journey. Footprints also connote something very personal—like fingerprints, footprints are unique -- and, at the same time they are visible, they are not something easily hidden from view from others. Your footprints reveal where you have been and where you are headed, just as Sullivan's web presence reveals her past professional and personal experiences and looks forward to her newer role as university administrator.

The fact that Sullivan clearly labels her “footprints” page a work in progress (i.e. she calls it her “partially reconstructed omni page”) minimizes audience expectations for navigation and layout consistency; the site is read as a draft, not as a finished product. However, to readers like myself who have returned to this site multiple times over a period of more than two years and not seen any updates, this message begins to lose its power. I no longer read this site as a draft in progress but as a site that may never be finished. As such, it comes to stand in for a final version of her individual home page and is therefore subject to greater levels of scrutiny; the site is not easy to use, there is no consistent navigation and the content is outdated. And yet, the creative use of the footprint motif still stands out as one of the best examples of using graphics to support a larger concept (like the blending of personal and professional) in the sites I analyzed from UT and Purdue.

The R&C program sites, like Sullivan’s individual sites, evidence a great attention to building a welcoming, teacherly character that brings Sullivan’s personality into the public role of teacher/ scholar. But, like Sullivan’s home page (Figure 4.28) these sites suffer from a relative lack of usability (with the exception, perhaps, of the course materials site, Figure 4.27). This common focus on using web space to present character further elides the ethos of Sullivan with the R&C program and insinuates that she is the driving force behind the R&C web presence. Her ethos as presented on her course materials and individual home page and the ethos of the R&C web sites are seemingly inseparable—the flaws on one site serve to highlight weaknesses of the other sites while the strengths of the teacherly character highlight this similar character on the others.

Reading Faculty Sites as Part of the Knowledge Network: Summary of Impacts on Ethos

Just as program web sites are read within the context of the knowledge network, these faculty web sites are read within the context of the program sites. The reverse is also true—program and department web sites are read in the context of these faculty sites. In the case of David Blakesley’s and Patricia Sullivan’s sites, these faculty sites highlight the different types of ethos on the PW and R&C sites with which they are affiliated.

As mentioned earlier, Sullivan’s site reinforces the teacherly ethos and focus on community building of the R&C site while Blakesley’s site emphasizes the relatively more scholarly ethos and focus on expertise of the PW site. Sullivan’s site(s) also reveals a more creative, playful type of technical expertise that uses the web more as an experimental canvas for working with the intersection of thematic and graphical elements that is also present in the revised R&C site’s use of the window as motif and spiral logos. On Sullivan’s site the implied speaker is more clearly Sullivan herself; when the sites are read as part of the same knowledge network, users can identify the connections and similarities between this voice and the implied speaker(s) on the R&C site. Blakesley’s site and the faculty index pages use the third person, which, as discussed earlier, creates some confusion about author versus subject and which also shapes a more scholarly character.¹⁷

The difference in voice between Blakesley’s and Sullivan’s web sites may increase user awareness of the assumption that individual faculty pages are “self-published” (i.e. written by the faculty member). Blakesley’s site calls these assumptions

¹⁷ On the faculty index pages, this use of third person is not as surprising because of the possibility that these faculty information pages were put together by someone else as a resource for users.

into question. When the analysis is broadened to include the UT sites, the fact that the UT DRC templates use first person is reframed as a rhetorical action that shapes a more teacherly character and allows users to feel that they are meeting individual faculty members. This use of voice on faculty templates challenges initial impressions that the Purdue sites are more focused on building a teacherly ethos based on an approachable character while the UT sites tend towards a scholarly ethos based on technical expertise.

Finally, this analysis of faculty sites reveals that different kinds of technical expertise shape ethos. Sullivan's web presence shapes a creative expertise in manipulating graphical signifiers by using the design of her sites to connote the overlaps between the personal and professional that her textual content directly addresses. On the other hand, Blakesley's site and the revised PW site evidence a more traditional web design expertise in adhering to established patterns. This reading changes perceptions of the technical expertise of both the R&C and PW sites; the R&C program site is reframed to demonstrate more creativity in using graphics to create meaning, which helps minimize the usability challenges of this site. On the other hand, Blakesley's site reveals that the PW site applies design standards clearly and consistently to create a usable site that incorporates graphical signifiers but not in the same, unexpected and contextualized manner as Sullivan's sites.

Character, Technical Expertise, and Disciplinary Expertise: Three Facets of Ethos

These Purdue web sites evidence different strategies for building ethos. As the preceding discussion explains, Patricia Sullivan's home page and the R&C site(s) ultimately demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the ways web sites use graphics and

design to shape meaning. This type of ethos fits very well with a rhetoric program focused on understanding the ways language systems (including the web) make meaning. On the other hand, the PW site and David Blakesley's homepage demonstrate a near perfect adherence to the "rules" of web design to illustrate the PW program's ability to teach students appropriately professional design techniques. The ICaP site uses a very basic and straightforward design to communicate program information to students and faculty; design is effective given the current state of transition for this program and the need for clear information transmission. In this last case, establishing an ethos based on information sharing may be the most effective way to build credibility. The Department of English web site at Purdue does not demonstrate a particularly strong departmental ethos because this site functions mainly as a portal to access information published in other places. This lack of a strong central departmental ethos suggests that at Purdue the community nexus and energy may be located more at the program level than at the department level.

Navigation is less of an issues on these sites than on the UT sites, primarily because, with the exception of the PW site, these Purdue sites are less complex. However, the PW program and Department of English faculty index page illustrate what some users may consider very usable navigational strategies that enhance perceptions of technical expertise while on the R&C and, to lesser extent ICaP site, navigation is not a noticeable strength.

Representations of Technology and Ethos

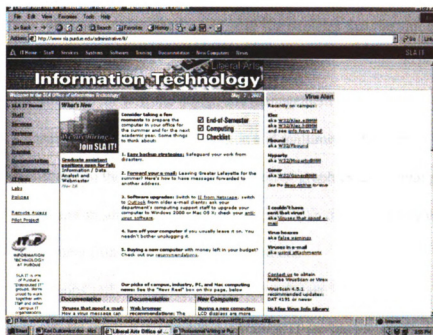
The philosophy of technology that is portrayed on a specific web site impacts the overall ethos and image of the department, college, and university, as well as the program

itself because the philosophy of technology can validate or contradict the online positioning of the program as “expert” reliable source, especially in disciplines with a focus on technical writing or digital rhetoric. These Purdue sites do not foreground technology graphically in the same way as the UT sites. However, if these Purdue sites are read within the larger context of the Purdue University School of Liberal Arts (SLA) web sites, this absence of technology is more noticeable and also more understandable. The SLA at Purdue has an IT department focused on providing technical support to the liberal arts. The web site published by this department suggests that technology expertise and resources are readily available across Purdue and creates the impression that perhaps these Purdue program sites do not focus on technology directly for the same reasons that many people in Catholic countries may not regularly attend mass— if the whole country is devoted to the religion why do individuals need to go to church? At Purdue, the lack of overt representations and discussions of technology may echo this sentiment—if the SLA is doing such a great job publicizing our technical expertise, why do individual programs have to worry about it?

The School of Liberal Arts IT site (Figure 4.30) positions the IT group as a key participant in the daily activities of the college (office work, classes, and internet research). IT services and resources are seemingly focused on providing assistance aimed at increasing faculty, staff, and students’ critical literacy of technology. The presence of the SLA IT web site shapes readings of ethos on the Department of English and affiliated program sites because these sites help the reader become aware that a great deal of technical information and support is available to the Purdue community to support web

publication. Furthermore, the type of character asserted on the SLA IT site shapes audience expectations for the overall institutional character.

Figure 4.30 Purdue SLA IT Web Site



The SLA IT web site states that this unit's goal is to provide support to users in Liberal Arts so that they can “most effectively use the technology available to them in their office, on campus, and on the Internet.” Rather than dictating standards, the site offers advice and support. For example, rather than state that Netscape 6.0 is banned from all university computers, the SLA IT site offers 11 reasons why IE is better than Netscape, an obvious attempt to persuade computer users with education and information, not through issuing top-down proclamations. This approach shapes a teacherly character like that demonstrated by many of the program sites at Purdue—the SLA IT web site positions the SLA IT group as a technology coach and guide interested in genuinely helping Purdue faculty and staff.

The SLA IT page builds this teacherly character through many aspects of site content. The SLA IT site does not provide templates, lists of do's and don'ts, or cookbook style recipes to follow when designing web sites. Instead, it suggests a process that includes important questions departments or individuals should ask themselves when designing their web sites. Also, the SLA IT web site explains that the unit offers the following services:

- Consultation for web site design and management
- Consultation for database integration and multimedia delivery
- Assistance in the creation and production of graphics and digital photographs
- Assistance in selecting competent students or an outside agency to develop the site content from your detailed specifications
- Workshops and training on web-related software

These services offered imply a methodology whereby IT staff are available to facilitate the development of crucial skills (like using web development software, selecting a vendor to build web pages, and understanding the process of designing and developing web sites) not perform these tasks. These services, taken together, are an attempt at developing a basic critical literacy of web technologies that will help faculty and staff in the liberal arts make good decisions about the design and development of their web sites. It is not an overtly theoretically grounded educational program, but it does address key issues that involve the multiple types of literacy required to design and build a web site. For example, the list of services offered include teaching basic programming skills, helping with vendor selection techniques, developing IT program management skills, and developing web design skills.

These varied skills are the scaffolding of an implied critical theory of technology that understands how technical decisions require not only technology “know how” but the management, decision-making, and problem solving skills required to understand how technology impacts the culture and work processes of a specific organizational ecology. Clearly defining this process develops a credible teacherly character based on mutual respect and expertise; SLA IT obviously knows how to build web sites, as evidenced by the content and design of its own web site. By creating a tone of supportive advice, not directives, the SLA IT group builds ethos based on character and expertise and thereby seeks to earn the trust and respect of liberal arts faculty and staff.

Whereas the SLA web site includes information about technology and liberal arts and links to the SLA IT web site, on the Department of English web site does not portray technology as central to the work being done in the department; the links to various literary publications and the listed events pertaining to areas of study and research do not include any reference to technology.¹⁸ The ICaP site does not discuss technology except by offering a link to the Computers and Composition component, which, as discussed earlier, does not establish a credible ethos because it is buried and not directly included in the knowledge network surrounding Composition and Rhetoric at Purdue. Furthermore, discussions of technology are all but absent from both versions of the R&C site—no links to technology resources, no in-depth discussion of technology as it impacts Rhetoric and Composition, no graphical representations of technology are present on the R&C site. The curriculum page lists several courses on computers and writing, visual rhetoric, and distance learning which link to online syllabi created by Patricia Sullivan, and the site

¹⁸ The footer does say that “this page is maintained by the English web coordinator” implying that English values technology enough to have a web coordinator. But this person is nameless; the “web coordinator” is presented as just a role, not an individual person valued for their unique contributions.

explains that a concentration in technology and digital literacy is available, but the content on the R&C site itself does not focus on technology.

The Professional Writing Program is fairly unique among the Purdue sites examined in this chapter because it fully integrates technology into the web site and into its core mission. According to the web site, the Professional Writing major views digital literacy as an essential component that cannot be separated out from the overall project of learning to produce professional documents and work within an institutional context. “Computer-based Writing” is one of the program’s five core strengths and the site offers a huge documentation section with technical resources. However, although the site talks about developing a critical literacy of technology, the resources section forwards a more instrumental view of technology as tool to be mastered, not social force to be interrogated. The mission statement of the Professional Writing program states that the program “is noted for cultivating expertise in writing for the digital workplace, for teaching and researching multimedia writing and visual rhetoric, and for . . . its creative and cutting-edge approach to writing and publishing in the digital age.” Although the Professional Writing web site demonstrates a great deal of “how-to” knowledge and connotes connections to theory in the site’s use of the term “rhizomes” as title for collections of related sites, the mission statement and the site itself position technology as a tool used by program participants to complete their work as digital authors.

Finally, there are few visual representations of technology on these Purdue sites, with the exception of the SLA IT web site and segments of the Professional Writing site. Technology is not visually foregrounded as content or context of the work being done in these programs, as it is at UT. At UT, technology figures graphically and textually to

portray the ways that faculty and students work together through and with technology. By interweaving graphical representations of technology with site design, the UT knowledge network analyzed in the previous chapter creates a sense of community and connection in the fact that the different programs represent themselves as working with, around, and through, technology. At Purdue, the sense is that technology does not need to be explicitly discussed because it is a given fact of education in 2003.

When read against each other, sites within the knowledge network at Purdue reinforce the teacherly character focused on community building and outreach on most of the Purdue program and faculty web sites addressed by this chapter. For example, the PW web site is by far the most professional and attractive (in my opinion) and other web sites, like R&C, look like online brochures rather than web sites in comparison to the PW site. But, this less professional look and feel does not undermine ethos of the R&C site because the look and feel of the R&C web site is congruent with the rhetorical strategy of building ethos based on Patricia Sullivan's character and reputation. The design of the R&C web site is similar to a personal home page which increases the correlation between the program and Dr. Sullivan.

However, although the Purdue knowledge network as a whole does not focus on technology and on making explicit connections to other web sites, these Purdue sites do successfully establish an ethos that relies at least in part, upon technical expertise insofar as technical expertise overlaps with the type of disciplinary expertise appropriate for each program. The R&C program uses graphical motifs to reinforce the connections between personal and public and the anchoring of the program in the figure of Dr. Sullivan. The SLA web site constructs an ethos based on a teacherly character and on disciplinary

expertise with technology; the Professional Writing web site uses site design and content to demonstrate expertise in both the theory and practice of professional digital publication; and the ICaP sends the clear message that its focus is on undergraduate students, which is in alignment with its stated mission.

Conclusions

Readings of these Purdue sites, like readings of sites at UT, help explain that content or subject matter expertise is demonstrated through the use of appropriate disciplinary-specific terminology and through the inclusion of relevant, up-to-date information. For example, the Purdue Professional Writing site analysis demonstrates the application of design strategies that enhance rather than limit users' navigational options though the content builds a perception of content expertise in addition to demonstrating design expertise.¹⁹

These Purdue web sites have gone through multiple site revisions, although not as many as the sites at UT. As at UT, completing site revisions seems to enhance perceptions of a character committed to continual improvement and the development of new technical literacies, as long as the revisions improve usability and design. While site revisions at UT tend to improve the design and ultimate usability, the revisions at Purdue are less clearly an improvement. Revisions to the R&C and ICaP sites merely import a new GUI without significantly changing navigation or content. For both these sites, this GUI is simply different, not better. Conversely, the revisions to the PW program site do improve navigation and design and thereby support perceptions of an ethos based

¹⁹ The Purdue Professional Writing web site successfully incorporates a professional design with key disciplinary terms, and a clear statement of program purpose.

primarily on technical expertise and the desire to stay on top of evolving trends in web site design (although the PW site does not evidence adherence to new types of standardization designed for deployment of web content on varied types of hardware). The Purdue Department of English site falls in between these extremes—the departmental site demonstrates technical expertise in the faculty index search features and the revised header evidences a greater facility with graphical design for the web. The lack of a consistent GUI across all segments of the site continues to undermine perceptions of technical expertise and goodwill towards the audience on the main department page and the undergraduate section.

Nonetheless, a trustworthy character (what Fogg calls “trustworthiness” and what Aristotle calls goodwill and virtue) is developed in these web sites by the demonstration of design and content expertise as well as by the tone and voice of a web site. These analyses suggest that the UT and the Purdue knowledge network assert very different character types.²⁰ As the conclusion to the UT site analyses explains (in the preceding chapter), the UT knowledge network relies heavily on the assertion of both content/disciplinary and web design expertise to create a scholarly, intellectual voice or ethos. Purdue, on the other hand, tends to rely on tone, both textual and graphical, to assert a more teacherly, welcoming ethos. In both the UT and Purdue settings, the knowledge network shapes ethos by validating content through links to other sites and through the use of discipline-specific terms that connote membership in that academic community (i.e. by establishing ethos by affiliation).

²⁰ I use the term character type in the literary sense to mean a stock character that is usually flat (two-dimensional) and static, or unchanging.

This analysis of Purdue sites, specifically the Department of English and Blakesley's faculty site, reiterates the claim from the UT analysis that implementing graphics, navigation, and content to create a sense of unity is important to establishing ethos because this unity helps readers understand how the multiple aspects or voices within a program or faculty web site fit together to shape the character of the program or individual. As the preceding discussion of Blakesley's faculty site explains, the division between the coursework site and the "main" page in terms of voice and tone creates confusion about the implied speaker of the web site. This lack of clarity mirrors the incongruent multiple voices on the UT Department of English site and results in a similarly schizophrenic character that undermines attempts at establishing ethos.

Although the results from the Purdue site echo findings from UT, this analysis also reveals that the findings from UT are based on problematic assumptions. Taken in the context of the prior readings of UT sites, this analysis of Purdue sites raises important clarifying questions about the nature of online ethos and the ways context impacts perceptions and valuations of ethos. For example, to what extent do a user's preconceived ideas about "appropriate" web design and tone shape perceptions of ethos? These readings of web sites at Purdue reveal that the concept of "design expertise" is based in part on adherence to accepted standards for web design but also on preconceived notions held by the reader about what constitutes an appropriate tone and voice for a specific genre of web site. My assumptions about appropriate voice shaped my reading of Blakesley's site, but is this merely my subjectivity seeping in or is this correlation important to understanding online ethos? How can researchers in Professional Writing and Digital Rhetoric think about this relationship between standards, technical expertise,

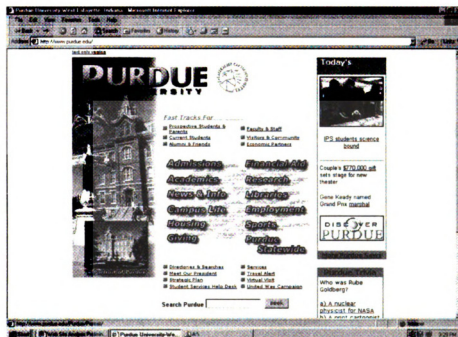
character, and ethos without lapsing into generalized thinking in binary terms like “teacherly” and “scholarly” to describe ethos? How can we talk about the different kinds of technical expertise evidenced by Sullivan and Blakesley without using similarly binary divisions?

The concluding chapters that follow explore one possible way to answer these questions and begin reframing the ways digital rhetoricians explore and discuss online ethos by positioning ethos as a process that unfolds, not as a static feature that can be uncovered. As this conclusion will explain, this revisioning of ethos as a process impacts understandings of the relationship between context and ethos and between the multiple components of a web site that work together to shape ethos.

The UT University main page also offers content-based navigation in the left hand menu bar by offering links to information about UT, academics, computing, and the like. This left navigational frame menu “brands” the site as belonging to the state of Texas—the cattle head graphic in the left main navigation bar looks like an actual cattle brand. At the bottom of the page (bottom frame) there are links for people with disabilities, links to the previous UT home page (not the previous weekly version of this GUI but an earlier generation web site), address and phone book (which is called “directory” in the top menu bar) as well as links to the state of Texas, privacy information, and a copyright notice. This UT home page constructs an ethos that is based, in large part, on the connotative identity associated with the state of Texas and upon expertise. This site positions the University of Texas at Austin as a pre-eminent, news-making, research-focused institution whose credibility rests on documented, recognized achievement (expertise) and whose character is elided with the geographical affiliations with Texas.

The Purdue main page is different in that the tone is more informal and conversational and the design of the Purdue main page is not as sharp (literally) as the UT site—the resolution of the graphics on the Purdue site is much lower, resulting in a grainy, fuzzy look. The Purdue University homepage focuses on representing the

Figure 5.3 Purdue University Main Page



physical and geographical space of Purdue online by offering images of the Purdue campus and community. But, unlike the UT page, this Purdue main page does not use GUI design to position itself as a news site.

Similar to the UT main page header, the Purdue main site has a picture of University Hall, the oldest building on campus and home to the department of history. Like the UT tower, this building functions as a Purdue landmark that is used to symbolize the history of the university and the campus itself. On the UT main page, the photograph

of the tower is taken from an angle looking up at the building; however, the photograph on the Purdue site includes more foreground and actually shows the steps leading up to the building. The photograph of the building itself is very different than that of the tower incorporated into the UT header. The Purdue photograph does not look so much like an “ivory tower”, the picture includes more context, not just the upper turrets of the building as on the UT site, and the picture is part of the main frame of the site, not an icon in the header (as it is at UT). At UT, the use of the tower next to the text “University of Texas at Austin” positions the tower as a logo, but on the Purdue page the clock tower is presented as content to help orient the reader.

The picture contains an inlaid photograph of the same building at an even greater distance, which is a link to “A Portrait of Purdue.” By clicking on this inset photograph, visitors to the site can investigate the Purdue campus. Interestingly, the link is not called a “tour” of Purdue, but a *portrait*. The selection of the word “portrait” highlights the selected, artistic nature of the selected information and also creates a more personal tone than tour because the term portrait suggests a more intimate portrayal.² Another link called “virtual tour” offers an interactive campus map that gives pictures of individual buildings and information about each building. This tour is more formal and more structured than the portrait of Purdue. The presence of this portrait and the virtual tour work to “open up” the university to site visitors rather than presenting information about the university in a more formal manner.

Although this site has a section titled “Today’s Purdue News” that includes several updated news stories about the institution, the Purdue site is less focused on

² The Portrait of Purdue is a one-page overview of Purdue that contains information on school history, a profile of the school, location, student body, estimated annual undergraduate expenses, and athletics.

presenting news about the university on the main page than UT. The layout of the site with this news information in a side bar rather than as the primary screen content signals this difference in focus. The Purdue News section is presented as an add-on, as something interesting but peripheral to the main focus of the site, the links to information about the university itself listed in the center frame. The portrait, virtual tour, and other links to academics, financial aid and the like create a site that is organized for ease of use by students. Foregrounding University Hall and offering so many photos of students embedded in the information creates an online atmosphere that seemingly echoes the actual campus and establishes an ethos that relies upon the image of the university as a long-standing community of learners who pursue intellectual endeavors in an idyllic setting.³ This is not to say that the Purdue site is not focused on demonstrating expertise as well. The individual college pages are filled with specific facts demonstrating the achievements of Purdue graduates, faculty, and staff. In comparison to the UT homepage, the Purdue homepage is more focused on using character to establish a sense of community (of which the reader is an implied member) than on expertise.

Both the Purdue and the UT web site offer visitors multiple choices from pre-selected navigational patterns based on user role as well as the option to create an individual path by selecting other links based on immediate need or interest. Like the UT main page, the Purdue homepage offers role-based “fast tracks” navigation at the top and

³ While this representation of the university as retreat from the “real” world creates a somewhat problematic identity for the university, my point is that it is significantly different from the ivory tower representation on the UT site. Both the idyllic retreat and ivory tower stereotypical views of universities separate universities from the general public and could contribute to perceptions that higher education is not sufficiently engaged with the realities of poverty, pollution, and violence plaguing modern societies. Furthermore, these representations shape an ethos that relies on this separation and echo a Faustian conflict where the student seeking understanding ironically is further separated from the world she wishes to understand. However, while interesting, this is a subject for another research project and is not the focus of this study on ethos.

begins the list with prospective students. Unlike Texas, the site also has links to “economic partners” and specifically includes parents with prospective students. The availability of these varied links and the attendant user choices establish a relationship in which site visitors are apparently enabled to control their own travels through both the UT and Purdue sites and where visitors have seemingly unfettered access to information about the universities. These navigational options suggest total access to the university via these menus of links to all sorts of information. However, the fact is that these content links, especially the “fast tracks” at Purdue and the similar role-based navigation option at UT, have been designed to create a specific vision of the schools by controlling the user experience.

The absence of links to message boards where students discuss university issues, to press releases on any negative topic (lawsuits, etc.), or even to places where the visitor can contribute to site content (other than simply asking a question privately via the comments button) demonstrates that both sites are edited for general audiences, much like a “G” rated movie.⁴ While they may be helpful to guide new visitors to potentially helpful areas of the site, and while they appear to offer unrestricted “open” access, these sites do not position readers as equal participants or empowered members of the university communities—the site designers are in control of reader experience from both a navigational and content perspective. The navigational strategy, then, attempts to create an ethos of open access to information and of inclusiveness while in actuality guiding access to information and forcing users to select one or more of the predetermined roles.⁵

⁴ Burbules, for example, stresses the importance of evaluating the absence of links as well as the presence of links because these absences reveal authorial control methods (109).

⁵ As discussed in Chapter One, Spinuzzi et al (2001) discuss the ways in which functional democratic empowerment of the community comprising part of a site’s audience is difficult to achieve.

Unlike UT, Purdue includes a trivia game about the university, a standard ploy in the marketing world, to apparently get people to return to the site each day to see what the next trivia question will be. The addition of this game offers a bit of interactivity, and although the experience is designed to teach visitors to the site about Purdue, it demonstrates a creativity and a desire to interact with the audience to make the site amusing as well as informative that is lacking from the UT site. This game also connotes active learning exercises and contributes to the image of Purdue as a place where students and learning matter.

The footer of the standard Purdue university pages contains a copyright notice along with the university address and phone number. This copyright notice impacts the ethos of the Purdue site, not so much by its presence here in the footer (since many sites are adding copyright protection to their web pages), but in the information the link displays. UT also offers a similar copyright page, and it is in reading these copyright notices against each other that the differences in the type of ethos between the two university sites can be seen. Both UT and Purdue's copyright notices link to separate pages offering disclaimers and legal notices, but the tone of these notices is drastically different and shapes very different types of ethos. The Purdue site is mainly a disclaimer stating that the Purdue Office of University Relations cannot take responsibility for the pages connected to this main page or the content presented therein. The UT link, on the other hand, makes a more vague and threatening reference to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act warning visitors that access to computing resources can be terminated if the rules of this act are not adhered to. Whereas Purdue seems mainly concerned with defending itself against potential accusations from others that a member of the Purdue community has

violated someone else's copyright, the UT page is more focused on punishing unauthorized usage of UT materials. Since the threat is loss of access to UT resources, this deterrence strategy appears aimed at current students, faculty, and staff more than site visitors who may not be using UT technology (just visiting its web site) and therefore are not in danger of losing any privileges if they violate the copyright.

These different tones and approaches towards copyright impact the ethos of the institutional web spaces because they establish very different relationships with readers and imply different types of organizational cultures and attitudes towards the legal implications of web publication. By focusing on protecting its own intellectual resources, the UT site presents a more competitive character and an ethos built on scientific discovery and proprietary research that firmly "belongs" to UT. Ethos at UT is more firmly focused on demonstrating expertise than at Purdue, which focuses more on building a welcoming character. The Purdue web site, by focusing on the need to defend itself against accusations, creates a more open atmosphere that sounds less focused on retention of proprietary information than the UT site. However, the online presentation of a seemingly inclusive community at Purdue is undermined by the link to Executive Memorandum No. C-42 published on January 13, 1997 outlines policies and procedures for web publication (<http://www.purdue.edu/PUCC-PDN/ExecMemoC42.html#Official>).

In this document, the university clearly outlines that there is a clear distinction between "official" university web pages and "unofficial" pages published by faculty, staff, and students. The only "official" web pages are those authored by an official administrative unit and approved by the office of university publications. Pages published by an individual member of any unit are not considered for review because

they are “unofficial.”⁶ This division of web sites into official and unofficial suggests an atmosphere of mistrust and division between administration and the faculty and staff at Purdue. Regardless of the veracity of this connotation, the labeling of non-administrative approved sites as “unofficial” undermines the carefully constructed image of the cooperative and welcoming community presented on the Purdue main page.

Based on my selected navigation pattern that involved first visiting the university main pages and then proceeding to the individual program and faculty sites, I expected design standards at UT to be very professional, due to my experience with the UT university home page. At Purdue, on the other hand, I expected design to be more “homegrown” in look and feel, again based on my experience with the Purdue university home page. While this assumption was, in some ways, proven false (i.e. in the case of the Purdue PW site) the similarities and differences between these university main sites reflect general differences in the ethos presented by other web sites affiliated with these institutions. As such, the university main pages are an important part of the knowledge network shaping the ethos of individual sites. Perhaps my perception that these main university sites reveal general trends is based on the fact that, because I navigated to specific sites from these university main pages, every reading of the program, departmental, and faculty sites at each university was colored by my initial impressions of the university main page. I implicitly read the program and faculty sites in the context of the larger university site because these two main sites are so different and because these striking differences focused my attention on looking for similar differences on the program and faculty pages.

⁶ I cannot be certain whether or not the Department of English, Professional Writing, and Rhetoric and Composition web sites included in this study of the Purdue knowledge network are considered official or unofficial web sites.

For example, in a general sense, my readings of the UT sites uncovered a more focused attempt than the Purdue sites to use site design standards to locate themselves within their online context. The UT sites analyzed in Chapter Three tended to use a fairly consistent design. There are significant differences in the design of the UT sites, as Chapter Three details; however, the variation in design approach is much greater within the Purdue sites. Horton and Lynch explain that standards are important to effective site design because “a consistent approach to the layout of titles, subtitles, page footers, and navigation links to your home page or related pages will also reinforce the reader’s sense of context within your site organization”

(<http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/interface/interface.html>). By context, Horton and Lynch mean that readers need to know where they are at all times—every page must locate the reader contextually within the larger grouping of web sites affiliated with a particular institution. The UT sites enact this recommendation by using the common design standard of a footer containing locator links. As a result, the UT sites build ethos by affiliation more effectively than Purdue. By clearly locating themselves within the UT knowledge network, these sites leverage the reputation of UT to enhance credibility (ethos by affiliation), by using common design standards. At Purdue, the affiliations are not always as clear. However, if I had not read the Purdue sites in the context of the UT sites, the relative lack of typical markers of institutional affiliation on the Purdue sites might not have been as noticeable.

When the Purdue and UT sites are read in context of each other, as elements of the larger knowledge network of university web sites, both UT and Purdue use GUI design, albeit to different degrees and by different mechanisms, to establish affiliations

with the university and to assert character. The more noticeable UT standardization and professional design creates a more scholarly character focused on demonstrating expertise that permeates many of the UT sites. In comparison, the Purdue sites are less professional in design but present a more teacherly character. While the Purdue sites do not use a common logo or design standards, they establish institutional affiliation by presenting a similar character.

The Impact of Site Revisions on Ethos

Many of the sites analyzed in Chapters Three and Four have undergone revisions in the time I have been conducting research. When the older versions of sites from the UT and Purdue knowledge networks were read against one another, navigation was not significantly different between the sites and did not exert an overarching impact on ethos except in those discrete instances where the confusing navigation hindered usability (UT Department of English site) or those several exceptions whose navigation was so intuitive that it stood out from the other sites (old version Purdue PW or old version CWRL site). However, when updated generations of sites from UT and Purdue are compared, the navigational strategies of sites at UT are much more sophisticated and user-friendly overall than those at Purdue.

For example, the updates to the DRC, the CWRL (both updates), and the Department of English at UT all demonstrate an increased technical literacy in the improved GUI and navigation that make finding information on these sites much easier. As discussed in my analysis of the UT sites, these improvements also contribute to perceived levels of goodwill in that the sheer number of site updates at UT is impressive;

the UT sites seem to be engaged in a process of continual improvement wherein the sites are redesigned to reflect changing standards, increased technical literacy with web design, and improved understandings of what readers require to successfully interact with digital texts.⁷

Reading the Purdue and UT sites against each other highlights the relative lack of successful updates on the Purdue sites. While the R&C, PW, ICaP and Department of English all published new generations of web sites, these revised sites do not impact ethos in the same way as the site revisions at UT. At UT, programs and departments by and large updated their sites and improved navigation, usability, and the coherence between graphical and textual content (in the sense that graphic and textual content presents a consistent message). But at Purdue the revisions did not always improve navigation or usability. For example, the revised R&C site retains the confusing and inconsistent navigation of the old site. The GUI demonstrates a coherence between graphics and textual content in advancing a community-focused ethos, but this GUI also reveals a relative lack of technical expertise and/or access to more advanced software applications that enable the construction of more professional looking graphics and layout. The ICaP site revision reflects the changing name and structure of the program but does not significantly improve navigation or demonstrate a markedly improved literacy in web design. So, even though these two sites are revised with a new GUI, the lack of relative improvement could present a program that is struggling with production issues, design expertise, or resources.

⁷ While this research project is not focused on the design process itself, a more in-depth study like Spinuzzi et al's recent research into the ways the design process shapes ethos (2003) that considers the design process and authorial intentions behind site design could reveal interesting correlations (or lack thereof) between site redesigns and ethos.

The revised versions of the Purdue PW and Department of English sites do, however, evidence improvements in navigation and GUI design that improve site usability and coherence. As explained in Chapter Four, these sites use consistent, graphically rich headers to create an overarching sense of coherence in the site and map the graphics in these headers to core concepts essential to the disciplinary focus of each. Even though these sites do demonstrate an improvement, when compared to the threefold revisions of, say, the CWRL at UT, these revisions (with perhaps the exception of the Purdue PW site) are neither as numerous nor as advanced. Overall, then, the quantity and quality of site revisions at UT reinforces an ethos built on expertise in both subject matter and web design. The revisions at Purdue do not hinder presentations of ethos until these Purdue sites are read against the UT revisions.⁸

Reading these multiple versions of sites impacts my perceptions of ethos at these universities, but some readers may not encounter these multiple versions simply because they many not use the site frequently over an extended period of time. For these readers, the fact that sites have been revised does not, in and of itself, shape ethos—it is only the currently available version that conveys an ethos to these readers. But based on my experience, it appears that for long-term users updated generations of web sites do positively impact ethos by suggesting an attention to continual improvement. Further research is necessary to more carefully consider audience perceptions of these revisions to sites and the impact these revisions have on ethos. A survey-based research project

⁸ The number of site revisions could also be related to perceptions of the relative importance of these web sites to these programs and departments. If the producers of these sites don't perceive web sites as critical to program ethos then they are not likely to invest time and resources to continual improvement or revisioning of these sites.

like that Fogg conducted on medical and legal web sites would be one interesting way to examine this issue.

Textual Links and Ethos

Textual or embedded links and the ways that these links establish a knowledge network impact perceptions of ethos. Links are used to establish conventions and indicate institutional affiliation. In the sites I analyzed, links are not typically used to give clarity to institutional organization, partnerships, and relationships between programs and department, except on the university main pages and the Purdue PW site. Links are more often used to establish a sense of community and collaboration with peers (which impacts perceptions of character) and to contextualize information located on the site.

Textual links must be relevant and well-placed to be effective. For example, the Purdue PW site uses textual links effectively to shape a sense of the community of practice at Purdue revolving around PW and to give readers easy access to additional information. While menu-based links are helpful, these textual links give readers the option of navigating to the other sites immediately and simplify the navigational process because readers don't have to leave the text, go find a listing of links to other sites, and then select the appropriate link. Also, as discussed throughout Chapters Three and Four, embedded links are often described by the paragraph in which they are placed. This description not only helps users predict what content is behind each link, it can also subtly communicate the goals of the site and site audience.

When peer sites offer links to a department or program page, this demonstrates validation of the site and the program and works as a form of ethos by affiliation. Ethos is validated by the knowledge network within which the site is published (i.e. the university context) in terms of the number of links from other sites that connect to the site in question. Because links to another page imply that this linked page is relevant, trustworthy, and important, the greater the number of links to a particular page, the greater the perceived content expertise (as evaluated by peers at the same institution). This occurs most noticeably at UT where the TLC program is frequently not included in the conventional footer links and in Purdue when the Computers and Composition page is not linked to by any sites except ICaP. The lack of links pointing to the Computers and Composition page signals an absence of institutional affiliation which, in combination with the outdated design and information on the Computers and Composition site, suggests to the reader that this site is not credible and may not contain relevant or accurate information. The lack of links to the TLC site impacts ethos in a slightly different way, mainly because the TLC site is not obviously outdated. Because the TLC site presents a strong ethos based on a strong content-area expertise, web design expertise, and the creation of a blended teacherly/ scholarly/ administrative character, the lack of links to the TLC site could be read as evidence of institutional politics or petty squabbles. In this possible scenario, it is the sites which fail to link to the TLC which reveal a less-than-excellent character.⁹

Links to other sites outside of the institution, like those links listed on “Professional Resources” section of the Purdue R&C web site, provide evidence of

⁹ Refer to the next section analyzing locator links for additional ideas about the ways the absence of links to the TLC shapes the ethos of the other UT program and departmental sites.

character or content expertise, depending on the type of link. Links to journals published by the department or program, like those included in the UT English site, validate expertise while links to professional resources like those published online by the CWRL and Purdue's Professional Writing program demonstrate both teacherly and scholarly character as well as goodwill by making an effort to be of assistance to readers. As discussed in the two previous chapters, the sheer quantity of these free resources presents a teacherly character dedicated to sharing information while the high quality of these resources demonstrates a scholarly expertise in the areas of teaching and technology. Finally, these resources hint at an administrative expertise capable of mobilizing scarce resources to produce and publish these online documents.

Locator Links and Ethos by Affiliation

Locator links are those links found in a common footer on a web site that serve to locate the site in its online context. This section summarizes findings about the locator links at UT and Purdue and the ways these locator links shape ethos.

The DRC, CWRL, and TLC (and many of the faculty web sites) all include direct reference to the University of Texas as a way of validating their credibility; just as teachers may instruct students to evaluate the credibility of web sources by looking for connections to a university or company, these web sites make sure that readers understand that they are affiliated with UT through the use of textual references and locator links embedded in the GUI. James McCroskey labels this validation by affiliation the sponsorship effect and explains that, "one may expect to have substantially higher ethos if introduced by a person respected by the audience than one would have without

such an introduction” (2002, 89). While UT is not literally “introducing” readers to the program and faculty web sites, links to and from UT (as well as graphics incorporating references to UT) create an online sponsorship effect. These findings echo Fogg’s 2002 study which found that participants in his survey rated “The site is by an organization that is well respected” as tied with “The site has proven useful to you before” for the most important factors that can increase site credibility. In the preceding analysis of Purdue and UT sites, I examine not only the affiliations with the university but also links to other programs for evidence of attempts to bolster ethos by affiliation.

Burbules explains that a critical reading of hypertext links can help uncover the “limits of any web of information” and enable the rhetorical reading of “the absences as well as the presences” (109). To read absences as well as presences, I examine the links present in the footers¹⁰ in the UT and Purdue sites, paying close attention to the arrangement and selection (including what is left out) of links and the ways these links define the knowledge network for each site. This shaping of context is then connected to the ways these sites attempt to establish credibility.

¹⁰ Footers are an important aspect of site design; footers are one way that individual web pages can legitimate themselves and shape ethos by listing the date last updated (implies recent, up-to-date information), author information (someone who can be contacted with questions), and links to other sites within the online context of the site. Horton and Lynch explain that

World Wide Web pages are different from books and other documents in one crucial respect: hypertext links allow users to access a single Web page with no preamble. Thus Web pages need to be more independent than pages in a conventional book. This usually means that the headers and footers of Web pages are more informative and elaborate than printed pages. It would be absurd to repeat the copyright, author, and date of a book at the bottom of every page, but individual Web pages often need such information because a single Web page may be the only part of your site some users ever see (<http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual>).

The footer of a web page, according to Horton and Lynch, is one way of positioning the page independently of the click-stream a particular user followed to access the site; as Horton and Lynch explain, individual web pages may be accessed from another site within the knowledge network or directly, without an understanding of context and institutional affiliations.

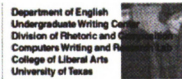
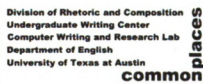
Linking to other sites is the primary denotative method whereby a knowledge network is constructed. Links on program and departmental sites reveal the “tacit assumptions and values of authors” about what type of information and design are relevant to developing an ethos and image of the department by manifesting these assumptions and values in a hypertext (Burbules 104). The hypertext links in a footer are no different. These links have been consciously selected to shape reader perceptions of the web site and build credibility by offering affiliation with other, credible web sites.

The English main site, CWRL, and DRC sites reviewed at UT all have, in the bottom right hand corner of the footer, an “address” or locator that links to other programs and programs. These locator links are a very visible way in which a web page locates itself within a larger knowledge network; they establish program identity and location, much like an address on snail mail that locates the program within a department at a specific university. If the metaphor of a traditional address is applied, the order of the items listed can indicate relationship between the different entities listed. In this scenario, the bottom-most link implies the largest community (it takes the place of city and state or even country for international mail), and the links in the middle and top imply ranges of communities-- a specific “neighborhood” (taking the place of the street address and the street name in traditional address).

Table 5.1 summarizes the locator links on the Department of English, CWRL, and DRC web sites at the University of Texas. TLC does not offer links to other programs on each page of its site as these other programs do. This lack of connections to other programs connotes that the TLC considers itself an independent entity not entirely

affiliated with any one group of programs, which reflects the institutional structure and the location of the TLC as an interdisciplinary program.

Table 5.1 Summary of Locator Links in Footers on UT Sites

Site	English Main Site	CWRL	DRC
Links (in order listed)	Department of English Undergraduate Writing Center Division of Rhetoric and Composition Computer Writing and Research Lab College of Liberal Arts University of Texas	DRC Department of English Undergraduate Writing Center University of Texas at Austin	Division of Rhetoric and Composition Undergraduate Writing Center <u>Computer Writing and Research Lab</u> Department of English University of Texas at Austin
Graphical Display	Has a thumbnail of small section of splash screen watercolor in side with text overlapping it. 	Black and white horizontal menu bar. Items listed above are in left to right order (see image below this table)	Thumbnail textual graphic of "commonplaces"—nice play on rhetorical commonplaces and literal meaning of "common places to visit." 

The DRC

Calendar

5.4 shows

(depend

metapho

belong.

home pa

their pro

program

same sh

the relat

Reading

they bel

The DRC new site retains the same links, but adds several more (The Blue Files, Calendar Server, and Substantial Writing Component Resources). In addition, as Figure 5.4 shows, the order is slightly rearranged.

Figure 5.4 Locator Links in Revised DRC Web Site



All four of these sites list the University of Texas at the bottom or far right (depending on if the links are presented horizontally or vertically); following the metaphor of snail mail, UT is the larger entity to which these programs and departments belong. The fact that all programs, including the TLC, included links to the university home page signals that they are relying upon the public image of the university to bolster their program credibility. From examining these three sets of locator links, all three programs (Department of English, CWRL, and DRC) consider themselves part of the same shared community defined as the University of Texas College of Liberal Arts, but the relationships between members of this community is not clearly or uniformly defined. Reading the absences in these footers, it becomes apparent that these groups agree that they belong together while they perceive that the Technology, Literacy, and Culture

program does not belong with them, even though the TLC program is an interdisciplinary program with relevance to the DRC.¹¹

The absence of the TLC from locator links in the footer, when read against the content and design of the sites, reveals a juxtaposition that undermines the ethos of the CWRL and DRC as programs focused on developing critical literacies of technology. The TLC program, which seems very relevant to the mission/ vision of the English Department, CWRL, and DRC by virtue of its interdisciplinary focus on understanding the relationship between technology and society and on developing critical literacy of technology in students, and which seems like a good way of legitimizing the ways technology is used in the CWRL and DRC, is excluded from the group of links in the footer. Furthermore, many faculty members of the DRC (like Turnley) include links to the DRC and the University of Texas at Austin but do not include links to the Department of English. This common exclusion of the Department of English on DRC faculty web sites connotes a sense that DRC faculty considers their department separate from the Department of English, even though the program site includes links to English.

The knowledge network of Composition and Rhetoric at Purdue is very different from UT in that this knowledge network is itself not very clearly defined. In fact, at first glance it seems that the concept of a knowledge network may not even be appropriate to apply to Purdue because the sites do not make many connections between each other. The absence of locator links, or links that help to “locate” or orient the web site within an online context, and that typically exist in the header and footer of a web site, contributes

¹¹ However, the revised DRC site does include a link to the TLC program.

to the seeming lack of connection between these different programs affiliated with the Department of English at Purdue.

In addition to not typically including locator links in the footer, the home pages for each of the Purdue sites analyzed do not contain very many textual links (links embedded in a paragraph) to other programs or departments. Table 5.2 summarizes the locator links on the Department of English, Professional Writing, and R&C web sites at Purdue.

Table 5.2 Summary of Locator Links in Footers on Purdue Sites			
Site	Department of English	Professional Writing (both old and revised versions)	Rhetoric and Composition (both old and revised versions)
Links (in order listed)	No external links in the footer Links in right hand menu include 13 “departmental areas” including the Introductory Writing Program, Professional Writing, and Rhetoric and Composition.	No external links in footer – footer of new version contains links to navigational categories listed in top navigational frame. Home page contains a textual link to Rhetoric and Composition (both versions) and to the Department of English (new version only)	No textual links on main page to other programs Standard icon-based footer used on entire site EXCEPT main page and news page (new version) and contains links to (in left to right order across the bottom of the page): R&C Home, Dept. of English, Purdue U., Living in Lafayette.

In addition, the ICaP includes a standard footer on most content pages, including a link to the main page, a link back to the Department of English and a link to the Computers and Composition site (as discussed in the analysis of the lack of links to the Computers and Composition site earlier in this chapter). On the R&C web site, the online context is defined at the bottom of each content page with the four graphical links to Rhetoric & Composition Home, Department of English, Purdue University, and Living in Lafayette, arranged left to right across the bottom of the screen. The very selection of these links as the common footer indicates that they are considered important for readers of the R&C

web site

network

program

page and

program

Program

the UT

reader c

more st

any num

teacherl

one site

the site.

conclus

more c

within

levels

interp

unive

usabi

¹² The
a link

web site. They can also be interpreted as one definition or view of the knowledge network surrounding the R&C web site. Based on a reading of these links, the R&C program at Purdue considers that the Department of English and Purdue University home page and the town of Lafayette itself are important elements to understanding the R&C program that need to be called out in a common footer while the Professional Writing Program does not need a direct link to establish the connection.¹²

Because these Purdue sites do not directly cross-reference each other as much as the UT sites, the knowledge network at Purdue is created less by links and more by the reader clickstream used to access a site and by a common approach to ethos that focuses more strongly on a teacherly character. Because readers can approach and locate sites in any number of ways, and because the connections shaped by the presentation of a teacherly character are not directly obvious to the casual reader, the online context of any one site at Purdue is more dependent on the individual path taken by the reader to reach the site. These web sites allow for individual site visitors to come to their own conclusions about the context of a particular web site whereas the UT web sites make a more concerted effort to contain user assumptions by clearly defining the relevant context within which a site should be read.

Locator links are also relevant to understanding design standardization and the levels of conformity to pre-set standards required within a particular knowledge network; interpretive readings of locator links could shape perceptions of the ethos of the overall university. An institution that enables individual site design and accepts the risks to usability that this approach engenders presents a different character than one that requires

¹² The lack of a link to the PW page could indicate that the PW program is so interwoven in other ways that a link is believed to be unnecessary.

adherence to standards for the sake of maintaining consistent usability and an integrated institutional image.

Narrative Voice and Character

As described in the preceding sections of this chapter summarizing the impact of the GUI, navigation, and content on ethos, when Purdue and UT sites are read through each other, there are large general differences in the strategies these sites use to establish ethos. In my analysis of the Purdue and UT sites, the differences in narrative voice and tone of the textual content on the UT and Purdue sites help shape different types of character. For example, the UT knowledge network relies heavily on the assertion of both disciplinary and web design expertise to create a scholarly, intellectual, “scientific” character. The absence of emotive voice and a tendency to talk *about* readers and *about* students rather than *to* readers and students on the UT site creates a more distant, formal tone that presents information and expertise rather than relating personal experiences with meaning-making within a community. These sites use a blend of first person and third person (singular and plural) in their textual content to create the informative tone one might expect to accompany a scholarly character. The Purdue sites, on the other hand, tend to develop a more teacherly character through (in part) talking more directly to the readers.

Although the UT and Purdue sites convey such different characters, program sites from both institutions use a blend of first person and third person narrative voice, with Purdue tending more towards first person and UT tending more towards third person.

However, most sites used a blend of both. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 summarize the narrative voice of the textual content on the UT and Purdue sites.

Table 5.3: Summary of Narrative Voice on UT Sites

UT Web Site Name	Voice
Department of English	Primarily third person with some first person plural
Division of Rhetoric and Composition	Blend of third person and first person plural—primarily first person plural
Technology, Literacy and Culture (TLC)	Blend of third person and first person plural—primarily first person plural
Computers, Writing, and Research Lab (CWRL)	Blend of third person and first person plural—primarily first person plural
Faculty Templates published by Department of English	Third person
Faculty Templates published by DRC	Primarily first person (although the rare example of third person does exist)
Revised Faculty Templates	First and third person singular (depending on faculty)
Melinda Turnley's Homepage	First person
Peg Syverson's Homepage	First person
Lester Faigley's Homepage	First person

UT sites are primarily blends of third person and first person plural—these sites use “we” and “us” in addition to referring to themselves by program name.

Table 5.4: Summary of Narrative Voice in Purdue Sites

Purdue Web Site Name	Voice
Department of English	Primarily lists of links—very little prose
English Graduate Studies	Blend of third person and first person plural.
Professional Writing Program	Blend of third person and first person plural.
Rhetoric and Composition Program	First person plural
Computers and Composition Web Site	Third person
Introductory Writing Program (ICaP)	First person (with some third person)
Faculty templates on Department of English Faculty Index	First person or third person, depending on faculty member
David Blakesley's Homepage	Third person singular
Patricia Sullivan's Homepage	First person singular

As on the UT sites, many of the Purdue sites use blends of third person and first person plural in their textual content. However, at UT the blend is slightly weighted towards the first person plural, especially on the Rhetoric and Composition and Introductory Writing Program sites.¹³

The narrative point of view (typically first person plural, first person singular, or third person) shapes tone and ethos because the point of view impacts perceptions of the character of the implied author. As the example of David Blakesley's homepage illustrates, the use of third person on a faculty web site raises questions about the author of the site and heightens awareness of the expectation that individual web pages should be written in first person.

¹³ A more detailed analysis of the textual content itself that uncovered the relative percentages of first person versus third person voice on these sites would be helpful in understanding the extent to which the Purdue and UT sites differ in their use of narrative voice.

Technical Expertise and Character

Most of the sites investigated for these cases demonstrate content expertise in terms of the intellectual knowledge expected and required in their discipline. Many of the sites at both Purdue and UT use appropriate disciplinary terminology, reference journals and publications, and describe course offerings as a way to convey content-area expertise. Some sites, like the UT CWRL and Purdue PW site, offer online resources that simultaneously convey content area expertise, technical expertise, and goodwill towards the audience. Even listings of faculty and links to the template-driven faculty web sites help to build content expertise by demonstrating that the program or department employs people with publications and appropriate degrees. To preserve goodwill, however, sites that build an ethos based on a teacherly character must be careful not to alienate non-expert users; to effectively maintain goodwill and usability for all readers, successful “teacherly” sites avoid over-using jargon but incorporate disciplinary-specific terms judiciously to establish content expertise without damaging character by making the site exclusive rather than inclusive. Most of the web sites investigated did not use jargon inappropriately. For example, the Purdue PW site incorporates disciplinary terms, (i.e. rhizomes), but does so in an educational manner which does not exclude users who are not familiar with the term. Although the UT English Graduate Program site (like the Purdue R&C site) uses disciplinary-specific language, on a site targeted towards graduate students this usage is appropriate and not exclusionary.

Expertise is also established in the ways these web sites present technology. Because many of the sites I analyze at Purdue and UT present the teaching of digital literacy or the use of technology in composition as important to their program mission,

representations of technology and direct discussions of technology shape perceptions of technical expertise and character. If a program purporting to teach web publication does not display skills in web design in its own web site, program expertise could be undermined and the character of the program could be questioned because the textual content may not be perceived as being trustworthy.

Overall, direct textual and graphical representations of technology and its role in the academic mission of the program are much more prominent at UT than Purdue. PW is the only program at Purdue to actively discuss the impact of technology on the discipline but at UT, the TLC, DRC, and CWRL program sites all discuss and present technology as interwoven with the program mission; however, the CWRL is the only UT program that offers a significant quantity of technical tools online.

Faculty pages continue this trend; at UT, Melinda Turnley, Peg Syverson, and Lester Faigley all discuss technology on their homepages while discussions of technology on Purdue faculty homepages are limited. Patricia Sullivan's web sites mention technology, especially in connection with her course site. Although Sullivan does not discuss technology as directly as the UT sites, the design of her sites suggests an approach to using digital technologies in creative ways to shape the non-coded iconic messages of a web site. These different presentations and discussions of technology shape reader perceptions of content expertise, technical expertise, and character by highlighting the ways that technology is used within a particular program or department or by an individual faculty member.

In analyzing the representations of technology on a particular site, I looked both at graphical and text-based discussions or portrayals of the relevance and impact of

technology on the discipline or program mission. In my analysis I examined the extent to which discussions of technology convey technical literacy and make connections between theoretical understandings of digital technology and the successful implementation of this technology (as evidenced by the web site design). In the Purdue and UT sites, graphical presentations of technology often contradict other textually stated attitudes towards technology. For example, the older version of the UT DRC site displays a graphic of technology used in solitude while the program mission statement discusses the importance of using technology to facilitate collaboration. These contradictions send mixed messages about the character and ethos of a site to the audience by juxtaposing two contradictory views.

As suggested in Chapters Three and Four, representations of technology function as connector joints scaffolding the presentation of ethos by building coherence between stated levels of expertise and demonstrated expertise. As such, representations of technology relay meaning between the textual content, graphical design, and navigation of the site. According to Barthes, in the relay relationship, both text and image present fragments of meaning that cannot be understood in isolation from each other. I use the term relay to describe the function of representations of technology on web sites because textual and graphical representations of technology work to undermine or support the ethos established by the GUI design and navigation. Representations of technology impact ethos most strongly when the GUI design or navigation doesn't adhere to the standards or live up to the stated levels of technical expertise found in textual content on the site. Furthermore, representations of technology can undermine character; if programs or faculty members state that they are experts in web technologies and digital

literacy but have poorly designed and difficult to use web pages, readers may lose confidence in the reliability of what the web site author(s) state.

Web Sites as Systems of Relay

Barthes' concept of anchorage presupposes that one rhetorical element "directs" reader's progress through and interpretation of the rhetorical artifact. In his study of advertising posters, text often anchored meaning by directing readers' perceptions of the iconic signifiers. In anchorage, then, one element forms the hub of interpretation, which suggests meaning-making centralized around the element that is the anchor. But, in relay, the multiple elements of a rhetorical artifact are all equally required and necessary—there is not the same kind of implied centralization present in anchorage.

My readings of Purdue and UT sites suggests that web sites and the knowledge networks in which sites operate do not have a centralized anchor that shapes meaning. Instead, as the preceding analysis of representations of technology suggests, the relay of a consistent message between multiple site elements is the most important factor to establishing ethos effectively online. This makes sense because the web itself is a de-centered network that is not "anchored" by any one site, any one author, or any technical platform (with the possible exception of HTML¹⁴ and newer variants including XML¹⁵ and DHTML¹⁶). Thinking about the web as a de-centered complex system that relies upon relay to create meaning requires that ethos itself be reconceptualized from a static feature to be uncovered and understood to a process that unfolds over time and in

¹⁴ Hypertext markup language.

¹⁵ eXtensible Markup Language.

¹⁶ Dynamic hypertext markup language—a form of html used to create web-page content that, as perceived by the viewer, appears to change each time it is viewed.

multiple ways. The following concluding chapter (Chapter Six) presents my concept of synergistic ethos to simultaneously offer a theoretical lens for examining the ethos of web sites and a rhetorical term for describing the particular ways ethos unfolds online.

Chapter 6

Synergistic Ethos: Implications, Applications, and Calls for Further Research

As suggested at the end of Chapter Five, my readings of the Purdue and UT web sites indicate that ethos is shaped by a complex system of relay wherein the navigation, design, and content of a web site work together to co-create portrayals of character, technical expertise, content expertise, and goodwill. This final chapter addresses the way this understanding of relay as a core function scaffolding the ethos of web sites leads to a revised understanding of ethos as a process that unfolds over time through the relay of information not only between site elements but also between sites in a knowledge network.

Roots of Synergistic Ethos: Initial, Derived, and Terminal Ethos

My theory of synergistic ethos emerges from the realization that web sites use relay to create a de-centered network of signifiers which shapes ethos. This realization builds on existing research on information and knowledge ecologies (discussed in Chapter One) and from the concepts of initial, derived, and terminal ethos. To explain synergistic ethos, I must first define initial, derived, and terminal ethos.

The concept of initial ethos, sometimes referred to as prior ethos, originated with Andersen and Clevenger's 1963 article discussing source credibility published in *Speech Monographs*. James McCroskey defines initial ethos as "the ethos of a source just before he or she begins to speak or the writer's ethos just before the reader begins to read" (83). This concept translates to the web as the reader's perception of the ethos of the implied

author, institution or program represented by a web site just *before* the reader begins to explore the web site. Alternately, prior ethos can be conceptualized as the ethos of one web site based solely upon the reader's experience with other web sites, like the main university pages discussed in Chapter Five. Just as a speaker's initial ethos is shaped by his or her appearance and reputation, the initial ethos of a web site is similarly shaped by the appearance and design of the site's initial splash screen as well as, perhaps, prior knowledge of the implied author, or of the institution or industry with which the implied author is affiliated.¹ For example, web site design that is judged to be "inappropriate" in comparison to other web sites and in comparison to a particular reader's vision of the ideal web site design equates to judging a speaker based on his or her initial appearance, as compared to other real or idealized speakers.

Initial ethos is an extrinsic ethos because it is based, in part, on external valuations and assumptions about appropriate communication in writing or in speech or web communication. In the absence of first-hand knowledge about the department, program, or faculty member, site visitors will bring what they already know about web site design and about post-secondary education to evaluate initial ethos. This means that the initial ethos of university web sites is also based, in part, on the reputation of the school itself.²

Derived ethos is the ethos constructed by the individual web site when read as a rhetorical act or artifact. It is the ethos produced during the act of communication and information presentation (McCroskey 83). Derived ethos is considered more intrinsic

¹ Fogg's recent studies (2003, 2003), for example, uncovered that design (i.e. the appearance and navigation of the web site) is more powerful than content quality in impacting how non-expert web site readers evaluate site credibility. The results of my rhetorical analysis likewise assert that design is a key factor in developing online ethos.

² While this study is not focused on the ways that ethos is shaped by the larger marketing strategy and the public image of a university or of higher education in general, an interdisciplinary study coming from the intersections of marketing theory and rhetoric could offer a great deal more information on the ways that initial ethos is shaped by print ads, public service campaigns, news media, television, etc.

than initial ethos because it is based on the content, style of delivery and tone of the rhetorical act. Derived ethos is the credibility “created during the [rhetorical] message” that is “influenced by the logic of the presentation, the strength of the evidence, the emotional appeal, and even the way the information is arranged on the page” (Boone and Kurtz, online). The readings of UT and Purdue sites in Chapter Five are primarily analyses of the derived ethos; these readings do not focus on analyzing the ways prior perspectives of these universities shapes readings and perceptions of ethos. Instead, these readings focus on how the rhetorical text of the web site, comprised of navigation, design, and content conveys an ethos.³

Terminal ethos is “the ethos of a source at the completion of a communicative act” (McCroskey 83). Terminal ethos is the effect of initial ethos combined with derived ethos; the term is used to clarify the complex relationship between a specific rhetorical act or artifact and the larger context surrounding this act or artifact. Ethos is a combination of the audience’s prior knowledge of the speaker or implied author and the audience’s perceptions of the speaker or implied author that emerge as a result of a rhetorical act. Derived ethos and initial ethos both influence terminal ethos but derived ethos can work to offset a negative initial ethos and vice-versa. For example, if a web site is particularly inept, but is affiliated with a respected university, a reader may allow that site more leeway than an equally unskilled site on the same subject published by an unrecognized individual (i.e. someone without a persuasive initial ethos) because the initial ethos of a university site may carry more weight in developing credibility.

³ Although Fogg’s published studies (2002, 2003) do not address initial, derived, and terminal ethos, his studies perhaps find design exerting such a strong influence over credibility because design is one factor of initial ethos *and* an important factor in derived ethos. Design is part of the appearance of a site that works in conjunction with prior knowledge about the institution’s reputation and assumptions about appropriate site design to determine initial audience perceptions of character and expertise.

My readings of sites selected from Purdue and UT reveal that character, goodwill, design expertise, and content expertise are impacted by two key levers: graphical and textual content and navigation (including links). These key levers are the inputs that shape what is known as the derived ethos, or the ethos produced during the act of communicating. The knowledge network shapes derived and terminal ethos by validating content through links to other sites and through the use of discipline-specific terms that connote membership in that academic community. Knowledge networks also shape derived and terminal ethos through the process whereby design choices become institutionalized (through the use of standardized templates) and the process whereby design choices over time become the standard, accepted, appropriate design for a particular industry, discipline, or type of web site. For example, the process of conventionalizing specific design motifs into the accepted canon of web design is uncovered in my readings of UT and Purdue sites in the ways that these readings help clarify that individual faculty web sites are typically written in first person singular narrative voice. Reading David Blakesley's web site (written in third person) and reading the faculty templates written in third person highlight the convention and expectation that faculty pages are written in first person.

This recognition of an unstated design standard impacting readings of faculty sites emerges only when multiple sites are read against each other. I would not, perhaps, have recognized that first person narrative voice is important in establishing a character to which audience members can relate had I not been comparing Blakesley's page and the faculty templates against other faculty pages. By facilitating this process of reading web

sites intertextually, the knowledge network shapes the ways initial, derived, and terminal ethos intersect.

Synergistic Ethos: Connections and Overlaps between Character, Content

Expertise and Technical Expertise in the UT and Purdue Cases

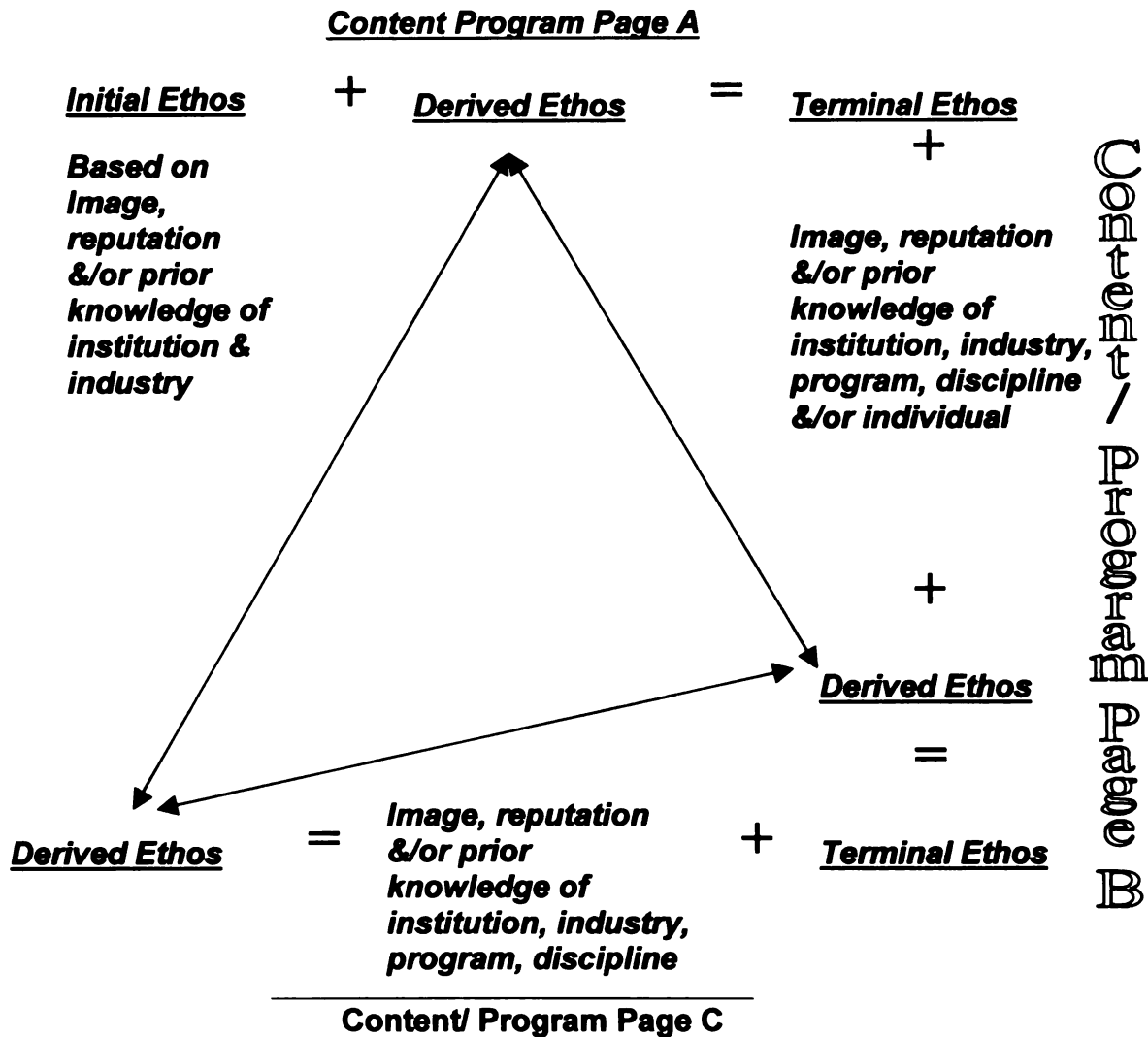
The knowledge network affects ethos because the derived ethos of one site in the knowledge network functions as one aspect of initial ethos for other sites by relaying interpretations of content (both graphical and textual) and navigation that shape reader evaluations of character, technical expertise, content expertise, and goodwill. *Synergistic ethos* is the perception of the overall (terminal) ethos of both the knowledge network *and* a particular site within the knowledge network at any given moment. I use the term synergistic because as in any complex system, the outcome or impact of the multi-layered relationships between constituent elements is always in flux, always shifting, depending on the exact configuration of elements at any one moment. The term synergistic also refers to the ways two or more organisms (in biological sciences) or substances (in, for example, chemistry) interact to achieve an effect of which each is individually incapable. I translate this scientific term to the context of rhetorical research to help explain that ethos is created in the ways the multiple elements of a web text synergistically interact to convey an overall ethos that each element alone is incapable of presenting. This concept of a synergistic ethos also explains how multiple sites interact to shape an ethos that may not be immediately apparent in reading individual sites in isolation.

The use of the term synergistic also links this discussion to Nardi and O'Day's (1999) conceptualizations of information ecologies as co-evolutionary and

interdependent. Synergistic ethos is a cumulative process that evolves over time as web sites in the knowledge network, design standards, and reader experience with the institution, industry, and knowledge network co-evolve.⁴ Synergistic ethos is also interdependent (one of the key factors of knowledge ecologies) because it is built in the cyclical relationship between initial, derived, and terminal ethos. Just as ecologies depend on the healthy functioning of every organism to maintain balance, knowledge networks rely upon effectively conveying an initial, derived, and terminal ethos to shape an overall ethos. Figure 6.1 attempts to summarize this cyclical, synergistic relationship between initial, derived, and terminal ethos.

⁴ The analysis of UT and Purdue cases addresses this co-evolution by examining multiple generations of web sites from a defined user perspective.

Figure 6.1: Cyclical Relationship Between Initial, Derived, and Terminal Ethos in a Knowledge Network



This diagram demonstrates the process whereby terminal ethos for one site in a knowledge network cycles to become one factor of initial ethos for another site in the network. For example, the top line captures the process whereby initial ethos and derived ethos of the university home page work together to create terminal ethos for this home

page. Then, the right hand vertical line shows how the terminal ethos for the university home page works with image, reputation and prior knowledge of the institution, industry, program, discipline, or individual affiliated with the site *and* with derived ethos to create terminal ethos for another web page (here labeled content page B).⁵ The bottom line demonstrates how a third web page is impacted by the derived ethos of content page B which is itself impacted by the derived ethos of content page A.

Derived ethos is impacted by reading sites against each other (as represented by the arrow connecting derived ethos on the diagonal across all three sites diagrammed in Figure 6.1). As the analyses of sites at UT and Purdue reveal, derived ethos is modified by reading sites in context because perceptions and valuations of content expertise, technical expertise, and character shift when sites are compared and contrasted. Readers notice strengths and weaknesses of a site more easily when it is read in comparison to other sites—the results of this comparison can either strengthen or diminish perceptions of ethos. For example, at first glance the ethos of sites in the UT knowledge network do not seem unusually focused on content-area (i.e. scholarly) expertise. However, when the UT knowledge network is read against the Purdue knowledge network, the contrast between the types of ethos of the two knowledge networks emphasizes the relative focus on expertise at UT and the relative focus on character at Purdue.

Synergistic ethos may also help to explain the ways in which perceptions of ethos are impacted by reading whole knowledge networks against other knowledge networks.

⁵ The terminal ethos of one site is not the only factor shaping initial ethos of another site—initial ethos is also informed by prior knowledge, beliefs, and opinions about a particular industry, institution, discipline, department, or individual garnered through direct interpersonal experience and indirect information (for example, from news media). So, the initial ethos of each site is based on the readers' immediate impressions and prior knowledge as well as expectations for the site design/ navigation, content, and tone which derive from reading other web sites.

Just as web sites are read within the context of their knowledge network, so are knowledge networks read within the context of other knowledge networks. Although this study only analyzes two knowledge networks, future work could investigate the ways these Purdue and UT sites compare to other Composition and Rhetoric web sites published by other institutions. Knowledge networks of Composition and Rhetoric sites could also be compared to other types of academic knowledge networks in the sciences and in business. Finally, these academic knowledge networks could be compared to knowledge networks comprised of sites published by non-profit organizations, government offices, or for-profit corporations. While this kind of further research is necessary to more fully understand how synergistic ethos functions across knowledge networks, the theoretical concept of synergistic ethos offers a starting point to scaffold this additional research.

My readings of the Purdue and UT sites discovered that among all the elements of a web site the graphics, text, and navigation exert the strongest impact on ethos. A reader's prior interactions with a particular industry, institution, or type of web site also impact perceptions of ethos, as discussed in the opening section of this concluding chapter; however, because my methodology is focused on rhetorical analysis, not on interviews with readers and producers of these web texts, this research project does not focus on understanding impressions of initial ethos that emerge from outside the web texts.

My rhetorical analysis reveals that synergistic ethos is also shaped by the precise clickstream a user follows to reach an individual site. My methodology as critical reader of these sites was to navigate through the sites over and over again consciously

comparing and contrasting the different sites in the knowledge network. Because I had read the university home pages and the college home pages, I had a different perception of the online context within which a particular department or program site is located. Someone else coming to these sites who had not read through these contextual pages might have a very different impression. Web designers ultimately may not have control over synergistic ethos because readers bring varied experiences with prior versions of sites.

The results of this preliminary study indicate that context does shape initial ethos because in navigating the knowledge network to arrive at a particular site, users are forming an impression of the goal site (the site they want to end up at) based on their experience with sites that are connected to this goal site. Terminal ethos for any one site, then, is the result of the first impressions produced by navigating multiple pages to arrive at the goal site and the ways in which the goal site itself asserts derived ethos. In sum, the concept of synergistic ethos helps readers and rhetoricians understand why perceptions of ethos shift depending on the connection between the site and other sites and depending upon the readers' clickstream and past experience with the institution, the web, and the content around which the web site is focused. Differentiation between initial, derived, terminal and synergistic ethos demonstrates that the question, "How does the context of the online knowledge network impact readings of online ethos?" does not have a simple answer; relationships between site elements and different sites of a knowledge network function as complex, continually evolving ecosystems. Synergistic ethos (as a theoretical lens) offers researchers a new conceptualization of ethos as a

process that continually unfolds as sites are read as part of the larger online inter- and intratextual context of the knowledge network.

Implications and Calls for Further Research

My research into the relationship between online context and ethos offers two primary theoretical constructs: knowledge networks and synergistic ethos. These constructs provide a theoretical framework for deepening understandings of the ways ethos functions online; they also offer a way to focus investigations into the relationship between ethos and context. By defining the key terms of knowledge network and synergistic ethos, this project begins creating the vocabulary necessary for a more in-depth investigation of the complex relationships between networked texts, the social ecologies that produce and interact with these online texts, and the ways in which the rhetorical messages shaping ethos can be distilled and extrapolated from the relationship between the two. However, these terms need further clarification and more detailed definitions. For example, the boundaries of a knowledge network need to be delineated in order to explain the inter- and intratextual relationships between and within connected groupings of web sites. Also, the conceptualization of synergistic ethos itself requires a sustained critical investigation that imports developing ideas about systems and networks to the study of digital rhetoric.

Key Issues and Questions Regarding the Theoretical Construct of the Knowledge Network

The theoretical construct of the knowledge network first and foremost needs clarity in terms of boundaries and the ways in which knowledge networks overlap. How do we define the boundaries of a knowledge network? Is it based primarily on institutional affiliation? Do disciplinary networks comprised of sites published within the same academic discipline themselves comprise a knowledge network? Is there a larger overarching knowledge network of all math sites, or all biology sites?⁶ Could (or should) a knowledge network be redefined in a more expansive sense to encompass print, television and other communicative media?

Part of understanding the boundaries of the knowledge network requires an examination of the ways that knowledge networks may themselves comprise a larger system, an integrated ecology that brands an institution or an individual.⁷ How important are web sites in the strategic plans for marketing and communication at universities? Are web sites seen as essential aspects of conveying a departmental or university image? How does the relative level of importance of the web site to a specific department or university shape the web text itself? What risks and advantages are there to not focusing on the web as a primary method for conveying an ethos and branding a program or university with a particular character?

⁶ In a more specific sense, research is needed to clarify how disciplinary perspectives shape the knowledge network; how many of my findings apply to math or science departments?

⁷ I use the term branding in the marketing sense to mean the ways that an institution creates an image of itself that is memorable, unique, and effective in attracting new customers and maintaining the loyalty of existing customers. The term is used here to signify the ways that web sites interact with other strategies (such as print text, facilities, organizational culture, and product) to shape an overall image of the institution.

Also, the relationship between the knowledge network and the information ecology, as defined by Nardi and O'Day, should be examined both from the perspective of how the socio-cultural ecology surrounding the production of web sites shapes the knowledge network *and* how the knowledge network shapes the socio-cultural ecology. What types of overlaps and connections occur between knowledge networks and knowledge ecologies and how do these overlaps and connections impact culture, meaning, and rhetoric both online and face-to-face? For example, how much control and/or power do individual readers and designers have within their ecological contexts and how does this power impact their level and type of engagement with the web site? How do institutional politics impact the structure and content of a knowledge network?⁸ How do knowledge ecologies and the web sites produced within/ around these ecologies impact valuations of technical and interpersonal literacies and how does this valuation affect the adoption of particular literacies by readers and designers?

Addressing the relationship between knowledge networks and knowledge ecologies will increase understandings of the ways readers, authors, and the social/ technical milieu interact to produce web texts and standards for design, production, and reading of these digital texts. Furthermore, by better understanding the relationship between the social context and the web site itself, both readers and designers can begin to pursue strategies for institutional micro-political critique that use the design and reading of web sites to impact and change the institutions within which they live and work.⁹

⁸ For an excellent model of one way to begin investigating the overlaps between the politics of a departmental ecology and the web representation of this department, see Clay Spinuzzi et al (2003).

⁹ The methodology of institutional critique, as defined by James E. Porter and Patricia Sullivan (2000) outlines the need for a specific localized focus on a particular context in order to avoid generalizations that do little to actually change the institutions under consideration. They define institutions as changeable semiotic systems which "contain spaces for reflection, resistance, revision, and productive action" (613)

The concept of the knowledge network also needs to be tested in other online rhetorical situations to uncover the extent to which the idea of a knowledge network functions for other types of web sites. How does the concept of a knowledge network apply to online shopping sites? To government sites? In addition, to what extent does the concept of a knowledge network apply to non-digital texts?

While the practical issue of refining the definition and boundaries of knowledge networks is crucial to further work in this area, my preliminary use of the concept also raises more theoretical questions about how knowledge networks operate. How do knowledge networks evolve and to what extent are knowledge networks interconnected? What function does this evolution and interconnection play from a rhetorical and social perspective? What types of connections between knowledge networks are the most pervasive and enduring and why?

Key Issues and Questions Regarding the Theoretical Construct of Synergistic Ethos

In addition to deepening understandings of the relationship between knowledge networks and knowledge ecologies, researchers interested in the relationship between context and ethos need to refine understandings of synergistic ethos. As defined earlier in this chapter as the perception of the terminal ethos of a knowledge network at any given moment based on an individual reader's navigation of the knowledge network,

and contend that institutional critique, via "an examination of micro practices within the macro structures of an entire industry over time (and with the cooperation of others) can produce rhetorical and material change" (625). This methodology furthers the research on power relations and technology by Ray and Barton, Janangelo and others, by providing a defined research methodology that focuses on the larger institutional context and expands the scope of rhetorical inquiry to include not just recommendations for institutional change but actual "enactments" of changed practices by "demonstrating how the process of producing the publication or engaging in the research enacted some form of institutional change" (628).

synergistic ethos needs to be more carefully explored in order to more fully understand the ways elements of a knowledge network function as a system to shape ethos. For example, further work is needed to more clearly understand the ways in which synergistic ethos is similar to and different from terminal ethos. Is the notion of synergistic ethos redundant and unnecessary? How does the concept of synergistic ethos overlap with current thinking on the ways complex systems operate (see, for example, Duncan Watt's book Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age 2003)?

Key Issues and Questions Regarding Methodological Approach to the Study of Knowledge Networks and Synergistic Ethos

While the methodology of rhetorical readings used in this study offers a valid starting point, further research is needed from other methodological perspectives to leverage disciplinary knowledge making tools in the pursuit of more nuanced understandings of the relationship between ethos and context in digital environments. Research that incorporates surveys and formal usability analysis will help balance the individual readings presented in this study with other potential analyses and perspectives. For example, further research completed on the knowledge ecology, on the institutions and departments designing and publishing web sites, like that published by Spinuzzi et al (2002), will provide much needed information about the relationship between site goals and the rhetorical strategies employed to convey ethos. Undertaking research that examines both the knowledge network and the information ecology may lead to increased understanding of the relationship between ethos and design strategies. For example, research that combines interviews, usability testing, and rhetorical analysis could be used

to examine both the desired type of ethos site authors wish to convey and the design strategies these authors use to do so. Such work could clarify how site authors make design decisions to support an ethos and the extent to which these decisions result in the desired outcome. In so doing, researchers in digital rhetoric will be able to correlate specific design intentions to the tracings of these intentions evident in rhetorical analysis.

Finally, the concepts of the knowledge network and synergistic ethos need to be investigated from a web design and usability perspective. How do these concepts shape thinking about usability? Do these ideas demand a new approach to evaluating usability? My research suggests that considering coherence between site elements is perhaps the most important strategy for web designers wishing to convey a more persuasive and effective ethos. The tone of textual content, the ways in which site elements establish a relationship with readers, and the ways in which links to other sites offer an ethos by affiliation (or lack thereof) scaffold the ethos of the Purdue and UT sites I examined in the preceding chapters. But are these key indicators the same for other groups of sites?

Conclusion

By continuing research into knowledge networks, synergistic ethos, and the interrelationships between the two, the field of digital rhetoric will not only deepen understandings of the ways digital texts operate within both online and face to face contexts, but will also be able to participate in evolving discussions about the science of networks and the ways complex systems comprised of technical and human elements co-evolve and influence each other. Furthering understanding of the interrelationships between the elements of a knowledge network and the elements of the socio-cultural

ecology scaffolding the network will enable researchers to make connections between digital texts, institutional culture, and the ways individual web authors and readers find their way within and across this complex terrain. In so doing, we will be able to better understand the human impact of digital rhetoric and may be better equipped to develop new web design processes and techniques that more carefully consider the complex networked nature not only of the web, but of our increasingly multifaceted roles as teachers, scholars, administrators, web authors, and web readers.

•

APPENDIX A

Appendix A

Sites of Analysis: Locating Selected Web Sites Within Their Larger Knowledge Network

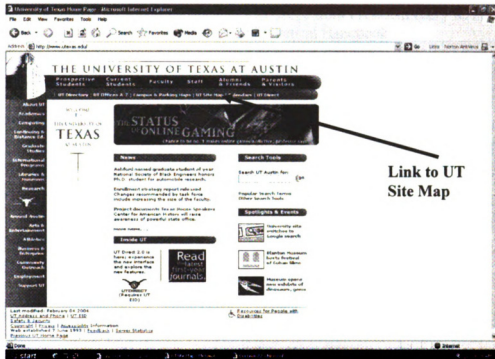
This appendix helps locate my selected sites within the context of the larger university web sites. In so doing, this appendix helps to explain the necessity of this type of focus to maintain a manageable project but also illustrates the gaps in such a focus. For both the University of Texas at Austin and Purdue, I begin each section by offering an overview of the multiple components of the university online presence. Then, I present a graphical representation of the small sub-segment of this larger knowledge network that I focus on in my analysis.

This Appendix is designed to be read in conjunction with Chapter Three, which supplements this information with additional details about the rationale and focus of my research. As such, it does not repeat information detailed in this earlier Chapter.

University of Texas at Austin Larger Contexts

The University of Texas at Austin (UT) main page (see Figure A.1) includes a link to a site map in the top header.

Figure A.1 UT Main Page



This UT site map is a textual site map with many links. Table A.1 lists these links in the order presented on the UT site map page. The areas of research that I am focusing on in this study are indicated by an arrow; viewing this site map makes it clear that my research addresses only a small segment of the overall UT web site. Please note that for the sake of presentation, I have only listed primary sub-site headers not all individual sites. To view all individual sites, visit <http://www.utexas.edu> and view the actual site map.

Table A.1: UT Site Map	
Header	Primary Sub-Site Headers
About UT	Campus Facts Campus Maps Campus Profile Campus Tours Core Purpose History & Traditions Message from President Larry R. Faulkner Statistical Handbook
Academics All the program and department sites I examine are located within this one section of the UT site	Academic Preview Admissions Advising Colleges and Academic Units Computing Resources Executive Vice President and Provost Graduate Studies Office of Institutional Studies Division of Instructional Innovation and Assessment International Programs Office of the Registrar ROSE - Registrar Online Services Teaching & Learning Tools
Administration	Business Services Community Services Executive Offices Facilities Management Forums Information Technology Policy & Regulations
Alumni & Friends	Alumni Directory Alumni Associations Career Development Daily Texan Online Impact of Giving Latin American Network Information Center (LANIC) Longhorns Limited Maps of Texas and the World Selected UT Offices Stardate Texas Exes Texas Style Transcripts TXTELL

	UT News and Information
Around Austin	Accommodations & Housing Dining & Shopping Getting To & Around Austin Tour Austin Search Austin Sports & Recreation What's Happening
Arts & Entertainment	Museums & Exhibits Film Theatre & Dance Comedy Guides and Other Activities
Athletics	Conference and NCAA Of Interest to Longhorns Fans Fitness & Wellness
Business and Enterprise	Educational Opportunities Hiring UT Students & Graduates News Other UT Corporate Sites
Community Outreach	Campus & Community Involvement College of Natural Sciences Outreach & Community Education Hogg Foundation Neighborhood Longhorns Program Office of Technology Licensing Texas Exes The Texas Union University Interscholastic League University Outreach University Volunteer Center
Continuing & Distance Education	Office of Continuing & Extended Education (CEE) CEE Distance Education Center CEE Petroleum Extension Service (PETEX) CEE Professional Development Center CEE Third Age University CEE Thompson Conference Center CEE University Extension Evening Classes Continuing Education Programs at UT Austin Other Resources
Current Students	Student Groups & Volunteers Greek Life Orientation

	Disabilities Judicial Services Registrar Admissions International Students Entering Freshman Transfer Students Graduate Students Re-admission Students Student Financial Services Division of Housing and Food The Texas Union General information Student Events Center Events Calendar University Health Services Hot Spots What's New General information Counseling, Learning & Career Services Texas Student Publications Measurement and Evaluation Center
Employment Resources	Jobs at UT Austin Career Services Offices accessUT - career services database of jobs Jobs Resources and Tools
Faculty	Administration and Policies Faculty Council Office of the Provost Benefits and Retirement Optional Retirement Programs Intellectual Property Copyright Clearance Center UT System Intellectual Property Guidelines Professional Development Center for Teaching Effectiveness Faculty Development Program Research Electronic grant submission National Science Foundation Services and Organization Campus Maps Faculty Center

	Faculty Computing Resources Teaching Academic calendars Academic Policies and Procedures
Features	
Libraries	
News	
Offices A-Z	
Parents & Visitors	About UT Safety on Campus Visiting Campus & Austin Applying & Attending Recreation & Entertainment Organizations Get Involved at UT
Prospective Students	Admissions Academics Financial Aid Libraries Campus Life About Austin
Research	Research by Academic Area Research Facilities Resources for Researchers Development Office
Search	
Spotlight and Events	
Staff	UT Direct Employee Information Human Resource Services UT Operational & Admin Systems UT Job Vacancies Supervisors Benefits Services/Resources Policies & Forms Recreation
Support UT	Capital Campaign Corporate & Foundation Relations How to Support UT News & Publications Resource Development Staff UT Direct

University of Texas Focus for Analysis

Figure A.3 UT College of Liberal Arts Menu

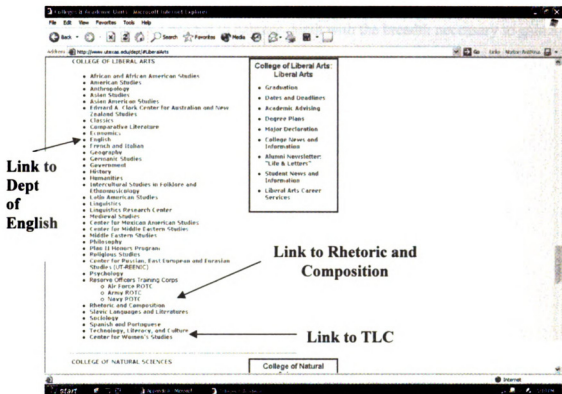
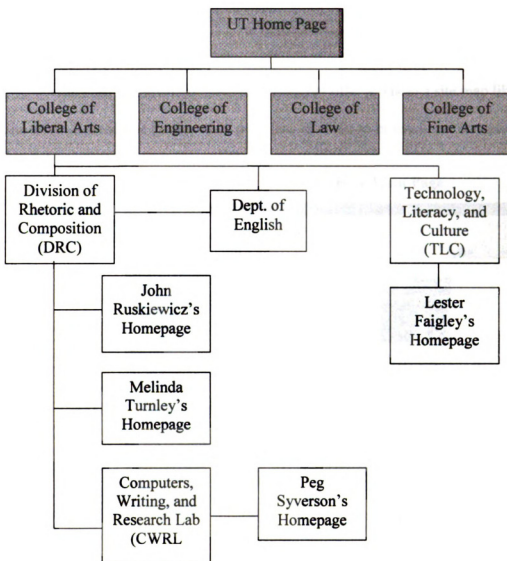


Figure A.3 lists all of the program and department sites I examine in my project, with the exception of the CWRL. I have added textual labels to this web site to indicate the links to the sites I examine. But, as the previous section details, these programs and department sites are just one segment of the available web sites within the College of Liberal Arts at UT. The following graphics, Figure A.4, is a graphical representation of the sites at UT my analysis addresses. The grayed out boxes represent sites that are not directly part of my analysis but that are important to understanding how these sites all fit together.

Table A.2 graphically illustrates how these programs fit together and includes a listing of the faculty pages that I analyze. Like my focus on only four programs, I focus on only a few of the web sites published by the numerous faculty members affiliated with these programs. Again, the choice is one of necessity—for a preliminary study of online ethos in the knowledge network I needed to balance depth with the breadth necessary to gain a sense of the knowledge network of sites.

Table A.2: Diagram of the Segment of the UT Knowledge Network Addressed in Chapter Three



Please note that this diagram does not represent all linkages between sites.

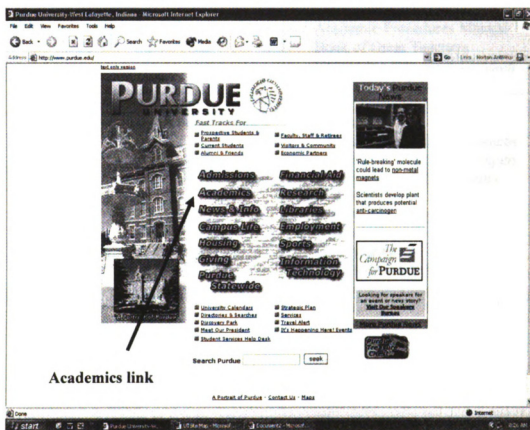
As is also explained in Chapter Three, my analysis does not address the Writing Center at UT. While the Writing Center provides valuable resources to students, staff, and the

public, for purposes of this study I decided not to include Writing Centers because the unique theoretical, pedagogical, and administrative needs that surround Writing Centers also impact their web sites. As such, I believe that another study is needed to specifically study the ethos of online Writing Centers across multiple institutions.

Purdue University

The Purdue University main page does not offer a link to a site map like the UT site does. Instead, the Purdue main page lists the links to primary content areas as a

Figure A.4: Purdue University Main Page



menu in the center of the main page (see Figure A.4). My research focuses on sites located within the “Academics” section of the Purdue site, as indicated by the arrow on

Figure A.4. Just like at UT, my analysis at Purdue focuses on a few academic programs, departments, and faculty associated with these departments. I do not address any non-academic sites published as part of the larger Purdue knowledge network.

Clicking on this Academics link from the main Purdue page (Figure A.4) brings up a site map for this content area. Table A.2 gives primary content headers for this Academics site map. I did not list all sub-links to save space; however, even this partial listing conveys a sense of the variety of web sites listed under “academics” on the Purdue knowledge network.

Table A.3: Purdue Academics Site Map	
Header	Primary Sub-Site Headers
Meet our President	
Office of the Provost	Academic Procedures Manual Book of Great Teachers Continuing Education Division Teaching Academy
Course Information West Lafayette Campus: Schools and Programs	Agriculture Consumer and Family Sciences Cooperative Education Program Distance Learning Programs Education Engineering Graduate School Health Sciences Interdisciplinary Programs International Programs Lafayette Center for Medical Education Liberal Arts Lifelong Learning Management Nursing Officer Training Programs (ROTC) Pharmacy and Pharmacal Sciences Science Technology Undergraduate Studies Program Veterinary Medicine

My focus is on the Liberal Arts programs →

System-Wide Campuses	Indiana University-Purdue University Columbus Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Purdue Calumet Purdue North Central Campus
Statewide Technology Programs	Anderson/Muncie Columbus/SE Indiana Indianapolis Kokomo/Lafayette New Albany Richmond South Bend/Elkhart
Lilly Endowment Retention Initiatives	(none)
Strategic Plan	(none)
University Senate	(none)

Within this larger picture of academics at Purdue, my research focuses on programs in the Liberal Arts at the West Lafayette main campus. Clicking on the link to Liberal Arts at West Lafayette brings up a main page for the School of Liberal Arts at Purdue (Figure A.6). Selecting the textual link to academic departments on this page brings up a second web page (Figure A.7) listing numerous academic departments within Purdue's School of Liberal Arts. This listing of academic departments lists the Department of English but none of the other sites I investigate at Purdue.

Figure A.5: Purdue School of Liberal Arts Home Page

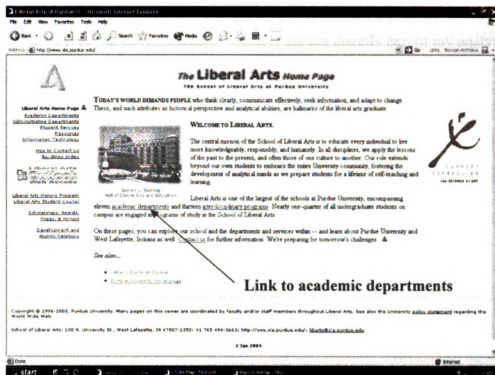
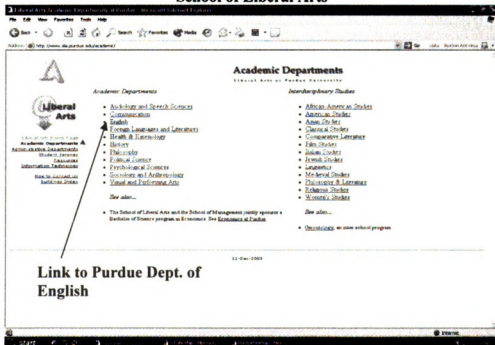


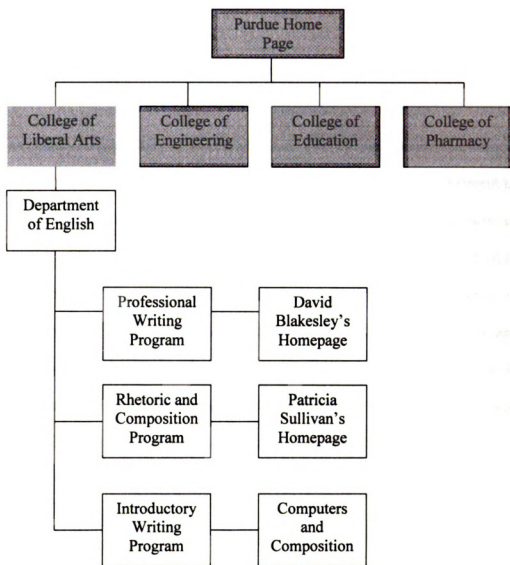
Figure A.6: List of Academic Departments within Purdue School of Liberal Arts



Purdue Focus For Analysis

Table A.4 is a graphical representation of the sites at Purdue my analysis addresses. The grayed out boxes represent sites that are not directly part of my analysis but that are important to understanding how these sites all fit together.

Figure A.4: Diagram of Purdue University Knowledge Network Addressed in Chapter Four



Please note that this diagram does not represent all linkages between sites.

Just as with the diagram of the UT sites, Figure A.4 includes grayed out references to the university and college pages to assist in locating these web sites in the larger context at Purdue.

Implications on Restricted Focus for Research

As explained in Chapter Two, this restricted focus is a practical necessity to keep an already lengthy study of manageable size. There is much additional work to be done in examining, for example, the similarities and differences between different knowledge networks and in interrogating the ways boundaries between knowledge networks are created and/ or imposed through the research process. The absence of detailed analysis of Writing Center web sites and the lack of focus on administrative sites may be partly responsible for the types of ethos my analysis uncovered. But, for a preliminary study on the ways ethos functions in the knowledge network, my selected focus offers an appropriate balance between breadth and depth while eliminating variables such as disciplinary focus and academic vs. non-academic web site.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andersen, K.E., & Clevenger, T., Jr. "A Summary of Experimental Research in Ethos." Speech Monographs 30 (1963): 59-78.
- Anderson. Imagined Communities. London: Verso, 1991.
- Andres, Clay. Great Web Architecture. Foster City: IDG Books, 1999.
- Anson, Chris. "Distant Voices: Teaching and Writing in a Culture of Technology." College English 61(1999): 261-80.
- Aristotle. On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse. Trans. George A. Kennedy. New York : Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Aronowitz, Stanley et. al., eds. Technoscience and Cyberculture. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Aune, James. "Catching the Third Wave: The Dialectic of Rhetoric and Technology." At the Intersection: Cultural Studies and Rhetorical Studies. Ed. Thomas Rosteck. New York: Guilford Press, 1999. 84-100.
- Barabasi, Albert-Laszlo. Linked: How Everything is Connected to Everything Else and What it Means. New York: Plume, 2003.
- Barthes, Roland. "The Rhetoric of the Image." Image, Music, Text. Ed. Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- Barton, Ben, and Marthalee Barton. "Toward a Rhetoric of Visuals for the Computer Age." The Technical Writing Teacher 12:2 (1985): 126-145.
- Barton, Ben F., & Barton, Marthalee S. "Ideology and The Map: Toward a Postmodern Visual Design Practice." Professional Communication: The Social Perspective. Ed. Nancy Roundy Blyler and Charlotte Thralls. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993. 49-78.
- Baumlin, J.S., and T.F. Baumlin, eds. Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994.
- Beauchamp, Darrell G., et al, eds. Visual Literacy in the Digital Age. Blacksburg, VA: International Visual Literacy Association, 1995.
- Beauchamp, Darrell G., et al, eds. Imagery and Visual Literacy. Blacksburg, VA: International Visual Literacy Association, 1994.

- Berlo, D.K., Lemert, J. B., and Mertz, R. J. "Dimensions for Evaluating the Acceptability of Message Sources." Public Opinion Quarterly 33 (1969): 563-76.
- Bernhardt, Stephen A. "The Shape of Text to Come: The Texture of Print on Screens." College Composition and Communication 44:2 (1993): 151-175.
- Birkerts, Sven. "Digital Rhetoric Page."
<<http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/1391dlb.htm>>. Accessed 7/20/2002.
- Bizzell, Patricia. Academic Discourse and Critical Consciousness. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992.
- Blair, Kristine, and Pamela Takayoshi. "Who's Gaze is it Anyway? Navigating the Image of Women Online." Kairos 10 (1999): 23-42.
- Blakesley, David and Collin Brooke. "Notes on Visual Rhetoric." Enculturation 3:2. <http://www.uta.edu/huma/enculturation/3_2/introduction.html>. Accessed 4/06/2002.
- Bolter, Jay David. Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext and the History of Writing. Hillsdale: Erlbaum, 1991.
- Bolter, Jay David. "Hypertext and the Rhetorical Canons." Rhetorical Memory and Delivery: Classical Concepts for Contemporary Composition and Communication. Ed. John Frederick Reynolds. Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1993. 97-111.
- Bolter, Jay David. "Hypertext and the Question of Visual Literacy." Handbook of Literacy and Technology: Transformations in a Post-Typographic World. Ed. David Reinking, et al. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998. 3-13.
- Boone, Louis and David Kurtz. Contemporary Business. Tenth Edition. Mason, OH: South-Western Publications, 2002.
- Brown, John Seely and Paul Duguid. The Social Life of Information. Harvard Business School Press: Boston, 2000.
- Burbles, Nicholas C. "The Rhetorics of the Web: Hyperreading and Critical Literacy." From Page to Screen: Taking Literacy into the Electronic Era. Ed. Ilana Snyder and Michael Joyce. New York: Routledge, 1998. 102-122.
- Nicholas C. Burbules, "Questions of Content and Questions of Access to the Internet." Access 17:1 (1998): 79-89.

- Burke, James. The Knowledge Web. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999.
- Campbell, Charles. "Ethos: Character and Ethics in Technical Writing." IEEE Transactions and Professional Communication September 1995. Accessed 2/21/2003. <<http://www.nmt.edu/~cpc/ethos.html>>.
- Cherry, Roger D.. "Ethos Versus Persona: Self-Representation in Written Discourse." Written Communication 5 (1988): 251-76.
- Cheung, Charles. "A Home on the Web: Presentations of Self on Personal Homepages." Web.Studies: Rewiring Media Studies for the Digital Age. Ed. David Gauntlett. London: Oxford University Press, 2000. 43-51.
- Clemmensen, Christian. "A Guide for Determining the Ethos of Online Brand Mascots." <http://www.filmtracks.com/home/mascots_thesis/entire.html>. Accessed Online 3/20/2003.
- Constantinides, Helen and Jenni Swenson. "Credibility and Medical Web Sites: A Literature Review." Internet Studies Center. <<http://www.isc.umn.edu/research/cred.html>>. Accessed Online 4/25/2003.
- Courtright, Jeffrey L. "'I am a Scientologist': The Image Management of Identity." Public Relations Inquiry as Rhetorical Criticism: Case Studies of Corporate Discourse and Social Influence. Ed. William N. Elwood. Westport, CT: Praeger Press, 1995. 107-145.
- DeVoss, D. "Women's Porn Sites--Spaces of Fissure and Eruption or 'I'm a Little Bit of Everything.'" Sexuality and Culture. 6:3 (2002): 75-94.
- DeVoss, D. "Re-reading Cyborg(?) Women: The Visual Rhetoric of Images of Cyborg (and Cyber) Bodies on the World-Wide Web." CyberPsychology and Behavior 3:5 (2000): 835-846.
- Dondis, Donis A. A Primer of Visual Literacy. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1973.
- Downing, David, ed. Changing Classroom Practices: Resources for Literary and Cultural Studies. Urbana: NCTE, 1994.
- Elkins, James. The Domain of Images. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Elkins, James. On Pictures and the Words that Fail Them. London: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Ely, Donald P and Tjeerd Plomp. Classic Writings on Instructional Technology. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1996.

- Enos, Theresa and Shane Borrowman. "Authority and Credibility: Classical Rhetoric, the Internet, and the Teaching of Techno-Ethos." Ed. Laura Gray-Rosendale and Sibylle Gruber. Alternative Rhetorics: Challenges to the Rhetorical Tradition. New York: SUNY Press, 2001. 93-110.
- Feenberg, Andrew. Critical Theory of Technology. London: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Feenberg, Andrew. "Distance Learning: Promise or Threat?" Crosstalk. Winter, 1999. Accessed online.
- Fogg, B.J.. Persuasive Technology: Using Computers to Change What We Think and Do. New York: Morgan Kaufman, 2002.
- Fogg, B.J. Julianne Stanford, Ellen Tauber. "Stanford-Makovsky Web Credibility Study 2002: Investigating What Makes Web Sites Credible Today." A Research Report by Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab and Makovsky & Company. Stanford University. <<http://www.webcredibility.org>>. Accessed online 5/20/2002.
- Fogg, B.J. "Stanford Guidelines for Web Credibility." 1999. A Research Report by Stanford Persuasive Technology Lab and Makovsky & Company. Stanford University. <<http://www.webcredibility.org/guidelines>>. Accessed online 5/20/2002.
- Foss, Sonja K. "A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery." Communication Studies 45 (1994): 213-224.
- Foucault, Michel. "Space, Knowledge, and Power." Ed. Paul Rabinow. The Foucault Reader. New York: Pantheon, 1984.
- Galliers, Robert and Walter Baets. Information Technology and Organizational Transformation. New York: Wiley, 1998.
- Gerrard, Lisa. "Computers and Composition: Rethinking our Values." Computers and Composition 9.2 (1993): 23-34.
- Gregory, Marshall. "Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Teacherly Ethos." Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture. 1 (2000): 69-89.
- Gruber, Sibylle, ed. Weaving a Virtual Web. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2000.
- Grusin, Richard and Bolter, Jay David. Remediation: Understanding New Media. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

- Gurak, Laura J. "The Rhetorical Dynamics of Delivery and Ethos in Online Communities." Communities in Cyberspace. Ed. Marc A. Smith and Peter Kollack. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Gurak, Laura J. and Christine Silker. "Technical Communication Research Methods: From Traditional to Virtual." Technical Communication Quarterly 6.4 (1997): 403-418.
- Handa, C. Ed. Computers and Community: Teaching Composition in the Twenty-First Century. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton Cook, 1990.
- Handa, Carolyn. "Letter from the Guest Editor: Digital Rhetoric, Digital Literacy, Computers, and Composition." Computers and Composition 18 (2001): 1-10.
- Hasenyager, Bruce. Managing the Information Ecology. London: Quorum, 1996.
- Hawisher, Gail and Patricia Sullivan. "Fleeting Images: Women Visually Writing the Web." Passions, Pedagogies, and 21st Century Technologies. Ed. Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1999. 15-39.
- Horton, Sarah and Patrick Lynch. Web Style Guide. Cambridge: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Janangelo, Joseph. "Technopower and Technopression: Some Abuses of Power and Control in Computer-Assisted Writing Environments." Computers and Composition 9 (1991): 47-64.
- Johnson, Nan. "Ethos and the Aims of Rhetoric." Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse. Ed. Robert J. Connors, Lisa Ede, and Andrea Lunsford. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984. 98-114.
- Johnson, Nan. "Ethos." Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition. Ed. Theresa Enos. New York: Garland, 1996. 243-245.
- Johnson, Robert R. User Centered Technology: A Rhetorical Theory for Computers and Other Mundane Artifacts. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.
- Johnson-Eiola, Johndan. "Living on the Surface: Learning in the Age of Global Communication Networks." From Page to Screen: Taking Literacy into the Electronic Era. Ed. Illana Snyder and Michael Joyce. New York: Routledge, 1998. 185-210.
- Karp, Tony. "Zen and The Art of Web Sites." Tony Karp, TLC Systems, 1999. <<http://www.tlc-systems.com/webtips.shtml>>. Accessed online 5/10/2002.

- Kennedy, George. Aristotle: On Rhetoric. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Kinneavy, James L.. Theory of Discourse. New York: Norton, 1990.
- Koulopoulos, Thomas et. al. Corporate Instinct: Building a Knowing Enterprise for the 21st Century. New York: VanNostrand Reinhold, 1997.
- Kress, Gunther and Theo VanLeeuwen. Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Kress, Gunther. "Visual and Verbal Modes of Representation in Electronically Mediated Communication." From Page to Screen: Taking Literacy into the Electronic Era. Ed. Illana Snyder and Michael Joyce. New York: Routledge, 1998. 179-204.
- Kress, Gunther. "'English' at the Crossroads: Rethinking Curricula of Communication in the Context of The Turn to the Visual." Passions, Pedagogies, and 21st Century Technologies. Ed. Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1999. 66-89.
- Kristeva, Julia. "Word, Dialogue, and the Novel." The Kristeva Reader. Ed. T. Moi. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. 35-61.
- Lesmire, Timothy J. "Writing Workshop as Carnival: Reflections on an Alternative Learning Environment." Harvard Educational Review 64 (1994): 371-391.
- Levy, Pierre. Collective Intelligence: Mankind's Emergine World in Cyberspace. Trans. Robert Bononno. New York: Plenum, 1997.
- Liotard, Jean-Francois. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.
- Margolin, Victor, ed. Design Discourse: History/Theory/Criticism. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- McCroskey, James C.. An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication. Eighth Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.
- McCroskey, James C. and J.J. Teven. "Goodwill: A Reexamination of the Construct and Its Measurement." Communication Monographs 66 (1999): 90-103.
- McCroskey, James C. and J.J. Teven. "The Relationship of Perceived Teacher Caring with Student Learning and Teacher Evaluation." Communication Education 46 (1997): 1-9.

- McCroskey, James C. and Thomas Young. "Ethos and Credibility: The Construct and Its Measurement After Three Decades."
<<http://www.jamesmccroskey.com/publications/96.htm>>. Accessed Online 3/20/2003.
- Nardi, Bonnie and Vicki O'Day Information Ecologies: Using Technology with Heart. Boston: MIT Press, 1999.
- Moulthrop, Stuart. "Paragnosis, or the Story of Cyberspace." Works and Days 12.1 (1994): 33-55.
- Nielsen, Jakob, ed. Coordinating User Interfaces for Consistency. Boston: Morgan Kaufman, 2002.
- Nielsen, Jakob. Designing Web Usability. Indianapolis: New Riders, 2000.
- Nielsen, Jakob and Marie Tahir. Homepage Usability: 50 Websites Deconstructed. Indianapolis: New Riders, 2001.
- Porter James E. and Patricia Sullivan. "Repetition and the Rhetoric of Visual Design." Repetition in Discourse: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Vol 2. Ed. Barbara Johnstone. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1994. 114-129.
- Porter, James E. Rhetorical Ethics and Internetworked Writing. Norwood, NJ: Ablex/ New Directions in Computers and Composition Studies, 1998.
- Porter, James E. "Developing a Postmodern Ethics of Rhetoric and Composition." Defining the New Rhetorics. Ed. Theresa Enos and Stuart C. Brown. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993. 207-26.
- Ray, Ruth and Ellen Barton. "Technology and Authority." Evolving Perspectives on Computers and Composition Studies: Questions for the 1990's. Ed. Gail Hawisher and Cynthia Selfe. Urbana IL: NCTE. 1991. 279-299.
- Salinas, Carlos. Toward a Critical Rhetoric of Images: Design/Writing Within a Corporate Web Site. Unpublished Dissertation. Purdue University. 2000.
- Sano, Darrell. Designing Large Scale Web Sites. New York: John Wiley, 1996.
- Seigel, David. Creating Killer Web Sites. <<http://www.killersites.com/core.html>>. Accessed online 10/12/2003.

- Selfe, Cynthia L. "Lest We Think the Revolution is a Revolution: Images of Technology and the Nature of Change." Ed. Gail E. Hawisher and Cynthia L. Selfe. Passions, Pedagogies and 21st Century Technologies. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1999. 292-322.
- Snyder, Illana and Michael Joyce, eds. From Page to Screen: Taking Literacy into the Electronic Era. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Sosnoski, James J. Modern skeletons in postmodern closets: A cultural studies Alternative. Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1995.
- Spinuzzi, Clay and J. Bowie, X. Li, and I. Rogers. "Open Systems and Citizenship: Designing a Departmental Website as an Open System." Computers and Composition 20:2. (2003): 168-193.
- Sullivan, Patricia. "Practicing Safe Visual Rhetoric on the World Wide Web." Computers and Composition 18:2 (2001): 103-121.
- Sullivan, Patricia and James E. Porter. Opening Spaces: Writing Technologies and Critical Research Practices. Ablex/ New Directions in Computers and Composition Studies, 1997.
- Swales, John M and Priscilla Rogers. "Discourse and the Projection of Corporate Culture: The Mission Statement." Discourse and Society 6:2 (1995): 223-247.
- Swearingen, Jan. "Ethos: Imitation, Impersonation, and Voice." Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory. Ed. James S. Baumlin and Tita Baumlin. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1994. 115-148.
- Syverson, Margaret. "Knowledge Ecologies." <<http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~syverson>>. Accessed online 8/21/2002.
- Takayoshi, Pamela and Kristine Blair. "Navigating the Image of Women On-Line." Kairos: A Journal for Teachers of Writing in Webbed Environments 2.2 (1997): <<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/2.2/coverweb/invited/kb.html>>.
- Watts, Duncan. "Unraveling the Mysteries of the Connected Age." The Chronicle of Higher Education February 14, 2003. B7-B9.
- Watts, Duncan. Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age. New York: Norton, 2003.
- Welch, Kathleen. Electric Rhetoric. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999.

- Welch, Kathleen. The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric: Appropriations of Ancient Discourse. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1990.
- Welch, Kathleen. "Electrifying Classical Rhetoric: Ancient Media, Modern Technology, and Contemporary Composition." Journal of Advanced Composition. 10:1 (1990): 269-282.
- Wysocki, Anne. "Impossibly Distinct: On Form/Content and Word/Image in Two Pieces of Computer-Based Interactive Multimedia." Computers and Composition 18 (2001): 137-162.
- Wysocki, Anne. Visibly Composed, or Seeing What We Make of Ourselves on Paper and on Screen. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, MI, 1999.
- Wysocki, Anne, Grimm, Nancy M, and Cooper, Marilyn. "Rewriting Praxis (and Redefining Texts) in Composition Research." Under Construction: Working at the Intersections of Composition Theory. Ed. Christine Farris and Chris Anson. Research, and Practice. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1998. 250-281.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES



3 1293 02551 6851