

Professor Bill Wolff
Technologies and the Future of Writing, Fall 2007
a module in Introduction to Writing Arts

Module Hours and Location: W,F Education Hall 1112, 10:50 – 12:05
Eight class meetings in total

Office Location: Education Hall 3075 **Office Hours:** W 1:30 – 4:30

Contact: wolffw@rowan.edu **Office Phone:** 856-256-5221

Course Web Page: <http://wolff-tfw-fall07.pbwiki.com>
certain features of Blackboard will also be used

Module Overview

In this module we will be considering the relationships among technology, writing, and the construction of virtual spaces. To do so, the module will be broken into four sections (in varying order).

Origins

This section provides a theoretical and historical frame work for whole module as we will consider definitions of technology and the origins of the Internet. Readings will challenge us to rethink our perceptions of technology and the relationship between technology and literacy. Students will learn how to connect to their personal space on the Rowan servers from school and from home, and will think about how to use the server space to organize their education at Rowan. We will also discuss the portfolio system that will be used for your final Portfolio Course.

Writing Spaces

In this section we will consider what Jay David Bolter calls writing spaces—online and in-print areas where texts are written, read, and manipulated. We will look at how new media technologies are changing the way people write, compose, and think about both. Our readings will focus on the genre of blogging. We will begin to compose our own professional blogs using Wordpress as part of constructing our own personal information ecologies.

Ownership and Identities

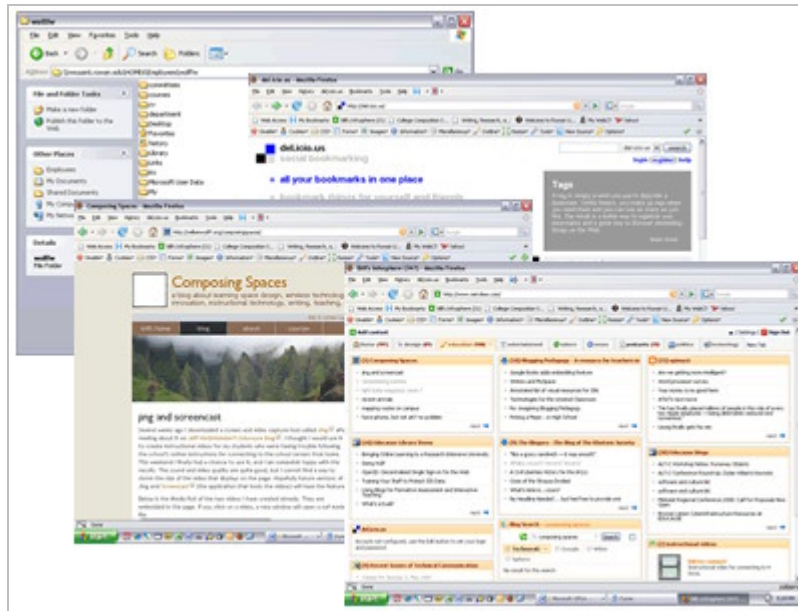
In this section we will look at how identities are constructed in electronic spaces and how electronic spaces are forcing us to rethink questions of ownership. Readings will center on open source computing, copyright in digital environments, and identity formation in digital environments. We will begin to construct our own knowledge ecology using a powerful, fun open source application called Netvibes.

The Future of Writing

This last section will ask us to speculate as to where writing and composing is headed in the near and distant future. The social networking that is a primary characteristic of Web 2.0 is going to transform how we write (individually and collaboratively) as well as how we store and process vast amounts of information. We will think about the nature of tagging and folksonomies, and will look at the literacy of comics and video games. Students will continue to make robust their information ecologies.

Projects

In this module, we will be creating our own online information ecologies. Bonnie A. Nardi and Vicki L. O'Day (1999) “define an information ecology to be a system of people, practices, values, and technologies in a particular local environment. In information ecologies, the spotlight is not on technology, but on human activities that are served by technology” (p. 49). Our own, personal online information ecologies will be comprised of three interrelated, symbiotic spaces:



personal accounts on the Rowan server system, an evolving Netvibes ecosystem (<http://www.netvibes.com>), an evolving del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us>) or diigo (<http://www.diigo.com>) bookmarking space and a collaborative professional blog using Wordpress (<http://www.wordpress.com>). Students will also write a short (4 - 6) page paper in which they locate their own particular information ecology within their professional and educational goals, as well as the theories discussed in the module. Specifics for each portion of the information ecology will be described in greater detail on a separate assignment page.

Grading

Final grades for the course will be based on the following percentages:

Information Ecology		80%
server design	10%	
Netvibes ecosystem	30%	
Bookmarking tags	30%	
blog postings	30%	
(Module 1) Class participation / forum postings		20%
(Module 2) Class participation		20%

The Information Ecology percentages include your discussion of those specific writing spaces in your final 4 - 6 page essay. This essay will ask you to use the theories discussed in the class to reflect on your Information Ecology and describe how your skills in the Writing Arts 9 Core Values have evolved during the course of the module. Late work will result in a 3 point reduction from your class participation/forum postings grade. The number grades you receive at the end of the module correspond to the letter grades on the overall course syllabus.