

**Figure 5.1: An Example Heuristic for Assessing the Scholarly Value of Online Texts (Warner, 2007)**

### **An Example Heuristic for Assessing the Scholarly Value of Online Texts**

#### **Content**

*Considers whether the content of the text meets traditional standards of scholarship.*

- Does the text establish clear goals within an introductory, prominent node?
- Does the text incorporate documentation to support the logical appeal of the argument?
- Does the text contextualize the main argument and demonstrate its significance within the field by offering a review of relevant literature?
- Does the author employ a method acceptable in the field?
- Does the text establish a formal tone throughout a majority of content-based nodes?

#### **Web-based allowances**

*Considers whether the text incorporates the allowances of the medium to enhance the rhetorical effect of the argument as well as to justify its construction within the online environment.*

- Does the text divide content into discrete nodes?
- Does the text move beyond print-based forms of presentation and provide a multi-linear navigation option (either visually guided or fully multi-linear) for readers to select their own path based on their interests and needs?
- Does the text provide internal and external linked contextualizing nodes that enhance the content?
- Does the form enact or exemplify the content in some way?
- Does the text incorporate multi-media to enhance or present the content?

#### **Emerging conventions**

*Considers whether the text follows emerging conventions of web-based writing in order to accommodate the new reading experience (e.g., in terms of navigation, coherence, and screen-reading).*

- Does the text provide navigation instructions (particularly if it is extensive) comprised of multiple nodes and designed with a multi-linear structure?
- Does the text include a textual or graphical webview that shows the extent of the web, indicates the connections among nodes, and provides direct link access to main content nodes?
- Does the text incorporate an effective rhetoric of link text?
- Do the text's nodes include contextualizing information that connects to the main argument?
- Does the author provide a rationale for the formal design of the text?
- Does the text incorporate visual elements (e.g., icons, graphics, and images) to assist with navigation and/or to enhance the content?
- Does the text provide feedback for link activation as a way to enhance navigation?