

# Introduction

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## Coming Together across Computers and Writing: A Playlist as Introduction—Track I

We find ourselves living and working at such an exciting time in the field of rhetoric and composition and its sub-field of computers and writing—so exciting that this edited collection has developed into two volumes. College students are writing and reading in a wide variety of formats and spaces, and they use computers, phones, and other digital devices to connect to audiences online through words, images, and sounds. Researchers continue to study these and other forms of 21st-century communication, and we too have laptops, cell phones, software programs, digital cameras and microphones, and more to assist us. With the use of digital technologies, though, comes researcher responsibility and new questions. How does the prevalence of the digital in rhetoric and writing affect the questions we ask, the methods we use to answer these questions, the knowledge we make, and the teaching practices we employ?

We developed this edited collection in response to these questions, perceiving a need to revisit where computers and writing today stands in its use of digital methodologies and methods. Drawing on Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan, we define *methodology* as the overarching theoretical approach and design of research, and *methods* as the tangible research practices that are enacted within a study. In this collection, we explore methodologies and methods that are shaped with and through *digital* tools and texts: electronic and computerized tools that allow what Doug Eyman calls “a new form of production enabled by information and communication technologies” (20), and multimodal texts composed with both “fingers and codes” as Angela Haas has described (84). As scholars of digital writing and digital rhetoric, we study communicative products and practices at the intersection of textual production and rhetoric, where a text is defined as any object that can be read or interpreted (Eyman 21), and rhetoric involves practices related to oratory, language, persuasion, style, human action and motivation, ideology, and meaning (Eyman 13-17). Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes further describe digital texts and related practices as having been affected by technological change, as developing over time, and as “enriched

by the experiences and traditions of many diverse people and communities” (4). Because of this variety, some difficulty arises, as Eyman notes, when “applying traditional rhetorical theories and methods to new media compositions and networked spaces,” and thus “new methods and theories may need to be developed” (18). Specific attention to *how* the digital informs and shapes theories that ground research and the specific methods used is crucial. The authors in this collection provide windows into the process of theory-building and method development for research related to various digital sites, tools, and approaches.

Our conversations about digital methodologies and methods have ultimately been steered by where in the field we stand and what our disciplinary landscape represents. At the outset of this project, both of us wanted to fill the need for a resource for scholars of digital writing and rhetoric: for much of our own research and that of our colleagues, we felt like we were constantly figuring out digital methods and methodologies on our own as we proceeded with our work. We wanted to emphasize that there is a broad landscape of scholars doing important work in digital rhetoric and writing that we knew could provide starting points for others, and we sought to bring some of this work together in one place. As editors, we searched for a balance of chapters that would help us get at granular questions about methods and how they related back to the development of digital methodologies, while seeing how far we could push the possibilities of what could be understood as part of methods and methodologies for digital writing and rhetoric.

One place we often found ourselves coming back to in our discussions was one of our disciplinary homes: computers and writing (C&W). The field and the conference represent the audience we want to speak directly to with this book. For both of us, our work “fits” at C&W. We have presented many times at the computers and writing conference, we have networked there, and we have attended C&W presentations by many authors in this collection. Thus, one of our goals is to highlight voices from C&W. But we also want to expand our methodological discussions and discourses, to shift our attention to diverse scholars and to other parts of the field that might not be our own. C&W, like all conferences in our field, is still overwhelmingly white, but there are many researchers who identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) who are designing and implementing digital research related to and aligned with work in C&W.<sup>1</sup> Another goal of this collection, then, is to highlight the voices of BIPOC scholars doing digital work. Finally, we want this collection to speak across and beyond C&W and encourage researchers to look at and listen to a variety of digital research. We both are members of the C&W community, for example, but in the past, we did not interact with each other at the C&W conference: we come from

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1. A note from the publisher: The WAC Clearinghouse practice is to capitalize names of racial and ethnic groups. The editors and contributors to this collection have chosen to capitalize *Black*, *Brown*, and *Indigenous* but not *white*.

distinct positionalities and different pathways. Perhaps in part because of our differences—our research interests, the technologies we use, the communities we inhabit and study, our race, age, and gender—we existed in the same academic community for several years without meaningful interaction, inhabiting different corners of the field.

As co-editors of this collection, we now take a different approach: we speak together from a new place, a shared corner, where we highlight our similarities and our differences and use our varying strengths and points-of-view. One of our similarities, for example, is that we both love music. Crystal is a singer; Victor is a DJ. So we frame this introduction as a playlist, juxtaposing and mixing our voices, histories, and positionalities with scholarship to lead you into the chapters to come. We also intentionally use our differences, demonstrating one way that this collection might enter the disciplinary discourse within and adjacent to C&W, and drawing on the collective vision that comes from distinct positions. Crystal approaches this work with strong grounding in composition studies and a desire to seek out digital method/ologies due to the multimodal nature of composition. Victor approaches the collection drawn to the work of BIPOC scholars who have used and developed digital methods and methodologies to trace long histories of technology work in their respective communities. Together, we forge and widen pathways for authors in the collection to share research insights grounded in multimodality, positionality, and community. In volume 1 of the collection, we focus on researchers' stories, exploring how positionality impacts research and vision for the field, as well as how new tools are changing what is possible for digital writing and rhetoric.

## Our Histories: How Crystal Learned that Research Inquiry is Always Multimodal—Track 2

The field needs more scholars to share digital writing and research experiences so that others can learn from and build on their mistakes and successes. Thus we begin by each telling our research stories and sharing some context about where we come from personally and professionally. Through conversations with scholars in the field and with each other, we have come to know that thinking critically about identity and positionality in relation to digital methods and methodologies is a crucial part of any discussion on research. We understand that there is no way to fully consider what future technologies await us, yet one constant is the impact of the researcher and their unique and multiple points of experience.

In 2009 as a first-year graduate student, I (Crystal) composed a video to go along with my seminar paper for a course entitled *Introduction to Composition Studies*. My paper explored the use of sound and music in composition studies, providing an overview of work in rhet/comp that demonstrated how sound might be used and emphasized in writing classrooms and in research. I wasn't required to make a video as part of the project, but I felt that writing about the importance

of composing with sounds, but including no sounds or music in my paper, wasn't a very appropriate approach. Thus I chose to make a companion video to hand in with my more traditional paper, and in the video, I put songs together with images of musical notes, people singing and playing instruments, and people dancing and moving their bodies. I concluded the video with singing, my voice ringing out a bit awkwardly that "composition needs music." Of course, others in our field had been making such a call already (Halbritter; Selfe; Shankar), but in that moment—my first year of graduate study, my first Ph.D. level seminar paper in rhet/comp, my first attempt at joining the conversation—it seemed amazing and freeing and *fun* to me that I could sing my thesis to my professor, that I could illustrate my argument by lining up photos to the driving beat of a song that I loved and literally got me moving, and that all of this was part of my *writing*.

This story of my first academic video composition demonstrates that research inquiry, critical thinking, and making knowledge are always entwined with multimodal expression, and thus with new (or at least newly accessible) digital technologies for composition. In rhet/comp, we do not always fully acknowledge or explore the multimodal nature of inquiry because of print-centric research traditions, time or technology constraints, lack of training and mentorship for new researchers, or publication venues that favor alphabetic-only composition. But digital technologies that facilitate multimodal inquiry—a laptop, free video editing software, a laptop microphone—were immediately available to me as a grad student and easy to learn how to use, and as I began to use them, I found that the multimodal processes they facilitated stimulated different kinds of thinking and engagement, not to mention a lot of joy. I sat on the bed in my small graduate-student bedroom, hunched over a laptop, lining up images with song beats for *hours*, bobbing my head to the music while I considered the rhetorical qualities of notes, sounds, melodies, and beats. I was sucked into the editing, to the flow, to the hearing and composing and the inquiry.

Thus when it came time to decide what to study for my dissertation project, I knew that multimodal expression of ideas was going to be at the core of my research. My dissertation was a qualitative classroom study in which I observed and interviewed first-year composition students and instructors, looking for evidence of if and how students developed meta-awareness through video composition. To conduct the study, I collected various kinds of digital data: I observed and recorded class sessions, I conducted and recorded one-on-one interviews with students and instructors, and I collected videos that students composed. (To read more about the methods and findings from my dissertation, please reference VanKooten "Identifying . . ."; "Messy Problem-Exploring"; and "'The video was what did it' . . .").

The training I received in how I might approach designing and conducting such a study came from several sources. I took one course in *Qualitative Methods in Educational Research*, where we read about and discussed fundamentals of qualitative inquiry within education: epistemology, validity, reliability, inter-

views, observations, data analysis, politics, ethics, and the presentation of data. I also took one course in *Multimedia Writing*, in which I composed several videos: a remix video, an interview-based informational video, and a final project video where I interviewed several undergraduate students who had taken my writing courses and then used this interview footage to make a video argument about their learning and the rhetoric of music. This final video project within *Multimedia Writing* served as a pilot study for the kind of work I would do on a larger scale in the dissertation: observing and talking to students, recording their narratives and interactions, and using the digital recordings for analysis and presentation of conclusions, and it also led to my first academic publication, where I used both prose and video to present arguments (VanKooten “A New Composition”).

In addition to coursework, I was mentored through the process of composing my dissertation using video and other digital tools and methods by several professors, most notably by my dissertation co-directors, Anne Ruggles Gere and Bump Halbritter. Much of my learning, though, about specific digital methods and the possibilities of the digital for inquiry came because of me jumping in, asking for advice, and figuring it out as I went along. After the dissertation, as an Assistant Professor, I continued using video to pursue similar research questions, and my work expanded to include more classrooms, more student participants, and more video cameras. As I collected new video data and analyzed it using a combination of multimodal and traditional print-based methods, I found myself constantly reflecting on how humans and technologies interacted, and I worked toward written and multimodal expressions of findings. I’ve written elsewhere about the process of coming to articulate and employ what I now call a methodology of interdependence through video as method (VanKooten “A Research Methodology . . .”), and I describe there how much of my methodological wayfinding (to borrow an apt word for learning from Jonathan Alexander, Karen Lunsford, and Carl Whithaus) occurred as I experimented with cameras and editing software and learned as I went about the affordances and limitations of video for qualitative writing research.

My wayfinding went a little like this: I made some bad recordings and videos, and some that weren’t so bad. In the process, I wrestled with ethics—again and again as the study progressed—and I still came up against ethical and procedural questions that I didn’t know how to answer. What I thought would be simple was not ever simple, and I often received conflicting advice: use pseudonyms for student participants/use real names; record with one camera/record with multiple cameras. I made choices, tried something, reflected on the choice, and moved forward. I edited footage together in a way that was confusing, or that wasn’t as respectful of my participants as it could have been, or that didn’t acknowledge my own role in the research interaction. I reflected, got feedback, and revised. I made some videos that were overly simplistic, hard to understand, and weren’t very useful. And then I made something that I thought was kind of good, maybe—a video sequence that sparked a new insight. And the combinations of images, in-

terview clips, sounds, and words began to speak to me, to reveal new pathways for moving forward.

I am so fortunate that with support from others in the field and in my personal life, I was able to publish my digital book, *Transfer across Media: Using Digital Video in the Teaching of Writing*, through Computers and Composition Digital Press in 2020. In the book, readers can see and hear my process of seeking out digital-methodological pathways that were new to me, and they can also explore digital data and video analyses and findings. For me, though, these pathways were not always easily discovered, and I needed and wanted more guidance along the way.

With this edited collection, we want to shed light on and widen similar hard-to-find or seemingly narrow methodological pathways for research in digital writing and rhetoric. Through these chapters, we offer seasoned and emerging scholars in computers and writing and rhet/comp some help and advice as they work to develop their own digital methods and methodologies for research. While it might seem like you are the only researcher who wants to use digital and online tools to collect, analyze, and present data about writing and rhetoric, and who is grappling with the many complexities of doing so, there are, in fact, many researchers in our field who have gone and are going through a similar confusing, messy, and exciting digital research process. We seek to present and amplify their voices in the chapters to come.

## Our Histories: How Victor Learned to Problem-Solve with Digital Tools—Track 3

I (Victor) like to joke with my friends in academia that I hate reading. I always tell a version of this joke to my students and tell them that is why I decided to study Hip-Hop. The truth of that statement is actually more about the relationship I have to education. Growing up in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it was the digital music turn which meant that digital tools have been at the center of my life, and, by association, a part of my learning.

Maybe my favorite memory of the interaction between digital tools and my education history was the year I received an MPIO FL300 mp3 player for Christmas. It was tiny, the size of a fun size snickers, but it was a full gigabyte of memory and featured a tiny microphone on the end. Later that year, I sat in my junior year high school English class—an AP class that we were told was the hardest class we would ever take and would prepare us for college. At the start of the year, students in this class were advised that if we were not willing to work hard, we should tell our counselors to switch us out of the course. As the youngest of three siblings, during a time when my older siblings were away for college, I was eager for a taste of what college life would be like.

I was excited for this class where we would read literature and talk about the world. We would challenge ourselves to think hard about the complicated texts. We might read some Shakespeare and others in the canon that my college-aged

siblings were reading. However, over the course of that class, I grew increasingly disappointed in my educational experience and increasingly agitated at schooling in general. The culmination of this moment was when our English teacher went on some tangent and decided we needed to go back to the basics. Instead of engaging with difficult literature, we would be having vocabulary spelling tests. The whole class groaned at this announcement, and I could not have been more pissed off about having to do a spelling test. After all, we had all already transitioned to writing our papers on computers! Spellcheck would have our backs.

That night, I sat in my room begrudgingly studying for this spelling test while listening to my mp3 player. At some point, I looked at my MPIO FL300, remembered the tiny microphone on the end of the display screen, and suddenly had an idea. Fueled by all my indignation about the spelling test, I held in my hand my tool for rebellion. That night, I schemed to cheat on my test by recording the spelling of each word on the test using this microphone, and then playing back the recording in my ear during the test. Frankly, this instance of rebellion really kickstarted my first experience with a digital tool, helping me begin to understand how to best use these tools for any situation. I recorded drafts, quickly learning that I would need to speak softly but clearly so I could hear the spellings using only one earbud on the side opposite of the teacher's desk. I spelled the words slowly so I could write them while preserving a natural spelling speed. Finally, I had to remember to leave the playback setting on "repeat one track" mode so I could listen back the second time and make sure I spelled everything correctly.

Reflecting on this experience, I could make several connections to scholarly inquiry, including arguments about education, innovation, and lived experiences with digital composing. I could also say this was my first experience with post-humanism, as this mp3 player was just an extension of my own memory as I listened to the sound of my own voice spelling out the words no different than what was happening in the head of any other student in the room. I knew I was cheating, but I felt justified because I felt like I was getting cheated out of an education. Two wrongs may not make a right, but I know this experience set off a continuing relationship I have had with schooling that I continue to grapple with as an educator. This relationship is one of skepticism that is perpetually directed at institutions of learning that are not transparent about their methods and methodologies or about the motivations for the pedagogical decisions that inform schooling. In my experiences of public education, there was hardly any discussion by school officials about the decisions they made. Or at the very least an inkling that my teachers also recognized that there were some cracks in the system. In the example of my AP English class, we were simultaneously supposed to believe that we were gaining a college credit worthy experience while being disciplined with lackluster pedagogy. At all phases of my schooling, I have strived to hack, resist, rebel, and survive by finding solutions to problems that a Chicano studying Hip-Hop might encounter. I have learned which educators are truly invested in helping their students, and which ones are just interested in gatekeep-

ing. I have also learned that there is risk in finding innovative solutions, and that these solutions sometimes don't work, but you can still learn from the experience.

I share this story to locate my experience in digital rhetoric as one that comes from problem solving. Often the problems that I find myself solving are linked directly to not accepting the status quo while simultaneously making sense of the methods and methodologies we gravitate to for our solutions. In this collection, we are excited to highlight work that draws on digital methods and methodologies as tools to solve problems while doing so from lived experiences. We bring knowledges and approaches to our digital methods and methodologies that draw from all our experiences of digital tools and all the ways we have learned to leverage them. Many of the authors in this collection echo the same kind of innovation that draws on lived experience, problem solving, and a rejection of average or getting by. And so, I and my co-authors ask, what problems are you interested in solving? What versions of the status quo are you rejecting? What digital tools are you playing with to go higher?

### Who We Are: Crystal's Positionality Statement—Track 4

Many of the authors in this collection powerfully highlight how positionalities and identities intersect with and shape methodology in meaningful—and at times subversive and emancipatory—ways. Scholars of color in the collection, queer scholars, and differently abled scholars, these strong and persuasive voices demonstrate the importance of acknowledging oppression, privilege, and positionality when a researcher speaks and writes. Across the collection, then, you will notice that we have asked all authors to include a positionality statement or a positionality story that links identities and digital methodologies, and Victor and I offer editorial positionality statements here in the introduction. Through writing explicitly about positionality, the authors and editors entered a process of what Jacqueline Royster and Gesa Kirsch label “strategic contemplation” at the intersection of identities and research methodologies and methods. *Strategic contemplation*, a feminist orientation, asks us to “pay attention to how lived experiences shape our perspectives as researchers and those of our research subjects” (Royster and Kirsch 22). Royster and Kirsch remind us that explicit attention to positionality can bring “rich, new dimensions in scholarly work when we deliberately seek to attend to the places where past and present meet, where our embodied experience, intuition, and quiet minds can begin to notice the unnoticed” (22). In the pages that follow, it is our hope that researchers in computers and writing and beyond can learn from these new dimensions together.

I start my positionality statement by introducing myself and the place where I work and live. My name is Crystal VanKooten, and I am a white, cisgender, able-bodied woman. I work as an Associate Professor of Writing and Rhetoric at Oakland University, and I live in Rochester Hills with my family: my partner

Ben and my two young kids, Sabrina and Paul. The land on which Oakland University stands is the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabe, known as the Three Fires Confederacy, comprised of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi. The land was ceded in the 1807 Treaty of Detroit and makes up southeast Michigan. I recognize these roots to acknowledge that the arts and humanities have been practiced where I live and work long before the arrival of Europeans such as myself.<sup>2</sup> I am half Dutch and half German; I am a Christian; I am a musician (I play piano and love to sing in choir); I am a teacher, a writer, and a video-maker.

I recognize and acknowledge that many aspects of who I am shape the work that I do and the ways that I can do it. Because I am white, straight, cisgender, able-bodied, and Christian, I am privileged in a society and a schooling system that often unfairly recognizes and rewards these qualities as natural or normal. I have benefitted from my white skin, for example, in that I almost always had teachers and professors that looked like me and shared many aspects of my home culture. I fit in at school, and I always loved it, partially because my schooling experiences were dominated by a familiar and comfortable white culture. Now, as a professor in a predominantly white university culture, I am only recently learning to see and prioritize the importance and impact of race in my work—and the dire need to address racial inequities and white supremacy head on—in part through working with and reading the writing of scholars of color such as Victor and other authors in this collection. In 1995, Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie urged feminist researchers to “acknowledge the way race (and for most composition scholars this means examining their whiteness), social class, and other circumstances have structured their own thinking and how that, in turn, has shaped their own questions and interpretations” (10). Today, I see that my white privilege allows me to remain unaware of or even ignore such urging, which can negatively influence the experiences of research participants, my research findings, and the audiences I am able to speak to within the field.

I have benefitted, too, from an able body in my research. I often carry heavy camera and microphone equipment with me, and I freely walk about a classroom research site with a camera in hand. When I compose video products, I see and hear the material I’m working with, and standard video-editing tools generally work well for my body and my abilities. While I am a woman who lives within a patriarchal society, I have experienced few extremely damaging or limiting instances of overt misogyny in my professional and personal life, at least that I am aware of. Because I am married and am a mother, I split my time between family and work, but I receive heavy familial support from my partner and my parents when it comes to childcare, allowing me to focus a great deal of time on my work and scholarship.

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2. I am grateful to Oakland University and the Center for Public Humanities for sharing this land acknowledgment.

These reflections on my identity, positionality, and privileges make clear some of the pathways I've traveled and assistance I've received that have led to and facilitated my research and the use of digital methods and methodologies in that research. I share these parts of me while acknowledging, as Kirsch and Ritchie point out, that my experiences are reflections of ideology and culture and that we all inhabit "split selves" where "multiple and often unknowable identities" exist (8). I recognize that these pathways might be open, closed, or partially blocked to other scholars and researchers reading this book, and I commit to working toward opening as many entry points as possible and providing adequate assistance to all who want to engage in similar work.

## Who We Are: Victor's Positionality Statement—Track 5

What up doe! What it do? I (Victor) always open my presentations with these greetings because I always want to honor and show love to two Hip-Hop communities that have sustained and nourished me as an academic: Detroit and Houston. Specifically, I want to honor my Southwest Detroit homie Sacramento Knoxx, who inspires and reminds me that Hip-Hop is still about community and resistance. In addition, DJ Screw and Houston Hip-Hop taught me that you can show love to those who came before you while making your own lane and still staying grounded in your community.

I enter this discussion of digital methods and methodologies through Hip-Hop. DJs in Hip-Hop have used records to travel across time and space, listening, learning, and keeping alive records they grew up with as well as records from different eras across all continents. These DJ practices are acts of knowledge making and a practice that I treat as the foundation to my work in Hip-Hop. Furthermore, I credit Hip-Hop for giving me the opportunity to learn how to enact migratory practices as a productive and relational activity. I have learned to find comfort in being a migrant and understanding that migration is my grounding for my relationship to people, culture, and land.

I grew up in the borderlands of El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua. Growing up, I really did not know the impact crossing back and forth between nation-states had on me. And while reading Chicana studies scholarship helped it make more sense, it was not until I spent time in Michigan in graduate school making an intentional effort to understand my relationship to land and to Indigenous communities that I started to understand my identity as migratory.

The borderlands taught me about the value of border crossing, Hip-Hop taught me how to respect the spaces you cross into, and migration taught me to be purposeful in my engagements and movements. I draw on this orientation of borders, Hip-Hop, and migration to understand my own positionality and my approach to research. For example, knowing that Hip-Hop is a Black space, I always want to ensure that my movement within Hip-Hop is pro-Black. And while Hip-Hop has embraced me in some spaces, I know that Hip-Hop, like Black peo-

ple, is not a monolith. So, in every space I engage within Hip-Hop, I do my best to enact a purposeful movement into different spaces. What is purposeful movement and why does it matter? For me, purposeful movement is the foundation to my positionality because it asks me to identify why I am deciding to move into a space and as part of that decision I have to identify whether or not that space is for me. This process is iterative and an important part of my practice of relationship-building.

This brings me back to Hip-Hop, DJs, and the connection to purposeful movement, aka migration. As I have started to play with my own turntables, one of the first revelations made to me was how much data was needed to play records. In addition to what I will call the raw data, the information pressed onto the records, was the information needed to perform as a DJ: how the needle works; the role of the platter; the way to use your hands; the feel of different records. All of these are tools for examining and understanding the raw data on the record. And then there is the part where you commit what is on the record into your own memory: sounds, words, artists, track locations, and so much more. As the hands and the needle physically make their way across the record, you develop a relationship. Hip-Hop taught me how to move over records with purpose by paying attention to language, place, and stories. DJs emphasize this purposeful movement as they develop relationships to records by connecting the physical movements to the content as they apply their analytical frameworks as they listen and compose. A Hip-Hop DJ listens with purpose because their movements require it; this is their digital method.

The ways that Hip-Hop has taught me to listen have been a grounding practice for understanding my own identity and positionality and how it exists in relation to other people, communities, and identities. As a cis-man Chicano, I do my best to be conscious of who and what I embody as I move between spaces and engage with people. I listen for stories because they ground humanization. I pay attention to language, specifically how people describe themselves, their communities, and the places they occupy. When they feel familiar, I make connections, and when there are no connections, I keep listening. When stories sound personal, I respect boundaries. If I did not catch it the first time, I wait for the next time or ask for a rewind. Hip-Hop grounds all my relationships with any kind of knowledge-making experience. I will always make sense of my understanding of scholarship in writing and rhetoric through what Hip-Hop has taught me.

## Digital Methods and Methodologies in Computers and Writing—Track 6

In the next several paragraphs, we review prior scholarship within C&W and rhet/comp that has led us to our current moment of collaboration and this collection. Published in 2007, *Digital Writing Research: Technologies, Methodologies, and Ethical Issues* provides a look into several kinds of digital writing research oc-

curing at the start of the 21st century. In their introduction, editors Heidi McKee and Dànielle DeVoss note that there was “little extended and published examination by compositionists of the methodologies used and ethical issues faced when studying writing with/in digital technologies” (12), and they also call attention to an assumption in writing studies that non-digital methods could be applied across digital spaces with little or no changes (13). McKee and DeVoss survey the limited amount of work on digital methods for writing research that had been conducted at the time, mentioning research in the 1980s on writing processes with word processors and computer software, and a few published studies and discussions of methodological approaches in the 1990s (McKee and DeVoss 12-17). The 90s also included calls for new attention to context; to critical, feminist approaches; and to ethnography and empirical work within digital writing research, as well as web-based research in other fields such as technical communication, information architecture, and computer programming (McKee and DeVoss 15-18).

The chapters within the McKee and DeVoss collection offer views into several kinds of digital research that was occurring at the start of the 2000s: research on digital communities (Banks and Eble; De Pew; Sidler), research on global citizens and transnational institutions (Sapienza; Pandey; Smith); research on the activity of writing through digital technologies (Hart-Davidson; Addison; Geisler and Slattery); research on digital texts and multimodal spaces (Blythe; Hilligoss and Williams; Romberger; Kimme Hea; McIntire-Strasburg); and research on the research process and research reports (Blair and Tulley; Burnett, Chandler, and Lopez; Hawkes; Reilly and Eyman; Rickly). Overall, McKee and DeVoss’s collection presents wide coverage on a range of research angles and topics within computers and writing, illustrating that the sites and questions for digital writing were changing and that methodologies should be reshaped for these new contexts, technologies, and tools.

At the same time in the mid-2000s, scholars like Adam J. Banks and Angela Haas were developing groundbreaking work bringing together digital and cultural rhetorics. Angela Haas’ 2007 “Wampum as Hypertext” brought to the forefront what digital methods and methodologies looked like from an Indigenous perspective, rewriting the history of hypertext while tying it back to embodied practice. Adam J. Banks’ 2006 *Race, Rhetoric, and Technology: Searching for Higher Ground* (winner of the 2007 Computers and Writing Distinguished Book Award) and 2011 *Digital Griots: African American Rhetoric in a Multimedia Age* brought African American rhetorics to the center of digital writing. Haas and Banks are representative of the work being done by BIPOC scholars that expands our understanding of digital methods and methodologies. Additionally, Dora Ramirez-Dhoore’s 2005 article “The Cyberborderlands: Surfing the Web for Xicanidad” traces early conversations of identity and race on the internet, and Samantha Blackmon’s 2004 article “Violent Networks: Historical Access in the Composition Classroom” reminds us that even though computers entered the classroom more frequently, there was still a major digital divide to account for

in terms of access and the historical lineage of institutional racism. The genius in all this work is not about identifying new tools for digital writing, but instead connecting longer lineages and discourses to conversations on technology and writing. Banks, Haas, Ramirez-Dhoore, and Blackmon insist on bringing methodologies to digital rhetoric that identify and keep communities at the center.

Since this mid-2000s moment, other scholars have continued to build on these publications in digital writing and rhetoric. We list them briefly here to honor their contributions and to point to how a variety of work related to digital tools has shaped research inquiry in the field. To be blunt, if you haven't read these works and you do digital research, get to reading! First, we have been heavily influenced by the work of scholars in C&W who study writing and rhetoric through video and other related technologies (many of whom are women), listed here in alphabetical order by author name: Megan Adams' use of digital storytelling connected to place; Sarah Arroyo and Bahareh Alaei's visually stunning video remixes; Laura Gonzales's use of video coding software to examine rhetorics of translation; Bump Halbritter and Julie Lindquist's use of video to examine scenes of literacy sponsorship; Alexandra Hidalgo's feminist filmmaking methodology; bonnie lenore kyburz's video experimentation and theorization of film-composition; Lehua Ledbetter's work on YouTube bloggers; Casey Miles' Queer video filmmaking; Andrea Olinger's analysis of visual embodied actions within interviews; Laquana Cooke, Lisa Dusenberry, and Joy Robinson's work on gaming; Ann Shivers-McNair's use of point-of-view (POV) researcher video; and Josie Walwema's studies on intercultural and transnational digital communication.

Overall, these authors demonstrate how digital research tools like a video camera or video editing software function as much more than a "note-taking device," but instead as an integral part of the research ecology that then "demands a retooling of the methodology" (Halbritter and Lindquist 185). We have learned much from technofeminists, as well, who have discussed multimodal methods within a technofeminist research identity (Almjeld and Blair), shown their work through authoring digital dissertations (Adams and Blair), and have extended "conversations in technofeminism, digital rhetorics, and computers and writing, with an increased attention to intersectionality" of race, gender, class, and sex (Haas, Rhodes, and DeVoss).

We also draw from and build on the work from those using digital research and technologies as what Regina Duthely calls a "disruptive political force" (357) to address injustice. Duthely argues that Hip-Hop provides a foundation for digital and multimodal composition in our field, and that we can learn much from online Hip-Hop communities that use digital tools to build community, resist dominance, reaffirm Black experiences, and generate hopeful narratives (355). A.D. Carson's *i used to love to dream* is an apt example, and as the first peer-reviewed rap album, it paves new ground for digital methods related to the presentation of scholarship and simultaneously disrupts dominant forms of discourse within academia and foregrounds Black expression. We are listening, as well, to

colleagues from the Sound Studies, Rhetoric, and Writing community and conference who record and mix sound to connect to communities and fight against oppression and injustice (Aguilar, Bravo, Craig, Milburn, Petchauer, Rodriguez, Valenzuela, and Landa-Posas). For these authors, composing and performing with digital tools such as turntables or audio and video editing software is a way to share stories and to disrupt harmful narratives and practices in society.

## Extending Work on Digital Methods and Methodologies: Positionalities and Technologies—Track 7

From the history of work on digital methods and methodologies that we present in Track 6, we learn that the digital affects all aspects of research, including methodology and methods. The use of digital technologies for writing research is thus always experiential, contextual, and rhetorical. The authors in this collection are navigating complex experiences, and one way that they build on prior work is that they purposefully—and at length—share methodological stories, experiences, and knowledge gained. They do so with an explicit attention to researcher positionality and how that positionality affects the work. The results are methodological narratives that are personal and professional, individual yet foundational. Our authors, much like Victor with his MPIO FL300, use the digital to solve problems, to challenge the status quo, and to address inequalities. Sometimes they do so by using familiar digital technologies in novel ways, exploring the use of social media, online repositories, a handheld sound recorder, online corpora, or a camera, for example. Other times, they explain the use of relatively new or less familiar technologies such as digital mapping apps, Twitter bots, audio-visual captions, or computer programming code. Overall, the collection usefully combines attention to human positionality and digital technology to dig into important social issues and questions related to writing and rhetoric today. And because our authors have so many important experiences to share and diverse methodological narratives to tell, we have divided the collection into two volumes. In Track 7, we provide an overview of the sections and chapters in each volume.

### Telling Research Stories for Activist Ends

In Volume 1, *Section 1—The Journey and the Destination: Accessing Stories of Digital Writing Researchers* focuses on the stories of researchers arriving at their current digital-methodological practices, with attention to how digital methodologies open opportunities for reflective scholarship that is at times activist minded and at others an opportunity to check our privilege. In chapter 1, “Lessons Learned from an Early Career, Five-Year Project with Digital Methods: Accounting for Positionality and Redressing Injustice,” Ann Shivers-McNair traces the relationships between bodies, things, contexts, and practices in her experiences as an early-career digital researcher. With careful attention to her own positionality and to networks

of relationships with BIPOC women scholars in rhetoric and composition, she describes work on an ethnographic case study of a makerspace where she used video recording and still photography. Specifically, Shivers-McNair reflects on how digital fabrication technologies like 3D printing and the use of video and photographs for storytelling are intertwined in her work, and how both aspects are often influenced by her own multiple identities and white privilege.

In chapter 2, “Flipping the Table and Redefining the Dissertation Genre with a Digital Chapter,” Temptuous Mckoy discusses the methods behind the digital chapter in her award-winning dissertation. Connecting digital publishing with digital methods as fundamental to doing digital scholarship, Mckoy argues that leveraging a wide range of experiences in and out of academia helped her realize the potential of her skill set based in her own lived experience. These skills and practices, including networking, social media strategy, fund-raising, and relationship building, allowed her to utilize a wide range of digital methods to complete her project through an iterative process that eventually led to the digital chapter. By wanting to create a digital publication that would better tell the story of her research, Mckoy was led to the acknowledgment, development, and deployment of her digital methods to complete her research.

In chapter 3, Janine Butler brings together theories of sound, access, interdependency, articulation, and voice to reflect on her methodology and methods, which include the use of audio and video technologies. The chapter, “Strategies for Accessing and Articulating Voices through Digital Writing Research Projects,” details processes for accessing a professional voice through signed, captioned, and voiced-over videos; as well as processes for accessing research participants’ voices through transcribing and video recording. Butler urges digital writing researchers to join her in further exploring ways to make sounds visible and visuals sonic so that more people might fully access and articulate their writerly voices.

Chapter 4, “‘Tell Virgil Write BRICK on my brick’: Doctoral Bashments, (Re) Visiting Hiphopography and the Digital Discursivity of the DJ: A Mixed Down Methods Movement,” is a reflection from Todd Craig on hiphopography, a term originally coined by James G. Spady, as a research methodology that intermingles with classroom praxis. Hiphopography, for Craig, embraces inclusion through digital resources, always inviting, invoking, and involving participants of Hip-Hop culture into the processes and products of research and teaching. Craig organizes his reflections as a set of tracks, mixing in samples from an online meme, a track from the Buffalo, NY based Hip-Hop collective Griselda, his own theory of Hip-Hop DJ Rhetoric, Nelson Flores and Jonathan Rosa’s raciolinguistic theories, and James G. Spady’s work on Hip-Hop.

As editors, we wanted to open the collection with these chapters because they emphasized the journey of research. Methods and methodologies are learned, expanded, and understood best through experience. As the authors retrace their research steps, we are grateful to them for sharing their stories. Through their narratives, Shivers-McNair, Mckoy, Butler, and Craig give us access to their iden-

tities and digital research stories in ways that inspire us to build on their work and learning. Sharing stories is a vulnerable and engaging act that motivated us to further shape this collection by asking all the authors in the book to acknowledge their positionalities as they describe their scholarship. We hope you share in our gratitude to these authors for the stories they provide in their chapters.

## New Perspectives, New Tools

Section 2 in Volume 1 contains methodological perspectives that utilize evolving 21st-century digital technologies to document histories, experiences, and phenomena. In the section, entitled *Memory and Documentation: Digital Archives and Multimodal Methods of Preservation*, the authors explore various applications and tools for archiving, recording, and mapping that extend current approaches to looking and listening across time and experiences. In chapter 5, “Digital Story-Mapping,” Eda Özyeşilpınar and Diane Quaglia Beltran employ digital story-mapping (DSM) as a methodology and method to explore space and place, embodied storytelling, and multimodal writing in two projects: Özyeşilpınar’s reading of the cartographic narrative within the *Israel in Pictorial Maps* atlas, and Beltran’s writing classroom where students interrogate historical memory on a university campus. Through these projects, Özyeşilpınar and Beltran demonstrate how DSM offers possibilities for uncovering counterstories and silenced experiences of under-represented groups.

In chapter 6, “Social Network Analysis and Feminist Methodology,” Patricia Fancher and Michael J. Faris explore the question of “who appears?” in two research projects through social network analysis (SNA). Fancher examines solidarity, inclusion, and exclusion in a community of early 20th-century women physicians, and Faris presents a citation network analysis of queer rhetoric studies, exploring citation patterns relating to scholars of color. Fancher and Faris conclude with three feminist methodological principles for the use of SNA, and they call for more attention to questions of power, embodiment and emotions, and the complexities of defining and visualizing networks.

Next, Kati Fargo Ahern asks us to consider ethics, ownership, IRB-related issues, and the consequences of the practice of field recording sounds. In chapter 7, “Recording Nonverbal Sounds: Cultivating Rhetorical Ambivalence in Digital Methods,” Ahern describes field recording as a method, gives details on two sonic methods projects, and encourages researchers to actively cultivate ambivalence as they choose whether or not to field record. To assist us in this cultivation, Ahern offers a heuristic based on Indigenous digital composing and Indigenous sound studies that includes consideration of sound’s purpose, land and space protocols, relationships, and potential benefit.

In chapter 8, “Digitally Preserving the Home through the Collective: A Communal Methodology for Filipinx-American Digital Archiving,” Stephanie Mahnke and James Beni Wilson describe the digital archiving of artifacts from the

Philippine American Cultural Center of Michigan. Mahnke and Wilson detail communal methods that challenge traditional notions of the archive through seeking balance between the creation of a digital infrastructure for a large set of collections and a community-engaged praxis that attends to narratives and place/space. They discuss grounding their archive in shared identity, communal decision making, local Filipinx history, the cultural center as a physical collective place, intergenerational succession, outreach, access, and financial sustainability.

Bibhushana Poudyal then discusses what minimal computing and community praxis offer digital archival research in chapter 9, “Counter, Contradictory, and Contingent Digital-Storytelling through Minimal Computing and Community-Praxis.” Drawing from her experience creating an online archive of images depicting life in Kathmandu, Nepal, Poudyal describes how digital archives can be a dialectical space for deconstructing representations of the Other. She also reflects on openings for working with community members through digital archiving, even as a researcher with few resources, and argues that digital storytellers must learn to pay attention to and reflect the heterogeneities within diverse communities.

Taken together, the researchers in section 2 ask us to consider how mapping and archiving, how recording and networking create a space for preserving and sharing knowledge and for challenging racism and inequalities within the past and the present. The maps, graphs, sounds, and archives they describe help us to visualize and hear digital representations of cultures, events, and locations, and to consider our own roles in the ways we look back and remember in our research and our lives. They help us think about the potential for the digital to preserve—and to alter—the ways the world around us is constructed.

## Negotiating Challenges in Digital Research

Digital writing research presents challenges that are contextual, rhetorical, and at times uncharted. While we might imagine that digital writing research presents *new* challenges, and it does, we are reminded that there will always be *people* navigating the technology. In Volume 2, *Section 3—Ethics and Intangibles: Unique Challenges of Digital Research* focuses on complex methodological situations that arose for authors: working with marginalized groups on the web, dealing with on-line digital aggression, centering Black rhetorics and Hip-Hop DJ practices, negotiating trauma in community engagement projects, and selecting participants within the vastness of the internet. Overall, the authors point to the necessity of continually considering digital ethics when encountering unfamiliar, challenging, or potentially harmful situations. In chapter 10, for example, Constance Haywood draws on her experiences researching online to suggest that Black feminist theory has much to teach digital writing and rhetoric researchers. In “Developing a Black Feminist Research Ethic: A Methodological Approach to Research in Digital Spaces,” Haywood calls rhet/comp researchers to give prioritized at-

tention to the lived experiences of Black women and to the ethics of working with research participants and communities online, especially with those who are multiply marginalized. Black feminism guides and specifies how we might do this, Haywood argues, through critical self-reflection, radical reciprocity, consideration of multiple identities and histories, and a commitment to liberation through protection and privacy.

In chapter 11, “Toward a Feminist Ethic of Self-Care and Protection When Researching Digital Aggression,” Derek M. Sparby recounts their experience studying and navigating digital aggression on the popular message board site 4chan. Connecting their work to the growing body of research in writing studies on digital aggression, Sparby highlights the importance of researching digital aggression while acknowledging the inherent potential for harm in doing so. Specifically, Sparby advocates for a feminist ethic of self-care because of the emotional and intellectual toll of working in these at-times dangerous spaces. Sparby offers advice on how to be proactive within this feminist ethic of self-care, including an example of how to contact administrators to help secure support.

In chapter 12, “Reflections on a Hip-Hop DJ Methodology” Eric A. House argues for the centering of Black digital writing and rhetoric practices in our field through Hip-Hop, teasing out what the DJ has to offer pedagogy and research ethics. House illustrates that the Hip-Hop DJ represents a model for digital writing that is situated in a long-standing tradition of multimodal and digital writing practices. By emphasizing DJ practices like the mix, the remix, and the sample, House pushes back on the idea of digital methods and methodologies as new or fresh, but rather sees them as part of a larger rhetorical lineage if we center Black digital writing epistemologies. Ultimately, House argues that foregrounding Hip-Hop DJs in the theorizing of digital writing methods and methodologies goes beyond simply bringing in Hip-Hop, but instead invites a dynamic understanding of the relationship between culture, embodiment, and digital composition.

Shannon Kelly, Eric Rodriguez, Benjamin Lauren, and Stuart Blythe discuss the importance of Trauma Informed (TI) scholarship and its relationship to two community engagement digital writing projects in chapter 13, “Trauma-Informed Scholarship as a Rhetorical Methodology in Digital Research and Design.” The authors provide an extensive literature review on TI scholarship and offer a heuristic for conceptualizing a TI approach within digital work. Drawing on two projects as examples, the authors explain how TI scholarship shaped their research designs to prioritize participants and ensure their safety and well-being.

Finally, in chapter 14, “Considerations for Internet Participant Selection: Algorithms, Power Users, Overload, Conventionalization, and Participant Protection” John R. Gallagher discusses the selection of participants in internet research, outlining five challenges: algorithms, power users, overload of possible participants, conventionalization of experiences, and participant protection from online toxic communities. He describes the importance of understanding these challenges while designing a study because while research on the internet can feel

unwieldy, careful participant selection aids in understanding internet spaces at a granular level. Ultimately, this granular view helps researchers understand the narratives that users build in their relationships to digital spaces.

Section 3 speaks to the intangible, layered questions that arise as the digital intertwines with human participants and researchers. The people involved in digital writing research have human needs: of representation, protection, safety, and security, and the technologies we use can help to facilitate how we remain aware of and meet these needs, or they might present barriers that can compromise an ethical response. The authors in this section remind us to consider the people *and* the technologies, the original and the remix, as we design and conduct research.

### Engaging with Bots, Corpora, Code, and Cameras

In Volume 2's *Section 4—Digital Tools for Understanding Discourse, Process, and Writing: Language Across Modalities*, the authors take us back to one of our most powerful technologies: language. In the final section of our collection, we found comfort in our roots in writing studies. At the same time, the authors in this section demonstrate the possibilities of composition when your writing and research tools involve Twitter bots, chunks of code, linguistic patterns, and even fashion. These researchers, with (digital) tools such as bots, corpora, code, and cameras, deeply engage with activism, accessibility, linguistic diversity, and multimodal compositional processes. In chapter 15, "Studying Unknown Unknowns: Lessons from Critical Making on Twitter," Whitney Lew James takes on the work of trying to better understand the relationship between social media, algorithms, and echo chambers. James brilliantly undertakes this project by engaging in the creation of Twitter bots as a method of digital making and data collection. As tools for collecting research, James argues that making bots helps us better understand how they function and how we might utilize them to better understand social media spaces. Finally, James grapples with the complex relationship and associations that bots have as social media menaces as well as with their possibilities for social media activism.

In chapter 16, "Language Policing to Language Curiosity: Using Corpus Analysis to Foreground Linguistic Diversity" Laura Aull argues for a shift in how students engage with language in writing classrooms: from prescribed rules and evaluation to language curiosity and analysis. By centering linguistic diversity as well as linguistic patterns, Aull explains that this shift asks scholars to reimagine how we engage with diverse language practices, not only in terms of language ideologies but also in terms of how we analyze and assess language itself. Furthermore, Aull shows how a corpus approach drawing on linguistic diversity is a method that allows us to put stated beliefs about diversity into action while resisting an urge to return to homogeneity in practice.

In chapter 17, "The Pleasurable Difficulty of Programming," Benjamin Miller calls for a renewed understanding of programming through his experience

building digital tools as an enriching collaborative writing process. This chapter hopes to change perceptions of programming code by encouraging non-coders to consider working in both direct collaboration with programmers and indirect collaboration with others as you develop coding literacies. Miller reminds us that all code comes from somewhere, and while you may not directly work side by side with someone, there are collaborators everywhere in online communities or in the code itself. Ultimately, Miller provides a view of composition with a digital tool that aims to both embrace the difficulty of coding while providing an invitation to programming by demystifying the process.

Finally, Christina Rowell dives deep into studying the composing processes of students within a fashion design program. In chapter 18, “Multimodal Methods for Mapping Multimodal Composing Processes,” Rowell describes how multimodal process interviews evolved within her study and were born out of collaboration with participants and grounded in feminist theory and research on think-aloud protocols. Rowell details her methods for these interviews, which involve interacting with participants in the composing space, collecting and capturing various kinds of data on video, taking field notes, streamlining and combining data sources in a video editor, and supplementing interview data with various reflections and artifacts. Overall, Rowell calls researchers in writing studies to more carefully attend to the complex ecologies of humans, nonhumans, objects, materials, tools, and environments involved in composing.

Section 4 prompts researchers to make something new—and digital—that helps us better understand different ways of writing and composition. The authors describe their own experiences making and researching, reminding us that writing is ideological, activist, pleasurable, difficult, and always multimodal.

## Outro

The chapters in this collection offer insight into designing and approaching research using a wide variety of digital tools and technologies. It is our hope that the chapters in both volumes provide a broad but inclusive cross section of the dynamic work occurring in digital writing and rhetoric studies. What makes digital scholarship digital? What does adding the word “digital” in front of “methods and methodologies” represent for scholars and the discipline? The tools themselves are one aspect of the answers to these questions, albeit an important one. Yet our identities and positionalities, and those of our research participants and collaborators, affect and influence the technologies that mediate our relationships and research. These relationships between humans, technologies, methods, and methodologies determine the results of our efforts towards knowledge-building, problem-solving, and ideally, as many authors in this collection demonstrate, our efforts towards redressing oppression.

As this project developed, we strived as editors to make an impact on digital writing and rhetoric by offering readers a variety of projects with an emphasis

on positionalities. We acknowledge that attention to positionality is a common approach within the research designs of multiply marginalized scholars, and we honor this approach as we take it up. We hope that the stories and experiences described in this book offer starting points for those interested in digital writing research, as well as continual access points for those already engaged. We believe that the work represented here is defining what it means to do research in digital writing and rhetoric. Drawing on our own stories and those of our authors, we recognize that a multiplicity of paths can lead you to digital writing research, and so we share these narratives as an invitation to new scholars and an affirmation of those already in the field. We aim to inspire you to go for it, and to give you a little bit of help along the way, as you think about how and why you might learn to use an unfamiliar digital tool, or to reimagine your use of familiar tools for new possibilities.

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