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Digital Rhetoric: Doing Things with Words Online

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Digital Rhetoric: Doing Things with Words Online

By

Lisa M. Russell

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Professional Writing in the

Department of English in the

College of Humanities and Social Sciences of Kennesaw State University

Kennesaw, Georgia

2012

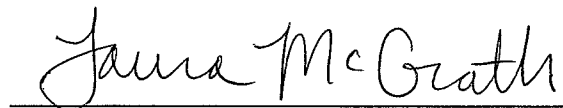
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Kennesaw, Georgia
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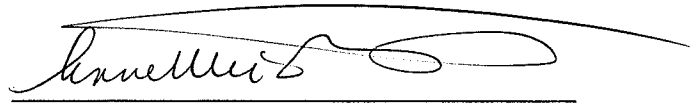
Lisa M. Russell

Has been approved by the committee
For the capstone requirement for the Master of Arts in
Professional Writing in the Department of English
At the May 2012 graduation

Capstone Committee:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Laura McGrath", written over a horizontal line.

Member

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth", written over a horizontal line.

Member

Acknowledgements

Dr. Amy Benson Brown gave me a new word recently, *kismet*. Kismet can be defined as *destiny* or *fate* or a *prearranged series of events*. My encounters in the MA in Professional Writing program at Kennesaw State University that culminated in this capstone project were *kismet*.

Certainly it was predetermined that I should meet Dr. Anne Richards in the hallway between our offices five-years ago. I made a lame joke, and somehow, we still became friends. Dr. Richards would play an important role in my life by encouraging me to applying to the MA in Professional Writing program. She is a natural mentor and encourager; she pushed and sometimes dragged me across the graduation finish line.

Another hallway encounter happened after a composition rhetoric class. While whining to classmates in the hallway that the coursework was killing me, the intended target of my complaints heard and replied. Dr. Laura McGrath quietly said, “I am taking you over to the dark side.” That she did. I found a field of study that fascinated and challenged me. A scholar of Dr. McGrath’s caliber does not have to work one on one with students on projects, but she does – with wisdom and grace.

Dr. Margaret Walters and I started talking about biographies one day as she passed by my Georgia Writers Association office, and there was a connection. Within a few months, Dr. Margaret Walters became my Executive Director. She never misses a holiday or an occasion to send a card or give a gift. Once she went on a vacation and brought me a gift from Mexico. More than material gifts, she indulges me with the

freedom to do my job creatively. The *kismet* of a hallway book discussion led to a productive collaboration with Georgia Writers Association and a friend for life.

I had a faulty impression of Dr. Mary Lou Odom until she randomly sat next to me in a technology workshop. She needed to plug in her laptop, but she scared me. So, I kept my mouth shut and plugged in her laptop. After class, she confronted another professor, and I smiled and thought, “I like her raw honesty.” This meeting led to a directed study and an important collaboration. Somewhere along the way, we became friends. She taught me so much about “the business” and made me finally feel like a writer.

Kismet. These fate-driven events led me to where I am today, and I am so grateful to others like Milya Delahaye tutored me through this project, sacrificing time and energy. Dr. Amy Benson Brown, my freelance client who *just happened* to be an editor at Emory University went over my first draft.

My life is prearranged – *kismet*. When I was young, I did not dream of living with 4 messy men and picking up socks as a daily ritual and that my home would become a hunting lodge and a baseball locker room. However, they are the most important people in my life. Thank you John, Mike, Samuel, and my husband of over 28 years, David, for trying to understand my need to write; you did your best. Becka, thank you for helping me organize my life, my spice cabinet, and my Tupperware drawers. Love to my supportive sister and new found-friend Ellen and my patron saint of writing dear Ella, for praying me past writing icebergs.

Finally, to the architect of *kismet*, my Great Teacher (Isaiah 30) for dragging me into this writing thing, kicking and screaming, “I am not a writer! I am grammatically challenged! I am not a writer!” Well, I guess You showed me.

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An Introductory Essay: Digital Rhetoric

My letter of intent for admission to the Masters of Arts in Professional Writing program at Kennesaw State University (KSU) contained a naïve statement: *Current and subsequent generations need to communicate effectively online; whether by example or in the college classroom, I want to be part of raising the level of online writing excellence.* Although naïve, the statement remained foremost in my mind and guided my course choices. Ultimately this idea became the foundation of *Digital Rhetoric: Doing Things with Words Online*. The title of this project changed often throughout production as I struggled to define its essence. After much thought, I am convinced that *Digital Rhetoric* is the title that best defines this capstone project.

Though coursework, research, and my own digital experiments, I came to understand how online writers can make themselves heard above the digital din by applying rhetorical principles. A synergy between classical rhetoric and new media practices can lead to persuasive and memorable digital writing. Despite the hurried clip and the complex nature of technology, writing grounded in firm rhetorical concepts can produce compelling online content.

The purpose of this capstone project is to teach specific audiences how they might accomplish such goals or “do things with words online.” Toward that end, the project includes three modules that explore the themes of targeting niche audiences, writing persuasively, and using the digital medium of communications.

The procedure for this capstone project included writing content, presenting content, and evaluating content in three different modules. The first module, *Create, Connect, Collaborate: Words that Work Online*, was delivered on February 4, 2012 to an audience of professional new media marketers gathered at SoCon12. SoCon12 is an annual social media conference sponsored by the Center for Sustainable Journalism in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Kennesaw State University. Discussion topics covered included words that work online, phrasing sentences for impact, search engine optimization (SEO), and online credibility. The evaluation was informal and based on social media chatter and feedback from the participants.

The KSU Writing Center's director inspired the second module, *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources*, designed to help students taking English 1102 (the second in two first-year composition courses required of KSU undergraduate students) complete their research projects. This module was presented twice, once on February 8, 2012 and again on February 9, 2012. This module covered topics to include how to do scholarly research on *Google* using *Google Scholar*, sort sources for credibility, and organize research with digital tools. Comments from the director of the Writing Center and feedback she received from professors of students who attended served as an informal evaluation for this workshop.

I wrote and presented the final module for Georgia Writers Association Second Saturday Writers Workshop Series on March 10, 2012. After assessing the interests of this audience of writers, *Bonding, Branding, Building: Connecting Authentically Online*, I prepared and presented at a 90-minute workshop. Topics included knowing social media options, SEO, self-branding, connecting with audiences, and building a platform. I

conducted a survey of workshop participants before and after the event. The participants in each module interacted with the workshop content and the presenter. The audience in each workshop participated and interacted with the module materials and the presenter. The presenter (the author) was offered opportunities to speak at other writing groups, first-year English classes, and other conferences.

The primary value for the workshop participants was enhanced understanding of digital rhetoric. A Website landing page was established for each module, allowing participants to return for additional resources. To extend the discussion of digital rhetoric further, a blog is fed with topics brought up in the workshops that were not fully developed.

Digital Rhetoric Defined

It was necessary for this project that I define *rhetoric* in the digital environment. In each workshop, the powerful term *rhetoric* was a beacon on the rapidly changing digital landscape.

“In 2500 years the word *rhetoric* has taken on a range of meanings,” Lindemann and Anderson explain. And “people may use the term to refer to skillful, but often deceptive, eloquence” (38). Indeed, rhetoric’s reputation has suffered at the hands of manipulators, as illustrated by Clemson University’s MA program, which created a video and a campaign called *In Defense of Rhetoric: Not Just for Liars*. This video defines rhetoric as part of everyday life and as made by everyone; it also attempts to restore rhetoric’s reputation by exploring the idea of epistemic rhetoric (Student Project at the Kenneth Burke Society Conference).

The work of Lindemann and Anderson contends that rhetoric is not merely a way of pulling the wool over peoples' eyes but a "compelling subject to study" and that knowledge of "rhetoric helps us to understanding of our world" (37).

Kenneth Burke in *A Rhetoric of Motives* suggests that rhetoric's uses extend beyond Aristotelian notions of persuasion and into cooperation. Motives are explored and purpose is infused into Burke's definition of rhetoric. Burke views rhetoric as so comprehensive that any discipline could profit from the use of rhetoric (Marie Hochmuth 43). In fact, both Aristotle's "old" and Burke's "new" rhetoric are collaborative or working with the audience to create a joint intellectual effort. A digital rhetorician can guide his audience to interact and identify with other members in the online environment by using comments, likes, and sharing.

Lindemann and Anderson characterize "old rhetoric" as "persuasion" and "new rhetoric" as "identification" (54). Burke's rhetorical theory, which centers on identification, "explains why human beings act rhetorically on one another—to promote social cohesion" (Lindemann and Anderson 54). Rhetoric that is persuasive while promoting social cohesion is essential to "digital rhetoric."

Jeffrey T. Grabill and Troy Hicks, digital writing scholars, point out that while digital tools are revolutionary, the potential for connectivity made possible by convergence and interactivity are as important. And with both convergence and interactivity writing spaces and modalities have changed. Text and media stream in from across the Web and converge in a new writing space, a digital space that allows for a two-way flow of information between user and writer. Digital writing is immediate and interactive. Thus "Teaching Digital Rhetoric," a collaborative piece written by graduate

students, defines new writing spaces as needing new rhetoric: “Writing is no longer a purely text-driven practice,” write the authors of the article. “Writing requires carefully and critically analyzing and selecting among multiple media elements. Digital writers rely on words, motion, interactivity, and visuals to make meaning” (DigiRhet.org 245). The multimodal element of writing is made easier as technology evolves to improve digital writing tools and spaces.

While “digital rhetoric” has a technological foundation, it does not apply exclusively to computers. *Digital* refers to all the electronic gadgets that allow us to communicate. Technology has streamlined the writing process from invention to revision (Porter). A 2004 article in *Pedagogy* states, “Only a few writing technologies . . . have had truly dramatic social impact. The printing press is one; the networked computer is another” (DigiRhet.org 241). This elevates the importance of digital writing and digital rhetoric. Digital rhetoric is less about technological devices and more about a process or way of communicating.

Digital rhetoric is not confined to the digital writing toolbox. Rhetoric used in the digital environment overcomes constant upgrades and changes in technology. Jim Ridolfo defines digital rhetoric as “a communicative objective or series of communicative objects that are created, maintained, or disseminated through or within binary environments: digital rhetoric has the unique properties of being ‘immaterial,’ and does not directly face the physical boundaries of delivery that delimit analog rhetoric.” (DigiRhet 243). Delivery modes are not only multiplying but also doing so at a pace that confounds communication analysts. Mary Hocks identified a common frustration in

defining digital rhetoric while presenting a paper at Michigan State University in 2005, when she asserted that “Technology is always already over” (Akar and Topcu 42).

Though people are talking about social media, Web 2.0, and digital writing, the discussion has remained more vibrant in the trade journals and blogs than in the academic environment. According to Kim, Jeong, and Lee, “there are few academic studies on social Web sites, and most of the studies are comprised of newspaper and magazine articles, Wikipedia writings, and blogs with limited topics related to social Web sites (Kim, Lee, and Jeong 234). Studies of marketing and social media are easy to find in the less formal sources.

Amid all the changes in technology and debates about its meaning, some sound practices are emerging in the use of digital rhetoric in social media. *The Social Media Examiner*, a Web page, offers nine success stories. Ana White, a carpenter who calls herself a “homemaker” has more than 51,000 Facebook fans, for instance. She writes a website with her step-by-step plans for furniture projects and has published free how-to guides for furniture. Fans post pictures of their completed projects. Ana does not post or answer questions every day; her fans carry on the conversation without her. This is a connection and collaboration success story because she built credibility and an online platform using digital rhetoric ([Mershon](#)).

Another success story involves the marketing efforts of American Express. Combining its blog with Facebook, American Express uses the work of online authors to add quality content for readers. The company encourages continuous engagement by varying content and posts. It uses short quotes and articles to engage fans. According to

Buddy Media, posts composed of 80 characters or less get 27% more engagement than longer posts (Mershon).

These brief success stories confirm the importance of digital rhetoric to Web content. Both these businesses, one a major credit card company and the other a small “how-to” site have tailored content to reach audiences successfully. Digital rhetoric is the writing tool that allows such effective tailoring of content. In fact, the first advice I give marketing clients is to produce content for their Website, blog, and social media profiles. The more content, the better chance they have of ranking high in Google search engines. The content, however, must be planned to include elements of the communicative situation. That is digital writers must think about the perceived audience, the context of the communicative situation, the digital space, and the discourse community long before he picks up his digital tools to write.

Writing in the digital environment will improve if digital writers become digital rhetoricians. Brian Carroll, in *Writing for Digital Media*, suggests that digital rhetoric is about writing “clearly, precisely, accurately, with energy and voice, and for specific audiences.” He continues, “[f]ortunately good writing is valued online, and unfortunately it is still just as hard to find good writing online as it is in print” (Carroll). As in printed writing, the definition of good often depends on the audience. To illustrate this point, Carroll quotes the entertainer Fanny Price: “Your audience gives you everything you need. They tell you. There is no director who can direct you like an audience.” Getting to know the audience is possible by setting up listening posts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, and discussion threads. By defining the communicative situation, the writers have a better chance of succeeding on the blog or Website. Carroll suggests

thinking of the audience “in terms of the information they are looking for, or how the information you present might fit into the larger puzzle that your audience is trying to fit together over time” (Carroll).

Additionally, content must be examined to ensure credibility. The purpose of writing a particular piece must be assessed in terms of the type of site that will feature the piece. The digital rhetorician must consider where readers live and work as well as their education level. The digital writer must weigh the weight of his words and length of prose. Considering the plethora of information available, these efforts will help the digital writer to stand out. Collaboration and interaction are essential in today’s participatory culture, as is a consideration of the audience’s technical abilities (Carroll).

Because rhetorical invention applies to the screen as well as the page, the effective digital rhetorician will analyze these communicative elements and structure her writing with ethos, pathos, and logos. She will convey ethos by displaying expert knowledge and by connecting authentically to an audience she has studied and to whom she is making an appeal. The wise digital rhetorician, furthermore, will apply logos by adding expert information. And she will not forget to draw on pathos to speak to the emotions of the audience to encourage them to feel moved to act (Blakesley).

To use these elements effectively, a high level of self-awareness is needed. A digital rhetorician must consider his purpose, goals, and motivations for writing a digital piece. Certain bloggers might want to engage readers; certain Facebook posters might want to be expressive and have fun; certain Tweeters might want to inform or be informed; and certain social marketers might want to persuade. Technology extends the power of persuasion for behavior change.

Dr. B.J. Fogg and David Danielson of Stanford University have introduced the term *captology*, which is “the study and design of computers as *persuasive technologies*”(Fogg and Danielson). The study of persuasive technology began as these researchers used “methods from experimental psychology to demonstrate that computers can change people’s thoughts and behaviors in predictable ways (Fogg and Danielson). Fogg set up a lab to study how computers can change behavior through code but concluded that the missing piece to understanding persuasion was psychology, not technology. Ultimately, he developed a formula for behavior change.

Fogg and Danielson write that behavior change requires a trigger or a reminder. In other words, we must have the ability to do something and the motivation to do it. If behavior is to change, then trigger, ability, and motivation must all be present and occur simultaneously. This is called the Fogg Behavior Module (Fogg and Danielson). Digital rhetoric allows us to communicate with our online readers by sending a trigger or a reminder. For example, for one workshop described in this project, advance registration left more than 40 seats open. I set up a trigger by sending a reminder message to members of Georgia Writers Association offering the seats. The members who had the ability and the motivation would click the register button. After this email was sent, registrations went from nine to forty-nine in less than one week.

Becoming a Digital Rhetorician

My interest in digital rhetoric began in a composition and rhetoric class, Teaching Writing in High School and College. A member of the class made the tired argument that technology should not be the focus of pedagogy. I was seething inside, and it surprised

me. Why did a pointless argument upset me? I remained silent but began to build a digital rhetoric argument.

In this capstone project and in coursework, I learned that although writing and modalities were changing, the “new” and the “old” rhetoric had much in common. The first professional writing course I took in the MAPW program was *Review Writing*. This course taught that ethos is everything for a reviewer. Ethos is the persuasive appeal using one’s character when writing a commentary or review. Likewise, in digital rhetoric, ethos is essential. My final project was a review of a *History* channel series. In addition to the course requirements, I asked my local newspaper editor to publish the review in the Sunday paper as a preview to the series rebroadcast. I placed the same review on a content Website called *Suite101.com* (L. M. Russell, “America, the Story of Us: A Review of Problematic Television”). The review was changed slightly for search engine optimization. A publicist from *History* channel discovered the review and asked if she could send the print copy of the series for another review. One assignment was written for a newspaper and the other for the Web was written with the same purpose, but the Web version was optimized for Web readers and reached a significantly different audience. In this experience, I observed how digital rhetoric was not geared to the traditional channels of content publishing. The local newspaper reached a limited audience that was more interested in my ethos as a local writer than the content of the article. The online version of this review reached a larger audience with a more significant result.

A *rhetorician* according to *Cambridge Dictionary* is “a person who is good at speaking in public, especially someone who is able to influence people” Andrew

McMurray in “The Rhetoric of Resilience” lays out a job description of a rhetorician: You might say that nothing in the world gets done without an accompanying slice of rhetoric:

Goods aren't sold without sales pitches, politicians can't get elected without campaigns, children rarely leap into bed without wrangling, and scientific paradigms don't shift without debate, negotiation and accommodation. It's generally easier to make a persuasive case if truth is on your side, yet truth doesn't pop into view without rhetoric as its midwife” (McMurry).

These descriptions of how ideas become influential apply to the digital environment in addition to the traditional uses of rhetoric. Copywriters, new media marketers, even the occasional blogger would do well to study rhetoric and become digital rhetoricians. I became a digital rhetorician when I began forming arguments to raise the awareness of writing with rhetoric online. With arguments in hand, I began practicing and talking about these ideas.

In *Digital Technologies in the Writing Classroom*, another composition and rhetoric class, I had the writing challenge of composing a research blog. Meeting typical research expectations in blog format is difficult. I made adjustments and weighed in on the digital immigrant/digital native debate. Another professor working on a collaborative book with graduate students read my blog. She asked if I would rework the digital content and create an introduction for this book on social media. The audience changed and the content was adapted to fit the new medium.

In a directed study I worked with the KSU Writing Center and learned the pedagogy it valued. I took that information and conducted a campus-wide survey to

determine the existing brand of the center. This survey provided a valuable audience assessment. I then developed a strategic plan for marketing and branding the writing center. The work began by studying the context of the KSU Writing Center and its campus audience. In collaboration, the project produced a new image and lead to measures to engage the campus more in the services offered to students, faculty, and staff. The first semester after implementing a few steps resulted in an increase of 500 student visits to the KSU Writing Center.

Such experiences have made my commitment stronger than ever to using digital rhetoric to accomplish goals. A series of courses supplied the needed foundation for building a rhetorical platform in the digital environment. I reworked a tired Website and created a useful blog with resourceful landing pages for each module of this project. After adding a subscription widget to the blog, I began to notice a spike in subscribers that peaked after my last workshop. The blog began with 0 subscribers and currently has more than 200 people waiting for my next blog on digital rhetoric topics. I am becoming a digital rhetorician.

Digital Rhetoric Matters

The National Writing Project published the perfectly titled book *Digital Writing Matters*. It matters in part because we are writing more than ever before. According to the authors of *Digital Writing Matters*, we live in a participatory culture that requires involvement an many levels (*National Writing Project*). Digital rhetoric also matters because even in a difficult economy, jobs in new media marketing are increasing in salary and in number (Li). More employers are hiring marketers with skills to reach a

niche audience through social media and new media channels (Drell). At some point, this skill will become part of the job descriptions of most professionals.

Digital rhetoric matters for employment, but it also matters for education. According to Elizabeth Losh, the Writing Director of the Humanities Core Course at U.C. Irvine, there is extended value of using digital rhetoric for pedagogy. Often what is taught in the university eventually finds its way into practice and areas one has never considered. Losh illustrates this point when she points to the astronauts who lost their lives in the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster, they might have been spared if data sharing had been a practice at NASA at that time. Indeed, digital rhetoric can influence education, the work place, the political arena to produce social and economic change.

Finally, digital rhetoric matters because the world changes every sixty seconds. An info graph illustrates what happens in sixty-seconds on Social Media:

- *Pinterest, the newest social media channel, has 1090 visitors.*
- *Linked In has logged 7,610 searches.*
- *Twitter posts 175,000 tweets.*
- *Facebook sends 700,000 messages*
- *YouTube plays 2 million videos. (“Things That Happen on Internet Every Sixty Seconds”)*

Each of these social media platforms requires digital writing.

My initial goals for entering the MAPW program may have been a little naïve but were on track. Digital rhetoric can improve the way we communicate in every aspect of

life. It is far more than raising the level of online writing; digital rhetoric has changed the way we communicate online.

In summary, this capstone project added to my professional portfolio and gave me a new launching pad for future excursions into the field of digital rhetoric. My blog is growing in followers and potential content is expanding. The project has also raised my credibility to a new level in the digital environment. Pursuing an MA in Professional Writing has changed aversion to scholarly study in new media and has provided me with a way to merge academic discourse with practical application. Digital rhetoric matters.

Introduction to *Digital Rhetoric: Doing Things with Words*

Today's technology is already over. Media evolves. Social media channels change. Yet rhetoric remains the same (Hocks). Professional writers, marketers, and business people interested in new media marketing are riding the wave of the latest trend; the anchor that controls mass communication is *rhetoric* or *digital rhetoric*. Digital rhetoric is as difficult to define as the term *rhetoric*. Defining *digital rhetoric* is like nailing Jell-O to a tree. David Blakesley and Jeffrey L. Hoogeveen in their book, *Writing: A Manual for the Digital Age* explain that the “concept is both complex and nebulous, and it lends itself to a very wide range of media and activities.” In the simplest terms, like *rhetoric*, the purpose of *digital rhetoric* is to “persuade, inform, and move” readers (Blakesley 4). James Zappen from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute says the definition of digital rhetoric is both exciting and troublesome: “It is exciting because it holds promise of opening new vistas of opportunity for rhetorical studies and troublesome because it reveals the difficulties and the challenges of adapting a rhetorical tradition more than 2,000 years old to the conditions and constraints of the new digital media” (Zappen, James P. 319). Technology is always changing, but the rhetorical tradition can be what gives digital media credibility and strength.

The study of rhetoric reveals the power of words. Dr. C. Michael Drout, professor rhetoric and medieval studies at Wheaton University notes, “One simple definition of rhetoric is *How to Do Things with Words*” (Drout and Recorded Books 7). Drout argues that the idea of doing things with words comes from Speech-Act Theory: “Speech is not just the communication of information, but also a kind of action that people perform and that therefore has social as well as communicative implications” (Drout and Recorded

Books 6). Communication is not just putting out information it is getting through to an audience with a targeted and timely message. The digital environment quickens this process. When the strength of rhetoric collides with the electric digital environment, words will do more things, and better things, online.

The synergy between classical rhetoric and new media practices leads to persuasive digital writing. The Internet was created to sell. Selling goods, services, and ideas online did not always mean the exchange of cash; sometimes the exchange of ideas is the currency of the World Wide Web. Despite the hurried clip and progressive nature of technology applied or professional writers using firm rhetorical concepts can produce compelling online content to sell. Whether selling widgets or words, digital writers can make words accomplish their goals.

After years of working as a professional writer, I entered the MA in Professional Writing program (MAPW) at Kennesaw State University with the intent of building my credibility. Composition and rhetoric pedagogies shed new light on the reasons for my success at writing effective digital copy. Learning basic rhetorical conventions provided answers to question to why my current writing worked online. My work became purposeful and I began researching digital writing and digital rhetoric.

This project began as an attempt to apply the practices of rhetoric in the digital environment by writing and presenting a series of modules teaching digital writing techniques. This writing project addresses three different audiences, teaching each audience how to do things with words in the digital environment. Whether “selling” our widgets or our words, persuasive communication calls for high-quality rhetoric inspired words and sentences. Instead of wandering around in a writing wilderness, the MAPW

courses provided answers to why my methods worked. My credibility grew with my skills and provided a platform on which I could speak.

The clients of this project, *Digital Rhetoric: Doing Things with Words* were chosen based on my relationship with the client's organization. I obtained the clients' approval of the proposed workshops and scheduled a presentation date. The clients were the Center for Sustainable Journalism in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Kennesaw State University Writing Center, and the Georgia Writers Association. Dr. Laura McGrath and I submitted a proposal to the organizers of SoCon12 for the Center for Sustainable Journalism, and we were selected to present the 60-minute workshop, *Create, Connect, Collaborate: Words that Work Online*. Dr. Mary Lou Odom, the Director of the Kennesaw State University Writing Center, requested a workshop to help students find credible sources when using search engines. This workshop, *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources*, was developed for a student audience with a need to know how to find sources for research essays. The final client was the Georgia Writers Association, where I am employed as the administrator of this non-profit professional writing association. The organization has monthly writers workshops that range from the business to the craft of writing. The 90-minute workshop, *Bonding, Branding, and Building: Connecting in an Authentic Way* was presented to an audience of writers in various stages of their writing careers.

For each workshop in this project, I customized the content to the perceived needs of the audience. An analysis of the audience was conducted prior to creating materials. The workshop or the module content was written to encourage participants to interact with the information during the workshop and beyond. From the opening activity to the

business card with a link to all the resources, the goal was to extend the workshop beyond the allotted time.

Each workshop included an opening activity to create an atmosphere of collegial collaboration. The workshops ended with an invitation to continue the pursuit of knowledge. Face-to-face interaction began as the audience walked in the door, and I handed each participant printed materials for the session and the business cards to help reconnect online after the session. I greeted each person to ignite a connection before I spoke one word.

Business cards were designed with a Web address and QR Code for mobile access of the workshop resources. The Web address went to a *landing page* on my Website. A *landing page* is a location on a Website that has one purpose, to ask readers to do something. In this case, I wanted readers to interact with my research materials to learn more and link to my affiliates if they wanted to know more about the products I use for new media marketing. Another purpose of the landing page was to grow an online audience by collecting email subscribers for my blog about digital writing.

Follow-up assessments for each workshop were different and matched the audience profile. In the first two workshops, evaluations were informal using social media and word of mouth assessment, however, the last workshop I used email surveys to determine the effectiveness of the content. I used informal methods of assessment like watching Twitter and Facebook posts after SoCon12 to assess *Create, Connect, Collaborate: Writing with Words that Work Online*. For the assessment of the module presented at the Kennesaw State University Writing Center assessment, *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources*, I depended on the Director's evaluation.

Bonding, Branding, Building: Connecting in an Authentic Way, the workshop for the Georgia Writers Association, incorporated four evaluations. I sent email surveys to determine the needs of the potential audience to everyone on my mailing list and then to only those registered. I asked the participants a pre-workshop question and emailed a final survey. The results of what specifically was discovered will be addressed after each module.

The most common comments coming from all the workshops participants concerned time and technology. The participants did not have time to keep up with social media and changing technology. The infusion of rhetoric into this discussion gives digital writers purpose and powerful words. This yields results of increased readership, more customers, and higher Google rankings. The time argument becomes null and void when the digital writer finds writing in new media purposeful. The changing tide of technology is manageable when rhetorical principles are applied in any environment.

Create, Connect, Collaborate: Working Words that Work Online

Technology is changing exponentially. Digital producers are learning to function in this multimodal information tsunami. Eric Qualman, author of *Socialnomics*, supports this observation with these facts in May 2010. There are over 200,000,000 blogs and 60 million daily Facebook status updates. Kindle eBooks outsold paperbacks during the 2009 Christmas season. The largest newspapers, not to mention the small hometown papers, report record circulation decline. People let the daily news find them by subscribing to news feeds. What does this mean to people trying to sell? Qualman states that 34% of bloggers talk about brands. He asks, “Do you like what they are saying about your brand? You better” (Qualman). Consumers trust peer recommendations over advertisements (78% over 14%). Qualman summarizes social media or new media marketing, “Social Media isn’t a fad; it’s a fundamental shift in the way we communicate. We don’t have a choice on whether we do social media; the question is how well we do it” (Qualman).

Social media and new media marketing can be done well, even in this rapid pace, by adapting to the change and remaining steadfast in producing a quality product. Web content is growing because everyone is writing more online. Everyone is a blogging, posting, and commenting. Brian Carroll, author of the textbook, *Writing for Digital Media*, says, “We are all content creators and writers. Fortunately, good writing is valued online, and unfortunately it is still just as hard to find good writing online as it is in print” (Carroll). Web content producers must raise the level of writing standards to get and

maintain an online presence. Web writers must create excellent online content with words that work, words that connect and collaborate with the intended audience. Digital writers can improve their skills like writers have improved for years, with focus and practice.

The objective of this module is to leave each participant with a profound impression that rhetorical words will accomplish the writer's wishes in the digital environment. *Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Working with Words that Work Online* is designed to help writers find ways to create content that compels the reader to connect and collaborate in the digital environment. The hope is that this writing style will help content producers fulfill their purpose one blog, post, or tweet at a time. The main goal of this module is to present words that work online, ways to write on the Web for impact, and organic search engine optimization techniques that can push content to the top of the Google search heap.

The Client. The Audience. The Venue.

The client for *Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Working with Words that Work Online* was the Center for Sustainable Journalism. This center, under the direction of Dr. Leonard Witt, is housed in Kennesaw State University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences. According to the organizational Website, the mission is to "ensure that high quality, ethically sound journalism continues to have a vibrant place in our democracy" ("Center for Sustainable Journalism, About"). For the past six years, the Center for Sustainable Journalism sponsors SoCon, a social media conference. This "un-conference" is billed as "totally interactive" and is the longest running social media event of its kind. The atmosphere is creative and collaborative; attendees connect on Twitter and scan QR codes from smart phones instead of doling out business cards. The audience

is more tech savvy than the average person and eager practitioners who want to learn something fresh and useful.

On the morning of the conference, registrants picked up bags and nametags while reading random tweets on the screens at the registration tables. The buzz began before the first session. Participants were encouraged to tweet with the hash-tag Twitter phrase, *#SoCon12*. This Twitter feed was an instant evaluation of the conference, the speakers, and the environment before, during, and after the event. Conference attendees were tweeting all day and for days following the event. Participants were encouraged to sign up for three workshops on wall sheets. During the keynote addresses, the staff tallied the numbers and assigned classrooms based on those interested in each workshop. The classes with the highest registrants received the biggest rooms.

The interest was extremely high for this topic, *Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Working with Words that Work Online* landed the largest room. The topic met a need in the audience of professional marketers, new media marketers, educators, and small business owners. People who work in the digital environment are looking for ways to rise above the river of information with engaging content. The workshop title and description were words that worked with this audience netting over 50 participants and subsequent Twitter buzz.

To draw participants into the topic and retain this audience after the conference, I created a resource page on my Website. Instead of the usual Power Point, this presentation was designed to use a landing page (or a designated space on my blog that requires interaction) with an outline covered with links to encourage the participants to return to this space and learn more. Many topics were covered in a 60-minute workshop;

therefore, business cards with a link and a QR Code going to a resource-landing page continues the learning. The goal was to continue the learning long after the presentation and to connect with these marketers for future opportunities to share information through my professional blog about digital writing at www.russellink.org.

Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Words that Work Online is a self-contained module that combines classical rhetoric with digital writing. The topic focused on using the best words strategically placed and used with authenticity. Participants viewed a presentation on 21 words that work in the 21st century. The SoCon12 audience participated in a word order exercise for memorable sentences and titles. Search engine optimization techniques were briefly mentioned for the purpose of finding niche markets for these marketers.

An overarching theme for this project is relating to readers authentically. The idea of “trust agents” was introduced briefly, but the goal was to make an understated theme. The idea of being a “trust agent” online is a difficult concept to define. It speaks to the intangible ethos of the writer. It was introduced slowly at the end of this workshop at SoCon12 for the purpose of whetting the appetite of the participants to read further into the resources provided on the landing page.

The following is the module content presented at SoCon12 at Kennesaw State University. The assessment of *Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Words that Work Online* follows the content section. Module materials and resources end this section. Works cited from each module are combined and presented after the conclusion.

The Module Content

Two politicians stood at a dedication ceremony. The keynote speaker, an eloquent man, spoke for two hours. The crowd was restless when the second man came to the platform. The second man, an afterthought, spoke only 273 words and took only two minutes, but his words were never forgotten. The following day, November 20, 1863, the first speaker, Edward Everett sent a note to the second speaker, Abraham Lincoln, commending him on his Gettysburg Address:

Permit me also to express my great admiration of the thoughts expressed by you, with such eloquent simplicity & appropriateness, at the consecration of the Cemetery. I should be glad, if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes. (United States Library of Congress)

In 1863, audiences had a longer attention span; today's audiences would have checked out or clicked away after a few lines of Edward Everett's speech. Nicholas Carr writes, in *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, that the mind of an adult in 1858 was wired differently than the digitally connected adult of today. Carr notes that the Lincoln-Douglas Debates lasted for over seven hours. The crowd had to be persuaded by Lincoln to go home and rest after the first four hours. They reluctantly went home and returned rested for Lincoln's portion of the program. These men were not even political candidates at this time. Indeed, the 1858 mind was inquisitive and had a longer attention span. The attendance at the Lincoln-Douglas Debates proves that lengthy speech of Everett was not unusual for the time. Lincoln's blurb, or his 19th century sound bite, *The Gettysburg Address*, a tightly written piece with power packed words, is unforgettable

and unusual for the time. Everett's long keynote is barely a footnote in history. Today, the demand for concise writing in the digital age is greater than in Lincoln's day. Writers must fight for the distracted mind and compose content that will grab the Web reader and drag him deeper into the message.

Words matter. The right words really matter. Today readers have little patience for endless bloviating. We want our messages quickly and in 140 characters or less. If writers cannot capture a reader's imagination in the first few words, the rest goes unread. Captivating audiences happens at the word level. Words arranged for emphasis begin with the title or the headline and deliver value with each line. Great words connect with readers. Lincoln knew the power of words. Lincoln was a master of rhetoric and the President connected with a nation in 273 words.

This story opened the SoCon12 workshop, *Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Words that Work Online*. Followed by a quick summary of how rhetoric and digital media can be merged by using words that work and sentences that persuade.

Cultivate Words that Really Work: Cut the Words that Really Don't

Words do things. In classical rhetoric and new media, the right words do the things we want them to do. A simple definition of *rhetoric* is to *do things with words* (Drout and Recorded Books). The word fitly spoken or written will click with the intended audience to change minds and alter lives. Some words do nothing. Impotent words are boring; worn-out phrases drop on listless ears. Some words are damaging. Author and poet Maya Angelou says, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Rhetoric is a misunderstood word with a bad reputation. Drout says, “In fact rhetoric is simply (and complexly) the art of using words to change the world. This is, of course, the social world rather than the physical world, but words that change the social world can be amplified, through human ingenuity and effort, into changing the physical” (Drout and Recorded Books). An amusing tag line used on *Karios News Web* site offers a simple but revealing definition, “Rhetoric, Not Just for Liars” (Student Project at the Kenneth Burke Society Conference).

Amy Harrison, writer for Copyblogger.com says, “Rhetoric is the art of using language for persuasive ends. Not unlike copywriting” (Harrison). Aristotle introduced the world to the trifecta of rhetoric: ethos, pathos, and logos. Briefly, ethos is establishing character as a speaker in front of an audience. Pathos is making an audience feel. Logos is the Greek word for “word,” and we connect logos with “logic.” Our words, in order to do something, must be packed with logic. Copywriters and digital writers must persuade with clear truth sans the hyperbole. Eliminating shaky statements from online text such as, “we all know that . . .” and “it’s important to . . .” digital writers win the audience with researched and supported facts (Harrison). Content writers compete with millions of messages; excellent rhetorical construction may be the only distinction to set the digital writer apart from mounds of email and a trail of tweets. Companies and other organizations may have a very good message or product, but if they cannot share, it they may become “Cassandras.”

In ancient Greek literature, Cassandra fooled Apollo into giving her the gift of prophecy. Cassandra would become a “know it all,” but no one believed her. Apollo had cursed her with no rhetorical skills; she knew truth, but she was unable to convince

anyone to do anything about it (Drout and Recorded Books). Rhetoric, according to Aristotle, “Serves a useful purpose” (“Book I - Chapter 2 : Aristotle’s Rhetoric”). Digital writers, more than ever before must consider Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric and evaluate the purpose of their words. Dumping words on a blog post or a Facebook page without using rhetoric turns the writer into a “Cassandra.”

One way to be an effective digital rhetorician is to observe Frank Luntz. A linguist and pollster, Luntz lists “21 words that work in the 21st Century” in his book, *Words that Work: It’s Not what you Say, it’s What People Hear*. The word at the top of his list is “imagine.” While Luntz stresses how this word speaks differently to each person – it hooks the reader in an interactive way. Just say the word, “imagine, and what comes to your mind?” Luntz says, “‘Imagine’ is one of the most powerful words in the English language. It evokes something different to each person that hears it” (Luntz 241). “Imagine” opens stored images of our individual dreams and desires. It appeals to all of our senses and encourages us to interact with the writer.

Other words in the list are words that sell: “hassle-free,” “results,” “efficient,” “casual elegance,” and “certified” (Luntz 240–263). The way these words are used can produce sales and increased revenue. Other words are political. Luntz was one of the advisors to Newt Gingrich and helped write “The Contract on America”. Luntz has since removed himself from partisan politics and works for both sides, but he still advises politicians to use words like “investment” instead of government “spending” (255). Other political words useful in any rhetorical situation include, “prosperity,” “all-American,” “a balanced approach,” and “a culture of . . .” (256).

As nice as it is to have a list of words that are guaranteed to work in the right rhetorical situations, including the digital environment, these words must read like the writer's natural voice. A quality piece written with all the right words but not in an authentic voice is stilted. Luntz says, "As Roger Ailes, the greatest media guru of the twentieth century, so accurately put it: 'You are the message'" (264).

What about words that *do not work* in the digital environment? Dan Zarrella recommends that Web geeks avoid techie terms: "What I found was that techie and social-media dork favorite topics like Twitter, Google, and the iPhone aren't very popular with the mainstream Facebook audience. These topics might be hot with the bleeding-edge Twitter crowd, but when you're targeting the much larger Facebook audience, lay off the trendy web geek stuff" (Zarrella).

Writers will benefit from working these words that do things into the next tweet, blog post, article, or email and testing the results. A test will be if the content is forwarded, reposted, followed, or re-tweeted. Google analytics tracks people staying on Websites and blogs. There are many new and emerging tools that help digital writers examine effectiveness of words.

Words that work online are simple and not technical. Words that work online form short sentences, not long and winding platitudes. Repetition is a good writing technique as long as it is not redundant and rhythmic. Words with texture give the message an interesting sound. Cadence and alliteration strengthen phrasing. Words can paint a picture and create questions. Words can be personal and transparent, humanizing the message with embedded emotional triggers. Words must establish context to convey the message. In his book, *Words That Work : It's Not What You Say, It's What People*

Hear, Frank Luntz sums it up, “You have to give people the ‘why’ of a message before you tell them the ‘therefore’ and the ‘so that’ without context, you cannot establish a message’s value, its impact or, most importantly, its relevance” (Luntz). Setting the audience up with a rationale establishes context and a platform to “sell.”

During the SoCon12 workshop, *Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Words that Work Online* participants shared in a Prezi presentation from the Frank Luntz book, *Words That Work: It’s Not What You Say, It’s What People Hear*. The participants interacted with “21 Words for the 21st Century” by sharing ways to use these words in online writing (239-264).

Creating Word Orders that Work: Ordering Words for Emphasis

She hated my copy for her book trailer: “Ann B. Sloan knows violence.” The sentence attacked my marketing client. Ann B. Sloan is an author with a new mystery thriller based on her book on years of work experience with violent offenders and backed up with her PhD research in violence.

“I want to change that sentence. There are so many creeps out there who would misunderstand.”

“Okay,” I said, “But I can tell by your reaction, it worked.”

“What worked?” asked Dr. Sloan.

“Well, that is the effect I was going for the way you responded. I wanted potential readers to be jarred enough to buy your book,” I said. “But never mind, I will rewrite it.”

Within a few moments of our call, Dr. Sloan sent an email:

“Go ahead and run with it. You are right: it works.”

Words that work online are strategically arranged for emphasis. Sentences should be arranged to emphasize the most important word at the end of the sentence just before the stop sign or the “period.” This full stop is where readers need to linger and ponder.

Hooking Web readers requires titles and first sentences constructed with carefully chosen words placed in the right order to keep your audience’s attention until the end of the content. Short, well-arranged words are “baited” sentences that will keep readers interested.

This method suggested by Poytner News University’s Roy Peter Clark can change anyone’s writing in one day. Ordering words for emphasis was used by Shakespeare when he wrote, “The Queen, my Lord, is dead” (R. P. Clark, *Order Your Words for Emphasis*). Clark suggests that the most important word is the one before the full stop, in this case, “dead.” The second most important piece of information is the subject of the condition, “The Queen.” The middle information in this tiny sentence could actually be removed and the reader would get the point that the Queen is dead. Shakespeare could have arranged this sentence in many other ways, but this arrangement creates a powerful sentence that impacts the reader.

Novelist Melanie Sumner teaches students to end some sentences with a punch. Feel the impact of the first sentence in *The School of Beauty and Charm: A Novel*: “I was born again, for the first time, when I was seven” (Sumner 1). This is fiction, but this works with digital writing as well. Arranging words for emphasis can grab the lazy browser by the neck. Before readers get to those great sentences, they have to get past the very first “sentence” the headline or title of the content.

Internet readers decide in seconds if the title is interesting enough to read further. Brian Clark, founder of Copyblogger says, “The biggest battle is getting enough people to read in the first place. And that battle is won or lost at the headline.” Clark, in his headline writing series delivers useful suggestions to get readers past blog post titles, email subject lines, and article titles, and into the content (B. Clark, “How to Write Magnetic Headlines”). A title cannot only draw in search traffic by using search engine optimized Meta tag words; it will draw the human reader to the text, if the title is carefully constructed. Try rewriting a title on a piece of writing or as a subject line of an email. Test the open rate of the sent emails; see how many more times this email was opened – with the exact same text, but with a new title. According to Copyblogger, “On average, 8 out of 10 people will read headline copy, but only 2 out of 10 will read the rest.” That is why writing a power headline is essential to turning browsers into a niche audience. Copyblogger continues, “Remember, every element of compelling copy has just one purpose — to get the next sentence read” (B. Clark, “How to Write Magnetic Headlines”).

Some tips on writing great headlines include writing the title first to make a promise to readers, and then deliver. Keywords in the Web titles are important. Brian Clark, author of *How to Create Compelling Content that Ranks Well in Search Engines*, wants writers to speak “back to the prospective reader in her own chosen words.” Using key words or tags to create compelling headlines makes “promises to answer the *exact question* the searcher is asking in the search query” (B. Clark, *How to Create Compelling Content*). The highest searched term is not the best choice for a key word or Meta tag, because there is too much competition for that one word. The least searched term is also

not a good choice for obvious reasons. The middle is the safest route for writers to find effective key words.

Brian Clark suggests writing “How to” headlines: “It’s no secret that “how to” articles and blog posts are some of the most sought after, linked to, and bookmarked content online. People want useful information, and they’ll reward you by promoting it to others when you provide it” (B. Clark, “How to Write a Killer ‘How To’ Article That Gets Attention”).

One way to write effective headlines is to write numbered lists. Clark suggests, “Any headline that lists a number of reasons, secrets, types, or ways will work because, once again, it makes a very specific promise of what’s in store for the reader” (B. Clark, “7 Reasons Why List Posts Will Always Work”).

One final way to write great headlines is to follow the tried and true formulas of experienced copywriters. Some suggestions by Clark include writing direct and simple headlines. Pointing out a big benefit and announcing exciting news to readers has a positive email open rate. The digital writer could pose a “provocative question” or “bark a command” like, *Get Rid of [problem] Once and For All*. Writers can follow up with the next step (B. Clark, “10 Sure-Fire Headline Formulas That Work”).

At the SoCon12 workshop, Writers might look back at the last piece they wrote for the Web and looked at all the last words in the content. They looked at titles, first sentences, last sentences in paragraphs and last sentence in the Web article. The group helped a marketer revise his recent marketing piece by asking him to decide if the last word in all those places were most important to the title, sentence, paragraph and the piece. The group led him to ask questions of his writing: Is that word the most important?

Is it the thought that causes readers to linger at the end of the title? How about the first sentence? How about the last sentence? After helping our workshop volunteer to rewrite a sentence or two, arranging words for emphasis, the work was read to the workshop participants. The piece was improved for impact by this collaborative exercise at the workshop.

In the *Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Words that Work Online* workshop at SoCon12, there was a simple search engine optimization tutorial to introduce the topic. It is a complicated process, best left to a longer workshop, so the basics were given in a simple format. I explained that writing naturally and then finding organic key words is the one simple truth about writing captivating content that will rank high in search engines. I then shared some ways my writing was optimized using key words written naturally into articles raised my content level on Google.

For a writing class one summer I had to write a review of the *History Channel's* series *America, the Story of Us*. I love history, especially when it is retold as a dramatic story in HD. My honest assessment of the producer's product was mixed, and I placed my completed assignment on a content Web site after I optimized the title and key words for Google and search engines. In a few weeks, I received an email from a *History* channel publicist. She found my article in a search and asked me if I would review the book version of the television series for *History*. This publicist found my article, "*America, The Story of Us: A Review of Problematic Television*" through her Google alert and found my contact information.

In another instance, I was writing an article for about leptin hormones. I was using an Atlanta doctor whose book was revolutionary in weight management based on the "fat

hormone” leptin. The doctor wrote me an email and thanked me for writing about his research. He found me on a Google search. That article, “Leptin Theory Definition” on ehow.com was optimized for search engines (“Leptin Theory Definition”). That doctor asked me to write marketing articles for him as I went through his weight loss program at a reduced price. I lost 45 pounds.

I wrote these organically and placed the key words close to the beginning of the content. I then constructed a title from the same keyword tags. Inserting keywords into the natural flow of the content, I was able to target links and raise the ranking of my article in Google.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) has complicated and evolving guidelines. The one simple truth about SEO is to write for people and not search engines. Success comes when we write natural and compelling content and then apply a few search engine tricks to force our writing to the surface in a sea of digital content.

Keep it Simple SEO

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) can be complicated. The digital writer must focus on four simple words as they write content: Text, Titles, Tags, and Targeted Links.

1. Text

With only seconds to grab readers, writers must get to the point fast. The Yahoo style guide recommends three guidelines for effective online writing:

Keep it short. Use short words, sentences, paragraphs, bulleted lists, and short webpages. Take print sources and put them on a “diet.” Long “brochure-like” content is a sure way to get browsers to click away.

Front-load content. For readers of English and many other languages, the most important space on a webpage is the upper-left area; thus the wise digital communicator will put the good stuff there. Drawing readers requires putting important information first without dragging readers through meandering thoughts. Long passages need to be shortened or “bulleted.”

Keep it simple. One or two ideas per short paragraph are the maximum. Simple language is appropriate for all web pages, even ones that are technical. Web writers do not need to resort to fluff or promotional copy when speaking naturally. The Yahoo guide says, “Direct, objective text -- not promotional copy -- is more helpful to the site visitor, and readers perceive it as more trustworthy” (Barr and Yahoo! Inc.).

2. Titles

The title and bolded subtitles help readers decide if they are going to finish the text. They want to know if the content is relevant. Titles must contain a keyword close to the beginning (read about keywords under “Tags”) for search engines, but titles must not lie to the reader or trick them with clever sentences. Titles should be long enough to be descriptive. Search engine tools like *SEO Scribe* recommend a title length of 72 characters with the keywords or keyword phrases near the beginning (B. Clark, *How to Create Compelling Content*). Most of all, make titles interesting, unique, and clear to the reader.

3. Tags

Tags or Meta tags are essentially keywords, or words or phrases people place in the search box on Google or Bing to find content. People want to know why and how and

find terms to describe what they are searching for. Keywords or key phrases are ranked by popularity in free programs like Google Ad words. There are many strategies to find the best key words for digital content. To keep it simple, here is one simple way to find keywords or tags: Imagine what the audience or potential reader wants to know and pick a relevant word.

4. Targeted Links

Google wants to know what other people think of the writer. Content writers are given a higher credibility grade when other credible sources link back. This tells search engines that the writer or poster is reliable and trustworthy.

Writing Words that Work Online is a starting place to help writers start thinking about their writing for a specific niche market. The hope is that writing becomes powerful, able to connect writers to their audience one blog, post, and tweet at a time.

You are the Message

In the tradition of rhetoric and ethos, the writer becomes the message. The ethos, character, and presence of a company or the writer are powerful assets making the words work online. Some of this discourse may seem like rhetorical manipulative strategies for getting readers and building an online presence. Connecting and collaborating with a targeted audience, using words that are proven to work, and arranging words to make impressive sentences could be construed as manipulative by the online browser. The purpose for becoming the message is to present authenticity. Frank Luntz concludes his book with this important message about using language ethically:

For most people, language is functional rather than being an end in itself. For me, it's people that are the end; language is just a tool to reach them, a means to an end. But it's not enough to simply stand there and marvel at the tool's beauty. You must realize that it is like fire, and the outcome depends on how it is used to light the way or to destroy. (Luntz 265)

I shared this quote and the following sentiments at the conclusion of *Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Words that Work Online* workshop at SoCon12.

I am the message; I want to be authentic in that message. The writing techniques are just ways to be understood and heard over the roar of the cyber-crowd. I want to reach people with my words. I do not worship the tools or the trade, but use them to accomplish my goals. Whether my goals are to help a client sell a book or pack a room at a workshop, I want to share my lessons learned about this brave new world of digital rhetoric. It's about people. It's about relationship.

The Assessment

Following the SoCon12 *Create, Connect, Collaborate: Words that Work Online* workshop on February 4, 2012, I conducted an informal assessment based on participant feedback and the number of new followers and subscribers to my blog, www.russellink.org. I followed the #SoCon12 and #Imrussell mentions for several days. Many of the tweets focused on one or two aspects of the presentation. One repeated theme on the tweets was the writing tips gleaned from the workshop. It appears that knowing how to write online is an important topic.

The one negative tweet said, “It was not what I thought it was going to be.” That forced an evaluation of the program description. I evaluated the entire selection of workshops offered in my time slot and considered why *Create, Connect, Collaborate: Writing with Words that Work Online* was well attended. Some of the workshops were very technical. Another workshop pushed a message that social media is not for every business. It appears that people wanted to know how to write well online to connect with target markets to sell widgets or ideas. I asked the negative tweeter what I did not cover that she thought I would cover. She only responded, “Oh nothing. I got some great resources and that was worth it all.”

The workshop was designed to build my own platform and keeping the audience at my landing page on my Website. Using business cards with a QR code and links direct participants back to the site for more information. It appears that this was accomplished.

My email marketing records indicate a substantial increase in subscriptions to my email contact list. I started a new Website designed with this and other workshops in mind. I added landing pages or pages that insist visitors interact with the content for the purpose of using them as presentation platforms and future references. My email contact list grew from 20 to 190 as a result of this workshop and the subsequent workshops using the same marketing tactic of landing page conversion.

Another indication of the workshop’s success was that the participants stayed long after the workshop ended. Several participants extended invitations for me to speak at other events, such as at Cole’s School of Business at Kennesaw State University.

I began the workshop by welcoming each person who entered the room to establish a point of contact before I began speaking. This was an effective technique for

creating a warm and collaborative workshop. The workshop began with my talking to the participants to make me approachable. It seemed to work as at the end of the workshops, many of the participants thanked me and gave connected with me on Twitter and face-to-face. Professional speakers use this technique to create intimacy in a large group. It is also a model of what can be done in the digital environment by responding to all your email and posts with a personal and friendly reply or commenting on other's blogs and content. Establishing a relationship at the very beginning makes it easier for the speaker to make her points and encourage interaction throughout the presentation.

The workshop was followed by days of contacts through email and in the social media realm. A colleague from Kennesaw State University wrote a glowing email and has begun referring me to people for information and speaking opportunities. This colleague also attended my last workshop in this series, a good indication that she benefited from the type of information I delivered.

Create, Connect, and Collaborate: Words that Work Online was a well-attended workshop at SoCon12. The rhetoric of the title full of carefully chosen words that work netted the largest attended workshop in the time slot. The materials were carefully arranged considering the audience and the context of the conference being for technically literate professionals. Based on the informal evaluation, the participants appeared to understand the concept of using words that work, a rhetorical concept, in the digital environment.

Module Resources

Create Connect Collaborate: Words that Work Online

SoCon 12
Saturday, February 4, 2012
KSU College of Humanities &
Social Sciences
2:30-3:30 PM

Lisa M. Russell

Introduction (5 Minutes)

1) Cultivate Words that Really Work Cut the Words that Really Don't (10 Minutes)

- Frank Luntz, *Words that Work: It's Not What you Say, it's what People Hear**
- Lists of Words that Work by Frank Luntz*
- Ways to write with Words that Work

2) Create Word Orders that Work: Order Your Words for Emphasis (15 Minutes)

- An enduring method of arranging words in a sentence for effect*
- Shakespeare, *MacBeth*: "The Queen, my Lord, is dead."
- My experience: "Anne B. Jones knows violence"
- INTERACTIVE: Reorder the Words (10 minutes)

3) Connect Key Words to Your Niche (15 Minutes)

- Find key words, phrases, and trending topics*
- SEO Essentials
- How it Worked for Me
- INTERACTIVE: Use SEO Tools*

4) Collaborate and Build Credentials (10 Minutes)

- The thread that ties this all together is being credible/trustworthy
- Strive to be a trust agent, but never call yourself one.
- GWA Chapter: Literary Trust Agent*
- Tie all together – how can using your words turn you into a TRUST AGENT and why do you care?

* Items on Resource Page

- Frank Luntz Books
- List of Words that Work
- Poytner News U Video
- Russell Book Trailers
- Links to find key words
- Link to SEO Tools

Visuals

- PPT with integrated videos, Prezsis and audio.
- QR Code Cards

Interactives

- Google Docs
- Resources Page
- QR Code link cards and contacts

B. Reorder the Words (10 minutes)

- 1) Select a SHORT piece of your writing (or someone else's) and highlight every last word of every sentence.
- 2) The last word in every paragraph.
- 3) The last word before the final period.
- 4) Pick one sentence (with good words) and without changing words reorder the words for a more impactful sentence.

C. Use SEO Tools (10 minutes)

- 1) Log-onto myscribeseo.
- 2) Use same piece of writing and test

Create, Connect, Collaborate: Words that Work Online

Lisa M. Russell, Georgia Writers Association and Dr. Laura McGrath, Kennesaw State University



In a world where user-generated content is sometimes valued more than the work of officials and/or experts, how can communication pros become influencers and trust agents in the digital sphere? Well, it's a collaborative world, so let's collaborate! Participants will work together to identify strategies for creating social media content that reaches the correct target audience(s) and produces results. Russell and McGrath will take a look at the research, using real-world case studies to demonstrate proven routes to success. Attendees will submit collaborative writings in real-time, contributing to a Google Doc that will serve as a for conference attendees and beyond.

speakers



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Web Words

that Work

1. Cultivate Words that Really Work: Cut the Words that Really Don't

- Frank Luntz, [Words that Work: It's Not What You Say, It's What You Hear](#)
- Janice (Ginny) Reddish, [Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content](#)
- [21 Words that Work in the 21st Century](#) (Prezi Presentation)
- [11 Words for 2011](#)
- [Words that Don't Work on Social Media](#)
- [The Social Media Scientist](#)
- Aristotle was a blogger before blogging was cool. [Read more](#)
- [Aristotle's Ancient Guide to Blogging](#) - Copyblogger

2. Create Word Orders that Work: Order Your Words for Emphasis

- [Order Words for Emphasis](#) – Poytner News University
- [Write Magnetic Headlines](#) - Copyblogger

3. Connect Keywords to Your Niche

- [Scribe SEO](#) - *We will use this tool in workshop*
- [How to Create Compelling Content that Ranks High in Search Engines](#)

4. Collaborate and Build Credentials

- *Becoming a Literary Trust Agent* – Free Chapter Download: [Social Media In Context Chapter 10](#)
- [Trust Agents: Using the Web to Build Influence, Improve Reputation, and Earn Trust](#), Chris Brogan, Julien Smith
- [Building Trust](#) - Susanne Furman: "lack of trust has been identified as one of the most formidable barriers in building online relationships"

Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources

Students are not really more digital than their instructors. In 2001, Marc Prensky invented the term *digital native* to describe the generations born after 1980 and the “first generations to grow up” with digital technology. He referenced neurologist Dr. Bruce D. Perry of Baylor College of Medicine to support his theory that “today’s students think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors” (Prensky, “H. Sapiens Digital: From Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom”). Prensky’s motivation, while academically altruistic, may also have reflected a vested interest. He built an industry around the message that educators need to learn the language of the “digital natives” (Prensky, “Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants Part 1”).

“This is not just a joke,” he said. “It’s very serious, because the single biggest problem facing education today is that our digital immigrant instructors, who speak an outdated language [that of a pre-digital age], are struggling to teach a population that speaks an entirely new language.” Prensky implored the digital immigrant to lose the accent. The identity of digital natives and immigrants, however, is more complex than Prensky’s analysis suggests” (Prensky, “H. Sapiens Digital: From Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives to Digital Wisdom”).

Students are going to use Google as their first line of defense in a research project. The idea behind this self-contained module was to help students in the midst of a college research paper to Google responsibly and find credible sources. Introducing students to

the purpose of Google and to the tools of Google creates successful searches for peer-reviewed articles and other reliable Internet sources.

Librarians and professors overestimate students' ability to research on every level. Students do not understand simple search logic and misuse Google. According to Steve Kolowich, "The prevalence of Google in student research is well-documented, but the Illinois researchers found something they did not expect: students were not very good at using Google" (Kolowich). Students are clueless about search terms that return good sources for research projects. Andrew Asher, an anthropology professor at Bucknell University concludes, "I think it really exploded this myth of the 'digital native,' Just because you've grown up searching things in Google doesn't mean you know how to use Google as a good research tool" (Kolowich). Clearly not all students are "digital." They know even less about doing online research to find credible sources. This is the purpose for presenting this workshop, *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources*.

The Client. The Audience. The Venue.

The Kennesaw State University Writing Center under the direction of Dr. Mary Lou Odom began offering writing workshops for students in addition to tutoring sessions in fall 2011. This module was offered as a workshop in February 2012. The KSU Writing Center served more than 5000 students in the 2011 fall semester, including tutoring sessions and workshop attendance.

The Kennesaw State University Writing Center is located in the English building on the campus of Kennesaw State University. Under the auspices of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Center has expanded its reach and visibility by offering proactive writing workshops (as opposed to remedial workshops) in a recently

remodeled teaching area with a Smart Board. The area and the Smart Board were used for *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources*. There were two workshops offered on different days and times to accommodate various student schedules.

Dr. Odom selected from a list of workshops that I would present as part of this project. She selected the topic of online search for credible sources. The module was developed with students taking English 1102 in mind. These students would be beginning research papers at this point of the semester.

The first workshop had seven students. The second workshop had 18 students and two professors, including the director. The session began with a warm-up activity called “Credible Source.” The idea behind the activity was to start the session with a fun interactive game that included networking. The group was divided into pairs and instructed to tell their partners three things: two true things and one false thing about themselves. The partner was to guess from the information provided fact or fiction. In this activity, the participants enjoyed sharing information and discovering if they guessed the correct information. The point is driven home: Just because something appears credible, it may not be.

The Module Content

In 1990, while taking a historical research course in a graduate program, I encountered Dr. Roach. He was a scary man in a basement room of a dark building on the campus of Kennesaw State University. Old Roach insisted that we use only primary sources for our research. In 1991, this meant many hours in the library scanning reels of microfiche and closing the library down at midnight. These were the days before the World Wide Web. Computers were not personal, but communal. The computer in the

Kennesaw State University library computer lab had a tiny screen and operated on the DOSS system where we entered a command to a flashing “CMD>” in order to open Norton Textra. Microsoft Word had not been invented. It was an unnatural way to write compared to Microsoft Word; but it was still much better than an electric typewriter and tiny bottles of White Out or reams of correction tape.

Students in the computer lab were tethered to a central dot matrix printer. The paper in the printer moved along by sprockets holding the paper with tiny holes along the edges. The paper kept getting off-centered and coming off the sprockets. Stacks of writing assignments were pouring out of the overworked machine, and most were unfit by today’s standards. Everyone waited in turn to print. A full lab and many malfunctions made it impossible to write a last-minute paper.

Hours of microfiche research in primary sources and wrestling with a printer made it a primitive time. However, what Dr. Roach taught us about research using primary sources lasted long beyond my sting of that singular “B” in graduate school. Going to primary sources, reading diaries and memoirs of Civil War nurses, made me one with my sources. I felt as if I knew these women and was there with them in the 1860s. After hours of reading the words of Sarah Emma Edmondson and Kate Cummings, two Civil War nurses, I envisioned piles of amputated legs and arms piling up out back of the hospital. I observed the blood seeping through the aprons of the surgeons and of their nurses. I experienced the rejection the nurses felt from the doctors and male nurses who wanted the nurses to leave. That is what primary and quality research does to the mind. It changes the researcher and the writer. To know how to find credible sources and primary sources is a valuable skill for first-year English students.

Research in pre-Google days was uncivilized, practically barbaric. Sources had to be ripped from microfiche and digested or it would cost you – 10 cents a copy. Copies were not pretty; they were black sheets of paper with white words. The days searching the stacks and sweating over microfiche while feeding it change to get that perfect primary source are finally over. I knew it was over when I found most of the diaries and books by Civil War nurses (that I dug for on microfiche in 1991) on Google Books. Times are very different in many ways. Students have it easier, but they must be more careful in the search for sources.

The amount of online information is overwhelming and dangerous to scholarly research. The volume of digitized content is growing. Some things “look” credible but are in fact, less than reliable and even “para” sites. These are sites that say they are one thing, but are in fact, another.

In the workshop, *Google Responsibly*, we took sites that were obvious hoaxes or “para-sites” to apply the principles learned in this workshop. A Martin Luther King Site, for example, looks like a reliable source about King, but only at first glance. Beyond the homepage, buried in a list are pages of hate propaganda. While this is obviously a poor source for research, applying the principles of finding credible sources make the process easier to understand when looking at an obviously flawed site.

To begin the presentation, *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources*, I demonstrated what sources look like online. After telling the students about my research experiences before the Internet, I told them to imagine a stack of materials – like in the “good old days.” A student goes to the card catalogue and finds a source. Then she writes down the numbers. The student pulls a book off the shelf and starts a pile of resources.

She then finds a great source, but because it is an old diary she has to go to the microfiche room and find the sources and make copies. Those copies go on top of the books. Then she discovers a journal article, prints a copy, and places it on the top of the microfiche copies. She digs out an old newspaper and places the crumpling paper on the nice pile. Next, some careless student walks by and bumps her resource pile and all her sources are scattered on the library floor. This is a picture of the way sources are stored online, scattered in various places. Research was tedious in the old days, but you could see where sources were located. Students can use traditional search tactics along with new ways to research to find credible sources to write powerful writing assignments.

In the actual workshop, I demonstrated the analogy by piling up sources on the workshop room table and at the end of describing how sources were found before the Internet. When the participants were not expecting it, I pushed the pile across the table and on to the floor. I said, "This is what sources online look like. You have to know how to find credible sources in this far-flung mess."

Students are not going to the research librarian as much as they are going to Google because Internet search is easy and available. However, they are missing piles of information not available on Google or not in the first 10 search results. Students do not understand that Google is primarily for people wanting to sell something. Marketers have learned to use Google to get results. New media marketers use search engine optimization techniques to get the coveted top 10 places on Google. Most content is buried after the first page of searches. This is not a bad thing, but it is a fact about marketing. Researchers might find a credible source in the first ten Google listings, but they must learn to separate the gold from the fool's gold.

The History channel has program called “*Gold Rush*.” Watching the men on this show dig for gold in the frozen ground of Alaska reminds me of first year English students trying to find valuable sources. Both have difficult deadlines. The miners have to find the gold and mine it before the winter deadline, and students have to research and write under the pressure of a professor’s deadline. The *Gold Rush* miners did not have a clue how to efficiently mine gold. The equipment broke often and they kept digging in the wrong places. However, once they were “on the gold,” the miners dropped “pay dirt” into the hopper. The water plus gravity and motion pulls the heavy gold deposits to the top of the sleuth boxes. The carpet pieces covering the sleuth boxes were full of gold. The miners rinsed and squeezed the carpet to pull out the gold and sand. Next, the gold was rinsed and squeezed to pull out the gold. Finally, the gold was panned. This is a massive amount of work, but gold at the current rate is worth the work. Finding excellent credible sources is like mining for gold, a tremendous amount of work for the few flakes of usable knowledge, but each flake is rich in credible content.

The analogies are striking and rich. First-year English students plod along looking for sources, mostly searching on Google, but they do not know the cred from the crud.

CARS: What is Cred and what is Crud?

McGraw-Hill developed The CARS Checklist to provide some criteria for assessing the quality of a source, whether it is in print or online. Evaluate your source based on this list.

Credibility: The author's credentials are available and there is organizational support. A credible source is an authoritative source with evidence of credentials and supported details for a compelling argument.

Accuracy: A source that is up-to-date, detailed, comprehensive, and exact. A one-sided argument that does not acknowledge an opposing view may be an indication of extremism that slants the truth.

Reasonableness: A reasonable source is balanced, fair, and objective. Some clues to lack of reasonableness: intemperate tone or words, sweeping statements and over claims. Conflict of interest may be discerned by viewing the “About” Web page of the source for associations.

Support: Multiple sources are listed and available for access and the author’s contact information is supplied (“Cars”).

In the workshop, *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources*, Web sites and digital sources were sifted through this checklist to determine if the source was worthy for scholarly citation. Untrustworthy sites and sources are not always easy to spot at face value, and excellent Web design tools make this harder to accomplish. Using CARS will eliminate the “fool’s gold” on your dig for credible sources.

Tools for a Research Toolbox

There are many tools that students can add to their search toolboxes. The best resources are human. This workshop was not intended to replace the use of an excellent research librarian. I demonstrated to the students in the workshop how the Kennesaw State University has research librarians online during library hours to address specific questions. I suggested to the students that if they must Google, then Google responsibly. Google has a tremendous amount of applications available to help students do scholarly research. The tools are growing and improving.

Google Scholar is a bibliographic resource created by Google, according to their Website to provide “a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature.” Google Scholar finds: “articles, theses, books, abstracts and court opinions, from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, universities and other web sites all in one place.” There are limitations because some sources are not available as full-text sources. KSU students can set their preferences in Google Scholar so they will be able to access most documents on Google Scholar. While library databases are still the best sources for peer-reviewed articles, Google Scholar saves time and leads to sources in the library database not easy to find.

Once you have found a topic and a good search term that is netting many credible sources in Google Scholar, save your search and use Google Alerts. Google Alerts describes itself as, “ emails sent to you when Google finds new results -- such as web pages, newspaper articles, or blogs -- that match your search term.” Google Alerts will to effortlessly collect research for a paper.

Google has many other applications that are worthy of exploring, but two more might help with research. Google Adwords is what marketers use to find most searched terms. Learning what is trending in searching might provide useful for a research paper. A final tool is Google Docs, a collaborative writing tool and a good way to start research papers before transferring them into a Word document. Students working on a collaborative project will find this interface easy to use and keep everyone on the same “page.”

Organizing research is a personal thing. There are many digital applications to help preserve sources and help with citation. A word of warning about relying on

programs to cite sources, always check an English handbook for formatting guidelines. These citation machines are often wrong. Here are just a few research tool to organize research:

- *Evernote* is a personal digital assistant. Evernote saves notes to digital devices, clips articles, takes pictures, and captures handwritten notes (“A Quick Introduction to Evernote”).
- *Diigo* is a collaborative research tool that can be shared with groups of other students who are doing similar research. This cloud-based tool allows for arranging of materials into groups or classes. Diigo has reading tools that allow online highlighting and the page stays in the cloud. Visual notes and screen-shots organizes research(“Collect and Highlight, Then Remember”).
- *Spring Pad* is a way to remember information and organize it quickly. Spring pad has a social media element. It is easy to use with a fun interface (“About SpringPad”).
- *Zotero* is an excellent tool for extended research. The product Website says, “Zotero is an easy-to-use yet powerful research tool that helps you gather, organize, and analyze sources (citations, full texts, web pages, images, and other objects), and lets you share the results of your research in a variety of ways” (“Zotero, About”). It works with Microsoft Word as a plug-in, allowing citing while writing technology. Sources and citations must be edited, especially if information is not inserted correctly into Zotero.

Using these tools will allow students to collect resources long before a paper is due, giving them time to evaluate the sources for credibility and usability.

Those Civil War Nurses Still Haunt Me

Knowing how to do quality research is even more important when the materials are a click away. It has been over 20 years since I spent those library hours with my primary sources. I still have all my research notes, carefully preserved. I remember lines from crumbling diaries. Most of all, I can remember how it felt doing that primary research.

I felt as if I was with Sarah Emma Edmundson and Mother Bickerdyke. I will never forget the images in my mind of a Southern woman taking a shot at a Northern nurse getting on her horse after refusing the nurse's care. I could smell the rancid stench of decaying flesh and see the pile of feet outside the back window, where the bloody pans were poured out on top of the refuse of amputee surgery. I am instantly there because of primary research.

Students sometimes will write papers with quotes lying all over the page like a patchwork quilt. They rip apart peer-reviewed articles into ragged scraps and strategically place them in research papers. The quotes are not sewn together with comprehension.

The best research is not a patchwork quilt. Solid research is living and breathing and able to transform the reader long after it changes the writer. In the workshop, I ended the session by encouraging the students to pursue research with passion, find topics they were really interested in, and do the very best to find credible sources through Google and the old-fashioned way, in the library.

The Assessment

The evaluation of these workshops was based on informal assessment techniques. The pre-workshop marketing strategy was to reach students with digital messages, digital signage, and paper signage in the English building and across campus. I was told that the title *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources* was intriguing to them and lured them in. Others commented they wanted to come just for the title. The rhetoric of the title and visual rhetoric of the workshop brand succeeded beyond expectations.

I received a note from a professor after her student attended the workshop, and he told her he was glad he came. The conversation continued long after the workshop in the conference room and online. Business cards with links and QR Codes linked to the resources. The landing page with links and presentations was made available to the students and to the professors who attended, and they took the extra cards back to their composition classes.

The workshop module was designed to have continuous results as people visit the landing pages for resources and read the blog posts about digital tools. The total attendance for the KSU Writing Center workshops was 25. Dr. Mary Lou Odom evaluated my presentation of *Google Responsibly: Finding Credible Sources*:

In early February, Lisa Russell presented an innovative workshop for the KSU Writing Center on using Google in academic research. In this one-hour session, Lisa helped participants understand this common search engine as well as envision a variety of new ways to use it productively and critically. "Google Responsibly" was our best-attended workshop this semester, and it received exceptionally positive feedback both from attendees at the sessions and

subsequently. Below is a sample of the praise we received for Lisa and the workshop: (Odom).

"I attended your talk on how to 'Google Responsibly' in the writing center a few weeks ago. I loved your approach and your energy. I'm wondering if you would be available to give an abbreviated version of your talk in 2 sections of ENG1101." (English faculty member teaching ENGL 1101) (qtd in Odom)

"Dear Writing Center, Just want to let you know that one of my English 1101 students attended the Google Responsibly Workshop. He was very happy with it. He said he learned a lot, and was glad he took the time to go. Thank you so much!" (English faculty member teaching ENGL 1101). (qtd in Odom)

"This is a BRILLIANT topic. Thanks for doing it." (English/MAPW TA teaching ENGL 1102) (qtd in Odom)

This workshop has had a second life. Without any promotion on my part, I have been invited to teach some form of this workshop in four Kennesaw State University classrooms and at Dalton State College.

Module Resources

Google Responsibly Finding Credible Sources

Overview

Starting with “The Liar Game” to use as an “ice breaker” with purpose.

Give an overview of this workshop with goals and objectives.

Let me tell ya ‘bout the Good Ol’ Days

Explain with my own story about doing research before the internet and word processors to show how far we have come and what we have available.

What can we learn from *Gold Rush*?

On the reality television program, *Gold Rush*, miners must wash away useless materials (tailings) to hit pay dirt. There are mounds of material on the Web. Researchers must learn how to sift the “gold” from the “tailings.”

Go CSI on your Sources

Steps are presented to analyze each source for value as a credible source. Google search techniques including a cheat sheet are presented.

What is CRED and What is CRUD

A series of questionable Websites are introduced to examine each source using the steps presented for analyzing each site.

Tools for Your Research Toolbox

Selections of Google tools are presented to give researchers choices.

Organize your Research

Using online tools such as *Diigo*, *Evernote*, *Spring Pad*, and *Zotero* are presented as tools for researchers to organize resources and prevent plagiarism.

KSU Writing Center

February 7, 2012

February 8, 2012

Lisa M. Russell

Materials

- Library Resources for a demonstration
- Landing Page Resource Page with links and presentation software – Prezi.
- QR Code Cards with contact information
- Google Docs note page

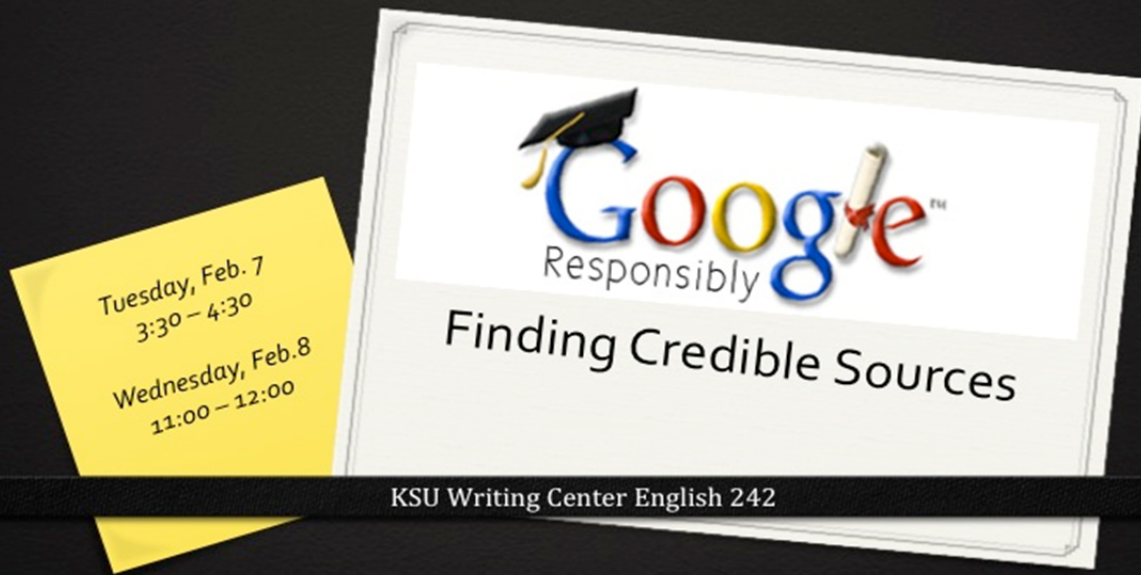
Research Toolbox

- [Ask a KSU Librarian—Library 101](#)
- [What are Peer Reviewed Articles?](#)
- [OWL Purdue](#)
- [Google Scholar](#)
- [Google Books](#)
- [Google Alerts](#)

Organize Your Research

- [Evernote](#)
- [Diigo](#)
- [SpringPad](#)
- [RefWorks](#)

Got Research To Do?





[Take Notes Here](#)

Disclaimer: Google and Google Scholar should not be your only source for a research paper. Contact the Librarian and Research Librarians.

Let me tell ya 'bout the Good Ol' Days

- [Prezi](#)
- The Old Roach
- When "surfing" was only done in California
- [Primary Sources: Next best thing to being there](#)
- The Stacks

What Can *Gold Rush* can Teach us about Searching for Sources?

- [Gold Rush](#)
- [Getting the most out of Google](#)
- [Google Search Cheat Sheet](#)

[Landing Page:](#)

- **Search single word exactly as is ("")**

Google employs synonyms automatically, so that it finds pages that mention, for example, childcare for the query [child care] (with a space), or California history for the query [ca history]. But sometimes Google helps out a little too much and gives you a synonym when you don't really want it. By putting double quotes around a single word, you are telling Google to match that word precisely as you typed it.

- **Search within a specific website (site:)**

Google allows you to specify that your search results must come from a given website. For example, the query [iraq site:nytimes.com] will return pages about Iraq but only from nytimes.com. The simpler queries [iraq nytimes.com] or [iraq New York Times] will usually be just as good, though they might return results from other sites that mention the New York Times. You can also specify a whole class of sites, for example [iraq site:.gov] will return results only from a .gov domain and [iraq site:.iq] will return results only from Iraqi sites.

- **Terms you want to exclude (-)**

Attaching a minus sign immediately before a word indicates that you do not want pages that contain this word to appear in your results. The minus sign should appear immediately before the word and should be preceded with a space. For example, in the query [anti-virus software], the minus sign is used as a hyphen and will not be interpreted as an exclusion symbol; whereas the query [anti-virus -software] will search for the words 'anti-virus' but exclude references to software. You can exclude as many words as you want by using the - sign in front of all of them, for example [jaguar -cars -football -os]. The - sign can be used to exclude more than just words. For example, place a hyphen before the 'site:' operator (without a space) to exclude a specific site from your search results.

- **Fill in the blanks (*)**

The *, or wildcard, is a little-known feature that can be very powerful. If you include * within a query, it tells Google to try to treat the star as a placeholder for any unknown term(s) and then find the best matches. For example, the search [Google *] will give you results about many of Google's products (go to next page and next page — we have many products). The query [Obama voted * on the * bill] will give you stories about different votes on different bills. Note that the * operator works only on whole words, not parts of words.

- **The OR operator**

Google's default behavior is to consider all the words in a search. If you want to specifically allow either one of several words, you can use the OR operator (note that you have to type 'OR' in ALL CAPS). For example, [San Francisco Giants 2004 OR 2005] will give you results about either one of these years, whereas [San Francisco Giants 2004 2005] (without the OR) will show pages that include both years on the same page. The symbol | can be substituted for OR. (The AND operator, by the way, is the default, so it is not needed.) <http://support.google.com/websearch/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=136861>

- The SEO of Scholarly Research – **Why the first 10 Google sources are not your best for research.**

Go CSI on your Sources

- [Credible Sources Checklist from Cornell University](#)
- [CARS](#)
- Evaluating Sources

What is CRED and What is CRUD?

- [Moonbeam Enterprises](#)

- [National Geographic Moon Exploration](#)
- [NASA: The Moon and Mars](#)

- [MLK Site](#)

[King Center](#)

[Nobel Prize](#)

- [California's Velcro Crop](#)

[Velcro](#) – Wikipedia or Not?

[So, What is Velcro?](#) - company site

[About.com](#)

[California Department of Agriculture](#)

Tools for Your Research Toolbox

- [Ask a KSU Librarian](#)
- [Library 101](#)
- [What are Peer Reviewed Articles?](#)
- [OWL Purdue](#)
- [Google Scholar](#)
- [Google Books](#)
- [Google Alerts](#)

Organize your Research

- [Evernote](#)
- [Diigo](#)
- [SpringPad](#)
- [RefWorks](#) - Set up an individual account on campus using group code #RWKennesawStUni



Bonding, Branding, Building: Connecting in an Authentic Way

The combination of classical rhetoric principles and new media practices leads to persuasive digital writing. Despite the progressive nature of technology, connecting and bonding with an audience, self-branding, and building a credible online presence is essential in this social media-driven economy whether the product to sell are ideas or widgets. From my professional prospective, writers resisting this technical/rhetoric mix will lose readers and customers.

This workshop was designed to cover a multitude of social media tools and entice the audience of Georgia writers to embrace the concept of connecting in an authentic way by applying digital rhetoric to their marketing campaigns.

The Client. The Audience. The Venue.

Georgia Writers Association (GWA) is a nonprofit, 501(c) (3) organization housed on the campus of Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. Under the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, in the English Department, this member-supported professional writing association works across Georgia to “encourage and strengthen the proficiencies of writers in both the creative and the business aspects of the writing life” (Georgia Writers Association, About) GWA sponsors monthly writing workshops and yearly conferences. Under the guidance of the board of directors, the executive director, and the administrator, guidelines are set for the establishment of satellite groups, critique groups, and other writer resources. GWA manages grant funds provided by the National Endowment of the Arts for the funding of guest authors to

various Georgia counties. Online publications and online social media networks are established in an attempt to “educate and inform the diverse literary community of Georgia. Accomplished Georgia writers are recognized through the Georgia Author of the Year Awards” (L. Russell, “About GWA”).

The original idea behind the GWA, which was founded in 1994, was to create a consortium of writing groups in the Metro Atlanta area and throughout the state. This original idea was lost as the grassroots organization took on various projects and the administration of the group struggled to manage the message. Social media networking forced the organization back to its roots by providing members and the writing community with the ability to connect in order to learn about and from fellow writers.

Dr. Margaret Walters is the Executive Director and Lisa M. Russell (the author) is the administrator. Since January 2011, monthly workshop attendance has steadily grown to beyond room capacity requiring preregistration. A survey was given to the entire membership and email subscribers two months before the workshop was scheduled. The workshop was set up as a free workshop. Registration opened and more than 80 people registered. This was one of our highest registrations in six years of programming.

The following section contains the content that was shared in the *Bonding, Branding, Building: Connecting in an Authentic Way* workshop. The follow up sections include the assessment materials and resource materials.

The Module Content

Writers buried in words and deadlines find fitting in new media marketing a challenge. Writers can rise above the sea of social media and connect with their readers in an authentic way, but it takes time. Authors wonder if spending the time to bond with readers will translate into books sales and speaking fees. Writers are seeking answers in this new media economy. They are asking: Who cares? Why bother? How can I do all this and still write my books? Writers need to see the connection between old-world rhetoric and new media as a powerful partnership bringing results. Time spent learning the tools, techniques, and the touch of social media marketing is a profitable endeavor. Doing business as a human being is not a waste of time, but it is time invested.

Writers should first examine the social media landscape to determine which tool will help them connect and build quickly within a niche market. An author will want to set up a Facebook fan page if his readers are on Facebook. A Facebook fan page is different from a profile page or a group page. A profile page is for personal information and connections. A group page is for affiliation and connection with like-minded people. A Facebook fan page is a *landing* page where being “liked” will build your online credibility. The more likes, the higher your page ranks in Google searches. A Facebook landing page is where friends turn into customers. Some authors have a fan page for each book or for all their books and services. They might create a landing page offering everyone who “likes” the author a free eBook, a sample chapter, or some other incentive. Being “liked” on Facebook is very important. As people are “liking” and scooping up the free offer, the writer is gathering the valuable emails of future contacts. This is just one

example of a social media tool that works. Each social media tool has a personality, and new ones are being born and raised each day.

If we were going to assign a persona to the popular social media channels of the day, each would have a notable character. Facebook would be like a local pub or Starbucks; it is a place where friends and acquaintances hang out for different reasons. Twitter is like a cocktail party where many conversations are happening at once and the writer can wander up to one conversation and wander away without feeling obligated to spend lots of time in communication with one person. Linked In is like going to a trade or career fair; it's a place to find employment or freelance work, but it is also a powerful networking tool. Pinterest, the newest social media venue, is like posting things on a refrigerator or office door. The value of Pinterest is social sharing of favorite images and ideas. This social media avenue has yet to be fully explored. New tools emerge every day.

I conducted an email survey one-month prior to the scheduled workshop targeting the active members of Georgia Writers Association. The *active members* were determined by the attendance at previous workshops. I narrowed the focus on a second survey to the registrants for the workshop one week before the workshop. I surveyed the attendees in the workshop. Finally, I sent an email evaluation the day after the workshop. One repeated question that appeared on all the surveys was how to do social media well, and still have time to be a writer. Using social media is an investment of time. Tools like Nutshell can mash up all the traffic on channels and send a summary so the writer can respond and interact without going to all the sites – all day or every time an email comes to an inbox. Emails can be limited to once a day to cut down on inbox clutter. Another

time saving trick is to link all social media together. Tools are just tools. Writers must learn techniques for using the tools and new media to get the best return on time investment (ROI).

The content was developed around these themes after analyzing the survey data. The workshop participants were given these instructions:

- *Brand yourself by being authentic and honest*
- *Use words that work online by using digital rhetoric*
- *Optimize all of your online content by using simple search engine optimization*
- *Digital rhetoric explained and applied in Web content, blogs, posts, comments*
- *Build email contacts*

Branding and Building at GWA

While there was no strategic plan in 2006 when GWA came to Kennesaw State University, the emerging social media technologies and the need for a new conversation among writing professionals charted the course for updating the dialogue.

The first move was to change the image or the brand. In *Breakthrough Nonprofit Branding: Seven Principles to Power Extraordinary Results*, brand is defined as a “collection of perceptions about an organization, formed by its every communication, action, and interaction. It is what people collectively say, feel, and think about your organization. In short, it’s your reputation, identity, and goodwill with stakeholders and in the community” (Daw et al.). A brand is not a logo or a new color or even a new web

page, but GWA needed all of that and more to refresh a dwindling organization. The message was thus redefined: GWA would be about education and connection. Towards that end, GWA raised the quality of the writing workshops. Workshops and conferences nurtured members to be future event speakers. Other writing groups strive to get the big names and draw big crowds, but GWA established a reputation of helping writers who are what J. Steve Miller, author of *Sell More Books*, calls “low-profile, not-yet-famous authors” (J. S. Miller and C. K. Miller).

With a guiding principle, a new logo, a new website, and a growing brand, Georgia Writers Association was ready to connect writers online. We started to build our social media constellation with email marketing. Finding the perfect words to connect with a target audience requires diligence and practice. Whether writing a blog, a Facebook post, a short tweet, or an email, collaboration with readers is essential to the success of the digital writer. This collaboration occurs when a responsive Web writer who responds to comments, likes, re-tweets, and emails.

The overarching purpose is to raise a writer’s credibility by responding in an authentic way. Brian Clark, creator of *Copyblogger* says, “*What people say about you is more important than what you say about yourself*” (B. Clark, *How to Create Compelling Content*). People link to content if the writer is sharing valuable information and speaking in his or her own voice. Speak from experience creates a transparent persona that is hard to resist. Transforming truth comes when one heart speaks to another heart. This is becoming a “Trust Agent.”

Trust Agents

A trust agent is someone with a strong ethos. This is where classical rhetoric fits perfectly with digital media creating digital rhetoric. Chris Brogan coined this term in his book, *Trust Agents: Using the Web to Build Influence, Improve Reputation, and Earn Trust*, to describe people who are the “power users of the new tools of the Web, educated more by way of their own experiences and experiments than from the core of their professional experiences” (Brogan and Smith). Trust agents have many qualities that will build a digital writer’s online profile and build a solid and credible platform.

Trust agents speak online technology fluently. They learn by trying, so they are bold in their efforts to try on new applications and devices. They recommend more, and more often on social bookmarking applications than anyone else. Then connect with more people than anyone else, and they know how to leave a good impression. As they do so, they build healthy, honest relationships. Trust agents use emerging and tested Web tools to spread their influence fast, wider, and deeper than atypical company’s PR or marketing department might be capable of. We need to become them – and to harness them (Brogan and Smith).

The idea of being a *trust agent* is supported by Dr. Susanne Furman, a usability engineer with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Her article, “Building Trust” on Usability.gov identifies key variables to enhance trust in the digital environment. Furman defines online trust, “Lack of trust has been identified as one of the biggest barriers to people engaging in e-commerce” (Furman). The research proved that trust is built with sustained relationship between two parties that become familiar. Furman continues, “Users decide whether they are going to ‘buy’ your information (i.e.,

content) or your goods and services” (Furman). Online relationships require trust. In her research Furman determined that the “lack of trust has been identified as one of the most formidable barriers in building online relationships” (Furman). A blog written using faulty information or that uses extremist expressions might cost the trust of an intended audience. People will buy from and listen to someone they feel they know and trust.

A trust agent is humble, helpful, honest, and generous. A trust agent is often at the elbow of someone else’s deal. He or she is a connector and community curator. A trust agent will give and give without quid pro quo; he expect nothing in return because he knows it builds credibility and community. Something at some time will return to the benevolent trust agent. A trust agent builds a personal brand by focusing on other people and not talking about herself. A trust agent would never go on Facebook and promote herself because her reputation will speak louder (Brogan and Smith). A trust agent can be heard above the clamor of online messages.

I began reading Chris Brogan’s blogs after devouring his book *Trust Agents*. In fact, Brogan coined the term *trust agent*, which he defined as a person “who uses the Web in a very human way to build influence, reputation, awareness, and who can translate that into some kind of business value” (Brogan & Smith). I had started such a process before learning about Brogan, for the Georgia Writers Association (GWA) began building relationships among and with members when the organization came under the auspices of Kennesaw State University in 2006. The intuitive idea of being a trust agent—a literary trust agent—had already become the guiding principle for every email, press release, blog post, column, and social media tool used by the GWA. A word of caution: Be a trust agent, do not call yourself one. It ruins your credibility

There are trust agents I chose to listen to as they fill my inbox everyday. I invited those trust agents in because the information is helpful and reliable. In this culture, we must learn to sort our incoming data wisely. Barry L. Ritholtz, economic columnist for *The Washington Post* comments, “The World Wide Web is growing at a rapid pace. On average, more than a billion new pages are added to it every day.” The infographic, “60 Seconds, Things That Happen On the Internet Every Sixty Seconds,” reports at least sixty new blogs are created and 1,500 blogs are posted on line every minute. Among other facts, the report states that You Tube grows by 600 new videos and 70 new domains are registered. In one short minute, Google reports 694,445 searches, Twitter logs 98,000 tweets, and 168,000 emails are sent (“Things That Happen on Internet Every Sixty Seconds”). How do we get heard above the cacophony? The reason this is important, as I pointed out to the participants of this workshop is that if a writer writes it, the writer wants people to come and read it. If there are competing messages, the writer must rise above the masses. The digital writer’s chances of being read are increased by using digital rhetoric. Say what you mean and be authentic.

The Assessment

I conducted an email survey one month before *Bonding, Branding, Building: Connecting in an Authentic Way*. Active members of Georgia Writers Association were asked to rank their interest in five social media questions. Here are the results:

1

* Please rank your interest in the following topics.



1 = Most Interested						Number of Responses	Ranking Score*
Answer	1	2	3	4	5		
How to use social media to sell more books or connect with customers.						108	2.3
How to write better online content to build a platform and reach more readers.						108	2.6
Hands on information about Facebook, Linked In, Twitter and other social media tools.						108	3.3
What is "branding" and why should I care as a writer or business owner?						108	3.4
To blog or not to blog? What really is the question and the answer to time consuming blogging?						108	3.4

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

[View comments \(16\)](#)

The members suggested that they wanted to know how to use social media to sell books and how to write better online content to build a platform and reach more readers.

I opened the registration and the workshop filled up quickly. Registration closed early. I sent another short survey a few days before the workshop to narrow down what the registrants wanted to know. I asked the registrants this question: Please tell me three things you want to learn most this Saturday at our GWA Workshop, *Bonding, Branding, Building: Connecting in an Authentic Way?* What do you want to walk away with?

While there were only 14 respondents, the answers helped narrow down my topic for the workshop slightly:

- *I would like to walk away with valuable information that will help me with my career as a writer.*
- *How important is writing with SEO and keywords in mind?*
- *How "personal" should your writing be? (i.e. informal)*

- *I want my blog to reach people interested in the issues I write about. How can I get my blog/site the highest level of traffic possible?*
- *How to start and effectively build a platform on Facebook and twitter.*
- *Minimum amount of time per day or week that should be applied to building a brand/platform using social media.*
- *How to engage an audience and get people to connect, respond with comments and just interact.*
- *I'm looking for more ways to sell more books this year.*
- *I'd like to know how to use Facebook to develop relationships that will help me with my book business.*
- *Building a persona that connects with readers and potential clients vs. just gathering "hits" on social media sites. Build a brand that answers the question, "Why would I use her to write my project?"*
- *Detailed information about creative marketing on a budget.*
- *Ways to make my name the brand, not just my books.*
- *When to Tweet? How to Tweet? What is the lingo (hash marks?)*
- *Tweeting Etiquette - for example, I loath what I call tweeting diarrhea - tweet after tweet after tweet after tweet about Nothing of importance.*
- *How best to utilize Facebook.*
- *How to draw a readership/followership when blogging.*
- *A Better understanding of how to connect with readers versus writers.*
- *How to wade through all of the writers out there that are asking to connect.*

- *The best way to brand myself, is it based on who I am as a writer, person, or my books?*

I planned the workshop around the common themes suggested by respondents. I could not offer a quick and easy way to do social media because building a brand and an online presence as a trust agent takes time and patience. I did, however, offer ways to work smarter with social media by creating a constellation with email marketing as the hub. Many wanted to know how to use the tools and I planned to cover this topic with a virtual poster with audio and visual components. This tool was made available to participants after the workshop on a landing page on my website.

I started the workshop by asking the participants to write a note to me on a slip of paper. I asked them to tell me what they were anticipating for the workshop. I asked, “What were you thinking on your way to the workshop today?” I collected the slips and found the responses were as broad as the email survey I took days before the workshop.

At the end of the workshop, I told them that I would send another survey to them that evening with one question: “What were you thinking on your way home?” To start with the only negative comment:

I thought Lisa was very likable and down to earth. I could tell that she cared a lot about GWA and it was clear that she has raised the bar high for the organization. However, I was also thinking that the workshop was a lot like the Internet itself—all over the place. Their seemed to be no real, clear cut dissemination of info, just a bunch of links with one sentence summations about how much Lisa liked them.

From this assessment, I realized I had not hit my mark because I was trying to cover too much. This is rectified with the resource-landing page I added to my Website. I encouraged participants to visit those sources. The links and recommendations are often requested at workshops and something I personally miss because the speaker glances over them. I tried to give so much information from other useful resources.

Respondents to the final survey questions elaborated at length about what they learned by going into great detail. These comments balance out the negative response of my giving too much information. These comments include the following:

- *When I'm writing [I] will use: Ethos-Ethics, Pathos-making people feel and Logos-Logical as a guide to improve my writing techniques.*
- *I thought about how personable, passionate and knowledgeable the facilitator was and how, for those reasons, I would attend another of her workshops. I was thinking that I was very blessed indeed to not depend on making a living in this social media world. Having recently retired after 40 years as a business writer, I finally can write what I want and not worry about whether it'll sell. To break through the media clutter, it seems to me that writers today will have to spend half (or more) of their energy marketing themselves, and that leaves less time and energy for their own creative works. I thoroughly enjoyed the workshop, however, because it enhanced by understanding of different aspects of social media and elevated by respect for the role these tools play in the writer's world.*
- *I learned a lot in a couple of hours and ended the seminar feeling knowledge-able! At the end of the seminar I knew more about social media*

but also writing in general. I believe writing is all about connecting in an authentic way with the audience and this seminar reinforced how important that authentic connection is.

- *I gained a new appreciation for the art of *how* to learn new ways to connect with my readers. I think that there are too many faux attempts today on social media by recently published authors who miss the human connection.*
- *You can connect to the masses, but not lose intimacy if you offer to the reader something truly relevant to them.*
- *The questions and conversations that came up in the meeting were excellent and I see value and potential in them.*
- *Some of the comments were encouraging as a presenter to know that my manner did not hinder the dissemination of knowledge:*
- *You're a good instructor. And I especially appreciated your emphasis on communicating from the heart, presenting the "authentic self," and offering something of value to others -- a responsibility we writers sometimes fail to embrace when we emerge from our self-centered dens in search of an audience with which to share our hard-wrought creations.*
- *First, thanks so much for the informative workshop, and all the effort you put into the course outline. I left the meeting armed with new ideas, and anxious to get to my computer to look into some of the topics we*

discussed. Your outline was so thorough; it was a great resource as I browsed to investigate the tools it lists.

- *This was the best workshop that I have ever attended (and in the banking business, which was my occupation, I attended many)! My thoughts were to get home quickly and try out what I had learned. Great Job!*

I learned from this survey that on some points, the participants understood, and on others they were overwhelmed. I felt that I had not explained some topics enough. This was backed up by some of the responses. Other comments were encouraging and compelled me to write more for the participants and invite them to subscribe to my blog. Many of the participants signed up to get blog updates, and there are now over 200 people on the blog email list.

The project is not really over. It is just the beginning. These honest survey responses provided months of blog topics to discuss and start new conversations. This workshop could be divided in many ways to better cover the information. In the future, perhaps I could leave the participants with fewer points that are easier to apply. I wanted to leave the participants with ... one more thing.

Module Resources

Marketing Piece

Bonding, Branding, Building Connecting in an Authentic Way

Georgia Writers Association
Saturday, March 10, 2012
Kennesaw State University Center
12:00 – 2:00 PM

Lisa M. Russell

Introduction

- The age old practices of rhetoric meets new media marketing
- AND you must be a human being – not a book selling machine
- Do You Think Social Media is a Waste of Your Time?
- Watch This: [The Social Media Revolution](#)

1) The Tools of New Media Marketing

- Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Goodreads, Shelfari
- GWA Community, SEO Scribe, Email

2) The Techniques for Bonding, Branding & Building

- Digital Rhetoric
- SEO Writing
- Landing Pages
- Blogging
- Email Contacts

3) The Touch – Connecting in an Authentic Way

- Trust Agents
- Human Business

4) The Time it Takes

- Time to start building, branding and bonding

* Introductory Activities

- What's in Your Wallet?
- Tools, Techniques, Touch, Time
- The Point: It's not about the tools and the techniques.
- The age old practices of rhetoric meets new media marketing
- AND you must be a human being – not a book selling machine
- Do You Think Social Media is a Waste of Your Time?
- Watch This: [The Social Media Revolution](#)

Blogs to Subscribe to

- [CopyBlogger](#)
- [Chris Brogan](#)
- [ProBlogger](#)
- [Blogwise](#)

And that's Not All . . .

Let's keep the discussion going. Subscribe to my blog and I will send you an email when I write a blog post. I will take the subjects you want to learn more about and expand them into a weekly blog post. Please go to the home page and subscribe or click the RSS feed to send it directly to your reader

How do you connect in a sea of social media?



Bonding, Branding, Building: *Connecting in an authentic way*

March 10, 2012 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM KSU Center

Learn more: www.georgiawriters.org

FREE WORKSHOP

2012 Second Saturday Speakers Series

Welcome Georgia Writers

What were you thinking?

What's in Your Wallet?

Where do you want to go today?

- Tools, Techniques, Touch, Time
- The Point: It's not about the tools and the techniques.
 - To be authentic
 - To not waste your time
- **The age old practices of rhetoric meets new media marketing**
- **AND you must be a human being – not a book selling machine**

Do You Think Social Media is a Waste of Your Time?

Watch This: [The Social Media Revolution](#)

The Tools of the New Media Marketing

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Google+](#)
- [Pinterest - 41 Ways to Use Pinterest to Market your Business](#)
- [Goodreads](#)
- [Shelfari](#)
- [GWA Community](#)
- [SEO Scribe](#)
- [Email](#)

The Techniques for Bonding, Branding & Building

- [Digital Rhetoric](#)
- [SEO writing](#) - Made Simple:
 - The Text
 - The Title
 - The Tags
 - The Targeted Links
- [Landing Pages](#)
 - Makes you do something
 - The Ultimate in Visual Rhetoric (Rhetoric makes you do things with words)
 - Converts your browsers into your buyers
- [Email Contact List is Gold](#)
 - Email has not gone away – it has gone social.
 - Targeted email lists are GOLD! Start gathering emails everywhere.
 - The Hub of your social media constellation.
- Too Busy to Blog?
 - How to get your content out there? Maybe it is not about *time* but *focus*.
 - Content is EVERYTHING
 - Provide valuable and well-written content to your niche audience
 - Who is your audience? What is your niche? THINK ABOUT IT. Write it down and write to them – individually.

The Touch – Connecting in an Authentic Way

- [The Trust Agent](#)

- Not a label you give yourself – Never call yourself a “trust agent” just be one.
- Be Humble. Be Helpful. Be Honest. Be Generous.
- You cannot CREATE community – you CURATE community – keep building networks – so when you need them – they will be there
- Be the one who is at the elbow of someone’s deal – the person that connects other people
- Give and give without quid pro quo – expect nothing in return – then it will return to you
- “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.” Proverbs 27:2
- [Human Business Works](#) for building a solid platform and brand

The Time it Takes

- To connect authentically may take years of building
- To communicate your brand will take a human touch and time.
- Do you want to invest the time? Or do you just want to check Facebook and Tweet a little?
- So, let’s start building together. Read the next blurb:

And that’s Not All

Let’s keep the discussion going. Subscribe to my blog and I will send you an email when I write a blog post. I will take the subjects you want to learn more about and expand them into a weekly blog post. **Please [go to the home page](#) and subscribe or click the RSS feed to send it directly to your reader.**

Check Out these Great Blogs and Resources

[CopyBlogger](#)

[Chris Brogan](#)

[ProBlogger](#)

[Blogwise](#)

[Digital Writing Amazon Bookstore](#)

“And one more thing . . .”

Steve Jobs would introduce the next Apple creation and leave the best for last. He would reveal something new by saying, “And one more thing . . .” (Isaacson). The conclusion of this project, *Digital Rhetoric: Doing Things with Words Online*, feels a little like there is “one more thing.” To the writer, no writing project is ever finished: there is always one more edit and one more point to make. The changing nature of the digital environment forces the digital writer to continually say, “And one more thing . . .”

This project involved more than 150 participants and a growing online presence as the workshop materials are offered freely online. Ten speaking invitations were offered to me as a result of this project. My personal brand and platform have grown from this experience. My email contact list grew from 0 to 200 in less than two months. The project made a blogger out of this non-blogger. The content is a compilation of over five years of building a social media constellation and two years of applying writing principles and practices learned in the Master of Arts in Professional Writing program at Kennesaw State University. It was one thing and then one more thing that built these modules. I copied Steve Jobs and told the participants at the conclusion of each workshop, “And there is one more thing. This is not the end. These resources are available to you for future reference, and I will be blogging the topics we did not cover in this session.” I would like to continue to add to the body of knowledge and build relationships with people online.

The number of participants in all the workshops I presented as part of this project is the proof that people want to know how to leverage digital media. I want to continue

making the connections and sharing what I discovered about the synergy of classical rhetoric and new media writing.

Every word of this module was conceived and written with the purpose of tying all the loose threads and connecting with my readers in an authentic way. I want to have a “relationship” with those who have searched and found me, got past the headline and bothered to read my content. I want to share everything I discover, because at my very core – I am a teacher.

“And there is one more thing . . . “This project will continue in the digital environment. The blog, www.russellink.org is to helping people discover digital rhetoric and doing things with words online.

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- Presentation Software: Panopto, Camtasia, Audacity, Jing, iMovie, Animoto, Issuu, iPhoto, Keynote, Prezi
- Productivity and Educational Software: Diigo, Snagit, Evernote, Jing, Camtasia, Google Docs, Google+
- Web interface experience: Joomla, Drupal, Word Press, Blogger, WebVista CT (building online courses), Dreamweaver
- Microsoft Office 2010 (PC), 2011(MAC): Publisher, Word, Excel, Access, Project Manager,
- Search Engine Optimization, Web Content Writing, New Media Marketing
- Social Media Marketing

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Quality Matters Certification for online instruction: Certification expected by January 2012
- Dreamweaver Training and Web Design
- Photoshop, Intermediate
- Project Management Software Training
- Prezi for College Classrooms
- Tech Writing for Publication
- Collaborative Writing Workshop
- Digital Communications in the Writing Classroom
- Teaching College in High School and College
- Research in the Rare Book Room Internship
- Branding & Marketing
- Writing Tutor Training
- Podcasting for Mac and PC

- Wikis and Social Bookmarking

PUBLICATIONS

Social Media in Context: Writers Explore the Marketplace

"Introduction: Digital Wisdom"; "Literary Trust Agents: How a Professional Writing Associate Built an Authentic Social Network"
2012

"Game on Gwinnett"

Gwinnett Business Chronicle

Other Publications and Digital Content:

- Published curriculum for youth and adults with a major Nashville Publisher – LifeWay Publishers
- Wrote teaching materials for Christianity Today and North American Mission Board
- Researched and produced feature content for the Bentley Rare Book Gallery of Kennesaw State University
Provided online content for sites such as eHow.com, Suite 101, and Answer Bag
- Manage and write content as the Atlanta Writing Careers Examiner
Write web content for several Web sites and blogs including Georgiawriters.org

RELATED COURSE WORK AND PRESENTATION EXPERIENCE

Digital Communications in the Writing Classroom, 2011

Collaborated to rewrite a position statement on Digital Writing, presented a lesson on search engine optimization, and wrote and presented pedagogy projects.

Teaching English in College and High School, 2011

Designed a course including a syllabus, goals and objectives, examinations, assignments and projects involved with assessment and other classroom management techniques

Directed study in the KSU Writing Center, 2011

Helped the faculty learn how to brand and market the center using new media marketing.

Quality Matter Online Instruction Certification Internship, 2011 to 2012

Built an online class for QM certification for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Masters Capstone Project, 2011 - 2012

Designing a seven module course: "Digital Wisdom: Writing in the Digital Environment" Presenting at the KSU Writing Center, Georgia Writers Association, graduate writing classes.

Presenter at SoCon 12

“Create, Connect, Collaborate: Using Words that Work Online” was presented at the Social Media Conference in the College of Humanities in February 2012.

Guest Presenter in Various English Classrooms and the KSU Writing Center

Presented digital writing tools to first-year English students in spring 2012.

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA

Administrative Specialist

2005 – Present

- Redesigned the logo and rebranded Georgia Writers Association including print materials, Web design, multimodal presentations
- Web content management on content management system (Joomla) and Dreamweaver
- Designed Word press and Joomla Web sites for members and authors
- Used InDesign, Photoshop, and Illustrator for program layouts and event branding
- Instruct interns and GRAs how to use Adobe CS5, Acrobat, SEO writing, Joomla, and other productivity and design software

Freelance

Writer, Graphic Designer, Web Design, Marketing Consultant

1997 – Present

- Created Dreamweaver Web sites at KSU for President Emeritus Betty Siegel and The Siegel Institute
- Created marketing materials for Tiger Iron Press
- Used InDesign to produce books for Doin' it Publishing and did layout and cover design for other author's books
- Designed over 10 author Web sites
- Wrote for instructional materials for LifeWay Publishers and Christianity Today
- Wrote Web content for many online content sites such as Examiner.com, Suite 101, Ehow.com and AOL/Seed.com

SERVICE TO KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

- Created a strategic marketing and branding plan for the KSU Writing Center including graphic designs and multimodal presentations
- Branded and marketed the MA in Professional Writing Speakers Series. Collaborated with MAPW faculty to promote speakers and events
- Redesigned the SIGNAL Journal for English Education using InDesign. Created a new image for this scholarly review journal.

MEMBERSHIPS

Association of Writing Professionals (AWP)

Georgia Writers Association