Phase IV: Recommendations-- The Consultants

This phase of the TicToc Conversations consisted of the responses of the eight consultants to four questions posed by Jim Sosnoski regarding how the UIC English department should proceed in its efforts to transition from an academic print culture to an academic electronic culture. David Downing (4/25) began the conversation by advocating a pro-active approach. His recommendation received support from other group members, some of whom, such as Eric Crump (5/14) advised UIC to set aside its hesitations and seize the opportunity to shift from literacy to electracy while the opportunity is still available. The urgency of Crump's response was motivated by two issues that were taken up and repeatedly discussed by the group as a whole. The first issue deals with the shared acknowledgment that the untried, unspoiled terrain of the virtual learning environment presents a rare occasion for revolutionary change within the classroom, the department, and the greater university. Joe Amato (4/27), Greg Ulmer (5/4, 5/5), and Randy Bass (5/15, 5/15) emphasized this point, indicating concrete ways in which the advent of electracy will challenge the primacy of conventional learning structures and present us with the opportunity to re-evaluate that which is necessary and that which is unnecessary in our shared mission to educate. The second issue regarding the efforts to be proactive was the concern that this window of opportunity is precariously ephemeral. Several group members, for example, warned that the limitations of institutional structure and policy, once imposed upon this new and undefined medium, will spoil its current elasticity and ruin its latent potential for progressive change. While the "newness" of the electronic learning environment was praised in the context of pedagogical reform, it poses several problems for other aspects of teaching, problems such as how to set new standards for faculty promotion and tenure, how to create new definitions of community and intellectual property, and how to instigate new measures of self-assessment to monitor the progress of radically different teaching strategies.

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Jim Sosnsoki's Questions:

The members of our department hope to develop guidelines for developing an online departmental presence on the WWW. There are several issues with which we are particularly concerned. I've formulated them as a series of questions which we hope you will answer and thus offer recommendations about how we should approach these issues. We intend to focus primarily on three aspects of online education germane to our situation: the University of Illinois' intention to construct an online university, the development of e-works as a virtual English department, and online pedagogical practices suitable for our programs. Thus it would be helpful if you addressed the following questions in your recommendations:

1. How do you think our department should respond to the UI-Online initiative? Should we take a pro-active role and try to establish leadership? Should we take a wait and see attitude? Should we oppose being included in their plans?
2. What should be included in our plans for e-works that has not been mentioned? What should we rethink in our stated plans?

3. Should we establish the scenarios as "templates" for future courses in our department? Which practices should we encourage? Which should we discourage?

4) From a more general perspective, what problems, issues, directions should we be most attentive to as we move more towards "Teaching in Cyberspace Through Online Courses?" What effects will these new technologies have on our working conditions and teaching practices in English studies? What specific kinds of actions should we take to resist the negative effects and
enhance the positive?

We encourage you make additional recommendations on aspects of online education that are not covered in the quesjtions above. We are especially interested in statements that need to be in the departmental guidelines we hope to construct.

Date: Friday, 25 April 1997
From: David Downing
Subject: Recommendations #1

I'll begin our discussion about recommendations for the TicToc project and e- works by first responding to Jim Sosnoski's Question 1: How do you think our department should respond to the UI-Online initiative?

My sense is that Question 1 is easy to answer for most all of us: yes, take a pro-active role; assume that this is an opportunity and invitation to develop important new work in ways that would be best determined by some of the individuals most likely to be directly affected by the initiative. (If there are participants who believe we ought to "wait and see" or oppose these plans, I would be interested to hear their reasons.)

Having said that, I'll make a few opening remarks about what seem to me important basic considerations in moving forward with whatever plans emerge:

1. I think we need to keep a very holistic perspective on any new practices for teaching in cyberspace. That is, we ought to build into the innovations some broadly conceived self-reflections about how the online courses affect students, teachers, colleagues, administrators, funding practices, evaluation and tenure procedures, and university and national political issues, etc. If we can agree that teaching/research in cyberspace will have pretty far-reaching effects on academic life in general, then it would be best to conceive of our work as building a culture (or micro-cultres) rather than just disseminating more knowledge quicker via modems and computers. I think Greg phrased this as "info ecology," so long as information includes the persons and communities working with the ideas, dialogues, and data.

2. Since we are in a transition phase, we will constantly be experiencing changes in what can be done, technologically speaking, before we ever get to implement plans based on what could be done when the plans were devised.

3. With this in mind, it is important to theorize any plans according to our ideas about how we hope to improve interactive learning experiences, or according to whatever pedagogical goals we hope to achieve. In short, we need to be clear about using the technology to do what we need to do rather than do what the technology can do because it's there.

David

Date: Friday, 25 April 1997
From: Cindy Selfe
Subject: Recommendations #1

Cindy Selfe: I am a Professor of Composition and Communication and the Chair of the Humanities Department at Michigan Technological University.

About thirteen years ago, I also helped Kate Kiefer start and edit *Computers and Composition: An International Journal for Teachers of Writing*, a journal now published by Ablex, which I continue to co-edit with my buddy Gail Hawisher (University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana).

Currently, I am the Program Chair for the 1997 Conference on College Composition and Communication. I have also done other kinds of things within that organization and the NCTE and the MLA—especially stuff having to do with computers. I have chaired the College Section of the National Council of Teachers of English, served as a founding member and Chair of that organization's Assembly of Computers in English, and served as Chair of the organization's Instructional Technology Committee. I have been a member of the Executive Committee of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and the Committee on Computers and Emerging Technologies for the Modern Language Association (MLA).

For those of you who would like some publication cites (for the rest, simply skip this paragraph!), I have authored *Computer-Assisted Instruction in Composition: Create Your Own* and *Creating a Computer-Supported Writing Facility*, and have served as a co-author of *Computers and the Teaching of Writing in American Higher Education, 1979-1994: A History* (with Gail Haiwsher, Paul LeBlanc, Charlie Moran) and co-author of *Technical Writing* (with Mary Lay, Billie Wahlstrom, Stephen Doheny-Farina, Ann Hill Duin, Sherry Burgus Little, Carolyn D. Rude, and Jack Selzer, Irwin). I have also co-edited several collections of essays on computers, including "Literacy and Computers: Complicating Our Vision of Teaching and Learning with Technology" (with Susan Hilligoss), "Evolving

TICTOCCERS,

Cindy Selfe, here, emerging from the last work throes associated with CCCC 1997.

I tend to agree with David about the question of being proactive. That's the only way to go—or you get tossed by other folk's notion of what you should be doing. From my perspective, the best way to accomplish the goal of proactivity is to work with the rest department to identify a list of instructional goals associated with the teaching of writing/literature/etc., and then to use these goals to make decisions about technology.

The benefit of such an approach is keeping technology in the background (at least for a time—they will, it is clear emerge strongly as you move forward) and foregrounding the goals you have as teachers of English.

Each of the instructional goals that you have identified will have both specific and general implications for your use of technology: from the most concrete decisions about what kinds of technology to buy to the most political decisions about the architecture of the virtual environments you want to set up.

The goals that you identify early on can also be used to structure the reflection and formative assessment that David also suggests. Such goals give you something to shoot for that isn't simply technological in the machine sense; instead, they keep you focused on what you want to

Perspectives on Computers in Composition Studies: Questions for the 1990s" (with Gail Hawisher), "Computers in English and Language Arts: The Challenge of Teacher Education" (with Dawn Rodrigues and William Oates), "Critical Perspectives on Computers and Composition Instruction" (with Gail Hawisher), and "Computers and Writing: Theory, Research, and Practice" (with Deborah Holdstein). Whew—makes me tired to think of it!

Currently, Gail Hawisher and I also serve as the Editors of Computers and Composition Press, which sponsors the publication of books on computers of

accomplish as a teacher of English studies.

I hope this makes sense—actually David says it all in his last sentence:

> >In short, we need to be clear >about using the technology >to do what we need to do >rather than do what the
> >technology can do because >it's there.

Cindy

Date: Sunday, 27 April 1997
From: Burks Oakley
Subject: Recommendations #1

On April 25, David wrote:

> >I'll begin our discussion about recommendations for the TicToc project >and e-works by first responding to Jim Sosnoski's Question 1: How do >you think our department should respond to the UI-Online initiative? >I'll also follow Greg Ulmer's suggestion that it would be best to post a >series of shorter replies, rather than try to post one long entry.

Greetings! For more on UI-OnLine, please see the article published in the "ALN Magazine" last month: http://www.aln-.org/alnweb/magazine/issue1/oakley2.htm

Best regards,
Burks

Date: Sunday, 27 April 1997
From: Joe Amato
Subject: Recommendations #1

well let's see . . . i think i'll risk stating the obvious here, just to make sure that it's stated . . .

1. it seems to me (perhaps only me?) that there has been right along, lurking in the tictoc discussions, a divided view—-not as to what specific online technologies might mean for specific educational practices (of course we're divided here, in so many ways)—-but as to the sort of

occasion such technologies may be taken to inaugurate, all told . . . that is, my impulse in viewing online technologies is that, even as i permit myself a good deal of skepticism regarding the more emancipatory claims emerging side-by-side with these technologies, the potential exists for doing something different under the auspices of english studies . . . the potential exists, that is, for actually changing english studies into a more hospitable, more useful, more vital, less hierarchical, more participatory field of endeavor, all told . . . which is to say, i am not pleased with the way english studies is currently configured—-never have been, probably never will be . . . call me a malcontent if you must, but it seems to me that *any* new fora present us, at least, with the possibilities for constructive, as well as destructive, change . . . and many of us have located, courtesy of the online world and efforts pertaining thereto, ways in which, in fact, we can be more constructive . . . this has less to do perhaps with any inherent quality of the medium than it has to do with the opening up of new, less territorialized institutional spaces which (at the moment, still) permit for crossing geopolitical boundaries—-if and only if you're so inclined, and pace the question of access (which needs to be given its due *even as* it needs to be bracketed in order for me to proceed *here* at all) . . . and in my view, believing in these possibilities runs at times counter to the more traditional humanistic logic of the university as a strictly preservative (and conservative) institution, even as it provides potentially for more (and less!) along these lines as well . . .

2. if—-and only if!—-you find yourself with me on (1), why then your various impulses, whether teaching or publication or service or administration, wrt online technologies will be to ask—-not how can i do online what i'm doing over there, f2f—-but how can i do what i'm doing differently, how will online technologies help me to do it better . . . that is, the emergence of said online realities will likely be the cause of you entirely rethinking what you're about, professionally and (it is to be expected, he sez) personally . . . this is, again, if and only if you see in online technologies the potential for altering english studies (i could say, for altering 'the university,' but i'm trying to keep it simple!) . . .

3. now this is not, never has been to say that those of us who share the mentalite of (1) and (2) wish to renege on our f2f commitments . . . only that we've come to a shared awareness that something is stirring online which in so many ways, effectively and affectively, prompts us to reconsider our various and varied institutional affiliations . . . and with, again, due regard for our ideological suspicions . . . so if you're with me thus far, then perhaps you'll understand what i'm going to say next: that many of us have found ourselves going underground, as it were, in our online efforts . . . to this day, many of us have found that we can't directly affect change, esp. not when so many english depts. have made the question of 'getting wired' among their chief administrative concerns .

. . hence many of us are hoping that, in fact, we can reconfigure ourselves online to permit for changes that could not be effected f2f, and in some elemental ways *cannot be anticipated*. . . that the emergence of virtual communities among students, in fact, presents us with a largely untapped and powerful resource for institutional change . . . in our more hallucinatory moments, many of us perhaps see the long-awaited revolution in learning (which faltered around 1972, right?) occurring right now in the online world . . . not as a result of some 'natural succession' to new and improved means, but as a sort of contingency process owing to the reconfiguration of human bodies and minds, which would otherwise not be permitted to, well, get together . . . at the same time, we are also, many of us, all too aware of the rapid commodification occurring on, say, the web . . . so we view this recent development with a mixture of hopefulness and anxiety . . . but the fact remains that we find in going underground a certain vitality that is all but vitiated when it becomes a matter of policy . . .

4. so this leads me to my most provocative [cough] insight: how is tictoc going to be the site of such counter-establishment (sorry!) impulses if it becomes a matter of programmatic change? . . . isn't it built into the logic of programmatic change that things are, well, programmatic? . . . this is one of the paradoxical costs of legitimating online work—that it comes under the scrutiny of prevailing powers, and eventually, under their management . . . to put it another way: how can we take cindy and others' suggestions for developing objectives *prior to* (if you will) machines and construct a departmental platform that will not foreclose on the sorts of contingent (online and f2f) realities that could (could) result in a new & improved & perhaps more truly *student-centered* learning institution? . . . and (in my dreams anyway) new and improved social institutions (incl., even, the corporation)? . . .

apologies for any pseudo-revolutionary dogma here, but i really do believe that 'we' need to change a whole lot . . . and perhaps, if you like, one day at a time . . .

best,

Joe

Date: Tuesday, 29 April 1997
From: David Downing
Subject: Response to Cindy and Joe

Just to pick up on Cindy's point, which also relates to Joe's posting:

We might begin by simply naming some of the things we might want for the future of English studies: multi-cultural and cross-cultural perspectives, post-disciplinary forms of knowledge, collaboration and shared intellectual projects, and interactive learning.

Now, you can say a lot about each of these points, and there's noth-

ing striking or new in any one of them by themselves, but taken together they do mean that when we start to think about eworks and the UI Online initiative, we would be doing different kinds of things if we kept such points in mind. That is, we would not just (or only) be using distance learning to get Shakespeare out to those who can't drive to campus. I think most of us agree on this point, and it does connect to Joe's concern that some of us feel the need to change the profession, while at the same time we always have to be wary that the powers of the modern university will merely colonize any "new" and "better" postmodern alternatives under the familiar institutional structures—in short, the "new" often gets caught up in the old "webs," even when it's on the ww web. This seems to me indeed the case, and I see the situation as Jim Sosnoski lays it out in *Modern Skeletons in Postmodern Closets* as the conflict between postmodern ideas and pomo people caught within the modern hierarchies of the university. So I think it does call for a pretty constant self-reflective capacity and examination of the consequences of anything we do. But on the positive side, I do not think the modern system is a "totality," and in those contradictions and spaces we can sometimes carve out new possibilities for our work. Again, any new space, innovative practice, can become institutionalized in unpleasant ways. But when that happens we can be sure some will keep moving on to new spaces—building new cultures, as it were, in whatever local way they (we) can, even if it means digging deeper holes into a limitless cyberspace. Moreover, in actual practice, our lives are typically not so dualistic as our terminology leads us to believe: political activism takes place within those contradictions that are multiple, and constraining, and enabling, depending on the circumstances. Which means it's important to know when opportunities arise, and the UI Online initiative and eworks will hopefully be one such place to inaugurate some institutional changes that would not otherwise happen. Finally, (for this email), I do think it's important to keep in mind that any significant changes will involve institutional changes (which are happening all the time anyway, even when we don't like them),so even if we long for the subterranean freedoms of some kinds of alternative cyberspaces, the politics of the spaces overhead, as it were, is something we can't lose sight of (as if we ever could).

David

Date: Tuesday, 29 April 1997
From: Joe Amato
Subject: Response to David's 4/29

and to second david's thoughts re not losing sight of overarching political structures and exigencies . . . i'm not an esp. subterranean type [he sez], which i say to indicate that, though my thinking, and writing,

is often oblique (shades of greg's tilted magnetosphere!), i prefer to address institutional problems head-on, i hold activism in high regard, etc. . . . it's just that i've found the necessity at times, given who i am (and i mean, good heavens, i *am* a poet!), for pushing ahead w/o sanction, as it were... and when sanction headed my way, i've often found i've had to duck . . . yknow—-be careful what you wish for, b/c sometimes—-

best,
Joe

Date: Friday, 2 May 1997
From: David Downing
Subject: Recommendation #2 and #3

I'll move on to begin an initial answer to Jim's questions 2 & 3 combined:

Question #2: What should be included in our plans for e-works that has not been mentioned?

Question #3: Should we establish the scenarios as "templates" for future courses?

I'll begin by answering #2 very briefly: I think we need an expanded "rationale" section. That is, if we take my opening remarks about a holistic perspective and a need for a vision of future directions in English studies in the telecommunications revolution, then I think we need to pay special attention to these rationales and thus to the kinds of theorizing we do when devising models for new educational practices in online environments. The scenarios, at least in the forms I have seen them, tend to describe more what you are doing in each instance than why you are doing what you are doing, and how it is that what you are doing improves upon the way you were doing things in print environments. The main rationale offered tends to be: to learn all these new electronic features and to allow more people who would not otherwise be able to attend classes to participate. These are both worthy goals, but there are undoubtedly many more that we need to talk about. The UI Online Initiative statements offers the following rationale:

"Its off-campus students will occasionally be the same students who are enrolled on the campuses, but a new, underserved population will be drawn from Illinois citizens constrained by work, family, or other limitations that prevent direct access to a campus. The UI-OnLine will be the twenty-first-century realization of the University's historical land-grant mission."

Then, in section II, "Why Create A UI-Online?" there are several other specific rationales, mostly relating to reaching new "place-bound students", etc. These are, indeed, important new ways of reaching out to new populations, and continuing a long-standing mission. And the

UIC-OnLine initiative is an exciting opening in many of these new directions. But I think we ought to conceive of the e- works portion of this project as an exploration and experiment (as it all is anyway) of new kinds of educational experiences, new kinds of university life, and new kinds of knowledge production, and new kinds of pedagogy linking teaching, research, and service in new, and often unforseen ways. From this perspective then, we need more fully developed rationales. As it now stands, the rationales for different courses in the scenarios run in all kinds of different directions, depending on the course, it's intentions, its audience, etc., although these intentions are more implicit in the course description which focuses more on the specific technologies employed. Let me turn to a specific example by beginning to answer Question #3 with respect to scenario 1.

Scenario #1 is set up as a topics course to address exactly the main issues of "Writing and Publishing for Cyberspace." This raises tremendously big questions, and in the brief syllabus the basic questions asked have to do with "where is scholarship going in cyberspace? What will it look like?" etc. These could be expanded in numerous ways, and I think they ought to. That is, the whole rationale for such a course might conceivably change the nature of the relations between reading/writing, between audience and author, between composing and assimilation culture, and considerably alter the traditional protocols for disciplinary work. If so, then we need to say much more about these dimensions of the course, and how we envision them, and what our expectations might be. It so often happens that the technical elements of laying out web pages, setting up listservs, online journals, teleconferencing makes it seem like our focus is just on learning these technologies. Moreover, the purpose and rationale for a course like "Writing and Publishing for Cyberspace" is not simply to reach "place-bound students", or the other fine rationales briefly outlined in the UI-OnLine Initiative. So, to begin, let's flesh out some of these intentions.

David

Date: Tuesday, 6 May 1997
From: Cindy Selfe
Subject: Response to Questions 2 and 3

TIC-TOCCERS:

Cindy Selfe, here, back from a week's road trip to the University of Oregon and to Washington D.C.

I agree with David (once again) that the rationale for computer-supported instruction or on-line instruction should not be limited to distance education or to serving a population of students who do not find the traditional place-bound nature of higher education to be conducive

to their needs. The potential for change and innovation that electronic environments offer can—if it is used intelligently and understood from a range of critical perspectives—serve faculty and students in a variety of settings, both on and off a traditional campus.

The things that interest me most about electronic environments for education is how they might be used to support different kinds of literacies, different kinds of communication patterns, different kinds of learning and teaching opportunities. Such issues are certainly as important to students on a traditional campus as they are to students who can't make it to a traditional campus.

As for the use of scenarios—they don't do much for me. Such things are usually dated before they are ever published (especially given the current length of media generations) and they are descriptive rather than richly explanative of the instructional goals that teachers and learners need to be thinking about as a context for their educational efforts. The kinds of goals that I'm talking about don't have anything to do with technology—rather, they have to do with what kinds of things teachers and learners want to work toward intellectually: understandings of a field or topic, the ability to identify multiple perspectives on an issue, the skill of using (or developing) strategies for approaching problems; etc. As some of the other participants have stated, these kinds of goals do need to be open ended and flexible so that they can be shaped by the kinds of things that electronic environments offer (especially those that we don't yet know about).

Cindy

Date: Friday, 2 May 1997
From: Cynthia Haynes & Jan Holmevik
Subject: TicToc Recommendations

We were reading the paper with coffee this morning, while also talking about our TicToc recommendations when we happened upon an article called "New Theory Could Turn Cosmology Upside Down." Intrigued by that headline we read on . . . it seems that two physicists have discovered something about the nature of the universe that changes fundamentally the way we conceive of how it works and how it was created. The upshot is that their findings suggest that the universe has an "up" and a "down," that there is "a mysterious axis, a kind of cosmological north start that orients the universe." We won't go into detail about the new theory, but essentially their findings have huge implications for Einstein's theory of relativity, and of what we know about physics in general. What, you are asking, is this new theory's "relevance threshold" for the TicToc project? Well, we feel as others have in these conversations, that online education is something SO new that

it makes measuring its effectiveness, quality, and delivery against traditional models akin to measuring radio waves (as they travel through space in a spiral pattern) with old relativity eyes.

General Recommendations:

With that said, we want to proceed with our recommendations in a quaquaversal — in all directions at once.

We think that eworks and TicToc are extremely valuable projects in a process of redefining the educational 'cosmology' in which we all live and work. We feel strongly that the 'process' needs to be foremost. Let us explain. There are obvious advantages to planning, defining instructional goals, mapping scenarios with which to rethink curriculum and its delivery, theorizing about the institutional constraints, the intellectual property issues, the technology issues . . . . but there is something prior to those efforts that deserves attention: the dynamic process. And here is how we define a dynamic process.

We believe that several factors are key. First, the process needs to be dynamic, malleable, and eclectic. So, it requires an unorthodox approach. Rather than first setting up goals, you need to find out what is possible. If, for example, you set up goals that will limit you with respect to the technology, then you're constrained when new technologies become available. This means the process needs to remain completely open. It means setting up a task force (or working group) to monitor the process at all times and when certain aspects of the project stagnate or fragment, they need to be ready to adjust and quickly. Second, this task force (and the participating faculty) would do well to adopt the "hacker spirit." The beauty of internet technologies is that most involved 'share' in such a way that the whole complex network and ways to access the net move forward in the eclectic manner that is characteristic of the 'hacker ethic.' "Information wants to be free" also applies to course content, syllabi, pedagogical practices. This speaks to the issue of intellectual property raised earlier this week. And it speaks to community property.

Another of key aspect of the process has to be establishing the community. Jim asked at one point for us to speculate about why the TicToc conversations failed to engage us. We have several theories about that. They range from the simple explanation that we all have WAY too much to do, we're all over-committed (perhaps :), and the internet has increased our work loads exponentially while it has significantly altered HOW we go about our work and with whom. We appreciate all the work that Jim, Keith, David, Ken, and others put into setting up the TicToc email list, the scenarios, and so forth. And in some sense, we HAVE become a community of participants, observers, and consultants. The email process, however, may have served to intimidate some, overwhelm others, and isolate us rather then suture our various experiences and recommendations into a kind of 'energy field.' Long

emails are time-intensive and take a great deal of energy. If, as we suggest above, we had thought of the possibilities for HOW to establish a community of scholars invested in these goals, we might have included some synchronous MOO sessions, for example, as a way to get to know one another...to draw each of us into the community in a way that even email can't (more about this in a moment). The internet opens up countless opportunities for micro-communities to flare into existence, to morph, to reconfigure themselves, and yet we must consider more ways to foster this kind of energy, to harness it, but not in such a way that it becomes an "IDEAL template" for how we conduct our work.

Finally, a general guideline to remember is that you should not base education on specific hardware or software. New tools are going to become available all the time, and the technology needs to be affordable and easily maintained.

Specific Recommendations:

1. As educational MOO administrators, we feel that MOO technology offers some of the most effective tools currently available to enable the process to remain eclectic and flexible, and it is low-cost for both the institution and the users. Real-time conferencing software and IRC channels are limited with respect to creating a community, fostering collaboration, and providing resources for research. MOO technology engages teachers and students in creative, dynamic ways, especially when the MOO is webbed and users have both synchronous and asynchronous modes of interaction available to them. In our presentation in Chicago we will demonstrate Lingua MOO and discuss some specific projects ongoing at Lingua that exemplify our points. In addition, we will discuss the range of options for using MOO, the various teaching and research tools, and how using MOOs would benefit UIC-online and e-works.
2. The templates, we feel, are valuable if they remain malleable. In some instances, as we read the scenarios in grid form, we see that not enough time is devoted to the training of students and faculty on the technology. Or, at least the tables don't show this. Thus a template for a course that does not include time for training PRIOR to the course beginning will ultimately fail in varying degrees. These are hard logistical and institutional questions, though we feel they are not impossible questions. If a course will require 20% of internet use, tell us WHY and we can better tell you how and which programs are better than others (in addition to watching those in development that may change the way the course is conducted the following semester).
3. The faculty needs not only to be able to see the possibilities for teaching with technology, they also need to shift their work methods, research process, and pedagogical practices to successfully integrate an online component to courses. They need to participate in the shift as well, not just have it determined for them (we'll want to discuss C-FEST

as an example during the Symposium). You may have no difficulty drawing students in to distance education, but you must consider ways to draw faculty in also. Otherwise we fear a trend in which institutions set up bid systems for free-lance faculty in their effort to maximize enrollment and minimize costs. The faculty need to see themselves as part of a larger community, larger than even the UIC-online project, larger than the UIC system. They need to see the shift to online education in terms of research, creativity, and as a huge source to meet new colleagues both within their own discipline and without. Faculty need to become hybrids, shape-shifters, post-disciplinary hackers.

4. These shifts in thinking also make it imperative that as we come to new and improved methods of teaching, the 'value' of online education also works to push the limits of how academia 'values' electronic scholarship and the implications this has for tenure and promotion. In line with Joe's posts, going online has to also be about rethinking 'institutionality', rather than about preserving the institution in order to further line the pockets of those who have the most at stake in preserving the institution. Those of us at the symposium engaged in these efforts will most likely speak about this in Chicago. We need to be proactive, work from within the infrastructure, constantly monitoring the process of innovation and appropriation (resulting in commodification) so that "ideal templates" do not turn into new programmatic structures that constrain innovation.

We look forward to seeing you all in Chicago!

Cindy & Jan

Date: Thursday, 15 May 1997
From: Gian Pagnucci
Subject: Response to Haynes/Holmevik

Here's my personal (quirky?) reading/interpretation of Cynthia and Jan's work:

Overarching themes:

•Technology represents a fundamental change to education
•This change needs to be approached through a dynamic process

Recommendations:

1. Measurement/evaluation a. We can't use old methods to evaluate new technological teaching approaches.

2. Value a. TicToc/eworks type endeavors have great value.

3. Process a. Process must be our chief concern. b. We must use a "dynamic process." c. To ensure an effective process, we need unorthodox approaches. d. Goals may limit the process. e. A completely open

process is necessary. f. A task force should constantly monitor the process. g. The process must be flexible. h. The process should be altered whenever necessary as quickly as possible.

4. Free information a. Technological information should be distributed using a "hacker spirit." b. All information should be free, including educational information. c. Community property should be more important than individual/intellectual property.

5. Time a. Academics are generally over-committed. b. New technologies increase our time commitments, not lessen them.

6. How to work a. The TicToc email discussions met with failure. a. Email can intimidate, isolate, and overwhelm. b. Email may not be the best way to build community. c. MOO sessions (such as Lingua MOO) are effective for community building. d. No technology is stable—better technologies always come along. e. The best technologies are cheap, easy to maintain, flexible, and eclectic. f. Templates must be malleable. g. Sufficient training is always vital.

7. Faculty a. Must be willing to change teaching methods, research approaches, etc. b. Must see the educational possibilities in new technologies. c. Must take an active role in technological changes (for example, C-FEST) d. Are part of a larger community. e. Must be shapeshifters (like Odo on Star Trek: Deep Space Nine)

8. Values a. The value of online education is not yet determined. b. Giving value to online educational efforts requires rethinking "institutionality."

Gian

Date: Tuesday, 13 May 1997
From: Bob Goldstein
Subject: Response to Haynes/Holmevik

Per Jim's request, I'll post my response question(s) to the recommendations from Cynthia Haynes and Jan Rune Holmevik. Jim said to make the question "hard", so I'll try :-) (They are hard enough that I sure don't have the answers.)

Q: What is involved in "setting up a task force (or working group) to monitor the process at all times and when certain aspects of the process stagnate or fragment, they need to be ready to adjust and quickly" ?

Here's the background and detail for my question.

In order to monitor a process, one has to monitor *for* something. For how much the students are learning? For how easy it is to use the technology? For the costs in time or money? For the quality of community established? For the efficiency of preparation or teaching? For the flexibility of teachers and students?

One *must* have goals, and it is progress towards these goals that should be monitored. I want to know specifically which goals are most important. Particularly when some goals like input and output (i.e. expense and learning) can be traded off against each other, with or without technology. What should the priorities be in the early phases? What are the most important things to monitor for, and how should we assess them?

Once we know what to monitor for, what kind of intervention should we be prepared for if the assessements are not up to snuff? Are we talking small changes (email isn't working, so we'll give an extra training session on email) or large changes (email isn't working, so we'll switch to video teleconferences)?

Does the task force consist of just the teacher? Include any TA's? Other teachers? Departmental committee? How often should they run assessments? How formal should the assessments be? To my mind, we ought to be experimenting with ways of delivering higher quality for lower cost. This means measuring both quality and cost, and comparing these measurements with traditional methods as well as with alternative technological methods. How else does one "find out what is possible" ?

And a followup question, in case the above discussion doesn't last long enough :-)

Q: Item 3 recommends we "draw [the] faculty in" in order to prevent "bid systems for free-lance faculty . . . to maximize enrollment and minimize costs". I do see how competent on-line teachers would be better able to compete in a bid system, but I don't easily see how "integrating an online component to courses" in any way hinders a bid system.

So, assuming that a university administration does seek to maximize enrollment and minimize costs, what reward structure, in contrast to a bid system, would be most effective in encouraging the faculty to appropriately "shift their work methods" ?

Bob

Date: Tuesday, 6 May 1997
From: David Downing
Subject: Recommendation #3

In this posting I would like to address Question #3: Should we establish the scenarios as 'templates' for future courses? What practices should we encourage? Which should we discourage?

I would like to proceed under the broad assumptions articulated by several of the consultants (Cynthia and Jan, Greg, Mick) that work in cyberspace needs to be eclectic, flexible, process-oriented, hybrid,

post-disciplinary, decentralized, innovative, experimental, and at the same time we need to be valued and rewarded within the modern, hierarchical university structure of tenure and evaluation, etc. That the two goals (innovation and reward) don't always easily align themselves is a tremendously big problem which I'm going to bracket for now (and elaborate on in the next posting) and focus on some of the ways that the specific scenarios offered by e-works may or may not be innovative and flexible.

First of all, what may be useful about the scenarios is that if we scan through all of them it becomes immediately apparent that some are more directly aimed at exploring new working conditions and innovative practices in cyberspace whereas others are intended primarily to extend disciplinary practices into online work via distance educational goals. Thus, for instance, Jim Sosnoski's EN:558—Introduction to Electronic Pedagogy (Scenario 2) directly aims to alter the conditions of "work" so that course participants will be working on specific tasks designed to explore new possibilities for teaching and research in cyberspace, and all grading/evaluating is done with respect to completion of the specific tasks. (Scenarios 4 & 6 tend to move in this same direction also.) In contrast, Scenarios 3 (History of English Literature II) and 7 (Major Plays of Shakespeare) tend not to alter familiar working conditions for courses in f2f classes and print environments: thus, they have primarily print-based reading assignments, lectures, exams, papers, etc. and cover recognizable periods and genres of literature. Even though Scenario 7 involves multi-media experiences of Shakespeare's plays, the exams, research papers, and grading practices remain quite disciplinary.

Now, given this range, it would seem that most of the consultants we have heard from would like to see all of the scenarios move more towards the post-disciplinary innovations. I admit that I would like to see that, but I also think the following caution is in order: our flexibility needs to include what Jim Sosnoski and I have termed "multivalent" practices. That is, those of us devoted to changing the profession and to exploring innovative practices should have the opportunity to do so, but we will just be recreating the familiar modes of coercing others to do as we wish unless we acknowledge that those who wish to continue disciplinary work in familiar channels have equal access to the electronic resources. Can "we" work together with these differences? is often a tough question and leads to difficult political problems (again, I'll address more of these evaluative problems in the next post).

But here's a specific example drawn from an earlier version of Scenario 6 when Jim S. and I team taught an online teleseminar linking our two graduate courses. The course was called "Cultural Turns: Problems in the Profession of Literary Studies," and, as you can see from the brief description in the scenario, we planned the course in 3 phas-

es: I: "The Culture Wars: Current Curricular and Pedagogical Problems," II: "The Modern Discipline of Literary Study," III: "Postmodern Alternatives." Now the basic rationale was for us to begin to articulate contemporary problems, study their historical basis in and out of the institution, and end with student-designed "postmodern alternatives" in their concluding projects and their design of this part of the syllabus. Now what was successful about this seminar is that some of the participants did quite exciting (from our perspective) projects such as the "Discursive Action Project," a hybrid, collaborative book on postcolonial problems joining revisions of online dialogues with position papers, etc. But we also had some participants who wanted to do traditional disciplinary projects, and so they did research papers on contemporary theorists, "the big names in theory," for example. So far as I can see, it would have been a mistake to force these latter participants to be "innovative hybrid hackers" when they didn't want to do that. And my point is that the multiple dimensions of space and time in electronic environments opens the door to such multivalent practices even within one seminar. Nobody needed to force either the disciplinary or postdisciplinary models of academic work (although I don't want to give the false impression that these differences exist without tensions and anxieties which may, in our experience, be unavoidable depending on the participants themselves).

Moreover, because of the constraints of the brief scenario descriptions, it is difficult at times to get a feel for the experiences made possible by each of these different scenarios. The only solution I can see to this problem is that we need more "thick descriptions" of various case studies—in short, we need more narratives of more pedagogical experiments in which the rationales for the courses are developed and revised in light of the specific tasks undertaken. What this also means is that there should be some kinds of course innovations that are devoted exclusively to e-works projects, rather, than as the scenarios now operate, they are adaptions of existing courses in the current curriculum. (In short, you'll need more curriculum revision to open new spaces for courses that link technology to community action projects and artistic/collaborative projects, etc., and other non-traditional course-work.) Since I am involved with both scenarios 4 and 6, it has been strikingly clear to me that we need thicker descriptions to get at the heart of the issues. Were Jim S. and I to talk at much greater length than the scenario format allows, we could say much about the many failures as well as some of the successes of these experiments. (Perhaps we can expand upon this at the symposium) In other words, we have as much, if not more, to say about the limits of listservs, teleconferences, and web sites as we do about the advantages these technologies offer us. We need, therefore, to have forums, such as e-works where we can open up the problems as well as possibilities of these technologies by

examining accounts of these experiences by both teachers and students. In contrast, however, if the scenarios were to be part of a grant application say, seeking funding for such online courses, then focusing on the problems would, of course, not be the wisest political move. Which takes us to the problem of evaluation and reward within the institutions we inhabit which I will turn to in my next post.

David

Date: Tuesday, 6 May 1997
From: David Downing
Subject: Recommendation #4

As a follow-up to my last posting, I want to address the problem of recognition, evaluation, credit, and reward for work in technology and cyberspace:

On the one hand, most everyone agrees that work in cyberspace is blurring the boundaries of the traditional categories of evaluation. That is, our changing work conditions in cyberspace can no longer be broken down neatly into teaching, research/scholarship, and service. Moreover, what "counts" as research and scholarship in online work can't easily be measured against the yardstick of peer- reviewed print publications; teaching in cyberspace so often blends research and service as well. These "blurrings" may often be one of the great virtues emerging from our efforts to compose new kinds of culture in cyberspace communities, but our problem is that modern institutions resist such "blurred genres." The discussion of this problem acquired some formal recognition in the early 1990's with the MLA emerging technology committee that drafted the MLA Guidelines, but it has been picked up more recently (and more fruitfully, I would say) by many people and organizations (NCTE, CCCC, ACW, etc.) as Mick documents in his web site recommendations.

The most common denominator of this work, so far, has been the efforts to get the new forms acknowledged within the old institutions: how to document it, how to describe it, how to make it count, how to compare it to traditional models of scholarship. I agree that it is vital that all the new kinds of work we do find some way of being "counted" for tenure and promotion, and so I am supportive of all these endeavors. But I think there are some underlying problems that will not so easily go away: the first is that there is always an element of professional risk in the postdisciplinary experiments we undertake in a disciplinary institution. We also have to admit that it's equally possible for the postmodern innovations to be just more fodder for the modern institution—we call ourselves postmoderns while playing all the modernist games. (See Sosnoski's *Modern Skeletons in Postmodern Closets*. I also

take it that this is what Mick warns us against when he says we should not allow ourselves to be "conned," although I think if we phrase the problem in terms of "What's in it for me?" we most likely will be conned into accepting what perks the university will award us rather taking the risks inherent in the more daring innovations.) We have to be self-reflective enough to worry about such self-deceptions that can be so easy under the pressure of fights for jobs, tenure, and promotion.

In the recent *Kairos* issue devoted to these problems, Janice Walker articulates the problem in this way (favoring the process over the product, much as Cynthia and Jan do):

> . . . both in print and online publications, we can only value that which is currently valued. So how do we effect real change? How do unpopular ideas and "unscholarly" (i.e., new) ideas become accepted? Essentially, then, we can create our own forums for publication and our own criteria for evaluating online work. The value of online writing may not be in the product at all — at least not yet. Instead, it may lie in the process, in the act of exploration, in experimentation with forms. It is not what we say; it is how we say it (or, even more to the point, how we attempt to say it) that counts here — at least for now. ("Fanning the Flames: Tenure and Promotion and Other Role-Playing Games" *Kairos* 2.1)

How "our" forums for publication and "our own criteria" could be assimilated to the university system is, of course, the crux of this way of proceeding. As Mick reminds us, it is crucial how we name what we do, and how we get that naming to be recognized within the institutions where we work can have tremendous consequences in our lives. Walker, however, cautions us about the limits of defining it so as to fit within the current institution:

> I am not sure at this juncture that we necessarily want our work to be "valued" if by placing that kind of value on what we're doing — institutionalizing it — we are locked into a definition of online work before we are ready to define it — if, indeed, defining it is something we can or want to do. (*Kairos* 2.1)

In short, from Walker's perspective we risk not being rewarded if we resist defining our work in recognizable ways, but, conversely, if we do define it we risk defeating the innovative purposes of our work. This is, indeed, the great "Catch-22".

So I think that we will need to do a good bit more than just have the new forms, new contents, new practices of English professors and hybrid hackers "count" for evaluation purposes and credit hours. Unless the institutionalized evaluation structures change, we're not likely to be happy with just changing (and expanding) the forms and contents of what gets recognized as being worthy of being evaluated in the

first place. And I don't think we should take a defeatist attitude about the possibility of initiating such changes (although the specific institutional circumstances will largely determine the extent of this work). A few of the contributors to the *Kairos* discussion of these problems point in exactly these directions. As Janet Cross and Kristian Fuglevik put it:

> Indeed, assessment must come from across the disciplines and fully engage all — administrators, teachers, and students — in the process. In other words, assessment, and the concomitant evaluation practices, can no longer come from on high and must radically involve all who participate: those being assessed as well as those assessing. This then means that all involved are responsible for acquiring the necessary means to take part in the assessment process. ("Jesters Get Serious," *Kairos* 2.1)

How this might happen is exactly what we need to explore. And my recommendation would be that e-works designate as part of its work the exploration of institutional changes in evaluation and accreditation that effect e-workers. One of the immediate advantages of e-works is that, following Cross and Fuglevik's point, it already involves administrators, teachers, and students, and that point should not be lost on our proceedings. I also think Cynthia and Jan have pointed in this direction with their suggestion of a "task force" designed to "monitor the process at all times and when certain aspects of the project stagnate or fragment, they need to be ready to adjust and quickly." My suggestion to supplement this would be to inaugurate peer evaluation practices such as having faculty and students regularly visit each other's classroom, observe and take notes, regularly visit our online experiments, and then meet afterwards to discuss the teaching/research both in its specific activities and in its implications for broader social and political perspectives, as I suggested in my first recommendation. The point of these practices would be to incorporate evaluation into the intellectual community, rather than as it now is at my institution, an ineffective system devoid of any intellectual merit, and imposed from above. In short, we would be asking not just how we can work within the rules, but how we can alter the rules themselves. To begin such practices, it may be difficult to determine how they might work into the current evaluation procedures, but that's the risk of the experiment, and the only effective kind of assimilation will be through modification of the existing system. The goal, again, is for evaluation to become a practical phase of the "value" of the diverse intellectual work we do within our local and national "communities" (the quotes acknowledge that the hostilities we often encounter in these arenas hardly seem communal and more like street fighting and guerilla warfare— And this doesn't yet begin to touch on the difficulties of the intellectual property issues raised by Randy Bass). In any case, peer evaluations would also need

to be supplemented by regular online and f2f colloquiua where the discussion and evaluation is extended. The creation of such networks is what we and e-works should facilitate, both at and between our local institutions.

David

Date: Thursday, 15 May 1997
From: Thomas Philion
Subject: Response to David Downing

I've been reading and reviewing the various recommendations of David Downing and the other TicToc consultants at different times over the past two days, on paper and on computer screen, in an effort to develop a sense of what people are suggesting, and what those suggestions might mean for e-works and the UIC English Department. (It's not easy, let me tell you, to read in this way—here is one vote for linearity and conventionality). Then, just as I'm about to sit down and type up a response, Ken sends all these messages that constitute the TicToc Manifesto! Fortunately, these messages seem to summarize and clarify the various recommendations of the consultants, and they help me to focus my response to the various recommendations. Consequently, the questions that I pose here correspond to David Downing's recommendations and to other recommendations developed by the TicToc consultants, but they also attempt to speak to the more recent TicToc Manifesto as well.

One question that I considered in light of David's recommendations is the question of how to frame or conceive the relationship between e-works and the UIC English Department. This is a question that I have been thinking about for quite some time, largely because the relationship has been unclear to me from the beginning of the project. Is e-works an extension of the English department, or authorized by it in some way, or is it a more autonomous project sponsored by a single professor (Jim Sosnoski) located within it? I was reminded of this question when I read Joe Amato's provocative question about the viability of the "counter-institutionality" of e-works given its participation in "programmatic change." Joe's comments reminded me that throughout this early stage in the development of e-works, great effort has been expended by Jim and others, I believe, to emphasize the counter-institutional nature of e-works (for instance, the various writings on the web about e-works emphasize its "non-hierarchical" and "collaborative" nature, and the recent Manifesto goes to great lengths to emphasize the "humane" values of e-works in contrast to "technological" and "institutional" values). At the same time, however, I clearly read in e-works a "programmatic" impulse (for instance, the authority structure of e-works

does imitate the authority structure of the department, and this TicToc symposium is one clear indication of the tight relationship between e-works and the larger institution in which it resides—as is the call in the TicToc Manifesto for a "Director" of e-works elected by the faculty).

The question I wish to pose, then, is might it be useful to clarify the relationship between e-works and the UIC English department? In particular, might it be useful to recognize, if not embrace, the complicitous relationship between the UIC English Department, and other circumscribing social structures, and e-works? David Downing reminds us in his first recommendation (also in part a response to Joe Amato) that "significant changes will involve institutional changes...so even if we long for the subterranean freedoms of some kinds of alternative cyberspaces, the politics of the spaces overhead..is something we can't lose sight of (as if we ever could)." What I take David to mean here is that there exists a dynamic relationship between programmatic change and counter-institutionality; in other words, one cannot proceed without the other. Given this circumstance, ought we to re-frame e-works as a significant dimension of the UIC English Department, as part and parcel of its structure and ethos, so that e-works might play a role in re-shaping it (should we even appoint the Director of e-works on a permanent basis to the English Department Steering Committee?) Alternatively, might we be more honest and forthright and perhaps even POSITIVE about the way in which institutional and technological values contribute to and sometimes even enhance—rather than diminish—the e-works project?

My second question flows from this first one, in many respects. I noticed in David Downing's 2nd posting his notion of the relationship between e-works and NEW ideas and modes of social behavior. He writes:

****But I think we ought to conceive of the e-works portion of this project as an exploration and experiment (as it all is anyway) of new kinds of educational experiences, new kinds of university life, and new kinds of knowledge production, and new kinds of pedagogy linking teaching, research, and service in new, and often unforseen ways. ****

The TicToc Manifesto draws upon this comment to proclaim:

As an exploration of, and experiment with new kinds of educational experiences, new kinds of university life, new kinds of knowledge production, and new kinds of pedagogy linking technology and research, e-works will provide an opportunity for all department members, both on and off-campus, to work with and support a variety of literacies and communication patterns.

Clearly, there exists a sense that e-works is devoted to the exploration of new ideas and pedagogical and social initiatives, and possesses the utopian goal of serving ALL department members, literacies, and communication patterns.

My point here is to call attention to this rhetorical device, and to question its usefulness. Exactly how "new" are the various projects associated with e-works? What ideas and practices does this rhetorical device enable us to see, and to value, and what ideas and practices does it cause us to ignore or to de-value? In particular, I wonder about the relationship between this idea of NEW-ness and the idea of *multi-valency* suggested by David Downing and also incorporated into the TicToc Manifesto. Will the focus on new-ness cause us to ignore or de-value ideas or practices that fail to meet our standards of newness (a trap that I suggest the excerpt below from Part Five of the TicToc Manifesto falls into)? Alternatively, in positioning ourselves as advocates of the new, are we likely to fail to appreciate our own failure to be creative, or our own complicity with conventional academic languages, dispositions, and practices (again, see the excerpt below)?

*** Our scope in these and other endeavors will extend far beyond information dissemination and weak attempts to convert traditional courses into electronic ones. Our scope will include working to obtain positions in departmental curricula for an emerging range of electronic courses that reflect the multivalecy of the interests and abilities of our staff, students, and faculty; helping teachers and students to develop their ability to identify computing problematics, and then to invent and test possible explanations and solutions for them; establishing e-works as a dynamic repository for the accumulated and articulable knowledge of UIC faculty, staff, administration, and student body; and fostering projects similar to itself in other institutions.****

I look forward to our conversation.

Tom

Date: Friday, 16 May 1997
From: Eric Crump
Subject: Response to Thomas Philion

On May 15, thomas philion wrote:

> >What I take David to mean here is that there exists a dynamic relation
> >ship between programmatic change and counter-institutionality; in other
> >words, one cannot proceed without the other.

I agree with your take and with David's point, Thomas. But I guess your question about whether e-works and the English Department can be better buddies probably turns on a number of factors that reside more in the English Department—its culture, its sense of identity and mission, its conception of organizational integrity, that sort of thing.

How willing is it to change or to tolerate change? Does it perceive change as a threat or an opportunity?

In any case, it would be ideal if e-works could influence the department. And it would be terrific if forthrightness could prevail. It's preferable, you're right. However, it's often necessary to go underground to find the freedom to experiment. I think Jim gets to the heart of the matter in the most recent *Works & Days* when he says:

> Administrations do not favor programs that have political overtones of revolution because the majority of their clients favor the status quo." and, noting that universities see themselves as "sites of disinterested knowledge—'knowledge for its own sake,'" he wonders whether "it is possible to change a culture from inside an institution that reproduces it in accord with this rationale?

Hope for open, fruitful relations between the department and e-works is a good goal, but I would suggest some wariness. Institutional structures tend, as we know, to have powerful self-protection mechanisms. They remind me of organisms with immune systems—and in this case, change is often perceived by the system as a virus. (maybe it is!) So what is worth watching carefully is how the department reacts to the TICTOC initiative. How wary is "it"? How willing to embrace new possibilities being suggested? And if the reception is good, to what limitations will it place on exploration?

That last bit is tricky. I could see a forward-looking department, especially if led by politically savvy folk who see the writing on the wall and know that distance education and related changes are a-coming whether they like it or not, might embrace an effort like e-works. But if its embrace is an appropriative one, that may not be an unqualified good thing. That is, if it embraces e-works in order to influence its shape toward the past, toward "its" shape and self-image, the gain in departmental unity might be paid for heavily in terms of limiting the range of exploration e-works can engage in.

Cynthia & Jan talked in their recommendations about the 'hacker ethic' (reminds me of this great definition of 'hacker' I came across: "A Hacker is any person who derives joy from discovering ways to circumvent limitations." —Robert Bickford). I think their suggestion is good. Trying to foster the hacker spirit is just right for the times. It already seems present in the e-works projects. Will the English Department embrace it as well?

I don't mean to sound paranoid & sour. I'm a pretty upbeat guy & all. But it seems important to find ways to give e-works room to move. Departments I know simply and by nature do not provide room. They see it as their business to protect holy territory. That tradition may be something UIC's English Department is willing to break out of—I hope so—but at least keep that tradition in mind while working out this relationship, because I doubt it will simply and easily disappear.

More later . . .

Eric

Date: Wednesday, 7 May 1997
From: Cindy Selfe
Subject: FYI: full text of the questions posed to the TicToc consultants

TIC-TOCCERS—

I have produced some responses to questions 1-3, but I think #4 is also important—so, I'll try that now.

I think the issues surrounding on-line education/distance education are only going to continue to grow in complexity over the next five years. And while there are a number of perspectives to take on these issues, I'll try one l scenario/explanation out on you to see what you think.

Although we all like to think that computers hold the potential for great and productive change, we sometimes forget how hard such change is to enact. The tendential forces of technology as a social formation, in fact, work against change in powerful ways. Let's take distance education as a case in point.

First, state and national legislators—motivated by constituents' increasing calls for educational equity, by the national movement for educational access and goal achievement, by the increasingly competitive global markets that put American products at a disadvantage, by shrinking welfare rolls, by business and industry partners demanding more innovative delivery of educational programs for the workplace—put increasing pressures on college and university administrators to make use of distance and on-line education to serve more citizens with the product of the state educational system.

Next, university administrators—facing the realities of shrinking educational dollars, recognizing the impact that reduced state and federal funding would have on their universities, and understanding the potential of untapped markets (i.e., tuition dollars) that distance/online education could make available to them, direct departments and faculty to design and create distance ed/online courses and instructional materials to meet the specific needs of non-traditional groups of students (e.g., adults in corporate and business settings, home-bound seniors, high-schools seniors bound for college, disabled citizens, citizens tied to a geographic locale by their jobs, students from other countries who cannot emigrate to attend an American school). The institution accomplishes this effort at a relatively low cost per hour of education—often employing part-time faculty, graduate students, staff, and women to design and teach distance ed/on-line courses.

In this way, the university/college/educational system aligns itself

unconsciously with the tremendous growth and tendential force of multinational capitalism (Jameson, 1991) as a social formation. The expanding university, grown hungry and thirsty for capital, seeks "the endless production and proliferation of new groups and ethnicities of all kinds" (p. 325). It seeks to identify endless sources of new microgroups to whom it can market its educational product—masking or naturalizing its efforts by talking about the need to serve increasingly diverse populations of students, the need to serve an increasingly pluralistic society, or the need to attend to the global markets who do not have access to a first-class education. The multiplication of these "new groups and neoethnicities of all kinds" (p. 325) provides the source for new tuition dollars and counterbalances a shrinking of revenues from the state.

Well-meaning university faculty—who believe in the power of technology to promote effective social change—recognize the pressures introduced by the erosion of tenure as a security system, the shrinking academic budget, increasing legislative accountability efforts, the increasing tentativeness of part-time work, among other forces—oblige and create on-line instruction. Sometimes these teachers forget the colonizing nature of on-line educational efforts when they are globally enacted, the violence that literacy efforts can enact on non-dominant groups within our own country (Stuckey, 1991), and the exploitation of low-paid educational workers.

In this explanation scenario, a huge tendential force is created by the alignment of various social formations (multinational capitalism-technology- education-classism-racism-etc.) along a single and complex axis.

Given this explanation, my interest is in identifying ways in which teachers, students, administrators, staff, etc. can enact productive social action/tactics/strategies within electronically supported educational environments. I want to study how we can use computer technology to resist (if even only momentarily, fragmentarily, and partially) the tendential forces that motivate distance-ed/on-line teaching as described above. To help me in this kind of thinking, I turn to the social theorists who provide what I consider to be a relatively optimistic view of social agency—de Certeau, Giddens, Bordieu, LaClau and Mouffe—folks who recognize that humans shape the social situations in which they function and are in turn shaped by these systems, who recognize that we all have practical and discursive means of changing our social and cultural environments if we can understand them from a critical perspective.

How we enact such perspectives in the electronic classroom, however, in particular locales, in specific assignments, in classroom activities, in our relations with students and administrators and technology continues to be a challenge, and one that we all need to work on.

Selfe out, for now.
Cindy

Date: Saturday, 26 April 1997
From: Randy Bass
Subject: Recommendations #4

Hi all:

I'd like to make some initial response to the TICTOC recommendations. I suppose my comments address #4) "From a more general perspective, what problems, issues, directions should we be most attentive to as we move more towards 'Teaching in Cyberspace Through Online Courses?'" I am still mulling over the specific scenarios. These issues would pertain to all of them.

Three issues to be attentive to (to which to be attentive?):

1. Two Main Parameters: Accountability and Interactivity

It seems to me that there are two primary parameters for determining the value of a student's participation in an online course (as there is for a f2f course): (1) accountability for the "content" of the course, and (2) interactivity with instructors and peers throughout the course. These two factors are always present in different proportions in f2f courses in higher ed. And indeed in a large lecture course, for example, where students rarely interact with each other or the professor, there is "high accountability" for content and "low interactivity." Other courses may be high in both; some courses have high interactivity, but where accountability for the material is intimately tied up with engagement in the course in general, and difficult to separate as "content." As I listen to faculty around the country try to decide how to design an online course, or how to measure its worth for value as a credit class, it seems to me that it always comes down to reproducing these two factors—accountability and interactivity—in an online setting. Thus, at the level both of curriculum design and professional reward (e.g., calculation of faculty load) these two parameters seem key.

2. Recognizing that Different Knowledge Is Being Made in Online Courses

In light of the above, then, it seems to me fundamental to begin with the premise that it is impossible to map a f2f course into cyberspace so that it is the same course. This may seem a truism, and certainly underlies much of what has been stated in these discussions. Yet, I hear so often from faculty that they are trying to figure out how to teach their XX course AS an online course, as if it were like converting a file from WP 5.1 to MS WORD 6.0. So, I would recommend that any

response or guidelines include in it the fundamental premise that online courses will not (and cannot) be the equivalents of f2f courses. That is not a hidden judgement about worth one way or the other. Just the premise that they will be fundamentally different. Beginning with that assumption allows you to maintain a space where traditional courses or courses with high practitioner contact are not compared to online courses in terms of productivity and cost-benefit as if they were equivalent entities.

3. Intellectual Property/Community Property: Two Trains on the Same Track

This is more abstract. I plan specifically to expand on this at the May symposium. I think there is a painful collision coming for higher education in the form of conflict between intellectual property issues surrounding "who owns what in a technology rich course" and community property values that underlie most of our professional ethics and spirit regarding sharing of materials and curriculum. No faculty should engage in online courses of any kind without a full intellectual property agreement about ownership of materials (and of course there is much to say about what those agreements should look like); but I think it is critical that these agreements go forward with an eye toward preserving, not eroding, community property values.

That's all for now.
Randy

Date: Thursday, 15 May 1997
From: Gian Pagnucci
Subject: Response to Randy Bass

Here's my personal (quirky?) reading/interpretation of Randy Bass's work:

Recommendations:

1. Accountability a. The amount a course is driven by content goals varies both online and in traditional formats.

2. Interactivity b. Teacher/student interaction varies in courses both online and in traditional formats.

3. Impacts a. Interactivity and accountability are often interrelated. b. Both factors effect curriculum design. c. Both factors effect professional rewards such as faculty load. d. These factors will be used to judge/measure teaching in cyberspace.

4. Knowledge creation a. Online courses are not simple conversions of traditional courses. b. New technologies create new teaching/knowledge forms. c. Online courses shouldn't be judged by offline

standards

5. Intellectual Property a. Ownership is hard to determine in online courses. b. Loss of property/idea ownership will be threatening/problematic for some people c. Academic professionalism has always valued community sharing

Gian

Date: Thursday, 15 May 1997
From: Randy Bass
Subject: Recommendations #1 and #2

["Late, with flesh." In the spirit of recursion, rather than timeliness, I'm sending a fleshed out version of my recommendations in two pieces. RBass.]

Listening in Two Registers (Response to Questions #1)

About three hours before my father died, he was taken to Intensive Care for an ultra sound of his heart. This was day 33 for him in the hospital, where he had been demonstrating the mathematical principle, day by day, that no matter how little of something you have (in his case life/health) you could always divide it in half. After the ultra sound, the doctor (who had little poetry about him) approached my mother and me. My mother said, "doctor, what do you see?"

"What I see," he said, "is a really big heart." And for a moment, I just nodded agreeably, assuming he was talking about my father's endurance and bravery. Of course, the doctor went on to describe the condition of my father's "big" (i.e. enlarged) heart, expanding too far on the "out beat" to fully come back on the "in beat." Having a "big heart" was a very bad thing indeed. Fatal in fact.

That incident has stayed with me because nothing has ever more vividly brought home what it means to listen and speak in more than one register. What a powerful and meaningful dual status "a really big heart" held in that conversation. And how possible (and necessary) it was to understand its meaning in both registers.

Listening and speaking in more than one register is what English disciplinarians (and other culture people) do. And I have been struck reading through the last wave of TICTOC postings at the two (maybe more) kinds of discourse we're speculating about. I have spent a good deal of time in the last three years travelling around the country working with faculty on incorporating information technologies into their teaching (especially their teaching of culture and history). I learned the hard way that if I spoke only in the register characterized by paradigm shifts and postdisciplinarity (indeed, post-anything), all I encountered

was resistance. Naturally, then, taking a pro-active role is all important. And I think it is imperative that it go on with (as David Downing and Jim Sosnoski have dubbed it) "multivalent practices," encouraging both disciplinary practices as well as acknowledging those who wish to continue disciplinary work in familiar channels, but still want to have access to electronic resources. Thinking about Greg Ulmer's story of going to college at the University of Montana and not knowing that "the humanities constituted a domain of disciplinary knowledge": How does the student's "pre-disciplinary" condition determine our possible postdisciplinary practices? Or are students already conditioned (and disciplined) in some form? The challenge before us is not just multivalent practices for faculty, but students as well. I have found many of my students to be conservative on many counts including their interest in technology in the humanities. I've learned (the very hard way) I have to listen and speak in more than one register for them too. I appreciate Cindy Selfe's notion that electronic environments need to "support different kinds of literacies." It will be difficult but necessary to operate in the two registers of pragmatics (getting courses to place-bound constituents) and rhetorics (using electronic environments only when appropriate to particular literacies) at the same time.

So, pro-active and multivalent. And (adding my voice to the chorus) Ecological. My new motto about technology, teaching, and learning is: *Everything additive is reconstructive.* That's not what we're led to believe, saturated as we are with media images and bureaucratic hype about information technology, with what Stuart Mualthrop calls the "game of perfect information." The ecological metaphor is not about perfect information. It is not about "frontiers" (vacant space to be written on).

Technological change is neither additive nor substractive. It is ecological. I mean "ecological" in the same sense as the word is used by environmental scientists. One significant change generates total change...New technologies alter the structure of our interests: the things we think about. They alter the character of our symbols: the things we think with. And they alter the nature of our community: the arena in which thoughts develop...For something has happened in America that is strange and dangerous, and there is only a dull and even stupid awareness of what it is—in part because it has no name. I call it Technopoly. (Postman-"Technopoly")

The virtual intelligence we must learn how to construct into a discourse network in the electronic prosthesis will take our specialized problems and give us back instructions for ecological solutions. (Ulmer-TICTOC).

Two registers.

There are many implications in the ecological view for the proactivity of the UIC English department in online initiatives. Many of which

are being covered admirably in the Conversations. I will focus on three: (1) Thinking beyond courses to "courses of study"; (2) Treating courses as "research problems"; (3) Focusing on the coming conflicts between teaching as "community property" and teaching as "intellectual property."

Beyond Courses to "Courses of Study" (Response to #2)

It has occurred to me in the last few years (as I lurched toward tenure, especially) that higher education is particularly inhospitable to pedagogical innovation. This may seem obvious to most people, but it was a revelation to me. I guess I was fooled by its dedication to innovation in research and intellectualism. But for teaching, pedagogy, professional work, higher education is inhospitable (perhaps at times hostile) to innovation. There are lots of reasons for this that we all feel acutely: Time. Workload. The tradition of degrading work in teaching as fulfillment of responsibility not advancement of knowledge or field. (And hence little reward structure for pedagogical or curricular innovation.) I've begun asking people at various institutions I visit if there are any institutionalized incentives "to take pedagogical risks"? I have not gotten too many responses. So, my first recommendation, which echoes others, regarding "e-works" and the English Department's participation in the Online Initiative, is that it must work wholeheartedly to create an environment (professional and electronic) where it is safe to take creative risks. Risk and innovation should be collectivized; the responsibility for this is three-fold. The institution has responsibility, the department has responsibility, and the individual has responsibility to support, reward, and be accountable for creative risks in teaching and professional work.

The collectivization of responsibility for risk points at one more major factor in the inhospitability to innovation in teaching, especially with technology: the prevailing culture of autonomy. This bears on my recommendations for #2 (E-Works) and #3 (templates/scenarios). Most of the discourse in the online initiative, TICTOC conversations, and even to some extent in the e-works descriptions, is oriented toward single courses. But, as Lee Shulman points out, courses, in addition to having "natural histories" and "anatomies," also have an "ecologies" (there's that word again):

> The ecological examination of the course, where it fits in the curriculum of the major, where it fits in the curriculum of the minor, and most important of all for many of our areas, where it fits into the education of students who are neither majoring nor minoring in our area, but are taking our course perhaps as part of a liberal education, looks at a course as part of a larger system of instruction and learning. ("Course Anatomy," 13-14)

How can the UIC English department, in its electronic initiatives focus not only on courses but "courses of study"? "Course of study" has both a latitude and longitude. That is, this means that courses have ecologies that are both institutional and inter-institutional. The COLLAB dimension of e-works seems to address the inter-institutional dimension in preliminary way, if only in terms of pairings of courses. There is a broader inter-institutional dimension of "shared curriculum" that goes beyond pairings of courses to the question of where "whole curricula" will be located? As English and cultural studies continues to expand, divide, subdivide, combine, recombine, blurring genres and hybridizing knowledge, do we go on pretending that every institution's curriculum is complete? Whole? Coherent? To what extent shall a course of study cross institutional lines? Will smaller schools and colleges in the UIC "broadcast area" receive their curriculum from UIC or share in it? To what extent will new media enable a fundamental change in the alignment between a single institution's curriculum and the collective "imaginary" of the field? These are some of the latitudinal (or synchronic) questions surrounding the idea of a "course of study".

What about the longitudinal or diachronic dimensions of a "course of study" for a particular student? With all the talk about electronic courses and teaching, there has been substantially less talk in TICTOC about how electronic media can reshape a student's "course of study," whether an English major or something else. Of all the conversations I've heard on campuses around the country about piloting "online courses" I can't think of a single instance where that discussion had a departmental or programmatic basis (except of course TICTOC) where faculty creating online courses were not only trying to decide how to offer viable online courses but also how, for example, a whole set of online courses would constitute a "course of study" or how students might build a particular kind of knowledge "across several courses," and where that accumulation (or employment) was one of the shaping factors in mapping a range of literacies and pedagogies to electronic space. That seems to me a worthy and necessary challenge for UIC.

To be continued . . .

Randy

Date: Thursday, 15 May 1997
From: Randy Bass
Subject: Recommendations #3 and #4

Teaching as Community Property (Response to #3)

The questions surrounding "courses of study" also bear on the sce-

narios and templates proposed for the English department's participation in the online initiative. Clearly the scenarios offer a range of plausible possibilities, and represent an array of surfaces and depths. And perhaps represent a fair sampling of Claudine Keenan's three models (Traditional, Transitional, and Distance Learning.) One of the dimensions that seems missing to me is some modeling or reflection on constellations of courses, or how virtual courses might not only transcend the boundaries of the classroom, time, and space, but possibly also the traditional boundaries of the episodic and discrete course as well.

The ecology of courses as part both of an institutional context and an inter-institutional (and thus disciplinary) context brings me to the issue of the status of teaching within the academy, and particularly its status as "community property."

The application of the term "community property" to teaching is not mine, of course, but Lee Shulman's (President Designate of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching). Seeing teaching as community property means a great deal more in his usage than sharing curricula, curricular materials, or teaching strategies. As he puts it:

> I now believe that the reason teaching is not more valued in the academy is because the way we treat teaching, removes it from the community of scholars. (Shulman, 1993).

To take teaching seriously it must be treated as community property in the same way as "scholarship". Treating teaching as community property (i.e. as a kind of scholarly work) would require, according to Pat Hutchings (who collaborates in the AAHE Teaching Initiative with Lee Shulman):

(1) to see teaching as a process of ongoing inquiry and reflection;

(2) to see it in the context of collegial exchange and publicness;

(3) to treat it so that faculty take professional responsibility for the quality of their work as teachers. (And as I've said above, that responsibility extends departmentally and institutionally as well.)

These criteria all point to the creation of an institutional and professional discourse surrounding teaching that is generally absent, and bear on the contours of participation in online curricula. "Until we find ways," says Shulman, "of publicly displaying, examining, archiving, and referencing teaching as a form scholarship and investigation, it will never serve us as scholars in the ways our research publications do." And he continues (this is the last thing I'll quote here):

The archival functions of research scaffold our frailties of memory, and we need something comparable for the scholarship of teaching. Moreover, intellectual communities form around collections of text—or in our days probably hypertext: ways of archiving, storing, and preserv-

ing understanding and its criticisms. A community of teachers needs collections of text that are equally substantial around which the community can be organized, although "text" will likely include far more than the written word alone. (Shulman, "Course Anatomy," 5).

This then points to my lone, general suggestion regarding the scenarios. That they not be considered "templates" but "hypotheses." That instead (or in addition to) the suggestion made elsewhere for a "task force" to oversee the evaluation and implementation of the pilot courses, that the courses themselves be seen as propositions that particular needs might be met through a particular curricular and pedagogical structure. Rather than merely seeing that a task force monitor the pilots, think of their instructors as a community of researchers and establish a set of procedures and structures by which their individual and collaborative research can be shared. (There are a variety of ways that this research can be brought forward—for example, the course monograph or course portfolio) but more generally, the couching of pilot courses in the discourse of research problems (i.e. treating courses as investigations, and ultimately, through reflection, as community property) implies several things that will go far in both reinforcing the important of the UIC experiments and creating an environment that is safe(r) for taking creative risks. Framing the scenarios as hypotheses could mean: that each course iteration (i.e. each semester it offered) is part of a multi-semester development process, where data and knowledge is being reflected upon, and success is counted only over time; that each course be articulated as an intellectual (pedagogical, methodological) problem, and thus grounded in a particular match of literacies and technologies; that the course materials, the course execution, and (perhaps) the faculty member's reflective product on that course are all subject to peer review (formative and summative), in such a way that both improves the quality of the courses and validates it as part of a community discourse; that among other dimensions, each course's ecological contexts would become part of an ongoing discourse emergent from their implementation.

Much of the discussion on TICTOC has invoked the hope that work in electronic environments will somehow catalyze or foster broad changes in the way institutions work. Perhaps recasting participation in the online initiative in this way will help (a tiny bit) foster a culture of reflection about teaching that is counter to established institutional prejudices.

Intellectual Property/Community Property: Marriage or Divorce? (Response to #4)

I spent about six months last year believing something that I no longer believe. That the national movement for making teaching com-

munity property (the peer review of teaching, teaching portfolio, classroom assessment movements, to name a few) were all going to be terrifically and unequivocally advanced by new media.

New media, like the World Wide Web, and other hypermedia environments (not to mention distance learning technologies) seemed perfectly suited to make visible the nuance and substance of teaching knowledge that had pretty much remained a private experience except on those invasive occasions when your peers reviewed you, those exceptional occasions when you were recognized for excellence, or those narrow opportunities to publish pedagogical materials in journals or textbooks.

Faculty work with new media seemed ideally suited to promote the dimensions of teaching knowledge that were both "local" and "cosmopolitan" (as Gene Rice puts it). All teaching knowledge is both and has ramifications in the local context and for the broader field, but the latter were usually lost. Hence, being more local than cosmopolitan, teaching is generally degraded in the faculty reward process. Faculty spend most of their time doing local work and gain most of their reward from work recognized as cosmopolitan. If one of the obstacles to taking teaching seriously was that it wasn't "portable" then worldwide network technologies, or multimedia programs, seemed poised to change all that. The most important aspect of making teaching community property was to make it visible, and with new media it was more visible than ever.

It then occurred to me that this was only half the story. The other half belonged not to community property but intellectual property. I started hearing stories (as we all have) about faculty who developed distance learning or asynchronous materials only to learn that those materials (what were coterminous with their teaching in real time) do not belong to them, but to the institution. Institutions were using video tapes, for example, of faculty lectures made by faculty no longer at institutions. On the other side, there are stories of faculty who are being paid significant amounts of money to convert their courses to large-scale distance learning courses, or franchised courses, while teaching side by side with other faculty who are reaching many fewer students and making substantially less money (but working as many hours). These are familiar scenarios.

The question is: can we treat teaching as both community property AND intellectual property? Or will the emphasis on the one damage the other? Will it be possible to demand a culture of reflection about a process that is being simultaneously negotiated and remunerated as a marketable product? Or, an even more plausible scenario, will the efforts (that Mick Doherty and others so articulately ask for) to take seriously electronic work and publications be won in the name of "finished products" at the expense of process-oriented and collaborative work in

the identical media?

These are big questions that I can't answer, except to take refuge in the injunction that we must speak, listen, and develop in both registers. That is, we need to fully dedicate ourselves to creating a culture of reflective development where we take teaching seriously as community property, while recognizing the need to develop fully executed and protective intellectual property agreements and policies. Such agreements ought not only protect the rights of ownership and portability for faculty (as well as students and graduate students) but formalize, in the language of contracts, some of the process-oriented values that characterize community property orientation.

What might this mean?

- stipulating the use and ownership of materials in all course scenarios, as well as spelling out the life of materials beyond the courses taught by the developing instructor;
- training faculty how to do an intellectual property "audit" in a technology-rich course;
- defining certain online courses as more than content and materials, and possibly stipulating contractually, where labor intensive multimedia/hypermedia materials are being created, that such materials can only be used in courses with a certain level of "interactivity";
- protecting faculty rights to withdraw and revise materials in intellectual property agreements where courses are being institutionalized or even franchised.

Community property. Intellectual property. It will be a challenge to protect both. I commend UIC for taking the initiative to try.

Randy

Date: Saturday, 3 May 1997
From: Mick Doherty
Subject: Late & URLy Recommendations

TicTockers,

Sorry I didn't post this last night; I decided to incorporate a little of what Jan and Cynthia wrote and posted. The essay-cum-manifesto-cum- rant-cum-website-cum-recommendations I have put together is entitled, with tongue only partially in cheek (and never in check) "What's In It For Me? Tic-Toc Goes the Tenure Clock." The final third of it is an invitation to collaboration to all of you, and I hope you'll take me up on the challenge I post. It could be fun. Enjoy (or at least endure): http://www.rpi.edu/~doherm/tictoc/

Have a good Saturday morning . . . see everyone in just two weeks!

Mick

Date: May 2, 1997
From: Mick Dougherty
Subject: TicToc Recommendations

I must admit ... I'm both pleased and bemused to be speaking last at the TicToc Symposium. While I could never convince myself that batting ninth was a privilege when I was 12 and playing Little League, there is something to be said for "having the last word" at a conference. Of course, Joe Amato and Tom Bestul will actually have the last word, as respondents to these recommendations, so let me preface my comments by admitting how much I enjoy and admire their work.

What's In It For Me? Tic-Toc Goes the Tenure Clock

Of course, the penalty for being the last presenter on the Saturday of a conference or colloquium —and we've all been there — is that the audience (or what remains of it) is very much in "When does the party start?" mode, and the major goal of the presentation is usually to finish early. Unless the topic is of particular interest to those in attendance — unless they have a stake in the task at hand —then participation and reaction is guaranteed to be minimal.

Of course, we all have a stake in what's been discussed this week — we wouldn't be here if, individually and collectively, we were not commited to furthering the cause of electronic scholarship and online pedagogy. The question I ask in this final presentation, then, is "What's in it for us?"

A selfish outlook? Hardly. Consider a recent "Of Note on the Net" in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*:

> Do promotion and tenure committees take kindly to Internet savvy, regarding it as a credential like any other? Or do they dismiss it as little more than a result of playing with technology? ... Making the system of academic appointment and promotion more technology-friendly [may] entail rethinking traditional tenure policies ... Many doubt whether the current categories of qualification — which at most institutions are research, teaching, and service — can be applied fairly to what they do ...
>
> For the [online scholars], the issue ultimately comes down to asking which is the more-effective approach: trying to work within a dated but respected system, or taking advantage of the changing academic environment and starting over? (Lisa Guernsey,

29 April 1997)

I would posit that we — the participants in the TicToc initiative and many of our closest colleagues— are facing precisely the above question as we dedicate our time to considering scenarios, making recommendations, and (essentially) speculating about how to reconfigure the very academy to which we currently belong. This recommendation — I suppose some of you will think of it as a manifesto, or in internet terminology, an extended rant — addresses the nebulous Question #4 posed to the TicToc collective:

> From a more general perspective, what problems, issues,directions should we be most attentive to as we move more towards "Teaching in Cyberspace Through Online Courses?" What effects will these new technologies have on our working conditions and teaching practices in English studies? What specific kinds of actions should we take to resist the negative effects and enhance the positive?

Do the stated plans of "E-works" address the issues of recognition, academic credit, tenure, promotion, course releases and credit for graduate students involved in design, implementation and teaching? Let's see ...

IV. SUPPORT FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A "UI-OnLine Institute" will:

> maintain a demonstration site on the web of courseware tools available to UI faculty, with both commercial packages and UI-faculty-developed applications provide conferences and workshops to assist faculty in developing on-line courses or course supplements provide grant funds to faculty, departments and colleges for program development assist intercampus initiatives in program development support research on the effectiveness of on-line instruction assist in the evaluation of UI-OnLine programs and initiatives oversee university-level attention to issues concerning faculty such as ownership of courseware, workload, and recognition. (From *UI-OnLine: The Realization of the 21st Century Land-Grant University)*

The language in this excerpt begins to hint at the issues involved; there is mention of "research support" and "ownership" of courseware ... the very last line manages to blurt out that some attention must be paid to workload and recognition. I will be quite happy if my contribution to this symposium is simply to point out that we may need to forefront these ideas a bit more. I am confident that UIC can be a leader in this field; a department which allows — and I hate that I have to even engage that verb — the pursuit of a hypertextual dissertation such as the

magnificent work Keith Dorwick is doing is clearly ready to be an example for other universities and their anxious-but-hesitant administrators.

I also hear echoes of these issues in the posts of my TicTic colleagues; Joe Amato succinctly captured one flavor of the issue(s), in writing:

> ... my impulse in viewing online technologies is that, even as i permit mself a good deal of skepticism regarding the more emancipatory claims emerging side-by-side with these technologies, the potential exists for doing something different under the auspices of english studies... the potential exists, that is, for actually changing english studies into a more hospitable, more useful, more vital, less hierarchical, more participatory field of endeavor, all told...
>
> ... if — and only if! — you find yourself with me on [the above], why then your various impulses, whether teaching or publication or service or administration, with online technologies will be to ask—-not how can i do online what i'm doing over there, f2f—-but how can i do what i'm doing differently, how will online technologies help me to do it better... that is, the emergence of said online realities will likely be the cause of you entirely rethinking what you're about ("Re: Recommendations #1" 27 April 1997)

Amato is clearly echoing the half of the Chronicle author's bifurcation which suggests the possibility of "taking advantage of the changing academic environment and starting over." Cynthia Haynes and Jan Holmevik seem to agree, stating outright,

> ... as we come to new and improved methods of teaching, the 'value' of online education also works to push the limits of how academia 'values' electronic scholarship and the implications this has for tenure and promotion. In line with Joe's posts, going online has to also be about rethinking 'institutionality', rather than about preserving the institution in order to further line the pockets of those who have the most at stake in preserving the institution." ("TicToc Recommendations," 2 May).

And yet we are working within an administrative imperative, both at UIC and elsewhere, which is intended not to subvert the dominant paradigm, or even invert it, but simply (as I see it) convert it to a different medium.

I don't think we should allow ourselves to be "conned."

If it seems my phraseology is simple wordplay, I protest — to play with words can be a serious matter indeed. Much of my own approach to scholarship is embedded in the investigation of how we name what we are doing, and why that matters. Greg Ulmer has called it — or at least one/his version of this approach — "heuretics," and as Ulmer has been a part of this conversation, I will defer to his own description of the rhetorical device, that "Heuretics is a way to generate insights, but is not itself an insight," ("consultation/advising" 28 April), and more importantly, of his/our role in this symposium: "My advising is couched in the mode of a stochastic process (a system which produces a sequence of symbols according to certain probabilities), or rather the special case known as the Markoff chain (the probabilities depend on the previous events)" ("2nd Advisory" 29 April).

Interstitial:

I wondered, at the beginning of this essay (and it is the first linear essay I have written in three years) why I might be last in the order of presentation. As I consider the "name" of this symposium — TicToc — which implies clocks — which suggests time — I recall that the Greek term for linear "time" is "chronos," and admit that it is only in that sense of the word that I am "last."

In fact, the other Greek term for "time," which I have embraced in my scholarship, is "kairos" — which means, more or less, "the present occasion," or "situational context." In that sense, and in any hypertextual-postmodern sense, my place on the program is incidental; thus my relation to the term "kairos" makes my place a marvelous convergence. Or, that is what I am telling myself.

Eric Charles White has suggested that "kairos" might more precisely be defined as "a radical principle of occasionality which implies a conception of the production of meaning in language as a process of continuous adjustment to and creation of the present occasion." I believe this echoes, simultaneously, Amato's

"impulses," Ulmer's "heuretics"
and my own focus on naming what
we do.

The issues at hand are reiterated throughout our own online discussion, and should be shouted aloud again in our face-to-face meetings, and later in our print publication(s). For instance, when David Downing writes that he hopes "we can agree that teaching/research in cyberspace will have pretty far-reaching effects on academic life in general, [so] it would be best to conceive of our work as building a culture rather than just disseminating more knowledge quicker via modems and computers ("Recommendations #1," 25 April), what do we answer? Do we agree? If we do, should we continue to work within the hierarchical academic ivory-tower world — some might argue that is what we are doing here at this symposium — or do we band together to start afresh, and build Crump's "interversity" ?

When Randy Bass argues that "there is a painful collision coming for higher education in the form of conflict between intellectual property issues surrounding 'who owns what in a technology rich course' and community property values that underlie most of our professional ethics and spirit regarding sharing of materials and curriculum," we can hardly disagree — the proof of this is being argued in the popular media as well as in the academic press. But when he adds the caveat, "No faculty should engage in online courses of any kind without a full intellectual property agreement about ownership of materials" ("Recommendation #4" 26 April), how are we to respond? I am not a faculty member; I do not own the space where I have designed and taught web-based courses. As a graduate student, can I demand an intellectual property agreement before signing off on my TA? As a (possibly) future tenure-track junior faculty member, when I design and claim ownership of these spaces, can I step into a review board meeting and expect credit not just for the teaching, but for the time spent designing the space? Couldn't we look at the activity of teaching a web-based course as actually fulfilling all three "topoi" of academic review?

Teaching: well, enough said. We are teaching the class; perhaps not as teaching has always been envisioned, but this part is not a tough sell;

Research/Publication: we are building public spaces — syllawebs and Hypernews fora,and listserves; and "editing" class publications, student work that goes through rigorous peer review (literally) and enters into the public domain;

Service: inevitably we are taking care of the physical lab space, tending to the computers,interacting for hours with contacts at Academic computing, teaching our colleagues what it means to "ftp," and through it all presenting work to the World (Wide Web) on behalf of the university or institution at which we are teaching.

Which is it? Or is it all of them? The rules are changing ... and perhaps in trying to fit the tasks at hand into these traditional cookie-cutter categories, I am trapping myself within the second half ofthe *Chronicle* author's bifurcation — "trying to work within a dated but respected system." Yet, if we want tenure — and that is another argument entirely, one I will respectfully leave to Eric Crump who makes it better than I do — then we must work within the rules. Or, as suggested above — change them.

Interstitial:

Many sites have already begun to examine this process of change:

Professional Recognition: Technology in the Humanities maintained by Mick Doherty on behalf of C-Fest;

New Technologies, New Environments, New Scholarship, and the Academic Work Value System maintained by Eric Crump in Rhetnet;

NCTE/ITC/7C Project on Professional Recognition maintained by Traci Gardner;

Evaluating Computer-Related Work in the Modern Languages (MLA Guidelines);

The Kairos 2.1 Coverweb on Tenure, Promotion & Technology coordinated by Douglas Eyman;

Pre/Text: Electra(Lite) 1.1A — Critical Polylogue on E-Publishing coordinated by Cynthia Haynes and Victor Vitanza;

Shooting Hoops: A Draft Essay Addressing T/P and Technology by Mick Doherty in Rhetnet;

"Scholars Meet on Line to Draft Internet-Friendly Promotion Standards" Unofficial mirror site of article in Chronicle of Higher Education.

So what does this all have to do with the TicToc symposium and my (heretofore) rather murky recommendations? Do we play the game? Change the rules? Leave the game altogether?

Definitely none of the above. As Downing has noted,

> " in actual practice, our lives are typically not so dualistic as our terminology leads us to believe ... Which means it's important to know

> when opportunities arise, and the UI Online initiative and eworks will hopefully be one such place to inaugurate some institutional changes that would not otherwise happen." In the same post, but in a slightly different context, Downing added, "We might begin by simply naming some of the things we might want for the future of English studies" ("Re: recommendation #1" 29 April).

Precisely.

What I am proposing — even challenging — the collected wit(s) of TicToc to undertake is the composition of a brief, familiar-sounding document that will allow for a discussion of "the new" and "the possible" within "the rules" of "the establishment." I have taken to calling this "attempt at translation" the "Gardner/Rickly method" based on the excellent work of Traci Gardner and Becky Rickly on behalf of NCTE and CCCC.

What do I mean by "familiar-sounding?" It is the process chronicled by McLuhan and Huxley, among others, of using words to identify and simultaneously challenge the "commonplaces" of culture(s). We use old names to help us think about new ideas ("horseless carriage" and "talking pictures" points out McLuhan; I would add "electronic mail" and "information highway" among many others). We also try to sloganize our world, to make it easier to understand; McLuhan gave us "the medium is the message" and today we are inundated by similar bumper-sticker invocations from Madison Avenue that have little or nothing to do with the product ("Just Do It" is as good an example as any).

A year ago, I attempted to demonstrate how this might work within the realm of "technorhetoric" (another familiar-sounding neologism, coined by the aforementioned Eric Crump) by borrowing the often-quoted "Hacker Ethic" and morphing it into a statement about pedagogy:

The Hacker Ethic

> Access to computers — and anything which might teach you something about the way the world works — should be unlimited and total. Always yield to the Hands-On Imperative! Allinformation should be free. Mistrust authority — promote Decentralization. Hackers should be judged by their hacking, not bogus criteria such as degrees, age, race or position. You can create art and beauty on a computer. Computers can change your life for the better. (Steven Levy, in *The Hackers: Heroes of the Computer Revolution*, 1984)

Became ...

The Technorhetorician's Ethic

> Access to computers — and anything which might teach us something about the way communication through the written word works — should be available to all students and teachers of writing. Always yield to the Hands-On Experience! The writing process should be collaborative and free of graded constraints. Mistrust traditional teacher-centered pedagogies — promote Decentralization. Teachers should be judged by their teaching, not bogus criteria such as research, publications, departmental service, and other tenure-track idols, while student writers should be judged by their writing, not bogus criteria like mechanics, usage, grammar, spelling or ability to conform to a pre-determined model of correctness. You can create art and beauty on a computer. Computers can change the writing classroom for the better. (Doherty, 1996)

While I believe you can probably hear echoes of many of this symposium's presenters in the above "Ethics" (both of them!), there is an inherent problem with this particular linguistic kludge. As a slogan, it really only "resonates" with those familiar with the earlier "Hacker" version — and at that, the term "hacker" has gained a good many unfortunate negative connotations, so that may not be the image we wish to conjure. If our audience is the wider, skeptical, broad base of academia — and I would argue that it must be! — then to engage this kind of lyrical resonance requires a more ...traditional ... starting point.

In a recent installment of the C-Fest series, this discussion also arose; the best effort by far at an ironic, yet emphatic statement is being drafted by Sandra Thompson at Texas Woman's University, who decided to highlight the point by taking the act of modeling all the way back to the United States Declaration of Independence:

When, in the course of scholarly pursuits, it becomes necessary for one discipline to reassess the current procedures which have devalued them by another, and to assume among the powers of academia the separate and equal contributions to which the laws of scholarship and of academia's excellence entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of the academic community requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the reevaluation.

> We hold these truths to be self evident: that all writing instructors are created equal; they they are endowed by NCTE with inherent and inalienable rights; that among these are tenure, promotion, and the pursuit of scholarship ... (Thompson 1997)

Her work is not yet available in full-text, but is clearly meant as a jarring, ironic sample of how to juxtapose the traditional with the postmodern when we are calling into question the very basis upon which decisions about recognition are made.

Following her lead — quite literally, considering the document I am about to "kludge" — I am hereby challenging the TicToc consortium (or whatever we are calling ourselves) to collaboratively draft an Electronic Pedagogist's Bill of Rights.

Below I've reproduced the Original Bill of Rights, and started the sacreligious process of re-authoring it to make it resonant with the task at hand for the TicToc project. The re-written parts — as if they wouldn't be obvious — are in RED ... if the juxtaposition of the original text with the occasional rewritten part is jarring ... well, good. Let's think hard about what's at stake. And let's make this statement — to borrow a phrase from Cynthia Haynes and Jan Holmevik — "dynamic, malleable, and eclectic" ("TicToc Recommendations," 2 May).

Consider this an invitation to offer your own "amendments," in language approximating the original, as I have done, or in some other way — whatever you believe will work. Offer your suggestions and complaints about what is already in place here. (Personally, I can't help but note the irony in how easy it was to shift the language of the Sixth Amendment from "criminal prosecution" to "tenure review.")

As I receive suggestions, I will add them to this site — and maybe if we work at it, we can have an agreed-upon TicToc Bill of RIghts for Electronic Pedagogists in place for the *Works and Days* edition ... though, if we undertake anything like the microlevel of argument our forebears in the original Continental Congress did, we might well be happy to settle on a title.

In a word (or two): Hack Away!

1. Academia shall make no law respecting the establishment a single computer platform, or prohibiting interconnections thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of students and faculty peaceably to assemble online, and to petition the administration for a redress of grievances.

2. A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.

3. No teacher of writing shall, in the name of "part of your teaching assignment," without the consent of said instructor, be expected to perform additional community service, to include lab upkeep and colleague training, without due recompense in the form of course releases,monetary remuneration, or other manner to be prescribed in advance by departmental policy.

4. The right of the online communities to be secure in their web pages, electronic mail, server space, and other electronic effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

5. No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

6. In all tenure and promotion review processes, the candidate shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of qualified peers from within the discipline of the candidate's specialty, wherein the candidate's scholarship has been utilized and critically valued, which discipline shall have been previously agreed upon by negotiation between the candidate and the administration, and to be provided with the opportunity to describe and defend materials less suited to the traditional categories for academic recognition in ways suited to the particular discipline in question; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have for his or her defense the benefit of electronic support from colleagues within the discipline but located at distant sites

7. In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury shall be otherwise re-examined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

8. Excessive bail shall not be required nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

9. The enumeration in the departmental Tenure/Promotion documents, of certain rights, responsibilities, and expectations, shall not be construed to deny or disparage the possibilities of new and different approaches to scholarship provided by electonic writing spaces.

10. The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.

Mick

Date: Thursday, 8 May 1997
From: Joe Amato
Subject: Response to M. Doherty

As I read through Mick's web piece, I found myself admiring his inventiveness & insight, as well as the sheer reach of his ambitions. Rather than provide my "sober & considered" response or some such, I thought it appropriate instead to take Mick's gesture—his new Bill of Rights—-at face value, & to offer this knee-jerk liberal "response", my attempt at summarizing the historical resonances I see at work here. In the process, I've had to make a recommendation or two myself in order to help situate the two questions I pose at my conclusion. My apologies, then, for deviating from what would seem to be the anticipated TicToc procedure, but I really see no other way.

[In what follows, I've opted to keep related references out of my discussion. So please—just post me if you're wondering what sources I have in mind.]

(1) Most of us are probably all too familiar with the ways in which the tradition of tenure, currently experiencing such stresses & strains, is caught up with the notion of "academic freedom". This latter term makes its way into English around the turn of the century, & there is continuing speculation as to its relation to the German term that would seem to prefigure it, "Lehrfreiheit". The groundwork for what we call academic freedom can probably be traced back, ultimately, to the medieval university—for example, the paradoxical, theologically-motivated censorship of certain of Aristotle's texts at the same time his work was being studied. Yet some have argued that our current notion of academic freedom is in fact directly linked to the increasing dissemination of scientific method during the Enlightenment.

(2) In broad contour, the Federalist period of US history—-our break from the enlightened state of literate Protestant souls struggling for salvation under monarchy from abroad—-not only forged regulating structures to permit taxation *with* representation, but implicitly linked

rising literacy rates with citizenship, with political self-determination in a young nation (even if power remained in the hands of landed white male gentry). Seen in this light, the Bill of Rights serves as the Lyrical Ballads of Democracy, initially through the sanction of a free press, controversial at the time because of its incompatibility with earlier notions of seditious libel. So if the Enlightenment drift away from religious dogma & toward free inquiry remained largely intact in European universities at the time of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, this same period of US history witnessed a young nation prospering from an increasingly secularized literacy (in New England esp.), economic prosperity (owing in part to slavery, & keeping slaves illiterate), & homegrown scientific rationale in the form of Yankee ingenuity & the like. I trust you can see where I'm headed here: the Industrial Revolution, the development of public education after the Civil War, the rise of the professions, the rise of the nation-state, the rise of Culture (with a capital C)—all of this "progressed," courtesy of our constitutional democracy, to permit for the eventual emergence of the modern research institution (derived from German & British models), an enterprise wedded both to technological progress & to distinctively humanist impulses (however in opposition these sometimes seem). And at the same time, one can begin to see the development, here & abroad, of what many would call the modern corporation.

(3) In short: if the old Bill of Rights was a government guarantor of individual liberties—in essence, the liberty of god-fearing literate citizens who refused to worship their governing body-it has nonetheless done little to check either the entrepreneurial spirit of self-made men & women or the incorporation of same, & has thus permitted for the unbridled expansion of scientific & technological rationality & means in support of the putatively democratic, if often imperialistic, urgings of its underwriting authority. In (pessimistic) retrospect, emancipation & individual liberty come at the expense of virtually endless corporate, transnational expansion, provoked by huge defense spending, & aided & abetted by the university —-now, as some argue, itself become a corporation. And what individual liberty is in *this* light, or academic freedom—-what the First Amendment itself may signify —-well, it's tough to say, no?

(4) And today—-call me a postmodernist, call me a posthumanist, please don't call me irresponsible—so many of us, inside & out, find our institutions of higher learning wanting. Academic freedom has itself come under often harsh public scrutiny as a result of concerted attempts to abolish tenure, encroaching privatization pressures, the *soi-disant* culture wars, sexual harassment legislation, general job market pressures, & so forth. This represents, from one perspective, a wholesale shift in global demographic-economic realities—-if you'll permit me this metaphor—-a global warming of our various & varied social

spheres, so many sectors of which are now more & more in day-to-day contact thanks in so many ways to global communications technologies. One might observe that, in the industrialized nations, it takes a *global* village now to raise a child—but what sort of child? And in so many places on the planet, distribution of technologies has surely not facilitated distribution of wealth.

(5) If scientific rationale once delivered a privileged elite from a textbook god, paving the way for current notions of academic freedom, it appears now to have run its course in such terms (esp. if you find yourself on a tech campus). It is not that science & technology are inherently suspect, it is simply that the realities they bring to life, under the auspices of Big Business, have saturated collective consciousness with hopes & fears that are as mystical to many as a seven-day creation. Hence the recent resurgence of creationism, superstition, etc. Science in itself (& contrary to a few of its practitioners) does not provide a secure public platform, theoretical or algorithmic, for addressing the political & ethical controversies looming before us. I am worried, too, that the more juridical or legislative we sound in our agenda & our discourses—no matter how accessible or popular—the more likely we may underestimate the actual politics of our situated practices. Which is to say, the more likely the politics of networking—which in no small way comprise a fraught merger of Earth & technological society—will remain largely illegible.

(6) A proclamation or declaration is not exactly a how-to. How *can* we manage in effect to neutralize, to a significant degree, technical-corporate rationality? One step we might take, or think about taking—& here I address "us" as a collective who are interested simply in rethinking our educational efforts to avail ourselves of online possibilities-is to turn our attention, *not* toward the workplace (which is happening), & *not* toward the educational institution (which has been happening), but toward our various arts communities. In my view, we need to work much harder to understand how the arts have right along provided alternative structures for creative endeavor, & we might even think about forging stronger alliances in this regard. Doing so is politically apropos in my view, given the stated Republican agenda to do away with the NEA this year, & it might be politically dangerous for this reason. But I must observe that it's a rare occasion, indeed, when I run into an academic professional in English studies who has any substantive knowledge, say, of the small presses, or of the mail arts movement. The contemporary work & working communities of visual artists, playwrights, actors, dancers, musicians, independent film-makers & poets are, even today, only marginally evident in current academic efforts to alter curricula or pedagogies through electronic or print technologies, & there would seem to be little educational policy in this regard that exhibits even a cursory awareness of such communities. Such strategic

neglect, in my view, is predicated perhaps on a mutual & tacit distrust—-organizations tend to distrust artistic anarchy, while artists tend to distrust any programmatic agenda. Liminal or no, however, so many artistic enterprises & alliances are, in digital terms, a mere click away from the more staid activities of academe. Hence I feel anything but an optimist in asserting that it is through the arts—-esp. the smaller regional communities & networks that permit the arts to flourish even without federal funding—-hat we might identify helpful measures of hope & activism, the unruly mix of technology & creativity requisite to invigorating our curricula, our classrooms, even our manifestos.

(7) & a final thought: this talk of reworking promotion & tenure review in order to find ways to reward postdisciplinary work, whether print or online, could itself stand to profit from more thorough exposure to arts communities, because the arts take their various public imprimaturs, to varying degrees, from their capacity to innovate, to experiment with new forms, & in many cases, to provoke fruitful collaborations. Though there are more conservative & less conservative artistic practices—-some artists define themselves primarily in terms of performance & entertainment, while others primarily in terms of breaking with convention—-the idea of the new, & of how to evaluate what is deemed so, is always at least latent in artistic processes and products, & in their reception. Moreover, within arts communities themselves, specifically "aesthetic" motivations are generally given their due alongside those that are ostensibly more "critically" savvy. So I would strongly urge English departments to cultivate relationships with the arts or design departments at their home institutions (if they exist), & again—-with local groups, & with network communities.

So what does all of this mean for the new Bill of Rights that Mick proposes? In my view—-& I feel obliged to say that I have mixed feelings regarding corporations as such, & in any case am opposed generally to current conglomerations—-I think Mick's gesture must somehow encourage a constructive break away from the dictates of technical-*qua*-corporate rationality—-the reduction of educational (and other) initiatives to profit motive and the like—*even as* it "frees" us to pursue our professionally rational investment in new learning technologies.

Hence my first question: How, specifically, might Mick's new Bill of Rights address what, in my view, the old Bill of Rights failed to address-subjugation of the individual (including professional autonomy) to technical-corporate rationality?

My second question is more tangential, assumes that my recommendation regarding the arts is desirable: How can Mick's new Bill of Rights help to move English studies further in the general direction of the arts?

Joe

Date: Wednesday, 14 May 1997
From: Eric Crump
Subject: Recommendations #1

1. How do you think our department should respond to the UI-Online initiative? Should we take a pro-active role and try to establish leadership? Should we take a wait and see attitude? Should we oppose being included in their plans?

I was tempted to just 'ditto' David & Cindy & others, but 'ditto' doesn't inspire much, does it. I'll try to do a bit more than that . . .

OK, I double-dog DARE you to be proactive—proactive publicly, politically, and (this may sound odd, but I'll explain) by looking very intently and intentionally the other way at times.

Yes, I know. The double-dog dare is a rhetorical tactic reserved for special circumstances. I think this is an appropriate situation. I'll explain:

We're in this unstable period. New technologies are creating the conditions in which cultural transformation *can* occur. We have opportunities (or seem to anyway) to exert a more substantial influence on the direction our culture takes, on what exactly it does with these new variables, and since education is our biz, that's one place we can apply whatever steering we can manage. But nothing is inevitable. Orthodoxic forces are wakened from their long, complacent slumber. There is in society strong conservative desire to adapt the new technologies to conventional cultural values and practices rather than adapting culture to new conditions, to migrate educational practices pretty much whole from the classroom to the net.

There are those who say we should look before we leap.

In bits of folk wisdom like that reside the glue of stability institutions depend on. If you believe it's necessary to stop and think before acting, to plan and cautiously move forward, chances are slim that you'll attempt anything radically new. Good sense, given time, usually overwhelms courage. I like to take a cue from Fred Kemp, who always inverts that old saying. So does Margaret Wheatley (in *Leadership and the New Science*) citing Karl Weick: "Acting should precede planning, he said, because is only through action and implementation that we create the environment. . . . In strategic planning, we act as though we are responding to a demand from the environment; but, in fact, Weick argued, we *create* the environment through our own strong intentions" (37).

Joe says (on 4/27):

> "the potential exists for doing something different under the auspices of english studies . . . the potential exists, that is, for actually changing english studies into a more hospitable, more useful, more vital, less hierarchical, more participatory field of endeavor . . ."

Another ditto. Another double-dog dare. Conventional practices (and attitudes and political structure) will pursue us online unless we make real efforts to diverge from them. Cyberspace is a potential waiting to be acted upon by our intentions. You want to maintain the hierarchic institution? disciplines and tenure and courses and semesters and grades? Cyberspace can probably be bent to that purpose. Want something different? something new? something that better fits our age? something that enacts our visions and gives a field of play to our imaginations? Leap.

But I don't mean to suggest "leap before you think," rather: leaping *is* thinking. The best planning is not prior to action. The best planning *is* action. I guess in practical terms, this means I'd suggest trying *al*l the scenarios on the table. Try all the scenarios you can think of, then think of some more.

Now seems like a good time to be proactive. Not only is the possibility of influence great, but the possibility of losing influence is as great. The net has lit a fire under society. It's being civilized (the net, that is). And as the merchants and bureaucrats set up shop in the wild west, they'll be interested in making the place look like home. I only glance at the various "virtual university" projects and "online courses" and "online degrees" and whatnot, but the impression I get is that nearly all are products of the current and conventional institutional paradigm. Some vie for accreditation (but I have yet to hear of an accrediting organization that's onto what's happening online and actively incorporating new practices and purposes into its assessment of institutions—maybe it's happening, but I'd be shocked). Some are borne of accredited institutions that are thus tethered to conventional practices and unable to venture very far from the familiar.

Now may also be a good time to be proactively negligent.

Er, maybe laissez faire would be a better term :) Joe mentions going underground to find unobserved space where innovation can thrive. If you have the right folks in your camp, that'll happen naturally. But what I mean by 'proactively laissez faire' is that administration intentionally creates the conditions in which explorer types will feel *invited* to go underground. Let the faculty, staff, and graduate teachers who seem to have commitment to change, a sense of vision, ability to take initiative, a sense of responsibility to larger visions and to students, go with their ideas. Turn them loose. Let them experiment without much if any oversight.

Sound dangerous? It is. It's also the kind of conditions that fertile ground for creativity and innovation.

I make this recommendation based on personal experience. My boss, aside from reminding me to keep her informed about any project that might catch the attention of her boss, trusts me to stay within the

broad mission of our unit and past that I've been free to roam. I was able to initiate the Online Writery, RhetNet, English Online, and Interversity precisely because none of them required proposals, applications, permissions, plans, or reports (and in cases where reports were expected I conveniently forgot ;) Those projects have all grown organically, with contributions and partnerships that have developed spontaneously and from various sources, not usually from within the university, even. They grow and branch. Projects spring from them and thrive or die. They are *fun*! (I can't stress too much the need to create an organizational culture that values and encourages people to have fun, no matter what their role).

Joe says (4/28):

> "how is tictoc going to be the site of such counter-establishment (sorry!) impulses if it becomes a matter of programmatic change? . . . isn't it built into the logic of programmatic change that things are, well, programmatic? . . . this is one of the paradoxical costs of legitimating online work . . . "

That's what I wonder, too. I'm not sure to what extent it's possible to intentionally create underground space associated with programmatic change. Or whether 'programmatic change' is a sort of oxymoron. It might be that all the best changes germinate underground and when they sprout, they are cultivated by programmatic hoes. That may be the way of things. But that's why I suggest some intentional looking-the-other-way. It seems to me an organization that nurtures the conditions of change may have an advantage. What it programmatizes is at least something born of its own soil. There is a relationship there between innovation and programming. They depend on each other while they oppose each other. Could be a productive opposition.

So back to the question: "To be or not to be (proactive)?" To make a difference, you have to be "in the game." This whole point could, I suppose, be reduced to 'do unto others before they do unto you,' a perversion of the golden rule, but one that informs so much of human interaction. If e-works isn't proactive, administration will be. Who's lead will administration follow? What other efforts are impressing the administrators? Do they like the looks of Western Governors University? Are they impressed with something MIT is doing? Are they watching closely what Bill Gates is up to? I'd rather be on the campus committees that are dealing with these issues and talking to the administrators who are plotting the course than hanging back, waiting to see what they cook up. I'd like to see the signs and omens myself.

I'd like to *make* the signs and omens, if at all possible.

Eric, The Official TicToc Laggard

Date: Wednesday, 14 May 1997
From: David Coogan
Subject: Response to Crump

Eric's recommendations, if I can boil them down to some kind of sticky syrup, are to be Janus-like, looking one way while looking the other way; to be proactive—trying any and all scenarios, without running them through the usual university paper-mill—and to be nonchalant, or maybe just passive-aggressive, or inactive: to be a bit ill-at-ease with "programmatic" changes that really don't step outside the system.

What can I possibly say to this? Crump doesn't say no to proactive positioning. Doesn't say yes to it, either! Fortunately for TICTOC, Crump has taken both positions and, in so doing, refused to reductive. Leaping ahead, the way he talks about, becomes a kind of thinking in practice, or what Althusser describes as "struggling in theory." This to me is the only viable way to be Janus-faced. One needs a larger sense of "why" or "so what?" before one takes up anyone else's initiatives.

My response, then, would be tactical: in order to maintain a vision, or to see clearly why we are bothering with things like online courses, credit hours, and so forth, we need to not only leap into the fray. We need spaces where we can step back from the fray and comment upon what we've done. "Comment" is really too weak of a word. What I really mean is something more along the lines of "critique" or "problematize."

Part of this problematizing could very well lead to the same conclusion that Eric has already reached: that there really is no need to replicate traditional course structures, accreditation, and so on, unless there is something about the course system that we are trying to defend here. (Like, oh, I don't know . . . our jobs?)

Another part of that problematizing could also lead to the conclusion that "content" or "writing" or "learning" must be re-imagined online. And while we could just say this, up front, it would be quite a different thing to be able to say it with evidence, juxtaposing in public "under-construction" spaces, for example, student papers with research in rhetoric and composition (or other related fields) about student papers. I seem to recall Becky Rickly describing a study she did on gender and synchronous conferencing. Wouldn't it more than appropriate to juxtapose Becky's findings with, say, the experiences of students in the initiative?

My response to Eric's recommendations, then, would be framed as a challenge: how can we develop feedback-loops for ourselves and our students that will enable us to struggle in theory, or "leap" into the fray, fully confident that our leaping is a form of thinking?

Dave

Date: Friday, 16 May 1997
From: Eric Crump
Subject: Response to David Coogan

I like this Janus thing, David. I think I'll have to adopt that as my next MOO persona!

On May 14, David Coogan wrote:

> >What can I possibly say to this? Crump doesn't say no to proactive posi
> >tioning. Doesn't say yes to it, either!

Well, I *meant* to say yes and Yes! Be proactive programmatically. Be proactive subversively. Be subversively proactive. Be all that you can be (though I'd pull up short of joining the Marines, I guess).

I like your suggestion that space be created away from the leaping and the fray (or a harbor within it) for reflection and critique. Actually, the TICTOC symposium may set a precedent. It appears to be reflection/critique *during* the birthing process. And if you know birthing processes (biological or programmatic) you know that's no easy task—but an admirable goal.

There are, probably, any number of possibilities for fostering reflection as part of the process. It occurs to me that regular symposia might be one option. It may not be likely or practical to do anything on the scale of this event very often, but focused events, with local folks and a consultant or two... I'd suggest trying consultations online as an option, too. Saves travel & lodging money! We've done a couple of them (including a MOO colloquium with Cynthia and Jan as the invited speakers!) and they've worked out great.

Another idea occurs (and maybe this has already occurred to Jim & Co.): What about opening up the TICTOC list? it's possible, with some luck, that you might end up with a continuous reflective online symposium. It could be the eye of the storm in which to seek refuge and advice. Or it could be the storm. Ya never know. But it might be a very powerful tool and a very productive influence on the UIC community.

> > there really is no need to replicate traditional course structures, accred
> >itation, and so on, unless there is something about the course system that
> >we are trying to defend here.
> >(Like, oh, I don't know . . . our jobs?)

Interesting point. Jobs. Hadn't thought of that . . . :)

Ah, but what this suggests is that teaching jobs are somehow inextricably tied to "courses." And that reminds me of one of my favorite passages from Richard Lanham's *The Electronic Word* in which he sug-

gests we remember "what business we're in," noting that technology has a way of forcing that issue. He reminds us that railroads which assumed they were in the railroad business eventually went out of business, but those that recognized they were in the *transportation* business are still alive. So, as teachers, are we in the business of *managing courses*? or are we in the business of helping others learn? And if it's the latter, how do courses help us serve that function?

I suppose I've already got this point across, but I think everything should be on the table, open to discussion. Courses. Classrooms. Semesters. Textbooks. Curricula. Grades. Semesters. Degrees. The works! And we should approach each element of the current educational structure WILLING TO THROW IT OUT. Now, we may not choose to toss everything—it probably isn't possible to toss everything—but if we cling too tightly to any of our security blankets, we're eliminating new possibilities in the process and before we've got a chance to test them out.

I hope we get a chance in our session Saturday to talk about what might emerge in the place of discarded elements. The cool thing is, we don't really know. What could be better? But I've got some ideas where to start looking and what to start trying & I bet others do, too.

> >My response to Eric's recommendations, then, would be framed as a
> >challenge: how can we develop feedback-loops for ourselves and our
> >students that will enable us to struggle in theory, >or "leap" into the fray,
> >fully confident that our leaping is a form of thinking?

Good challenge, David. I have only an inadequate answer. That is, I already take it on faith (but based on personal experience) that leaping is a form of thinking. When I drew up my last job description I wanted to include the fact that I play on the net all day (and into the night), so I put down as a portion of my duties: immersive research. A fancy way of saying I'm paid to "live" on the net, to learn it like fish learn water. I have six years of that to back up my faith in leaping. So I guess the feedback loop I would suggest would be the net itself. Therein lies the structure and the spirit of this endeavor and of the future of education. Look at it from a distance, if that helps. Measure it. Sniff it. Poke it with sticks to see how it reacts. Then dive in.

Eric

Date: Friday, 16 May 1997
From: Eric Crump
Subject: Productive subversion

Ever notice how the right words from the right author sometime

pop up at just the right moment. I happened to grab from the library the other day *Leadership and the New Science* by Margaret Wheatley & this morning came across a passage that explains better than I have been what purpose this underground element of e-works might serve.

She's talking about self-organizing systems (a la Prigogine & Stengers), suggesting parallels between chemical and human systems:

> It is natural for any system, whether it be human of chemmical, to attempt to quell a disturbance when it first appears. But if the disturbance survives those first attempts at suppression and remains lodged within the system, an iterative process begins. The disturbance increases as different parts of the system get hold of it. Finally, it becomes so amplified that it cannot be ignored. This dynamic supports some current ideas that organizational change, even in large systems, can be created by a small group of committed individuals or champions." (96) ...like the e-works bunch. She goes on, and this gets to what I was trying to suggest about being wary of the current institutional structure:
>
> "Certain conditions support this process of change in both molecules and people. The revolutionaries cannot be isolated from one another. They must keep a firm grasp on their intentions and not let them be diffused into the larger system too early. And they must have links to other parts of the system.

She also notes that in self-organizing systems, change occurs when the system is in a state of dis-equilibrium, that equilibrium is a kind of death, in fact. And she offers an interesting explanation for our culture's strong impulse to pursue stability, attributing it to the cultural influence of the second law of thermodynamics. If entropy is inevitable, then expenditures of energy invite early death (of the university, but we assume we'll go along with it :) so people abhor radical change, which always involves tremendous amounts of energy.

What we've neglected to account for, she says, is the fact that the law applies to "closed systems" and that the universe is full of (and perhaps *is*) open systems that interact with their environments and exchange entropy for free energy.

e-works, then, to be an effective agent of change, needs to be a 'disturbance' and to push the current system out of whatever equilibrium it has.

I highly recommend Wheatley's book, by the way. It makes accessible some of the difficult-to-grasp ideas from science. I've tried to read Prigogine & Stengers' *Order Out of Chaos* a couple of times and never get through it. Love the ideas, can't grok the formulas.

Eric

Date: Friday, 16 May 1997

From: Eric Crump
Subject: Interversity & change

Distance Education or Interversity? Hope & Hype, Migration & Transformation, or Distance Education with-or-without Distance...and other impending adventures (because a long title is a good title)

THANK: Joseph Unger, Carolyn Cook, and TTU. (Pleasure to visit a place where innovation in writing education still finds purchase) but especially Fred.

One ground-rule: Q&A is open now. Success depends on it. Lightbulb jokes: list users (everybody's seen this by now) faculty (Q. how many faculty members does it take to change a lightbulb? A. change?)

Example of how the silly can edify. Contrast in jokes illuminates contrast between the internet (copious, contested, collegial, cranky, confusing, corny—a pan of boiling water, with lots of motion and noise but not always a lot of progress) and the university (focused, compartmentalized, refined, reserved, traditional, hierarchical, managed—a pan of tepid water, progress at the speed of evaporation). Sort of like the difference between the high church and mardi gras. An ancient dichotomy.

That dichotomy may be about to change. Or it could change, if we have the interest and the will to break out of that oscillation and explore the possibilities of convergence. I don't have a punch-line for this, but maybe our primary question today is:

How many internet users and faculty does it take to change the institution of education?

I don't think the case for change is hard to make, but it seems pretty hard to take, judging by our response so far. Institutions, of course, are structurally resistant (maybe even immune) to radical change.

I just found on the web the first report from the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities (25 present and past presidents). One assertion it makes: public universities played key roles in two major socioeconomic transformations in this country—the industrial revolution of the mid 19th century and the retooling of the labor force (GI bill) following WWII.

The transformation we're in the midst of may be more profound than either. The internet, as the catalyst and defining technology of our age, has been compared often in significance to the invention of moveable type. But John Perry Barlow, in an impressive display of one-upsmanship, says it's the biggest thing since fire.

Even if Barlow, merry hypster that he is, has exaggerated a wee bit, we're still talking about magnificent moves afoot. Even the Kellogg Commission college presidents (not typically the hypster type) say this is the biggest transformation since the big public universities were born.

They cite a number of factors coming to bear on educational institutions:

*more and more students, and more diverse students

*competition from emerging alternative educational concerns

*continued cost increases with funding flat

* eroding public trust

*limited institutional flexibility ("Higher education is not as nimble as the times require. As the challenges facing us multiply, we find it hard to break out of the silos our disciplines create. The world has problems; universities have departments.")

The Kellogg report recommends that universities become more responsive to students, that they become "genuine learning communities." And it claims, of course, that it's urgent that change happens and happens fast. As is often the case these days, it's not a question of whether but how. And "how" is always both a more interesting and more challenging question anyway.

How, for instance, do we unleash ourselves from the stability of the department structure and the curriculum? What I find most unsettling about current structures is the extent to which they seem to limit our imaginations about what's possible in education. [I recently proposed a conference workshop on Alternatives to grading, for instance, but every one of my colleagues who joined me wanted to start from the assumption that grading is inevitable and that the best we can do is investigate alternative forms of evaluation *within* that system, an assumption I do not share.] Any number of fine educators and researchers since John Dewey (and before) have argued persuasively that intrinsic interest, desire, and motivation fuel learning (and do, in fact, represent the natural shape of learning abilities all humans come packaged with). John Holt and Ivan Illich have argued that coercion kills the spirit of learning quite dead. Yet we cling to a fundamentally coercive system (we're products of it, not coincidentally), even when (as in the 60s and 70s) many people seriously question its effectiveness.

Even the Kellogg folks, talking a good fight about responsiveness to students and creating better learning environments do not seem to question the basic structural elements of the current system: the classroom, the semester, the degree, the teacher's authority over not just the subject but the students.

We're all in a rut.

It's taken for granted that these control structures are necessary. Of *course* we have to control children. If we didn't (goes conventional wisdom) they wouldn't behave in an orderly way, they wouldn't follow our instructions, they wouldn't learn what we want them to learn.

It's at this point that I always want to shout: Of COURSE they won't behave in orderly way. They're kids! With spirit and energy! They weren't made to sit quietly in cramped desks in rows absorbing infor-

mation! They don't want to learn our stuff. They want to learn THEIR stuff! Who wouldn't? Who doesn't? Why not?

Rejection of individual learning abilities and interests as a shaping force in education is a legacy of the industrial age in which our schools and universities were created. At that time, a quickly growing nation, absorbing immigrants from around the world, chose homogenization (the good old melting pot) over diversity, and efficiency over effectiveness.

I've just started reading a book about ungraded education, *Nongraded Schools in Action*, and one of the editors, Edward Bruffie, begins by tracing the history of the graded school. It was imported from Europe, Prussia mainly, at about the time public education was rapidly developing into a broad social institution—about the mid 19th century. He says it was primarily administrative convenience that caused it to be embraced and become prevalent. In our effort to develop a school system rapidly, and in our industrial-age infatuation with "efficiency" we grabbed the system that could be implemented the fastest. It was easier to train teachers if they had only to be trained to teach a very narrowly defined curriculum deemed appropriate for a particular age group.

"The same educational system which gloried in its new-found efficiency also gave rise to an inhibiting form of regimentation. The pendulum had swung from no system to nothing but system."

We no longer are the same fast-growing industrial power we were 150 years ago, but I think we're still stuck with too much system. The education system designed to meet the needs of that past society does not meet the needs of ours. Diversity and creativity are, or should be, valued more highly now. The time seems right to reintroduce the progressive approaches that were not allowed to succeed two decades ago.

How?

We might look to the net. Not just its technologies, but its radically democratic culture, as the treatment for that systemic condition called bureaucracy.

The tools that make this possible & which most of us are becoming familiar with as quickly as we can—things like email, newsgroups, web forums, MUDs, IRC, web chats: anything that supports the unregulated conversations occurring on the net—are, to a certain extent, venues unfettered by bureaucracy.

If education really embraces the suite of tools that make up the Internet and the social rules they support (that is, the democratic assumptions and practices those tools tend to facilitate in the wild) there exists the possibility that rampant collegiality might result, and that's got people understandably nervous. The hierarchy begins to teeter.

Collegiality, as I'm using it, is the situation in which the psychological distance supplied by hierarchical authority is removed or muted. In online environments, it's *possible* to blur lines of authority to the point

that people are able to interact as if they were peers, regardless of their conventional credentials. I should add quickly that I don't mean to suggest that differences in knowledge and skill are or should be erased—only that those differences need not be used as barriers to productive relationships, or as rationale for sustaining hierarchic relationships.

What Internet communities have provided that educational institutions typically do not (on any significant scale) is the possibility for people to interact and pursue tasks based on mutual interest and respect rather than via the rigid channels and within the isolating compartments of the traditional university.

> The most radical alternative to school wold be a network or service which gave each [person] the same opportunity to share his current concern with others motivated by the same concern." (Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society)*

There is a fundamental incongruity between the mature, stable, regulated environment of the classroom and the immature, unstable, unregulated environment of the net. I use the term "interversity" quite a bit these days because it seems like a neat if not elegant way to describe the convergence of internet and university, serving as an emblem for the rich array of conflicts and possibilities that erupt when those two things come together. The challenge for us is how we negotiate that incongruity as we simultaneously move from the classroom to the net and from the net to the classroom.

In practice, the conditions of conflict are created when teachers and students have had time to explore the net on their own, have experienced the exhilaration of making connections with people and information that is relevant to them, have begun forming relationships and developing interesting projects in that virtual space and outside the watchful gaze of the institution. Most of us who apprehend the net as an exciting and liberatory place, whatever its traps and turmoils, tend to want to share the wealth, to invite others to join us

The problem comes when the people we invite are students in our classes at our universities. The bureaucratic institution, whatever it's good qualities as a learning environment and educational resource, has become something preoccupied with compartmentalizing, specializing, sorting, ranking, judging, with developing and protecting knowledge rather than enabling people. Most bureaucracies are like that to some extent. I like to think of bureaucracies as organisms. They're highest priority is self-preservation, not service. So if we think our bureaucratic institutions are there to help US become better educated, we might want to reconsider. They exist to sustain themselves *in our name* but not in our service. And like any organism, bureaucracies have immune systems. Change, especially change that involves a shift to a

much less regulated and therefore less bureaucratic environment, is perceived as a disease.

The way to developing open, collegial learning environments on the net "but within the purview of the institution" will not be easy. Worse, it may be a way that the bureaucracy will overtly and covertly attempt to sabotage or appropriate in its own defense. Witness the 'online classroom' —it may exist in virtual space, but it's authority structures are straight from the classroom box.

There's this immense imperviousness about institutions; they seem quite unperturbed by a moderate tone and balance presentation. Thus the emergence of hyper-rhetoric like Barlow's in discussions that enter this terrain. I'm reminded of a passage in Stewart Brand's book, *Media Lab*, in which he quotes Marvin Minksy:

> Religion is a teaching machine—a little deadly loop for putting itself in your mind and keeping it there. The main concern of a religion is to stop thinking, to suppress doubt. It's interested in solving deep problems, not in understanding them. And it's correct in a sense, because the problems it deals with don't have solutions, because they're loops. 'Who made the world?' 'God.' You're not allowed to ask, 'Who made God?'

If we're not allowed to ask "Who made the classroom?" then certain amount of shouting and a few bold claims seem necessary, if nothing else to get the question on the table. If want to find ways to make possible for us and our students to legitimately engage in the kind of productively chaotic we find on the net, we may have to get at hidden institutional agendas, petrified and obsolete structures, old beliefs and rituals. This makes us heretics, but it's ok. Hereticking can be fun. Dangerous, but fun.

So I urge us all to consider alternatives to stable structures, consider something other than courses and classrooms, grades and degrees. If it can't be done in the university, then the Interversity—still outside the bureaucracy's field of vision and reach—may be our best hope. In a way, we are seeing the force of bureaucratic institution, with its investment in stability and consistency, versus the forces of democratic complexity, with its investment in change and instability. If we look at the oft-used frontier metaphor to describe the net, we might assume that anarchy is doomed, that civilization will assert, that bureaucracy will gain its foothold and will flourish, crowding out the weeds of liberation at a brisk pace. There's every reason to believe that will happen.

That's the main reason it's important, I think, to be aware of and appreciate and promote the kind of learning environments that happen almost spontaneously on the net and to fight for those spaces and for the kind of interaction they allow.

What if what we had was a system that allowed teachers and stu-

dents to hang out together, teaching and learning by turn (blurring and shifting those roles almost whimsically), exploring and experimenting, working on projects springing from mutual interest and benefit? We'd have us a helluva powerful education system.

Sound idyllic, idealistic, unattainable, unreasonable? Well, we have it now, out on the net. We live in it every day, some of us. Some of us (me) would even claim to have gotten a better education in a few years hanging out on the net, talking and having fun, than in all the classrooms we've ever been in.

The fact that things don't look like that in most classrooms is not an indictment of teachers or students, necessarily (though all of us in some way help perpetuate the system that enslaves us). And it's not evidence that the idealistic portrayals of the net are uselessly Utopian. It means we have some work to do if we want to get past this creaky, ponderous, stifling system and shape education to fit the needs of the people it is "supposed" to serve! Us!

Ideals are not evaluative criteria to be applied as measures of success or failure; they are calls to action. For the next generation educational institution to become more internet than university, we have to intentionally and insistently advocate the value of open learning systems, of systems that support and enable learners rather than erecting barriers and enforcing isolation. We may have to violate some rules along the way, but keep in mind the rules of the institution are not necessarily there to serve us but to serve it. As John Mayher reminds us in his recent College English review: "The debate framers always win since they determine the ground rules, what counts as evidence, and what the criteria are for 'winning.'" The rules we are taught to follow are there and enforced specifically to prevent us from exploring new possibilities that don't fit old conditions and conventions. Violating them—ethically and with some caution—may be the only means of getting out of the box.

In practice, I think this means taking some risks, a willingness to make some semi-blind leaps and give up some of the familiar, (dis)comfortable practices that the institution wants us to think are inevitable and eternal: grading, syllabi, assignments, classrooms, classes, semesters, maybe even degrees, probably curricula. We can't get past the institution by playing its game, obeying its rules. None of those things exist, as such, on the net. If we export them there, we may be colonizing our own selves.

I'll close by sharing an illuminating bit that was posted by Nancy Dodge to a home education list I'm on. Makes my point about the obsolescence of our system more betterly than I have.

A Horsie Story

Common advice from knowledgeable horse trainers includes the adage, "If the horse you're riding dies, get off." Seems simple enough, yet, in the education business we don't always follow that advice. Instead, we choose from an array of other alternatives which includes: 1.Buying a stronger whip. 2.Trying a new bit or bridle. 3.Moving the horse to a new location. 4.Riding the dead horse for longer periods of time. 5.Saying things like "This is the way we've always ridden the horse." 6.Appointing a committee to study the horse. 7.Arranging to visit other sites where they ride dead horses more efficiently. 8.Increasing the standards for riding dead horses. 9.Creating a test to measure our dead horse riding ability. 10.Comparing how we're riding now to how we did ten or twenty years ago. 11.Complaining about the state of horses these days. 12.Coming up with new styles of riding dead horses. 13.Blaming the horse's parents. The problem is often in the breeding. 14.Tightening the cinch.

Time to get off this dead horse of a system before the cinch chokes us.

Eric

Date: Friday, 16 May 1997
From: Eric Crump
Subject: Recommendations #3

3. Should we establish the scenarios as "templates" for future courses in our department? Which practices should we encourage? Which should we discourage?

I said in an earlier note that I thought you should try all the scenarios on for size. Probably that sounds unrealistic. What's more likely to work is to try the ones that look most possible, fit best with the larger institution and university system, and invite the most excitement among those folks charged with the task of making them happen. And that last may be the most important criteria of all.

Of course, as you enact one scenario or set of scenarios, time will pass. The ones not chosen may lose their appeal. But if—as part of the e-works process—new models are continually being produced, there will never be a lack of new things to try. Might be good to have a repository for possibilities, a place to stash these ideas so they'll be handy when you need a fresh one. Kind of a fruit bin of educational models.

The idea of using these scenarios as templates could be a mixed blessing. It would definitely be a blessing in terms of providing a ramp up for teachers & staff who aren't already immersed in cyberspace (and maybe for some who are, as well).

For example, though this is at a vastly different scale, a couple of years ago I got intrigued with the possibilities web forms might offer for

letting communities publish collaboratively. I asked a local sysop for help, and he gave me a simple PERL script, showed me how to use it, and turned me loose.

I used that script as a template, copying it and adapting it over and over, making it do things it wasn't intended to do, making it do things I had dreamed of doing with the web.

So far so good. The tinkering and tweaking has been instructive. I'm pleased with what that little script has enabled for all the web projects I'm involved in. However, I'm not much closer today than I was two years ago to knowing how to construct my own PERL scripts. If I had to start one from scratch, I would be lost.

So templates are good for helping more people do things they might not otherwise, but they are also crutches that do not effectively contribute to people's ability to operate independently, to have a *deep* understanding of the processes that lead to the model. On the other hand, it's probably not reasonable or practical for everyone to learn how to program in PERL or develop online courses from scratch.

I think the scenarios will be very useful as templates. I guess I would only caution that e-works be aware of the possibility that folks will be too dependent on them. Maybe continually refreshing the collection of templates will help mitigate that effect.

Eric

Date: Monday, 28 April 1997
From: Greg Ulmer
Subject: Consultation/Advising #1

1. I cannot improve on answers already given to this question when I advise you to take a role of leadership in the UIC project to put degree programs online. The questions posed to the consultants overlap and to get started I need to praise the concept of eworks as a place to reflect on itself, on the department and its projects. Much of what I have to say actually will seem more a part of this reflection, a meta-consultation, as this series of numbered fragments unfolds. I will make recommendations but in the form of telling you how I came to hold these views. Heuretics is a way to generate insights, but is not itself an insight. I see my function as introducing heuretics into this process, as one more device you might use in your work.

Leadership? Not only with respect to your own destiny, but to that of UIC and of the university as such. The challenge will be to base this leadership on the best of what we know and care about. I am slipping now into the we and us and our because I identify with what you want to do (I am thinking always of Florida and what needs to be accomplished in my own place or chora). Eworks begins as a virtual depart-

ment but we have some options as to what is foregrounded: let it not be the committee meeting! As you can see, I am trying to write now. Yes, the clock on the bomb is ticking, but we are good students and know how to make an outline before we start the in-class essay.

In order to assess the worth of my advising you need to know the genealogy of my knowledge. The first thing to admit is that my approach to consulting reflects a misspelling or, more generously, a neologism: I am an advisor more than an adviser. This visor, intensified as the "ad" indicates, is the one Derrida speaks of in *Specters of Marx*, referring to the helmet worn by the ghost of Hamlet's father. I speak of theory because we are addressing a problem. *Problema* is something thrown out ahead, in front, a quality that Derrida explores by means of *Hamlet*'s time being out of joint, producing a hauntology. Dare we tell our colleagues that our problems come to us dressed in full armor? that to truly understand a problem the inventor must be able to recognize the persons whose identities are masked behind the visor?

The problem may be the same for everyone, but the hauntology is specific to each inventor. The problem is distance learning, electronic society, but in addressing my own provost as well as you about this problem I am at the same time in a scene that dates from 1964, set in Miles City, Montana, when I tried to explain to my father (a representative to the state legislature from Custer County), and his good friend, Mr. Richards (an area rancher who was also Chairman of the Montana Board of Regents), why that spring I had changed my major to English. These are some of the faces behind the visor. That this decision was incomprehensible to them was understandable in that Custer County High School's college preparation track had led me to believe that going to college meant learning a practical trade or profession such as engineering (my father's degree was in civil engineering). I actually won a slide rule in a problem-solving competition during a high school recruitment visit to Montana State University in Bozeman.

These adults explained to me that real work was to add value to the world by taking something and making it useful to society, the way Mr. Richard's turned his cattle into beef, or the way my father in his business took sand and gravel out of the hills (deposited seven thousand years ago by a retreating glacier, and full of the bones of mastodons) and turned them into building materials. "What about poetry, didn't poetry add value to life?" No: poets and people who taught poetry were parasites living off the labor of others who turned the stuff of nature into (commodities). "You are wrong," I insisted, "and I can prove it."

Greg

Date: Tuesday, 29 April 1997
From: Greg Ulmer

Subject: 2nd advisory

2. I never won the argument with the patriarchs of my parents' generation but I am still trying to prove something to their heirs. I mention them as part of the *problema* to remind myself about the context of this project—the community, the society of which we are a part (nor is it "one"). Eworks might be an opportunity to suspend temporarily (to bracket) the planning in order to remember how we got where we are now, both collectively as a discipline and personally. The visored scene of 1964 shows me the poles of my purpose, a tension, contradiction, dialectic between art and instrumentalism. What I intuited in that argument was that art in its purest form if brought into contact with the practical world would prove to be invaluable.

I am starting now with one pole of the binary, whose qualities might be found in the opening stanza of "The Lost Son" (Theodore Roethke).

At Woodlawn I heard the dead cry:
I was lulled by the slamming of iron,
A slow drip over stones,
Toads brooding in wells.
All the leaves stuck out their tongues;
I shook the softening chalk of my bones,
Saying,
Snail, snail, glister me forward,
Bird, soft-sigh me home.
Worm, be with me.
This is my hard time.

The point I want to make does not depend on this poem in particular, and you will think of your own examples. What was the effect when I first read "The Lost Son"? The memory of it can only make sense in the context of how surprising to me was everything about *English.* Now I know that there were precedents in my history of learning to read, such as my first encounter with a science fiction story before I knew anything about genre; or when in the seventh grade I discovered in O'Connor's Newsstand my first copy of *Mad*.

When I arrived at the University of Montana in the fall of 1962 I did not know that the humanities constituted a domain of disciplinary knowledge. Having made this discovery through required general education classes, and learning that it was possible actually to major in English, I enrolled in creative writing courses. Perhaps I was working by analogy with sports: football and baseball were not something I watched or appreciated, but something I did. Literature was not something to be read, but something to be written. My first instructor was

Richard Hugo, and his instructor had been Theodore Roethke.

What did I learn from Hugo? First, that men can be poets. I tell you this news as part of this exercise in anamnesis recalling the extent of my ignorance and naivete (mine and the community that educated me). As a child I believed for a time that dogs were male and cats were female. As an adolescent, to the extent that I thought about it all, I assumed that engineers were men and poets were women. The canon was a revelation: Hemingway? And the poets at Montana at that time were maga-hemingways.

The second thing I learned from Hugo is that my heart is too weak, too unconditioned perhaps, to work with poetry directly. I am not sure that I am expressing properly this lesson. The way I would say it now is that I went straight from an anesthetic sensibility to jouissance without passing through beauty. An image for it might be whatever it was that happened to Uranus that knocked its magnetic field off the north-south axis that is the case for all the other planets. The solar wind of poetry pushed my magnetosphere on its side so that it streams away from me in the form of a turning curving field. Theory is as close as I can get to beauty; poetry is the calculus of theory in the domain of arts and letters.

Perhaps too the strange polar dynamics of Uranus tell me something about the poles of my imagination—applied poetry. The kind of uncanny evidence I have learned to trust suggests this possibility, in that the moons of Uranus bear the names of characters from the plays of Shakespeare, including one of my choral names—Miranda. This choral reasoning, choreography, is not taught in the schools after about the third grade. As a civilization we have preserved the memory of the poetic and we continue to honor its calculators without knowing why or what purpose might be served by the dimension of language (the remainder) that they operate.

My advising is couched in the mode of a stochastic process (a system which produces a sequence of symbols according to certain probabilities), or rather the special case known as the Markoff chain (the probabilities depend on the previous events).

Greg

Date: Sunday, 4 May 1997
From: Greg Ulmer
Subject: Third advisory

First Answer: The scenarios reflect a good range of permutations and combinations among the elements of campus resources, remote students, technology, traditional content, innovative method . . . The pragmatic virtue of these drafts is their fit with the non-trivial rule of minimal change having the greatest chance of acceptance. To some extent

they beg the question of the appropriateness and rationality of the current state of the discipline as such. If we were meeting to discuss the representation of English outside of the context of distance education, I expect that we would not want to accept it entirely in its present form.

Second Answer: it does not matter how the department goes online, so long as it gets there, and the sooner the better. The history of writing shows that one of the first uses of a new technology of representation is the recording of the extant works of the culture: the epics of Homer in Ancient Greece; the Bible in Renaissance Europe. The consequence of this recording was a mutation or reformation of one degree or another. Walter Ong has shown, for example, that once the move was made from manuscript to print, at least two foundational practices of schooling were abandoned: mnemonic training and scholastic logic. The practices of writing invented by Ramus and others simplified immensely the experience of learning.

In our case, the translation of the literate categories organizing knowledge into cyberspace will make explicit that these categories (English, History, Sociology, Physics, Architecture, Engineering) are relative to the social machine (apparatus) of literacy and have no absolute necessity. While the entire administrative superstructure of literate specialized knowledge will be translated into cyberspace, once there much of it will evaporate. The practices that will replace specialized knowledge remain to be invented. Who will be the inventors? Why not us?

Meta-Scenarios. UIC and Florida English Departments then may put themselves online willy-nilly, providing that at the same time they monitor and direct the process by means of something like eworks. Eworks should be used to sort out the essentials of our discipline from the accidents of literacy. For example, general education writing courses, staffed by English, serve at least the following consensus needs—methods for using the language to learn specialized knowledge; practices of rhetoric and logic required for citizenship in a democratic society; models of self-knowledge for living the examined life. We may assume that these needs will continue in electracy, but that they will be articulated differently. The kind of "belonging together" experienced in electronic culture will not be of the same nature fostered by the novel and print journalism, described in *Imagined Communities* (Anderson). Taking responsibility for these experiences must be separated from the literate formats of courses, exams, lectures, semesters.

Alternative Scenarios: —Production. A student-centered assessment of English might consider the major as a whole. At the conclusion of ten semester courses, students are likely to have read between 60-100 books, and written between 200-300 pages of expository, interpretive prose. In short, they will have written a book. The collected papers are book-length, but not yet a book conceptually. The MA repeats the BA experience at a higher level, again producing a book-

length set of writings if one includes seminar papers with the thesis. Finally, the Ph.D. dissertation attempts the full-length book at the conceptual level. A basic scenario for the BA degree then might be: write a book. Once the production model is in place, it may be extended to other media (video, computer). How might the learning be organized? Perhaps by modules rather than courses, holistically rather than cumulatively.

Pedagogy? Eworks will undertake to debrief the faculty leading to the design and production of an expert system (modeled after, but not taken literally necessarily, this practice in artificial intelligence). A composite of the expertise possessed by the faculty may be represented in virtual intelligence (eworks), in a way that a student might emulate, learned in the manner of a craft rather than as a science, with faculty serving as role models and facilitators, but not as masters. This debriefing would add value in that many experts realize through such interviews that what they think they are doing and what they actually do are not the same thing.

Skills? The debriefing should help define the path for moving from here to there, from one apparatus to the other. The challenge of invention must be undertaken holistically, addressing the matrix of institutional methodologies, technology, and individual identity formation. I agree at one level with those who recommend that we not let the technology dictate what we do. However, in the context of the apparatus, we must take into account the technology to appreciate the relativity of practices to equipment. In this context, those who fear that electracy causes students to forget how to write thesis/support arguments are like scholastics who feared that print literacy made students forget how to form memory palaces in support of oratory. I assume that this analogy is controversial, heretical. Still, we should remember that Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, one of the founding documents of modern science, was directed explicitly against scholastic schooling. I have much more to say about the specifics of this sorting out of practices to keep or to abandon. For now a slogan may suffice: Let us be auto-Cartesians.

Greg

Date: Thursday, 8 May 1997
From: Greg Ulmer
Subject: Fourth advisory

4. The question concerning how the new technologies might affect our working conditions and teaching practices, and what we might do to reduce the negative aspects and enhance the positive.

The history of literacy shows that we may expect profound changes to result from the changes in the language apparatus of our civilization

that have been underway for some time now. As I understand it, the one negentropic force in the world is human intelligence: we should consider this moment as a time for invention. Our discipline, like most others, has neglected the inventive side of its history, but it is present in almost every story we tell. Heuretics is a way to turn our hermeneutic understanding into a plan for action. Perhaps the most useful thing I can do as a consultant is to offer the formula of invention that I derived from teaching the history of theory for many years. This formula is a useful reminder to suspend our common sense at least temporarily and to reason with our disciplinary methods. The reminder is necessary since the methods often seem counter-intuitive. We need to generate some ideas for now (deciding later what is worth keeping), and the formula functions for this purpose in the manner of a form such as the sonnet or villanelle in poetry—to stimulate creativity.

The formula is stated in the acronym CATTt, which may be graphed as

CONTRAST<————————>TARGET

ANALOGY | THEORY

with the T-frame representing the tale in which the resources stored in the inventories of each of the limbs may be syncretized into a poetics for making or doing something. Any recommendations I might make are motivated by the particular configuration that I give to the CATTt—the way I articulate the limbs. You will no doubt have your own preferences for the resources and so your outcomes could be different from mine. A further benefit of the CATTt is that it helps us locate the grounds of our differences as part of the process of achieving consensus on a plan. Let me run through very briefly a specific CATTt, that could be a point of departure for discussion.

CONTRAST Often in discourses on method the Contrast is cast in a negative light, but it need not be; it is some part of the existing norm that needs improvement. My Contrast is: the discipline major, which I put here in order to inventory all those aspects of this administrative entity that have lost their purpose. This process is heuristic, so my choices may be disputed at every point. For me there are two anomalies that inform my Contrast (against which my plan will define itself):

1) Our object of study (literature?) joined every other disciplinary practice in revolutionizing representation around the turn of the century. *Finnegans Wake* is a metonym for a host of titles of works experimenting with formal alternatives to realism. The formal practices of our dis-

cipline, however, remain unaffected by this transformation in writing. To use Kittler's *Discourse Networks* for shorthand, literature entered the discourse network of 1900, but the study of literature remains in the discourse network of 1800, at least formally.

2) In terms of method we opened the canon to cultural and postcolonial studies, for irrefutable ethical and political reasons, but created in the process a dilemma for our students. The methodologies of close reading, subspecialization, and coverage remained in place although ill-suited to the new object of study (first, second, third world literature, art, history, politics, economics, religion, mythologies...) The gaps opened in the major by these changes expose the limitations of the major which our CATTt must show how to overcome.

TARGET The internet is the institution we are addressing, that lacks at present a practice capable of supporting full disciplinary learning. In this process we inventory the capabilities of the internet that our poetics or plan might be able to use for education. I say that the internet is an institution to note that it is partly technological and partly social—its social history and applications are as important to understanding its nature (for example, that it originated as part of a cold war strategy to survive a nuclear strike) as are its technological attributes (global distribution, interactivity, digital linking, etc). As with the Contrast, the Target suggests both positive and negative qualities for the inventory. To focus on one feature, the computer interface for accessing the internet is evolving into a graphics based medium. To be electrate (to be able to write as well as read the internet) requires graphics as well as text skills. Perhaps the only place in the university curriculum that teaches these skills together is advertising. Advertising is formally at least in the discourse network of 2000.

PROBLEMATIC The Contrast—Target together constitute the problem we need to solve. To summarize: Contrast—the object of study of English has become out of synch with the forms and methods of study; Target—reading and writing online requires a hybrid practice integrating graphics with text. A solution for these conditions may be generated by means of the Analogy and Theory. (to be continued)

Greg

Date: Sunday, 11 May 1997
From: Greg Ulmer
Subject: fourth advisory (conclusion)

4-ii Applying the CATTt heuristic (continued).

An answer to the question posed by Contrast-Target may be found

in the Theory-Analogy.

THEORY The theory provides a conceptualization with which to configure the elements of the problematic. The theory I draw on is post-structuralism, by which I mean the French reading of the Germans (20th century), and which I see as being of a piece, whatever the local differences might be that distinguish one oeuvre from the other. In practice, specific cases require selective applications; in our case, the most relevant concept is that of discourse formation as it is elaborated in Foucault (but also in Deleuze-Guattari). Foucault's methods of archeology and genealogy offer the possibility in principle of locating the *poetics* of an episteme: the rules by which it is possible to say anything whatever in a given historical setting; by implication also the meta-rules by which such poetics themselves arise and evolve.

Setting aside the utopian dream of total knowledge, the more immediate use for us of discourse network theory is the program it provides for the articulation among diverse disciplines and discourse formations, promising the following possibilities:
1) an arrangement in which the full range of separate disciplines might be brought into communication with one another, and with other discourse formations of a society in a way that permits collaboration;
2) that the bases of this arrangement is aesthetic. For example, it has been demonstrated persuasively that the formal solution to the problems confronting Kepler (et al) was already available in the art of the period. This parallelism, grasped now in retrospect, but underlying the claims of modern aesthetics—that the arts have an anticipatory function in the culture—, may become also a heuretic principle for cross-divisional problem solving.

ANALOGY An analogy with some extant practice that figures as a stand-in for the new practice being invented in this CATTt process (in our case—electracy). The analogy I propose is the way of life of an arts bohemia in general, and Montmartre in particular: learning online will be like being in Paris during the heyday of the experimental avant garde. Analogies are always selective, keeping some facets of the vehicle and discarding others. What I notice when reading the intellectual history of a given epoch is that many of the most creative people of the time seemed to know each other and to meet or communicate as best they could. It may be a phenomenon of the sort Lacan had in mind when calling our attention to the way rivers somehow always seemed to flow through major cities. Coincidence? What sorts of conversations went on late into the night in the studios of the bateau lavoir? Du vin, s'il vous plait!

PLAN My CATTt shows me a pose, a figure, or points in a direction. The answer lies with the experimental arts currently neglected or whose lessons about representation have been unreceivable until now

in our discipline. Art passes from the status of object of study in our specialization to that of methodology across the curriculum. How should we design the place of virtual learning? Like a campus? No, more like Montmartre, even if in electracy there will be no need for the children of the bourgeoisie to flee mainstreet. The virtual intelligence we must learn how to construct into a discourse network in the electronic prosthesis will take our specialized problems and give us back instructions for ecological solutions.

Talking to Ghosts (Behind the Visor): These recommendations to you echo my answer to the position posed to me in 1964 by the patriarchs (the late!). Has the lost son been found again? Are the poets parasites on the working community? Knowing how to make leaves stick out their tongues COULD BE the calculus of electracy. Uncannily, this answer is the same one I gave then, the very same one. "Pipe-knock (who stunned the dirt into noise)." Walt and his friend were not wrong, exactly, for I take their point: in some ways we in arts and letters (theorist, scholars, poets too) are like those indigenes living among the stone monoliths of Easter Island, having forgotten what the heads were for or how they got there. Or had they? Did not some anthropologist finally get them to move and erect a head, showing that the knowledge was not forgotten but secret?

Greg

Date: Tuesday, 13 May 1997
From: Joe Tabbi
Subject: Response to Greg Ulmer

I like the way that Greg Ulmer cuts to the chase, when he notes that the experience of an English major is the equivalent, at least in terms of pages written, to the experience of writing a book. If we can redefine the book in an electronic context, Ulmer implies, we should be able to see our way to redefining the major itself.

As it happens, I was invited last week to critique an end-of-term presentation by a class of design students, who had as their course project the creation of a book. This course was developed with the aid of a CETL grant by Marta Huszar, an assistant professor in the Art & Architecture program. The students created (part one) traditional artists' books as well as non-traditional book forms, based on texts that ranged from Emily Dickinson, Octavio Paz, and Italo Calvino to John Lydon; once these material books were completed, they then analyzed an aspect of the chosen text (part two) by translating and transforming the material into moving sequences. To accomplish the second part, the students learned the Adobe Premiere program, which got them initiated into ways of moving sequential information. They incorporated

sound as well. And they completed their book projects in one semester.

I mention my experience, as a guest critic from English, because it was the first time I'd actually seen graphic and text skills being taught together. And it wasn't even a course in "advertising" — the one field where, as Ulmer notes in his fourth advisory, visual and verbal skills are systematically conjoined. There's much in Ulmer's paper to suggest that such a course in book design represents what many English courses might look like in the new media assemblage. From Ulmer's account of his argument with those Montana dads, I take it that, in his heart, he'd like to see "art in its purest form . . . brought into contact with the practical world" (advisory #2). Ulmer also proposes a pedagogy that would allow students to learn "in the manner of a craft rather than as a science" (#3). He pleads that we not let our concept of collaboration in a virtual English department degenerate into the committee meeting (#1). I understand Ulmer's own posts to the tictoc discussion as a series of performances.

Like Joe Amato, then, Ulmer would appear to want "to move English studies further in the general direction of the arts." But it's not clear whether Ulmer would be willing, in Amato's words, to "encourage a constructive break away from the dictates of technical-*qua*-corporate rationality" (see Amato's response to David Downing; and let's not forget that initial strange exchange between Amato and Ulmer early in the cycle). In Ulmer's scheme, we remain Cartesians — do-it-yourself, "auto-Cartesians," in fact. However, we're professionally autonomous only insofar as we satisfy the requirements of an institution increasingly subject to commodification, through the star system at one end and an expanding pool of academic temp workers at the other. Electronic environments, to the extent that they reward the bravura performance, bid fair to consolidate the star system, while at the same time facilitating the administration of a nomadic, deterritorialized workforce (which would be in touch, through "distance learning" technologies, with an equally deterritorialized student body). For the sake of argument, let's accept Ulmer's submission that the administrative structure currently supporting disciplinary boundaries will "evaporate," once academic departments move online. So much, then, for "literate specialized knowledge." But can Ulmer say the same about the economic and corporate (if not the national state) structures supporting the Internet? Structures that, according to the terms of last year's Telecommunications act, will allot the lion's share of Internet bandwidth to the same six or eight corporations that currently dominate book publishing.

Is this the moment, as the U.S. congress works to dismantle the NEA, to advise English administrators bravely to make a common cause with the arts? Or does Ulmer view the faltering grant structure as

an early confirmation of the administration's imminent evaporation?

I sympathize with Ulmer's rejection of disciplinary isolation—especially the debilitating isolation of English Studies from the Fine and Practical Arts. It's refreshing, too, to think in Ulmer's terms of what we actually do in English studies. Here we are, undergraduates, grad students, tenured and untenured faculty, all working away at our book projects, with 4 to 6 years allotted for completion at every stage. But what happens when the author gets redefined as a "content provider"? Isn't there a danger that, along with the disciplinary structures, the concept of the "book" itself will evaporate, not to mention the space, time, and solitude needed for composition?

My question to Ulmer, then, is this: If the concept of the book is worth preserving in the new electracy, what institutional guarantees are needed for its continued production? If Montmartre is to be our imagined community (and not the corporate research campus, "Microsoft U," as some of us have called it), hadn't we better produce our books in an artisan's studio, rather than at the usual array of office desks?

Joe

Date: Thursday, 15 May 1997
From: Eva Bednarowicz
Subject: response to Ulmer

I find it timely that Ulmer's recommendation for a neo-poetic "protocol", as it were, was posted during the Deep Blue/Kasparov exchange of chess pieces and wits. The Day After, Deep Blue made rhetorical history in all the media, and _The Chicago Tribune_ chose to report an online interchange in which a Midwestern grad student asserted that Deep Blue's routing of Kasparov was not constitutive of humanity: "in the best of human spirit" — may be slightly misquoting the *Trib* quote-"was poetry." I am not sure whether "poetry" was posed as residual romantic category in eternally impregnable opposition to technology or simply as a criterion of intelligent sensitivity that Deep Blue (but note that spiritual color!) has not yet (sigh of relief) attained. On the other hand, rallying to Deep Blue's uneasy rescue was the claim that its achievement had been, after all, a collaborative (corporate) effort. In any case: here (*Tribune*) was the traditional concept of poetry, figured as a space of resistance which Cynthia Selfe calls for her in her post. And here also were Ulmer's recommendations nudging the discussion towards a radical? poetic methodology of future academic "electracy", on the assumption that "the arts have an anticipatory function in the culture." Ulmer's preferred "art" is that of poetry; his very style argues for a rhetopoesis accommodating both of the "nilly-willy" Cartesian rationality and Montmartre and an evaluation of past personal history

and current theoretical anxieties. Ulmer's is, as Joe Tabbi points out, a "performance"—a performance of the virtual personae, of the "lost son", of the experimental poet and rhetorician "inventing" the "poetics" of the episteme eworks will be conceptualizing.

But as Joe Amato warns us, "a proclamation or declaration is not exactly a how to." Both Amato and Ulmer agree on the dynamic qualities of the artist and their innovative input, and the need to integrate those energies into the e-works agenda. As a graduate student involved in the trying job of getting our creative writers online, I wonder what would Ulmer recommend as the incentive to offer to those in the "aesthetic" community who might see the eworks approach as an imposition if not appropriation of their "spirit." Is technology Montmartre enough for them? My experience shows—not quite. In other words, given the lingering of the aesthetic of the artist/author, pomo notwithstanding, would not the e-worker be seen as a move of an technologically driven corporate identity? Would Ulmer's strategy for e-works validate the "anticipatory" in our ranksz? . . . What hypothetical institutional shifts can we invent—CATTwise or otherwise—to invoke a new creativity, a new, virtually-structured rhetoricity among UIC students and how do we involve those traditionally listed as "creative writers"? Are these people to be enlisted as "role models" and "facilitators"? and if so, how? In sum: what is the eworkers' responsibility to the creative community if it should draw on its paradigms?

Eva

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That's it for now—I'm glad to be aboard!