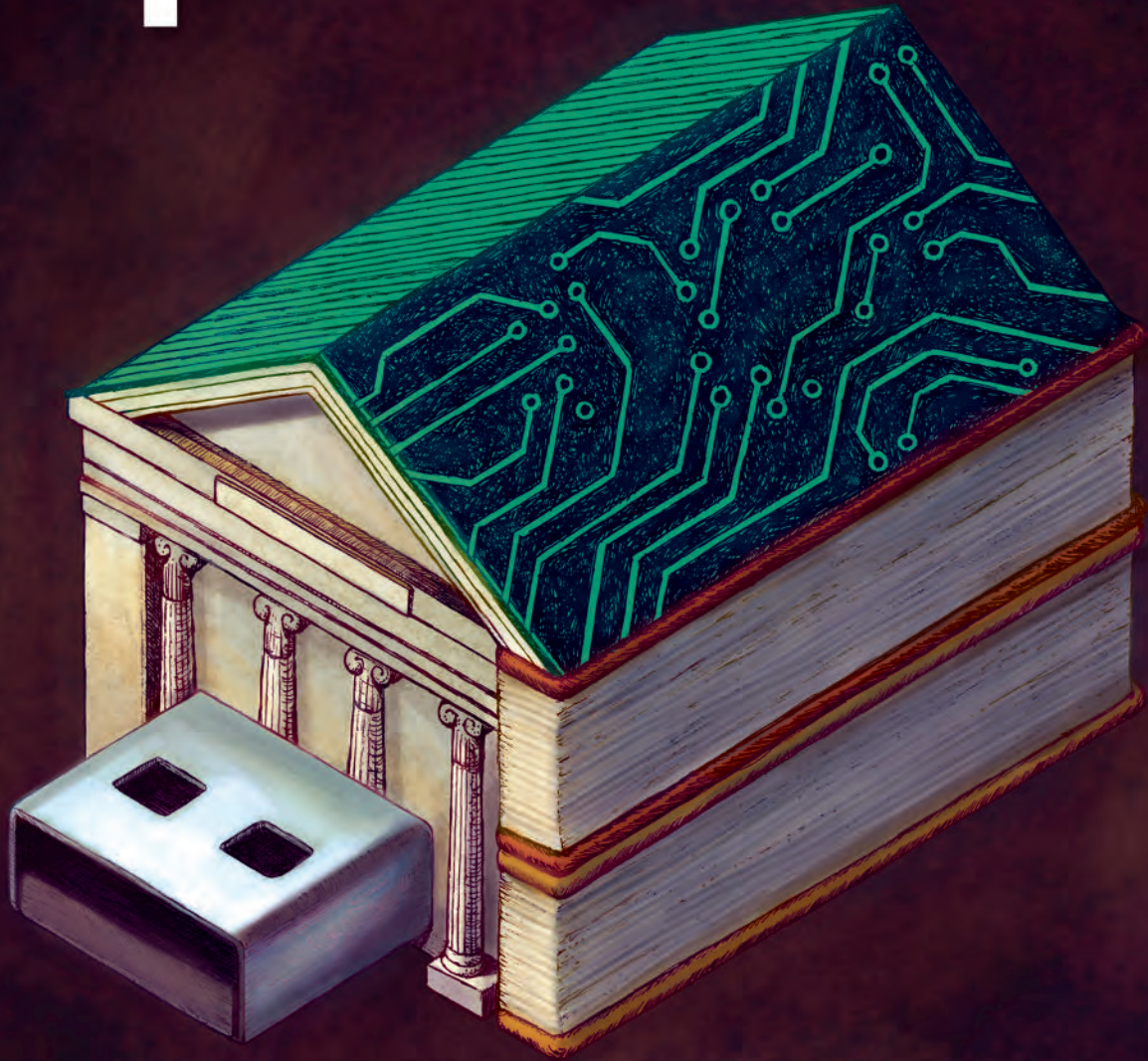# spectra

A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

— SPECIAL ISSUE —

Technology and Higher Education

spectra Volume 49, Number 1

IN THIS ISSUE

ABOUT SPECTRA

Spectra (ISSN 2157-3751), a publication of the National Communication Association (NCA), features articles on topics that are relevant to communication scholars, teachers, and practitioners. *Spectra* is one means through which NCA works toward accomplishing its mission of advancing communication as the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific, and aesthetic inquiry.

The NCA serves its members by enabling and supporting their professional interests. Dedicated to fostering and promoting free and ethical communication, the NCA promotes the widespread appreciation of the importance of communication in public and private life, the application of competent communication to improve the quality of human life and relationships, and the use of knowledge about communication to solve human problems.

Spectra is published four times a year (September, November, March, and May), and all NCA members receive a subscription. *Spectra* is also available via individual subscription for non-members.

In order to ensure that the content of *Spectra* reflects the interests and priorities of NCA members, the association has appointed a rotating advisory board that is composed of representatives from each of the four regional communication associations. The members of this group meet a few times a year to discuss ideas for themed issues, article topics, and authors. Advisory board members include:

Kevin Meyer, Illinois State University
Teresa Bergman, University of the Pacific
Janie Harden Fritz, Duquesne University
Jean DeHart, Appalachian State University

We thank the advisory board for its contributions.

2013 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

STORY IDEAS AND FEEDBACK

We welcome suggestions for future content. Please contact us at spectra@natcom.org.

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COVER ART

Messan Byll-Cataria is a student at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

The United "States" of Communication

We associate collectively as members of the National Communication Association to advance all forms of communication. Yet you've probably heard some members suggest that NCA is too big and has too many overlapping divisions. Despite our divisions, what common quest theoretically and conceptually unites us as a discipline and as an association?

Questions about the principles that provide coherence to communication study have echoed for millennia. Aristotle's opening line of *The Art of Rhetoric*, "Rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic," offers evidence that sub-parts and counterparts to what we investigate have existed from the foundation of the systematic study of human interaction. (Questions even linger as to whether communication is a discipline, but that's a conversation for another time.)

The 2012 NCA convention theme "Celebrate COMMunity" explored ideas about what unites us as a discipline and an association. Those who attended the opening general session titled "Celebrating What Unites Us as a Communication Community" heard distinguished scholars and educators Kory Floyd, Navita Cummings James, and Kathleen Hall Jamieson offer their ideas. Their thought-provoking insights are worth paraphrasing here, with a goal of not ending the conversation, but continuing it.

Biology. Professor Floyd sees us united through our existence as biological creatures. We each belong to the physical world. While acknowledging that biology will never provide the whole story about communication, he noted that studying our mental and physical processes from a biological perspective informs every aspect of our application of communication principles and practices. Communication would not be possible without a biological framework—our biology is our genetic "hardware" that significantly influences our cultural "software" that makes human communication possible. To ignore our biological existence in our study and practice of communication is to ignore that largest feature that unites us as humans.

E Pluribus, Technology, Ethics. Professor Navita Cummings James intriguingly claimed that our very diversity is what establishes a common perspective from which to study human communication. It is because of our differences that we seek commonalities—that we communicate. Our *e pluribus* is what facilitates *Unum*. Building on Dr. Floyd's ideas, she

suggested that our biological differences are among a host of diverse elements that give our study a common focus. In addition to our diversity, we are united by our increased use of emerging technologies that have the potential to shape fundamental aspects of communication study and society. And, foreshadowing Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamieson's perspective, Dr. James suggested that underlying all communication study should be explicit and enduring ethical principles.

The Rhetorical Ethical Imperative. Professor Kathleen Hall Jamieson argued that the communication discipline has a primary responsibility to teach rhetorical ethics. Because of the potency of rhetoric, it is imperative that we not only teach techniques of effective communication, but also the ethical responsibilities and applications of its use. She pointed to the ethically challenged political rhetoric of the 2012 presidential election as evidence of the significant need to use rhetoric responsibly. Deliberate deception, misrepresentation of opponent's positions, and attempts to "create truth" by repetitious recitations of false information seem standard contemporary rhetorical practice. Because ethical lapses often seem part of the cultural zeitgeist, communication scholars and educators should provide a strong counterbalance. If we don't, it's likely that we will slip further down the slope of unethical rhetorical practice. The communication discipline, Jamieson argues, is *the* discipline to advocate that we should be "good people speaking well," not only in the political arena but in all communication contexts. What unites us is an explicit mission to go beyond merely communicating information; we should uphold enduring ethical principles in every rhetorical act.

So, what do *you* think unites us in our research and teaching? Over the years I've heard a variety of responses to that question. Reduced to a word, some say our central focus is about: *messages* or *meaning* or *power* or *relationships*. What's your response? What gives our discipline coherence? Why are we here—together? I suggest that these are important questions to ask, whether during a faculty meeting, at the "water cooler," or in our classes. The goal of these conversations is not to seek definitive answers, but to identify and strengthen the current state of our communication union.

Steven Beebe
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SPOTLIGHT

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DATA ABOUT THE DISCIPLINE

According to a 2011 survey of over 2,800 academic leaders conducted by the Babson Survey Research Group and the College Board, 31% of all post-secondary students take at least one course online during their college career. As the chart below reveals, total enrollment in online courses in American colleges and universities has reached over five million. The 2011 Online Learning Survey is available free at http://sloanconsortium.org/publications/survey/going_distance_2011.

The 2011 NCA Department Chairs Survey of over 270 chairs or heads of Communication departments reveals that many programs are offering some online courses for Communication students. The chart (right) from the 2011 Survey shows that online courses are still relatively rare, with 45.2% of Communication programs offering fewer than five online courses on average, and 32.7% offering no online courses at all. The results from the NCA 2011 Department Chairs Survey are available in the Data About the Discipline section of www.natcom.org.

Online Communication Courses
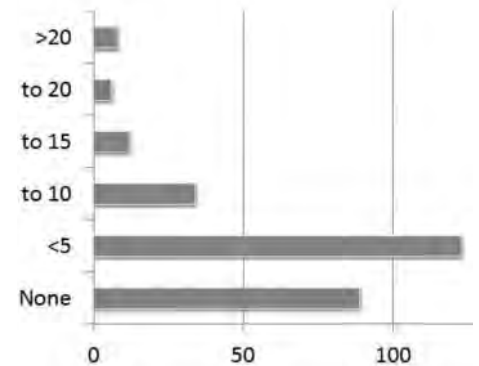
Source: 2011 Survey, NCA
n=271 department chairs

Enrollment in Degree-Granting Post Secondary Institutions
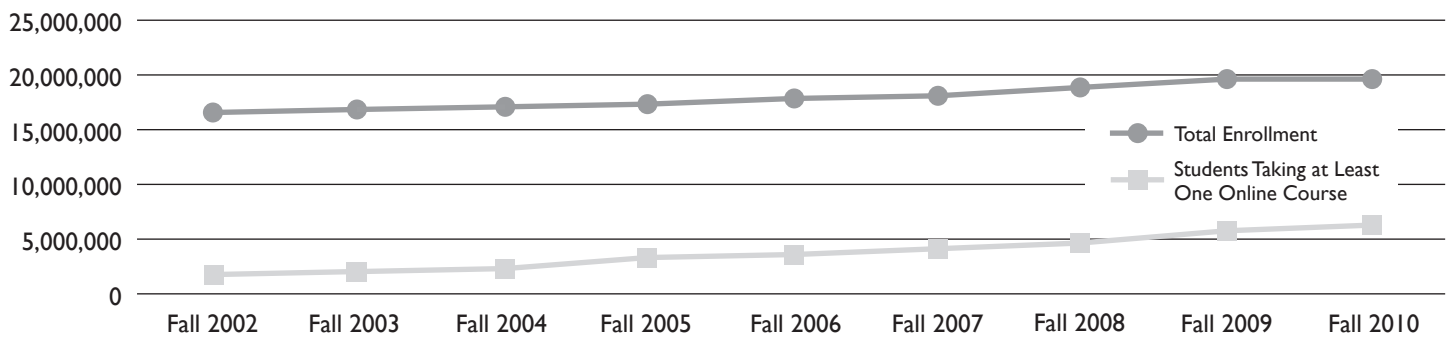
Source: Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States, 2011

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IN OUR JOURNALS

Laura Stafford & Joshua D. Hillyer, "Information and Communication Technologies in Personal Relationships," *Review of Communication 12* (2012): 290-213.

In this article, Stafford and Hillyer (University of Kentucky) briefly review the emergence of research on information communication technologies (ICT) and summarize current trends in the study of ICTs and personal relationships, including topics such as multicommunication, media multiplexity, and perpetual connectivity. Additionally, they pose several conundrums and complexities encountered when considering ICTs, such as the simultaneous management of connection and distance as well as the potential to both gain and lose control in interpersonal relationships.

Teaching with Technology:
New Ideas from *Communication Teacher*

Johny T. Garner & Marjorie M. Buckner, "Skyping Class: Using Videoconferencing in Organizational Communication Classes," *Communication Teacher 27* (2013): 1-5.

Objectives: Students will identify and evaluate the differences between videoconferencing and face-to-face communication. Students will also understand the issues that people in organizations encounter when using such technology.

C. Leigh Nelson & Eric M. Fife, "RateMyProfessors.com: A Validity Exercise," *Communication Teacher 27* (2013): 6-10.

Objectives: Students will analyze different types of validity using the popular website, RateMyProfessors.com.

Elizabeth G. Tolman, "Observing Cell Phone Use and Enhancing Collaborative Learning Using a Wiki," *Communication Teacher 27* (2013): 16-20.

Objective: Students will be able to identify communication competence characteristics and enhance their understanding of the implications of cell phone use.

Joshua A. Barbour, "Consider Clicking In: Using Audience Response Systems to Spark Discussion," *Communication Teacher 27* (2013): 38-44.

Objectives: Students will apply and evaluate course concepts through daily discussion activities and class dialogues supported by audience response systems (i.e., clickers).

SPOTLIGHT

TEACHING

Leslie Reynard, (Washburn University) received an NCA Grant to Advance the Discipline to support research about teaching methods in online public speaking courses. Professor Reynard conducted a qualitative content analysis of online public speaking course syllabi (n=44).

That analysis revealed a range of options and experiences for online public speaking students. Students enrolled in online courses delivered their speeches to as few as two audience members and to groups as large as ten. Some students videotaped their speeches and mailed them to the instructor while others posted their speeches to YouTube. Reynard concludes her analysis with a list of best practices for online public speaking courses. Her recommendations include specific expectations, conveyed on the course syllabus, about student "check ins" to the course, peer review of student speeches, and clear information about where students can go for help with the technological aspects of participating in an online course. Read the full report on NCA 's website at www. natcom.org/psonline.

For more about the challenges of teaching public speaking online, read the article by Everett E. Corum on page 20 of this issue of Spectra. *Information about NCA "Funds to Advance the Discipline" can be found at www.natcom.org/grants.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We encourage readers to respond to *Spectra* articles through letters to the editor. Letters should be no longer than 150 words, must refer to an article that appeared in the last two issues of the magazine, and must include the writer's city, state, institutional affiliation, and phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity and space. Due to space constraints, not all submitted letters will be published. We will make every effort to confer with writers about edits to their letters.

The deadline for submitting a letter to run in the May issue of *Spectra* is March 31. Please email submissions to spectra@natcom.org with the subject line "letter to the editor."

PUBLIC PRESENCE

NCA routinely promotes communication scholarship to the media in an effort to make the results of communication research accessible to a broad public audience. A recent example that yielded substantial coverage in the national and international press is the article "Rethinking College Students' Self-Regulation and Sustained Attention: Does Text Messaging During Class Influence Cognitive Learning" *Communication Teacher* 61 3 (2012): 185-204, by Fang-Yi Flora Wei, Ken Wang, and Michael Klausner of the University of Pittsburgh, Bradford.

Research Question: What is the relationship among college students' self-regulation, texting during class, sustained attention to classroom learning, and cognitive learning?

Key Findings: Employing structural equation modeling to analyze a sample of 190 undergraduate students, the researchers found that texting during class partially mediates the effect of students' self-regulation on their sustained attention to classroom learning. In addition, the survey indicated

that students' sustained attention fully mediates the effect of their texting during class on experience-oriented learning. Results suggest that self-regulated students are less likely to text during class and are more likely to sustain their attention to learning which, in turn, facilitates cognitive learning.

Press Coverage: 75 + media placements including, among others: *Chicago Tribune,*

HealthDay, *La Opinion, La Raza*, MSN.com, *News Day, Science Daily, Scientific American*, Technonews, *Times of India*, Univision, UPI, *U.S. News & World Report*, and YahooHealth.

Please feel free to share your newsworthy scholarship with NCA via Arlyn G. Riskind at ariskind@natcom.org.

Technology and Higher Education

The pace of change we experience in everyday life could not be more dizzying. Driven by the introduction and spread of new technologies, these changes can of course be exhilarating as well as frustrating, foreboding as well as freeing. At work or at play, nettled by technology and its requirements, we are reminded continually that today is not quite the same as yesterday, and that the world in which we live is quickly and irreversibly changing.

Scholars, students, and administrators are well aware that technology is rapidly transforming the landscape of higher education. From teaching and learning to research and writing, every aspect of the university experience is subject to technological change. Communication scholars and teachers are uniquely positioned to contemplate those changes as well as fashion creative responses to help shape the future of higher education.

This special issue of *Spectra* contemplates some of the ways that technology transforms higher education. In this issue, we offer four diverse perspectives that address different aspects of the relationship between technology and higher education, with a special focus on particular outcomes for communication scholars. First, Anne Balsamo describes an innovative new project designed to bring together feminist technology scholars and media practitioners in an experimental new type of cyberlearning experience, a Distributed Open Collaborative Course, or DOCC. Next, José Antonio Bowen speculates that technology will likely drive better marketing practices that will fundamentally alter the current message professed by almost all colleges and universities today. Third, Nicholas Bowman and Elizabeth Cohen write about the many new opportunities that online social networks offer for scholars seeking to conduct survey research. Finally, Everett Corum discusses the challenges of teaching a core communication course—public speaking—in a primarily online environment.

In anticipation of NCA's centennial in 2014, we also introduce something new in this issue of *Spectra*—a special feature that we call "NCA's First 100 Years." Every issue from now until NCA's centennial celebration will feature a discussion of some aspect of NCA's history, recognizing the challenges, triumphs, and possibilities of the thousands of men and women who shaped and defined NCA's first 100 years. The initial offering in this series, on page 15, is connected to this issue's special theme by contemplating the impact that a radical new technology—radio—once had on the academic discipline of communication. ■

A WORK OF FEMINIST TECHNOCULTURAL INNOVATION

Creating an Alternative Genre of MOOC

By Anne Balsamo

In early 2012, Alex Juhasz—a feminist professor of media art at Pitzer College—and I convened a small group of colleagues who were all accomplished scholars and artists working on topics of feminism and technology. That initial gathering inaugurated a process of what I refer to as feminist technocultural innovation focused on the activation of a global network of feminist technology scholars and media practitioners that is now called FemTechNet.

By late 2012, FemTechNet had initiated a "cyberlearning experiment" that engages experts in science and technology studies, media artists, online learning instructors, and media systems designers. The organizing infrastructure of this cyberlearning experiment is the creation of a new genre of online education that we call a *Distributed Open Collaborative Course (DOCC)* on the topic of "Dialogues in Feminism and Technology."

The DOCC 2013 will involve the participation of instructors and students at 15 universities and colleges in the US and elsewhere from September – November 2013. The DOCC will be "open" to other types of learners: independent studies, self-directed learners, and drop-in learners. The primary aim of this project is to manifest a work of collaborative feminist technological innovation for the purposes of addressing the educational needs of students interested in advanced topics in feminist science-technology studies. DOCC's are built on the recognition that expertise is distributed within networks. The organization of a DOCC addresses the collaborative nature of learning in a digital age.

We also seek to contribute to the digital archive of material on the history of women and technology and on the contribution of feminist STS scholarship to the histories of science and technology and to archived discussions of STS topics. And finally, we seek to engender a set of digital practices among women and girls, to teach and encourage their participation in writing the technocultural histories of the future by becoming active participants in the creation of global digital archives.

Open, distributed and participatory online learning and information exchange have existed in various ways since the mid 1990s when the Internet in the United States became more available to large numbers of people; teachers and businesses began to see the potential for pedagogic and training related uses of the Internet. With the wide scale emphasis on the development of the open-courseware movement in the early 2000s, online instructors (situated within diverse educational and training institutional contexts) have stepped up efforts to create a digital collection of learning materials to be freely shared and used by online participants. Models of online courses—that include protocols for the use of open courseware materials and techniques of communication among participants—serve as the infrastructure of the open-courseware movement.

These models, or what we might refer to as "genres" of online courses, are vitally important to the success or not of these open learning network aspirations. Genres of courses provide conventions for the use of digital learning materials and structure the participation of learners and teachers.

In 2007, the term "MOOC (massive open online course)" was coined to name a particular type of online educational experience. It builds on the naming conventions of a specific genre of game (MOOG—massively open online game), and extends the logic of "massively open" to the structure of online learning experiences. In November 2011, the idea of a MOOC spread wildly when two professors at Stanford University reported their success in attracting thousands of web-enabled students to their "Introduction to AI" online course. After the experience, the instructors went on to establish two distance education start-up efforts: 1) Udacity and 2) Coursera. By the end of 2012, more than 1 million students had signed up for Coursera courses. With these "out-of-the-gate" enrollment numbers, the concept of a MOOC as the delivery infrastructure for a particular kind of online learning has taken hold in the broader popular imagination.

In the aftermath of the celebratory publicity for the Stanford experiment, many media pundits conflated MOOCs with online distance education, but in fact the two are not coterminous. With the emphasis on the term "massive," MOOCs are an attempt to scale-up the online learning experience such that it is available to extremely large numbers of learners: in the tens of thousands. While it may have been an aspiration of some institutions that their distance education offerings would attract large numbers of off-site students, until

> Since mid 1990s, cyberfeminists have spent a lot of time and energy in developing methods for inclusive teaching.

the Stanford MOOC experiment, no one had successfully delivered such a large-scale effort. Bracketing the question of what "success" means at the scale of 60,000 students, what the Stanford MOOC demonstrated was the feasibility of networking a large and globally distributed population of "students" to participate (in differing ways) in a shared learning experience.

The Stanford MOOC codified certain conventions such that MOOCs now are generally understood to be organized in the following way:

- Instructors at a single institution;
- Offering an institutionally-specific and "branded" expertise;
- That is "distributed" through online networks;
- To learners who self-select to participate in an "open" course.

While the infrastructure of the course is actually rhizomatic—i.e., based on the rhizome nature of Internets—the course conventions of a MOOC have evolved to enact a centralized "tree" structure of participation. Expertise is located in one digital place (that takes the form of the brand-name university and its faculty avatars); this digital place is the central stalk of expertise; students, according to this model, are end nodes of distributed branches off the main stalk of expertise. In the best cases, networked connections among students are encouraged, but for the most part the branching of the network isn't the main point of the course, rather, the objective remains the reproduction of a centralized and institutionally-sanctioned source of expertise that can be delivered more efficiently to greater numbers of learners by exploding the typical instructor-to-student ratios.

Since the early years of Internet availability, cyberfeminists have explored the use of the Internet for dialogue and participation across various socio-economic layers worldwide. Access and skills for women and various economically underprivileged communities of the world (such as populations from the developing world and inner cities of the U.S.) was a central concern for feminists in developing distributed and participatory environments for learning, training and information exchange. Since mid 1990s, cyberfeminists have spent a lot of time and energy in developing methods for inclusive teaching.

The project under development by FemTechNet proposes an alternative genre of MOCC that we call a DOCC: Distributed Open Collaborative Course. The FemTechNet

DOCC seeks to engage a wide network of feminist teachers, scholars and practitioners who have been working (as individuals and as members of various communities and networks) to provide distributed and participatory access to learning, educational materials, and technology more broadly. What we term "feminist pedagogy" in technological environments shares some of the basic principles that underlie the historical development of MOOCs. Yet because women non-profit workers, advocacy groups and cyberfeminist teachers and scholars have spent almost two decades or more centrally focused on issues of access and strategies for inclusive and distributed teaching in online environments, we have well developed plans and strategies that speak to the criticisms leveled against several existing MOOC models. The fundamental difference is that a DOCC recognizes and is built on the understanding that expertise is distributed throughout a network, among participants situated in diverse institutional contexts, within diverse material, geographic, and national settings, and who embody and perform diverse identities (as teachers, as students, as media-makers, as activists, as trainers, as members of various publics, for example).

The DOCC 2013: "Dialogues in Feminism and Technology" will involve participants from around the globe who teach "NODAL courses" configured within a particular educational institutional setting. There is no SINGLE credit granting institution. Credit is offered to students through mechanisms that are already established within particular/situated institutions. As of January 1, 2013, instructors at fifteen universities and colleges have indicated interest in participating the DOCC 2013. Learning

The popularity of MOOCs spread wildly after Stanford University attracted thousands of students with an open course on artificial intelligence in 2011.

> The fundamental difference is that a DOCC recognizes and is built on the understanding that expertise is distributed throughout a network.

activities are being collaboratively developed among FemTechNet participants, some of who will teach NODAL courses, and others who are providing specific topic expertise.

Each instructor of a NODAL course will create a course that is best suited to her or his students, institution, locale, and discipline. A core group of DOCC 2013 facilitators (led by Anne Balsamo and Alex Juhasz) will provide support for the instructors of nodal courses and maintain a web-based course site where learning materials can be uploaded and archived. Participants will be encouraged to share materials, assignments, activities, comments, and observations so as to link learners across disciplines, institutions and

national boundaries. These efforts will then become part of an extended archive, database and dialogue on the topics of feminism and technology. There are multiple channels of collaboration: among instructors of nodal courses, among students in those courses, among those who "drop-in" to the course, and among those who are temporarily shifted: those who participate and those who will use the archive of learning materials in the future. People can participate through independent studies arranged by students and teachers in other learning contexts, as self-directed learners who aren't necessarily interested in institutional learning credit, and as drop-in learners who tune in for a particular discussion or topic.

The DOCC 2013: "Dialogues in Feminism and Technology" will address both the histories and cutting edge scholarship on feminism and technology produced through art, science and visual studies. An online space (currently under construction) provides key infrastructural elements for the DOCC:

■ A 10-week series of online **"Video Dialogues"** that feature prominent feminist scholars of science and technology in paired discussions on a specific topic.

■ An **asynchronous online discussion forum** for cross-network exchange and dialogue.

■ Instructions and prompts for a shared pedagogical exercise called **"Storming Wikipedia"** that can be tailored for different learning levels.

■ Instructions for creating and disseminating **"Keyword Videos"** on topics relating to feminism and technology.

The "Video Dialogues" online se-

ries will include 6-10 recorded conversations between experts in feminist science and technology studies produced in advance of the course. For each of ten weeks, one video dialogue will be uploaded for viewing and discussion. The list of speakers to be invited to participate in the video dialogues include 20 experts in various aspects of technology and society that have been identified by broad and basic set of themes. The list of themes—developed in conversation among FemTechNet participants in an ad-hoc distributed discussions during 2012—address key topics in the histories of feminism, science, and technology: archive, bodies, differences, discipline, ethics, labor, machine,

place, race, sexualities, systems.

The shared pedagogical activity called "Storming Wikipedia" is designed to write women and feminist scholarship of science and technology back into our web-based cultural archives. The broader impact of this effort is to address and support the interest of women and girls in STE(A) M topics by revisiting the (often forgotten) histories of the engagements among women, technological innovation, scientific practice and knowledge making, and the imagination. By engaging in the practices of editing and revising Wikipedia pages, we seek to address the gendered division of labor of online encyclopedia authoring and editing which is skewed now toward

male participation. Through the "Storming Wikipedia" activities we also seek to engage a wider group of participants in the effort of writing and maintaining a digital archive of feminist work in science, technology and media so that the histories of the future will be well populated by the ideas and people that took feminism seriously as a source of inspiration and innovation in the creation of new technocultures.

To join the FemTechNet effort or to learn more about it, please visit the recently launched platform for feminism, new media, science and technology called FEMBOT at http:// fembotcollective.org. Or contact me at: annebalsamo@gmail.com. ■

Anne Balsamo
was recently appointed the Dean of the School of Media Studies at the New School for Public Engagement in New York. Previously she was a full professor at the University of Southern California (USC) in the Annenberg School of Communication and the Interactive Media Division of the School of Cinematic Arts. From 2004-2007, she served as the

Director of the Institute for Multimedia Literacy at USC where she created one of the first academic programs in multimedia literacy across the curriculum. In 2002, she co-founded Onomy Labs, Inc. a Silicon Valley technology design and fabrication company that builds cultural technologies. From 1999-2002, she was a member of RED (Research on Experimental Documents), a collaborative research-design group at Xerox PARC who created experimental reading devices and new media genres. Balsamo served as

project manager and new media designer for the development of RED's interactive museum exhibit, XFR: Experiments in the Future of Reading that toured Science/ Technology Museums in the U.S. from 2000-2003. In her recent book, *Designing Culture: The Technological Imagination at Work* (Duke, 2011), Balsamo offers a manifesto for rethinking the role of culture in the process of technological innovation in the 20th Century. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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In partnership with Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), NCA publishes 11 academic journals that are designed to provide timely, essential information on communication. You can stay in touch with all the latest research by signing up for table of contents alerts from Taylor & Francis Online. There are two different types of alert service available: email alerts and RSS feeds.

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lished online. In addition, for many NCA journals, you can also register to receive an email each time a new article is available online, ahead of an issue's publication date.

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tors for a listing of available readers if you don't already have one.

To set up an alert for a publication go to Taylor & Francis Online (www. tandfonline.com), locate your favorite NCA journal, select "Alert Me" and then choose either "TOC email alert" or "TOC RSS feed." For email alerts you may be required to sign into the website, if you haven't already. For RSS alerts, depending on the reader you are using, you will then need to click "Subscribe to this feed" or paste the URL into the field in your reader and submit your request for a new feed.

MORE MARKETING, MORE MISSION

How Technology is Driving the Branding of Higher Education—and Why that Might be Good for Us

By José Antonio Bowen

The news is that CMO's (chief marketing officers) have arrived on college campuses. *The Wall Street Journal* ("Marketing Pros: Big Brand on Campus," August 15, 2012) suggests that budget cuts, rising tuition and more competition for students have lead to new branding efforts, but like most of the general public, they might equally wonder *what took us so long*?

It is also true that technology is about to increase competition. In one way, technology levels the playing field: every college can now offer its own version of Economics 101 to the world. With everyone frantically measuring outcomes, will the "best" courses emerge as market leaders? Not universally. As the marketing pros know, increased competition also makes brand awareness more important. We don't know if a student actually learns more at Yale, but parents keep sending students because being a part of the Yale brand opens career doors. Technology will change our branding problems and increase our need for consistent messaging, but it also highlights a more fundamental and long-standing problem of higher education.

Our products are largely the same on every campus. Most of us offer nearly identical 4-year, 120-credit degrees with similar majors that are advertised in familiar brochures where mixed-race groups of students talk earnestly to tweed-clad professors on grassy campuses about personal growth, life-long memories and alumni connections. What's to market? "We're the same, only better!"

For decades, we've made this worse by limiting our messages and mission statements to platitudes about excellence and quality. Then, as if to underscore the irony of academic institutions not understanding that those were meaningless differentiators, we have allowed a single set of ratings by *U.S. News and World Report* to define excellence. Hundreds of American universities have a board-approved goal of cracking the top 25 or top 50 club, but we can't all be in the top 50 and we should not settle for one definition of quality. It is poor marketing, but it is an even worse organizational strategy.

Such undifferentiated competition has not been good for students or universities. Just like any other organization, a university needs a focused and unique mission. It is silly (and confusing to consumers) all to claim that we are more "excellent" than the next school. If we all continue to chase the same set of metrics in the same rankings, we make the playing field too narrow and serve only a tiny sliver of students. We don't actually want all of our universities to be like Harvard.

This is an opportunity to start a new conversation about both value and distinctiveness. Maybe our dorms are better or your rock wall is higher, but which schools focus on job skills, or a broader education? Maybe we offer a five-year degree (with an entry year for high school dropouts) while you offer majors that no one else does. What about a school that requires real science literacy for non-majors or one that emphasizes slow thinking or oral communication? What about programs for parents? The marketing teams will have a hard time until we start to think more carefully about our individual missions and products.

How is a communication officer going to distinguish the North Carolina State University's dedication to "excellent teaching" from the "ex-

cellence in teaching" at the University of Oklahoma? More urgently, how do we distinguish the benefit of our highly expensive excellent teaching, from the now free and increasingly excellent teaching now taking place online? It's nice that we all want to be "one of the world's premier institutions of higher education, devoted to transforming the lives of our students" (Florida State University), but is it good for higher education or society that we are all pursuing the same singular mission?

The biggest differentiator in higher education remains location. If there is a difference between the mission of Kansas State ("to foster excellent teaching, research, and service that develop a highly skilled and educated citizenry necessary to advancing the well-being of Kansas, the nation, and the international community") and the University of Texas ("to provide high-quality educational opportunities for the enhancement of the human resources of Texas, the nation, and the world through intellectual and personal growth"), it is only in which state they serve. We all desire to "advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the State through quality programs of teaching, research, and service" (University of Alabama). Alumni networks are indeed a benefit of college, and since those benefits are intensified locally, there is a real life advantage to attending a college near where you want to work. Ironically, the local brand advantage of our product is one thing we are reluctant to use in our marketing: don't look for the tagline "wear purple to your job interview."

We've actually had plenty of marketing in higher education, but we call it athletics. It is easy to underestimate how name recognition brings value to our regions and institutions. State legislators and city councils like seeing the name of their state or city on television and sweatshirts, with or without the word "university"

(so the California State University, Fresno, brands itself Fresno State). When Georgetown won the NCAA Basketball tournament in 1984, it got a boost in applications the next year, but so did George Washington University and George Mason University. Athletics budgets are large, but marketers know the media impact of a winning team is enormous, cutting through the market noise with a positive message about the university.

> Technology will change our branding problems and increase our need for consistent messaging, but it also highlights a more fundamental and long-standing problem of higher education.

But even if you could spend an amount equal to the athletics budget on your campus on advertising for your university, do you have a distinct enough message that it would cut through the market noise as effectively? (The University of Phoenix may not have sports teams—yet—but buying the stadium name for the Arizona Cardinal's was a savvy move.) The difference between our badger and your beaver has become the difference in our brands.

Now technology has given us new geographically unspecific online products that are increasing competition and providing new price and brand pressure. Our response should be to focus on our unique value: what is it that we can do better in a physical or residential classroom? (I've given my own answer in *Teaching Naked: How Moving Tech-*

nology out of your College Classroom will Improve Student Learning, Jossey-Bass, 2012.) After all, the internet has made learning exponentially easier. It used to be that universities had a monopoly on quantum mechanics lectures, now Stanford and MIT are giving those away. The availability of these free resources should also make all teaching better. No one needs to spend another minute writing an introductory lecture on the periodic table. If students are going to pay high tuition, or even just buy gas to drive to campus and search for the elusive parking space, then we must offer them a classroom experience that goes beyond the free (and increasingly excellent) content available on the internet.

Many colleges, however, hope to continue to sell a very expensive "experience." In the last decades, the residence halls, tanning beds and football stadiums may have increased applications, but they also chain us to higher costs forever. The online competition will not have this extra cost. If our mission is really to deliver an excellent education (none of our mission statements say "to provide students with the best four-years of your life!") we should probably look more closely at what unique educational value we can provide.

Universities are already segmented by types of students and areas of content, especially in the arts and professional areas like nursing, broadcasting, or business. We have not seen as much segmentation for undergraduate writing or pre-med, but we will. The new business model of the "long tail" suggests that technology will foster more segmentation and allow more niche markets to emerge. (Chris Anderson has described the new business model of selling a relatively large number of unique items while selling relatively small numbers of each as a "long tail" distribution of goods. See *The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business is Selling Less of More*, Hyperion,

2006.) In this same way, in addition to specializing in content areas or even broad types of students (like commuter vs. residential or part-time vs. full-time), schools could focus on even smaller sub-categories.

Instead of all trying to be more like the residential leafy campuses with research programs (that trained virtually all of our faculty) we might examine the needs of students in our local area. Again, our campuses are already mostly distinguished by their location: even Ivy League schools have a higher in-region student profile. State schools already have an in-state monopoly on tuition costs and we already know that the benefits of our alumni networks are mostly regional.

One of the lessons of Borders bookstores is to leverage your assets. When Borders arrived, it had something the smaller independents did not have: inventory. As Amazon began to compete with Borders for inventory, Borders should have found some way to leverage the loyalty of its existing customers to stay vital in the marketplace. Instead of reducing staff and letting the stores get run-down, Borders should have done the opposite: give people more reasons to visit. So the "college as experience" strategy will work for the most elite students and those who simply must join a frat. That probably is not the *U.S. News* top 100, but it is the schools that have a unique national brand. From a marketing perspective it matters little if the brand is based upon sports, academics or alumni: either parents will pay for your brand or they won't. Borders is gone, but many of the more idiosyncratic independent booksellers that once feared Borders survive. Universities will each need to find a niche; becoming more idiosyncratic might be a better strategy than becoming more excellent.

There is a reason why there is only one Amazon: they are the best and cheapest at what they do. If you want to compete, you need to offer some-thing better, cheaper or different. Higher education has become too generic. With the same increasingly expensive products on every campus, we mostly compete through discounting. While online degrees won't affect the best brands or appeal to the best students, they will carve into the market share in the middle. Like it or not, online products are more convenient and they will force physical universities to place more emphasis on convenience. If that is all we do, however, it will only be a temporary fix. For universities in the middle, a new culture of innovation and change will be required. To survive we will need to offer more value for someone. I am not suggesting that we cede higher quality education at low cost to the online providers, but rather that we understand there is where the most competition will be.

Real marketing will be good for higher education. It is a chance to tell prospective students about what is different about your campus or your courses. The questions marketers ask will now be crucial: Who are you serving? What do your students and communities need and want? Who benefits? How does your cost vs. benefit compare? What is your added value? Most of us are wasting resources trying to be "one of the nation's top educational institutions" when instead we should be investing in providing our mostly local consumers with more reasons to choose us over cheaper online alternatives. The campus marketing push should stimulate a conversation about the unique mission of each institution.

This is a pretty radical idea. As a faculty member, I recognize my own desire to be left alone to teach what I want to teach and how I want to teach it—just bring me students. As one of my most distinguished faculty told the marketing team, "I can only tell you what is in the can. You need to figure out how to label that." I am suggesting that we flip this process.

To ask "what unique product might we offer that the market needs?" is routine for other organizations. But it will be new for higher education.

Marketers can help us build brands and find new labels to put on our educational products. Before we slap a new label on our can, however, we need to stop and think about what we want in it. This is an opportunity. While technology will massively increase the generic competition for higher education, most of us have been preparing by using the same old strategy. For-profit schools will continue to outspend not-for-profit schools on marketing, but the response should not be to have even glossier brochures. We need a better, more refined message, but that will require a better and more refined mission. Now, at the beginning of this enormous disruption to higher education, there are millions of niche markets to fill and all of us already enjoy some local advantage. Let's think about what we do that is excellent, but also distinctive. What's in your can? ∎

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The advent of radio profoundly affected American society. By 1933, two-thirds of homes owned at least one radio receiver, and people quickly adapted to receiving news and experiencing public events through radio broadcasts. During the so-called "Golden Age of Radio" time spent with popular programs became a focal point of family life. As radio wove into the fabric of everyday American life, adapting to and studying this new technology became an increasingly important subject for communication scholars.

Adapting to New Technology
Speech Professors Confront the Power of Radio

Leading up to NCA's centennial commemoration in 2014, Spectra *will feature short columns detailing some aspect of the history of the communication arts & sciences as a discipline. Below we offer the first of this series.*

In 1931, the editors of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* published an editorial, asking "When is Speech not Speech?" Noting that "a large share of public speaking is being done over the radio," and that "an increasingly large share of acting is being done in the talking-picture studio," these speech professors wondered, searchingly, "Is it not true that radio and the talkies are forcing upon us the necessity for a complete reconsideration of principles and techniques?"

As communication professors and students over eighty years later wonder about the power and influence of Pinterest and Twitter, fret about the social isolation wrought by video gaming and the Internet, and try to measure the power of Facebook in shaping interpersonal relationships, there is some virtue and comfort in recognizing that our forbearer "speech" teachers also faced the specter of technological change. How did these men and women adapt to the rise of radio in society? What was the impact of this mass media development on their teaching? On research?

The editorial writers in that 1931 *QJS* noted that "radio now stands sixth in size among all our nation's industries." The same April issue of the journal featured an address given by Henry Adams Bellows at the 1930 National Association of Teachers of Speech (NATS) Chicago convention. Bellows was then vice-president of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) and had formerly served on the Federal Radio Commission. His remarks noted, quite powerfully, the tremendous impact of radio on the nature and practice of public communication: "Radio is doing all the time, seventeen hours a day seven days a week, for millions of people what heretofore the pulpit, the state, and the lecture platform have done relatively infrequently and for a far smaller number of people—it is providing audible models of speech."

By the 1930s, then, speech teachers across the United States were reckoning with this powerful new technology, this paradigm-altering medium of communication. The University of Michigan's Sherman P. Lawton published, in June 1930's *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, a long (24 pages—for the time, a very long essay) investigation of "The Principles of Effective Radio Speaking." For Lawton and for many speech scholars and teachers, the advent of radio posed meaningful and challenging questions of standards and pedagogy. As radio executive L.B. Tyson said at the 1932 NATS Los Angeles convention (in an address printed in *QJS*), "radio is an infant industry and has hardly had time to establish very definite standards in respect to announcers or a standard form of speech."

Speech teachers and scholars saw themselves at the forefront of the effort to shape and determine quality and training in radio speech and radio speaking. *QJS*, throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s, published many different examinations of the radio speaking curriculum and the radio course, including the Michigan Association of Teachers of Speech "Suggested Outline for a One-Semester Course in Radio Speech," Ohio State's Donald W. Riley's attempt to elucidate "The Place of Radio in the Speech Curriculum Today," and a reprinting of the Federal Radio Education Committee's "Standards for College Courses in Radio Broadcasting." High schools, colleges, and universities across the United States incorporated radio training into their curricula; textbooks, workbooks, and technological equipment were marketed to aid in the teaching of radio speaking.

"Sooner or later," the 1931 editorial in *QJS* concluded, "our profession must take cognizance of the special and peculiar speech problems inherent in this new speech situation." And as with all "new speech situations" before and since the growth of radio, the cognizance taken by the communication arts & sciences to the advent of radio was guided by egalitarian and democratic impulses. As the *QJS* editors realized 82 years ago, "training in radio speaking should not be regarded as special vocational training for the few. Today every man who expects to fill a place of prominence and responsibility in the world is potentially a radio speaker." Or a Twitter follower. Or a Facebook friend. Or a MOOC student. ∎

> "Twenty-five years ago there were no courses and no activities in radio. Commercial radio as we know it was still in the future, and we teachers were unaware of its coming interest to us."

James M. O'Neill (1st President, NCA)
Remarks at the Opening Session of the 25th Annual Convention of the National Association of Teachers of Speech, Washington, DC, December 30, 1940.

"AND LO, WE HAVE CONTACT"

The Influence of Digital Communication Technology on the Research Process

By Nicholas David Bowman and Elizabeth Cohen

"Lo..." This was the first digital message transmitted through computing technology, when two nodes in the ARPANET – the U.S. Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency Network – attempted to send the text message "LOGIN" from a workstation at the University of California-Los Angeles to another station at Stanford University. After an hour or so of troubleshooting, the computer terminal at Stanford registered the complete "LOGIN" message, and the world's first digital communication technology was operational.

From its inception, a core function of digital communication technologies has been to facilitate the sharing of information – literally for the modern-day Internet, for University-based research scientists to share their data. ARPANET was an initiative from the U.S. Department of Defense to speed up scientific discovery in a day of Space Races, Arms Races and other Cold War pressures, yet the goal of these technologies remains the same today.

We suggest that modern digital communication technologies have the potential to greatly enhance the collection and distribution of scientific data. Moreover, as social scientists – and scholars of communication – we are particularly well-positioned to make use of this new research tool given the phenomenon we study: the creation and exchange of information from one another.

Given the immense popularity of digital communication technology, one apparent use from a research standpoint is the collection of data online. Online data can be collected quickly and inexpensively, often with relatively little inconvenience to respondents – many of whom already "live" online and thus are being reached in an increasingly naturalistic environment.

Web-based survey research opens up a world of quick and usually inexpensive sampling possibilities. Discussion boards, listservs, and social network sites can all be used to recruit study volunteers that in the past may have been difficult to locate. Members of NCA who receive e-mails from the association's listserv, CRTNET, are probably not unfamiliar with such practices. NCA members often use the listserv to request help from fellow members in finding survey participants belonging to special subpopulations.

Online discussion boards can be used for study recruitment in a similar fashion. For instance, posting survey volunteer requests to discussion boards or Facebook groups about television shows have given communication researchers access to different fan communities. In a study from our research group, a survey designed for World of Warcraft players was distributed by cluster sampling from every nth WoW server (each server representing different avatar communities). Online sampling of subpopulations is particularly useful for scholars studying communication practices among stigmatized groups (e.g. teenage mothers, drug users, or people suffering from mental illness), working with online group moderators to earn the trust of group members.

Surveys posted as paid advertisements on social network sites can also be targeted to specific groups. For example, advertisements on Facebook

can be targeted precisely to demographic and special interests groups – as broad as "males" and as specific as "male fans of Elton John and Yuengling Beer who have interest in Morgantown pubs." The advantage of using Facebook to target respondents is that researchers potentially have access to the one of the largest and most socially rich online databases (current estimates suggest that Facebook has no less than 1.01 billion monthly users). Yet, a notable downside is the financial cost, as researchers must bid against companies with much deeper advertising budgets potentially targeting the same audiences. Moreover, advertisers pay per click rather than per completed survey, which means that not every penny spent will result in usable data.

Of course, researchers can forego the financial risk by harnessing the connective power of social network sites like Facebook and Twitter for snowball sampling techniques. Researchers can post surveys using their own accounts (or accounts specifically created for research groups, such as Louisiana State University's Media Effects Lab, or @LSUMediaMEL on Twitter; http://twitter.com/LSUMediaMEL) and use the different social networks to distribute the surveys. Although such a technique might do little to overcome potential problems with snowball sampling techniques such as community biases, using social media-driven snowballing techniques can drastically speed up the distribution process. As well, the mechanics of social networks may work to expose the information to a more diverse set of social groups. Researchers using social snowballing techniques can also request research invitations to be shared with specific criteria by placing them in different pages or groups, tagging them with unique information (e.g., using a Twitter hashtag #videogames to target gamers), or merely stating participation requirements in content posts.

Other web tools are being developed to help researchers identify volunteers in specific subpopulations. For instance, ResearchMatch.org (https://www.researchmatch.org) is a National Institutes of Health-funded website that matches researchers with study volunteers. So far, over 30,000 research volunteers belong to this registry. Provided they first meet certain requirements, researchers can access this pool for free and search for volunteers that have certain health backgrounds. Although this site is designed for health research, its development speaks to the potential for other communication-related pools to be developed.

Web-based survey research opens up a world of quick and usually inexpensive sampling possibilities.

Even when no specific subpopulations are of interest, discussion boards can aid researchers in collecting quick data among more general online populations. One study we were involved with posted invitations to participate in the study on 29 different Yahoo Groups pages. To increase diversity, groups were randomly selected from each of 14 main interest areas on the Yahoo site (e.g., Entertainment & Arts, Science, Business and Finance) with links posted to no more than three user groups within each area.

Researchers who wish to conduct an online experiment with a nationally representative population can submit a proposal to Time-Sharing Experiments for the Social Sciences (TESS, www.tessexperiments.org). For those with successful proposals, TESS will conduct web-based experiments for free with their random,

probability-based subject pool free of charge.

Online survey services such as SocialSci (https://www.socialsci.com) and SurveyMonkey (https://www.surveymonkey.com) are developing their own subject pools to help researchers obtain both general and more specific samples. These pools usually consist of volunteers who get some sort of incentive for taking surveys such as money, donations to charities, or sweepstakes entries. The prices to access these subject pools vary, but are cheaper when fewer constraints with less specific samples are requested. Amazon.com's Mechanical Turk (MTurk, https://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome) offers perhaps one of the most affordable subject pool options for researchers. MTurk allows organizations to hire individuals to complete different web-based tasks, such as writing, file sorting and content posting – as well as survey completion. Researchers set the price they are willing to pay respondents for completed surveys, and to get a large sample in a short amount of time researchers should probably expect to spend at least one cent for every minute that a survey is expected to take (i.e., $0.15 for a completed 15-minute survey). Studies on the use of MTurk as a research recruitment service have found it to provide more representative of the general population when compared to other Internet-based samples.

Finally, with the increase in mobile technology use, researchers conducting web-based research should become more concerned with how and where respondents are completing online surveys. Respondents may use mobile devices such as tablets or smartphones to access online information now (including our studies) and to this end, many survey programs such as Checkbox (www.checkbox.com), Qualtrics (https://www.qualtrics.com), and SurveyGizmo (www.surveygizmo.com) use survey software

compatible with most mobile devices.

Mobile technologies also provide new opportunities for collecting data that can enhance retrospective self-report measures that communication researchers commonly rely on. Specifically, the use of mobile devices as data collection tools can allow researchers to capture people's real time experiences, attitudes, and routines. For instance, our team recently conducted an experience sampling study of college students' media use habits using text message surveys. Respondents texted information about any media they were using when prompted throughout a week-long period. Because the students normally carried their cell phones with them, this method helped us collect moment-to-moment information about their media activities. A number of smartphone applications have also been developed to help researchers collect ethnographic information about research participants. Platforms such as Over the Shoulder (http://overtheshoulder.com), the Andriod application MyInsights (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=nl.appcoders.myinsights&hl=en), and the iPad-native Ethnocorder (www.ethnocorder.com) help researchers collect data by capturing pictures, recording consumed media, scanning purchases, and tagging people's geo-location. These technologies hold the promise of giving researchers a more complete picture of the communication processes we study by granting access to the process in the moment.

Tenure and promotion decisions are largely rooted in ability to make meaningful contributions to the academy and in this vein we often save the sharing of our research results for journal publications where it "counts" most. Yet, most all of us recognize that much of the conceptual and theoretical heavy lifting comes not from perusing journal articles, but from engaging in conference discussions and – for many of us – talking with colleagues over a morning coffee or evening beer.

Discussing preliminary research ideas through blogging and sharing has the potential to help us identify and address areas of strength and weakness in our scholarship. For example, our research team has first-hand experience of this with the use of the blog *On Media Theory…* (http://onmediatheory.blogspot.com).

Since launching as a graduate school project in 2006, the blog has received over 250,000 individual page hits across nearly 200 individual research and theory posts from dozens of colleagues. The use of blogs to publically incubate research ideas exposes our earliest conceptual research development to our peers – relying on the mechanics of crowdsourcing to expose ourselves and our thoughts to our contemporaries. This might sound equally daunting and terrifying on first pass, yet such a system of open-source research (and open-source thinking) forces us to write and craft our ideas before sharing, reading and responding to criticisms of the same. Rarely in our work are we able to expose colleagues to the thinking behind our theory, and open-access blog systems might prove to be a valuable step in this direction.

For sharing completed work, websites such as Academia.edu (http://academia.edu), ResearchGate (www.researchgate.net), and Mendeley (www.mendeley.com) provide convenient and increasingly robust methods of sharing research presentations and reports – everything from unpublished laboratory notes to peer-reviewed journal articles. While

NCA E-NEWSLETTERS

NCA sends e-newsletters to all NCA members periodically. These e-newsletters are the primary source of information from the association to its members and the best way for you to learn about the many resources available to you through your membership.

Convention Newsletter

Features important details on convention programming, deadlines, travel arrangements, and more. The newsletter is sent out monthly until August, then every two weeks until the convention.

The Insider

Updates on the academic and professional resources available through the association. The Insider is distributed quarterly to NCA members.

NCA News and Member Notes

Governance information from NCA and news about members, including awards, books, media appearances, professional transitions, and memorials. NCA members receive this newsletter every one to two months.

Special Announcements

Sometimes there is information that requires rapid dissemination. In those cases, we will send a Special Announcement. We aim to use this outlet as infrequently as possible.

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issues of copyright and knowledge ownership are still vague for some of these services, many researchers have chosen to share research documents with the larger academic community – benefitting from increased exposure through paper downloads, increased citations and increased conversations and collaborations with like-minded colleagues. In addition to these academic-themed services, subscription services such as SlideShare.net (www.slideshare.net) can be used to share conference presentation and colloquia content (e.g., WVU's Department of Communication Studies SlideShare, www.slideshare.net/bowmanspartan1). All of these platforms, as with most social media programs, give feedback such as page views and document download statistics.

An emerging platform for managing and tracking academic citations is Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com). Although Google's scholarship-specific search engine has been in operation since 2004, recent additions to Google Scholar now include scholarship profiles that automatically populate with any articles authored or co-authored by an individual as they appear in Google Scholar searches. In addition to links to articles and other documents, the program also collects information on the number of times a given articles has been cited (by other articles appearing in Google Scholar searches) and even provides basic citation indices for individual authors, such as a cumulative citations count and an h-index, or "the largest number h such that h publications have at least h citations." Anne-Wil Harzing's popular Publish or Perish citation management software (www.harzing.com/pop.htm) draws its data from Google Scholar searches. Notably, while academics cannot directly alter or edit their Google Scholar search results (that is, without publishing or otherwise posting and sharing their research online), they can make use of scholarship profiles by creating and

sharing them through other social media platforms (e.g., linking one's Google Scholar profile to their Twitter or Facebook page, or through their University profile page).

An August 2012 article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (www.chronicle.com/article/Social-Networks-for-Academics/131726) quoted one scientist as referring to the sites mentioned above as "social networks for nerds" – which also suggests that even the social networks du jour such as Facebook and Twitter might serve a similar function. Indeed, many scholarly organizations such as NCA's Mass Communication Division (https://www.facebook.com/groups/NCAMCD) and the journal *Media Psychology* (https://www.facebook.com/MediaPsychology) have created Facebook pages to discussion trends and publications related to the study of media, and NCA has launched its own Twitter account (@NatComm, https://twitter.com/NatComm) to share information about the organization and its members.

The research process involves a pairing of concept and operation: finding the right tools to answer the burning questions that drive our scholarly interests. For the study of human communication – the art and science of stimulating meaning in the mind of others – we suggest digital communication technology to be an increasingly integral component of the communication research process. Digital communication technologies can be harnessed to collect and distribute data more specifically and more quickly, and they can facilitate communication among researchers leaving the field as a whole more well-informed.

Moving forward, research on the influence of digital communication technologies on the quality of our research is greatly needed. At the same time, we suggest that their usage in the research should not be dismissed

but rather analyzed and considered in comparison with alternatives. As with all research tools, there are strengths and limitations and digital communication technology is no different in this regard – after all, the first digital message was only 40% effective in stating its point. Yet, rather than shoot the process down as being flawed, we should continue to study and troubleshoot it so that the entire message can be received in its highest fidelity. ■

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Bowman's primary area of interest is the role of interactivity in understanding the relationship between people and communication technology. His work has been published in journals such as *CyberPsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking; Journal of Communication; Media Psychology;* and *New Media and Society*. He serves on the editorial boards of both *Media Psychology* and *Journal of Media Psychology*.

Cohen's work focuses on the "the bright side" of media uses and effects, or the prosocial outcomes of involvement with media and technology. Her research has recently appeared in *Journal of Media & Electronic Broadcasting; Health Communication;* and *Howard Journal of Communications*. She recently served as an editorial assistant with *Media Psychology*.

ON TEACHING PUBLIC SPEAKING ONLINE

By Everett E. Corum

The American officer invited me to ride along on a fairly routine patrol, cruising down one of the main thoroughfares of Baghdad in 2008, and off we sped down the road on a gray, overcast morning. The highway was divided, so all the traffic was moving in the same direction on either side of the median; we were following another armored troop carrier, which made me think that it would draw first fire, if we encountered any. The tension in the vehicle mounted as we passed a parked tractor trailer setting next to a retaining wall shielding some houses and other buildings. A little further along, two unmarked cars were parked on the right, requiring that our vehicle and the one ahead of us move to the left to go around them. An Iraqi appeared to be leaning down to the passenger's side of one of the vehicles, talking to whomever was inside. Everyone relaxed a little as we sped past. Less than a mile ahead another small, white car was also parked to the right on the sidewalk. Just as we approached a red, orange, and yellow fireball erupted from it, causing the windshield of the car in which I was riding to splinter into dozens of cracks, though the glass did not fall out of the frame. A hail of bullets and invective exploded from the American troops and the car slowed considerably, finally catching up too closely and quickly to the lead armored vehicle, which we were in danger of rear-ending. Our view out the windshield was partially obscured by all the cracks, but we could see that suddenly four other unmarked vehicles of various types were approaching on our side of the median. The prospects for our safety were not good, and the fear and anger inside our car was palpable, and so was the military response.

What, in fact, I just described, was not an actual event I experienced, but a short video clip used by one of my public speaking students who had just begun his demonstration speech on IEDs, Improvised Explosive Devices. He began with a short introduction and asked us to view the video, directing our attention to the right side of the screen. As we passed the truck and the two unmarked cars there was a fair amount of anticipation, and the effect was powerful enough to quicken one's heart rate and affect one's breathing. It also ensured that we paid attention to what the speaker had to say to us.

When I was approached by the administration of the American Public University System in late 2007 and asked what we would need to offer an Associate of Arts in Communication, the only course that we did not already offer was one in Public Speaking. We had courses in Communication and Gender, Small Group Communication, Intercultural Communication, Mass Communication, and Ethics in Communication, but there was no Public Speaking class, so we set about creating one that would offer our students a chance to exceed the standards set by the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). What we came up with was an eight-week course, beginning on the first Monday of the month, where students submit speeches at the end of weeks two, four, six and eight. Each speech is a little longer than the previous speech, and each speech has a specific goal in mind.

The first week begins with a series of introductions to one another, requiring a 250-word paragraph of self-introduction and a very short—thirty

second, TV commercial length—test video that demonstrates each student's ability to upload video content. This is important, since any technical difficulties need to be addressed early on. Students find this a wonderful way to connect with one another and the level of support they require after that is something that many comment on favorably when they review the course at the end of the eight weeks.

The first speech comes at the end of week two, though a full sentence outline is due on the Monday of that week, which gives the instructors an opportunity to make corrections and recommendations before the students actually have to record and upload their speeches. We ask students to write in complete sentences and to practice delivering their speeches as written, though we are very adamant about not simply reading the text of the written speech. As one can imagine, this is more difficult to do at the beginning of the course, but by the end of the full eight weeks, many students have found their comfort level for speaking with little or no recourse to notes. The first speech is a simple speech of introduction, though we allow students to speak on any topic of their own choosing. The speech must be two to four minutes in length, and we specify that it should be closer to four minutes than to two. The reason for such a short length is because the upload times for videos can be somewhat lengthy, and we do not want the students to become discouraged by technical issues at the very beginning of the course. Some students find themselves speaking for up to ten minutes or more in their speeches.

For the second speech—three to five minutes in length coming at the end of week four—we ask students to identify a controversial issue making the news in the town in which they live, and to present both sides of the issue in a purely informative manner. This speech, too, requires a complete sentence outline.

For the third speech—four to six minutes, coming at the end of week six, and with an accompanying sentence outline—students must choose one side of the controversial issue from the previous speech and take a stance defending that side and showing the flaws in the opposing side in a persuasive speech.

The question arises, of course, about the lack of "public" in a course called Public Speaking.

The final speech—five to seven minutes, to be completed in the final week of class, and with the usual sentence outline—may be an informative speech or a persuasive one, but there must be the addition of a visual aid of the students' choosing, and that visual aid must be a part of the actual delivered speech. Some use PowerPoint, some use actual objects, and some use short video clips like the one described above. Some students also attach their visual aid separately so that the instructor can view it separately and in greater detail.

We also encourage students to use a key-word outline for the actual delivery of their speeches to prevent them from reading the text, as most people do not read aloud well. And I have personally started to create my own "first speech" video of nearly four minutes in length, which I ask them to review in one of the discussion Forums. I tell them to say what I do well and what I still need to improve (there's always something that could be better).

Each week there is an asynchronous Forum in which students have a conversation with each other and with the instructor concerning such issues as their hopes for their first speech, what they expect to change for their second speech, good and bad speakers they have seen, the effective use of visual aids, and speaking to inform versus speaking to persuade. We also send them to the American Rhetoric website, so they can watch speeches made by famous historical speakers. Many of our students are active duty military, and they frequently report back on FDR's Pearl Harbor Address or General Douglas MacArthur's "Duty, Honor, Country." Dr. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" is a favorite, and so is President Reagan's Shuttle "Challenger" Disaster. Mary Fisher's "A Whisper of AIDS" gets a good deal of attention, and so does Barbara Bush's 1990 Wellesley Commencement Address, an excellent example of turning a somewhat hostile audience—the students wanted novelist Alice Walker as their commencement speaker—into an appreciative one. We require each student to respond to at least two others in the Forums, but after the first couple of weeks, many students respond to more than that, and the conversations get lengthier.

At first, students want to sit at their computer work-stations when they deliver their speech, but we quickly advise them—if they have missed it before—to stand when speaking, unless they have some medical reason that prevents them from doing so. Occasionally, we will hear from a student whose illness or injury does not allow them to stand, and we usually accept their explanation. We want students to have their weight equally balanced on both feet in such a way that they can engage their whole body in the delivery of the speech. When students understand that concept, their delivery improves significantly, and the timid speaker they were at the beginning of the course appears in stark contrast to the confident speaker at the end of the course.

In the off-weeks, when students do not have to speak, there are short quizzes for them to complete, in addition to the Forum discussions for the week. We want to be certain they are keeping up with the materials—including videos that demonstrate good speaking form, supplied by a commercial vendor in lieu of a textbook—that we want them to incorporate into their own speeches.

The question arises, of course, about the lack of "public" in a course called Public Speaking. We always encourage students to invite an audience of their peers to sit in the room as they speak, but the fact of the matter is that many students simply record their videos privately and upload them for the rest of us to watch. We live in an increasingly diverse, global, and technological world, one in which it is sometimes easier and less expensive for a company to establish a video connection between an office on the east coast and one on the west coast than it is to fly an employee across the country, which might disrupt one's daily work flow. However, there are times when face-to-face communication is preferable, but for our practice here, we offer students the option of taking the Public Speaking class online. Many of the students report that they are pleased to be able to do so, since they do not feel they have time to drive to a local campus, being working adults with families. More importantly, they can continue to earn credit toward degrees without disruption when they are transferred or reassigned to a different duty station in another part of the country or the world.

We conclude the course by asking students what they enjoyed and what they wished they could have spent more time studying. Many say they came to the course thinking it would be "a joke," only to find that they have enrolled in a fairly rigorous course that helps them overcome their fear of speaking before others; many find that the fear transfers just as quickly to the camera, and some students report making many versions of their speech before finally selecting one that pleases them most. We encourage students to limit the number of times they record their speeches, so as to avoid the onset of frustration, though we applaud their desire to do the best they can.

The student whose visual aid I described at the beginning of this article was in the United States when he gave that speech, but I have had students living and working abroad—and not all of them in the military—who present their speeches indoors or outside, with an audience of peers or family or, sometimes, pets (a favorite visual aid in some speeches). Most of the students leave the course at the end of eight weeks with greater confidence in their own abilities and appreciative of what it takes to make an excellent speech, focused on the message to be delivered and on the audience, even though it may be invisible for the moment. ■

Everett E. Corum is Director of Humanities, Philosophy, Religion, and World Languages Programs at American Public University System, and is the creator of the University's Public Speaking class. He is an expert in international connectivity programs, curriculum development, producing teacher support materials, and online interactive student activities for students. Corum was recognized in *Who's Who in American Teachers 1996* and again in 2000. He has several publications, presentations and grants to his credit. Corum earned his Ph.D. in Theatre and Media Arts from the University of Kansas in 1990. He added a Distance Teaching and Learning Certificate from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 2001.

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Wheaton College

Assistant Professor of Communication (Social Media/Social Networking)

The Communication Department at Wheaton College (IL) invites applications for a tenure-track Assistant Professor appointment in social media/social networking to begin August 2013.

We are looking for a candidate who has teaching and research interests at the intersection of interpersonal communication and media studies. The ideal candidate will have expertise in several of these areas: social networks, mobile media, computer-mediated communication, global culture, virtual communities, and digital reality. Candidates also must be capable of effective teaching in our general education curriculum, including public speaking and general communication studies. Applicants should have a Ph.D. and be committed to interdisciplinary collaboration in a vibrant Christian liberal arts environment.

Review of applications will begin November 5, 2012, and will continue until position is filled. Applicants should send a letter of interest and curriculum vitae to Dr. Kenneth Chase by email (kenneth.chase@wheaton.edu) or by mail to Dr. Kenneth Chase, Chair, Communication Department, 501 College Ave., Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187. Please do not send transcripts, letters of recommendation, or credential files unless requested. Promising candidates will be invited to submit a full application.

Wheaton College is an evangelical Protestant Christian liberal arts college whose faculty and staff affirm a Statement of Faith and adhere to lifestyle expectations of the Wheaton College Community Covenant <http://www.wheaton.edu/About-Wheaton/Statement-of-Faith-and-Educational-Purpose>. The College complies with federal and state guidelines for nondiscrimination in employment. Women and minority candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

NCA SUMMER PROGRAMS

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NCA Undergraduate Honors Conference

May 16-19, 2013
American University, Washington, DC

    NCA's first undergraduate student conference is designed to assist rising seniors majoring in communication in preparing for their capstone projects and post-graduation plans. Sessions on Friday and Saturday will include working groups, research time at the Library of Congress, career planning, a poster session, and a trip to the Newseum.

    For more information see www.natcom.org/UGConference or contact Brad Mello at bmello@natcom.org.

NCA Chairs' Summer Institute

June 28-30, 2013
St. Gregory Hotel, Washington, DC

    The Chair's Summer Institute brings department chairs together to discuss the challenges facing the discipline, departments, and departmental administrators in these times of dwindling resources and changing conditions in higher education.

    For more information see www.natcom.org/ChairsSummerInstitute or contact Trevor Parry-Giles at tparrygiles@natcom.org.

Doctoral Honors Seminar

July 18-21, 2013
Schoodic Education & Research Center
Acadia National Park, Winter Harbor, Maine

    The Doctoral Honors Seminar (DHS) brings together the best doctoral students and faculty members from across the discipline and around the nation to discuss current topics in communication. Approximately 30 doctoral students are selected to participate based on submitted papers and recommendations from their advisors.

    The 2013 DHS will be hosted by the University of Maine's Department of Communication & Journalism and the theme will be "Research Collaboration on Disciplinary Frontiers: Spanning Methodological Boundaries—Communication and the Environment, Rhetoric and Materiality, and Digital Media Convergence."
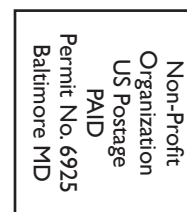
    For more information see www.natcom/org/DoctoralHonorsSeminar or contact Nathan Stormer, University of Maine, at nathan@maine.edu or Trevor Parry-Giles at tparrygiles@natcom.org.

NCA Faculty Development Institute (The "Hope" Conference)

July 21-27, 2013
Hope College, Holland, Michigan

    The NCA Faculty Development Institute enters its 27th year in the summer of 2013. Currently being held on the campus where the conference began, the institute focuses on helping undergraduate faculty stay abreast of the ever-evolving communication curriculum.

    For more information see www.natcom.org/facultydevelopmentinstitute or contact Brad Mello at bmello@natcom.org.

Pictured at right is the Bass Harbor Lighthouse at Acadia National Park, site of the 2013 NCA Doctoral Honors Seminar.

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