

**UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

NEW FACULTY INITIATIVE GRANT

Evaluation Group: _____ A (Sciences & Mathematics) _____ B (Social Sciences)
__X__ C (Humanities)

Principal Investigator	Department	Year of Appointment at ISU
Cheryl E. Ball	English	2007

Project Title: Digital Scholarship in the Humanities, Part 1: Authors' Composition and Revision Processes of New Media Scholarship

Does this research involve the use of human subjects? Yes __X__ No _____
Does this research involve the use of animal subjects? Yes _____ No __X__

TOTAL AMOUNT requested for projects (from budget page) _____ \$3500 _____

Investigator Signature: _____ Date __12-3-07__

.....

DEPARTMENT ACTION

Proposal is eligible for submission to the College. Yes _____ No _____

Chair Signature: _____ Date: _____

.....

Please submit the original proposal, plus as many copies as specified by your department chair, to your department chair by November 5, 2007. Departments must forward original proposal with signatures and you must submit your on-line proposal to the College Office by 4:00 P.M. on December 3, 2007.

Digital Scholarship in the Humanities, Part 1: Authors' Composition and Revision Processes of New Media Scholarship

Cheryl E. Ball, Department of English

ABSTRACT

My research question is whether new media scholars' writing processes are the same whether they are composing for print or new media. That is, do the rhetorical decisions authors make when they are composing change depending on whether they are writing for print or writing for new media. My primary objective is to discover the connections (as well as any disconnections) between these composition processes for authors, whom I will interview. My purpose in doing this research is to compare the value of new media composition processes to the already-valued processes of composing for print. In addition, I hope to discover value differences between these composition strategies. The outcomes will include a national conference presentation and an article.

STATEMENT OF NEED/SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

1. The Problem of Reading Digital Scholarship

In December 2006, the Modern Language Association of America (MLA), which is the guiding association for departments of English and foreign languages and literatures in higher education, published a 100-page report on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion. Just under six pages of this report were dedicated to digital forms of scholarship, and the forms the report discusses can be categorized as traditional, print-based scholarship digitized for an archive (i.e., Project MUSE; see p. 43, and subsequent footnote). Those six pages, labeled "Scholarship in New Media," signal that digital scholarship is gaining legitimacy in the field. And, yet, that legitimacy gap between refereed print articles and refereed electronic articles still exists. For instance, the survey on which the MLA report was based, indicated that "print articles count [...] in 97.9% of departments, as compared with 46.8% for articles in electronic form" (p. 45). In addition, the acceptance of digital scholarship in tenure cases is complicated by the reporting of as many as 50% of department heads who indicate that "they have had no experience evaluating scholarly work produced in these new forms by candidates for tenure and promotion" (p. 44). Based on these numbers, the report suggests that tenure committees do not have the familiarity to read or evaluate digital scholarship, not even for linear, print-based scholarship that has been digitized for archival purposes. Further complicating matters, then, is the growing body of humanities research that incorporates the use of non-linear, non-alphabetic, multimedia in its scholarly publications.

2. Defining Multiliteracies and New Media Scholarship

Since the mid-1980s, humanities scholarship (creative and research-based) has been shifting to take advantage of digital, multimedia technologies (see Bolter, 2002). Of particular import to this proposal is the uptake of *multiliteracies* in the early 2000s. The New London Group (Cope & Kalantzis, eds., 2000) defined multiliteracies as communicating in multiple modes of meaning making such as through aural/oral, visual, and gestural ways. In a recent webtext (an article designed specifically for interactive, online distribution), Allison Warner (2007) described how this shift has taken place in digital scholarship:

While a majority of texts published in online journals over the past decade actually are print-replicated articles that follow traditional conventions of scholarly arguments (see Krause,

2002; Ball, 2004), a growing trend within online journals is the publication of web-based texts that are increasingly more reliant on hypertextual and hypermedia strategies to tell their stories and make their arguments. (n.p.)

On one end of the spectrum of digital scholarship, Warner outlines print-replicated articles, like those the MLA Report discusses. On the other end of the digital scholarship spectrum is new media scholarship, which can only be published in digital format because it includes interactive, media-rich elements such as video, sound, and navigational graphics. New media scholarship uses the hypertextual and hypermedia (i.e., digital, interactive, multimedia) components Warner discussed and, typically, takes its use of multimedia elements a step farther, moving away from meaning making via alphabetic writing in favor of meaning making using graphics, animation, soundtracks, video, and other multimedia elements.

3. The Need for Research about New Media Scholarship

Despite the growing number of authors who use multiple modes and media in their scholarship, this type of digital scholarship is disparaged by the larger humanities community, as evidenced by the MLA Report's nondiscussion of new media scholarship in the section called "Scholarship in New Media." Another example of new media scholarship's dismissal in the field was provided by James English, then-President of the Council of Editors of Learned Journals, who remarked in his 2004 MLA address (which was later published in the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*) that

The actual quantity of scholarship of this more innovative sort, as represented in academic journals, is infinitesimal, and it is mostly to be found in the journals of low-rung academic fields whose claims to scholarly legitimacy would in any case be disputed. (The best example is *Kairos*, a rhetoric and composition journal focused on the use of computing in the teaching of writing. Given the lowly status of composition studies within humanistic research, the *Kairos*' editors preference for "webtexts" over conventional articles is liable to being read as tacit capitulation to the weakness of their field rather than as a sign of its exceptional inventiveness.) (p. 10)

If ever there were a better call to research about digital scholarship, I have not seen it. No one—certainly not me, as a capitulating editor of *Kairos*!—appreciates having their entire field dismissed by a respected person in the field. But given that English's statement above represents a seeming consensus to MLA constituents, it is not surprising that tenure committees don't know how to read digital scholarship. They don't *care* about digital scholarship; and it might be said, based on English's tone above, that they disdain new media scholarship. Therefore, it is all the more important that research is done on every aspect of digital and new media scholarship, results of which can be used to encourage readers that while they may not care about it, they do need to pay attention to it.

4. The Scope of Research Needed, and My Focus

Although current scholarship proposes how to read hypertextual and new media texts (see, e.g., Ball, 2004; Johnson-Eilola, 1997; Landow, 1994; Murray, 1997; Sloane, 2000), several of which address tenure committees specifically (see Krause, 2007; Warner, 2007; Webb, forthcoming), there are many questions that remain unanswered in this field of research:

1. how do authors compose and revise new media texts?
2. how do journals peer review (i.e., value the scholarly worth of) new media texts?
3. what are the institutional values placed on new media texts in relation to tenure print-traditions and guidelines?
4. how do tenure-track faculty prepare/construct their tenure portfolios (for readers who aren't familiar with reading new media work) if their portfolios include new media scholarship?
5. how do tenure reviewers read and evaluate new media texts?

For the purposes of this New Faculty Initiative Grant, my focus will be on the first question: How do authors compose and revise new media texts? Although I have been discussing how tenure committees, for instance, *read* new media scholarship, I do not believe that that research question is a production place to start since, as the MLA Report states, tenure committees have little experience reading such work. It is my belief that a larger connection can be made between how authors *compose* new media and how stakeholders—such as editorial boards of online journals who should be experts in reading new media—make meaning from those finished compositions. Therefore, my goal is to start from the beginning of the scholarly process and to explore how authors compose new media texts. (I plan to address the other questions in later research.)

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH

My research question is whether new media scholars' writing processes are the same whether they are composing for print or new media. That is, do the rhetorical decisions authors make when they are composing change depending on whether they are writing for print or writing for new media. My primary objective is to discover the connections (as well as any disconnections) between these composition processes for authors. The purpose of answering this objective is to assign value to new media composition processes as they relate to the already-valued processes of composing for print as well as to discover the value of differences between these composition strategies.

RESEARCH PLAN

To complete this research, I will interview and observe 2–3 writing studies scholars who are known producers of print and new media scholarship. Possible participants will be drawn from a national survey about new media composition studies, for which I was principle investigator in 2005; the survey contained a large section about digital and new media scholarship with detailed questions about which of the participants were publishing (or were planning to publish) such work (see Anderson et al, 2006 for details on this study). I will cross-check this list with authors in online journals to see who has already published new media scholarship, which will allow me to choose 2–3 scholars whose work with new media is at varying stages—from an author just beginning to compose in new media to one who has experience composing in new media. (I am checking with IRB to see if I need human subjects approval for this research.)

Based on my knowledge of the field, I have three participants who I am currently considering inviting to participate:

- Jason Palmeri (Miami University of Ohio). He is planning on revising a portion of his print dissertation for new media publication. He has never published a new media piece before.
- Carrie Lamanna (Colorado State University). She recently completed her dissertation, which included three digital chapters, composed in Flash, which she is revising for online publication.
- Danielle DeVoss (Michigan State University). She has published numerous print and new media scholarly pieces over the last several years.

They are representative of the diverse experiences I want to interview, but if they are not available, there are others whom I can invite.

Once participants have been chosen, contacted, and have agreed to participate in the study, I will interview them about their print and new media composing processes. My plan is to interview them in a face-to-face setting, preferably at the location where they typically compose, so that I can videotape the interviews and get screen captures of any new media works-in-progress. I will ask them to walk me through their composition processes for both a print article and a new media piece. For the

new media piece (either in-progress or recently completed), I will ask them to perform a read-aloud protocol in which they describe the rhetorical (and aesthetic) choices they are making/made as they composed. From this data, I will analyze their narrative responses, indicate the status of their new media pieces (stalled, submitted, under review, published, etc.) and generate a thesis based on both unique and similar data patterns that appear across the three participants.

The outcomes of this project include

- a print article, for submission to a journal (to reach a traditional and influential readership in the field) such as *College English*. The article will discuss the relationship between composing for print and composing for new media.
- at least two conferences presentations, with the hopes of presenting at MLA 2008.

I have chosen to pursue a print publication with this research so that the scope of readers is larger than those already committed to new media scholarship. In addition to these outcomes, the interviews/data will be used for further research toward my larger research agenda, as outlined in section 4 (“Scope”) above. I am in preliminary discussions with a new, online scholarly press about publishing the entirety of the research as a digital, interactive book.

BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

The budget of \$3500 includes the following:

Travel (\$3000)

- flight, car rental, 2-nights hotel, per diem to 3 participant locations
@ ~\$1000 per trip x 3 trips = \$3000

Equipment (\$500)

- digital video camera, lavalier mic, tripod, carrying case, video cassette tapes, firewire cable
@ total = \$500

BIBLIOGRAPHY/WORKS OF INTEREST

- Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of Scholarly Publishing. (2002). The future of scholarly publishing. *Modern Language Association Website*. Retrieved November 7 2007, from <http://www.mla.org/resources/documents/issues_scholarly_pub/repview_future_pub>.
- Anderson, Daniel; Atkins, Anthony; Ball, Cheryl E.; Homicz Millar, Krista; Selfe, Cynthia; & Selfe, Richard. (2006). Integrating multimodality in composition curricula: Survey methodology and results from a CCCC Research Initiative grant. *Composition Studies*, 34(2).
- Ball, Cheryl E. (2004). Show, not tell: The value of new media scholarship. *Computers & Composition*, 21, 403–425.
- Bolter, Jay David. (2002). *Writing space*. New Jersey: Erlbaum.
- Cope, Bill, & Kalantzis, Mary. (Eds.). (2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. New York: Routledge.
- English, James. (2005). Journals as innovators and the innovation of journals: The Council of Editors of Learned Journals Keynote Addresses MLA Convention 2004. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 37(1).

- Greenblatt, Stephen. (2002). A special letter from Stephen Greenblatt. *Modern Language Association Website*. Retrieved November 6, 2007, from <http://www.mla.org/resources/documents/rep_scholarly_pub/scholarly_pub>.
- Johnson-Eilola, Johndan. (1997). *Nostalgic angels: Rearticulating hypertext writing*. Stamford, CT: Ablex.
- Kalmbach, James. (2007). Reading the archives: Ten years on nonlinear (Kairos) history. *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 11(1). Retrieved November 7, 2007, from <<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/11.1/binder.html?topoi/kalmbach/index.html>>.
- Krause, Steve. (2007). Where do I list this on my CV?: Considering the values of self-published web sites (Version 2.0). *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 12(1). Retrieved November 7, 2007, from <<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/12.1/binder.html?topoi/krause/index.html>>.
- Landow, George. (Ed.). (1994). *Hyper/Text/Theory*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Murray, Janet H. (1997). *Hamlet on the holodeck: The future of narrative in cyberspace*. New York: The Free Press.
- Report of the MLA Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion. (2006). Retrieved November 7, 2007, from <http://www.mla.org/tenure_promotion>.
- Sloane, Sarah. (2000). *Digital fictions: Storytelling in a material world*. Stamford, CT: Ablex.
- Warner, Allison. (2007). Constructing a tool for assessing scholarly webtexts. *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 12(1). Retrieved November 7, 2007, from <<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/12.1/binder.html?topoi/warner/index.html>>.

**UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM
PROFESSIONAL OUTCOME FORM**

Check appropriate boxes:	
Type of outcome: <input type="checkbox"/> Intended Professional Outcome (Submit with URG proposal) <input type="checkbox"/> Accomplished Professional Outcome (Due October 12, 2009) (PFIG)	Faculty Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Tenured <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Tenured URG Category <input type="checkbox"/> New Faculty Initiative Grant (NFIG) <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Tenure Faculty Initiative Grant <input type="checkbox"/> Summer Faculty Fellowship (SFF) <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty Research Award (FRA)
Principal Investigator(s) - Please print.	College/Department(s)
Cheryl E. Ball	CAS/English
Title of Proposal: Digital Scholarship in the Humanities, Part 1: Authors' Composition and Revision Processes of New Media Scholarship	

Briefly describe the URG project (3-5 lines)

This proposal outlines a plan of study regarding the value of digital, new media scholarship. I will research how authors compose print scholarship compared to new media scholarship so that connections between traditional and nontraditional composition processes can be evaluated. The goal of this project is to assign value to new media scholarship based on the rhetorical, scholarly choices authors make in such work, and to explain that value in terms useful to stakeholders such as tenure committees who read/evaluate digital scholarship.

List the intended outcome(s) (i.e. the product/work/result) of this URG briefly and clearly. Be specific regarding the number of items in each category listed. **Outcomes must be completed by October 12, 2009.**

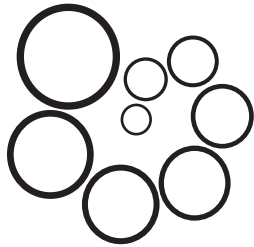
- a print article, for submission to a journal (to reach a traditional and influential readership in the field) such as *College English*. The article will discuss the relationship between composing for print and composing for new media.
- at least two conferences presentations, with the hopes of presenting at MLA 2008 or 2009.

Signatures:

P.I. _____ Date: _____

Chair _____ Date: _____

Dean _____ Date: _____



CHERYL E. BALL

Department of English
Campus Box 4240
Illinois State University
Normal, IL 61790-4240
Office: 309. 438. 3152
cball@ilstu.edu

abbreviated vita (updated 11/07):
digital scholarship & tenure research agenda

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS Assistant Professor, English Department, Illinois State University. 2007–present.
Assistant Professor, English Department, Utah State University. 2004–2007.

EDUCATION PhD in Rhetoric & Technical Communication, Michigan Technological University, 2005.
Dissertation: A New Media Reading Strategy.

EDITORSHIPS Co-Editor, *Kairos: A Journal of Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*. (2006–present). [*Kairos* only publishes multimedia, digital scholarship. I served as a section editor from 2001–2006.]

SCHOLARSHIP
books Ball, Cheryl E., & Kalmbach, Jim. (Eds.). (under contract). *RAW: Reading and writing new media*. Hampton Press: Creskill, NJ.

peer-reviewed articles/webtexts Arola, Kristin L., & Ball, Cheryl E. (2007). A conversation: From “They call me doctor?!” to tenure. *Computers & Composition Online*. [Invited].

Ball, Cheryl E. (2004). Show, not tell: The value of new media scholarship. *Computers & Composition*, 21, 403–425.

Ball, Cheryl E. (under review). Toward a reading heuristic for new media texts. *Written Communication* [Special issue: Research on New Media].

Kuhn, Virginia, & Ball, Cheryl E. (in revision). Embrace and ambivalence: The academy’s love-hate relationship with digital scholarship. *College Composition and Communication*.

invited & accepted scholarly presentations (2008, October). The new work of composing: Digital scholarship. Thomas R. Watson Conference in Rhetoric and Composition. University of Louisville, KY. [Invited panel].

(2008, March). Peer-review in new media: The process of evaluation as example for tenure and promotion committees. Conference on College Composition and Communication, New Orleans, LA.

(2006, July). Multimodal composition practices: Overviews and impacts on tenure & promotion. Virtual Reality & Real Life (VR@RL) Conference. [Invited presentation].

(2006, May). Editing scholarship in a new media age. *Computers & Writing*, Lubbock, TX.

(2004, June). Scholarship in digital spaces. *Computers & Writing Conference*, Honolulu, HI. [Invited plenary session]

(2004, March). Strong stories in digital scholarship: How time, tenure, & technology impact new & nontenured faculty members. Conference on College Composition & Communication, San Antonio, TX.

national service (2007–present). Member. Task Force on Digital Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion. (Working group from C&W Conference.) [invited]