Scholarship on the Move – 2 (Webtexts) by James P. Purdy and Joyce R. Walker

This Prezi is one of six by James P. Purdy and Joyce R. Walker for “Scholarship on the Move,” a piece in The New Work of Composing, forthcoming by Utah State University Press and Computers and Composition Digital Press (http://ccdigitalpress.org/).

Including elements of argument

Scholarly webtexts we studied include the parts scholars expect when reading an argumentative scholarly text. For instance, Karen McGrane Chauss (1996) includes explicit introduction, conclusion, and references sections in her piece.

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Michael J. Cripps (2004) likewise provides an abstract, background section, and literature review (in his “theory” section) in his webtext.

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We (2007) similarly divide our webtext “Digital Breadcrumbs” into introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, and conclusion sections, all of which are typical parts for recognizable scholarly publications, particularly in social science disciplines.

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In addition to having standard sections, all webtexts (except for Vitanza, 1999 and Love, 1999) also include in-text citations and a references or works cited page, thereby meeting a primary criterion for scholarly work.

Perhaps most forthright in its gesture to scholarly convention is Jeff White's “Hypersuasion and the New Ethos” (2000), which indicates on its home page that the article was peer reviewed and names the peer reviewers.

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Though texts other than explicit scholarly arguments can certainly be peer reviewed (as our analysis elsewhere shows), peer review is a characteristic part of conventional scholarly work and invocation of this convention signals a desire for webtexts to be recognized as including the necessary parts of the scholarly publication process.

Using language of argument

Webtext authors also use language associated with argument. Rickert and Salvo (2006), for instance, explicitly identify that they are arguing: “We are arguing that sound wants to be part of our very experience of the world, and it is, but we are seldom attuned to it; and further, we are arguing that our use of sound ushers in practices that suffuse every aspect of new media production” (“Continue"). They use similar language throughout the webtext: On the home page the authors explain, “Ideally, readers/listeners would listen to the sound files with the arguments we are making in mind” and “It could be considered that we are simply arguing by different means." Rickert and Salvo's point is that their webtext allows them to make their argument in new ways; however, they still frame what they are doing as argument (albeit a less clearly thesis-driven one).

Other webtexts likewise use language of argumentation. The “Hyper Suasion” page of White's webtext (2000) offers an explicit statement of White's argument against external linking: “My argument is that an author should be aware that by sending readers outward and away from his or her web[text], he or she might be letting the reader down. With the world wide web [sic] growing as a trusted source of information every day and with more and more students writing in this medium, we need to establish an understanding of critical principles: for one, we need a call for a New Ethos to balance Hypersuasion." Again, White labels his own work as argumentation.

Using such a label might reflect an understanding of the need for affiliation with recognizable scholarly forms or a lack of vocabulary with which to label such work in other appropriate ways. Nonetheless, calling such work argument explicitly links it to the familiar scholarly form that serves as the foundation of academia. Ultimately, such a label might be limiting, but using it is understandable and it does important work in situating texts that may initially seem to be unfamiliar.

Using images as evidence and illustration

As is characteristic of the academic texts with which we are already familiar, webtext authors use images in illustrative and evidentiary ways. On the “Sigur Rós” page on their webtext, for instance, Rickert and Salvo (2006) provide an image of the album slipcover to illustrate the lack of name of the album and support the authors' argument about the meaning of the parenthesis (the title of the album is ( ) ).

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Chauss (1996) similarly provides diagrams to support her discussion: the “Cognitive Science” page includes a diagram of Donald Norman's "Seven Stages of User Activities" and the “User Analysis” page includes a diagram of Peter Michael Fischer and Heinz Mandl's tetrahedral model for user interactions with information in hypermedia systems.

(two inserted images)

Images support words in conventional ways.

Organizing linearly

Many digital webtexts we studied are also organized somewhat linearly, as is usually the case with conventional arguments. As with print scholarship, readers can choose to engage webtexts “out of order” but several encourage, if implicitly, readers to read linearly.

Readers of “Violence of Text” (Miles, 2003), for example, must click the Next link to move through the screens of the introduction. They must progress linearly through the pages in an order determined by the editor. Contributor Jenny Weight's text is also organized linearly: a reader is required to click Next and Back to move through the text—in the order Weight presents.

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Jeremy Yuille's piece in "Violence of Text" (2003) likewise progresses linearly: readers push Play to begin the piece and it scrolls down automatically (with accompanying audio); readers can pause the progression, but they cannot change or disrupt it. The speed is already set.

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In Rickert and Salvo's webtext (2006), this linear progression is less predetermined but is still encouraged. Each page includes a Back and Next link that allows for and facilitates a linear progression through the article—should a reader choose to follow these links.

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The navigational structure of Sorapure’s “Between Modes” (2005) is similarly set up to follow linear conventions:

* Readers click on blocks from left to right to move through the screen in each section.
* They click on a down arrow to read the text on each screen.
* The main clickable section headings are arranged from left to right in a line at the bottom of the screen.
* The screen with example student projects includes arrows that suggest users should click them to move to the next screen.

Though users can choose not to follow these links in order, they are presented in a fashion that encourages such engagement (e.g., the “credits & thanks” link is the furthest to the right). Readers are not instructed how to navigate through the screens. They must figure out how to do so on their own; given their presumed familiarity with conventional argument conventions, readers are likely to engage with these texts linearly.

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When webtexts are not organized linearly, authors provide explicit guidance to readers. Will Hochman (Palmquist et al., 1997), for instance, recommends a particular way to read his unconventional webtext:

"I suggest a progression of reading by beginning with ‘north' to see how my screens began to be shaped by a conference proposal. Then I suggest moving ‘west' to Hyptertext Theory since I think I've managed to supply some juicy nuggets of ideas from my hypertext heroes. Then I suggest moving to ‘Hypertext Hybrids' since I think we need to think about how we are in two worlds (print & digital) at once, and then I suggest taking on ‘WebEd' since it offers thinking for the future with some good USC writing program pages to correlate with some of the essay's thinking" (“Poetic Electric: Starting Points”).

Such a move to orient readers suggests recognition of traditional argument organization and a need to comfort readers who might be concerned with or confused by this departure. This move to be transparent about organization is itself a convention of scholarly work.

Explaining departures from convention

As did Hochman, authors, particularly of older webtexts, generally explicitly explain departures when scholarly webtexts do diverge from convention. Mike Palmquist et al. (1997), for example, take pains to orient readers to their multi-part webtext. The authors' “A Good Place to Start” section offers multiple introductions to the site, including “How the Site is Organized,” “How the Site is Disorganized,” and “What the Site is for,” taking pains to ensure readers are able to engage with the webtext productively.

(text-based image in background)

In his introduction page, moreover, Palmquist explains the webtext:

"Our webs run the spectrum from virtually linear texts (Queer Theory) to modified linear texts (Poetic Electric and Orality & Literacy) to hierarchical texts (Contrasts) to a nearly pure web (Fences). . . . The differences in the structures of each of the webs lend themselves to different navigational tools. Contrasts and Poetic Electric, for instance, lend themselves well to the use of tables of contents and visual maps, while Fences is probably best navigated using a search engine. And Queer Theory, since it's a single text, doesn't really need navigational support. "

(text-based image in background)

Adrian Miles (2003) proceeds similarly. Because of the speculative, associational nature of “Violence of Text” and the fact that “many humanities academics have a limited set of literacies or competencies when it comes to reading or accommodating new media objects, largely because the majority of academic content in these new environments mirrors and privileges traditional paradigms,” Miles recognizes the need to meet certain reader expectations for scholarly work. He explains, “I have provided a brief map of what has happened to each academic's work in the Violence of Text, helping to contextualise the work” (“introduction,” 2nd screen). In the remainder of the introduction, he provides an overview of each contributor's text, explaining what each does and the idea enacted.

Because the contributors to “Violence of Text” do not provide conventional introductions in their individual submissions, Miles offers such introductions in his overview of the entire webtext. Though not entirely standard—he stops short of offering explicit thesis statements for each text, focusing instead on what each text does rather than what it says—Miles's gesture illustrates a sense of need to acknowledge generic conventions and make clear that the authors of “Violence of Text” know the ways in which their work departs from them.

While now these differences hardly seem to require such explanation, these multiple moves to orient readers reflect how authors believed that the webtext's (at the time perhaps large) departures from traditional scholarly texts need to be explained.

In a sense, these authors recognize that knowing the conventions of the paradigmatic scholarly argument form is a necessary precondition to scholarly publishing—in both traditional and nontraditional forms.

Important for our work here is that these nontraditional forms are not necessarily less scholarly by virtue of their formal departure and that because of previous work, such as Palmquist et al. (1997) and Miles (2003), authors may no longer need (or perhaps should not have) to make these gestures to show that they know they are breaking the rules.

Even when authors do not overtly or thoroughly explain departures from convention, they acknowledge them. On the page where readers click to download “A Bookling Monument” (2002), for instance, Anne Wysocki introduces the webtext as providing word compositions that are “not usual” and asks readers to have “patience” with that. Wysocki does not detail the ways in which her piece is “not usual,” but she clearly marks it as such to prepare her readers.

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That digital media allow for new genres makes new knowledge-making practices possible—sometimes very different practices than those of more traditional print scholarship—or at least allows for emphasizing or privileging certain practices that have conventionally been downplayed in print, not because they are inherently less effective but because they have been recognized as such based on the prevailing socio-cultural standards that surrounded the rise and dominance of print. For Miles (2003) what makes potentially difficult reading the speculative webtext he and his co-authors created is that “we remain hesitantly standing at the cusp of new academic genres” (“introduction,” 2nd screen). Identifying the rhetorical moves characteristic of digital scholarship can help us begin to understand these new academic genres and their value to meaning-making in the discipline.

Speculation

Digital webtexts do make meaning in ways beyond explicit argumentation. Among our objects of analysis, speculation is common in pieces relying on multiple modes. Miles (2003), for instance, frames the entire webtext he edited, which includes multimodal contributions from six authors, as speculation. The opening screen begins:

"So, I wondered, what would happen if a small group of honour year students had the opportunity to collaborate, really collaborate, on an electronic academic publishing project? What if the project invited them to reconsider what constituted academic content by producing a publication based on a formal symposium on digital multiliteracy using video, audio, image, and text? . . . to rethink what academic literacy and the expression of academic knowledge might be if digital literacy, rather than print literacy, were its basis."

Miles goes on to conclude the opening page, “Violence of Text is the outcome of this wondering and collaboration.” He thereby explicitly presents “wondering” rather than assertion as the basis for this work.

So does Walker (2001) in "Textual Textuality."  The section descriptions on the “map” pages use verbs such as "contemplates," "considers," and "discusses." The intertext page description, moreover, reads, “This text asks a question: How do we speak about what we know but do not experience?” ("intertext map").  Walker presents her text as asking questions, considering ideas, contemplating implications, and discussing approaches rather than offering forceful arguments or providing definitive answers.

In “Between Modes,” Madeleine Sorapure (2005) similarly uses language more suggestive of speculation than assertion. Like “Violence of Text,” “Between Modes” combines word, image, sound, and animation. While Sorapure explicitly states her thesis, her presentation of it is more exploratory than argumentative: “Focusing assessment on the relations of modes might alleviate part of what Yancey described as the ‘discomfort' of assessment" and “I think that we are indeed qualified to look at the relations between modes and to assess how effectively students have combined different resources in their compositions “ (“looking between modes,” 4th screen, emphasis added). In the final screen of the “modes and models” section, moreover, Sorapure begins her conclusion, “As I have suggested . . .,” and elsewhere she continues to use language associated with speculation: “I suggest,” “I propose” (“problem of assessment,” 1st screen, emphasis added). This word choice reinforces that conjecture characterizes her approach.

While affirmation is not absent, it is not dominant.

Rickert and Salvo (2006) likewise offer generative speculation as serving as the heart of their webtext. And like Miles's (2003) and Sorapure’s (2005) texts, they use sound, image, and words together as modes of communication. On the home page Rickert and Salvo speculate on the genre of their webtext:

“Perhaps this online version inhabits a new space entirely, a liminal space approaching three different genres: the director's cut, the remake, and the sequel. If this triadic space is perceived as being odd, we must in turn point to the medium itself: electracy enables us. Electracy opens up a different essay-world.” They recognize their text does not fit conventional scholarly expectations but are not sure what exactly they have created. They offer possibilities that “perhaps” make sense but give no answers. Then they explore potential consequences of their speculations: “If this triadic space . . . we must . . .”

They similarly use speculative language when they introduce the “Continue” section of their webtext: “This section presents thematically related explorations of how new media and music intersect." They frame this section as exploratory intersections that can help readers better understand the role of sound in new media composition rather than as definitive arguments about the role of sound.

While the newness of the inclusion of sound in digital texts perhaps drives this speculation, it is important to note that this speculation allows them to accomplish certain scholarly work. It is, in other words, a rhetorical choice, not a weakness of argument.

Clearly our corpus is too small to draw anything more than a tentative correlation between multimodality and speculation. One might argue that Kairos webtexts in general are becoming more multimodal. But the possibility that the use of multiple modes allows for, affords, or encourages speculation as a scholarly rhetorical move raises interesting and exciting questions about the scholarly potentials of multimodal texts.

Could the opportunity to experiment with multiple modes of communication lead to more exploratory scholarly work?

Implicit Association

Using hyperlinks

An even less direct rhetorical move than speculation is implicit association, and hyperlinks are a primary way in which webtext authors draw implicit associations. Hyperlinks connect particular sections within webtexts and link to related content outside webtexts. Internal hyperlinks establish the organizational structure of a piece and help readers note which parts of a webtext are related. In Cripps's (2004) webtext, for example, each section's title and the hyperlinks for that section are color coordinated. Hyperlink color, in other words, orients readers, letting them know “where they are” in the webtext. It associates all related parts.

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External hyperlinks offer connections to supplemental content. Rickert and Salvo's (2006) home page, for instance, provides a hyperlink to “Pro Tools” (Avid's professional-grade audio mixer that they allude to in their webtext title), mashuptown.com, and an article from the Village Voice; the “Continue” page provides links to The Flaming Lips, The Residents, and other bands named in the piece; and the “Context” page provides a hyperlinked list of 52 terms from the print companion piece. None of these is an explicit citation; readers are not told to “click here.” Instead these are “FYI” linking gestures. They offer additional information and associations that extend the webtext and clarify or suggest ideas.

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Juxtaposing textual elements

Hyperlinks, however, are not the only way in which scholars make such generative connections; they likewise juxtapose textual elements. These elements can be in the same mode, as in the case of Chauss (1996). Each page of “Reader as User” includes a hyperlinked quote from a scholar. These quotes are physically juxtaposed with the core text on each page, but no connection is explicitly made. Chauss does not analyze these quotes or relate them directly to the other content.

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Rickert and Salvo (2006) do the same. The far right column on all pages provides a quote or textual snippet that relates to the main page content but is not explicitly unpacked or referenced. The source name is provided but not cited. Readers must make connections themselves.

Juxtaposed elements can also be in different modes. On Rickert and Salvo's (2006) “Content” page podcast, for example, the words read aloud make the thesis-driven argument of their print article, but the accompanying audio soundtrack does not directly reflect this content. The soundtrack, which comes from sound files the authors created in Garageband, offers implicit associations for the listener to identify. Rickert and Salvo explicitly invoke the difference between the print essay's scholarly conventions and the webtext's associational approach:

"Here, we extend our lines of argument, provide additional links, and present our aural experiments with GarageBand. It could be considered that we are simply arguing by different means; in the print essay, we use the technologies of standard argumentation—thesis, evidence, warrants, examples, lines of reasoning. In this multimedia hypertext version, we immerse you in the subject matter. Dropping you into our world, so to speak. There are arguments and examples here, certainly, but no overarching thesis tying them all together." ("Home")

If readers want such a thesis, they need to create it themselves. The responsibility for meaning-making extends beyond authors to readers.

The home page of Sorapure's "Between Modes" (2005) further exemplifies this use of implicit association. Along with the main navigation choices, this page includes an image of a statue with its head in its hands. The image is not explicitly discussed or invoked in the webtext (though it is identified in the "credits & thanks" link).

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Given the topic of Sorapure's piece, readers might conclude that this image communicates how the process of creating or assessing new media compositions is frustrating and/or perplexing. This idea, however, is not explicitly offered, though Sorapure indicates in the webtext that not enough work has been done on assessing new media texts, which may result from (or cause) this frustration or confusion.

Using language of association

Scholarly webtexts also use language evocative of association. For instance, for the section descriptions on the “map” pages of "Textural Textuality," Walker (2001) use verbs such as "connects," "links," and "relates," suggesting moves to draw associations. Wysocki (2003) likewise explains her approach in “A Bookling Monument” as associative:

“I am not trying in this piece to establish claims of causality; I am, instead, tied into a less linear sense that our technologies and representations are networked, are complexly articulated and may sometimes explain or shape each other or may echo each other's structures in a web of repeated patterns.”

That links, design elements, and communicative modes form associations by being connected is precisely her point.

Mimicking dialogic

Scholarly work seeks to participate in the conversation surrounding a particular topic, and webtexts reinforce this by incorporating dialogue. Though other digital spaces are designed to encourage actual dialogue, the scholarly webtexts we examined also promote such exchange—even if in theory rather than practice. For example, on their “Context” page Rickert and Salvo (2006) explicitly address the audience: “We invite you back and hope you return.”

In other instances they address the audience in third rather than second-person but still simulate back and forth exchange with the audience. On the “Content” page, for example, the authors invite readers to engage in certain activities: “we offer these files in hope of offering some modest inspiration for others to cross the border from sound consumption to production, to become prosumers, to become participants in the creation of new soundscapes and to experiment with worlding” and “invite our readers not to stop with listening to these few imperfect files, but to take these samples as proof-of-concept for further sound experimentation.” Here readers are called to action. Rickert and Salvo (2006) ask readers to participate in their webtext in particular ways.

Elsewhere they explicitly seek feedback from their audience: On the “Content” page the authors discuss their problems with PowerPoint and solicit help from their audience:

"Although widely available, PowerPoint presents a problem for transfering [sic] this data, the images, and the sound as a cohesive unit. The sound file in uncompressed AIFF format is over 30 megabytes. AIFF is one of few [formats] which PowerPoint can integrate. It makes for an unwieldy file transfer at best. So we'll probably be revising this to another format for easier web transfer. Any advice for a presentation program that will either integrate the MP3 file, or compress the entire presentation to a few megabytes without losing too much quality?"

They ask a question they hope readers will answer, indicating that inviting their audience into the conversation might solve a difficulty they encountered. Such simulated dialogic exchange establishes how the audience plays a role in realizing the meaning-making potential of the piece.

In the absence of actual conversation, moves to represent its role in meaning-making still appear. On the home page of his "CompoZing com\_PLI\_cating Processes," Victor Vitanza (1999) simulates a conversation with readers. Below the animated loop of words and images central to the home page of his webtext, he provides the following exchange:

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This simulated exchange emphasizes the role of the audience in shaping (or not shaping) the content of Vitanza's webtext. Text arises from conversation (even if imagined).

Promoting explicit dialogic exchange

The formal affordances of digital spaces also make real dialogic exchange possible. While the other types of digital spaces we examined (Twitter, blogs) allow for actual conversation, the webtexts we studied illustrate other types of dialogic exchange. Rickert and Salvo (2006), for instance, show the generative potential of dialogic exchange through the way in which they construct their webtext. They created their webtext from open source files, building “. . . And They Had Pro Tools” from a web site template by Haran and remixing and "mashing up" existing sound files for the piece's “soundscapes,” putting their work into conversation with the creators of these files. They thereby do as they encourage their audience to do: take existing materials and use them in new ways in new contexts to construct meaning.

Such conversation can also be internal to an individual webtext. The “Converse” page of Walker's "Textural Textuality" (2001), for example, juxtaposes other parts of the webtext in an effort to put them into conversation. She explains, “The texts above are excerpted from the other sections of this essay. I've placed them here in an effort to consider how it is we speak to one another. What does it mean to have our words placed in reference to one another? What does it mean to have a conversation?” For Walker this juxtaposition of webtext elements promotes conversation—and putting these different sections into conversation ultimately leads to new knowledge that might not otherwise be generated.

Formal Enactment

Showing through Form

Our analysis reveals that digital texts allow for formal enactment of ideas, for showing as well as telling. That form affects content is now generally a widely accepted belief; consider how the form of this section, which asks you to read in non-intuitive ways, affects your approach to the content.

This formal enactment is evident from the very first Kairos Best Webtext Award winner. In “Reader as User,” Chauss (1996) uses hyperlinks to enact how in-text and reference citations are supposed to connect. Clicking on an in-text citation in her webtext takes a reader directly to an anchored location on the references page with that entry. The in-text and references citations literally connect, illustrating how in-text citations are intended to point to the full bibliographic information in reference entries. The piece also formally illustrates the advice Chauss offers about composing webtexts. For example, hyperlinks in her piece are built in to the prose (i.e., she avoid phrases like “click here”).

Jeff White (2000) likewise uses hyperlinks to enact ideas. Through the hypertext pathways he establishes for his readers, White seeks to perform his notion of hypersuasion, particularly to illustrate his idea that “I consider links as ethical or ethos building aspects of the hypertext medium. In all, the links allow functions with which the author can provide the reader material that will aid that reader in making informed choices about navigating the site” (“Theory of Links”). For example, on his “Links as Signs” page, he enacts the indexical function of links he discusses.

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The webtext interface mimics Google. Readers, therefore, are asked to engage with a Google-like space to read scholarly work. The search engine interface literally becomes the gateway to the webtext's content just as Google is often students' gateway to academic research materials.

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Though these are perhaps seemingly small examples, they aptly illustrate ways in which digital technologies allow scholars to do as they say.

Other examples are more dramatic.

Jane Love's (1999) webtext requires her audience to experience the technology about which she writes, MOOs. To read the piece, users must navigate in LinguaMOO. They must register for an account and follow the directions provided, thereby experiencing what it is like to use a MOO.

Multiple contributors to “Violence of Text” (Miles, 2003) likewise use multiple modes and digital affordances to enact ideas about the possibilities for scholarly work with digital technologies. Darren Tofts, for example, in his contribution about epigrams, asks, “What, in other words, if the epigram is not the link that prepares us for the conceptual passage elsewhere, but itself is a singular event in which an entire discourse is implicit?” Tofts enacts this idea by having the text itself shrink.

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Each time readers scroll to the bottom of the window, the amount of text decreases. Eventually all that is left is the epigram, which forces readers to consider what happens when the epigram is the "singular event."

The halves of Pia Ednie-Brown's webtext do not exactly match but are closely connected, illustrating—literally—her point about dichotomies: such dualisms break down and are blurred but still stand.

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Experiencing both at the same time (readers cannot turn off the audio unless they mute their computer speakers) makes it harder and harder to differentiate the parts. They become confused and unified, despite the obvious differences.

Finally, Mark Amerika's webtext is in the form of a blog, suggesting by way of form what it means to structure an academic text in blog form.

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Glossary links along the left-hand side connect to Google search results for the clicked on terms. Clicking on links in posts leads to more extended posts.

Explaining these ideas in print words would not be the same as illustrating them in blog form.

Rickert and Salvo's “. . . And They Had Pro Tools” (2006) similarly exploits digital affordances to enact their ideas. They advocate an intertextual and networked model of scholarship involving remixing and repurposing that they support by their use of internal and external hyperlinks; multilinear design; explicit gestures to and extensions of their companion print Computers and Composition article; incorporation of five, full-color images related to content addressed in both the print and online articles; and inclusion of “six different soundscapes, different aural environments, created in conversation with and response to the print-based and online versions of the essay” (“Content”).

As they point out, it is precisely what they can accomplish with multiple modes that makes their webtext possible—and a scholarly extension of their print piece.

Wysocki's "A Bookling Monument" (2002) departs most dramatically from conventional essay expectations by the ways in which it seeks to formally enact ideas. Readers are forced to interact with an image of the body in order to read the webtext.

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This formal structure supports her argument that "the visual sense we have of books has very much shaped the ‘associative paths' we see and follow when we think about our selves and our bodies."

Wysocki goes further in using digital affordances to communicate her ideas. On one screen, clicking on an image of a body causes that body to morph into an image of a book—visually enacting the connection between body and book that she presents.

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There are numerous other examples. On the screen about discomfort, for instance, text fades in and out in a way that is uncomfortable to read; the reader is made to feel discomfort through the presentation of words.

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In these ways, Wysocki (2002) shows rather than simply tells her audience how body and book shape one another and are related.

Navigation

Navigation systems also provide ways in which scholars enact idea in digital webtexts. In “Textual Textuality,” for instance, Walker (2001) explains that the navigation system for her piece is meant to be frustrating, to reflect her own frustration with learning to read a bus schedule for the first time and, by extension, her frustration with interacting with and understanding the experiences of those of other races.

She explains:

"Those of you attempting to navigate this text may find its mapping system to be similarly frustrating, at least at first. However, there are guides provided to help readers create a coherent reading experience. A more detailed explanation of the navigation tools follows, but readers can begin here -- simply attending to the colors and signs that mark direction -- as they would in any unfamiliar space, moving or otherwise." (“introduction”)

The affordances of digital spaces allow her to construct a non-linear, multi-pronged navigational system so readers can experience what she wants them to understand about critical race theory.

While print certainly also allows for experimenting with and enacting ideas with form (e.g., found poetry), it is far more limited, at least insofar as the paradigmatic scholarly monograph is concerned. Webtexts provide an opportunity to break free of this limitation in a way that can be generative and meaningful. Obviously, webtexts, as any textual form, have their own set of limitations. But acknowledging the affordances and constraints of these—and having the opportunity to do so as part of tenure and promotion materials—reinforces that real scholarly work happens through the choice to use alternative forms that serve as appropriate outlets for ideas.

Moving scholarship to new forms moves scholars to new ways of thinking.

FINIS

To continue, click on the "blogs" link of the webtext (close full screen view, if you are using it).