

REMEDIATING THE CANON . ABSTRACTS + BIOS

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Core text abstract: *Re-situating and re-mediating the canons: A cultural-historical remapping of rhetorical activity* is a collaborative webtext, composed of a co-authored core text and eleven individual or jointly written data nodes. The core text argues that the classical canons have always represented only a partial map of rhetorical activity, that reinterpretations of those canons continue to be shaped by problematic assumptions of ancient rhetorics, and that a remapping of rhetorical activity grounded in cultural-historical activity theory better addresses the diversely mediated practices of rhetoric. The analyses and enactments in the data nodes then illustrate the promise of expanded rhetorical canons to tackle the complexity of human rhetorical practice.

Keywords: rhetoric, rhetorical canons, memory, cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT), literacy research, digital literacies, remediation, identity, writing research, multimodality.

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Hannah Bellwoar is a PhD candidate in the Center for Writing Studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Her research explores the interfaces between public and private and official and unofficial discourses in medical spaces. She has taught several courses at the University of Illinois in business and professional writing, rhetoric and composition, and most recently, writing with video. In her own research and teaching, she is exploring how we write and are written in multi-modal contexts.

Abstract: Digital health and feminist (re)visionings of healing addresses the call of feminist scholars such as Treichler, Cartwright, and Penley (1998) to theorize vision, medicine, and the patient/female's relationship to disease by using the call of Writing Studies scholars and placing critique side by side with images that reinvent the spaces where digital health is represented. In this web installation, these calls are taken up through three parallel narratives: an academic narrative that takes up academic sources, a personal narrative that explores the writer's relationship with her own medical experiences and medical records, and a reflective narrative, found in audio files throughout the installation, that reflect on the choices made in the other two narratives to convey those perspectives.

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Patrick Berry is a PhD candidate in the Center for Writing Studies and Department of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is Assistant Director for the Center and Associate Editor for the journal *Computers and Composition*. He has taught courses in first-year composition, professional writing, and new media. His research concentrates on English teachers' literacy narratives as a family of genres to explore intersections among literacy, personal experience, technology, and social class.

Abstract: If we remediate and re-situate the canons to foreground the ever-present work of mediation and distribution, we move beyond a model where mediation is simply a choice of modality. Instead, we see messages crossing genres and media—and being remade in the process. For example, the story of *Pygmalion* has remained a perennial trope and has been retold throughout history and across modes. For rhetoricians, Bernard Shaw's (1913)

rendition of the tale is especially poignant in its foregrounding of language as a significant, though not exclusive, mediator. Beginning with Shaw's play, **Critical remediation: Locating Eliza** traces several remediations of the Eliza narrative, the story of the flower girl who learned how to act and speak like a duchess. In reading these different representations of Eliza and her literacy, I link Bolter and Grusin's theory of remediation with the all too familiar remediation of the lagging student. In doing this, I illustrate how a conception of delivery unhinged from a particular mode or media might offer a productive way of exploring literate practice.

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Karen J. Lunsford is an Assistant Professor of Writing in the Writing Program at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Her research employs interdisciplinary approaches to understand the writing practices that people engage in within evolving knowledge ecologies, how argumentation is situated within those ecologies, and what roles technologies play in these contexts.

Abstract: Although today's electronic, scientific journals—often little more than digitized copies of traditional print journals—have not realized the full potential of hypermedia environments, they have nonetheless achieved a revolution in text distribution on the Internet. This revolution has inspired several recent debates over serious challenges to traditional notions of copyright, peer review, and economic viability. However, what has been overlooked has been how the remediation (in Bolter & Grusin's 1999 sense) of print journals relates to the simultaneous remediation of scientific instruments and tools (such as genome and image databases, and virtual simulations). **Remediating science: A case study of socialization** focuses on a science journal editor's experiences with the remediation of his journal, and the socialization that remediation entailed.

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Paul Prior is an Associate Professor (English) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where he has served as Associate Director of the Center for Writing Studies and Director of Freshman Rhetoric. In situated studies drawing on cultural-historical activity theory, he has explored connections among writing, reading, talk, learning, and disciplinarity. This work has appeared in articles, chapters, and *Writing/disciplinarity: A sociohistoric account of literate activity in the academy* (1998). He has also co-edited with Charles Bazerman *What writing does and how it does it: An introduction to analyzing texts and textual practices* (2004). For further details see his [homepage](#).

Abstract: Remaking IO, remaking rhetoric: Semiotic remediation as situated rhetorical practice offers an analysis of the practices of a group led by two art and design professors and two student research assistants as they engage in the process of *remediating* (Bolter and Grusin, 1999) a web-based art object called *IO*, an interactive site that mixes words and images. Drawing on data (videotapes of work sessions, recorded interviews, screen captures of the web site, print documents) collected over an eight-month period, I examine features of the group's redesign process as they worked to enhance *IO* by building a new database and developing a new interface. The group's interactions involved a heterogeneous collection of tools and acts, including writing a PHP/MYSQL database and doing data entry; viewing, talking, and gesturing over computer screens; viewing, talking, and gesturing over pencil drawings and whiteboard diagrams that represented the screen and the database; programming the site for Macromedia Flash; talking, gesturing, and note-taking around a table; and participating in online user forums. The group was enabled and constrained by the specific affordances of the computer programs, hardware, and networks as they worked to realize their visions in those material forms. Whereas the classical canons offer a limited framework for understanding or engaging in such complexly mediated rhetorical activity, the cultural-historical remapping we propose in our core text is well suited to such practices.

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Liz Rohan is Assistant Professor of Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Her research interests include feminist research methodologies, literacy studies, computers and writing, creative non-fiction/life writing and American Studies. She has published several articles about women and literacy. Her latest appeared in the Winter 2006 issue of *Pedagogy*. One of her articles won the NCTE Award for Best Article Reporting Historical Research or Textual Studies in Technical or Scientific Communication. Another article won the 2004 Ellen Nold Award for Best Article in Computers and Composition Studies.

Abstract: Nobody told me that college was this hard!: "Venting" in the grad stacks describes a rhetoric and cultural practice that is unique to a certain ecology, University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus at the turn of the twenty-first century. Over the past 20 years, at least, students have used the grooves in the metal heating vents at the graduate library to write messages to one another about the latest football game, their various states of angst, the weather, their sexual status in general or du jour, and their struggles with learning. Venting shows how rhetoric "makes people" through imagined communities. Venting also foregrounds the agency of artifacts and their remediation in relationship to mnemonic activity. Venters' memories of college life are constantly recycled by new contexts as new texts are added and erased over time. Venting draws attention to the production of rhetoric as a system in which the rhetor is but one agent.

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Kevin Roozen is an Assistant Professor of English at Auburn University. His interests in cultural-historical activity theory and methodologies, literacy studies, and longitudinal portraits of literate development inform his inquiries into how persons weave literate lives from multiple and diverse experiences with writing and reading. His work has appeared in *Text and Talk: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Language, Discourse, and Communication Studies*.

Abstract: Drawing from a longitudinal study of the non-school and school writing done by Brian, a former math education major at the University of Illinois, **Pi, the Poetry Slam, and mathemagicians: Tracing trajectories of practice and person** explores the interplay among and across three of Brian's literate engagements: as a student in upper-division mathematics courses, a member of a sketch comedy troupe, and a gaming enthusiast developing content for a role-playing game. Woven from still images, video clips, and interview excerpts, these vignettes of Brian doing advanced mathematics, creating and performing sketch comedy, and constructing a role-playing game illustrate the profoundly laminated nature of literate activity and the remediation of practices and identities across multiple contexts. Understanding the development of actors and artifacts across settings, this webtext argues, demands a theoretical framework more finely attuned to the chains of remediation that link rhetorical engagements as well as the full range of practices and identities that persons bring to bear on their activities.

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Mary P. Sheridan-Rabideau is an Assistant Professor at Rutgers University where she teaches classes at the intersection of literacy, gender, and technology. She has published in *Computers and Composition*, *Written Communication*, and the *Journal for Basic Writing*, is co-editor of *Feminism and composition: A critical sourcebook* and is the author of the forthcoming book, *Girls, feminism, and grassroots literacies: Activism in the GirlZone*.

Abstract: In the past decade, work like Robert Putnam's *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community* have promoted discussions about the decline of community

in forums as diverse as Camp David and *People* magazine. As a literacy scholar, I too address this pressing social concern, combining my interests in how changing socio-economic conditions shape local community building with my interest in how rapid technological and social changes alter contemporary needs and possibilities for literacy. To investigate these intertwining inquiries, I examine the literate activities at one community organization called “Artists Now” which is devoted to bringing “culturally diverse programming” (e.g., Celtic Ceilidhs, West African drummers and dancers) to children and adults in the schools, homes, and community centers of Highland Park, NJ. Artists Now attempts to foster an appreciation for the arts and through this to build a local community invested in the arts.

In ***Kairos* and community building: Implications for literacy researchers**. I examine the struggles Artists Now is undergoing to put up a billboard that coincides with multiple events surrounding Artists Now’s growing institutionalization during the summer of 2006. In particular, I examine how the material and political conditions that surround this billboard call these organizers to rethink their public representation as it becomes visually locked in time and place, across a 45 x 9 space that is controlled by competing local politicians. To understand the complexity of placing public representations such as this billboard is to understand how literate activities function as a nexus of distributed resources and competing interests. Analyzing this nexus calls for an expanded mapping of rhetorical activity, one that can better address how multiple networks shift relations among production and distribution and call upon resources striated across time and space.

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Jody Shipka is an assistant professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. **Bill Chewing** is an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County majoring in English Communication and Technology with a focus on media studies and writing pedagogy for secondary and higher education.

Abstract: Drawing on interview data that Shipka collected in May, 2003, **live composition: four variations of a telling** provides its audience with a series of diversely-mediated mappings of the rhetorical, material, affective, and interpersonal strategies that one of her former first-year composition students employed while facilitating an in-class activity called “Music Day.” Described by Ben, the student whose composing processes are represented here, as an experience that allowed his class to “have fun with writing,” and to “take writing to a different plane of thinking,” Music Day was a two-day multimodal, multipart rhetorical event. Its success depended greatly on Ben’s ability to solicit his classmates’ reception of, and participation in, an activity that had been specifically engineered to disrupt the day-to-day routine of the class and to invite members of the class out of their respective “comfort zones.”

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Janine Solberg is a PhD candidate in the Center for Writing Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her scholarly interests include new media, gender, professional writing, and writing technologies. She is currently completing her dissertation, *Pretty typewriters: Gender, technology, and literacy in career advice literature for women, 1900-1945*.

Abstract: In **Re-membering identity: Recovering textual networks through a remediated canon**, I explore the socialization of women clerical workers in the early twentieth century as a kind of distributed work, mediated by texts and by the cultural/material channels through which those texts circulated. I do this by discussing a sampling of early twentieth century career advice texts, written to describe and guide women seeking clerical work after the turn of the century. Drawn from magazine articles, educational films, and handbooks, these constitute a rich if scattered archive, and represent an important means of negotiating gender identity amidst the swift and sweeping (technology-enabled) cultural changes of the early twentieth century.

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Derek Van Ittersum is a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research interests include computers and composition, sociohistoric theory, and innovative computer software. He is currently at work on his dissertation, which traces the diffusion of innovative writing technologies over time through a historical examination of the systems associated with computer engineer Douglas Engelbart as well as interviews with modern writers about their use and resistance to innovative writing tools.

Abstract: Traditional views of the canon of memory limit it to mere memorization or, at best, memorization of lists of topics to be used during invention and thus is easily dismissed as irrelevant in the age of computers. **Data-palace: Modern memory work in digital environments** presents audio interviews paired with screen capture recordings of modern writers' memory work to argue that cultural-historical activity theory, particularly theories of distributed cognition, provide more robust ways of understanding the digital tools, practices, and products of modern memory work.

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Joyce R. Walker is an assistant professor at Western Michigan University, where she is the Director of First Year Composition. Her research centers on the intersections between individual identities and digital technologies—particularly in the ways that compositional practices inform and are informed by the development of cyborg identities. Her recent publications include several articles published in the online journal *Kairos*: “While you were out: Furnishing digital space for a new decade,” and “Hyper.Activity: Reading and writing in digital spaces.” Other recent articles include “New media and the teaching of critical race theory: Or, ‘How my computer taught me to speak,’” (published in *Readerly/Writerly Texts*) and “Narratives in the database: Memorializing September 11th online” (forthcoming in *Computers & Composition*).

Abstract: My goal in this short narrative, **Research stories: Composing narratives of research practice** is to tell a story about how CHAT has worked to help me think about, plan research for, and investigate people and their literate activities. What I find as I reflect, is that although my original (and still principal) interest is in the ways that narratives about literate activities work to shape identity (as well as subsequent literate practices), I have used CHAT to help me “re-situate rhetoric in complex sociohistoric worlds and to realize not simply a consistent multimodality, but a deep orientation to mediated activity and agency.”

In particular, my interest in digital technologies has involved me in research environments where theories related to narrative and storytelling alone are not adequate tools for incorporating either the sense of space, memory, and interaction that occur specifically in certain kinds of digital spaces, or the relationship of digital spaces and artifacts to those in the physical world.