UnfURLed
Twenty Writing Center Sites to Visit on the Information Superhighway

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BACKGROUND: THE NWCA LIST OF ONLINE WRITING CENTERS

When the first version of the National Writing Centers Association page (http://departments.colgate.edu/diw/NWCA.html) appeared in January 1996, it included about five or six links to other writing center websites. Due to a lengthy web-crawler search and an exploration of sites indexed through the University of Maine's then excellent site of online writing centers, the NWCA list grew so quickly that at some point in the Spring of 1996 the list of writing centers online had to be moved to its own page (http://departments.colgate.edu/diw/NWCAOWLS.html) to ease downloading. Since then, through a combination of searching and suggestions from colleagues, sites have been added at the rate of a little over three a month, with major list revisions in March and October of 1997 deleting obsolete sites and adding still more. As of February 1998, 213 sites were included, and it was from this list that the sites reviewed here were chosen.

SITE SELECTION

Two major selection criteria were used: either the site offered a substantial resource of value to writers or the writing center community, reflected mastery of the HTML medium, or both. Thus, a site like the University of Richmond, though it employs a design, is included for its Writers Web section, while Michigan State's fairly simple site was included for its innovation and technical ability. For easy reference, the sites are also reviewed using the following system of icons:

The international symbol for information is used for sites who have information about their writing center, such as hours, location, and contact addresses, on their pages.

The chain icon is used for sites that contain links to other writing or writing center related sites.

This, and the next four icons, are for sites that feature handouts or related material original to that particular site. This first symbol, with a solid block of text, is for a site that has 10 or fewer handouts.

These icons, of handouts with 2 columns, are for sites that have 11-30 handouts. The letters A and Z indicate that the handouts are indexed.

These icons, of handouts with 3 columns, are for sites that have more than 31 handouts. Again, the A and Z indicate that the handouts are indexed.

These computer icons are for sites that have electronic tutoring via e-mail or multi-user domains. The first indicates that the site has tutoring exclusively for members of its own institution; the second is for a site that features electronic tutoring for anyone on the net.

The palette and brush icon is for a site that makes good use of graphics, such as image maps or frames, or that is exceptionally well organized.

This writing icon is used to indicate that the site features tutor training materials, such as tutor manuals or practicum syllabi, or material of interest to composition teachers. Like the handouts, this material must be original to the site.

The 'new' icon, used on many web pages to indicate new material, is here used to show that the site has been revised within the last three months.

BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY

http://cal.bemidji.msus.edu/WRC/WRChome.html

This site's index page strikes a fine balance between humor and seriousness. The page features a red header logo on a plain white background; below is a menu in a borderless frame on the left of the screen with links and descriptions of the site's main areas. In the center of the screen, cartoon-like icons in an image map also function as links to these areas (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Index Page: Bemidji State University Writing Resource Center
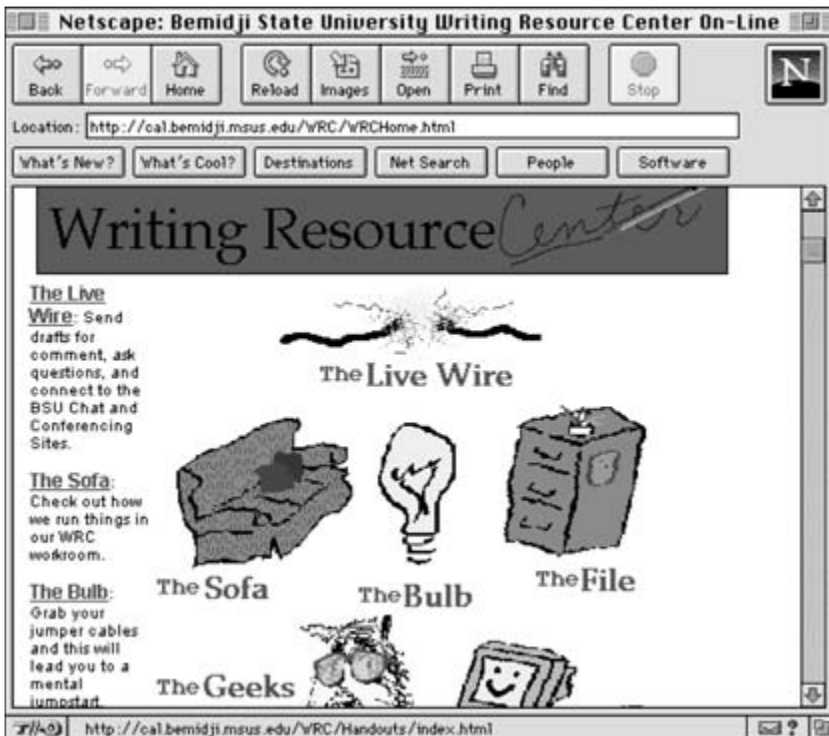
Clicking on The Bulb, for example, leads to a page of annotated links designed to stimulate writers, particularly those working on literature papers. Similarly, clicking on The Sofa leads to a page of information on Bemidji's real writing center, including a procedures manual and papers written for ENGL 312, Bemidji's Writing Consultancy course.

A third menu, of plain links, appears below the image map on the index page; items here could, perhaps, have been incorporated into existing sections or made into new ones. However, the site also features online tutoring, open to students and outsiders, and an indexed page of numerous linked and original handouts, making it complete and easily navigable.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY – HAWAII CAMPUS

http://lc.byuh.edu/R_WCTR/welcome. html

The cluttered index page is perhaps a good indication of how oddly this site is designed. Looking like a Victorian book, with lovely clickable watercolor pen-and-ink images on a brown textured background, this page is a haphazard mixture of internal and external links (which are duplicated on the Surf the Net page and are, therefore, redundant here). Perhaps a better option for visitors wishing to navigate the site is to select the Reading/Writing Center image, which links to a more orderly arranged menu — a collection of square icons and their corresponding links (http://lc.byuh.edu/R_WCTR/sample/welcom2.html).

Here, though, the visitor can find a link to a bordered frames version of the site (http://lc.byuh.edu/R_WCTR/frames/gallery.html) which employs the same icons in a menu bar on the left of the screen. This site employs a completely different design concept, using a notebook image for the main frame. The menu-bar icons are unlabeled; placing the cursor over them leads to a description of their function appearing at the bottom of the screen.

As problematic as the site's organization may be, the Surf the Net page is worth the visit. Although the design concept for this page is different again, it makes good use of forms to facilitate an easy search of several different search engines. The Meet the Tutors section also makes excellent use of an image map (clicking on a tutor's picture leads to a brief biography of that tutor). A nicely indexed collection of original handouts complements the site, which certainly could use unifying in its next revision.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY–LOS ANGELES

http://web.calstatela.edu/centers/write_cn/index.htm

This site, which is offered in both frames and non-frames versions, is a good example of how a simple frames set-up can facilitate easy site navigation. Though the instructions provided for its online tutoring service are perhaps a little complex, and there is a lot of information that is of local interest only (such as how to pass California State's Writing Proficiency Exam), the Resources and Faculty Services sections yield some high-quality material. The former section, divided into two categories (Writing Tips and Grammar and Punctuation Tips) is a small collection of handouts, including really useful ones on Using the Words of Others and on Breath, Grammar, and Punctuation (which looks at punctuation from an historical perspective and which ultimately challenges the traditional grammatical way of looking at punctuation). The Faculty Services section contains articles about teaching writing, including ones on Good Assignments, What is an 'A' Paper, and a concise historical survey of rhetorical education called Ancient Rhetoric and Modern Literacy. Sections on helping ESL students and on Writing In The Disciplines round out this small but significant section nicely.

CALIFORNIA UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

http://www.english.cup.edu/wcenter/wcenter.html
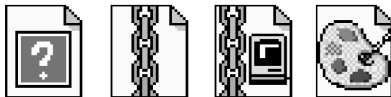
Another frames site, with a bordered menu bar on the left hand side of the screen and a larger frame on the right hand side of the screen. When the screen loads for the first time, information about California University of Pennsylvania's real writing center appears in the large frame; due to a coding problem, when a link from the menu frame is clicked, this information stays in the larger frame, and new information, rather than replacing the original, appears in a new web browser. However, a nice user-friendly forms-based page for online paper submissions, and a useful series of links shows that the site has promise, especially as it has been recently updated.

CLAREMONT GRADUATE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

http://www.cgts.edu/resources/wrtctr.html

Again, another very simple site, featuring only one very basic graphic which appears on most of the site's pages. Like California State Los Angeles, it also has pretty elaborate instructions for users of its online tutoring service (which is for students only). This site features an nice array of handouts presented in an easy-to-view table; sections on General Writing Tips, Working With Sources and on writing Specific Kinds of Papers (such as literature reviews and summaries) are complemented by an unusual offering of handouts for writers presenting at professional conferences. This section takes the visitor through the whole process of deciding what format the conference presentation should take, how to submit a proposal and abstract, how to deliver the paper, how to deal with responses and questions, and how conference presentations differ in the Humanities and Social Sciences. This, coupled with a useful online handbook on writing issues for faculty which includes sections on how to respond to writing and how to work with ESL students, and a small yet well-annotated list of useful internet sites, gives this site some real substance.

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/English/wcenter/wcenter.htm
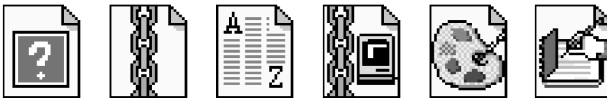
For web page managers looking for different ways to organize an abundance of information clearly and logically, this site is one to bookmark. The entry page to this site is very simple, featuring two audio samples (the only writing center site to do so) and information about Colorado State's real writing center. Like several other sites, this page then has a link to an online center (http://www.colostate.edu/Depts/WritingCenter/index.html), leading to an index page which provides several choices as to how to browse the site. Users can opt to use the straightforward index of links on the main page, which is divided into six main categories. With the exception of the Tutorials and Send A Paper categories, clicking on each of these categories leads to a sub-index; clicking on an item here leads to a screen

which adopts a three frame format. The left frame contains a menu bar, while the middle frame contains items which can be expanded out on the right frame (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Three-Frame Format: Colorado State University Writing Center
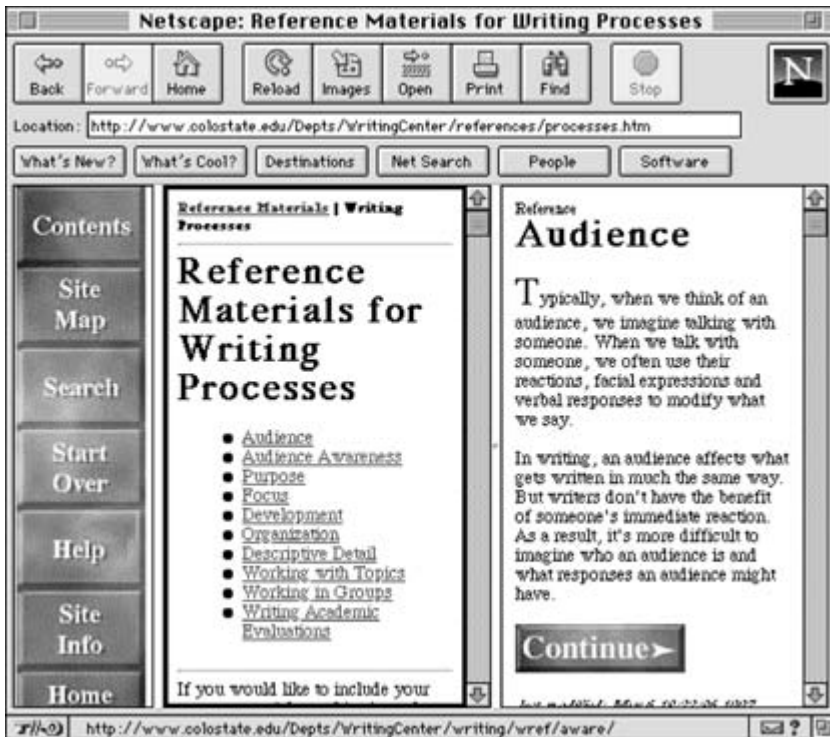
The other method of navigation is the menu bar, which is a borderless frame appearing on the left hand site of every screen in the site, and which provides various navigation options for visitors. With the exception of the confusingly-named Start Over button (which actually functions in the same way as a Back button on a browser) this method works well.

All the navigation systems on the web cannot help a site if it has nothing to offer; this site, however, delivers in several ways. The Assignments sections contains much useful information and syllabi for teachers of Composition, English, and Engineering courses with a writing component; the Reference Materials section also contains a wealth of handouts, all logically indexed. Sadly, the Tutorial section, which promises interactive tutorials for writers and readers" has yet to be

completed, though the Send A Paper section provides easy-to-follow instructions for cutting, pasting, and sending a paper via a well laid-out page.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

http://pilot.msu.edu/user/writing/
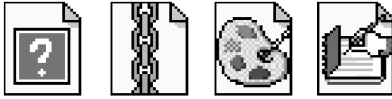
The opening page to this site, featuring some simple graphics and an index of internal links, gives few clues to the whimsical world that lies inside. The index is divided into five headings, and most of the links contained under these headings will take the visitor to pages featuring a borderless table menu bar on the right hand side of the screen, a simple yet effective logo graphic for a header, and generous photographic images. Several of the pages contain sub-indexes; nearly all contain information of mostly local interest.

Of particular note among these pages, however, is the online publication *Peer Review* (http://pilot.msu.edu/user/writing/Peer_Review/prpg1.html), an in-house newsletter that could serve as a model for other writing centers wishing to engage in a similar project. A promised WAC Newsletter has yet to materialize.

But the jewel in Michigan State's crown is the elaborate HTML house, Cloverfield Manor, listed on the index page under the Resources for Writers heading as The Writers' Retreat. Clicking on the link takes the visitor to a page (http://pilot.msu.edu/user/writing/retreat.html) containing a graphic of the Manor's exterior along with some information about it. The Retreat is a truly imaginative attempt to create a virtual reality writing center which the visitor can enter by clicking on the Enter the Cloverfield Manor link. Immediately, the visitor is transported to the Parlor, the Manor's front room, which is, in reality, a screen divided into three frames (see Figure 3).

In the top left frame is an image map of the Manor's floor plan; to move around the house, all the visitor has to do is to is to click on a room and the screen for that room downloads in the right-hand frame. This, too, is an image map, and clicking on an item in the room (such as the calendar on the parlor wall) leads to a page of links (in this case, a list of Michigan State writing center workshops). For the less adventurous and more literal-minded, scrolling down the bottom frame reveals a written description of the room, as well as a handy link to a list of all the clickable items in it.

Sadly, the Manor, like the stately home of some bankrupt British baron, is in need of some serious repair. The items within the rooms are all links to outside

Figure 3
Cloverfield Manor Parlor: Michigan State University Writing Center

sites, and one could only wish that the same energy put into designing the retreat could have also been put into designing some original resources. And four out of the nine projected rooms have, in the words of the site's author, yet to be remodeled; since the site was last revised in May of 1997, one can only speculate that the construction crew have gone on a rather lengthy coffee break.

PURDUE UNIVERSITY'S OWL



http://owl.english.purdue.edu

The index page to the oldest and most comprehensive online writing center in existence is simple and uncluttered, with a logo of a computer disk appearing

above a borderless table. The table is divided into seven self-explanatory sections and visitors can either choose to click on a color coded category heading to go to an introductory page for each category (which features the section's sub-index, sometimes in table form), dive straight in to one of the several links provided under each category heading, use the handy search engine for the site, or take a more leisurely paced self-guided tour (beginning at http://owl.english. purdue.edu/owls/tour/introduction.html).

And what an immense amount of information there is! There are over 200 connected pages of information here, though for most visitors, the highlight is the 130 downloadable handouts. As significant as the handouts are, however, a wonderful section of links for ESL students and teachers, and an excellent annotated bibliography of scholarly work on online writing labs (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owls/owl-bib.html) should not be overlooked. Many of the links throughout the site are annotated and, in the Sites of Interest to Writing Teachers section, reviewed.

Organizing and maintaining a site of this magnitude is a formidable task, and inevitably leads to some, albeit minor, problems. The index page contains a number of redundant links (with the exception of the Resources for Writers and Purdue Resources category headings on the opening index page, all the images are links which are confusingly duplicated by other links placed immediately below them); the page summarizing the handouts categories is not especially helpful (the categories are clear enough in themselves); the section on Internet Searching could be refined (discipline specific search engines and indexes could appear together, for example); and older pages need to be revised to include the helpful menu bar that appears at the bottom of most of the pages on the site to make the site uniform. But in the face of such a resource, such criticisms seem petty; the countless number of other websites that have linked to the Purdue OWL, and the 8,700 hits a day that the site received during the 1997 Fall Semester, are proof positive of the site's stature in the online writing center community.

ROANE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OWL
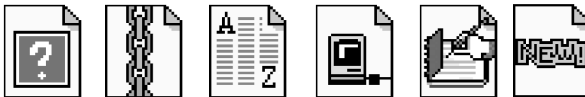
http://www2.rscc.cc.tn.us/~jordan_jj/OWL/owl.html

For anyone interested in exploring the possibilities of online pedagogy, this is certainly a site to bookmark. Another very simply designed site, the index page features an attractive logo of a great-horned owl; underneath it, a bordered table contains links that are both anchored to the index page or that lead elsewhere in the site. Highlights of the site include 35 original handouts, including a number

of sample student essays, syllabi for a writing center practicum and several online writing courses, a useful index of handouts at other online writing centers, and articles on writing, writing centers and online writing labs by the site's author, Jennifer Jordan-Henley. One of them, MOOving Across the Information Superhighway (http://www2.rscc.cc.tn.us/~jordan_jj/OWL/MOOving.html) details the Cyberspace Writing Center Consultation Project, where graduate students in rhetoric and writing at The University of Arkansas–Little Rock (http://www.ualr.edu/~owl/index.html) offer online tutoring to students enrolled in composition, literature and technical writing courses at Roane State via an email paper exchange and a virtual conference in a multi-user domain.

SALT LAKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

http://www.slcc.edu/wc/welcome.htm

The only online writing center boasting a writing center cam, this is another frames site, this time with the menu bar situated on the right-hand side of the screen. Unfortunately, this can be easily confused with the menu bar that appears at the foot of the main frame pages, which is intended for the main Salt Lake Community College site, and not for the writing center. However, the menu bar provides a link to an alphabetical Detailed Index, which provides an easy-to-use overview of the site in a bordered frame. Other areas of the site include Teachers' Writing: A Clearinghouse of Pedagogy (which currently contains a survey of Salt Lake Community College Writing Center users and a piece on email tutoring); an indexed list of links to writing and research resources on the net; links to syllabi for several online and traditional writing courses; *Cere*, an e-zine of creative writing for the Salt Lake Community College and neighboring Utah community; and online tutoring, where visitors can submit writing or writing-related questions in a number of ways (A MOO, a bulletin board, and a virtual tutor that takes papers or questions via a form or email).

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

http://parallel.park.uga.edu/~sigalas/wchome.html

The opening page offers a choice of frame or no-frames version, the frames version featuring a menu bar of links on the left side of the screen, while the no-frames version has the same menu in a bordered table. The whole site employs simple pages with a uniform, gray textured background and contains much of local interest, including information on the University of Georgia Regents Testing Program. It is the Writer's Resources section, which includes a number of original and linked handouts, which is the part of this site to head for, however; the prize here is the huge section on comma usage, called "Commas: They're Not Just For English Majors Anymore." Though the accompanying exercise section, which uses forms to allow the viewer to click on a box and immediately check the answer, can be seen as a high-tech skill-and-drill exercise, the main page is a genuine attempt to demonstrate how to apply punctuation knowledge during the drafting and proofreading stages of the writing process; the jargon-free approach to the section and humorous examples also give this a fresh approach to the issue of comma usage.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN WRITERS' WORKSHOP

http://www.english.uiuc.edu/cws/wworkshop/writer.html

Another very comprehensive site with much to offer. The opening page employs a bordered frames menu bar on the left hand side of the screen; the index page, confusingly, duplicates the links and icons on the menu bar but employs different names for the sections, though it does provide a good representation of the site and its layout. (Interestingly, whether intentional or not, clicking on the Home link below the Writers Workshop logo on the menu bar will lead to a no-frames version of the site). Pages after the index page employ a uniform white background and logos, rather than the green textured index page which could have been distracting if over-used, though the header logos vary from page to page, making the site appear a little disorderly.
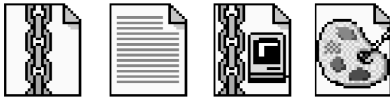
The main features of this site are the comprehensive Online Writing Guide and the really useful Best Websites For Writers section. The Online Writing Guide is divided into three sections: The Grammar, Writing Techniques, and Bibliography Handbooks. Each section is nicely indexed and tremendously helpful. Of special note is the Grammar Handbook, which ends each entry with a handy teaching tip for teachers using the material in class. I have some minor criticisms about the other two sections, however; the Bibliography handbook, which currently features sections on APA, MLA, and old MLA style, could be updated to include citations for online sources, while the Writing Techniques section could be better organized

(the section on genre specific advice includes a link on using commas, and the advice given could also a little more responsive to writers across the disciplines).

Arguably, the most impressive section of the site is the section on the Best Websites for Writers, which provides really helpful annotations of a vast number of websites. Five categories are considered here; of them, the Writing Teachers Resource page and the Help for Students and Teachers of English as a Second Language page incorporate large amounts of information. Both pages utilize indexes at the top of each respective page and take a few seconds to download, but the wait is definitely worth it.

The site is made complete by links from the index page to pages of local information as well as links to two other smaller sections, on Reference Texts and Directories and on WWW Searching Tools; of these, the first could use some expanding. On the whole, though, this is a valuable site, and one can only hope that they continue to expand along the lines they have already established.

## UNIVERSTIY OF MINNESOTA

http://www.Agricola.umn.edu/owc/

A site long on graphic ambition but short on technical prowess, this site could have potential if maintained properly. The index page to the site features images of a window and three doors marked Tutoring, Skill Center, and Staff (see Figure 4).

Despite being labeled, these images' functions are not readily apparent: the window, for example, is an external link to Minnesota weather, while clicking on the Staff door leads to a dialog box asking for a name and a password to enter a server whose function is not explained. Clicking on the tutoring door proves to be more inviting, however; the viewer is soon greeted by images of a blackboard, a clipboard, and an in and out tray. Clicking on the blackboard, on which is written "How to Use the Tutor," reveals that this page is for online tutoring; a long but clear list of instructions explains how to submit a paper. Going back and clicking on the in-tray provides an easy-to-use form for that purpose, and finished papers are then placed in the out-tray to be picked up by their authors. The clipboard, with the words "Leave a Message" written on it, functions, as one would expect, as a mail-to link.

The Skills Center also makes similar clever use of images, containing books on top of a file cabinet, a picture, a crystal ball, and two more doors, each labeled conveniently with their function. But it is here that the concept starts to break down. The page begins promisingly enough—clicking on the Books (labeled

Figure 4
Index Page: University of Minnesota Online Writing Center
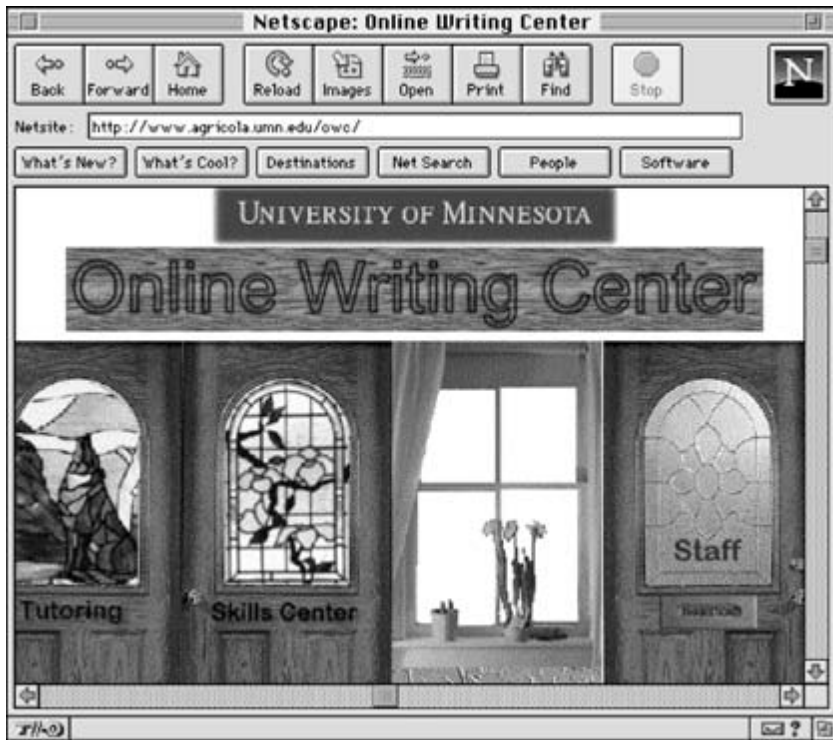
"WWW resources for Writers") leads to a page with a number of annotated links. However, clicking on the file cabinet marked Handouts leads to a dull, gopher-style index from which the handouts can be accessed (an open file drawer or something similar would have been more appropriate). Likewise, the crystal ball failed to live up to its promise. The Oracle, as it is named, promises to be a database of grammar information and a place where answers to email grammar questions will be revealed. However, an attempt to enter the database is met with an error message, as does any attempt to "open" the Classroom door, which looks to be some sort of chatroom. Clicking on the picture labeled Upcoming Online Workshops yielded no results at all.

With no information on the index page about the page's last update, it is impossible to determine whether this page will live up to its lavish, graphic promise; as at Cloverfield Manor, one can only hope that the contractors will finish their break soon.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

http://www.missouri.edu/~lcwww/wlhome.html

A busy index page features a number of moving images (visitors are greeted by an invisible hand writing the word "welcome" on a chalk board) on a gaudy yellow background; a bordered table in the center of the page contains the site's index. This contains mostly items of local interest, though a link to the University of Missouri's Writing Lab internship course (http://dewey.lc.missouri.edu/H120/intern.html) is of wider interest; while there, a visit to the course's newsletter is also worth the trip. Several links here are problematic, however: a link to a handout on APA documentation works fine, though the corresponding link to the handout on MLA documentation is inoperative, while links labeled Writing Workshop and Writers' Block Newsletter actually go to the University of Missouri's Learning Center .

But it is the link to Eric Crump's Online Writery (http://www.missouri.edu/~writery/) that most visitors to the site will be interested in. Here, in addition to a number of links to resources on the Net, Eric has put together the largest number of spaces for writing and writing related issues available through one site. Not only can visitors submit writing or writing-related questions to cybertutors via an easy-to-use form, but they can also subscribe to the Writers' Cafe, a listserv dedicated to writing issues, join ZooMoo, a real time virtual environment for writers," or even join one of several HyperNews forums (fiction, poetry and HTML help) to submit and/or discuss writing. The header frame at this site claims that you have entered a conversation coffeehouse for writers; judging by the number of different ways one can talk about writing here, the noise around the site must be deafening!

L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/arts/writcent/

Though the simple layout and stark white background of the index page suggest that this site has little to offer, its Hypergrammar is well worth the visit. Called an Online Textbook and Workbook for English Grammar, it is perhaps more accurately described as an interactive, self-guided grammar tutorial.

Initially, it may seem a little awkward to use (reading the instructions is highly recommended) but anyone that has any facility with the old Hypercard-type programs should have no problem navigating this ingenious site.

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

http://www.urich.edu/~writing

Like the University of Ottawa site, this simple set of pages contains a hidden gem: the Writers Web. A simple bordered table contains the index to over 50 original handouts, organized by the stages of the writing process; of note here are handouts on reading strategies in the Prewriting section, a cautionary handout on the warning signs of a rushed paper, a section on using sources, and a peer editing guide. The WAC focus of a number of handouts in this section is also a welcome addition

This site is also a part of the Epiphany Project, a project designed to integrate technology into the writing classroom. Though the main site is housed at George Mason University (http://mason.gmu.edu/~epiphany), the Richmond writing center houses an interesting survey on the problems of implementing electronic pedagogy and of using computers in WAC classes.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

http:/uwc-server.fac.utexas.edu/

This is another neglected site which needs to perform a thorough revision of all its pages. A simple index page featuring a logo and a textured gray background lists links to several items, including a huge list of links for communication scholars, many of which are annotated; teachers of composition will also find some useful items here, including handouts on designing writing assignments, commenting on student papers, peer critiquing and approaches to teaching grammar and punctuation. Finally, this is another site with a newsletter for tutors or clients of the University's real writing center; sadly, though, the last (and only) issue posted is December 1995.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

http://www.wisc.edu/writing

This site has recently been updated as a bordered frames site, and stands as a perfect illustration of the inherent problems with the frames concept; though the header and main frame fit nicely on the screen, the left-hand frame is too small for the menu bar contained inside it, making it difficult to use. Though it dispenses with the attractive photo images and splashy graphics of the frames version, the no-frames option (http://www.wisc.edu/writing/noframes.html) is, at least at this point in time, preferable. Here, the menu is presented as a bar on the left hand side of a bordered table, with new items appearing at the bottom of a bigger cell. To complete the design, a nav-bar and logo appear as an attractive header to the index page; here, a search option is incorporated to ease navigation.

Of note at this site is the Online Writers' Handbook, featuring a number of easy-to-find handouts on writing topics; many of these handouts provide lengthy yet clear illustrations of the topic under discussion. This is augmented by a small FAQ page featuring sections on grammar and documentation, and several pages of internet resources, with helpful annotations accompanying each link. Local information of interest to the wider writing center community includes information on the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Writing Fellows Program and a simple yet comprehensive and easy-to-use form for online tutoring.

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

http://owl.wsu.edu/

A new site that already holds out tremendous promise, this is perhaps a glimpse into the future of OWLs, as it uses multi-media techniques to provide its services to writers. The opening page, a simple affair employing a header graphic and an image of an owl on a white background, leads to a number of internal links; these pages have the same uniform white background with an image map menu bar (a series of shelves with icons and labels to guide visitors to other sections of the site) on the right of the screen.

Resources of note here include the OWL Writers' Exchange, which is a wonderful twist on online tutoring. Registered visitors can post their papers in a bulletin board

format, enabling online tutors and other visitors to comment on them and produce a thread of responses. The registration process itself is fairly straightforward, requiring a few minutes to fill out a self-explanatory form; visitors finding this confusing, however, can download several QuickTime movies (courtesy of Hooey the Helpful Owl) designed to guide them through the process. Judging by the number of submissions to the Exchange, this service looks like it could become one of the more widely used online tutoring efforts in the writing center community.

Unfortunately, the rest of the site is, as yet, not as well developed. The Resources section is small, featuring only a handful of links to other sites, but the links are annotated and a handy form enables visitors to provide annotations and ratings for recommended sites, making this a truly interactive site. In addition, a small list of other OWLs is also provided; unfortunately, this is not annotated, and is unhelpfully organized by geographic area. But this is a site to bookmark and revisit if it continues to be revised.

WILKES UNIVERSITY

http://wilkes1.wilkes.edu/~writing/

A bordered frame introduction page (with a menu in the left hand frame) employing no graphics provides several internal links, including one to a tutor's handbook. Though it contains a number of sections of local interest (such as filling out report forms), the handbook has several sections, particularly The Initial Interview, Discovering Patterns of Error, and on Responding to Clients Requests, that could be useful to tutors everywhere. Two other sections, on Generative Questions and Practice Situations, are equally useful but not linked from the Handbook menu, and can only be found by following the sequential links that appear at the bottom of each page.

This site's other valuable resource is a number of writing guides, containing sections on Writing Research Papers, Editing/Revising, and Grammar, Mechanic and Usage. Additionally, seven worksheets are included in this section; rather than providing exercises to test for comprehension of the above areas, they are mostly analytical in nature, providing a tool for writers and readers to evaluate workshops or conferences. As such, they seem out of place in this section, and would seem more at home in the Tutor's Handbook or in a section of their own. Of the two remaining sections, the Technology page seems to be most useful, making good use of screen captures to help people use different email programs. The other section, the Resources page, consists mostly of links to literature sites.

CONCLUSION

Choosing twenty sites out of the 213 writing centers on the NWCA list was not easy. Even sites that have only local information still have something to offer the wider writing center community, either by providing contact information, mission statements, or administrative information that can be of use to other centers, or by providing web page design ideas for those searching for new ways to present information on the net. Not everyone has, or needs to have, an owl, and though this review is biased toward sites that carry the most information, it is not meant to slight the other 193 sites whose presence on the net reflects their desire to make only limited use of it.

From the sites selected, however, certain conclusions can be drawn about the way that writing centers have embraced the new technology. Nearly all the sites have adopted design aesthetics that reflect the writing center's place in the academy: conservative enough to be taken seriously, yet adventurous (and in some cases, playful enough) to reflect the non-traditional role that we occupy in the curriculum. But whether by choice or by ignorance of the medium's potential, only a fraction of writing centers on the net have embraced the multi-media possibilities that are now prevalent among the commercial sites. Certainly, as the medium progresses, and advances in audio and video continue, we would all do well to consider how these areas will help us achieve our goals on the web.

The other problem that is all too evident in this list, as it is on the web as a whole, is the difficulty in maintaining a site. At least eight sites out of the twenty have not updated their sites in the last three months (fully a quarter of the sites on the NWCA list fit into this category); several more have revised or added individual pages without paying attention to other areas of the site that are rapidly falling into disrepair. As I have learned in maintaining the NWCA site, time devoted to keeping it up to date increases exponentially with the amount of material on it, a fact that anyone considering starting up a site, or with lofty ambitions for an existing one, would do well to consider.

But this list indicates an encouraging trend, one that I hope will continue as more sites spring up or expand. While all of our sites cater well to our clientele, either through our handouts, by providing electronic tutoring, or by providing links to other writing-related sites, it is good to note that we are also beginning to cater to our own profession. Nearly half of the sites in this review (and twenty-three in the entire NWCA list) have information concerning tutoring or teaching writing, a small yet significant percentage of the total number of writing centers online. It is encouraging to see the numbers of tutoring manuals and training course syllabi that are appearing on the web; soon, hopefully, our professional material will become as widely available as our handouts. Add to this the growing number of sites here that are beginning to imaginatively use the medium's possibilities, and it is easy to become excited by the wired writing center's potential.