New Media Pedagogy

Collin Gifford Brooke

Humanities 2.0 is a humanities of engagement that addresses our collective histories and concern for history. To be valued by one's time requires making oneself responsible and responsive to one's time. For academics, this engagement entails a willingness to reconsider the most cherished assumptions and structures of their discipline.


In the ten-plus years that have elapsed since the first edition of this volume was published, there has been no larger “growth industry” in the field of composition (and perhaps in pedagogy more broadly) than the study and adoption of new media in our lives, classrooms, and institutions. Charles Moran’s chapter in that volume, on “Technology and the Teaching of Writing,” has not aged well, through no fault of his own. In the late 1990s, applications like “electronic mail,” online discussion platforms, the Web, and hypertext/media were (with some exceptions) the province of a small subset of the field, a community comprised mostly of graduate students and assistant professors. Online journals in the field were in their infancy, which explains what would now be a startling absence of electronic resources in the bibliography of Moran’s chapter. The various (economic, cultural, social) barriers to access and adoption, while not insurmountable for most, were nonetheless significant.

Moran closes his chapter with an “envoi” that presages Cathy Davidson’s remarks in my epigraph. He explains that, if our students have access to contemporary information and communication technology, “they will be using it” (220). It is our responsibility as writing teachers, he says, to understand the scenes where our students write, the tools they will be using to write, and the often uneven attitudes (and access) that our students may have with respect to these technologies. To put it in Davidson’s terms, Moran’s conclusion can be read as a promise (or threat!) that our

*Kairos, for example, published its first issue in 1996.*
students will be responsive to their technological moment, and as teachers we had best be prepared to join them in that moment. This perspective has not aged at all; if anything, the challenges posed by technology have increased. Many institutions have bought into corporate course management systems (CMS) and automated plagiarism detection software, the proliferation of mobile devices has transformed the ways we interact with each other and with knowledge, and those industries and professions that have been unwilling to "reconsider [their] most cherished assumptions and structures" have in some cases been swept aside. The writing classroom is not somehow separate from the changes wrought by new media; it may be possible to resist those changes to a degree, but we can no longer ignore them.

WHY NEW MEDIA?

Where should we begin as writing teachers when it comes to understanding and engaging with new media? Unfortunately, the terminology we have used to describe technology seems to change as rapidly as the technologies themselves, and different communities adopt and adapt vocabulary at different times and rates. This can make it a challenge to locate resources, to collaborate with other teachers, and to find a place to begin. "New media" is one among many possible terms; it may strike some in our field as quaint at best and misleading at worst. At what point, one might ask, does a given medium cease being "new"? Is there a statute of limitations past which blogging, for example, simply assumes a place among a more general understanding of media? Or is it that, as Lisa Gitelman observes in *Always Already New*, "This overdetermined sense of reaching the end of media history is probably what accounts for the oddly perennial newness of today's new media" (3)? Books like Bolter's *Writing Space* (1991), Handa's *Computers and Community: Teaching Composition in the Twenty-First Century* (1990), or even Lanham's *The Electronic Word* (1993)—texts that arguably signal the start of our field's engagement with new media—are older than the vast majority of students entering our first-year classrooms. What do we gain by insisting on this particular terminology?

There are certainly alternatives to this particular nomenclature. In the field of rhetoric and composition, there has been a great deal of interest in recent years in what has come to be known as "multimodal pedagogy," a phrase that layers both new media and the multiliteracies advocated by the New London Group, who call for teaching a broader range of meaning-making "modalities," including visual, audio, spatial, and gestural literacies alongside more traditional textual/linguistic practices. In their opening chapter to the 2007 collection *Multimodal Composition*, Pamela Takayoshi and Cynthia Selfe invoke the challenges of "digital composing environments" and suggest that multimodal composition provides the means of meeting those challenges. What several authors in that collection note, however, is that multimodality and a focus on contemporary technologies are not necessarily coterminous, a distinction that has been reinforced more recently.

In *Remixing Composition*, Jason Palmeri suggests, among other things, that composition history holds a wealth of forgotten work on multimodality that predates new media. He contends that our emphasis on the "new" has "inadvertently deleted from view many of the vivid multimodal scenes that flourished in our field's past" (5). In *Toward a Composition Made Whole*, Jody Shipher echoes this admonition, urging "that we not limit our attention to a consideration of new media texts or to what the newest computer technologies make possible—or even make problematic—but attend to the highly distributed, complexly mediated, multimodal dimensions of all communicative practice" (29).

While "multimodal pedagogy" turns to the histories of literacy and composition to guide our adoption of new media, terms like digital pedagogy and hybrid pedagogy have emerged in recent years to approach it from the direction of technologies themselves. These discussions occur in the context of the recent turn across various disciplines to the digital humanities (DH), a loose confederation of academics devoted to exploring how new media are transforming our disciplines and institutions. While the initial emphasis of DH has been to revitalize research methods and practices across humanities disciplines (see Brier), digital pedagogy has emerged as a complementary focus. Matthew Gold's * Debates in the Digital Humanities*, for example, emphasizes "Teaching the Digital Humanities" (alongside defining, theorizing, critiquing, and practicing them). Dan Cohen and Tom Scheinfeld's *Hacking the Academy* attends equally to scholarship, pedagogy, and institutions. And a number of new journals and conferences (see "Resources" later in the chapter) have sprung up with the express purpose of bringing together teachers from across disciplines interested in exploring the pedagogical potential of new media.

Despite these various developments and terminological shifts, there is still some value in the idea of "new media pedagogy." One of the challenges facing any technology-oriented activity is the shifting terminological ground it occupies, and teaching is no exception in this regard. Gitelman explains that "When media are new, they offer a look into the different ways that their jobs get constructed as such" (6), and it is this attitude that recommends a phrase like "new media pedagogy" to us. Gitelman's point is that the "newness" of media highlights the transitional context in which they appear; they call attention to "the contested relations of force that determine the pathways by which new media may eventually become old hat" (6). In this sense, then, new media pedagogy marks (for me) a site where the long history of multiple modalities intersects with recent developments in technology, but it also includes important shifts in audience, institutions, and context. There is no single, proper way to draw the Venn diagram that includes these various terms and accounts for their overlap, but they provide the new teacher with a broad range of starting points from which to begin thinking about technology and pedagogy.

NEW MEDIA PRINCIPLES AND ATTITUDES

New media pedagogy involves more than simply moving one's writing class to a computer lab, posting short, formal essays to a weblog, or using library databases. Part of the challenge of adopting new media in the classroom is avoiding the
instrumentalist attitude that technology should be deployed as a supplement to traditional, print-based writing. What follows are some of the principles I've developed for my own courses that draw on new media.

1. New media pedagogy is more than “teaching to the text.”

In *Lingua Practa*, one of my broader themes is that we should think about writing less in terms of products and/or objects, and more in terms of practices, and this is one of the ways that individual teachers can mitigate potential conflicts between adopting new media and mandated course outcomes. In other words, it is worth our time to consider what new media do apart from the end products themselves, to consider their affordances. For example, one of the canonical assignments that many teachers use as part of the process for extended research writing is the annotated bibliography. We ask our students to gather together a number of sources for their project, to read and describe them, with the goal of synthesizing them for their own contribution for a given discussion. The end-product itself, the actual bibliography, can be monotonous both to read and to write. Ryan Hoover writes about requiring his students to compose annotated bibliographies using the presentation software Prezi:

Annotations stayed pretty much identical to what they'd be if done in Word. . . .
But then those paragraphs had to be copied into Prezi text boxes. And the students had to design the Prezi in a way that communicated how the sources relate to each other and to the research question. (n.p.)

Prezi is typically considered as an alternative to PowerPoint or Keynote; that is, most people understand it as a piece of software whose primary function is delivery. What Prezi does, however, is to allow a user to arrange spatially information that would be delivered sequentially; Hoover ties this affordance to the goal of synthesis for his students, asking them to communicate visually relationships that remain largely implicit in an alphabetized list of annotated sources. Just as “teaching to the test” can keep a teacher from pushing students beyond a set amount of information, “teaching to the test” may focus our students' attention on end-products rather than the practices and skills those products were originally meant to develop.

2. New media function as a writer's laboratory, a site of experimentation.

Taking an incremental approach to new media, one that ties specific affordances to established outcomes, is a frequent point of advice from experienced new media pedagogues. It is possible to take such an approach too far, however, to assume that only those platforms with bounded, specific, and recognizable products should be adopted in the writing classroom or to assume that documented outcomes provide the only context for our students' writing. “Add technology and stir” is perhaps a poor way to improve education in general, but on the smaller scale of the writing classroom, it can be a positive source of experimentation and innovation. For example, a couple of semesters ago, I came across graphic designer Kyle Tezak's “Four Icon Challenge.” As the name suggests, the challenge is to summarize visually a book or a movie using only four icons (such as those available at The Noun Project). Typically, I try to intersperse larger projects with smaller, less directed assignments, and one week, I asked my students to complete a four icon challenge. Weeks later, when my students were working on designing infographics, the practice of generalizing and compressing ideas in the form of graphic icons ended up being a skill that many of them drew upon in their designs. Not every assignment will dovetail with another as well as those two did, but my openness in adopting the former ended up improving the later assignment and giving students additional context for the work they were doing.

We can court this kind of serendipity by encouraging invention and experimentation from our students as well. In the late spring of 2012, Quinn Warnick shared an example of a long-form essay that a student of his had composed using Storify; it was Jayarr's “Video Game Communities on Kickstarter.” Jayarr's “essay” draws on activity theory to understand the recent use of Kickstarter in video game development, examining questions of credibility, agency, audience, and community, among other things. It is an interesting essay in its own right, but it also raises questions about how our students negotiate questions of citation and source use, as well as the relationship between argumentation and curration. While such questions can certainly arise in response to an explicit Storify assignment, it can be more productive (and engender more energy) when they emerge through students’ own innovation. Our responsibility in this regard involves creating the classroom spaces that can encourage our students to experiment.

3. New media often operate on “Internet time” (and so must we).

I often think of the carefully plotted stages of the traditional classroom's writing process as the *chronos* to new media's *kairos*. Often, in our handbooks, the writing process is a series of well-articulated, logical steps that begins with invention and ends in an essay. The measured writing process of the traditional handbook bears little resemblance to the bursts and spikes of activity that typically occur online. For example, shortly after the opening ceremonies of the 2012 Summer Olympics, when criticisms of NBC’s coverage of the event were peaking (and the Twitter hashtag #nbcfail was trending), Brandon Ballenger, a freelance writer and graduate student at Florida Atlantic University, published a Storify that aggregated many of those criticisms. Within a month of its publication, Ballenger's essay had been viewed more than 50,000 times, retweeted frequently on Twitter, shared on Facebook, and linked on a variety of websites.

Ballenger’s “essay” is a perfect example of the kind of impact that any writer can have online; the composition classroom, however, with its slow and steady approach to writing, may not prepare students to seize upon those kinds of moments and achieve that kind of impact. While our students need to know how to conduct academic research, they should also learn how to follow trending topics, gather

---

2Storify is one of a new genre of online applications that allow users to curate stories by allowing them to embed a range of online sources from social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.
information, filter through it, and curate it. Sometimes, we are so accustomed to treating Kenneth Burke's famous "conversation parlor" as an allegory for academic writing (with its conversations that span months if not years) that we overlook the dynamic conversations that are taking place online. Some of what our students learn as they participate in those conversations may scale to the more sedate pace of the academic essay (e.g., linking as a variation on academic citation practice) and some of it may seem to us a case study in "how not to write," but we should be having these conversations with students rather than pretending they're not relevant to the writing classroom. Making space in our classrooms for this kind of work requires us to negotiate among the different paces implied by our institutions and our technologies, and this can mean preparing our students to move with ease from "class time" to "Internet time."

4. New media replace expertise with exploration and engagement.

A frequent concern in technology-oriented courses is the uneven levels of expertise and experience among our students (and ourselves). Teachers must abandon the notion that all expertise must flow from the front of the classroom, particularly when it comes to technology. Even those who are considered experts or "power users" cannot expect to master every single program or application, and many of the platforms associated with new media lend themselves to (and indeed encourage) collaboration, as Basic Writing Pedagogy in this volume discusses.

One assignment that I often use, particularly in courses with a wide range of expertise, is what I call the "T+1" assignment, a variation on the "literacy autobiography." I ask students to reflect upon and account for the various media they use during their writing processes (T stands for their current level of engagement with information technologies), and then to commit to adding one element for the semester. Some students elect to start a blog, Tumblr, or Twitter account. Others may adopt a social bookmarking platform such as Delicious or Diigo, or note-taking applications like Evernote or Zotero. The output for the assignment can vary, from end-of-semester reflections to Screenr tutorials to in-class presentations, as does the ultimate "success" of the adoption. Some students will abandon their applications as soon as the assignment is complete, some change their minds during the semester, and some will integrate their chosen platforms into their activity permanently. But they all learn a great deal about a range of new media options, acquiring and sharing their new expertise with each other and with me. The value of this kind of assignment is that it provokes no less useful for the "power user" than it does for the beginner; rather than holding them all to a single standard of expertise, students at every level of experience receive credit for the exploration that they do.

Assessment is considered in more depth later in the chapter, but it is worth mentioning here as well for its formative value. One of the core elements of my "T+1" assignment is reflection; at its outset, I ask students to reflect upon their habits of media usage, both curricular and extracurricular, and they conclude their projects with reflection as well. Metacognition like this is a common feature of much new media pedagogy; teachers who adapt new media to their classrooms consider carefully the value, appropriateness, and effectiveness of both their own pedagogy and the affordances that new media provide. There is no single right way to accomplish this kind of reflection, but heuristics like those provided by Stuart Selber in Multiliteracies for a Digital Age can be a useful place to start. Selber suggests that we think of computer literacy as multilayered, comprised of functional, critical, and rhetorical dimensions. Selber describes these dimensions in detail, articulating several parameters for each that can provide guidance in designing assignments, reflecting on practice, and articulating potential outcomes for the writing teacher. Depending upon the particular application, student access, and pedagogical infrastructure, different platforms require different ratios of emphasis, but Selber's framework is a valuable one for thinking about new media pedagogy.

Working with new media in the writing classroom can often be as simple as adopting these attitudes and approaches, and they are quite compatible with the student-centered, peer-directed focus of many composition courses. When we focus on the processes and practices of writing, downplaying more product-oriented outcomes without abandoning them, it becomes much easier to invite our students to investigate and experiment with new media. The pace at which this happens in our classrooms can vary considerably; while this can mean ceding some of the control we normally exercise in our courses, the corresponding energy that we gain is often worth the trade. And the responsibility for this experimentation can be shared with students, an invitation to research collaboratively the discursive potentials of new media. And heuristics such as Selber's can help us guide that research, ensuring that our students use new media not only effectively but critically and rhetorically.

NEW CHALLENGES

Integrating contemporary technologies into our teaching does require more than a simple change of attitude. There are a number of potential obstacles to the successful integration of new media into the classroom, concerns that we need to address if that integration is to be both mindful and effective. (See New Media Pedagogy in this volume for additional discussion of many of the following issues.)

Access

In addition to their potential pedagogical impact, new media carry with them social, cultural, and economic implications. At the turn of the century, questions of access and the "digital divide" dominated discussions of technology. Moran, for instance, relates a story from Scientific American about the substantial advantage that computer ownership bestows upon more affluent students. Cynthia Selfe's CCCC Chair's Address, later published as Technology and Literacy in the 21st Century: The Importance of Paying Attention, called upon our entire field to attend to questions of economy and privilege alongside those of technology and literacy. In the past decade, however, a number of factors have intervened: the consolidation of Internet Service Providers, financial advantages accruing to public wifi, the proliferation of mobile devices, the availability of cloud storage.
and applications, the shifting metaphors with which access is described (e.g., from privilege to utility), and so forth. According to a 2012 Pew Report, “88% of American adults have a cell phone, 57% have a laptop, 19% own an e-book reader, and 19% have a tablet computer; about six in ten adults (63%) go online wirelessly with one of those devices.” The report continues to explain that mobile devices have “changed the story” of the digital divide, making access much more than a question of yes, no, or sometimes.

It would be naive to imagine that the divide has somehow been solved (see, e.g., Bessette), but the picture is much more complicated than it was even a few years ago. There is discussion of a secondary digital divide between those who have access to high-speed Internet service and those who do not. There are still important divides among specific populations; “significant differences in use remain, generally related to age, household income, and educational attainment” (Pew). Culturally, there is also a constantly shifting divide between those who produce content online and those who consume it. When the iPad was first released, for instance, many reviewers were critical of the relative lack of applications that could be used for creation rather than consumption. Whether or not we wish to retain the notion of a digital divide, there remain a number of important dimensions that separate certain groups of users from others, and these differences can enter our classrooms in unpredictable ways.

**Infrastructure**

There are a number of divides that operate on most campuses that can have a more direct effect on our classrooms as well. While many institutions have committed to providing wi-fi access, there are often marked differences among colleges and departments with respect to equipment, maintenance, resources, and support, and these can all have an impact on individual classroom adoptions of technology. The presence of computer (and/or smart) classrooms, facilities for faculty, equipment maintenance, and specialized software often varies widely on a single campus. As DeVoss, Cushman, and Grabill explain in “Infrastructure and Composing: The When of New Media Writing,”

> in order to teach and understand new media composing, some understanding of new media infrastructure is necessary. Without such an understanding, writing teachers and students will fail to anticipate and actively participate in the emergence of such infrastructures, thereby limiting—rhetorically, technically, and institutionally—what is possible for our students to write and learn. (37)

DeVoss et al. offer important advice about taking an activist stance toward that infrastructure, encouraging us not to treat it as inevitable, invisible, or immutable. This may mean something as seemingly small as thinking about where students will store files of their works in progress, to making sure that necessary software is installed on computers, to laying the groundwork with administration for new or expanded departmental facilities.

DeVoss et al. also explain that infrastructure is not a strictly material proposition. There are cultural and organizational structures that may encourage or impede the adoption of new media in one’s courses; “Infrastructure also entails decision-making processes and the values and power relationships enacted by those processes, and infrastructure is thoroughly penetrated by issues of culture and identity . . .” (22). It can be important for new teachers to understand both the material and the cultural landscapes of their institutions as they consider integrating technology into their courses, and scale can be a relevant consideration in this regard. Spending extra class time on online search strategies or the proper citation style for digital resources, for example, is a different matter from replacing a departmentally mandated research essay with infographics. As with any significant change to one’s pedagogy, it is important to know whether such changes will be supported and/or encouraged.

**Accessibility**

As new media have shifted from largely text-based genres (first-generation websites, e-mail, etc.) to increasingly multimodal experiences, and as the types of devices used to go online have diversified, questions of design as they relate to both accessibility and usability are important to consider. Sean Zdenek observes that “Too often, our excitement about new media, even when that excitement is tempered by sober reflection, leaves intact a set of normative assumptions about students’ bodies, minds, and abilities” (n.p.). Online accessibility draws on principles for universal design, the idea that products and environments should be as inclusive as possible with respect to potential users. As Patricia Dunn and Kathleen Dunn De Mers explain in their *Kairos* essay on universal design and online writing pedagogy, “In a way, universal design helps us see text-only pedagogies as ‘disabled,’ not those individuals who don’t happen to use writing-as-a-mode-of-learning in the same way their English teachers do” (n.p.). Accessibility is a pedagogical responsibility that needs to take place both in the planning stages of a course and during the course itself, as something that students account for as they produce new media content.

Usability is another distinctive quality that technologically oriented writing should account for; much like accessibility, usability is a part of credibility in online environments. The relative technological stability of the printed page makes us forget that it, too, was once a site of usability innovations (spaces between words, paragraph indentations, punctuation, etc.). While usability is still associated primarily in our field with technical communication, the recent publication of texts such as Susan Miller-Cochran and Rochelle Rodrigo’s *Rhetorically Rethinking Usability* suggests that the broader field of rhetoric and composition is beginning to recognize its importance. Usability can be an important way to prompt our students to avoid simply taking technologies at face value, and it is vital when we ask our students to produce their own content. As Michael Salvo and Paula Rosinski explain, “… proficiency in information design has become a key component of literacy in work contexts. It is now essential to include information design in any discussion of digital literacy” (103). They emphasize a range of features—including navigability, findability, signposting, and metadata—that contribute toward creating the “virtual space” entailed by information design.
Assessment

One of the persistent challenges in teaching with technology is the question of actually incorporating new media into the writing classroom, particularly when it comes to course outcomes. How does a three- to five-page paper translate to blog entries or Twitter updates? Many programs find themselves in the complicated position of maintaining certain kinds of requirements (perhaps university-mandated) on the one hand while wanting to encourage pedagogical innovation on the other, and these goals may come into conflict. New teachers, justifiably, may not want to play out such conflicts in their own classrooms. But just as our institutions are slowly shifting to recognize and reward scholarship produced across a range of media, rhetoric and composition is beginning to articulate common goals and standards for the kinds of work that our students can create using new media. Without careful reflection, however, the writing teacher may fall back onto tried and true assessment criteria and strategies that were designed for evaluating the printed page; worse still, there is the temptation to treat new media compositions as "excellent" simply because they take novel forms. Think, for example, about posting to Twitter. It's not unusual to see Twitter-based assignments that simply require students to post a certain number of times over a fixed duration (day, week, semester). Tweeting in 140 characters or less, however, is not the same as typing a sentence in an essay. Even in the compressed space of a tweet, there are rhetorical considerations (citation, hashtags, etc.). David Silver writes about having his students use Twitter, with the expectation that they compose what he terms "thick tweets" (as opposed to the "thin" status updates that sometimes dominate the medium):

"thick tweets convey two or more layers of information. They often, but not always, include a hyperlink that takes readers from twitter to another source of information—a newspaper article, a blog post, a flickr set, a video. I encourage my students to use 140 characters or less to compose a thick tweet that is so compelling that no reader in his or her right mind can avoid clicking the link. (n.p.)"

There is value in setting expectations for quantity (it can encourage experimentation, for example), but without some corresponding attention to quality, teachers run the risk of either rewarding banality or holding students accountable to a hidden standard. Silver goes on to offer several examples of student work that fulfill those expectations (and advice for a couple that could be improved).

Silver's approach to Twitter provides an excellent example of what Madeline Sorapure describes as her "broadly rhetorical approach" to assessing new media, "an assessment strategy that focuses on the effectiveness with which modes such as image, text, and sound are brought together or, literally, composed" (n.p.). Sorapure acknowledges that such a strategy needs to be combined with specific criteria geared toward the modalities of the assignment; no single strategy, regardless of how broad it might seem, can be equally effective for every assignment. In Silver's case, he makes explicit the broader rhetorical point of Twitter (compelling tweets/links) while articulating criteria (density, constraint) distinctive to that particular platform. Such a strategy does not have to be invented anew for each possible modality or application, though. In "The New Work of Assessment: Evaluating Multimodal Compositions," Elizabeth Murray, Hailey Sheets, and Nicole Williams write of their experience as teaching assistants in a program that requires them to teach multimodal composition. They offer concrete examples of their efforts to translate departmental outcomes into terms specific to these kinds of projects, translating print-based outcomes into goals that can be accomplished in multiple ways, depending on the modalities of the project. The National Writing Project's Multimodal Assessment Project has also begun the process of developing criteria and best practices that can be brought to bear on a broad range of new media writing. They name five criteria—context, artifact, process management, substance/content, and habits of mind—that they identify as "domains that many felt were critical for assessing and improving our work as creators of multimodal texts" ("Cross-Walking").

One of the strategies emerging in discussions of new media and/or multimodal assessment is the importance of reflection on the parts of both students and teachers, and it is easy to see how such strategies work across several of the domains noted previously. For example, Sonya Burton and Brian Huot advocate for the use of in-progress, formative assessment (studio sessions, progress journals, collaborative rubrics, etc.). "Such an approach," they explain, "also keeps teachers and students appropriately focused on rhetorical matters, whether they are composing multimodal essays or essays that are primarily alphabetic-only" (101). It is not unusual to see teachers assigning short, print-based reflections at the conclusion of new media projects, asking students to reflect upon their compositions' effectiveness and the strategies and choices deployed to achieve those goals. Approaches like these invite students to engage in the same sorts of reflective practices that we do as teachers when we ask them to work with new media, a fact that underscores the importance of many of the attitudes described earlier. New media pedagogy is not simply a matter of trading out one set of products for newer models; they change the dynamics of the classroom itself in addition to what it means to write and to write well.

NEW POSSIBILITIES

At some point, new media will simply become an accepted part of the definition of what it means to write well. Assuming that such a moment arrives, the idea of a "new media pedagogy" as something that can be separated conceptually from "pedagogy" will become an historical curiosity. For the present, we are still deeply embedded in a transitional phase, caught between the relatively stable habits and practices of literacy and the chaos of what Gregory Ulmer has termed "electracy." It can be easy to feel as though this transition is inevitable; while it may be irreversible, however, it is by no means certain what electracy will ultimately look like. Ten years ago, there were no Facebook pages, no Twitter feeds, no YouTube, no Instagram, no iPhones/iPads, no Androids, and very few weblogs; social software, the precursor to social media, was coined as a term after the first edition of this book was published. While the shape of our new media landscape has shifted dramatically...
in that time, what hasn’t changed is Moran’s reminder that we should be joining our students where, when, and how they write. As the WIDE Research Center Collective puts it, “if we want to teach writing or help students learn how to write more effectively, then we have to be with them where they write” (n.p.).

But there is more to new media pedagogy than simply surrendering to the demands of the present moment or accommodating our given audience. Taking an active role in contemporary discussions of pedagogy, and working with technology ourselves in mindful, reflective ways, can put us in the position to shape that landscape ourselves. Think about the #hashtag, which in a few short years developed from an emergent generic practice on a once-obscurc social media platform (Twitter) to a marketing strategy employed across media to promote television shows, movies, events, and the like. Only a few short years ago, online credibility was widely understood as an extension of “real world” ethos; we’ve moved quickly to the point where we can investigate ethos on sites like Facebook and Twitter without treating them as imperfect reflections. We can see where new media match up with our practices, goals, and outcomes, and where they prompt us to rethink those structures and assumptions. Perhaps most important, they provide us with the means for sharing and aggregating this exploration and experimentation with an audience broader than the people with whom we share an office, hallway, or department.

I have spent a disproportionate amount of time in this chapter on the challenges facing us as writing teachers with the advent of new media, but that shouldn’t be taken as a sign that the barriers for entry or the obstacles somehow outweigh the benefits. The WIDE Collective explains that “These needs complicate and extend the pressures we already feel and that we already exert—perils and possibilities related to teaching and working spaces, evaluation, class size, access to computer labs, access to wireless teaching spaces, design of curricula, staffing and labor, and more. Many more” (n.p.). Those pressures and challenges, we must remember, occur in the broader context of our relevancy as writing teachers. As with any change to our courses, philosophies, and classrooms, there will be perils and possibilities both; this is what it means to teach in a time where the media are “new.”

RESOURCES

The following is a collection of resources about new media for the interested teacher, one that is by no means exhaustive. I have also extended the bibliography beyond those texts cited herein.

Resources/Organizations/Conferences

Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations: http://digitalhumanities.org/
Association of Internet Researchers: http://aoir.org/

See, for example, Cate Blouke’s “Analyzing Ethos Using Twitter and Storify” (http://lessonplans.dwrl.utexas.edu/content/analyzing-ethos-using-twitter-and-storify).

Journals

Computers and Composition (print): http://computersandcomposition.candcblog.org/
Computers and Composition Online: http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/english/cconline/
Contemporary Issue in Technology and Teacher Education: http://www.citejournal.org/
Hybrid Pedagogy: http://www.hybridpedagogy.com/
Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy: http://jitp.commons.gc.cuny.edu/
Technology, Pedagogy, and Education: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rtpe20

BIBLIOGRAPHY


