

Changes Over Time

Cindy Selfe 0:00 One of the reasons that there were so many women and young scholars who are formational in this field is that computers were not generally accepted so very few older established scholars either had the training or inclination to work with technology. It was mostly graduate students or people who had very little to lose in terms of their position in the academy they were either young or they had Lisa Gerard for instance was an instructors position non tenure track position for many many years out in California as many of our colleagues are I think partially it was that position that you don't have a whole lot to lose that allows you to experiment the margins become wide open and that's always a fun place to be.

Steven Krause 1:20 The whole activity of the whole sort of notion that doing computers and writing stuff, I think the big thing that has changed there is that when I started doing this stuff in 94, that time frame, most of the people I was working with at Bowling Green besides the people I just mentioned thought we were crazy. As in like why would you be spending all this time with this computer stuff this doesn't make any sense. Now I don't think and this has been the case for a long time in the field, I don't think you can complete a PhD program in rhetoric writing composition or rhetoric writing studies whatever you want to call it, without having to do some of the work we talk about at conferences like computers and writing and things like that. It used to be that the only places that you could go to hear people talk about the kinds of

things that people talk about at computers conference, but you can go to things like the C's and DH conferences and stuff like that nowadays. So one shift has been in the fields of the basic premise of studying the relationship between ray and technology, ray and computers, both in terms of pedagogy and in terms of theory, that is no longer something that is an odd thing to do on the side. It is sort of like at the center of the field I think.

Gail Hawisher 02:41 We never would have thought, you have to realize when we went to that first computers and writing conferences something called CAI (Computers Assisted Instruction) was still all the rage that was even before word processing became the rage and we would get notes back from reviewers saying things like please not another article on word processing so to see how digital media has made its way through our field, and when I say our field I do mean computers and writing but I also mean the larger field of rhetoric and composition and writing studies because I mean its you know influenced. So the prestige has something to do with how ubiquitous digital media has become and how essential it is to our lives and how it is hard to even thinking about writing our literacy today without thinking about the technology.

3:52 Janice Walker The listserv that we had that was very vibrant kind of moved into the WPA list more or less, so really as a field I don't think we have anything like we did back then that brings people in that discusses only the things that we want to discuss. We have way more publications than we did

back then, so there are other ways to try and stay abreast but I think the immediacy that we had, we've lost that.

Mike Palmquist 4:32 There was a lot of work on computer support for collaborative work early on, hypertexts, CSCW, word processing was big and Email. some of the exciting work was in Email tutoring. I think there is still some of that excitement in UNIS going on and there is still the same conversations that need to be had because just like you get into any field, you're going to have the questions well, how does this work? How would we think about this? How would we frame these questions? What have people done before? There was maybe a little too much of a focus on practical stuff really early on. It was almost like it was a big workshop. There were studies in which people would present the results of research, there were theoretical arguments, there were a lot of big picture visionary things with interactive fiction and hypertext fiction and all the different directions people were going and there was good research going on. All the stuff on learning environments, writing environments, things like that were pretty darn exciting. There was plenty of good work going on, good data coming out of it, but maybe not as much as there is today. It is a more mature feel and there's better scholarship it's more informed by theory.

James Porter 5:52 I see a whole field of computers in writing and spent an immense amount of time on delivery and this is going back to the 90s that I can think of, but we didn't always call it delivery I certainly didn't. It was called other things, but it seems to me that we're doing delivery work. Now some

people ask me, “that’s an old term, do we really need it? Can’t we come up with different terms?” and I’m okay with that, but delivery is where the historical tradition has it and I would prefer to carry the term and to adapt it rather than to dump it to keep our traditional genealogies in mind.