

Hypermedia

Some Technology, Some Implications

Handouts: Day Seven

Tuesday, 14 September 1999

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Hypermedia Tutorial: Day Seven

Class 07: Writing and Reading Hypertext

Held Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Summary

- Due:
 - Citation exercise
 - Teaching web
- Assigned (all due on Thursday):
 - Project Perseus
 - Williams, *Style*, Chapter 1
 - Booth, Columb, and Williams, *The Craft of Research*, Chapter 1
 - Bolter, *Writing Space*, Chapters 6 and 7
 - Stuart Moulthrop, “You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media”

Handouts

- Daily handouts
 - Outline of class 7
 - Reading assignment: Project Perseus
 - Reading assignment: Williams, *Style*, Chapter 1
 - Reading assignment: Booth, Columb, and Williams, *The Craft of Research*, Chapter 1
 - Reading assignment: Bolter, *Writing Space*, Chapters 6 and 7
 - Reading assignment: Stuart Moulthrop, “You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media”
 - Discussion procedures
- Moulthrop, Stuart (1991). You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media. *Postmodern Culture* 1, 3.

Notes

- It still seems that many of you are having trouble getting questions to me on time. Please work on it!
 - No, you don’t have to come up with advance questions for Thursday, since I haven’t given you a lot of time for these readings.
- Rebecca will only be here for the second half of class today and Thursday, as she had prior commitments to other tutorials.

On Traditional Writing

- Before we delve into questions of writing and reading hypermedia, let us first consider how one writes (or is expected to write) a traditional argumentative paper.
- This is, of course, the *skills* section of today's course.
- As you might expect, different people have different strategies. I'll do my best to identify commonalities.
 - We'll also work on exercises to help with these techniques.
- Most writers quickly discover that writing is not so much a series of fixed steps as a collection of techniques that you alternate between.
- Often, you'll start with a broad *question*.
 - This may be something that interests you. "Is it really the case that soccer is as successful at breaking down barriers as Billy Bragg claims?"
 - This may be something that your instructor assigns. "Consider what Landow's *The Victorian Web* says about the hypertextual potential of the World-Wide Web."
 - This may be an idea you've founded in considering an instructor's questions. "Why do I believe that hypertext should be infinite?"
- You will then *identify sources* that can help you consider that question.
 - You may recall that we spent the previous class discussing how one finds sources.
- While reading sources, you *gather notes* about the sources.
- You then gather these notes into *topics* and *subtopics*.
- Often, you will then *link* the topics together as you consider their relationships.
- It may be a good to then *brainstorm* potential ideas or claims.
- You can then *select* an initial idea or claim.
 - It is likely that you revise or refine this idea or claim.
- From this point on, different writers seem to have very different techniques.
 - Some will *free write* an essay. Basically, the goal here is to get ideas down, but not worry so much about organization or coherence.
 - Others will *outline* the essay, considering the structure of their argument.
- From this point, you move toward a *draft* of the essay. When creating a draft, you should consider both structure and words.
- You will then repeatedly refine your draft as you
 - Correct grammar and spelling
 - Improve organization
 - Improve phrasing
 - Add transitions
 - ...

Writing Exercises

We'll start with a question: *What does Landow's "The Victorian Web" suggest about the World-Wide Web as a hypertext system?*

- In groups of three or four, spend about ten minutes identifying as many topics as you can that might fit in that essay. In doing so, you may want to consider the questions that you and your colleagues asked.
 - Draw your topics on one part of the board so that we can have a broader conversation.
 - Also draw links between your topics.
- Individually, spend about three minutes list as many claims or ideas as you can find. We'll read these aloud.
- Pick two that interest you the most. Write a short paragraph about each. (These are not introductory paragraphs; they are one-paragraph essays.)
- In groups of three or four, pick one of the paragraphs and write an outline (on the board) of a longer essay on the topic.

Questions from the Readings

The Victorian Web

The Web as Hypertext

- Why are some links Bold, whereas others are plain blue underlined for the hyperlink? When both go to menus or page references, should there not be a standard?
- Should hypertext documents if composed by more than one author have a standard page form, or should the authors be free to express themselves as they wish in their page construction?
- Can authors then claim a certain page construction theirs and make it their signature style. Dare I ask, can one copyright a Web page format?
- The Victorian Web Page has been linked with a start page and between documents to create as true a "hypertext" as possible. Should the start page be used in the first place? Wouldn't it be more interesting to find your way to one page and then immerse yourself in different topics from the first page? Or is it better to use the start page?
- The documents are linked between each other by topic within the document. Would it be helpful to include links at the bottom of pages to assist the reader after he or she has finished the document itself?
- It seems as if this document is more like a hypertext than anything I have ever seen before. It is a web of information linked together electronically and it is alterable. Is there anyway it cannot be considered a hypertext? If there is, is there anything that can be considered a hypertext?
- This web of information is a nice way to look up information on Victorian subjects. What are the origins of its creation? Why was this information put on the Web?

Content

- What would Victorians think of the state of the world today? - We are more technologically advanced, racially integrated, have safer labor laws and more secular.
- Was the socially helping attitude of the Victorians contradictory to how they treated and/or viewed the Irish?
- Were the Victorians really that much like modern-day America, as the opening page states?? Landow mentions the institutions of patriotism, sexual morality, and the family, but these institutions seem to be dying--or at least degrading--in America today. Have we fallen from our high pedestal, as the

Victorians eventually did?

- In addressing the same issues, was the reign of Queen Victoria really the beginning of a set of ideals that remained popular and vital in a society that continues today? Has the change really been that notable?

Bolter, Part I

Although these questions appear in the previous outline, they are repeated here for convenience.

- As computers become more common as a place for writing, will handwriting become secondary? Do we foresee a day when handwriting will no longer be taught in schools? Is this giving up the creativity that can come with handwriting in the name of convenience?
- If all of this amazing information resources and new way of communicating can be found on by using a computer and modem, is there a social gap being created between the "haves" and the "have nots"? Is this problem being addressed anywhere? Should it be?
- Will the written book, as we know it, disappear over time?
- Will anything surpass the Internet in terms of media in our lifetime?
- Is taking pen to paper "no less technological than writing at a computer screen" (37) as Bolter claims? When considering our progression as writers (from papyrus to the printed book), how does electronic text compare?
- Will the development of hypertext lead to more indepth reading and a greater comprehension of material, foster speed-reading in effort for a quick attainment of facts, or both?
- How is a new writing space (for example virtual reality) going to influence our concepts of reading in terms of visual structure?
- What if the keyboard will be replaced by a microphone? Does the "writing space" change?
- Bolter spoke about the tendency to hold on to familiar forms of writing, as they are convenient to use (the pencil is still used, even though we now have computers) and inefficient methods go by the wayside. Will traditional (oral) story telling become archaic as new multimedia procedures progress?
- Will our reliance on hypertext communications lead to communication difficulties in countries that have insufficient computing resources? (question derived from page 37, Economies of Reading)
- I am intrigued by the concept of writing as technology (chap 3.). Following the process of modern writing evolution through the ages of purely oral through written on parchments, then bound volumes, then printed, and now electronically displayed. What struck me was the example of what an Ancient Greek would think of a bound volume of text, I fancy to wonder what I would think of the Writing technology of the 24th century. Already there is talk of books with electronic pages that could be completely re-written by a memory chip in the spine, perhaps thought patterns will be next, will our computers 'think' at us?
- The concept of Pictorial Space (page 52) does not make much sense in that the book is vague and unclear about exactly what this thing is. What is Pictorial Space?
- What exactly does Bolter imply by stating that "the computer... challenges and disrupts our current economy of writing."(54) How does the computer have a negative impact on the present writing criterias?

Hypertext Nonfiction

- In the following, we will use our ever-evolving guidelines for discussion.

Types of Writing

- Before delving into a consideration of how writing hypertext is different, we might first consider what types of writing people commonly do.
- A first division (although not necessarily a correct one) is between fiction and nonfiction. For this week, we'll emphasize nonfiction.
- As we attempt to divide nonfiction, we may find a number of overlaps between categories.
- Here are a few to get you started:
 - Narrative and journalism (story-telling)
 - Summarization (encycloaedia)
 - Argumentation
- Where can we go from there?
- What effects does hypertext have on each?

Graphic Rhetoric

- Bolter concludes section I with a discussion of “graphic rhetoric”. Do we want to begin by considering that topic?
 - By the way, what is “rhetoric” (other than one of the classical liberal arts)?
 - What relationship does graphic rhetoric have to do with hypertext?
-

History

Monday, 22 March 1999

- Created as a blank outline. (Can you tell what I was doing during Spring break?)

Monday, 13 September 1999

- Filled in some details.

Assignments

Reading Assignment: Project Perseus

Assigned: Tuesday, 14 September 1999

Expected Discussion: Tuesday, 14 September 1999

Spend about thirty minutes exploring *Project Perseus* at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>. Make sure to read at least a few pages in the *Overview of Archaic and Classical Greek History* and to view some images of coins or vases.

Reading Assignment: Style: Causes

Assigned: Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Read by: Thursday, September 16, 1999

Read the preface to and chapter 1 (Causes) of Joseph M. Williams' *Style: Toward Clarity and Grace*.

Reading Assignment: The Craft of Research: Preliminary Readings

Assigned: Tuesday, September 14, 1999

Read by: Thursday, September 16, 1999

Read the preface to, prologue of, and chapter 1 (Thinking in Print) of *The Craft of Research*. Reflect on similarities between this and your other readings on writing.

Reading Assignment: Chapters 6 and 7 of Bolter

Assigned: Tuesday, 14 September 1999

Expected Discussion: Thursday, 16 September 1999

Read chapters 6 (The Electronic Book) and 7 (The New Dialogue) of Bolter's *Writing Space*.

Reading Assignment: Moulthrop's You Say You Want a Revolution

Assigned: Tuesday, 14 September 1999

Expected Discussion: Thursday, 16 September 1999

Read Stuart Moulthrop's *You Say You Want a Revolution? Hypertext and the Laws of Media*. Make sure that you look up any terms that he uses that you don't know.

Discussion Procedures

At Grinnell (and elsewhere), you will regularly engage in serious discussions and arguments about a number of topics. You will find that some discussions are both successful and enjoyable while others are painful and irritating. What makes a discussion good or useful?

- Better discussions often focus on a *central claim* or idea.
- Better discussions demonstrate a *continuity* of ideas: each comment or claim is linked, explicitly or implicitly, to prior comments and claims.
- Better discussions rely on *evidence* (most typically, from the readings).

For now, we will emphasize continuity. That is, each statement you make must *connect* to a prior statement or statements. Here are some of the connections you might make. When we first discuss, I'd like you to explicitly state what kind of connection you're making (and I'll try to put a list on the board).

- You can stake a *claim*. Typically, we will begin our discussions with a single claim. Once a claim has been made, you should not stake another claim.
- You can provide further *evidence* or examples to support or refute a claim.
- You can suggest or question the *warrant* that relates evidence to a claim.
- You can raise an *objection* to the claim.
 - This could be a possible flaw in the claim.
 - This could be a possible counter-claim.
- You can *refine* or *correct* the claim.
- You can *distinguish* between parts of a claim, often in conjunction with other connections.
 - For example, you might say something like "Jack has claimed that X, which is really a combination of Y and Z. While Jack is certainly correct in claiming Y, Jane has already disproven Z".
- You can *summarize* the discussion up to the present point.
- You can *relate* two or more earlier statements.
- You can comment on *structure* or *procedure* of the discussion. For example, "Joe's last comment seems to be bringing us further away from Jane's and Jack's earlier points".

Your connection might be a request for clarification of the prior statement or related issue.

- Could you rephrase that claim?
- Are you really saying ____?
- What warrant connects that evidence to the claim?
- What evidence do you have for that claim?