GENERAL STUDIES WRITING (GSW) DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AT BOWLING GREEN STATE UNIVERSITY: TO WEB 2.0 OR NOT TO WEB 2.0?

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First-year composition pedagogy and course communication (especially as implicitly endorsed by institutionally presented means) is often limiting in modes and modalities, which juxtaposes vibrant composing practices in the daily lives of students. Additionally, writing program requirements tend to value primarily alphabetic texts despite multimodal composing’s empirically-supported benefits to students. Many in the General Studies Writing program at Bowling Green State University—a sequence of Academic Composition courses—are also enjoying the affordances of Web 2.0 (an umbrella term for digitally connected platforms including file sharing, video and audio conferencing/commenting, and social networking) while creating ePortfolios. My dissertation takes advantage of this rich learning opportunity given the field’s call for published teacher research on digital pedagogy. Based in technofeminism, phenomenology, and grounded theory, this project reveals quantitative and qualitative data from digital surveys and interviews on the practices and preferences surrounding Web 2.0 in GSW. Voicing these “likes” is part of an ongoing thread on digital composition scholarship and teaching. This project provides examples, ideas, and activities showing how Web 2.0 can explicitly support GSW learning outcomes, university writing program goals, BGSU missions, state regulations such as the Ohio Transfer Module (OTM), and federal right to privacy.
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Much gratitude to my committee for consistently providing invaluable feedback, ideas, and answers to my many queries. Your guidance has richly shaped this project.

Love and abundant thanks to my family and friends for their plentiful support and encouragement. To my Nana and Grandaddy—I know this will make you proud.
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CHAPTER I. GETTING TO KNOW GSW AND TALKING TRENDS

During my time in the doctoral program in Rhetoric and Writing at Bowling Green State University (BGSU), I was consistently thankful that my mentors nurtured research interests in composing with Web 2.0, or what has been referred to as the “second generation” of the Internet. Web 2.0 as a term first appeared in 1999 by Darcy DiNucci, who observed that web design was beginning to take a more interactive turn. More than ten years later, Arola reminded scholars that social networking was definitely not the only part of Web 2.0—“It is, however, its largest manifestation. Social networking embodies some key components of Web 2.0: the Web as platform, the Web as participation, and the Web as collaboration” (5). With social networking as an increasingly popular gathering space, Web 2.0’s multimodality has fostered citizen activism more visibly and widely than ever before. Hundreds of networked “applications” share live content, foster international meetings, and update the vast majority of citizens worldwide. The most distinguishing feature of Web 2.0 is user-generated and user-edited content, which has been the very recent focus of many scholars.

Throughout this project, the terms “Web 2.0” “new media” and “digital media” are used somewhat interchangeably, as Horning and Kraemer described; defining new literacies must address “both reading and writing in the context of printed displays and various digital forms… ‘new literacies,’ then, is an umbrella category for the buzzword ‘literacies’ of the day, including: digital literacy, computer literacy, technological literacy, and more” (11). In addition, Horning and Kraemer aligned their definition of literacies “with that of Flower’s (1990) critical literacy, whereby students call on critical thinking skills to navigate, understand, transform, and apply information for their use” (13). Some examples of literacies investigated by this project included
collaborative composing on Google Docs, exchanging emails, utilizing Canvas CMS, social networking, mobile composing, and texting.

BGSU is an innovative technologically-advanced institution with an active population of students on Web 2.0. As one example, anyone on campus might spot colorful post-it notes with pick-me-ups on the walls of various classroom buildings and dorms (Figure 1). For example, the #yFFS (Your Fellow Falcon says) initiative is a student-run University-sponsored effort to make campus “a more welcoming place,” as the Facebook “About” page and University information page state. Student-to-campus communication is also happening in the BGSU School of Art; the Fine Arts Center Galleries popularized a 2015 “interactive exhibition featuring instructions by [well-known] artists.” This information was circulated by multiple groups under the #DoItBGSU hashtag on Twitter and Facebook, and around campus on flyers and on University-approved sidewalks (Figure 2).

Figure 1: #yFFsays Note

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1 The “Your Fellow Falcon” Facebook “About” page, and their BGSU information page.
The General Studies Writing program at BGSU, similar to first-year composition programs at other universities, has also taken advantage of Web 2.0 around campus. Their YouTube channel contains four helpful instructional videos: one about creating a BGSU ePortfolio, two on using Wikipedia for research, and one explaining using *CQ Researcher* database. During Teaching Assistant training, I excitedly discussed Web 2.0 pedagogy with colleagues—which we later implemented. The BGSU and GSW communities are clearly a rich opportunity for teacher research on new media, because the student and administrative population is already active on Web 2.0. My research interests, naturally, evolved into the influence of networked, multimodal communication on composition pedagogy in recent years; however, I also learned how these multimodal practices evolved from ancient rhetoric while weaving through key moments in history and culture.

One of the historical works inspiring my research was Palmeri’s *Remixing Composition: A History of Multimodal Writing Pedagogy*, which argued that, “Certainly, emerging digital technologies open up new possibilities for integrating multimodal activities into the writing
classroom, but it is important to remember that composition has always already been a field that has sought to help students draw connections between writing, image making, speaking, and listening” (Palmeri 10). Actively working with *Remixing Composition* with classmates and colleagues, and then discussing social media with my own GSW students, I realized that Web 2.0 fosters rich, historical collaborations in brilliant ways. For example, Twitter users take part in multimodal composing by creating short, impactful posts with words, photos, videos, and other live content, which is then shared and reacted upon by followers, friends, and/or total strangers. Twitter literally turns history into a story; Storify version one and version two can even archive any Twitter story permanently (Need to save proceedings from a conference live Tweet session?).

Since digitally networked activity seemed to be a cornerstone of the average BGSU student’s experience², GSW began to take advantage of Web 2.0. Scholarship supported the exigency of this move, and this project makes a valuable contribution by collecting evidence from GSW at BGSU via one survey, one interview with the GSW Director, and reflection on digital phenomena. This bevy of quantitative and qualitative data was coded using the theoretical frameworks of technofeminism, grounded theory, and phenomenology. Then, the coded data is presented by charts, tables, screen shots, and written analysis in order to arrive at some potential implications for GSW at BGSU. The project concludes by extending these implications to the field of rhetoric and writing.

For the phenomenological element of this project, I found evidence of effective digitally networked communication within the GSW community that represented the values and goals of GSW and BGSU. For example, tracking the number of views on a GSW YouTube video could

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² The phrase “average BGSU student” contains several shared characteristics, including socioeconomic status that enables access to personal laptops, personal smartphones, and the technological literacy to use them in ways that effectively engage with the campus community.
be an interesting digital record representing how Web 2.0 was a catalyst for digital literacy and troubleshooting regarding ePortfolios. What if this practice became less of an isolated event, and more of a commonplace occurrence as the resource became more popular? Determining whether GSW students would prefer this channel of communication over others was made more difficult without knowledge of how popular the resource is within the target population. Noting this need for more research in digital pedagogy, especially from both a student and instructor perspective, my dissertation addressed the following research questions/goals:

- First, how were students and instructors in the GSW program at BGSU currently interacting online regarding the course, and how did these practices enact institutional and pedagogical goals?

On its “Mission” page, BGSU promotes “engaged citizenship” (“About BGSU—Mission”), and the GSW homepage features “competency-based curriculum based on current theory and practice” (“College of Arts and Sciences—General Studies Writing”), which includes the ability to communicate in multiple modes for multiple audiences and purposes. Since GSW also liberally encourages technology in its programmatic pedagogy and electronic portfolio system, it is worth investigating how these digital values might be developing in innovative ways that are not yet visible to the GSW program or to the field of rhetoric and writing. For example, social media could be one innovative practice occurring between GSW instructor and student at BGSU, yet testimonials and empirical evidence of this kind of practice are not yet available. Without direct reference to this sort of teacher research, endorsement of particular Web 2.0 teaching practices could be considered less valid.

- Stemming from the first research goal, my dissertation also aimed to identify tangible preferences from the voices of the target population.
One survey distributed to volunteer GSW instructors and students (past and/or present) was tailored to reveal what kinds of networked instruction and communication are happening online, and for what purposes. The data from 42 respondents backed up the exigency created in this introductory chapter. Further, the current GSW Director was invited to an interview for her insights on electronic pedagogy, communication via Web 2.0, and the role of the institution in developing GSW curriculum. I also searched for digital artifacts which acted as examples of key junctures, conversations, activities, and pedagogy which I believe underscored the potential of Web 2.0 to explicitly support GSW learning outcomes, BGSU missions, and the overall goals of first-year composition. Research has already drawn successful ties between Web 2.0 and composition pedagogy; this project makes connections to how General Studies Writing at Bowling Green State University, a purposefully techno-savvy population, is already incorporating these digital values and practices. Based on research I have gathered, scholarly conversations I have followed on Web 2.0, and pedagogy I have practiced, I determined where to look for digital artifacts that added to this discussion of networked pedagogy. Ultimately, this project arrives at some best practices, strategies, and even lesson plan suggestions for both GSW and similar first-year composition programs.

Empirical evidence of Web 2.0 facilitating instructional pedagogy and communication is of ever-increasing importance as new technologies continually develop, especially because institutionally presented material is often limiting in modes and modalities. GSW and its student population at BGSU lent itself well to these research goals because the program emphasized the values of connectedness and technology, and the students are tech-savvy, with a majority willing and able to play with new platforms and genres. ITS (Information Technology Services) at BGSU even noted that the majority of students are using social media: “social media is a popular
and powerful mechanism for timely communications to the entire world about news and events occurring at Bowling Green State University. It has also become common to integrate classroom instruction and assignments with these technologies” (“BGSU Information Technology Policies”). This project’s data showcased the common strategies that BGSU Information Technology alluded to.

The remainder of this chapter constructs the exigency and essence of the project, beginning with vivid description of the GSW program, its population, goals, and demographics. Then, crucial federal regulations are discussed and compared to field-wide policies in, “But First—FERPA in the Field.” After these regulations and positions is a brief literature review in “Recent Activity: Following New Media, Rhetoric, and Writing.” The chapter concludes with a preview of content from the next chapters.

Friend Request from GSW at BGSU—“About” the Dissertation Population

Based on my interactions with GSW instructors, and teaching GSW students in seven course sections over the past three years, I knew that some students were critically creating and evaluating infographics, music videos, PSAs, Vines, and blogs. However, these vibrant practices often became less visible due to two important institutional factors: (1) GSW’s portfolio-based assessment system, which has intrinsically privileged alphabetic text due to both necessity and ease of assessment, and (2) an institutional effort to “maintain consistent standards across the many sections of each course” (“GSW Portfolio Assessment”). Even though a majority of final essays and portfolios in GSW end up as alphabetic final products, instructors might still be incorporating digital interactivity in lesson plans and course facilitation—just as I did while teaching GSW.
Research on social media use in composition pedagogy consistently reminded me of GSW at BGSU because the program places so much importance on digital literacy. Students in the General Studies Writing program at Bowling Green State University enroll in course sections for which laptops are required of students, or where class is held in a networked computer lab, or maybe even in an Active Learning Classroom supplied with iPads and technology hubs. The standard classrooms issued to full-time GSW faculty and graduate instructors are equipped with a projector, technology hub, and a newer desktop PC—up to half even include SmartBoards. In 2015, the program piloted a successful digital portfolio submission and assessment system in one of my own summer course sections.

In order to easily standardize GSW courses and also prepare incoming TAs, the program prepares new teaching assistants (TAs) via a mandatory three-credit-hour graduate seminar entitled “Composition Instructors’ Workshop.” In the course, TAs learn popular programmatic pedagogy, create content within the course management system Canvas, work together to build lesson plans that effectively teach principles of the GSW curriculum, and observe GSW teaching in pairs with current faculty. One helpful part of the seminar is that lesson plans are encouraged to be developed in three variations, (1) low-tech, (2) medium-tech, and (3) high-tech. That way, future instructors with varying classroom setups and access to technology may still teach these lessons effectively.

This graduate seminar can be incredibly helpful for TAs who are motivated to try new experiences and embrace new technologies—the mentoring experience through both the seminar and GSW teaching experience is often invaluable for TAs who have never before taught composition, making it an ideal space to highlight composition pedagogy with new media. However, the GSW program must also endorse any pedagogy under specific university and
curricular regulations; because it is important for GSW administration to be represented, the results of an interview with current GSW Director, Dr. Lee Nickoson, are presented in chapter four. In chapters one and two, I speak of GSW and its population through my own first-hand experience.

In the seven sections of GSW I taught at BGSU from 2013–2015, my students and I utilized the affordances of available technology to rhetorically explore and write on the effects of internet advertising, online privacy and surveillance, the right to access to television and text online, and the effects of social media on college students. A propensity for social media in composition pedagogy already exists. I believe the GSW population is noteworthy for its perspective on social media, in particular, because it more than meets Vie’s cross-reference that “the majority of adult Internet users in the United States maintain a robust social media presence, with over half (52%) regularly using multiple social media sites (Duggan et al., 2014, p. 3)” (Vie 36). Nearly all of my students brought iPhones, Macbooks, laptops, or tablets to class, or were provided access to the Internet and University server by numerous free computer labs on campus or in their dorms. In all of my GSW course sections combined, only two students dropped my section in favor of a low-tech GSW section.

While not all of them used the same social networks, almost every GSW student I taught maintained an active new media presence (including social networking, collaborative file sharing, networked group messaging, and online coursework). Bear in mind the controlled variables of this particular research site: students at BGSU were predominately middle-class with access to personal technology and literacies even outside of numerous on-campus resources. If so much of GSW coursework is experienced, downloaded, shared, developed, edited, and presented
for grading on digital platforms, then GSW pedagogy, and the portfolio itself, might rely more heavily on elements from Web 2.0 in order to move beyond the alphabetic.

In the beginning of 2016, a couple GSW course sections piloted an electronic portfolio submission system for viewing and assessing the essays, which gleaned positive feedback overall. The practice has now become GSW policy, with the infamous stacks of portfolios (Figures 3 and 4) now obsolete—an exigent move considering that in 2013, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) updated their definition of 21st Century Literacies to highlight a necessary range of student competencies, social trajectories, multimedia texts, and awareness of ethical responsibilities in increasingly complex environments. Though it was short, the NCTE definition of 21st Century Literacies drew attention to the one constant of culture—change.

![Figure 3: GSW Portfolio Stacks](image)
The GSW program at BGSU has updated its literate practices to reflect changing culture by moving course evaluations from paper to online, placing instructors in technology-rich spaces, providing thorough teacher training and technology support, and piloting a digital ePortfolio in 2015–2016. Even with these modern practices, innovative programmatic projects are difficult to implement on a large scale due to the nature of University systems. Regardless, following GSW’s example, this could very well be a kairotic time for more instructors and teaching assistants to take advantage of the ubiquity of social pedagogy and applications. On a state level, the Ohio Transfer Module (OTM) Guidelines and Learning Outcomes for composition, which impact all Ohio public post-secondary institutions of higher education, require students to understand and experience electronic composing and publishing “to the extent that technology is available and appropriate” (Figure 5: OTM Requirements 6 and 7). Which technologies are “appropriate” is a quite subjective notion addressed in this project’s research questions.
Despite the progressive attention to composing in electronic environments in OTM Composition Requirement 6, the extent of Web 2.0 to facilitate programmatic goals is limited by Requirement 7, which mandates that students write roughly 20 pages of primarily alphabetic work. Considering the remarkably busy nature of writing programs, faculty, and underclassmen, it is quite understandable that the latest in new media pedagogy is sometimes placed lower on the priority list than a full class of completed, assessed ePortfolio containing the required 5000 words. For both GSW and similar writing programs and classrooms, the need to fulfill contractual and legal goals is of utmost importance despite what could be considered a tangential interest in developing more connected pedagogy.

The interests of the sample size were collected by the project’s IRB-approved survey, and indicated to me significant concern for emerging cultural and scholarly themes. Figure 6 shows that culture, literacies, and pleasure reading were most popular. Participants were asked, “what do you like to read, study, or learn about?”
Because subject and reading interests varied so widely, I coded the categories based on common themes. An interest in “culture” (34%) included history, current events, pop culture, and entertainment, whereas interest in “literacies” (16%) included communications, digital literacies, writing studies, and multimodality. “Science” (12%) contained biology, psychology, physics, and math, while “education and teaching” (12%) included special needs education, English as a Second Language (ESL), writing instruction, and assessment. Pleasure reading, such as romance, mystery, and crime novels, was popular with 14% of respondents. Culture and literacy were the most-cited interests of the sample GSW population, which correlate tightly with this project’s focus on Web 2.0 in a classroom context.

Although Figure 6 gives critical insight on the interests of current members of the GSW community, this study asked multiple qualitative and quantitative questions to more deeply examine the motivations which might underscore uses and preferences for Web 2.0. For
example, one respondent answered about their research interests, “Anything that can be related to myself. I enjoy things that I can connect to on a personal level because it makes writing easier like technology.” This response showed that technology was a personal interest connected to writing. I wanted to know more—how is technology related to the respondent? How, specifically, does technology make writing easier for them? This study probed further as it gathered voices from GSW and assembled them into patterns and themes.

With a better sense of the state of networked digital communication in GSW pedagogy, administrators and instructors may continue to enact the values of digital literacy, citizenship, activism, and critical thinking. A great many scholars have endorsed the acquisition of transferable digital skills, but before jumping onto the technology train, educators must first understand the federal, state, and field-wide regulations of Web 2.0 pedagogy.

But First—FERPA in the Field (Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act)

Despite the rise of multimodal networked composing on campus and beyond, many instructors remain hesitant to move beyond using primarily email and course management systems (CMS) in order to adopt Web 2.0 as part of their daily pedagogy. A surprising number of instructors seem wary of their role in a complex system of federal regulations, institutional requirements, personal preferences, and effective pedagogy. It is crucial to consider both federal and ethical guidelines for social media use in a University context.

The Federal Department of Education provided specific requirements and advice via FERPA: the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, which applies to all federally funded educational institutions. According to FERPA, students retain the right to both their educational records and their privacy within the University and through institutional correspondence. The impact of this regulation on social media pedagogy, then, depends on whether the
correspondence is considered an “educational record,” defined by FERPA as “records that are directly related to a student and are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution” (“FERPA General Guidance for Students”). Some might consider a public username, demographic information required upon signup, Tweets with classroom updates, or even simply revealing one’s class enrollment as a violation of their educational rights—A very conservative approach might even consider all course-related public correspondence an “educational record.”

However, FERPA acknowledged a widely networked culture by purposefully allowing exceptions for University-related reasons; no part of the FERPA guidelines prohibit using social media in the university classroom. Instead, the Federal Department of Education suggested that teachers develop a formal contract in which their students claim awareness of the purpose, parameters, and privacy policies in the online space being utilized. These practices encourage the appropriate use of new media that university policies (such as the one at BGSU) describe.

Bowling Green State University’s social media guidelines aligned with FERPA by advising the community to use these sites cautiously and judiciously. Other subjective descriptors used on the BGSU guidelines included “best practices,” “appropriate,” and “selective;” two of the only tangible requirements for content were that Twitter accounts affiliated with the university be updated daily with active links, and language used on social media be conversational and inviting (“BGSU Social Networking Guidelines”). The language of the Bowling Green State University mission statement, as commonly referenced, encouraged the same consideration of audience by citing “critical thinking,” “action-participating,” and “personal and social responsibility” (“Mission: About BGSU”). These stated values and
guidelines were helpful when conceptualizing the general audience, needs, responsibilities, and ethics of networked pedagogy, yet contained little advice on the detailed use of digital spaces.

When considering adding Web 2.0 to composition pedagogy, it is important for both students and instructors to be aware of the immediate rhetorical situation for learning and socializing, activism, and information sharing. GSW has already adopted a few FERPA-approved helpful resources, including digital features available in the program-endorsed textbook subscription, sharing of popular digital lesson plans in the introductory TA course, and extensive mentoring for incoming teaching assistants. However, because one could be referred to Human Resources and/or the Provost should social media policies be violated, many TAs and even full-time instructors remain wary of incorporating social media in their GSW pedagogy. On top of these institutional concerns, FERPA and its policies seem to have become more of a hindrance than a guide to using Web 2.0 pedagogy.

The right to educational records and personal privacy became even more real for users with each new controversy caused and publicized by social media: In May of 2011, Facebook’s databases (the most popular social network since Myspace) were breached and profile information was leaked to corporate advertisers\(^3\). Since then, Facebook has faced scrutiny for questionable developments such as adding users to groups without permission, targeting advertising based on user activity, employing facial recognition, and automatic location tagging without user consent—all features discouraging educators from the platform despite potential advantages.

Because FERPA functions under the operational definition of “educational record,” it is also crucial to understand that Facebook operates under the “Safe Harbor” arrangement, a controversial agreement with Europe that allows the company to transmit personal information

\(^3\) From *The Guardian*. “Facebook Paid PR Firm to Smear Google.”
overseas. Facebook openly admits that this practice is legally permitted, intended to circumvent existing limits on international data transfer regarding citizens provided some kind of Federal benefit is gleaned (Farrell and Newman 3). Unfortunately, the most important “Federal benefit” tends to be monetary instead of educational, and these well-popularized fails give social media a bitter taste for some educators. While disillusionment of privacy is understandably frustrating, the same line of reasoning allows Web 2.0 to circumvent the definition of itself as an “educational record” in FERPA due to the educational benefit. Despite the conflicting definitions of both “privacy” and “record,” these networks (and others) still offer substantial opportunities.

Of these popular social networks, Twitter has earned the best reputation for protecting user privacy due to its detailed terms of use, strict negotiations with advertising agencies, and outright refusal to sell user information. While FERPA is understandably cautious about educational records, individual Tweets should not qualify as educational records unless grades, schedules, or official records are posted. Even if public correspondence is deemed a “record,” it is often one that qualifies for exemption under FERPA if reasonably related to course and institutional goals. Furthermore, it is important not to let FERPA intimidate pedagogues into avoiding Web 2.0, which is why rhetoricians, compositionists, and professional organizations have acknowledged both its pitfalls and affordances. Only by understanding the limits and affordances of FERPA, and how they interact with field-wide positions, may GSW fearlessly incorporate Web 2.0 in more ways that fulfill its stated mission.

Addressing these sociocultural concerns toward the teaching community, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) issued a position statement on “Student Educational Data Privacy and Security” in 2015, last edited in February 2016. The resolution, like this project, first discussed FERPA, adding exigency by stating that “as students are tracked, traced,
monitored, and scored with more intensity than ever, educators must remain informed advocates for their students’ privacy, security, and safety” (“Resolution on Student Educational Data”). Then NCTE encouraged all engaged populations to concern themselves with ethical, lawful, private, and responsible treatment of students’ literate educations. These are integral concepts in building ethical and effective networked pedagogy, and certainly helpful when conceptualizing 21st Century Literacies, but empirical advice is still not yet widely present.

Beginning to answer that call, NCTE then published a revised position statement on “Professional Knowledge for the Teaching of Writing” in 2016—showing concern for professional pedagogical development similar to the Association for Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW) in their 2016 call for submissions for Professional Development in Online Teaching. According to ATTW, “geographic location and embodied presence have become more salient to writing than at most times in human history” (“CFP: Special Edition of TCQ”). Because location and embodiment have become critical conversations regarding networked communication (and teaching), professional organizations in Rhetoric & Composition (and associated fields) have seen an exponential increase in new media pedagogy among its populations; the field is now moving toward a set of what NCTE termed networked “professional principles that guide effective teaching” (“Professional Knowledge…” NCTE). These principles echoed the transferable skills and digital literacy called for by ATTW, CCCCs, and Computers and Composition. Most importantly, these organizations and publications are also working within FERPA, proving that a students’ right to privacy can certainly coexist within Web 2.0.

Recent Activity: Following New Media, Rhetoric, and Writing

Although Web 2.0 could be considered ubiquitous, one cannot assume that any certain generation, age, gender, or ability can easily pick up on its intricacies. Thus, Hewett asserted that
“students also need preparation in how to access each other (and why) and the teacher (why and when), how to read the course syllabus and content efficiently and well, and how to understand and use individual conferences and teacher/tutor responses to their writing” (202). The semester-long training and acclimation to Web 2.0 pedagogy is a significant time commitment for both instructors and students as compared to the notion of the first class session, “syllabus day,” where the class meets, reads the syllabus, discusses the rules, and then leaves fully prepared for the semester.

Writing instruction has reached a time of great challenges, as new media has offered nearly limitless opportunities for new pedagogy. I wondered how course-related instruction and communication in the GSW program at BGSU might be occurring in similar trajectories to the “hypertext mind,” or in ways that addressed communicative values of digitally inclined populations. Shepherd echoed this exigency and then presented an unfortunate lack of scholarly exploration on “clear assessment of student attitudes” and “activities common in the composition classroom” (88). The use of adjectives “clear” and “common” implied generalizable attitudes and practices, which first need to be made more visible through teacher research. Without proper preparedness backed up with empirical data, Shepherd insinuated that today’s composition instructors might not be adequately prepared to facilitate Web 2.0 in the most effective ways. A technological training seminar for incoming instructors is a great start, but might not do the trick, because scholars have referred to those raised with the computer as those with “hypertext minds” (“Do They Really” 16), suggesting even biological and psychological differences among digital comfort levels.

While Prensky offered an interesting thread to this discussion by first coining the terms “digital native” and “digital immigrant,” it is important to note that any work relying on a binary
distinction between digital natives and digital immigrants is extremely problematic. Hewett, for one, redefined and then complicated discussion of digital natives and digital immigrants by stating that “one cannot assume that students who would call themselves digital natives gravitate educationally to OWI; many choose OWI for expedience (e.g. distance-taught soldiers and other working students) rather than as educational preference” (196). Hewett pointed out that the terms “digital native” and “digital immigrant” can be helpful for discussions of particular populations, but they certainly do not accommodate all students who end up in online courses or those utilizing aspects of online writing instruction.

It is with these underrepresented student populations in mind that some instructors are reluctant to fully embrace new media. Also addressing concern defining “digital natives” and “digital immigrants,” Judy Wajcman stated that “a technofeminist perspective points beyond the discourse of the digital divide to the connections between gender inequality and other forms of inequality, which come into view if we examine the broader political and economic basis of the networks that shape and deploy technical systems” (121). Wajcman pointed beyond a native/immigrant binary to address larger forces at work—capitalism, government, inequity, etc. Beyond simply investigating a theoretical digital divide, or advocating technology for the sake of technology, my teacher research with the GSW community was largely based in technofeminist curiosity about which foundational attitudes and preferences accompanied use of communicative new media resources in the program.

While the “digital divide” is important to this conversation, and still a crucial element of access to Web 2.0, this dissertation primarily explores how digital practices are currently interwoven with pedagogy that acknowledges political, economic, and cultural interests of
current GSW instructors and students. Almjeld and Blair identified a gap in this type of research by stating that:

While faculty are using e-mail, course management systems such as Blackboard, or even class blogs or wikis, our students are using Facebook, MySpace, or Second Life, or even newer spaces such as Twitter, and relying on instant messaging and status updates to communicate in ways that don’t seem to make their way into our traditional academic spaces, either real time or virtual. (103)

My research spoke to this call by asking to what extent these practices have indeed made their way into the GSW program at Bowling Green State University, but might not yet be very visible to the community. Ruth Ray endorsed similar teacher research in Composition from a Teacher-Research Point of View by noting that “Teachers often lack the perception necessary to see and interpret their own classroom environment” (183–184). As Ray noted, sometimes one’s own pedagogy is difficult to see because of its closeness and immediacy. Therefore, observing, interviewing, and reflecting on and with other teachers and learners is integral to developing updated, effective practices. This project is one example of Ray’s teacher research methods combined with a technofeminist methodology.

While no research context is ever the same, scholarship and theory could find value in studying the context of new media pedagogy in programs such as GSW. One example of this exigent research was Bourelle, Bourelle, Knutson, and Spong; the authors collected portfolios and compared face-to-face to online courses, ultimately asking “how student learning of multimodal literacies differs in online and f2f environments” (Bourelle et al. 55). Their mixed methods approach found that “The online students seemed to consider how the multimodal components fit into their written work, as well as how they learned from working in multiple
modes” (63). As the authors noted more explicitly later in their discussion, students in online environments gained a richer and more detailed understanding of rhetorical multimodality simply by being and doing. Bourelle et al. endorsed current understandings of best practices as applied to new media, and Vie established similar exigency for her recent research in computers and writing by citing Pew Research statistics also directly applicable to my project:

A study of 1,597 adult Internet users from the Pew Research Center discovered that 71% are on Facebook, with 70% of those Facebook users participating in the site daily….Other sites continue to rise in popularity amongst the general Internet population: LinkedIn and Pinterest users make up 28% of the population, with Instagram and Twitter bringing up the rear with 26% and 23% of the population, respectively…. In 2012, 86% of those 18 to 29 used social networking sites daily…” Similarly, a 2014 study by EDUCAUSE found that the majority of undergraduates stated that technology makes them feel more connected to other students (51%), their instructors (54%), and their institution (65%) (Dahlstrom & Bichsel, 2014). (Vie 33–34)

Like the technologies to which Vie drew attention, I certainly tended to observe the same kinds of media in action as I taught seven sections of GSW: one of my first tasks on the first day of teaching a GSW course was to informally ask students how many books they read in the past few months, what kind of content they preferred to read for pleasure, and how they “got” their news. While I lack quantitative data from these entertaining discussions, students largely reported that they did not read books unless assigned for school. My students tended to absorb news in video clips, snippets of headlines, and the occasional shared news brief on social media. “Reading” tended to include updates from friends and family that were transmitted in texted sentences or short paragraphs on social media; those students who affirmed pleasure reading
cited websites such as *ThoughtCatalog, Buzzfeed, Urban Dictionary*, and *IMDB* (Internet Movie Database). Popular composition curriculum encourages reading articles and books, but this is becoming too difficult for students who are not used to reading a lot of actual content.

In 2016, mobile applications such as Snapchat, YikYak, Vine, and others were extremely popular, the appeal of which was instantaneous and concise communication with a specific, learned mode and style—genre conventions, in terms of rhetoric. Sometimes, it even seemed that common grammar or usage had gone by the wayside in favor of emoticons, fragmented captions, stickers, and style—the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s 2015 “word” of the year was actually an emoji⁴ (“On Fleek” also made the short-list for the honor). I even included a first-day lesson with my GSW students on how to write a respectful and effective email to their professors without using undue emojis and text-speak. Regarding these rapid changes in cultural communicative practices, Carr cited Harvard and Tufts University literary developmental psycholinguist Maryanne Wolf to argue that Internet reading has actually changed the minds of our students: “we are not only *what* we read, we are *how* we read” (66). Supported by the renowned scientist, Carr reminded readers that given the prioritization of concise easy-to-read text, instant gratification, and quick responses, digital communication conventions of our students’ daily lives could be interfering with the ability to read deeply and reflectively, especially in a classroom context. Due to a decreasing attention span and an endless variety of networked entertainment, student and instructors’ embodied experiences seem to be shifting as online communication evolves, which is a move I examined in greater detail through the GSW program at BGSU. Thus, I studied networked new media practices through GSW to observe how GSW might currently be

using new media, and how GSW could most effectively move toward wider implementation of new media pedagogy.

Describing the appeal of instantaneous networked communication in populations such as GSW, Sherry Turkle stated that “people readily admit that they would rather leave a voicemail or send an email than talk face-to-face” (Alone Together 15). Even more prescient, “texting offers just the right amount of access, just the right amount of control” (Alone Together 15). In these two statements, Turkle showcased values suggesting that students might deal with anxiety about the pressure of face-to-face or even voice-to-voice conversations. It seems that students might also value digital written communication for its non-immediacy; in other words, before responding to another person, one may read and assess the tone, content, presentation, style, audience, and purpose (elements of the rhetorical situation) of a message. Vie gave rhetorical exigency to Turkle’s presentation of texting and social media by stating that “Rhetoric and social media overlap in multiple ways: social media can be used as a tool for conducting rhetorical analysis; social media can be the content or the focus of the rhetorical analysis itself; and social media can be used to broaden the classroom audience and introduce the students’ writing to the public for consumption and critique” (Vie 38). When considering Turkle’s analysis of the values of networked communication with the pedagogical perspective presented by Vie, I wondered what the GSW population would have to say about their communication preferences.

Because digital communication allows for far greater control of a conversation than face-to-face scenarios, perhaps students may now feel that answering an instructor’s question in class, asking a question of their own, or participating in group work causes undue stress. This hunch from Turkle was confirmed by Vie, who also addressed one way to move past this tension: “Many students feel apprehensive sharing their writing with others, particularly during peer
response or with audiences outside of the classroom. Several faculty described the supportive atmosphere of social media as a way to address that apprehension: ‘[It] allows me to engage students regularly in the process of writing, and it allows me to see more of their composition in a non-threatening atmosphere’” (Vie 38). Since Vie presented adjectives with embodied connotations such as “apprehension,” “engagement,” and “threat,” it is clear that even digital writing is embodied in a pedagogical context—for better or for worse. It was important, then, for this project to acknowledge the embodied nature of Web 2.0 as it aimed to arrive at best practices for GSW at BGSU.

While it is unlikely to encounter a full classroom of students willing and ready to employ networked new media effectively, engaged citizenship is still a goal of both BGSU and GSW. Considering the types of interaction happening in her own composition classroom, Megan Adams noticed students’ apprehension to Web 2.0 and countered these feelings with exploration and invention via multimodal tools, which she argued successfully made her students more invested and interested in their research:

In order to be good stewards of not only our field but of our institutions, communities, and classrooms, we should be working to integrate multimodal compositions into pedagogical practices. However, it is important to note that while these new forms of composition provide students with more opportunities to take advantage of all of the semiotic tools at their disposal, they do not necessarily need to be privileged over print. (“Multimodality Projects”)

Adams reported that students reacted favorably to multimodal components not only because they were relevant and fun, but also because they prepared students to articulate in traditionally academic prose. Vie would agree by stating that, “Several faculty described the
supportive atmosphere of social media as a way to address that apprehension [writing for multiple audiences, peer review, and assessment]: ‘[It] allows me to engage students regularly in the process of writing, and it allows me to see more of their composition in a non-threatening atmosphere’’ (38). Because new media is built for sharing multimodal content (including alphabetic), its guided use in the composition classroom could more deeply connect students to a real-world context in their own research. Over time, social writing could make students more comfortable with academic writing. The conversation on new media in the composition classroom, then, is not just a question of yes/no, but also a question of “how much?” How much Web 2.0 composing is really happening in GSW, and how has it assisted GSW instructors to meet their goals?

For example, using YouTube in a low-tech lesson might mean that the instructor simply shows a video to the class. In a high-tech lesson, including YouTube might mean that groups of students in a laptop section explore political ads and then each group presents/explains a different video to the class. The latter lesson plan would likely be more taxing for the composition instructor than the former. Any reaction (such as either excitement or anxiety) surrounding technology is justified due to its intrinsically embodied context; Arola and Wysocki offered that multimodal networked composing “modifies our sense of engagement: it shifts how we feel what is around us or how we sense those with whom we communicate; our senses reflex and shift in response to these mediated engagements, and in further response we then modify our media toward our shifting ends” (4). Arola and Wysocki discussed webbed writing to draw attention to the importance of both the individual experience and the community experience. While digital composing is certainly a means of personal expression, it is inseparable from its social/global context, causing anxiety and even confusion when users find their physical being
connected to their Web 2.0 presence. Besides an institutional, political, social, and embodied context, Web 2.0 is also mobile, which is a consideration of access. Composing on Web 2.0 is happening all around BGSU, with hundreds of networks of users around the world tangentially related to the events GSW students are researching.

With digital composing gaining popularity, instructors commonly expect composition students to read, write, and engage in the course outside of the classroom walls—“It’s on Blackboard/Canvas!” was one of my most-repeated phrases while teaching. However, it is important for pedagogues to bear in mind the “myth of universal access” that Fielding discussed. This “myth of universal access” pointed out that “teachers and scholars need to build critical consideration of students’ lived negotiations of time into the work of online courses. Social media provide a useful site for this work” (Fielding 103). While an ideal approach to any sort of networked education presumes that students will be able to neatly fit campus/coursework into their everyday digital lives, the lived reality tends to be much different, according to Fielding. She mentioned the complex negotiations that must take place when work outside the classroom is expected to be completed online, especially when access to a network and device is required. Coursework can be easy to access, download, and stream, but it is not the only media vying for attention on mobile devices and home computers, and often social media is most popular. Since students are spending a large amount of time on social media, both Fielding and renowned compositionist Gary Tate encouraged FYC to take advantage of this unique and versatile environment—with cautious awareness of contexts and abilities. Their discussions shed more light on the technological literacy of many GSW students.

In the introduction to the new edition of A Guide to Composition Pedagogies, Tate et al. observed that “many of our students read and write constantly online, while others may not have
access to technology or print materials in their homes. Their life experiences and future goals differentiate their instructional needs” (7). While it is true that most of our students are constantly exposed to the Internet and its myriad of environments, classroom instruction cannot rely on the assumption that each student will [is willing to] consciously use their web presence in an academically appropriate manner. Hewett added similar concern to Tate’s discussion of access when she stated that “technology is being used and studied, but the technologies—many of which students adapt easily to their social lives—are coming at educators fast and often and are being used without sufficient reflection educationally” (206). Caught in the middle of a transitional technological phase, instructors in the GSW program could be developing researched pedagogy with new media (of which students seem to be actively partaking) in addition to use of CMS and email. The stakes are higher than just classroom performance and assessment; “pedagogy can disrupt or reinforce normative socialization” (Tate et al. 10). If instructors and students really are experimenting with digital pedagogy via social media and networked apps, then forthcoming research could begin to offer best practices and testimony with their voices, a primary technofeminist goal of this project. The data analysis in chapters three and four takes particular care to present authentic voices from survey respondents, interviewees, and even participants on Web 2.0.

Because instructors and students in GSW at BGSU seem to be interacting in digital environments more often, more empirical teacher research is needed on how to develop pedagogies suiting the wider variety of student populations in writing classrooms. Vie’s 2015 study spoke to this urgency by stating that,

Despite the significant role that social media plays in college students’ everyday lives, there is little research on faculty inclusion of these sites in undergraduate students’
educational experiences, particularly in the writing classroom. In the face of these students’ expectations for a technologically enhanced educational experience, there is little research on the impact of social media technologies on undergraduate students’ educational experiences in writing classrooms nationally. (33–34)

While the lack of research is an issue for the field of Rhetoric and Composition, it is also a direct tie to teacher research, which Ruth Ray stated “forces us to examine our thinking and behavior, to become self-reflexive and self-critical” (110). Reliable digital pedagogy for the GSW population at BGSU can be achieved only by examining what is already happening in GSW classrooms; these results could provide a starting point for generalizable research on Web 2.0 pedagogy in college composition classrooms.

Sherry Turkle also researched and studied human relationships with technology in *Life on the Screen* and *Alone Together: Why we Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*. Turkle referenced a “story of digital culture over the past fifteen years, with a focus on the young, those from five through their early twenties—‘digital natives’ growing up with cell phones and toys that ask for love” (*Alone Together xii*). Those are the kid-generations of the 1990s and The Millennium, those who might have cared for a Tamagotchi, learned to type on one of the first (giant) Mac desktops in grade school, created an online Neopets account, spoke to friends on ICQ or AOL Instant Messenger, and then were targeted by advertisers during the advent of text messaging and mobile photo/video sharing. Turkle was especially interested in following “children who grew up with Tamagotchis and Furbies through their adolescence and young adulthood, as they entered the networked culture to become fluent with texting, Twitter, Myspace, Facebook, and the world of iPhone apps” (*Alone Together xv*). These are the students in GSW courses today, and the graduate instructors of the immediate future. Almjeld and Blair
deemed their values exigent because “the attention the larger discipline gives to the intersection between writing and identity, and the ways these issues connect back to classical concepts of ethos and voice, warrant inclusion of new media texts, public and private and a blend of both, into the rhetorical canon” (109). With concrete awareness of the rhetorical conventions that Almjeld and Blair presented, instructors and students in GSW may address the ways in which new media create shared goals and experiences, subvert traditional hierarchies, and foster new kinds of relationships.

However, new media pedagogy does require sacrifices for instructors and even programs, which is the beginning of significant concerns and counterarguments to techno-savvy “solutions.” In the introduction to their edited 2014 Guide to Composition Pedagogies, Tate et al. explained that using technology in any particular teaching style means that instructors must employ critical inductive reasoning—an approach in which general conclusions are drawn from particular instances. This trial-and-error approach has become necessary to digital research and practice because it is virtually impossible for one to keep up with the thousands of new digital environments and software available each day, because “inductive learning takes significant time that busy writing teachers may not afford and that newcomers may find frustrating” (Tate et al. 2). While approaches to a technological class vary, a teacher may realistically spend hours of digital reconnaissance developing a new lesson plan for just one class session. Most digitally-based resources require a user name and password for even a free account, and learning curves can be hefty depending on which affordances are pursued (Prezi is especially difficult). In graduate seminars, I have discussed with colleagues the statement that, “I signed up to be a writing teacher—not a computer teacher.” One goal of this research project, then, is to begin to speak to that statement with answers about “how much” Web 2.0 should be incorporated in GSW
curriculum; what is already happening, and how much technology integration might be appropriate?

In her chapter from McKee and Devoss’ *Digital Writing Research*, Lori Hawkes wrote on the “Impact of Invasive Web Technologies on Digital Research” while addressing some popular pedagogical concerns with the presentation of live digital content, public versus private identity concerns, and even informed consent (among other practical Internet issues). She defined and explored digital data harvesting, data mining, and data warehousing even without a user’s legal permission. These are very scary risks of networked composing for any user, let alone from the perspective of a university composition instructor, but Hawkes advised that to avoid these risks, students and instructors should use a secure network connection for all correspondence (the left edge of most Internet search bars will display a combination lock in either the “locked” or “unlocked” position to designate secure networks). For all the advice offered on maintaining privacy, though, McKee and Porter cautioned that digital “privacy” might just be an illusion. Text messages, discussion forums, and virtual accounts come with privacy settings, but thanks to loopholes and federal regulations such as the Patriot Act of 2001, recently renewed until 2019, each and every virtual interaction can be recorded and traced. “Given that people writing online have these expectations of privacy, but their writings are not actually private, should a researcher then respect that expectation of privacy even if it is illusory?” (McKee and Porter 249). McKee and Porter got at the ethics of using new media in pedagogy because neither instructors nor students have any real privacy online. Hawkes offered that, “researchers have an obligation to conceal the identities of the research subjects and their personal information” (349), advice one could extend to digital pedagogy as well: instructors incorporating Web 2.0 in composition
pedagogy might also have an obligation to protect their students and personal information as much as reasonably possible.

I often asked my GSW students whether their Facebook accounts were free, which tended to elicit an affirmative response because the cost was not monetary to them (aside from applications such as Farmville and Stickers). However, I then asked my students whether they saw targeted advertisements alongside their news feeds—one such ad would be for engagement ring vendors that appeared after a user notified Facebook of their relationship anniversary. Once prompted to consider economic and political value in their browsing, communication, and shared interests, students then realized that the true cost of their Facebook account was their privacy. Because the interest of new media sponsors tends to be financial rather than rhetorical, it is important for instructors to remain focused on pedagogy and professionalism rather than pitfalls, to which Hewett offered “group interaction as a primary way to bring ‘communal accountability’ to the facelessness of most online writing instruction (OWI) settings, where hurtful or educationally inappropriate communication can occur” (197) along with plenty of distractions. Keeping all participants active and accountable for each part of their archived digital communication may cut down on noisy or irrelevant content. While this is not a practical solution to all digital media foils, group accountability in class might help students stay focused. In addition, it is helpful for instructors to have a certain level of preparedness before embarking on technological trails. GSW’s “Composition Instructors’ Workshop” effectively exposes participants to the course management system, common curriculum, and strong lesson plans which prepare students for digital citizenship; what if GSW could provide for its instructors tutorials, instructions, training, and curriculum featuring Web 2.0?
Seeing a need for more guidance on digital pedagogy, the editors of *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* included chapters on “New Media” and “Digital and Hybrid Pedagogy” to the second, 2014 edition: “to differentiate the relative values of theories and practices, it is important to draw on the data and tested knowledge of the field, and by tested knowledge we mean a range of things, including the accumulation of classroom practice and teacher research but also including more social-scientific approaches” (Tate et al. 5). It was noteworthy that these new chapters appeared in 2014, a signal to me that new media and digital pedagogy were areas of increasing empirical interest to Rhetoric and Composition—especially Computers & Writing. However, this upturn was not without its scholarly trepidation.

Setting an appropriately cautious example, Beth Hewett’s chapter on “Online Writing Instruction” (OWI) from Tate’s *Guide to Composition Pedagogies* stated that: “clearly, OWI is both a distinctive pedagogical approach and one whose benefits remain too little understood from empirical and theoretical research” (196). Even though Hewett ultimately presented OWI and digital pedagogy as optimistic developments ripe with practical and experiential components, her chapter also spoke about her trepidation of digital media. Similarly, and in the same anthology, Brooke’s chapter on “New Media” presented the following concerns and challenges of implementing new media in composition pedagogy: access, infrastructure, accessibility, and assessment. Each is, to this day, a valid concern for instructors or programs with limited financial and technological resources, or hosting student populations with limited access. Thankfully, 2016 has delivered expanded public wireless signals, a range of inexpensive Internet Service Providers (ISPs), cheaper mobile devices (especially as new versions hit the market and “old”—perfectly functional—devices are sold at a discount), free downloadable applications and software, and the cultural values of open access and universal design. Brooke
even suggested that a new metaphor for the dreaded technological “privilege” problem is now “utility” (185). By focusing on the usability of devices/apps in addition to the status of those who use them, scholarship may better focus on affordances and their effects. Usability and wide-ranging access are in demand from new technology, and by association, new pedagogy. Since recent scholarship includes concerns with access, so did my project. The GSW program at BGSU has access to a wide range of technology, which is critical to the accessibility of digital pedagogy. Instead of using technology just because it is available, though, this project aimed to empirically support Web 2.0 techniques that purposefully furthered the goals of GSW.

More recently than Tate et al., Vie confronted the ever-present counterargument of access in her 2015 study, conceding that access is still a critical issue to digital composition, “however, [Vie’s] survey respondents generally focused on social media as a form of access to other concepts, ideas, or tools; rather than interrogate access as a material condition that would pose a challenge to incorporating social media into the classroom, most respondents saw social media and access as positively intertwined” (37). With this statement unpacking the rhetorical shift in the meaning of “access,” Vie implied that populations nowadays might view access as one of the most powerful parts of social media instead of a hindrance to its affordances. In other words, getting to social media on the Internet provides access to materials that would not be obtained otherwise, which is an exclusive perk outweighing the occasional inability to access it (and to access meaningful content despite “noise”). According to Vie, “These responses may indicate that the ubiquity of social media in our culture has become naturalized to the point that we have begun forgetting about technological access issues” (38). It seems that “access” could be fading as the biggest concerns of new media pedagogy; access as a whole remains a formidable concern to marginalized and disadvantaged populations. However, digital assessment on new media
remains a considerable, universal challenge as more instructors and students adapt to entirely new ways of writing and reading.

The population of students in any potential online writing instruction (OWI) environment is more varied than an instructor might initially think. Given this wide variation of students, it is safe to assume that their access and experience with new media is as diverse. Hewett acknowledged this by arguing that “student preparedness is critical to ability to succeed; characteristics of preparedness include self-motivation, understanding how an OWI course differs from other online courses, time management skills, and reading and writing skills” (201). Because it is risky for instructors to assume that all students in a writing course are prepared to use digital resources from the start of the course context, the institution, department, and instructor share responsibility to first prepare students with technological and rhetorical skills in online spaces (both academic and social). From setting up an account, to sending and receiving messages, to seeing and interacting with course content, to navigating the interface, “preparation” for any instruction involving OWI goes far beyond knowing which technology, software, or application to use and why. The data generated from this project is one step in ensuring that GSW is prepared for teaching with Web 2.0 in addition to simply using it.

While the logistics of setting up Web 2.0 are challenging for GSW instructors, Hewett complicated the situation even further by mentioning that “all current students are somewhat nontraditional in that they present educators with attitudes, skills, and needs that differ drastically from previous ones” (202). Because students and instructors each bring their individual technological and cultural literacies, it is too simplistic to assume that each lesson (even if digital) will reach each student. Each “hypertext mind” processes information and text differently. The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)
acknowledged this phenomenon by observing that “patterns of exclusion have too often resulted from an uncritical adoption of digital technology and an indifference to how it could be used by persons with various disabilities and learning challenges” (Position Statement on OWI: Rationale for Principle 1). Most interesting in their statement on inclusivity and access, the CCCC position statement encouraged “simple and intuitive use” that was present regardless of user circumstance. GSW currently lacks empirical evidence from their student and instructor population about student preferences and experiences on Web 2.0; with this data, instructors might more comfortably and intuitively adapt Web 2.0 into their own pedagogy if desired.

Directing the conversation from limited access to intuitive use could be a valuable concept that both considers students’ physical reality and manages new media cautiously and reflectively. Instead of requiring students to locate and work with scholarly sources off-campus, a composition instructor might use class time to have each student locate just one source and combine resources into discussion groups. One intuitive part of new media supporting this potential activity is the layering of differing modes and genres, with an effect similar to pastiche and parody. Jenkins et al. first coined this phenomenon as transmedia navigation in 2006, with Baepler and Reynolds taking the idea further in their “Digital Manifesto” of 2014: “The skill of transmedia navigation or transmedia storytelling draws from the availability and convergence of multiple sources of media—text, images, sound, video, etc.—to produce a new synthesis of those materials” (123). This rhetorical skill seems to be innate for populations of college students in GSW and FYC in general, and has caught the attention of researchers and pedagogues. The results of Baepler and Reynolds’ survey reflections on core media literacies indicated that student engagement, invention, preparation, and confidence increased via guided multimodal composing. “The ability to translate between communication modes drives to the heart of
transmedia navigation and suggests the act of navigating between media might alter how some students think” (132). It would seem that Baepler and Reynolds’ transmedia navigation connects to Carr’s “hypertext minds” and Turkle’s observations of Generations Y and Z.

Speaking to the inherent differences and difficulties of digital research and communication in new media, such as transmedia and new techniques, Hawkes argued that “we have to accept these methods as part of the everyday context of digital spaces; we have to adapt methods to protect ourselves, our computers, our networks, and our projects; and we have to be advocates in protecting privacy, addressing surveillance, and fostering a safe network ecology” (350). Performing teacher research on Web 2.0 with a plethora of digital tools can be tricky terrain, and Hawkes advised researchers to equip themselves and others with rhetorical tools to navigate safely. Ruth Ray described effective teacher research as providing “a means of communicating to graduate students the concept of epistemological diversity because it illustrates, on a very practical level, how knowledge is constructed personally, locally, and globally and how these three inform one another differently in the experience of every researcher” (115). This project continues by addressing those very concepts.

Chapter Overview and Conclusion

While chapter one offered exigency and a brief overview of relevant literature on my dissertation project, the first sections of chapter two describe the IRB (Institutional Review Board) approved Qualtrics survey completed by 42 participants, and explain the logistics of its dissemination and coding. Chapter two then offers the same breakdown of an interview with the Director of General Studies Writing for a crucial administrative perspective. In addition to survey and interview data, my dissertation project also collects, cites, and analyzes multimodal examples of GSW and writing-related communication on various forms of new media. For
example, I explored and gathered evidence (screen shots) of the GSW YouTube account, institutional web presence of GSW, Canvas training materials, and Twitter hashtags. Chapter two provides an overview of technofeminist methodology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and grounded theory as the theoretical frameworks for data collection and coding. The strong theoretical and practical base created in chapter two facilitates the presentation and analysis of the study’s findings in chapters three and four. Chapter three offers a look at the quantitative results of the Qualtrics survey built upon the scholarly and theoretical foundations established in the chapters before. Data is presented in graphics and charts and then analyzed. Chapter four walks readers through this project’s qualitative data while taking care to preserve participant voices.

Based on the data I gathered, and my close readings of representative digital content, chapter five considers the implications of my results for using new media in the GSW classroom, and for course interactions inside and outside of class. Specific practices and lessons are presented to the GSW community as examples of Web 2.0 and multimodal public rhetorics. These materials were influenced by survey respondents, include my own reflection on access, and offer concrete assessment methods for the particular assignment/unit. From these sample materials, researchers and teachers from both BGSU and the field at large may take away rhetorical goals and successful ideas to begin employing new media in their own classrooms. Finally, the last part of chapter five is a brief discussion of how other scholars, researchers, and instructors might extend my project’s work.

Though teacher research on new media might seem like a passing trend or temporary fascination to some, meaning-making still happens often in these spaces, the practices of which are of great significance to first-year composition students. My project’s survey of the GSW
population allows me to see how they are prioritizing the affordances of new media available in their courses to better prepare instructors for incorporating new media. Moving into the following chapter on methods and methodologies, it is important to bear in mind Romberger’s technofeminist warning that “the Western reification of the inherent good of progress and technology supports value articulations that allow technologies to be implemented without consideration of local environmental and social needs” (Romberger 251), which is where work such as my proposed dissertation project is intervening. Resisting the siren call of new gadgets and gateways should always begin with a reiteration of the rhetorical situation of a given digital environment, and an examination of how affordances of new media can match pedagogical goals (for the General Studies Writing program at BGSU, in this case).
CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGIES AND METHODS—UNDERSTANDING THE GSW GROUP

Killer Whales are a Killer Essay Topic

In Summer 2015, I taught an accelerated section of GSW 1120: Academic Writing II. It was the third week of a six-week class, and my students were tasked with choosing a topic of interest for their Multiple Source Essay, an assignment requiring them to search for primary, secondary, and scholarly sources; evaluate credibility of resources; and ultimately to practice synthesis of sources, which was the key to passing the course. While the first section of Academic Writing (GSW 1110) exposed students to academic writing conventions and introduced them to the research process, the second section in the GSW series (GSW 1120) required students to work with multiple sources, rhetorically analyze them, and synthesize their arguments in ways suiting their audience and purpose. These course goals directly aligned with the Ohio Transfer Module (OTM) second-year composition course requirement number 2, in Figure 7:

2. Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing*

Throughout the second writing course, students should build upon these foundational outcomes from the first course:

- Use reading and writing for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
- Analyze relationships among writer, text, and audience in various kinds of texts
- Use various critical thinking strategies to analyze texts

In addition, by the end of the second course, students should be able to

- Find and evaluate appropriate material from electronic and other sources
- Analyze and critique sources in their writing
- Juxtapose and integrate ideas and arguments from sources
- Develop a clear line of argument that incorporates ideas and evidence from sources

Figure 7: OTM Requirement 2
During one particular meeting of 1120—in a computer lab populated with desktops, personal laptops, a whiteboard, a chalkboard, and projection equipment—I directed students to spend half of class time searching on their laptops or university machines to get a sense of their idea and identify potential arguments on the issue. One particular student, Miranda (whose name has been changed for privacy), was struggling to generate content on her passion for the mistreatment of Killer Whales/Orcas at Sea World. Aside from a few scholarly journal articles found in the BGSU library databases, she dejectedly told me that, “Maybe this isn’t a good topic after all…” because she could not find reliable, authoritative support. She seemed to me a deeply invested animal rights activist halted by the immensity of available information, and she questioned the appropriateness of many outlets. I responded to Miranda with, “Challenge accepted.”

I immediately sat down with Miranda for a mini-conference—a popular in-class activity so-named for seven to eight minutes of quick brainstorming with students. I encouraged her to peruse popular blog entries, YouTube videos, reviews of Sea World, commentary from agencies or non-profits who had a stake (such as PETA and the U.S. Humane Society), and pieces of news reports and talk shows. She could then consider these sources rhetorically and culturally. Once Miranda was prompted to think “outside the box” on the types of primary and secondary sources available, her eyes lit up with even more passion than I had seen before. She set to work navigating the web for relevant videos, discussions, organizations, influential op-eds, and she even viewed and analyzed a popular documentary titled Blackfish. In the class meetings following this particular one, my activities required students to engage in peer conferences, discussion board conversations, and chunks of drafting. Miranda soon realized that she could weave those scholarly pieces with cultural representations of her topic. She successfully gathered
information from a variety of genres, performed rhetorical analysis, appropriately evaluated
sources, and synthesized the content into a cohesive argument for the Multiple Source Essay—
her project earned a grade of B according to the standardized GSW rubric.

Fueled by her enthusiasm for animal rights activism, Miranda employed several Web 2.0
resources for this assignment to come together: Email, discussion boards, comment threads,
YouTube videos, news briefs, editorials, and blogs. Students in the class section assisted and
inspired each other as I talked them through pedagogy utilizing Web 2.0. What might happen if
this pedagogy could be generalized and distributed to GSW instructors—is this something in
which the community would be interested? This study sought to find out. Chapter two first
describes the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved mixed methods by which the study
acknowledged the research questions: survey, interview, and digital artifact gathering. This
information is paired with vivid description of the study’s sample population, setting, and scope.
Then, the chapter breaks down the three methodologies situating data retrieval and analysis:
technofeminism, phenomenology, and grounded theory. Finally, I consider ethical and practical
limitations of the study before looking toward the possibilities generated by the project’s data.
To provide the context, I reiterate the research questions here: First, how are students and
instructors in the GSW program at BGSU currently interacting online regarding the course, and
how do these practices enact institutional and pedagogical goals? Second, what might voices
from the research sample reveal about GSW’s Web 2.0 preferences?

Research Design and Participants: Connecting with the Community

My research design utilized Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved mixed methods
to generate both quantitative and qualitative data. First, I developed an original survey (available
in an Appendix concluding the dissertation) on Web 2.0 practices and preferences as part of a
graduate course in Research Methods at Bowling Green State University—the class proofed and tested the survey draft for quality and clarity. It was made in Qualtrics, a university-endorsed survey generating website. Qualtrics allows users to customize surveys with multiple types of questions, answers, templates, and statistics. I chose Qualtrics to build and distribute the survey to my target population because of its intuitive interface, its customizable aesthetics, and its ability to calculate statistics in its reports. Once approved by IRB, I sent the survey—with a consent waiver—to the target population. I located GSW instructors’ email addresses through the department listserv, and asked each instructor to please disseminate the survey to their students. The link to the survey was also posted on the BGSU Rhetoric & Writing Facebook page and sent to students in my previous Canvas CMS shells.

The survey’s run was approximately two months during the early Spring of 2016, and 61 voluntary participants began the survey. Only 42 completed the survey, and of those respondents, 10 were instructors and 32 were students. Of the instructors who completed the survey, exactly half of them have been teaching GSW for one to two years. Only two instructors had been teaching for one year; with the rest teaching GSW for three-plus years. Of the students who completed the survey, 18 had taken only one GSW course, and 13 had taken two GSW courses. These respondents answered a series of 15–18 questions about their networked, digital practices both within and outside their GSW courses regarding class activities and assignments.

The survey was designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative information. Participants were asked first to identify types of digital communication that have been used most (from a list of 22, with space for “other”) to interact with peers and instructors in GSW, including both in-class and out-of-class communication. The survey instructed respondents to only consider conversations involving GSW and associated policies, activities, assignments, or
goals. Participants then ranked each tool on its effectiveness, and selected reasons that justified their definition of “effective.” Third, participants ranked the digital tools they would most prefer to use in GSW, and wrote short qualitative responses telling me why they would like to use those tools. The same questions were asked of tools participants did not prefer to use. Each question’s goal was for respondents to generate data by thinking clearly and critically about their networked digital experiences related to their GSW courses.

Responses from the survey were collected and stored on the secure Qualtrics website, and downloaded reports remained protected on my machine. The data was coded with the theoretical lenses of grounded technofeminist phenomenology (discussed in more detail in the following section on Methodologies). While coding the data, I looked online with detail and thoughtfulness to collect illustrative phenomena of GSW Web 2.0 communication, which were coded with technofeminist values in mind. Survey data was coded by allowing trends and preferences to emerge naturally; this quantitative data revealed what digital tools the GSW community is currently using and would wish to use; the ranking of each particular digital tool; the factors leading to each participant’s rating; types of preferred communication identified; digital tools identified as ones not to use; and demographics such as how many instructors versus students completed the survey. Qualitative data revealed what variables influenced participants’ ranking of digital tools, justification of why particular tools were or were not recommended, along with research and scholarly interests identified by participants.

Additionally, most data collected from interviewing the GSW Director was qualitative. The interview was 10–12 questions in length, and began by asking in what current theory and practice the GSW program was based (as worded on the program’s website). Then, I asked how the Graduate Teaching Assistant pedagogy was developed. After this discussion, I asked how
GSW currently contributes to teaching GSW instructors and students how to compose in electronic environments with Web 2.0. The next few questions focused on how the Director perceived the pedagogical influence of social networking, the GSW YouTube channel, Canvas CMS, and third-party file sharing and video applications. It was important for the Director to be represented in this project because she, too, is an invested scholar who works within University constraints and availability of resources. Her answers rounded out my discussion of implications.

The advantages to mixed methods as a research approach were numerous. For one, multiple types of data were collected: short response, longer response, numerical, multiple choice, and digital—the Qualtrics survey in particular was optimized to accept a bevy of genres as both selections, responses, and answers. Another pro to mixed methods was that researchers, respondents, and readers could more clearly perceive the rhetorical situation of the research. In fact, McNely and Teston remarked that, “One form of fieldwork or analysis—one tactical approach to a given object of study—cannot be expected to carry the weight of inquiry; instead, multiple methods guided by a reflexive global strategy provide nuance to our understandings of digital humanities concerns” (116). I spoke to this call for nuance by combining teacher research with mixed methods to generate multiple types of data speaking back to what the authors later referred to as a ‘lived digital experience.’ Acknowledging the embodied reality of digital communication was this study’s attempt to move closer to causation in addition to correlation.

Methodologies: “Backing Up” my Interactions

Backing the project’s survey, interview, and subsequent coding were these methodological frameworks—technofeminism (via survey and interview development), phenomenology (through observation of networked interaction online), and grounded theory (in coding and approach to data collection, analysis, and theory-building).
Technofeminism

Surveying communicative digital practices in GSW was motivated by a feminist research goal: to create gains for groups in which technological literacy is mediated through inequitable social and educational frameworks. This goal aligned with Wajcman’s definition of technofeminist research: “a scholarly activity that redefines the problem of the exclusion of groups of people from technological domains and activities” (8). Students communicating online in GSW could be excluded from preferred technological domains, because students are having to utilize webbed networks in which they had no choice implementing or building. The educational context of CMS and university email, while convenient, could be especially burdensome to some students who do not often check them for content despite syllabus policies to the contrary. Any other media an instructor chooses to use outside of the required email and CMS is inextricably connected to an embodied student/teacher power dynamic. For example, my mandate that all students in class use Twitter because “I thought it was fun and useful” did not do much for students’ confidence because they still had no choice in its implementation. However, making Twitter an option for students who wished to explore its empirically-proven advantages would resemble more considerate pedagogy. Speaking to these contextual elements of the class, Blair added that “technofeminist research intertwines the personal and the political, situating technological literacy in a range of familial, educational, and professional contexts that have often marginalized women’s voices” (64). Because my own research goals were informed by Blair’s definition of technofeminist research as educationally, professionally, and socially situated, and Wajcman’s definition of technofeminist research that focused on populations where technological activities are inequitable, I was comfortable saying that my research agenda was a technofeminist one.
If GSW students’ voices could be heard regarding their Web 2.0 preferences, GSW pedagogy could better reach its goals. Romberger presented an ecofeminist methodological approach to digital ecologies (such as the social and networked web) by restating Selfe’s 1999 call for scholars to “investigate the rhetoric of the multiple electronic writing spaces in which students and professionals compose” (250) in order to “change the dominant paradigms at work within the discourse communities operative in academic, corporate, and social communicative practices” (254). In other words, technofeminist work must seek to investigate popular sites of electronic composition in order to empower users with rhetorical awareness and agency in those spaces. I have enacted a technofeminist research agenda by investigating and validating the range of literate practices that are constructed by, and construct, networked digital communication in GSW. This goal was endorsed by Almjeld and Blair when they stated that “we believe that new media researchers must continually rearticulate and contextualize research around spaces, technologies, and identities not only for our larger community of scholarly peers in the field of computers and writing but also for our colleagues with whom we interact on a daily basis” (100).

My local teacher research investigating the digital networked communicative practices of the GSW population reflected Almjeld and Blair’s technofeminist goal for empowerment despite dominant frameworks and practices (such as the university-mediated Canvas software and associated technologies).

My survey questions and interview aimed to get students and instructors thinking about the rhetorical and practical purpose of tools they might use every day, but might not consider the institutional, digital, cultural, and personal implications of that use. According to Romberger, feminist research “advocates critical awareness of technology and its use for those subjugated to ideologies with which they might not have fully engaged on a critical level or that they had no
say in implementing as determiners of their context” (250). In GSW at BGSU, the situation was one similar to Romberger’s description. Instructors most easily incorporated Canvas LMS to facilitate course content and communication, with the built-in message feature and university-issued email as the go-to communicative tools. To address this inequity, I collected qualitative responses from participants as a way of speaking to technobiography, which is transparency that is central to a technofeminist stance, especially when using mixed multimodal methods. According to Almjeld and Blair: The goals of technobiography are “to rely on narrative and biography to neither celebrate nor scapegoat technology, but instead to theorize how our relationships to technology have been influenced by material conditions that are simultaneously gendered, sexed, raced, classed, and aged” (102). Almjeld and Blair encouraged me to think about (1) how BGSU has executed institutional influence over digital communication in GSW, (2) how GSW has influenced its own pedagogy, and (3) how these influences might be impacting current pedagogy, and the promise of future pedagogy. It takes strong initiative and technological confidence to implement digital tools other than file uploads and PowerPoint presentations, especially those on the networked web, which is a cultural and pedagogical value that instructors might not critically realize. In other words, it is crucial for GSW instructors to unpack the values that might influence them to negotiate pedagogy within institutional and programmatic parameters. Just as instructors should consider critical reflection, GSW students often have even less say in course communicative or pedagogical practices, making their experiences and preferences especially valuable in this project.

Updating a discussion of feminist methodology with feminist pedagogical methods was Laura Micciche, who revealed that “feminist practices commonly make an effort to circumvent the constraints of academic prose” (132). By thoughtfully including options such as popular
social media, networking, multimodal, and messaging apps, my survey and interview allowed me to identify those spaces which attempt to subvert traditional academic texts and text production while working toward the same rhetorical goals valued in GSW and across writing programs. Pursuing the same research goal, “feminist treatments of technology have similarly questioned neutral or egalitarian representations of online spaces” (Micciche 135). Micciche, like Blair, evoked the mistrust of privilege as power, especially when the power and profit of web spaces were left unquestioned. I addressed technofeminist concerns by asking (1) how and why GSW students were accessing new media for course-related activities, by investigating (2) what institutional and commercial influences provided and constrained these sites, and by (3) making use of new media more visible from within the GSW program. This knowledge should lead to empowerment and confidence for both GSW and the Rhetoric and Composition community.

These were admirable goals, but ultimately, Blair stated that “in the spirit of technofeminism,” I must also consider “how a range of transformative pedagogies, rhetorical choices, and literacy practices works to subvert existing gendered hierarchies in these spaces” (67). While I coded my survey data, then, the next technofeminist steps were to consider how the material kairotic conditions of new media influenced user identity and interaction (in political, social, and economic ways) so that the target population can continue to foster productive online discourse. Then, as Arola and Wysocki articulated, students may take a “turn toward production” which means that “audiences will become transmitters of their perspectives rather than passive receptors of the mass media” (15). In other words, effective instruction in digital composing must position users as advocates of their own discourse instead of passive receivers of other discourse. With the defining characteristics of user-generated metadata and responsivity, Web 2.0 was a great place to start.
One example of this transition from passive to active consumption occurred on the microblog Twitter. Students might already be aware that Twitter is a popular means of gathering information and news, but they might need some rhetorical guidance on how to use Twitter for creating generative content and networking with target communities. To place this goal in the words of Wajcman, “Technology must be understood as part of the social fabric that holds society together; it is never merely technical or social. Rather, technology is always a socio-material product—a seamless web or network combining artifacts, people, organizations, cultural meanings and knowledge” (106). To achieve this level of rhetorical awareness with GSW students, effective rhetorical guidance could come from thoughtful lesson plans and reflection with the digital platform; only then might students mediate their own embodied experience. Lest any reader believe that this project’s technofeminist stance addressed only women, Wajcman asserted that “In order to renegotiate the cultural equation between masculinity and technology, technofeminism insists that we must attend to women’s and men’s concrete sociotechnical practices” (Wajcman 115). My project collected survey data from all voluntary respondents and administrators from GSW regardless of gender, and attended to the survey population as one that was entitled to its own informed pedagogy with new media despite any immovable institutional and digital frameworks.

Phenomenology

To conceptualize and analyze content for the study, mobile and digital events and records were referred to as “phenomena” (plural) or a “phenomenon” (singular). Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation. Hermeneutic phenomenological research as a methodology “strives to describe and interpret some aspect of human experience from the point of view of those who have lived the experience via direct evidence” (Addison 172). This study included screenshots of
phenomena from the GSW community that spoke to its research questions, similar to digital ethnography. Tate et al. nodded to this approach in their discussion of critical inductive reasoning, described as trial-and-error experimentation by instructors for students. Truly, the best way to explore the affordances of Web 2.0 is to familiarize oneself with hands-on experience. Effective digital hermeneutic phenomenological research, then, should examine direct evidence from online spaces, and then present the evidence as a first-hand artifact of its user/community/situation, ideally alongside the voices of research participants.

Direct empirical evidence such as qualitative statements were important because Addison described how, although valuable to the field, indirect empirical evidence (such as test scores, nominal survey data, and textual analysis) offered “incomplete and often skewed versions of literacy” due to limitations in providing researchers with context (172). Addison (and Brandt) endorsed the collection of direct evidence from research participants, which “provides a complex account of the ways in which people acquire specific types of literacy as well as the socioeconomic implication of varying levels of acquisition” (172). Instead of just recording participants talking about digital interactions, or only coding qualitative survey responses, a phenomenological approach records participants actually interacting. For example, tweeting with the #FirstYearWriting, #TeachingWriting, or #writing communities is phenomenological research, while analyzing a survey response from one participant is indirect evidence. Figure 8 displays three recent Tweets from the #writing community as examples of generative conversations among professionals.
Direct research collection methods, as part of phenomenology, allow digital researchers to better consider the rhetorical and kairotic elements of a situation, including economic, political, intellectual, social, and contextual analysis as appropriate. To fully consider how a GSW instructor might take advantage of Twitter, one needs to know about the communities and resources available to them. To best study these elements, researchers accomplish the goals of hermeneutic phenomenology by “studying discourse from a situated perspective, requiring the consideration of literacy as part of the larger discourse of an individual or community” (Addison 174). In other words, writing and literacy are artifacts of discourse. Discourse is an artifact of communities, which are situated in a larger culture. Studying writing, then, is to study
community culture. Addison connected the goals of phenomenological digital research to the goals of a worldly research context: “If we view discourse—and by extension literacy—as the projection of a world, how can we materially ‘fix’ discourse in a way that allows for systematic investigation” (175). Rather than a connotation of “fix” that implies a deficiency in the associated discourse, one could think of hermeneutic phenomenology as seeing, arranging, or conceptualizing discourse in a way which allows a researcher to investigate the world from their identified stance and methodologies.

To begin arranging and reflecting upon a large quantity of phenomena like the data set collected here, Brooke asserted that “heuristics like those provided by Selber in *Multiliteracies for a Digital Age* can be a useful place to start. In his piece, Selber suggested that rhetoricians think of computer literacy as multilayered, comprised of functional, critical, and rhetorical dimensions” (Brooke 183). Selber offered a heuristic for analyzing the characteristics of communication in varying types of online instructional and/or collaborative environments by identifying three models of electronic instruction: Self Contained, Embedded, and Open. Table 9 shows connections I made between Selber’s heuristic and new media, including CMS, social networking, and digital communication. According to Table 9, students in a writing course utilizing a CMS, social networking, or digital modalities would be communicating in all three of Selber’s electronic instruction models. Awareness of these models, their conventions, and their purposes is helpful to begin to conceptualize the varying types of interactions possible online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Self Contained</th>
<th>Embedded</th>
<th>Open</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Selber’s Description</strong></td>
<td>“Users encounter procedural content that is fixed, static, and absolute” (100). <em>Consumption.</em></td>
<td>Users may contribute to the creation and collection of user-generated metadata (103). <em>Reaction.</em></td>
<td>Users as authors and editors (107) of “living breathing structures” (110). <em>Interaction.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Examples from New Media**

| Site policies, descriptions, tutorials, terms and conditions, links, linked files. | Facebook likes, Facebook/Twitter favorites, CMS announcements, discussions, sharing photos from other profiles, uploading and sharing YouTube videos, hashtags. | Wikis, status updates and threads, Tweets, Retweets, comments and threads, direct messages. |

Table 9: Selber’s Models of Electronic Instruction

While Selber’s material might be a bit too theoretical to give to students in the composition classroom, his heuristic could help writing instructors and researchers facilitate purposeful online environments and frame the metadata generated there. Figures 10 and 11, Canvas Discussions and Canvas Modules, captured the most-used elements of my GSW Canvas shell as examples:

![Canvas Discussions](image-url)
These documented features from Canvas fell somewhere between “Self-Contained” and “Embedded” according to Table 9, though some menu options facilitate wikis and users may direct message each other (“Open”). While contributors may expand on particular menus and threads within Canvas, the structure remains menu-driven and linear, while the aesthetic is only customizable to a limited extent and only by the instructor. Compared to the “always-on” nature of Web 2.0, I had trouble thinking of Canvas as one of the “living, breathing structures” a la Selber, which meant that its place in my coding process was not on the same tier as social media, which did evoke the descriptors of “living” and “breathing.” Table 9, Figure 10, and Figure 11 are part of one instance of how this project captured local student and instructor phenomena to address its research questions, and spoke in direct response to scholars such as Addison’s call for more local, digital teacher research: “Ultimately, we hope to provide a comprehensive, integrated account of the sites typically inhabited by rhetoric and composition faculty and their students” (Addison 178). This comprehensive account cannot feasibly be produced by one single
researcher or even an individual, but by an aggregate of communities working together to understand this kind of embodied digital literacy. This critical awareness could influence the field’s preferred means of data collection, data interpretation, teaching of writing, and literate practices.

Grounded Theory

As I organized and prepared qualitative survey and interview responses along with quantitative data and digital records, grounded theory was a framework that enabled me to allow results and implications come directly from what I gathered, as opposed to going into the research with hypotheses and biases. Grounded theory works on the values of open exploration and critical approach, with results or motivations not presupposed by the researcher but organically developed from exigency and from the study’s data. Not to be confused with researcher stance, coding of data via grounded theory conceptualizes the project’s overall impact and shape as data and patterns emerge (Spinuzzi “Secret Sauce and Snake Oil” is an example). As I gathered quantitative data on how students were writing on new media, it was important to consider the type of interaction, purpose, and audience. These aspects are often too subjective for researchers to simply gather this data from behind the scenes; Clay Spinuzzi modeled exactly the type of research that moves closer to reading behind the hypertext. His goal was to sift through a bounty of data to clarify the long-term impact of a particular company’s Search Engine Optimization (SEO) practices, and he used at least eight different coding methods to arrive at his implications: starter codes, open codes devolved from pre-observation interviews, autocoding by keyword, axial coding across codes, and then data reduction. Spinuzzi then used triangulation and member checks (participant approval) to edit the results. Not all research requires so many levels of coding, or even such complicated heuristics, but Spinuzzi’s transparent representation
of research was helpful when developing original work in new media studies using grounded theory.

Going into the study, I was not sure what the most active digital environments were for GSW instructors and students. To find out, Markham and Baym endorsed a grounded theoretical perspective: “The problem in defining appropriate field sites is that it is not always possible to identify in advance where the relevant social dynamics for understanding a particular technology are going on” (4). For this reason, research often develops and grows as it is conducted. Preliminary survey data told me where to begin my search for phenomena. While culture and context is everything, it is not always as visible as researchers would like! Markham quoted Laet and Mol, who suggested that internet researchers should “suspend judgment on the appropriateness of various forms of boundaries and instead engage with the situations that are found” (4). This is another tenet of grounded theory, meaning that researchers should remain objective enough about their own work to simply report what is found without bias. For example, I certainly included any student survey responses that spoke against the use of social networking in their writing classroom, despite how they might have disagreed with any of my statements about the benefits of social networking to composition pedagogy. Similarly, I found where students preferred to communicate on Web 2.0 by first reading their survey results, and did not force my own hypotheses onto them.

Especially when employing qualitative digital research methods (as well as quantitative), it is more ethical for digital research to adopt a perspective valuing multiplicity and individual authenticity because “the nature of an online community can be changed, either through the researcher’s interactions with participants or through the effect of publicizing the site” (McKee and Porter 252). Instead of aiming to change or persuade the community being observed, as
McKee and Porter caution, researchers should heed Lisa Ede’s advice to “focus reading in composition studies on rhetoric, philosophy, critical theory, and feminism” to develop intrinsically motivated methodologies (326). My project was motivated by the desire to collect student and instructor voices from which to reflect and draw implications for both the GSW program and the field as a whole. Keeping my own personal stance separate was very important, as it enabled me to report more accurate results. However, researcher stance also comes with its own limitations, discussed in the following section.

Equally as important to my own grounded theoretical perspective was Vie’s 2015 piece entitled “What’s Going On?: Challenges and Opportunities for Social Media Use in the Writing Classroom.” In this piece, Vie conducted a national study of writing teachers on their use of social media in composition classes: her study was a much larger version of my smaller-scale survey and interviews of the GSW community. Vie also coded results using grounded theory, with the explanation that “in grounded research, the researcher looks to his or her data for the emergence of categories and, later, theories; rather than beginning with theory, the theory emerges from the data” (35). Vie coded results and based implications largely on how the data steered them naturally, which is a method I used as well. This is not to say that I did not have an educated perspective going into my research; being a digital teacher and scholar, myself, an entirely objective stance was impossible. Using a similar grounded theoretical perspective to Vie, I picked up her call for further digital research in new media: “It would behoove us to consider whether additional social media beyond Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube might have an appropriate place in our classrooms” (41). Mine was one of many interdisciplinary perspectives that addressed Vie’s call for pedagogical research incorporating social media and new media,
and made the same sorts of grounded theoretical moves through data assimilation and coding, 
made more explicit in Chapters three and four.

Limitations, Including, “Is Web 2.0 just a Whim?”

A number of pitfalls and limitations could plague this study, beginning with the Internet’s 
propensity to foster temporary trends that “burn out” almost more quickly than they appeared:
dance crazes such as Gangnam Style, social movements such as pop culture Presidential 
candidates, and health scares such as pink slime meat; contemporary education has even faced its 
own share of public, editorial, even scholarly criticism when it comes to bandwagon approaches 
to teaching. Considering Web 2.0, however, the space is uniquely situated for this study’s sort of 
teacher research because it fosters writing and literacy in ways that have drawn the attention of 
compositionists for a long while—“Over the last ten years, discussions related to writing in 
digital environments have become mainstream in composition and rhetoric, the area most closely 
associated with the teaching and learning of writing in postsecondary education and, in 
particular, the introductory writing curriculum in the United States” (Ridolfo and Hart-Davidson 
2). Supported by the bevy of resources they cited and compiled, Ridolfo and Hart-Davidson 
advocated for the immediate multimodal, sociocultural, pedagogical exploration of Web 2.0 with 
the digital humanities.

However, cultural (un)popularity was not the only research restraint of this kairotic 
situation. One must also realize the barriers of survey and sampling methods. While the survey 
was developed to obtain descriptive, reflective information about the GSW population, data 
gathered might not actually represent the lived reality of the population and its Web 2.0 
practices. For starters, those who self-selected and responded to the digital survey could have 
been those who were more comfortable with Web 2.0 in the first place. Their responses could
have been more biased than those who were not comfortable using Web 2.0. Thus, the data might reflect a biased sample size of the GSW population. The nominal data, then, could be considered inaccurate. Furthermore, there are [estimated] hundreds of students and around thirty instructors in the GSW program, so 61 respondents was not a large percentage of respondents total, especially since only 42 of participants actually completed the survey.

As for digital phenomenology, it shares limitations with quasi-ethnographic research. The point of my looking for digital phenomena related to GSW and Web 2.0 was to see the research population in context. Digital environments such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook were lucrative research sites because I already knew that the population was active on Web 2.0. Ideally, the data I collected would be representative of the population, be generalizable to the entire population, and reveal the subsequent variables consistent with field-wide empirical data. However, just one or a few instances of a phenomenon did not make it habit. For example, finding one particularly interesting Twitter feed from one GSW instructor did not mean that the whole population harbored an interest in the social networking site. This fault in base-rate proportion could ignore the nearly countless interactions on Web 2.0 by focusing only on a few events that I was able to find.

Similarly, overconfidence in judgment and researcher stance could have harmed this study. I am one of a population that many are naming “millennial,” meaning that I grew up with computers and cell phones and other networked technology. Therefore, I tend to privilege Web 2.0 and connectedness in ways that others may not. My analysis of the data, then, could be so overconfident that it ignored evidence to the contrary. It was important for the study to not only base itself in current theory and practice, but also to examine counterarguments, and include survey/interview responses that did not speak so highly of Web 2.0 in pedagogy.
Phenomenology as a method is based on a selection of subjects that are useful and available; however, the useful and available subjects are not the only ones who matter. This is where grounded theory comes in, allowing dissenting voices space as well. McNely and Teston concurred with this aspect of grounded theory by arguing that “essentially, these approaches are a way to account for embodied, sensory, and material contexts of everyday practices such that theories about those practices are built from the sites themselves” (115). Without contexts generated by teacher research in the sites known to be used by students, practices and theories will not yet be accurate or substantial enough. While one tends to think of objectivity as central to empirical research, it is essential for a technofeminist grounded theoretical approach to acknowledge my own situated perspective on the project. My own passion and personal investment motivated these research questions, which is why purposeful theoretically-backed data collection, coding, and analysis were helpful in grounding the project. As for objectivity, Saldana asserted that it “has always been an ideal yet contrived and virtually impossible goal to achieve in quantitative research. So why should qualitative inquiry carry their baggage? We do not claim to be objective because the notion is a false god” (41). To be truly objective, as Saldana pointed out, would mean turning away from pivotal context surrounding research and research participants. Hine suggested that a transparent relationship with research participants could generate more nuanced reports, which would be “a positive move in the direction of empowered participants, although it can be somewhat challenging for researchers used to more conventional separations between field site and academic product” (266). Taken together, both Saldana and Hine encouraged reconceptualization of virtual ethnography, with researchers breaking the “objective” boundary and sharing the role with participants.
While this notion of co-research is appealing for its generative and more authentic affordances, significant ethical concerns also come with any sort of computer-mediated writing research. Besides consideration of unequal access (which the GSW program does a great job of addressing for its students), Sorapure et al. posited that “we may also have ethical concerns about allowing into our classrooms the commercial and offensive material that seem an ineradicable part of the Web” (335). As one surfs the web or scrolls along social media for any period of time, it is not uncommon to see harsh language, curses, violence, and triggers. In fact, Sorapure et al. argued that “the Web is not an ideologically neutral territory. It is inextricably bound to its time and place and to the ideologies of that time and place” (348). Writing instructors have been encouraged for many years to make the classroom an egalitarian, democratic, and neutral environment safe for a variety of ideologies and values. Web 2.0, however, is anything but neutral. Bolter agreed by stating that “the ease and equality of access to all the various forms of cultural representation (including pornography) appall traditionalists” (207). Bolter’s words were strong, but reflected strong values about how users are exploiting the Web. Because of these worries, it can be difficult for instructors to justify class access to the Web outside of library resources, databases, and what standardized GSW curriculum teaches students of primary and authoritative sources. Bolter asked of hypertext, is it better than print—“better in what sense, for whose purposes, and, as various contemporary critics would immediately ask, for whose economic benefit?” (42). One considerable criticism is that all users on the Web are tracked and taken advantage of based on their online activity—try researching weight loss strategies and one will see targeted ads on every subsequent website for various weight loss supplements and programs. Is it ethical, then, to expose participants and students to Web 2.0 when privacy is just an illusion?
Drawing attention to the differing expectations of each individual user, McKee and Porter cautioned that each user must be on the same page to best avoid ethical quandaries. Especially in digital environments, researchers can easily violate the anonymity or confidentiality of users even with innocent observation or data collection. Because the web can be thoroughly searched for exact names and phrases, even measures to protect participant identities can go awry. Yet providing informed consent for each networked user within a community is daunting and, in some cases, impossible. For these reasons, Hine argued that “online ethnographers, therefore need to be sensitive to the expectations of potential online informants, even where their activities are apparently occurring in public places” (265). Yes, parts of the networked web are public and ripe with opportunities for virtual ethnography, but researchers must still consider the identities and implications of any identifying information in order to best protect any parties involved. Furthermore, ethical treatment of participants must include “the opportunity for potential informants to choose to be excluded” (Hine 265), even in digital environments. For example, those in the #amwriting community on Twitter are networking with other educators and scholars for motivation, support, and resources. They are not aware that a researcher might be observing their rhetoric for, hypothetically, an upcoming conference presentation. Additionally, they did not have the option to opt out of their digital conversations with the knowledge that their activity was being observed and potentially recorded. Is it enough, then, to make anonymous the identities in #amwriting Tweets appearing in the presentation?

As he explored this question and other ethical dilemmas of digital activities, Coley acknowledged that authors such as Hine and McKee and Porter were having important conversations regarding digital research, but he argued that not enough empirical research has studied the ethics of digital media for undergraduate composition, in particular. Coley cited three
underdeveloped considerations: "audience awareness as an ethical construct, academic integrity, and the drive for digital literacy" (2). In short, he explored students’ deeply seated desire for acquiring digital literacy, which coexisted with debate on academic integrity (such as plagiarism and copyright) as well as the ethics of identity, audience, and citizenship. My own study asked one of the same research questions about digital media that Coley posed in chapter two: “How do students in digital media-enabled writing classrooms feel about/understand such usage?” (27). Knowing participant perspectives would inform researchers who employ their writing, artifacts, and reflections in their research. Since Coley posited this question in 2012, empirical research on undergraduates and their attitudes toward digital media has since been sparse. Ray agreed with the exigency for teacher research adding to empirical evidence of undergraduate attitudes, especially when the roles enacted by graduate students came into consideration: “the field of composition can learn a great deal about itself and its potential by observing graduate students, for in juggling their multiple roles within the university as students, teachers, and researchers, graduate students must negotiate, on a daily basis, a personal relationship between theory and practice” (104). By contributing to teacher research from my own unique stance as a millennial graduate student in the GSW community for four years, I have added to the store of research called for by both Coley and Ray. Additionally, I have considered the ethical implications of a participant-observer stance on Web 2.0 with the target population and taken appropriate measures to protect identities and information.

Ultimately, when considering the limitations to both methods and methodologies, it is wise to acknowledge Sorapure et al., who argued that while all of these are valid and exigent concerns, “the Web has already entered our classrooms even as we debate its value and effects” (335); furthermore, “it is unwise to reject the Web for these reasons… a close and careful
reading of Web sites can enhance students’ research and writing skills” (348). Limitations stated in this chapter apply to any Webbed pedagogy, but awareness of the issues may actually provide students and instructors with the power to see and address the rhetorical situation together.

Conclusion: Optimizing Webbed GSW Research

It is still unclear how widely this particular study could impact the GSW community at BGSU, and by proxy the fields of rhetoric, composition, computers and writing, technical and professional writing, and digital humanities. With awareness of limitations such as bias, overconfidence, misrepresentation, and ethical concerns, my research moved forward by relying on its theoretical and methodological framework to produce the most accurate and authentic data possible. Even though one limitation of this study was its small sample size in just one first-year writing program, its data and implications are important for triangulating teacher research which could lead to new practices for scholarly ventures in multiple fields. Brooks et al. considered the sustainability of projects like these by arguing that “sustainable projects need the people power that comes with collaboration, the documentation that comes from technical writing, and the sustained vision that comes from engaged, publicly oriented scholars” (230). A multidisciplinary public approach is critical to the value of research generated by many communities of scholars, students, and teachers in local situations. Digital ethnography and digital literacy were both closely-related volumes of scholarship that spoke to this project’s research questions in important ways, as they call for this type of deeply-situated teacher research. Now that the local context of GSW at BGSU has been more deeply established through local phenomena, current theory, and empirical scholarship, the study moves toward its data presentation and analysis phase. Chapters three and four present the data and coding gleaned from the methods explained in this chapter. Chapter three visualizes nominal, qualitative data such as numbers, charts, and statistics, while
Chapter four discusses digital phenomena and qualitative responses from surveys and interviews. Chapter five considers the data collected in light of phenomenology, grounded theory, and technofeminism, in order to generalize implications for both GSW and the field of Rhetoric & Writing as a whole.
CHAPTER III. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS: SHARING THE LIKES AND DISLIKES

Staying Connected Among Communities

In August 2012, I stood in front of my second-ever Freshman Composition class on day one; I spent most of the session explaining the syllabus and course policies. The course documents were standardized among first-year TAs in the English department, for which I was thankful, but I added just one change to the end of my own course policies. After the bullet point explaining that students were not to be on their cell phones in class, I inserted an asterisk stating, “unless you are reading or interacting with the course hashtag on Twitter.” Then, I asked how many students in my class were active on Twitter—every student but one raised a hand. Unable to contain my excitement, I eagerly shared my Twitter handle.

Rather than link my personal Twitter account to the students, I shared one separate and different than my personal handle. The handle, created specifically for the course, would send out assignment reminders, foster Q&A, and link to helpful Internet resources. Throughout the quarter, about half of the students in my course “followed” my teacher Twitter account. About a third of the students found my sharing of class homework reminders, helpful links, and MLA Q&A helpful on Twitter, while other student accounts (which did not even publish a profile photo) never favorited, replied, or messaged. They had “gone dark.” I needed to figure out how to make Twitter desirable enough for more of the class to want to follow and interact. Expecting to have conversations and populate resources, I was puzzled when that quarter’s Tweets were largely one-sided.

Despite slight disappointment about the lack of interaction on Twitter, I did learn about myself, my pedagogy, and the intersections of Web 2.0 with pedagogy and culture. For one, I
learned that using social networks is just that, *social*. Hindsight, I believed that my special “teacher Twitter” account might have alienated some students who simply did not want to share their personal lives with me. Another surprising takeaway was that, for students, personal interest in Twitter did not necessarily translate to course interest. I was surprised to encounter reluctance and sometimes even resistance to Twitter pedagogy; ultimately, my 2012–2013 composition Twitter experience taught me that numbers could be deceiving. Though all of my students were already active on Twitter, only about half were willing to participate in class activities on Twitter, and a couple students even voiced their total refusal to interact with their instructor on any social media. The motivation that students needed to take pedagogy online was clearly situational and individual. Quantitative data presented in this chapter, then, seemed to attach tangible numbers to the survey population. However, this was only the first layer of a complicated, networked conversation in just one research site. Diving deeper into scholarship and then surveying a GSW sample size about their attitudes and preferences on using new media enabled this project to grow in the spirits of technofeminism and grounded theory.

Chapter three first reviews the research questions and populations impacted in this study, and then offers quantitative results from the project’s digital Qualtrics survey. Results were coded and distributed according to the methods and methodologies described in chapter two. The survey contained eight questions designed to generate quantitative data, which was where this study began to move toward patterns, trends, and plausible explanations on digital communicative practices in GSW. Following this chapter, chapter four offers qualitative data and interpretation from digital records and from an interview with the GSW Director, enabling room for more thorough discussion and reflection. First, though, quantitative data and visualizations provided in this chapter assist in conceptualizing the current state of networked communicative
practices in GSW pedagogy, along with what kinds of digital tools were preferred (or not!) by
the target population, and for what reasons. Chapter three moves through the survey data by
presenting visuals and then analyzing each quantitative survey question in turn. Finally, the
chapter concludes with an overview of main themes and reflections applicable to larger
audiences in rhetoric, composition, and digital humanities.

Step one of coding quantitative data was to condense the hard data into a more readable
format than was presented by reports from Qualtrics. While the downloadable report files were
helpful at first, they became cumbersome by including a plethora of details in a format that was
not very readable. I exported data by hand into Microsoft Word and Excel documents, creating
lists and charts more concisely. Keeping in mind the literature and variety of perspectives
captured in the opening chapters of this project, I sought to identify the most prevalent choices
from each question, and present the results in a coherent format. By examining the raw data from
each Qualtrics report, I arrived at which tools and features were most and least mentioned among
respondents, creating tables that turned into charts which visualized the most relevant parts of
each question’s statistics. In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the content of these charts
and tie back to previous chapters on the state of digital literacy and Web 2.0 practices within
GSW currently.

First, demographic data revealed the number of participants who completed the voluntary
survey through Qualtrics (Figure 12—Survey Respondent Demographics). While 61 potential
respondents began the survey, only 42 completed it, a retention of 68.8%. Within the results
presented throughout chapters three and four, only the number of respondents who completed the
survey in full were counted in the quantitative data—otherwise, any statistics as ‘part of the total’
would cause inaccuracies since the total number of respondents to each question could vary. Of
the 42 total respondents, 32 (76%) were GSW students and 10 (24%) were GSW instructors. Of
the instructors who completed the survey, five (or half) had taught GSW for 1–2 years, while two
respondents had taught for less than a year, and two respondents had taught for 3–4 years. One
instructor respondent had taught for 5+ years at the time of this survey. Of the 32 students who
completed the survey, most (56.2%) were taking their first GSW course, while 40.6% were
taking their second GSW course. One student respondent had taken three GSW courses.

![Survey Respondent Demographics](image1.png)

**Figure 12: Survey Respondent Demographics**

Based on the demographic data presented in Figure 12, this survey accomplished one
goal: to record a number of voices from the target population—GSW at BGSU. This target
population at BGSU lent itself well to Web 2.0 research because the program emphasized the
values of connectedness and technology, and the students seemed to be tech-savvy. With its
university support, forthcoming 2017 merger with the English program, and number of graduate
students performing teacher research, both the local GSW program and FYC in other programs
could find this data enlightening. Bear in mind that the GSW program at BGSU enjoyed access to many digital resources: computer labs, laptop sections, Active Learning Classrooms, mobile devices, technology training and support, eportfolios, a weekly newsletter, even a programmatic Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube presence. These affordances of GSW certainly matched what Karper described as features of a “tech-heavy” institution: access to computer classrooms, access to hardware and software for research and teaching, consistent technology funding, the chance to explore new technologies, access to web server space, “not just course management software and email” (17). Both GSW and the BGSU English department are housed at a tech-heavy institution, which Karper placed at one end of a techno-continuum, a concept eliminating the “high tech or low tech” binary. Regarding this survey, 42 respondents represented a small, yet statistically significant number of the total GSW population (which is described in more detail in this study’s opening chapter).

Moving from the study’s populations to the research questions posed in chapter one, I pondered whether GSW’s identified digital practices were fostering “engaged citizenship,” specifically, teaching students how to compose with multiple modes for multiple audiences (“About BGSU—Mission”) (GSW homepage). Building upon the university mission, the College of Arts & Sciences website emphasized rhetorical knowledge; critical thinking, reading, and writing; processes; knowledge of conventions; composing in electronic environments; and values exploration (“General Studies Writing—BGSU Arts and Sciences”). It is important to note that literacy, in this case, did not only encompass the alphabetic paginated essay, but also highlighted electronic new media and multimodality (text, hypertext, audiovisual, kinesthetic, etc.). The New London Group defined these kinds of literacies as multiliteracies, which included “the increasing multiplicity and integration of significant modes of meaning-making, where the
textual is also related to the visual, the audio, the spatial, the behavioral, and so on. This is particularly important in the mass media, multimedia, and in an electronic hypermedia” (64). Multiliteracies, as the New London Group described, are crucial to understanding how technology and digital communication fit into social, workplace, and educational contexts, especially in any 21st Century context: “With a new worklife comes a new language. A good deal of this change is the result of new technologies, such as the iconographic, text, and screen-based modes of interacting with automated machinery; ‘user-friendly’ interfaces operate with more subtle levels of cultural embeddedness than interfaces based on abstract commands” (66). Because change in technology use occurs behind a screen, as the New London Group asserted, it is necessary for emerging research such as this project to examine the rhetorical context of its relevant communities, giving the target population its ethos to speak to my research questions.

The second research question for this project aimed to collect voices from the GSW population, and in this nominal data it became easier to visualize large-scale trends among responses. In their 2014 analysis of two teacher research studies, both of which also “used a pre and post survey to measure student perceptions of engagement, confidence, and interest” (122), Baepler and Reynolds also addressed Web 2.0 and what they termed “transmedia navigation.” This term referred to the individual ability to call upon transferable skills to utilize both familiar and unfamiliar new media. For example, what conventions of social media were common enough to recognize across platforms, and why were they significant? If one opened a new social media account on a new website, what aspects might already be familiar? Giving respondents a variety of tools from which to choose maximized the potential possibilities to identify these types of transmedia navigation, though only a few tools received any sort of majority attention through the context of GSW.
These quantitative results are of special interest to those FYC programs utilizing portfolio-based assessment, like the ones in the setting of Bourelle et al.’s research which compared online and face-to-face writing environments. One significant finding from the authors was that students in online environments gained “transmedia navigation” skills simply by being and doing. Simply dwelling and interacting online provided students with worthwhile takeaways. This was important to remember as I coded and interpreted data; I looked at not only the most preferred or most used tools, but even those least used or believed to be ineffective. From a grounded theoretical perspective, every piece of data was a valuable experience worth exploring.

What’s Out There, and What Works?

Searching for clues on where to search for digital artifacts of engaged citizenship, the first question asked of respondents was: “Think about your GSW course experiences. What types of digital communication have been used most to interact with peers and instructors? This includes both in-class and out-of-class means involving GSW and associated policies, activities, assignments, or goals. Please check all that apply.” While a list of more than twenty options was given to choose from (the full survey is available in the Appendix), only half of those resources were chosen three or more times in this question: Email (95.24%), Canvas course management system (CMS) (78.57%), Google Docs (33.33%), texting (30.95%), Facebook (23.81% of respondents), Prezi (21.43%), videos (21.43%), Twitter (16.67%), YouTube (16.67%), and phone calls (11.90%). Resources chosen by fewer than three respondents were the blogging platforms Tumblr, Wordpress, and Blogspot; Infographic builders; Dropbox file sharing system; Wikis; communicative platforms Skype and Facetime; and the social media site Instagram. This is not to say that the aforementioned tools were never used in the GSW community, just that they were
not used by a significant majority of the respondents to this particular survey. The results for question one are shown in Figure 13: Most-Used Digital Tools in GSW.

![Figure 13: Most-Used Digital Tools in GSW](image)

It was hardly surprising that Canvas CMS and University email were the most-selected tools, given that they were sponsored and facilitated by both GSW and the University. Speaking on the institutional oversight of course management software, the New London Group argued that “literacy pedagogy has traditionally meant teaching and learning to read and write in page-bound, official, standard forms of the national language. Literacy pedagogy, in other words, has been a carefully restricted project—limited to formalized, monolingual, monocultural, and rule-governed forms of language” (61). Despite how programs such as GSW hope that CMS will reach more students with multiple literacies, scholarship suggests that CMS could restrict the language of its participants and intrinsically privilege alphabetic literacy. If most GSW students and instructors were utilizing Canvas CMS, this could mean that some instructors were unwittingly privileging alphabetic texts despite the eportfolio initiative (although the situation is made more complex by institutional, state, and federal legislation).

Trademarks of course management systems are privacy, safety, university branding, file sharing, and, for Canvas, multimodal content. The two tools are easily accessible and instructors
receive plenty of support in their implementation—new GSW instructors and TAs are part of both a week-long orientation to campus and its online systems, along with a semester-long teacher training course built specifically for GSW. Furthermore, University email is the most secure way to privately communicate between student/instructor/administration, and files are backed up at least daily to campus servers. In the legal sense, the ability of the University to oversee and intercept emails is a level of protection to both student and instructor, but perhaps instructors and students were also endorsing these resources for safety and security. Plus, with University endorsement comes technical support and consultations from eager and tremendously helpful offices around the BGSU campus.

Despite how GSW employed advantages of Canvas CMS such as communal gathering spaces, digital file storage, and engaging lesson plans, Payne argued that teaching practices in CMS tended to “become homogenizing spatial practices that contribute to (re)inscriptions of normalized identities and ways of knowing privileged and maintained through dominant cultural modes of production and reception” (485). Payne added to the New London Group’s concerns about the privilege of alphabetic literacy by drawing attention to issues of identity, epistemology, and authority. These critiques are less limiting via Web 2.0, where the rhetorical context is more public, active, and multimodal-friendly. While lack of support and questionable security/privacy are indeed downfalls of Web 2.0 pedagogy, no institutional or federal policy forbids its integration with college curriculum (with notable exception. Chapter one contains a more extended discussion of FERPA, security, and Web 2.0). Suggesting how CMS could best fit into a productive and digitally-conscious writing program, then, Gillam and Wooden offered that CMS be interwoven with Web 2.0 pedagogy by having students build a network through a wiki tool, linking social media profiles, and/or directing classmates to their favorite cultural signifiers
as they get to know each other: “These introductory exercises elicit multimedia collages that give
students a variety of ways to present themselves to one another, and their mediated self-
definitions at least gesture toward the ecological complexity that comprises them, not only
allowing their peers access to numerous potentially significant personal details but helping them
feel invested in the community with which they’ve shared” (27). In lesson plans such as these,
GSW could continue using Canvas as a popular content delivery and management system while
actively engaging with rhetorical elements of Web 2.0 in the process—ideas for lesson plans that
follow Gillam and Wooden’s philosophy are included in the following chapters.

Knowing that Canvas and email were required of instructors to utilize, this study’s
research questions also indicated the desire to know the limitations of those systems, what other
resources were appearing in GSW, and what factors influenced selection and desire to use or
avoid Web 2.0. While question one of the survey asked respondents to identify the most
prevalent GSW resources, questions two and three prompted respondents to rank the three most
effective digital tools, and then reflect upon their reasons for rating those tools as effective. The
notion of “effective,” for this study, represented the ability of said tools to accomplish
programmatic and classroom achievement requirements and learning outcomes.

To that end, question two asked respondents, “Of the communication tools selected
above, please identify and rank the three most effective digital tools used in GSW.” Because the
question asked for only three most effective tools to be chosen, I coded this data by adding the
number of total times each tool was chosen. The same as question one—I included the choices
receiving three or more total selections in order to best focus in on a large amount of data. The
six most effective tools based on the number of times selected by respondents in their top three
tools were email (40.4%), Canvas (34.8%), Google Docs (8.9%), texting (7.8%), social
networking (4.4%), and YouTube (3.33%). That data is represented in Figure 14: Most Effective Digital Tools in GSW.

![Figure 14: Most Effective Digital Tools in GSW](image)

By narrowing the choices to just three tools of the ten most identified in question one, question two required respondents to focus more closely on what digital resources have worked to accomplish their goals. Again, email and Canvas dominated the poll, though one must consider that these were already prevalent in GSW teacher training (in a sense, like an independent variable). Accurately describing the GSW/CMS situation, Gillam and Wooden offered that “Many of us, if not most, are beholden to the large interdisciplinary course management systems that our schools require and/or support, like Blackboard 9.1, and while their numerous tools may give our courses variety and basic workability, they are still heavily weighted toward a content delivery and assessment model of pedagogy” (27). This model of delivery and assessment, one privileging the alphabetic and driven by product, had the potential to be thwarted by the eportfolio and by the “freedom” of CMS in GSW.

Of the remaining tools chosen as most effective in question two, besides Canvas and email, Google Docs and texting were ranked marginally more effective than social networking
and social video sharing. This data point was interesting to me given Dunn, Luke, and Nassar’s finding that, “when used alone Google Docs enabled no more than a digital version of the hardcopy portfolios our students had been developing for years” (71). Without more data on the *how* of Google Docs in GSW, it was still unclear if the tool was being used alone, as the authors described, or in tandem with other tools. This question’s data revealed what tools are currently being used to communicate among the GSW community, which told me where to search the Internet for digital artifacts that spoke to this study’s research objectives. Those artifacts will be presented in the following chapters, but first, the next set of quantitative survey questions dove deeper into user preferences and the working definition of “effective.”

Counting the Likes and Setting the Preferences

The following survey questions sought to collect more information on what “counted” as effective to the target population. Question three asked, “*What factors or situations led to your ranking of the digital tools? Please check all that apply.*” Data from question three was coded with the same sequence as question two: respondents identified which situations would lead to a positive review, out of a provided list of over seventeen potential reasons—with plenty of room for “other” and write-ins. The options included “ease of access,” “response time,” “graphics,” and “professional,” for examples of possible features (the whole survey is available in the Appendices).

Respondents selected a grand total of 556 preferences, broken down by category in Figure 15: Reasons for Choosing Effective Tools, below. For each preferred digital tool selected in the previous question, “ease of access” was the overwhelming choice for why respondents preferred that particular tool (14.3%). Also important was “response time” (10.2%), “file sharing” and “professional” (each with 9.5%). Respondents also valued “short messages”
(6.8%), “long messages” (6.1%), “more personal” (5.9%), “private” (5.7%), “instantaneous” (5.2%), “personalization” (4.6%), and “public” (4.6%). Least effective to respondents were “less personal” (3.2%), “social networking” (2.5%), and “anonymous” (1.6%).

Figure 15: Reasons for Choosing Effective Tools

Considering questions one through three together, nominal data suggested that a majority of survey respondents used Canvas and email most often, and attributed their effectiveness to ease of access, quick response time, and professional nature. Rhetorically, it seemed that respondents associated university systems with professionalism. It was yet unclear exactly how GSW pedagogy was using the tools surveyed in this chapter, except for questions asking respondents to reflect upon their reasons for “effective” tools. A quick response time and the ability to share files were both hallmarks of Google Docs and texting, which could explain the popularity of these tools among the population. Google Docs is a live editing platform, and
texting includes the potential for synchronous communication on mobile devices. Because texting was valued by 3.4% more respondents than social networking, and because “private” was a feature valued 1.1% more than public, the limitations of social media could perhaps weigh more heavily on GSW than fear of a potentially more personal connection among instructors’ and students’ mobile devices, which I noted as one feature to investigate in the following chapter on qualitative data. Survey questions four and six were designed to generate more quantitative data about preferences and dislikes.

Question four posed, “Regardless of what means have actually been used to communicate in your GSW experience, what types of digital communication do you think instructors and/or students SHOULD use for class correspondence? Please check all that apply.” Keeping the same coding system, the respondents identified six most-preferred tools which were selected more than three times out of a total 128 selections. Because a number of tools were selected three times, I found it pertinent to also include them in the visualization. Email (25.7%), Canvas (23.4%), and Google Docs (11.7%) were the top three most preferred tools for the GSW population (Figure 16: Tools Respondents Would Prefer to Use).
Figure 16: Tools Respondents Would Prefer to Use

Because these percentages aligned closely with the previous numbers on the most-used GSW tools, maybe these tools were more preferred simply because they were most available. I wondered what might happen if other tools and resources were made just as readily available and supported programmatically—Might they receive more preference? A small percentage of instructors and students were using social media pedagogy at the time of this survey, and their voices will be especially valuable in the forthcoming chapter. Aside from email, Canvas, and Google Docs, 7.0% of respondents preferred to text. At this point in the data coding, texting began to emerge as one of the rising preferences of many GSW respondents. Social networking, however, was selected by only nine total respondents, with Twitter (4.6%) twice as popular as Facebook (2.3%). Similarly, only 4.6% preferred to use Prezi. Infographics and videos (each with 3.1%) were only slightly more preferred than Dropbox, WordPress, Skype, Google Hangout, or phone calls (each with 2.3%). One trend that became apparent when analyzing the
data from question four was that survey respondents least preferred tools emphasizing multimodal content and conversation. Primarily, respondents preferred and voted effective tools that fostered the exchange and collaboration of alphabetic text: email, Canvas, and Google Docs, which Tulley and Blair stated was a trend “pervasive throughout the English curriculum, as many programs struggle with balancing not only how to integrate multimodal texts but also how to evaluate such texts” (441). Interestingly, instructors and students believed that GSW should be using primarily alphabetic tools. One motivation for instructors might be the institutional and programmatic endorsement of them, but chapter four explores what could be motivating GSW students to privilege the alphabetic as well.

Another point of interest in this study’s quantitative data was a slowly emerging propensity for social media in composition pedagogy. While scholarship has acknowledged the place of social media and multimedia in student’s personal lives, Tulley and Blair argued that “though our students can often use a variety of technological tools ranging from portable storage devices to social networking spaces such as Facebook, this does not mean the skills to effectively analyze digital texts from a rhetorical point of view are learned by association” (446). Based on the low numbers of respondents who valued bringing social media into their GSW coursework, the survey’s results also showed that a propensity for social media use did not correlate with higher interest for social media in course pedagogy. Tulley and Blair suggested that “This increase in access to and use of social networking software is perhaps one factor in the overall increase in digital knowledge students bring to the classroom, a type of literate practice that many educators continue to ignore” (464). While Tulley and Blair made an extremely important point, as I coded this data, it started to become clear to me that more factors influenced
respondent attitudes toward social media than just instructor beliefs. The following chapter further explores these growing variables.

Beginning to explain that cultural popularity did not correlate to pedagogical popularity, Hewett offered that students need preparation, mentoring, and even demonstrations to learn how to use educational media effectively (202). This concept could transfer to any use of educational media, but especially to digitally networked tools. Adding a technofeminist perspective to this conversation, Wajcman pointed beyond a digital divide and beyond a generational gap to address how larger-scale issues could be impacting pedagogy. While collecting nominal data was the first step in this study’s research methods, the following chapters speak to political, economic, and cultural perspectives from GSW instructors and students in ways that pick up threads from Hewett and Wajcman.

One cultural trend that aligned with survey results was texting. Almjeld and Blair named Facebook, MySpace, SecondLife, Twitter, and texting as newer communicative spaces (103), and this survey’s data backed up that claim. Because texting received more interest than social networking, I began to think about the differences between them that might account for this trend. A more personal connection was desired by over two percent more respondents, yet social media received less votes—could that be related to the pitfalls of social media as mentioned in chapter one? Or did GSW students and instructors simply desire a one-on-one personal connection rather than networked interaction? Addressing social media’s numerous possible interactions, the National Council of Teachers of English encouraged all engaged populations to concern themselves with ethical, lawful, private, and responsible treatment of students’ literate educations (“Professional Knowledge…”). It could hardly be argued that social media inevitably found its way both to and around the classroom, but the trepidation of school systems and
program policies could be holding back progressive networked pedagogy. It is critical for the personal information of all parties to be protected, both ethically and legally, and the possibilities for failure are numerous on social media, but might seem less threatening via texting. Through this research survey, voices from GSW as a representative population of networked first-year writing programs shed more light on how to make Web 2.0—and texting—work to accomplish their goals.

Availability and ease of use were the most impactful elements of digital tools preferred by the target population. As such, Canvas and university email were most prevalently used and most preferred. No other resources even came close to matching those percentages, which caused me to question the breadth of the impact of institutional and programmatic endorsement of particular tools and, subsequently, what tools may or may not be appearing in GSW classrooms. Were instructors and students wary, or maybe even intimidated, by the unknown terrain of Web 2.0? Tools were voted effective by a balance of personal, professional, file sharing, messaging, and semi-private attributes (according to Figure 15). These were all traits of networked new media, yet these tools were not yet drawing significant pedagogical concern either in scholarship or mainstream curriculum. Qualitative answers shed more light on these reflections in the following chapter, but the survey contained one more enlightening quantitative question important to technofeminist methodology.

In question six, respondents were asked, “In your opinion, what (if any) digital tools should instructors NOT use for class communication? Please list any that apply.” Based on the technofeminist and grounded theoretical perspectives established in the previous chapter, it was important for this research to explore counterarguments and qualms. Romberger noted that three of six essential methodological approaches to technofeminist research are to “(1) attempt to
reorient technology toward humanity through critical inquiry, education, and change; (2) describe the impact and relationship of technologies to each other; and (3) be aware of context and complexity—the ecology of the situation” (250). Without careful attention to counterarguments and opposition, critical inquiry and complexity as part of a technofeminist methodology are compromised. Similarly, grounded theory as methodology relies on conclusions coded organically from an abundance of data. Without a well-rounded pool of respondent attitudes including counterarguments, research could unfairly represent critical viewpoints. Plus, my own stance as a digi-scholar could have potentially skewed the representation of data by focusing only on the affordances of Web 2.0.

The data on least preferred digital tools was coded the same as all other quantitative questions, and was visualized based on tools receiving three or more votes of a total of 52 selections. The websites Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, when coded together as “social media,” added up to a combined 71.1% votes from respondents. Interestingly, both YikYak and texting received 11.5% of selections; while YikYak was not even on the radar for used or preferred tools in GSW courses, it was important enough to receive 11.5% of votes for least preferred. YikYak is an anonymous sharing app which allows its users to post and create topic threads within a five-mile geographic radius of each other. Since college environments could potentially work with this semi-private tool, I wondered what would make this tool least preferred for GSW, and noted this reflection as another to explore in the qualitative data. Texting, on the other hand, was most preferred by 7% of respondents, and least preferred by 11.5% of respondents. Figure 17: Tools Chosen as Least Preferred visualizes these results:
One interesting pattern from this data seemed to forecast that social media would face some criticism from the GSW population, which could be an opportunity to hear concerns which, to be honest, may never be “solved.” It is critical, however, for scholars to recognize current trends among students in their classrooms, and engage in conversation accordingly. Another interesting element of this data was that least preferred tools only received a total of 52 selections, while the most preferred tools received a total of 128 selections. This meant that respondents were more than twice as likely to reveal their preferences instead of their dislikes. Realizing this, one limitation of this study was the inability to follow-up with respondents on their answers—more probing about dislikes could have generated even more information.

Summary and Analysis

Each of the survey questions designed to generate quantitative data was coded with grounded theory and technofeminist methodologies in mind—tools were objectively tallied and calculated as percentages based on which received the majority of votes proportionate to each question. This chapter visualized and discussed statistically relevant results relative to the survey population and emerging trends in the data. I was able to identify that most GSW courses were run primarily on Canvas CMS and university email; respondents voted them most effective for
their ease of access and perceived professional nature. Again, quantitative data revealed that survey respondents have primarily used and would like to continue using resources based on alphabetic texts, a practice Gillam and Wooden confronted in their critique of CMS, which “still position the writer primarily as the isolated recipient of information, who contributes his or her thinking in discrete little bullets to the discussion forum or via various assessment instruments” (27). Fundamentally, there is nothing wrong with these practices. Pedagogically, though, these tools could not be reaching their full potential. Countering this habitual practice of relying on digital resources as file storage and messaging tools, Tulley and Blair endorsed “a call for writing teachers not merely to integrate technology for its own sake but rather to consider real-world assignment contexts in which issues of audience, purpose, development, organization, and style call for a range of digital rhetorical choices” (465). At both a programmatic level and a classroom level, GSW is making a bevy of rhetorical choices regarding use of digital resources, as numbers in this chapter show.

While texting and Google Docs could have the potential for more extensive applications in GSW, social networking sites such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook were only used occasionally. Shepherd also utilized survey as method, and found Facebook a particularly interesting site of mixed reviews:

> The primary implications of this survey seem to be that students do not see the activity that they do on Facebook as being related to activities in the composition classroom. However, there is a lot of evidence to suggest that there is, in fact, a connection. This leaves the door open for using Facebook as a tool to help teach students the connection and, therefore, bring an example of these skills into the classroom (92).
Even though use of Facebook in the composition classroom had clear connections to students’ everyday practices, it was critical for Shepherd to first make students aware of these connections in his pedagogy: Shepherd emphasized audience awareness and multimodal composing as rhetorical skills that many students picked up on quickly. Could GSW find a more widely rhetorical, educational perspective of social media with programmatic guidance? Could this result in more respondents preferring social media in their writing pedagogy? Dunn, Luke, and Nassar argued that a different conception of CMS was needed in order to fully and most effectively weave it into a writing course as they “had to re-conceptualize the platform to meet our needs and add the necessary value to increase stakeholder buy-in” (73); applying the same approach to social media, the New London Group asserted that “crucially, the teacher must help learners denaturalize and make strange again what they have learned and mastered” (86). Without bringing social media and other networked tools into the composition classroom, it was difficult to assess student attitudes and preferences for its potential. Only when the full rhetorical situation was unveiled could one adjust instruction and proceed toward programmatic goals.

In addition to identifying trending tools and preferences in the survey data, three sets of variables caught my attention while coding because they were influential, but not yet distinctly differentiated in nominal data: for one, would the GSW population prefer sending shorter or longer messages, on average? Platforms such as Twitter condense correspondence to 140 characters, which is a trademark steering its popularity, but also not leaving much room for reflecting or critical exploration. The numbers were too close to say that the population privileged one over the other, which might mean that the capability for a platform to offer both short and long messages was valued over the commercialization of one over the other. Another interesting variable was how the GSW population valued personal and professional in terms of
effectiveness. The survey did not offer or solicit a definition or example of either personal or professional, leaving the distinction up to individual respondents. Getting deeper into this distinction in the following chapter unveils why some tools were preferred over others, and how GSW might understand students’ rhetorical perspectives about “personal” and “professional” on Web 2.0.

The third set of variables by which I was also intrigued was “public vs. private,” with threads such as security, anonymity, and safety. Chapter one elaborated on the regulations of FERPA as well as University guidelines; While chapter four reveals how much weight these concerns carried with respondents, this chapter clearly showed that social networking and its semi-public/semi-private nature was a point of contention. The GSW program does talk about social media in Graduate Teaching Assistant training, and graduate students discuss its affordances and limitations in coursework, but each scenario lacks the perspective of GSW students directly. This survey included feedback from 32 GSW students in response to the kinds of digital tools which were already a large part of their lived reality. This research aimed to address Adams’ reminder that “as we continue to engage our students' new composition practices we must remind ourselves that while there is no doubt that the integration of technology into the 21st Century writing classroom is essential to promote student growth, the question we must ask is how will it best be integrated and to what extent?” (Adams “Conclusions”). By having the target population identify the tools and spaces being utilized already, this study’s quantitative data began to provide answers.

A potential limitation of this study’s scope could also be considered a significant advantage. One might say that “only” ten GSW instructors weighed in, which was admittedly a small fraction of the actual population of GSW instructors. This small response rate could be
attributed to the survey’s online nature; the link came in an email or Canvas message which was all too easy to ignore, trash, or bury in a busy inbox. Those instructors who were willing to devote 15–20 minutes to an online survey, including qualitative responses, clearly already had some level of digital commitment—but what about the opinions of instructors who were not as active online? While this was a limitation of the ability of the sample size to most accurately reflect the population, it could also work to reveal reasonable techno-goals for GSW based on the population’s current expertise. This would signal that readers could take the implications and apply them to any FYC program or course with a similar population. In this way, research will continue to move beyond the digital divide and beyond dichotomies of personal/professional and private/public in productive ways.

Conclusion: What’s the Status?

This research questioned to what extent Web 2.0 facilitated programmatic and institutional goals, helpfully condensed in the document entitled “The Relationship of GSW Learning Outcomes to the BGSU Bowling Green Perspectives (BGP) English Composition and Oral Communication Learning Outcomes” (part of the GSW website and available in the Appendices). This document connected GSW learning outcomes to University learning outcomes, and outlined the ideal composition and communicative outcomes of GSW. Reading the document with this study’s theoretical perspectives, important phrases and themes that jumped out to me included: “engagement in electronic research and composing,” “knowledge of a variety of academic genres and audiences,” “interaction with a variety of audiences,” and “use of strategies appropriate to the rhetorical situation.” These stated goals should, ideally, be directly applicable to any Web 2.0 used in GSW courses.
Directly applicable to these programmatic goals, this study’s quantitative data revealed that GSW instructors and students were indeed engaged in digital composing in many genres and environments, though primarily the alphabetic: Canvas CMS, email, Google Docs, and texting. In this research context, electronic and digital composition were not synonymous with multimodal composition. While Canvas CMS and Google Docs, in particular, were suitable for hosting multimodal content, respondents did not value multimodality in these tools, but valued access, file sharing, and professional nature. Though strategies for effective use seemed to vary according to the rhetorical situation, research suggested that the affordances of new media were less effective if users were unaware of their own transmedia navigation strategies. Certainly, the population was meeting GSW’s goal of engaged citizenship in digital environments, mostly on Canvas CMS, university email, and Google Docs, but perhaps social media was chosen as least effective because the GSW community has only recently begun to explore Web 2.0 programmatically.

Grounded theoretical coding forecasted conflicting attitudes toward social media and texting, along with the appearance of three influential variables in the perceived effectiveness of resources: length of messages, public/private, and professional/personal. Providing more detail on these trends from participant voices, chapter four presents the qualitative data collected by the Qualtrics survey, reported in interviews with the GSW Director, and archived by relevant digital phenomena. This analysis is grounded in the spirit of technofeminist research to examine educational tools in their varied rhetorical contexts and through the perspectives of their users/audience. Following chapter four, chapter five considers both the quantitative and qualitative data gathered, and discusses potential best practices, strategies, and lesson plan ideas for GSW and similar writing programs at other universities.
CHAPTER IV. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS: VOCALIZING “LIKES” AND “DOWNVOTES”

Further Contextualizing GSW Pedagogy

One of the primary goals of this project was to identify and represent some of the voices from particular threads of digital communication in the GSW program, especially as large-scale programmatic and cultural changes are currently taking place. In addition to curricular revisions, GSW is cultivating a stronger presence on digital media such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and University channels, aligning with Shepherd’s assertion that students naturally bring practices from their own digital media use into the composition classroom (88). Information on GSW’s online practices and preferences should better clarify which practices are transferring based on what preferences. Throughout the chapter, the terms “Web 2.0” “new media” and “digital media” are used somewhat interchangeably, as Horning and Kraemer described; defining new literacies must address “both reading and writing in the context of printed displays and various digital forms… ‘new literacies,’ then, is an umbrella category for the buzzword ‘literacies’ of the day, including: digital literacy, computer literacy, technological literacy, and more” (11). In addition, Horning and Kraemer aligned their definition of literacies “with that of Flower’s (1990) critical literacy, whereby students call on critical thinking skills to navigate, understand, transform, and apply information for their use” (13). Some examples of literacies investigated by this project included collaborative composing on Google Docs, exchanging emails, utilizing Canvas CMS, social networking, mobile composing, and texting.

This project’s survey and interview feedback offered critical insight which will form the basis of this project’s implications in chapter five. Chapter four presents most of the study’s qualitative data, taken verbatim from the online Qualtrics survey and from an email interview
with the current—new—Director of the GSW program. To understand where current GSW curriculum came from, I first asked the Director how the program built its training course for new Teaching Assistants. The course introduces incoming graduate students to a standardized version of GSW’s policies, including a sample syllabus and course schedule. According to the Director of GSW, who formally took over the position in Fall 2016:

We develop the curriculum (the assistant director, program assistants, and I) by first making sure that it covers all GSW needs to meet in terms of BGP, Ohio Transfer Module for FY Composition, and, as I was just stepping into the position, all that GSW had required previously. We then look for ways to build loosenings into the curriculum this year as/while we engage in curriculum revision but that also help the courses speak to the WPA Outcomes and also the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing. (Nickoson interview)

This statement from the GSW Director reminded me of important institutional and professional influences for the program, including the ability for students to transfer their credits to other colleges and universities, and meeting BGSU’s “Bowling Green Perspectives” (BGP). These perspectives, combined with the GSW learning outcomes, emphasized effective arguments, credible research, attention to a variety of audiences, and awareness of rhetorical situation (“The Relationship of GSW…”). As they developed curriculum, GSW administration also paid close attention to both the 2014 Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) “Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition” and the 2011 WPA “Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing.” As a professional, influential organization, the WPA “attempts to both represent and regularize writing programs’ priorities for first-year composition” (“Outcomes Statement”). Both of these documents state that digital and technological composing
is rapidly becoming the norm in first-year composition, leading to the need for these programs to develop new goals and techniques—for example, learning to communicate using the conventions of multiple modes. The WPA encouraged composition programs to consider how electronic environments and digital citizenship might have altered the populations of students taught, as well as necessitated the need for curricular revision.

Providing additional exigency, the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) stated in March 2013 that “patterns of exclusion have too often resulted from an uncritical adoption of digital technology” (1). To this end, the current GSW Director has focused on “deep curricular revisiting and revision” which might allow GSW instructors and students to better take advantage of digital resources and Web 2.0 (Nickoson interview). The CCCC’s newest Position Statement on online writing instruction focused on effective techniques. For example, the overarching principle was that “online writing instruction should be universally inclusive and accessible” (Position Statement). Another outcome was to use technology as a catalyst for learning rather than the ultimate goal of a writing course; to accomplish this goal, CCCCs stated that “Appropriate composition teaching/learning strategies should be developed” for online writing (Position Statement). CCCCs evoked a technofeminist stance by reiterating the focus on changing social relationships, instead of purely focusing on technology. Finally, the CCCC Position Statement encouraged administrators, teachers, and tutors to keep researching and practicing as their needs evolve. To best meet the goals and objectives of BGSU, BGP, WPA, and CCCC, the GSW program is in the midst of great change. While OWI is a body of literature and research all its own, the CCCC Position Statement on OWI drew attention to how online composing, assessment, and communication could change writing pedagogy even face-to-face.
While both the GSW program and its curriculum are rapidly developing, it is important to remember that both full-time GSW instructors and experienced graduate teaching assistants retain a certain amount of autonomy regarding their syllabi and activities. Using technology is a personal pedagogical choice—the Director’s words forecasted a variety of practices that informed the study’s data: “Instructors can and do bring their own methods of delivery to their section offerings. I do know that instructors’ approach to teaching academic writing, even within the frame established by our learning outcomes, for example, ranges significantly. Many instructors, for example, have digitally-rich assignments and teach academic writing very much as digitally-inclusive. Other instructors, much less so” (Nickoson interview). Thus, while coding and interpreting qualitative data, I kept an inclusive frame of mind, especially given this project’s reliance on grounded theory. Because not all GSW instructors endorsed heavy application of new media, it was important to include their voices as part of the whole data set—perhaps even more so than voices heavily endorsing new media. Grounded theory works on the values of open exploration and critical approach, with results or motivations not presupposed by the researcher but organically developed from exigency and from the study’s data. Because I was not working with any presuppositions about the results, this chapter includes a majority of verbatim qualitative data, including as many preferences, practices, and attitudes as possible. The qualitative data is presented with a reminder of any accompanying quantitative data from Qualtrics (as presented in chapter three).

Applications that “Should be” Used

The first qualitative question on the Qualtrics survey asked for respondents to “Please offer a brief (2–3 sentence) justification of why and/or how instructors should use [preferred] communication tools.” Based on the quantitative results presented in the previous chapter, tools
selected for the corresponding survey question were Email (25.7%), Canvas (23.4%), and Google Docs (11.7%). Other tools identified were texting (7%), Twitter (4.6%), infographics (3.1%), and videos (3.1%). Facebook, Dropbox, WordPress, Skype, Google Hangout, and phone calls each received 2.3% of the total votes. While it is certainly important to know which communicative tools are valued by the GSW population, this chapter begins by identifying what variables factored into effective and preferred digital media use for the GSW population.

Going forward, it was helpful to know the official policies in place for using instructional tools in the GSW program. BGSU email accounts are automatically distributed to the University population, and are required for any official correspondence to, from, and about the University, as stated on the Information Technology (IT) website: “Official email communications are intended only to meet the academic and administrative needs of the campus community” (BGSU Student Email Policy). Helpfully, the policy also stated that “Faculty will determine how electronic forms of communication (e.g., email) will be used in their classes, and will specify their requirements in the course syllabus” (BGSU Student Email Policy). Thus, any means of electronic communication—including University email—should be outlined on the course syllabus prior to use. Providing GSW-specific context, the current Director of GSW reported that,

Faculty are to make use of Canvas and University email for instructor/student communication. If using blogs and/or wikis, faculty are to use the BGSU-supported programs. Surveys: Qualtrics (via BGSU account). I don't know of any ‘prohibited’ pages, for example, as long as the communication falls under what is considered appropriate conduct for both faculty (as per BGSU Faculty Handbook) and also students (as per BGSU Student Handbook). (Nickoson interview)
It is required of instructors in GSW to use Canvas and University email regularly, and blogs/wikis through Canvas as desired. While Web 2.0 and social networking received comments from the survey population like “not allowed” and “FERPA violation,” this is actually not the case according to the GSW Director. Conduct on any and all websites, whether for instruction or class communication, should always be “appropriate” based on the BGSU Faculty and Student Handbooks. While neither handbook mentions social media specifically, BGSU Information Technology (IT) Services presented a BGSU Social Networking Media Policy on its website. The policy begins by stating that, “It has also become common to integrate classroom instruction and assignments with these technologies. BGSU recognizes the use of social media by its faculty, staff and students to communicate factual information regarding the University” (Social Networking Media Policy). This statement implies that IT supports and regulates social media use among faculty, staff, and students, which is why the policy was put into place. As long as a social media account does not attempt to represent an official office or program at the University, the account does not need to be approved by IT, which creates opportunities for instructors to create digital GSW course-specific accounts if desired.

The most popular reasons cited as to why Email and Canvas should be used in GSW classrooms were that, “In context of GSW Email and Canvas ‘should’ be used because they are default for BGSU and students should have most access to those systems. Many of those [Web 2.0] tools ‘could’ be used if used with specific pedagogical goals and theory behind their use.” This survey respondent valued CMS and Email because of their degree of accessibility—the University automatically provides students and faculty with email accounts and enrolls students in Canvas course shells. Although CMS is the default digital tool for GSW, the respondent also allowed room to explore other options as long as they are supported with theory and practice.
Another participant thought of access differently by stating that “Many students on campus use Twitter everyday [sic] so they would have easier access. Google hangout gives a chance for all students in the classroom to interact. Prezi’s are visually appealing.” instead of CMS providing the most convenient access by default, the response identified Twitter as a another space popular for BGSU on Web 2.0. Access, in this scenario, was availability on an already-used platform rather than the default use of university-sponsored CMS space. Quantitative data revealed that access was the overwhelming preference across digital tools (14.3%), though respondents did seem to define access subjectively.

“Convenience” was another theme that tied closely to “access” for the survey population, as one instructor exemplified: “I don't work on class materials just in the daytime so if students need help or answers when I am not in my office they need ways outside of class to get help. Email and CMS provide those and Google Docs and CMS provide meeting places that are convenient.” This instructor acknowledged that not all work is done between the hours of 8AM and 5PM, and especially in the hectic lives of college students on campus. This response showed a helpful concern for the rhetorical situation of GSW, but referred back to Email and CMS for the majority of communicative purposes regardless. However, the instructor noted Google Docs as a convenient meeting place, which reaffirmed the trend that effective digital tools were also the most convenient and accessible.

However, “convenient” did not always mean that both students and instructors could expect use of digital platforms to be easy or timely. For example, one participant wrote that “Email should be used so the teacher and students can communicate with each other at any time.” This person indicated that email was a resource to use “at any time,” which is actually discouraged by many GSW instructors’ syllabi due to the implied expectation that an instructor
check and respond to emails 24/7. Dealing with this issue, my own GSW course materials stated that,

If you email me something, I will email you back, ordinarily within 24 hours, to tell you that I have received your message. However, if you don’t receive my email reply, this means that I did not receive your message and that you should discuss the content of your email with me personally. Similarly, if you email me right before class, I probably will not be able to read your message until after class. Typically, I do not answer emails past 5:00PM.

Along with identifying boundaries for GSW students and aligning their expectations with that of a college environment, my email policy (and others like it) helped to define what it meant to use course materials professionally—I often told my own classes that they should call themselves writers, researchers, and young professionals rather than just simply students or undergraduates. Within the results of this study’s Qualtrics survey, professional discourse was another big theme. Table 18 represents how ten survey participants defined the use of “professional” resources such as BGSU email and the BGSU course management system (CMS) Canvas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Between first-year students and instructors, email and Canvas should be the primary communication tools because they are contained within BGSU, keep communication professional, and can be used for record keeping.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They should use these communication tools because they are more professional. Social media is not professional. Students and teacher should not be communicating with each other through sites like Facebook.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“These are just some ways to keep it professional.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All three forms of communication allows [sic] for students and teachers to remain professional, and unbiased. Also, if a message is left in these forms that it's obvious to the receiver that the topic at hand is serious and needs a responds in order to complete the assignment/task.”</td>
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| “I think that instructors should continue on using email for every type of communication out of the classroom, because that is the easiest and most effective way to communicate, also, it makes the relationship more professional, student to
teacher.”

- “Use email for individuals [sic] work such as assignment return, concerns about their class grades and performance. Canvas for overall general assignments and notifications.”

- “Personally I don’t think that instructors should really use anything outside of canvas and email. These were the tools that the school provided and that everyone has access to.”

- “Communication between the class and profs [sic] should remain professional. These tools are the way to keep the relationships controlled and in the right tone.”

- “Canvas should be used so the teacher can inform the students of upcoming assignments and due dates. Google Documents should be used so students can collaborate with other students or the teacher on various assignments.”

- “I use Canvas extensively—it’s a comprehensive, user-friendly, and continuously improving CMS, and I really like it. It appeals to me that students can do everything they need to do for our class in one place, rather than juggling various tools and logins. Students submit all drafts and assignments on Canvas, and we use it for peer reviews as well. Plus, as I’ve already mentioned, it has the benefit of being an official, secure platform, so I can be sure I am in compliance with FERPA. The recent integration with the BGSU OneDrive accounts for assignment submission makes it even better.”

Table 18: Explanations for how to Use “Professional” Resources

These statements implied that professional relationships and discourse should be controlled, serious in nature, and objective. These affordances were all met via university-sponsored resources, which automatically became the required and most-used channels.

Speaking to CMS, Nickoson contributed that “Canvas is helpful in that most students know how to use it, as do the vast majority of the faculty. Students know to expect Canvas as a meeting space for classes. Of course, it is limiting in terms of the platform's flexibility and ability for students or/instructors to personalize” (interview). With limited personalization options in Canvas, Nickoson alluded to the fact that the “shell” of Canvas remains the same in terms of navigation and function regardless of any aesthetic affordances. Despite this limitation, some survey responses from Table 1 indicated trepidation for using Web 2.0 to store records/data, foster an appropriate tone, or feel as safe as university-sponsored sites. Though the GSW population was active on social media, writing on social media was not taken as seriously as
emails or discussion boards. Drake acknowledged this discrepancy in larger-scale scholarship when he noticed that “notably absent from the literature is research on the relationship between social media, reading, writing, and scholarly communication… Technologies such as Facebook could become methods for disseminating scholarly information; they are already devices for scholarly communication” (247). Although the field of rhetoric and writing has more widely acknowledged social media in the past few years, some GSW instructors and students were aware of its potential for fulfilling program goals, yet hesitant to give it a try. In fact, a majority of respondents preferred not to merge their academic pursuits with their personal outlets. However, Table 19 displays how nine survey responses more positively considered the “outside” nature of Web 2.0:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I think it would be a laid back way to get an instantaneous response.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“These provide easy access and allow for better of [sic] communication.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Communication is quicker through these tools. Students and teachers have busy lives, therefore this is beneficial to both parties.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The technology most of us use today.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They are easy to get to and easy to use.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They should use these communication tools because it makes talking to your professors easier. Also it makes communication easier.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It will help us in the future since technology is growing for our generation and most of us students have a way to reach one of these social sites. Twitter would be a great one for the teacher to get because of the use of being able to update his students on what is going on in the next class or what is due.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They should use these tools to help students outside of class more with their writing projects.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Facebook and texting is more for communicating with my fellow teachers about assignments, grading, etc.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Explanations for Using Web 2.0 Resources

Unlike the more controlled nature associated with professional contact by previous responses, the positive terms “laid back,” “easy,” “quick,” and “social” stood out in these statements on why GSW instructors should use social media to communicate. Drake advocated for use of social media in reading and writing pedagogy because “social media hold tremendous
potential for reconnecting reading and writing, as both are necessary and integral to participation in the communities that have formed around social media” (247). Not only does social media play a powerful role in the personal lives of first-year composition students, scholars such as Drake have drawn attention to how classrooms could use social media to encourage scholarly literate practices as well.

However, social media was absent from most GSW experiences of the sample size, and only just emerging in field-wide teacher research, so its place in coursework received polarized attitudes through this project’s data. Advocating for the use of Twitter in GSW, one submission noted that, “I feel that it may be easier for students to be closer to the teacher and vice versa outside of class over Twitter, where questions can be asked and responded to on a faster bases [sic]. Not everyone checks CMS or their Email as frequently as Twitter.” This response lined up with the nominal data on ways in which digital tools were marked “effective,” response time (10.2%) and short messages (6.8%). Despite the polarizing attitudes collected about the use of Web 2.0 in GSW pedagogy, was there any way the two could coexist for the population? BGSU as an institution has many representative social media presences; perhaps some elements of a university-endorsed profile could impact a GSW course profile. Bringing together the best of both worlds, one GSW instructor shared effective strategies for combining digital resources:

I do believe that the majority of instructors use Canvas already, as well as email. Using YouTube/Prezi/Videos and the like are great ways to hold student's attention and get them interested in the materials they are learning. I used these for presentations in 1110, and it really helped the students with the essays they had to write, and it kept them interested. I used and currently use a Twitter system to communicate with students--I have them set up the notification system through their texting system, so that when I send
out a tweet with class reminders/cancellations, they automatically get the tweet as a text message on their phone. It's just a quicker response time than email, and students don't need to have an actual Twitter account to receive these notifications.

This GSW instructor acknowledged the popularity of Canvas and University email as institutionally required; however, they also named YouTube and Prezi as especially helpful in engaging students and keeping them invested. Another contribution corroborated with, “Why not? If we are to take multimodality serious [sic], then it would be important for both instructors and students to use every tool available, making use of the particular affordances of each specific tool.” Not only did multimodality seem to hold student’s attention and foster effective writing, social media assisted with class scheduling and notifications. Addressing one of the more prevalent qualms of employing social media, the GSW instructor above was sure to state that students did not need an actual Twitter account to read the benefits of the platform. In terms of access, then, all GSW students needed was an internet connection in order to use Twitter for their purposes. Describing the “social turn” which occurred at the turn of the Century, Harl proposed that access/literacy is a social process, which “calls for the need to understand relationships between writing and reading in all their contexts: not just cognitive, but also social, cultural, historical, and institutional” (44). Social media such as Twitter has encouraged scholars and pedagogues to rethink the definition of literacy, so much so that texting is becoming more popular in academic contexts.

One student respondent wrote that “Email and Canvas [are] most commonly used for interaction. Texting should be used as a mass text for when class is cancelled because personally I don't check my email at 8 a.m.” Convenience was a factor for this student, since use of professional resources such as Email and Canvas seemed restricted, whereas texting could be
accessed at any time based on an instantaneous notification to a personal device. As in the example of Twitter pedagogy above, Twitter users could even opt-in for particular Tweets to be sent straight to their mobile device—the same as a text message.

Providing her thoughts on using social networking for class-related activities, the GSW Director believed that, “as with any pedagogical tool or resource, social networking can be a boon or a bust, depending on the context, goals, and use for said program. Students must find the work they are asked to produce meaningful and appropriate/relevant to the work they are asked to engage for the course regardless of what it is” (Nickoson interview). This statement echoed the words of CCCC: technology should not be the only end goal of a writing course. Although prone to privacy and accessibility concerns, Nickoson noted that any pedagogical tool or resource could fail in the appropriate circumstances. The largest factor for her was that students find value in the work they do, regardless of modality. Adams suggested that one way to assist students in finding such value is guided reflection; ideally, the reflection would emphasize students’ composing process, audience, and rhetorical techniques instead of purely on content. Both Nickoson and Adams agreed that any tool, but especially multimodal tools, be used with thoughtful planning and pointed reflection. One of this project’s goals was to assess GSW perspectives on new media in order to best accomplish pedagogical and reflective goals. Based on qualitative data gathered from surveys and the interview, key questions which needed to be answered were how and why didn’t respondents find value in particular web-based tools.

Applications Less Endorsed

The next survey question provided insight on why survey respondents identified tools they believed should not be used for classroom activities or correspondence; the tools identified in the corresponding quantitative question were social media (71.1% of total votes), texting
(11.5%), and YikYak (11.5%) out of a total of 52 selections. The corresponding qualitative question asked of contributors, “If you identified any digital communication tools NOT to use, from the question above, please offer a brief (2–3 sentence) justification of why instructors should not use them.” I coded these 52 responses based on a few main themes that emerged: professional versus personal spaces, access, and popularity or prevalence of use. Most survey participants who did not support social media use cited a personal connection as their reason; Table 20 displays thirteen such explanations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• “Personal webpages shouldn't be used for school work.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “I don't want to intrude too much on my students' personal lives by infiltrating their social media spaces (even though I recognize that they may be more tuned in to those tools than official channels like BGSU email, I think the official spaces are more appropriate forums for class communication).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Facebook, texting, and Instagram are more geared towards friends. These ways of communicating would not be appropriate for teacher-student relationships that are supposed to be professional. Tumblr is not an academic site and not really used to communicate with others.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I believe that phone calling is the only tool I think mainly shouldn't be used because it seems a little too personal and would make me uncomfortable, whereas texting would be better because you could send out a mass text to your entire class and it's not as personal as talking on the phone.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I don't want my class all up in my life all the time. I want the information and course materials available when students need them but my business is my business.so [sic] I like to use public and anonymous things but not social media.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Texting/calling and social media shouldn't be used with first-year students because it's too personal. Perhaps in upper-level/graduate level courses the more personal tools could be used since there is a level of collegiality/professionalism that each party is aware of.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “These site [sic] are meant to show off your personal beliefs and feelings. Not to discuss matters about homework.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “I just feel that way of communication is to [sic] private or personal.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “They are really unprofessional and not appropriate for professor/student interactions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “People use certain cites [sic] for personal stuff, it could become unprofessional.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “They are too personal.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • “These are tools are too personal and informal. They are also not necessarily trustworthy in terms of connectivity. In the past, I've struggled to use FaceTime
or Google Hangout effectively with students.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>• “I would not use any other technologies besides email and canvas because some may cost money, and others are too personal of interactions.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 20:</strong> Explanations for not Using Web 2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rather than perceiving personal connections as affordances to learning, as was discussed by participants who valued social media in GSW coursework, these respondents believed that social media use was an inconvenience, or worse, an intrusion/invasion of privacy. For these participants, the line between personal and professional was bold, with social media defined as inappropriate, informal, untrustworthy, and uncomfortable. University-sponsored resources seemed to more clearly denote official, professional correspondence that should only be related to class activities and assignments with no attached feelings. One answer even added the concern of access: “In my opinion, I don't feel that is professional. Also what of a student doesn't have one of those social media networks then they couldn't get the help they need.” Similarly, another person noted that “No tool (digital or otherwise) should be used that all students do not have access to. Nor should tools be required that students do not feel comfortable using (e.g. Social networks because of potential invasion on privacy).” While I wholeheartedly agree that both students and instructors should feel comfortable with whatever pedagogy is employed throughout the semester, these two responses both noted dissonance with access to preferred or available resources. If a GSW student chose not to sign up for Facebook, for example, she would not be able to participate in a private Facebook group for the GSW course, but would be able to see any public group activity without interacting on the platform. Similarly without an account, one can search and view hashtags, public profiles, and trending topics on Twitter. Problematically, not enough instructors or students seemed aware of these possibilities, assuming that without an actual account, use of the media is impossible. Because BGSU is a
tech-savvy institution with a number of resources and offices available to students, access to machines and Internet (and, thus, GSW networked communication) is possible for students who feel comfortable using Canvas, email, and even social networking. Respondent qualms about incorporating social networking into GSW coursework, then, could be less about a matter of access and more about a matter of individual preference.

Two learners noted that quickly-shifting preferences regarding social networking platforms could negatively impact GSW pedagogy. One wrote that, “Not many people use most of those digital communication tools since teenagers only stick to a couple of them. Most of the new digital communication tools are brand new to me this year due to my instructors telling me we had to have them. It gets overwhelming to have this many.” Even though research such as Shepherd has argued that “students bring practices from social media into their learning and composing” (88), participants in this particular survey suggested that trying to incorporate too many social networks could be too overwhelming to be useful. Harl argued that via social media, “real-time interactions with author and audience are created, and the act of reading and writing narratives results in a socialized production of texts” (50), yet she did not acknowledge the potential for students and instructors to be overwhelmed or unfamiliar with socialized writing. If instructors cannot meet students “where they are” digitally, then Web 2.0 might risk being irrelevant and even a hindrance. Although Facebook was often cited as the most popular social network, one response noted that,

I used to use Facebook in undergrad for my GSW classes—I'd add everyone to a group and we would post questions/reminders for one another so we could work through the class together. I would not recommend using Facebook now, since the undergraduates
(freshman especially) seem to be using Facebook less than people did when I was a freshman.

Although Facebook proved useful for GSW course communication for this student in the past, they suggested moving away from Facebook due to lack of interest from current undergraduates at BGSU. When another survey question asked, “Is there anything else you would like me to know about your GSW digital communication experiences that was not covered in the questions above?” one helpful response mentioned that “Google hangouts may have a good potential due to the fact many people could work on the same document and communicate over a face time like application.” It seemed that, for this person, Google Docs could circumvent the problematic “personal versus professional” dichotomy expressed by survey participants while still being timely. In addition to offering the ability for invited persons to edit a document all at once, while tracking editors and edits, Google Hangouts can facilitate live video conferencing between machines. Unlike Facetime, which relies on a user’s personal Facebook account or personal mobile number, Google Hangouts connects via email addresses and Google accounts. Google had more “staying power” with the survey population as opposed to Facebook, which might apparently be “on its way out.”

Outside of the main themes I coded from the “which tools should not be used and why” survey question, FERPA continued to be an adverse factor for many, for example: “I do not think it is professionally ethical to use tools outside of the University privacy-right protected sites because of FERPA. I only used Skype when an alternative offered through the University was not available.” As presented in chapter one of this project, federal regulations do not prohibit use of Web 2.0 by students in a University context. Thus, ethical qualms might be more appropriately attributed to a digitally networked culture instead of with the tools themselves.
While FERPA offered clear guidelines for physical paper records, digital educational records are often more difficult to define, identify, and regulate. The respondent above, for example, seemed to feel trepidation using Skype video and chat service since the University did not offer separate software or options within CMS for video chat. It could be argued, though, that usernames and call logs from Skype are not educational records, especially when maintained by students themselves. A GSW instructor maintaining a Skype account for the GSW program as a whole, however, would mean a different conversation according to both FERPA and BGSU IT guidelines.

When considering online and distance GSW coursework, more instructors might be apprehensive about using Web 2.0 to facilitate online learning when the University does not endorse or explicitly provide these alternative options. According to Harl, “one important implication of the recent literature and theory suggests that we are all—as college administrators, textbook authors, librarians, and faculty—responsible for creating collaborative programs and curricula designed for teaching reading and writing skills” (54). The onus for multimodal composing and new media literacy is not only on GSW, then, but on BGSU and the campus community as well. How might new media pedagogy change if the university made a concerted effort to learn about and endorse regulated use of Web 2.0?

Another contributor believed that the blogging site WordPress could be a good option, but brought up a very valid point regarding FERPA guidelines: “Students in GSW started using Word Press [sic] blogs for portfolios last year and this was a violation under FERPA. Word Press mines data and captures students user names which BGSU will use for life as alumni. Word Press sells user names to other commercial interests.” While I confirmed that there was a FERPA violation in one GSW course in the past, more details could not be found on the situation. Not
surprisingly, scenarios such as this seem common throughout the community—one instructor hears about a fiasco with WordPress and FERPA violations, spreads the word, and then even more instructors avoid WordPress. However, a contributor for the national academic HASTAC community (Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory) argued that, in these situations, “When we want students to post directly to publicly accessible blogs, it is not certain that those student works ever actually become ‘educational records’ under the law because they are never ‘in our keeping’” (Mann 1). Because blogs are hosted on the public website WordPress, and maintained by students themselves instead of University representatives, the site itself does not actually violate FERPA, although this respondent revealed that individuals may post revealing information, and the site stores and tracks usernames. To counter these risks, Mann mentioned measures also explained in the official FERPA documents—aliases for online personas, written permission from students, and a rhetorical discussion in class about “what it means to write for the web” (3). It is important to note that these measures may not alleviate privacy concerns altogether, but it is good advice to use with Web 2.0 even outside of academia.

Assessing Comfort Levels with Web 2.0

The final qualitative question on this project’s Qualtrics digital survey asked the GSW sample about their comfort level with Web 2.0 specifically: “Think about the kinds of digital media mentioned in this survey. Are these tools you feel unfamiliar, familiar, comfortable, or uncomfortable with?” Additionally, participants were informed that, “I would very much appreciate a few sentences on your background and thoughts on incorporating digital media in GSW.” Of over 32 individual responses, only seven indicated trepidation. For example, one instructor wrote that:
I am a lover of tech but not of social media. There are many overlooked technologies available that can generate more productive explorations than those that provide 140 characters or less spaces to work. I do not like the invasive nature of many avenues and outlets of social media. Frankly I don't like to be marketed to or allow myself to be monitored for the financial gain of others who sell my information and information about my behaviors to corporations. For now I think that the risks outweigh the benefits when it comes to social media and I think it would be irresponsible of me to subject my students to extra data surveillance.

Speaking of Twitter, specifically, this instructor believed that 140 characters was not enough room for productive exploration, though other “overlooked technologies” were not mentioned by name. Similar to the question which asked about the potential downsides of Web 2.0, this instructor also cited a dislike for sharing any personal details with students, for ads and surveillance, and for privacy risks. It seemed that this particular instructor could avoid social media while still taking advantage of the affordances of other, more anonymous technology that did not require usernames or accounts. Similarly, another noted that, “I feel strongly that students' privacy should be protected from commercial interests. Academe should be a safe space for them.” This statement implied that digital media is unsafe due to privacy issues and corporate surveillance. While a large movement in recent composition pedagogy focused on the classroom as a “safe space,” I think it is more pressing to realize that the walls of the traditional classroom can no longer hold the entirety of class activities or applications. I would have liked to ask this instructor if they incorporated a lesson on how/why to write for the Web, as suggested by FERPA and other digital pedagogues, even as justification to their students for leaving Web 2.0 out of a course activities.
Another reason that some felt uncomfortable using Web 2.0 in the context of GSW was unfamiliarity with resources. For these respondents, personal inactivity on a particular platform usually meant that the resource had no application for GSW. Phrases that stood out while coding were:

- “Twitter and Instagram because I have neither and don't see the relevance in either app/site.”
- “I am open to viewing digital media. I think it should stay limited though. I feel there could be too many software's [sic] used and it could become too confusing.”
- “I am very comfortable with them. I don't really like the fact of incorporating digital media into GSW.”

These responses were not indicative of every person, but represent close to one-third of respondent attitudes based on the codes I developed. For one person, Twitter and Instagram were ruled out as potential resources due to the fact that they did not use them. Another answer expressed interest in viewing digital media, but not really interacting with it or creating it. For the third participant, while digital media were comfortable and familiar, that did not necessarily correlate with a desire to use it in class. Because Web 2.0 could be confusing, new, and different, the resources were unpopular with these particular respondents. While this is not conclusively a GSW population-wide trend, I must wonder if their answers would change if given a workshop on, for example, how to use Twitter in a GSW setting, or how to optimize digital media pedagogy with videos and images. Horning and Kraemer restated a valuable takeaway relevant to the feelings of both comfort and dissonance expressed by some of this survey’s participants:

“Numerous studies show that students entering college spend a significant amount of time interacting with technology. Because of this constant use, young people have a great amount of
confidence in their computer literacy” (14). However, confidence did not automatically mean that students were competent in information literacy and with scholarly pursuits. In other words, although students feel comfortable navigating the web and finding relevant information (a big first step for those in GSW), instruction is needed on evaluating, critically reading, choosing, and synthesizing sources. Just because a student has multiple social media accounts, this does not translate to rhetorical skills in information literacy. “Despite their constant use of computers and mobile devices of various kinds, students are not as adept at finding, reading, and using information as they could be and should be” (Horning and Kraemer 15). One of GSW’s own learning outcomes is to “Engage in the electronic research and composing processes, including locating, evaluating, disseminating, using and acknowledging research, both textual and visual, from popular and scholarly electronic databases” (“GSW Learning Outcomes”). This project’s results suggested that a divide between instructors who were/weren’t willing to experiment with digital pedagogy could be limiting the full extent of this particular learning outcome. While the BGSU electronic databases, Google Scholar, and other credible research sites were actively used in most all GSW courses, use of other digital pedagogy seemed directly related and widely varied as per the experiences and attitudes of any given instructor.

For at least seven survey respondents who were familiar and comfortable with digital resources such as social networking, file sharing, and video hosting sites, their comfort level actually did not correlate with using the resources in GSW. Almjeld and Blair alluded to this by stating that “it is nearly impossible to avoid being open to at least some degree when using new media” (107). This openness seemed to create tension, as demonstrated in Table 21:

<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Other [resources], I use for personal purposes, but not in my teaching (Facebook, Blogspot, Skype, etc.).”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“My background and thoughts on incorporating digital media in GSW includes discussions of protection of educational records through FERPA, providing room for</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
students to decide on which tools to use in a GSW class, and allow students to decide against using tools in a GSW class.”

- “I am very used to digital media, but if I use to [sic] much it gets very overwhelming for me. But it does not mean that I am not familiar with all of it after my first semester of college.”

- “Familiar with them all just think some are not appropriate for a GSW setting.”

- “I am very comfortable with most, if not all of the digital media mentioned. I don't feel that digital media is the most important thing in GSW. As long as I can connect with my prof. to turn things in and receive feedback, I don't think we need anything else.”

- “Most of the tools were very familiar and comfortable to me except very few. I have a majority of the popular social medias, and can very well navigate them, but would feel uncomfortable using them in a professional, educational setting.”

- “Most of the tools mentioned I am familiar with, enough to name their function at least. Several of the tools I am comfortable using, but lately I've tried to minimize digital interaction, especially social media, for personal reasons.”

| Table 21: Familiar yet Uncomfortable with Digital Resources |

Some instructors used Web 2.0 for personal ventures yet did not incorporate it in their GSW classrooms, which is understandable due to the potential drawbacks already discussed. I would like to draw attention, however, to those who felt trepidation, yet still experimented pedagogically. One GSW instructor purposefully discussed FERPA with their class, allowed students to decide on digital tools to use, and also gave the opportunity for students to “opt out” of using certain resources (hopefully without penalty to their participation points). Perhaps this strategy could work for instructors who are hesitant to mandate use of Web 2.0, yet see benefit in the possible affordances. Another student participant reiterated that the focus of GSW should not be solely digital media, but the learning outcomes of the course and program—in other words, technology should be the catalyst for learning, rather than the learning objective itself.

About twenty survey participants—roughly half of the total—reported that they were familiar and comfortable with the tools mentioned throughout the survey, which supported Vie’s statistics: “respondents overwhelmingly used three particular technologies: YouTube (80.8%), Facebook (65.9%), and Twitter (60.%)” (36). In addition to naming these resources in their
survey responses, some even offered suggestions and opinions in their answer to the prompt, “I would very much appreciate a few sentences on your background and thoughts on incorporating digital media in GSW.” The most helpful and detailed responses are collected in Table 22:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I consider myself comfortable using a large range of digital media. I have taught with and about digital technology in the classroom, and it is one of my primary research interests.”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I believe that incorporating Social Media in education in general is a great idea. In regards to GSW alone I have used Infographic sites to great effectiveness. I found that CMS, and Email to be highly effective in instantaneous communication outside of the classroom. I found Google applications like Document and Hangout to be useful in group projects and in revising papers.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am familiar and comfortable with Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google Documents, email, and CMS (Canvas). I think incorporating Google Documents, email, and CMS (Canvas) are good things to incorporate into GSW. Google Documents would be especially helpful so students can easily collaborate with others on various assignments.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“As a doctorate student whose research interests and pedagogy include digital rhetoric, multimodal writing, writing with and through new media, etc., I am quite comfortable with using digital media (whether it was for GSW or other courses). My courses have always incorporated digital technologies, ranging from Facebook, to blogs, to Youtube, etc.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I am very familiar with everything, Media is a big part of our lives now and I am very comfortable with it, I have no problem using any type of media during or for class.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Digital media in GSW is very useful because we need to be connected to the internet and the web in order to share and receive files pertaining to class.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I'm very comfortable with the tools mentioned, as I have used many of them when I was a TA for GSW, and during my time as an instructor for GSW. I am all for incorporating digital media in GSW because I think students can really learn a lot from it, and it will keep their attention.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Being a younger teacher, I'm comfortable with almost all of these tools, though I don't have experience with Yik Yak or Prezi. I feel confident in my ability to learn these if necessary, though. In general, I tend to use Canvas and e-mail to communicate with my students only.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I have been using digital tools since they were introduced in the early 1980s. I feel very comfortable with them in their many incarnations.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 22: Respondents Comfortable with Digital Media

The responses in Table 22 alluded to a more laid-back style of working with technology, of “working with what you have.” From collaborating on assignments, to revising papers, to keeping students' attention, even to scholarly ventures, these participants found success using
digital media in their academic and personal lives. Common factors and variables that seemed to influence these positive attitudes toward digital media were a greater length of time using digital media, students’ willing attitudes, and a personal investment in technology from the instructor. As discussed at the conclusion of the previous chapter, these responses might have indicated technological bias on the part of survey respondents—those who advocated for using digital media would be more likely to complete the survey. Regardless, qualitative data presented in this chapter was critical to this project’s goals. Conceptualizing the quantitative and qualitative data as a starting point, GSW could begin to assess and move forward with new media pedagogy as a program, rather than by the purview of individual instructors.

Conclusion: Where do We Go from Here?

While the total number of participants in this survey totaled 42, a significant number for this project’s scope, the GSW program employs 88 instructors and teaches hundreds of BGSU students. In her interview, GSW Director Nickoson expressed a desire to hear from more instructors in the future in order to:

More fully capture the many responses and approaches used by a faculty of 88 instructors, each of whom brings unique goals, approach, and literacies with them to instruction. My responses are to represent the Program, then, but so many of our instructors do wonderfully innovative 2.0 activities and projects, including all sorts of social media uses. (interview)

Although this project’s survey and interview gleaned insightful qualitative data, it was not exhaustive or indicative of program-wide trends. However, through the survey, more digital practices and preferences were made visible. Backing this project’s technofeminist lens, some
participants identified with Wajcman’s suggestion that each technology be thought of as open and constantly changing based on the rhetorical situation:

> With this in mind, we will be less inclined to identify technology itself as the source of positive or negative change, and will concentrate instead upon the changing social relationships within which technologies are embedded and how technologies may facilitate or constrain those relationships. (Wajcman 108)

Social relationships have changed as a result of new media’s rise in popularity, and the openness associated with new media seemed to occupy a central tension in this project’s data (as cited by Almjeld and Blair). Exploring counterarguments and critiques was one way in which this project’s scope enacted a technofeminist agenda. Similarly, because this project situated digital research in educational, personal, and social contexts, it conceptualized the technofeminist impact of Web 2.0. Through this investigation, I ultimately empowered users with rhetorical awareness and agency in Web 2.0 spaces.

As part of a technofeminist stance, I realized that new media itself was not the cause of hesitant or adverse attitudes portrayed through this project’s data; rather, privacy, surveillance, and the personal nature of such technology could be hindering its adaptation in GSW coursework. With the attitudes and preferences presented in this chapter, the concluding chapter discusses how this information may translate into new directions for the GSW program. Horning and Kraemer restated this project’s exigency: “Writing in an academic context now includes traditional research reports and papers and a myriad of other kinds of work, both print and digital” (11). While this fact is not surprising to instructors or students in GSW, its implications are of great importance to GSW’s programmatic development. According to one instructor’s survey response, “In the GSW classroom, I do think incorporating digital media is important, but
I have no ideas on how to do that effectively.” In order to ease such confusion and begin providing ideas and guidance, chapter five combines the themes of new media, online pedagogy, and how the University population could benefit from more standardized use of new media in GSW coursework and training.
CHAPTER V. IMPLICATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR NETWORKING GSW AND FIRST-YEAR WRITING PEDAGOGY

Project Overview: Refreshing the Page

“In the GSW classroom, I do think incorporating digital media is important, but I have no ideas on how to do that effectively.” This survey respondent’s sentiment was far from alone, as the previous chapter revealed. While revising GSW curriculum is understandably a daunting task for many reasons, the affordances far outweigh the challenges as the “social turn” in composition studies turns into the “social century.” Many scholars cited throughout this project agreed that, “Widespread access to technology has fundamentally changed the way users, particularly younger users, read. Some scholars have argued that digital texts threaten literacy. A more convincing argument, it seems, is that technology has changed reading, in some ways for the better” (Drake 235). Taking a technofeminist, grounded theoretical approach, this project assessed both hesitant and passionate attitudes toward new media and first-year composition pedagogy.

General Studies Writing (GSW) at Bowling Green State University served as a sample population indicative of many technologically-rich programs across the country. Though interest is clearly present throughout the program, creating innovative new media pedagogy is made more difficult without first understanding the needs and preferences of the program in question; this project’s research questions and theoretical lenses enabled rich analysis of new media in GSW. The first research question asked how students and instructors in the GSW program at BGSU were currently interacting online regarding the course, and how these practices enacted institutional and pedagogical goals. Bear in mind that the GSW program at BGSU enjoyed access to many digital resources; computer labs, laptop sections, Active Learning Classrooms,
mobile devices, technology training and support, eportfolios, a weekly newsletter, even a programmatic Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube presence. These affordances of GSW certainly matched what Karper described as features of a “tech-heavy” institution: access to computer classrooms, access to hardware and software for research and teaching, consistent technology funding, the chance to explore new technologies, access to web server space, “not just course management software and email” (17). This research question enabled the collection of phenomenological and quantitative data on new media.

The second research question obtained qualitative preferences about Web 2.0 from the target population. I wondered how course-related instruction and communication in the GSW program at BGSU might be occurring in similar trajectories to the “hypertext mind,” or in ways that addressed communicative values of digitally inclined populations. Throughout the project, the terms “Web 2.0” “new media” and “digital media” were used somewhat interchangeably, as Horning and Kraemer described; defining new literacies must address “both reading and writing in the context of printed displays and various digital forms… ‘new literacies,’ then, is an umbrella category for the buzzword ‘literacies’ of the day, including: digital literacy, computer literacy, technological literacy, and more” (11). In addition, Horning and Kraemer aligned their definition of literacies “with that of Flower’s (1990) critical literacy, whereby students call on critical thinking skills to navigate, understand, transform, and apply information for their use” (13). Some examples of literacies investigated by this project included Google Docs, emails, Canvas CMS, social networking, mobile composing, and texting.

Accompanying data gathering and coding were the theoretical frameworks of technofeminism, grounded theory, and phenomenology. Beyond simply investigating a theoretical digital divide, or advocating technology for the sake of technology, my teacher
research was technofeminist-based curiosity about which foundational attitudes would emerge alongside new media. Referencing a foundational technofeminist concern, I noticed that students communicating online in GSW were excluded from their most popular technological domains; instead, they utilized webbed networks in which they had no choice implementing or building. The institutional context of CMS and university email, while convenient, seemed like a hardship to those students who did not often log on despite syllabus policies to the contrary.

Technofeminist work, then, must seek to investigate popular sites of electronic composition (whether already used in the classroom or not) in order to empower users with rhetorical awareness and agency in those spaces. Because reading and writing are moving toward ever-increasing electronic platforms, teaching and composing preferences look drastically different than many educators would expect, leading Drake to note that, “further research is necessary to understand whether those preferences might be cultural, generational, or mitigated by improvements in screen quality and portability of electronic devices” (236). To best understand GSW new media preferences, and to foster their most effective use, it is critical for the program to understand what is currently happening online, how the program is supporting or limiting webbed pedagogy, and how its population prefers to bring in new media—or not! Thus, this project was motivated by a technofeminist agenda, and analyzed the voices of GSW in tandem with current theory and practice.

As part of the GSW community for four years, and as a rhetorician for twice more, My own stance was both a benefit and limitation to this project; my original interest stemmed from my own GSW experiences, and was inspired by informal conversations with many instructors and students regarding innovative pedagogy. While drawing on my own new media passion was helpful to conceptualize and complete the project, grounded theory was a methodology enabling
open exploration and critical approach, so that I drew conclusions from the project’s data alone. Although I had an educated perspective going into this research, I practiced grounded theory while coding and interpreting data so that it best represented GSW without my own impressions steering the write-ups. Combining grounded theory and technofeminism (with published scholarship) meant that I was concerned with representation of all research participants and their range of responses.

Similarly, phenomenology as methodology allowed me to address the current state of new media use in GSW based on evidence I found online. My own vested interest provided exigency for this research, yet phenomenology allowed me to show what GSW new media practices look like in cyberspace. For example, one instructor’s GSW 1120 Twitter feed, with 90 followers, revealed how Twitter could be a platform for reaching out to students regarding office hours, assignments, and due date reminders (Figure 23: GSW 1120 Twitter Feed). I noted that rhetoric on this Twitter feed was informal, including both the hashtag #werkit and an emoji. I also observed how the official GSW Twitter account interacted with current faculty developing new media pedagogy (Figure 24: GSW Programmatic Twitter Feed). The conversation in Figure 24 was friendly and encouraging, which facilitated sharing in prewriting and drafting stages. The GSW Twitter feed often cited its faculty, pedagogy, and special presentations, which were practices I deemed appropriate to a programmatic new media presence.
Figure 23: GSW 1120 Twitter Feed

Figure 24: GSW Programmatic Twitter Feed
Figures 23 and 24 illustrate phenomena from the GSW community that spoke to my research questions with evidence from practices already in place. Because effective digital hermeneutic phenomenological research should study occurrences from online spaces, it was important to use this kind of evidence as a starting point—Instead of just recording the GSW population talking about digital interactions, or only coding survey and interview responses, my phenomenological approach recorded GSW administration, instructors, and students actually interacting. As another example, I went to GSW’s YouTube channel and found the four videos with the most views (Figure 25: GSW YouTube Channel). These were “Determining the Credibility of Wikipedia,” “Using Wikipedia to Initiate Presearch,” “Presearch with CQ Researcher,” and “How to Create an ePortfolio in Canvas for Students.” Not only were these resources digitally based and accessible without a YouTube account, they were digital resources about digital resources, which restated the recursive potential of Web 2.0 to explicitly support GSW learning outcomes, BGSU missions, and the overall goals of first-year composition.

Because hundreds of students, and nearly every GSW instructor, viewed and will view these videos, YouTube was an important site to investigate. A technofeminist perspective demanded answers on why and how GSW would like to use YouTube, which was an exigent question given the program’s recent changes to its pedagogy. The channel is a digital
phenomenon which, according to the GSW Director, will receive even more attention as the program undergoes large-scale changes in the near future. As part of the GSW Director’s interview, I asked, “How did the GSW YouTube channel come about? Are there any plans for its continued development?” According to Dr. Lee Nickoson, one particular GSW lecturer received a Teaching Improvement Grant for Summer 2015, and “elected to build a library of YouTube videos as supplemental resources for instructors and students to use in their classes. Yes, we have plans to expand our YouTube presence in many ways: student and instructor video contributions as well as a few administrative ‘hello/welcome’ videos. In progress now!” (interview). With one Teaching Improvement Grant, the GSW lecturer was able to build a YouTube presence that I deemed crucial to the program given the number of views on each video (and rising!). Nickoson revealed that the account will be maintained and expanded in a number of ways; perhaps the channel could include teaching demonstrations, resources, Q&A, and/or introductory information about the GSW program. One January 2017 YouTube upload for GSW was that the Assistant Director, Kelly Moreland, explained the many Spring 2017 opportunities for GSW student awards and scholarships. Another digital phenomenon which influenced this research was a recent development by GSW administration—a weekly newsletter called paideia sent to the GSW list serv beginning in August 2016 through an campus email. The newsletter was so named for its “conversations about, examples of, and tools for teaching writing that may be useful to the program community” (paideia Issue 1). The culture shared by paideia is one closely connected to the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing presented by the Council of Writing Program Administrators, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the National Writing Project. Figure 26: GSW paideia Newsletter, contains part of the first issue, which explained the newsletter’s goals and objectives.
Based on my reading of this issue, *paideia* is a technofeminist practice utilizing the already-mandated email system to circulate vibrant resources, new practices, and new media throughout GSW. This practice transforms the usually-dull University email account into a space welcoming to new practices, instructor voices, and helpful cyber resources. In addition to moving more practices online and connecting to a new media presence, GSW is using email and Canvas to mobilize change and share excitement. Digitally-savvy or not, every GSW instructor must check their email, which is where *paideia* takes advantage of the opportunity to reach its
widest audience and empower them with tools to challenge existing pedagogy and move outside their comfort zones.

In this way, GSW creates gains for its own technological literacy while still mediated by inequitable, and mandatory, social and educational frameworks such as Canvas and email. Because the newsletter allows the GSW population to share multimodal and communal resources, it is a great starting point when conceptualizing additional new media pedagogy. Existing digital phenomena such as the *paideia* newsletter, Youtube, and Twitter feeds demonstrated that GSW has already taken steps to utilize new media in ways that meet its objectives. This study’s phenomenological findings showed that a propensity for new media certainly existed in the program, with the potential to move through other tools via networked multimodality. The following section summarizes these findings, which encompass 42 complete surveys totaling a retention of 68.8%. Then, the chapter provides recommendations both for pedagogy and for future research.

Findings: to Web 2.0 or not to Web 2.0?

Through this research survey and interview, a sample of voices from GSW represented a nationwide trend of networked first-year writing programs. One part of the research trajectory asked whether GSW’s identified digital practices were fostering “engaged citizenship,” specifically, teaching students how to compose with multiple modes for multiple audiences (“About BGSU—Mission”) (GSW homepage). Not only was GSW pedagogy developed using current theory and practice, the curriculum also spoke to the statements and guidelines of many professional organizations—Bowling Green Perspectives (BGP), Ohio Transfer Module, Information Technology Services policies (ITS), BGSU Handbooks, Writing Program Administrators (WPA), the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC),
and the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). On the University level, Drake suggested that “The cognitive complexity required by research-based writing assignments may require the support of content-based instructors, writing instructors, and librarians working collaboratively toward students’ intellectual growth and development” (227). The implications found via this analysis, then, are not only applicable to first-year composition but also applicable to WPA, Writing Centers, communications, professional writing, and education.

The first research question asked how students and instructors in the GSW program at BGSU were currently interacting online regarding the course, and if/how new media worked to accomplish their goals. While a list of more than twenty options was given from which to choose (the full survey is available in the Appendix), the tools identified as most used were Email (95.24%), Canvas course management system (CMS) (78.57%), Google Docs (33.33%), texting (30.95%), Facebook (23.81% of respondents), Prezi (21.43%), videos (21.43%), Twitter (16.67%), YouTube (16.67%), and phone calls (11.90%). The overwhelming majority of course communication happened via Email and CMS, through which it is possible to deliver a traditional alphabetic curriculum and have no integration of digital multimodal media. Primarily, respondents preferred and voted effective tools that fostered the exchange and collaboration of alphabetic text: email, Canvas, and Google Docs, which Tulley and Blair stated was a trend “pervasive throughout the English curriculum, as many programs struggle with balancing not only how to integrate multimodal texts but also how to evaluate such texts” (441). While eportfolio submissions were an exciting step toward more web-centralized GSW pedagogy, the process was still faster and most convenient with primarily alphabetic texts. However, recent scholarship argued that “Reading and writing in the first year college classroom has the potential for much more participation and agency than its print-bound counterpart” (Harl 51). It is required
of instructors in GSW to use Canvas and University email regularly, with Canvas blogs and wikis optional. About half of participant statements implied that professional relationships and discourse on these tools should be controlled, serious in nature, and objective. These affordances were all met via university-sponsored resources, which automatically became the required and most-used channels.

However, Gillam and Wooden suggested that CMS be interwoven with Web 2.0 pedagogy by having students build a network through a wiki, linking social media profiles, and directing classmates to their favorite cultural signifiers as they get to know each other. Harl agreed with a multimodal approach: “Using hypertext on the Web creates more integrated active reading and writing practices, increasing students’ metacognition. Electronic forums provide more agency for readers to write on blog walls or in comment forums. Conversely, writers are constantly being transformed as they read, with multiple ‘windows’ influencing their composing process” (49). Surprisingly, some GSW instructors and students remained unaware of social media’s potential for scholarly ventures. For other participants, the line between personal and professional was just too bold, with social media defined as inappropriate, informal, untrustworthy, and uncomfortable. Based on the counterarguments explored in the qualitative survey data, a significant point of interest throughout this study was a slow, controversial exploration of social media in composition pedagogy. In fact, the websites Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, when coded together as “social media,” added up to a combined 71.1% of negative votes from survey respondents. Though the GSW population was active on social media, writing on social media was not often taken as seriously as emails or discussion boards. It could hardly be argued that social media inevitably found its way both to and around the GSW classroom, but the trepidation of instructors and students held back progression of networked pedagogy.
The final research question aimed to identify tangible preferences about Web 2.0 from the voices of the target population. Nominal data revealed that Email (25.7%), Canvas (23.4%), and Google Docs (11.7%) were the top three most preferred tools for the GSW population, but suggested that intertwining Web 2.0 could further enhance their effectiveness. The six most effective tools based on the number of times selected by respondents in their top three tools were email (40.4%), Canvas (34.8%), Google Docs (8.9%), texting (7.8%), social networking (4.4%), and YouTube (3.33%). Again, email and Canvas dominated the poll, though one must consider that these were already prevalent in GSW teacher training (in a sense, like an independent variable).

For each preferred digital tool selected in the previous question, “ease of access” was the overwhelming choice for why respondents preferred that particular tool (14.3%). Also important was “response time” (10.2%), “file sharing” and “professional” (each with 9.5%). Considering questions one through three together, the success of any Web 2.0 tool depended on its ease of access, quick response time, and professional nature. These findings were verified by Drake: “Speed, immediate access, and self-service are the primary affordances of technology discussed relative to information seeking,” however, “technological advances have made it easier for researchers to prioritize time over the quality of information” (225). Drake drew attention to the privilege of instant gratification to which digi-pedagogues have grown accustomed, and Mirra cautioned that technology is actually only as strong as the educator employing it; in other words, “devices do not magically transform learning—strong pedagogy does that” (“Exploring Connected Learning”). New media did not garner many votes for most preferred technology, yet most respondents were familiar and comfortable using them in their daily lives.
Despite the number of participants unwilling or uncomfortable bringing social media into their GSW classrooms, social media pedagogy and Web 2.0 still played an important role in current practices. About twenty survey participants—roughly half of the total—reported that they were familiar and comfortable with the tools mentioned throughout the survey. Common factors and variables that seemed to influence these positive attitudes toward digital media were a greater length of time using digital media, students’ willing attitudes, and a personal investment in technology from the instructor. The stronger these factors, the more likely it was that new media would succeed in a given classroom. If a participant did not meet any of those variables, then they usually had a definite opinion adopting new media in GSW. Despite being small in number, even a handful of motivated instructors could pave the way for effective new media pedagogy in the program.

While counterarguments to new media pedagogy were tough considerations (screen addiction, physical access, and necessary experience) most scholarship in computers and writing, first-year writing, and digital humanities would agree that “many of the positive influences of technology on information seeking are numerous, well-documented, and, for the most part, self-evident” (Drake 225). Recently, however, the focus has shifted toward the ability of programs, instructors, and students to keep up with rapid technological changes and quickly-expired syllabi; “even as the push to get more technology into classrooms continues, teachers are becoming more wary of its value and more hesitant to incorporate it into their teaching” (Mirra). This study’s data suggested that could change with more programmatic support for networked multimodal composing. Ultimately, Mirra advocated for teacher training to become more connected in order to “broadcast” the importance of digital literacy. This goal was seconded by DeVoss et al., “As our field changes and those who populate it do as well, we must consider
ecologies, materialities, pedagogies, and the rhetoricities of various texts” (On Multimodal Composing). With that goal in mind, GSW may move toward more of its networked teacher training for graduate assistants and faculty with awareness of the potential and preferences of its members. The next section explains why these changes are important, and how composition programs such as GSW may address the implications of these findings.

Implications for GSW and Similarly Networked Communities

University mandates for Canvas and Email have fostered their effective and preferred use among the GSW population. However, the program’s new media presence could grow if additional digital tools and resources were made just as readily available and supported. Somewhat surprisingly, new media itself was not the cause of hesitant or adverse attitudes portrayed through this project’s data; rather, its [lack of] privacy, propensity for surveillance, and personal nature hindered its adaptation in GSW coursework. Providing curricular support for new media, if even optional, is one step toward allowing rhetoricians, teachers, and scholars to comfortably develop and assess digital pedagogy which adheres to the goals of both GSW and other first-year composition programs. GSW already has a significant amount of professional and organizational support built into its existing resources, which is a wonderful place to start. Providing programmatic instructions and resources for more new media platforms might be productive next steps. This project suggested that GSW’s own instructors and students could be sources of innovative ideas for their own goals.

One piece of information critical to this rhetorical situation was that the GSW program is in the process of “deep curricular revisiting and revision” (Interview—Nickoson) which will continue to meet both University and programmatic benchmarks, including but not limited to: eligible transfer credits, required alphabetic submission, effective arguments, audience variety,
credible research, digital composition, multiple modalities, digital citizenship, and technology as catalyst for action. To make its fullest contribution, this analysis considered how the current material conditions of new media influenced user identity and interaction (in political, social, and economic ways) so that the target population could continue to foster productive online discourse. This was also a move made by DeVoss et al. in her 2015 Multimodal Composing course; its syllabus stated that, “More and more, writing today means collaging multiple media into rich, multimodal texts. Writers compose reports, manuscripts, webtexts, web pages, slideshow presentations, brochures, flyers, forms, digital video, and much more, and most of these texts require us to work across different media” (On Multimodal Composing). By having her students pointedly read about multimodal composing and digital rhetoric, DeVoss combined the theory and methodology of multimedia with original multimodal student compositions and research. Mixing new tools with rhetorical emphasis on transferable skills accomplished the primary goal of course content working toward its goals via new media. The technology, though, was second to the goals of the program, which is another consideration for GSW pedagogy as well. GSW lesson plans and new teacher training could maintain focus on the digital literacy of its students via constructing arguments with research and rhetoric, using new media as a conduit and practice space similar to DeVoss’ course.

Not only does new media play a powerful role in the personal lives of first-year composition students, developing classroom pedagogy looks and feels different because “new media has shifted what was once perceived as classroom distractions to the center of learning. Personal blogs, podcasts, and even text messages are becoming topics for discussing reading and writing connections in the Information Age” (Harl 50). As the center of discussion, new media can be entertaining and eye-opening, yet it faces justified critiques in composition pedagogy.
Before incorporating new media, instructors should discuss with students what it means to write on the web, explore how privacy can/cannot be controlled, inform students of their rights via FERPA, and place explicit documentation and information on the course syllabus at the start of the course. In conceptualizing a web presence, programs and instructors should remember the advice from FERPA stated in chapter one: construct a digital contract with students, provide anonymity via username, and consider providing non-networked options. While considering FERPA and the very important role of privacy on Web 2.0, instructors must still allow the necessary space for students to explore and create without feeling restrained. Additionally, students must interact within Web 2.0 rather than just observing digital media, a goal endorsed by Mirra: “successful writing course encouraging digital literacy must “help teachers move from passive consumption of digital media toward active production of multimodal texts” (“Exploring Connected Learning”). The teaching suggestions mentioned here keep that spirit in mind, with their primary goals matching the GSW program at BGSU.

This project now arrives at some best practices for incorporating new media in GSW and other similar writing courses. The practices not only include tools such as Canvas, Email, and Google Docs, but also include video sharing, presentation, and social networking as potential activities. These recommended practices are based on the findings summarized above, and informed by scholars such as Drake, who found that “students increasingly reject reading large blocks of text on web pages. This finding is directly related to composition and rhetoric in the context of reading and writing as a sort of supply and demand economy. If readers increasingly demand smaller blocks of text and more visual rhetoric, authors of texts will need to shift their design and composition to be read” (232). Using the same logic, cognizant instructors must supply the kinds of digital instruction that students deem most effective and acceptable. They
must learn about new technologies and transfer existing rhetorical knowledge among new spaces.

Because Canvas CMS was strongly used and preferred by GSW, it is first crucial for instructors to realize its capacity for hosting multimodal and connected resources. It is possible to either link or embed YouTube videos to pages in CMS course shells simply by copying and pasting a block of text provided by YouTube; this is especially pertinent considering that one survey participant said that “Using YouTube/Prezi/Videos and the like are great ways to hold student's attention and get them interested in the materials they are learning.” Not only do these captivating videos, presentations, tutorials, lectures, and productions secure the attention of GSW students, they are also ways to circulate their original creations to a real audience invested in their content. The freedom to “make” original and innovative products is essential in engaging and motivating students: “Some quick examples that students have played around with it in my classroom through making are stop motion videos, x-ray goggles, powtoon, and iMovie. All of these are examples of apps or websites found on their computers or phones. If you don't know how to use them, but have a general idea of what functions they can have for your students, chances are your students will be able to figure them out!” (Pfahler). Through iMovie or similar apps, students can quickly create 30-second movie trailers, PSAs, and commercials from their smartphones, tablets, or laptops. After devoting a week or two to learning iMovie, Vine, Snapchat, GarageBand, and Voicethread for example, GSW students could build their own projects from the suggestions in Figure 27: Sample Multimodal Project Requirements. Multimodal Projects would require one element from each of three columns.
Two sample project ideas are a commercial for GSW’s participation in the annual National Day of Writing (#WhyIWrite), or a short podcast detailing the services available at the BGSU Library’s Learning Commons. While a vision of the project’s audience and purpose is critical to conceptualize the “bigger picture,” scholars suggest not to overlook the process of multimodal composing while focusing on its product. “Making” was a central component to Pfahler’s new media pedagogy because she valued process as equal to product. Though I am fortunate enough to have taught in the technology-rich GSW program, Digital Is provides an interactive, generative community for teachers in low-tech situations as well. Even without connected devices available in the classroom, the community extends the “makerspace” theory to promote the following values: creativity, hands-on experience, collaboration, differentiation, technology, interdisciplinary learning, and “just plain fun” (“How Making…”). One very adaptable lesson plan idea is for an Infographic, one of many emerging themes on the NWP Digital Is website. After researching and assigning my first Infographic unit in one of my GSW courses, it is now a staple of my FYC pedagogy; two respondents from this study also named infographics as examples of successful assignments. Piktochart, Easel.ly, and Venngage are three free websites/applications available to assist students in exploring more than three of the “Framework for Success” borrowed from CCCC’s Position Statement on OWI: “Design and layout principles for print and digital publication;” “Tools that help students compose as
independently as possible, in the modalities that best fit their needs and purposes;” and “Conventions for digital communication.” While listed as qualities for effective online-only education, they are also crucial to new media pedagogy as considerations of the rhetorical situation.

After the process of “making” their projects (Infographic or otherwise), students can turn toward posting, engaging with, circulating, or promoting their work in accompanying digital spaces. This is important to the goals of first-year writing because these communities should “accomplish work as a ‘public goal’ in the social world to which they belong. To do so, members of a discourse community must establish a discursive ‘forum’ available to all participants” (Harl 46). A forum could be a private Google Doc, public or private YouTube channel, a private Canvas discussion board, or a public Twitter hashtag. A helpful immediate forum for conferencing is WebEx, while Jing offers the ability to record a screencast with audio commentary to send/upload to students. In terms of conferencing and offering multimodal feedback, these tools are the beginning of networked pedagogy which effectively meets stated goals and could even be more “green.”

Because multimodal projects may be tailored to a variety of College or University scenarios, they could be circulated through these new media channels as a practice of real-world rhetoric. For example, University Housing could upload a series of student commercials detailing the amenities available in each dorm on campus. As another example, the Department of English could generate interest in the National Day of Writing by Tweeting audience responses to “Why do You Write?” For Pfahler, the most significant impact of working with multimedia was “the reactions my students would have after making and posting those reactions onto our Google classroom page” (“How Making…”), and this research showed that one likely cause of this
success was that, “In these electronic contexts, the relationships between reading and writing processes become multi-layered and highly interdependent” (Harl 50). These types of projects are highly adaptable to so many scenarios that each participant will find access to a community and content with which they feel passionate and comfortable.

Google Drive and Google Hangout are two new media platforms that have proven successful in fostering multimodal sharing and collaboration across communities and in real time—from any location with Internet access. Many people can work on the same document and communicate live through video and chat. This proved useful for some survey participants in group projects and in revising papers. I have employed Google Docs in my student conference repertories too, because it is easy to access, requires no downloads, is synchronous, and provides a digital record of the conversation. DeVoss regularly utilized Google Drive for the semester’s discussion readings and class creations (On Multimodal Composing). She also moved more than half of the course’s required assignments to online modules, given that her students enjoyed access to necessary resources on campus and via their own or a University laptop (which means that half of her course was modeled from OWI). Because the GSW population has access to many technologies, and this project’s participants were also open to using Google Docs and Hangout in class, these platforms have significant potential for new media pedagogy in the program.

Both Facebook and Snapchat (mobile only) are social media applications that may also have a pertinent place in composition classrooms. Using Facebook’s new “live video” feature, a mobile user could record part of a class lecture, short class presentation, or directions and post the video to a course group or using a course hashtag. The Facebook page/thread could populate many resources and videos for review or for students who were unable to attend that particular
class session. Likewise, sharing usernames on Snapchat is a great way for students and instructors to quickly and immediately ask/answer questions either at designated times or anytime. The instructor could generate a “story,” which is a collection of Snapchats viewable by all connected “friends,” explaining a prompt, talking about resources, offering advice, or simply course reminders in a unique audiovisual format. One limitation of this study is that it did not list Snapchat as an option on the distributed survey, nor did any questions ask about Snapchat; I believe that further composition research could uncover a lot of potential in Snapchat.

Other platforms with great potential for rhetoric, writing, and composition are Twitter and Facebook, two tools which are part of what is collectively termed “social media.” Conventions common to these spaces are the abilities to add “friends” or “followers,” share multimodal content, develop and monitor hashtags, join groups, create and share events, and instantly message other users. While some survey participants deemed social media too personal for GSW, scholars maintain that these spaces could house valuable lessons in composition: “A high comfort level with reading short blocks of text may result in preferences to write in a similar fashion. Indeed, blogs, microblogs, and other social media are one indication that students’ writing habits are already changing” (Drake 232). Because students have experienced micro-blogging in their personal lives, even 140 characters is ample space to practice a thesis statement, summarize a short article, provide class announcements, and link to YouTube videos, Google Docs, Infographics, common resources, and more. On a local level, the GSW program Twitter feed could publish weekly writing prompts from which instructors may begin a GSW class session, develop a discussion post, or Retweet engaging responses. This would bring together the GSW administrative and teaching community together to meet GSW’s Learning Outcomes.
Because social media was confusing and overwhelming, the resources were unpopular with GSW respondents despite their potential. However, if a workshop were provided to GSW instructors on, for example, incorporating Twitter in first-year composition, its popularity as a tool for pedagogy might increase. Almost all student participants reported a good deal of familiarity and comfort with Twitter and Facebook, yet this confidence did not translate to a GSW course content, to which Elbow argued “that good critical readers and writers can make cultural connections, ‘but most students need help achieving this kind of personal entanglement with texts’” (Harl 48), signifying the need for instructors to address genre and discourse conventions of various spaces. Hesse took the same guided approach by recommending that, “Professors teach key concepts about writing in order to help students consolidate and transfer skills from one writing occasion to the next” (“We Know What Works…). Skills transferable among scholarly writing and social media include audience awareness, concision, citation, source analysis, and genre conventions. Regardless of how much or little social media will be used in a course, young scholars need direction in evaluating, critically reading, choosing, and synthesizing sources, all of which are crucial to well-rounded information literacy. Twitter even became a successful social media outlet for one survey respondent who had students set up Twitter notifications via text message. This correlated with an emerging preference for texting with and about GSW. One example of this handy Twitter feature is to circulate news of a canceled or moved class, as another survey participant mentioned that they did not check their campus email very often.

Regardless of modality or tool used in GSW or similar first-year writing courses, a few general best practices are major takeaways. For one, beware of using too many platforms at once, which is overwhelming for both instructors and students. Especially for instructors new to
networked pedagogy, incorporating one new tool per semester would be a good starting point. Because CMS is currently the most-used means of circulating GSW resources, some resources that mesh well with them are Twitter, YouTube, Wikis, and Hyperlinks. When considering what tools to bring into a course, one piece of good advice is to “meet students where they are” in terms of technological experiences and preferences. Perhaps survey the class first, and then discuss the available options for new media. Afterward, address each individual’s ability and access in order to come up with the best plan for success that semester or quarter, instead of focusing too much on technology itself. Mirra cautioned against this pitfall by restating that, “Connected learning sees technology tools as valuable not in and of themselves, but to the extent that they open up opportunities to increase access to and participation in academic, professional, and civic life for all young people, particularly those who experience educational and social marginalization” (“Exploring Connected Learning…”). Including the entire class in the choice of composing/communicative spaces is a technofeminist practice which creates more autonomy for students. This practice is also great for keeping up with the hundreds of new applications circulated almost daily without overwhelming the class with many mandatory platforms. Survey participants in this project also reiterated the rapidly evolving nature of new media, which should mean a bevy of exciting (if challenging) lesson plans for composition instructors. This constant flux in composing tools and styles necessitates ongoing empirical work to keep track of productive and potential spaces and their pedagogy.

Concluding this Conversation and Creating New Pages

As I embarked on a journey to bring new media and social media into my composition classrooms, I could not ignore the overwhelming impact of culture and media at every step. Given the prioritization of concise easy-to-read text, instant gratification, and quick responses,
digital communication conventions of our students’ daily lives were clearly embedding themselves in new media pedagogy. I found it true that “Many new questions about computer literacy, including composing with computers in a variety of contexts, and the acquisition of literacy through popular trends such as gaming devices, have challenged educators to re-evaluate their resources and strategies to help students become better readers and writers in ever-shifting electronic environments” (Harl 52). Like DeVoss et al., this project began with research questions exploring the intersections of new media, multimodality, and writing pedagogy. What both projects hoped to offer was a “better vantage point into the processes of multimodal composing” (On Multimodal Composing). Through IRB-approved quantitative and qualitative methods and methodologies, data revealed that most GSW instructors and students utilized Canvas CMS and University email; most preferred these tools plus Google Docs and texting; and a struggle surfaced with the personal nature, privacy, and potential of social media’s place in coursework. Scholarship in fields such as composition, computers and composition, rhetoric and writing, and communication verified these trends—one essential theme for future empirical research with new media is that “time and research are necessary to better understand how technology is influencing the interaction of reading, writing, and research” (Drake 228). This project is just one example of how teacher research combined with thoughtful reflection and research may elicit new insights from its target populations. Upcoming publications on social media pedagogy, gaming pedagogy, and connected pedagogy will continue to offer best practices to writing programs such as GSW.

In further empirical research on new media, it is crucial for administrators and teachers to note that “any pedagogical tool or resource could fail in the appropriate circumstances,” and the largest factor for Nickoson was that “students find value in the work they do, regardless of
modality” (interview). In agreement, Adams suggested that one way to assist students in finding intrinsic value is guided reflection; ideally, the reflection would emphasize students’ composing process, audience, and rhetorical techniques instead of purely on content. Both Nickoson and Adams argued that any tool, but especially multimodal tools, be used with thoughtful planning and pointed reflection. The roles of professional organizations in the field (NCTE, CCCC, WPA, etc.) are both numerous and essential to this discussion for two reasons: one is that they circulate ongoing empirical and theoretical resources, and another is that they maintain focus on essential goals of writing instruction regardless of modality or platform. The latter goal is especially important because, “as with all research related to technology, research questions and methods must be updated continually to track the rapidly changing nature of technology use” (Drake 245). I found the methodologies of phenomenology, technofeminism, and grounded theory especially generative for addressing the research questions, though additional theoretical lenses would elicit even more diverse perspectives.

I share one of the same future research goals as the GSW Director, who expressed a desire to hear from even more GSW instructors in the future (Nickoson interview). Although this project’s methods generated a great deal of insightful data, it was not exhaustive or 100% indicative of program-wide trends. However, clearer new media teaching practices and preferences were made visible, which substantiated implications for practice and directions for future interdisciplinary research. Although this project’s research questions were answered, the analysis generated even more questions following the trends it established: Which social network is the best? What are the most important transferable skills practiced on new media? How might the first-year composition instructor best position herself to use new media? How will privacy controls continue to affect pedagogy?
Although the content of future new media research will vary, one main conclusion from DeVoss et al. reflects a primary takeaway:

Composing is social, mobile labor. Indeed, it's impossible for us to imagine, to see, composing as anything other than extremely networked, ecological, and therefore unceasingly complicated—dependent on (f)actors as diverse as technical skill and physical comfort. Our experiences of being human perhaps count as much as (or more than, perhaps) our official educations as composers. (*On Multimodal Composing*)

As exemplified throughout these chapters, nuanced views of new media presented both challenges and opportunities to GSW administrators, instructors, and students alike. Embracing the affordances of these resources on both a programmatic and individual level could mean an upsurge in confidence and success online. Fellow researchers, instructors, and pedagogues, I encourage you to explore how new media could make space for your present goals.
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APPENDIX A. IRB APPROVALS

[Image 72x77 to 539x692]

DATE: November 6, 2015
TO: Brianna Mauk
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board
PROJECT TITLE: [817281-2] General Studies Writing (GSW) Digital Communication Practices and Priorities at BGSU: Student and Instructor Perspectives
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision
ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
DECISION DATE: November 5, 2015
REVIEW CATEGORY: Exemption category #2

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has determined this project is exempt from IRB review according to federal regulations AND that the proposed research has met the principles outlined in the Belmont Report. You may now begin the research activities.

Note that an amendment may not be made to exempt research because of the possibility that proposed changes may change the research in such a way that it is no longer meets the criteria for exemption. A new application must be submitted and reviewed prior to modifying the research activity, unless the researcher believes that the change must be made to prevent harm to participants. In these cases, the Office of Research Compliance must be notified as soon as practicable.

We will retain a copy of this correspondence within our records.

If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Hagemeyer at 419-372-7716 or khagemey@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board's records.
DATE: October 12, 2016
TO: Brianna Mauk
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board
PROJECT TITLE: [817281-8] General Studies Writing (GSW) Digital Communication Practices and Priorities at BGSU: Student and Instructor Perspectives
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: October 12, 2016
EXPIRATION DATE: September 21, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

Modifications Approved:

- Interview the Director of the General Studies Writing program from 2012–2016, Dr. Cheryl Hoy and Dr. Lee Nickson, the 2016 newly appointed Director of GSW. PI will recruit the Directors via email to schedule an interview, and if they agree, then the interviews will take place in-person, privately, at a time of mutual convenience.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on September 21, 2017. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.
APPENDIX B. CONSENT LETTER

Informed Consent Form for Survey Study

General Studies Writing (GSW) Digital Communication Practices and Priorities at Bowling Green State University: Student and Instructor Perspectives

Researcher: Brianna C. Mauk
- PhD student at BGSU: 859-907-3140
- Email: bmauk@bgsu.edu

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Kris Blair
- Professor of Rhetoric & Writing, Department of English
- Email: kblair@bgsu.edu
- 419-372-2531

You have been asked to participate in a voluntary survey study. This brief introduction will provide you with information regarding the study’s purpose, methods, and any benefits/risks to you. It will also explain how your personal information will be used and protected. You may request more information or direct questions to Brianna Mauk at bmauk@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research. Completing this survey indicates consent to participate.

About the Study
As a scholar, researcher, and instructor of record of GSW (General Studies Writing) at Bowling Green State University, I am surveying voluntary GSW instructors and students during the year 2015-2016 to inform my dissertation, which explores digital communicative channels, goals, and audiences in GSW. For example, instructors and students might communicate via social media (like Facebook and Twitter), educational media (like Canvas), and multimedia (like YouTube and Prezi) in the classroom. Collectively, these tools are called digital media. I am studying how various digital media are used and prioritized in GSW in order to better understand how and why students and instructors are communicating online.

If you agree to participate, the brief online survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. No compensation will be provided to you. Answers are both multiple choice and short response, and I will be analyzing your survey responses in my dissertation, which might be published or referenced in other research. All information gathered through the study will remain confidential throughout; though the survey asks for your preferred phone/email/account for potential follow-up if desired, no part of your identifying information will be used in published materials. If you decide to follow up on the initial Qualtrics survey, then I will send 10 additional questions for your thoughts; the follow-up will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete on a platform of your choice. You may leave the study at any time by simply closing the browser window. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your standing, grades, or your relationship with BGSU.
**Risks**
The risks of participation are no greater than that experienced in daily life. One minimal concern of the survey study is that some employers may use tracking software so you may want to complete your survey on a personal computer. Do not leave the survey open if using a public computer or a computer others may have access to, and clear your browser cache and page history after completing the survey.

**Benefits**
By providing your honest answers to this survey, you will be providing me with the tools necessary to complete my study and my dissertation. You will also allow other instructors the opportunity to better understand how use of digital resources in the classroom affects the BGSU General Studies Writing population. You may benefit individually by using the survey questions to critically reflect on your classroom experience.

**Confidentiality**
Identifying information will be kept confidential, and will not be displayed or disseminated with any part of the dissertation or associated research. Survey responses are kept private via my password-protected Qualtrics account, only accessed through my password-protected locked laptop. Only myself and my dissertation chair will have access to the data. I will only use personal contact information in cases where participants agree to follow-up conversations regarding the survey. Continued conversations may be held via email or other digital forum, but all responses will be kept confidential nonetheless.

By participating in this survey, you are agreeing that:
- You are informed of the conditions present in this form and that you consent to the study.
- You will voluntarily participate in this survey.
- You may leave the survey at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you.
APPENDIX C. QUALTRICS SURVEY

Think about your GSW course experiences. What types of digital communication have been used most to interact with peers and instructors? This includes both in-class and out-of-class means involving GSW and associated policies, activities, assignments, or goals. Please check all that apply.

- [ ] Facebook
- [ ] Twitter
- [ ] Tumblr
- [ ] Wordpress
- [ ] Blogspot
- [ ] Wikis
- [ ] Prezi
- [ ] Videos
- [ ] Texting
- [ ] Photo Sharing
- [ ] Email
- [ ] CMS (Canvas, Blackboard, etc.)
- [ ] Google Documents
- [ ] Infographic
- [ ] Dropbox
- [ ] YouTube
- [ ] Skype
- [ ] Facetime
- [ ] Google Hangout
- [ ] Phone Calls
- [ ] Instagram
- [ ] Yik Yak
- [ ] LinkedIn
- [ ] Other:

Of the communication tools selected above, please identify and rank the three most effective digital tools used in GSW. "1" represents the most effective digital tool, "2" the second most effective, and "3" the third most effective.

- [ ] Digital Tool:
- [ ] Digital Tool:
- [ ] Digital Tool:
What factors or situations led to your ranking of the digital tools? Please check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>#1 Most Effective Tool</th>
<th>#2 Most Effective Tool</th>
<th>#3 Most Effective Tool</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Time</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Messages</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Messages</td>
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<tr>
<td>File Sharing</td>
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<td>Photo Sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>More personal</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less personal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instantaneous</td>
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<td>Anonymous</td>
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<td>Graphics Compatibility</td>
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<td>Visual Appeal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personalization</td>
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<td>Professional</td>
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<td>Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Reason</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regardless of what means have actually been used to communicate in your GSW experience, what types of digital communication do you think instructors and/or students SHOULD use for class correspondence? Please check all that apply.

- [ ] Facebook
- [ ] Twitter
- [ ] Tumblr
- [ ] Wordpress
- [ ] Blogspot
- [ ] Wikis
- [ ] Prezi
- [ ] Infographic
- [ ] Videos
- [ ] Texting
- [ ] Photo Sharing
- [ ] Email
- [ ] Canvas (or other CMS)
- [ ] Google Documents
- [ ] Dropbox
- [ ] YouTube
- [ ] Skype
- [ ] Facetime
- [ ] Google Hangout
- [ ] Instagram
- [ ] Yik Yak
- [ ] LinkedIn
- [ ] Phone Calls
- [ ] Other: ________________
- [ ] Other: ________________

Please offer a brief (2-3 sentence) justification of why and/or how instructors should use these communication tools.

__________________________________________
In your opinion, what (if any) digital tools should instructors NOT use for class communication? Please list any that apply.

[Blank field]

Display This Question:
If In your opinion, what (if any) digital tools should instructors NOT use for class communication?... Text Response Is Not Empty

If you identified any digital communication tools NOT to use, from the question above, please offer a brief (2-3 sentence) justification of why instructors should not use those technologies.

[Blank field]

Is there anything else you would like me to know about your GSW digital communication experiences that was not covered in the questions above?

[Blank field]

Please indicate whether you are completing this survey as an instructor or student of GSW.

- [ ] Instructor
- [ ] Student

Display This Question:
If Please indicate whether you are completing this survey as an instructor or student of GSW. Instructor Is Selected

If an instructor of GSW, how many years have you taught GSW?

- [ ] less than 1 year
- [ ] 1-2 years
- [ ] 3-4 years
- [ ] 5-more years

Display This Question:
If Please indicate whether you are completing this survey as an instructor or student of GSW. Student Is Selected

If a GSW student, what is your major?

[Blank field]
Display This Question:
If Please indicate whether you are completing this survey as an instructor or student of GSW. Student is Selected

How many GSW classes have you taken during your time at BGSU?

○ 1
○ 2
○ 3
○ 4+

What are your research or subject interests? What do you like to read, study, or learn about?

Thinking about the kinds of digital media mentioned in this survey, are these tools you feel unfamiliar, familiar, comfortable, or uncomfortable with? I would very much appreciate a few sentences on your background and thoughts on incorporating digital media in GSW.

In the event that I would like to contact you to get more feedback on your answers, would you agree?

○ Yes
○ No
APPENDIX D. GSW DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

General Studies Writing (GSW) Digital Communication at Bowling Green State University: to Web 2.0 or not to Web 2.0?

Interview Questions for the Director of GSW

1. When planning ENG 6020, the Graduate Teaching Assistant course for GSW at BGSU, how is the teaching curriculum developed for new TAs?

2. In what current theory and practice is the GSW program based?

3. How would you say that Web 2.0 currently contributes to teaching GSW students how to compose in electronic environments? (scholars define Web 2.0 as the turn of the Internet to user-generated data and metadata along with networking—especially social networking)

4. What stipulations does the University place on GSW curriculum and student-teacher-administration communication? Are any forums or media specifically prohibited? (I am thinking of the number of pages required of students to write each semester, and potential security concerns of social networking)

5. In your role as a GSW instructor, have you used Web 2.0 in your composition classroom? If yes, how so? If no, please skip the next question.
   a. Have you ever used social media such as Facebook or Twitter in your own GSW pedagogy? How did it go?

6. Drawing on your experiences as an instructor, an observer, and an administrator, can you give me a couple pros and cons of using social networking for class-related activities, from your perspective?

7. Drawing on your experiences as an instructor, an observer, and an administrator, can you give me a couple pros and cons of using Canvas CMS in GSW, from your perspective?

8. In your role as a GSW instructor, have you ever used a third-party file sharing system or messaging/video application for class-related activities? If so, how did it go? (I am thinking of Dropbox, Skype, FaceTime, or Google Docs)

9. How did the GSW YouTube channel come about? Are there any plans for its continued development?

10. Given the nature of these questions, what other information might you deem relevant or helpful to know?
11. Because this information may appear in my dissertation research and manuscript, I would like to give you the option to be represented by a pseudonym—is this something you would prefer?
   a. Please note that the dissertation names both the program and university. You will also be given the option to pre-review Chapter 4—Qualitative Analysis, which will contain data from this interview.
## APPENDIX E. BOWLING GREEN PERSPECTIVES (BGP) AND GSW LEARNING OUTCOMES

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF GSW LEARNING OUTCOMES TO THE BGSU BOWLING GREEN PERSPECTIVES (BGP) ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND ORAL COMMUNICATION LEARNING OUTCOMES

In the table below, the Bowling Green Perspective (BGP) University Learning Outcomes for English Composition and Oral Communication (ECOC) are listed alongside their corresponding abbreviated GSW Learning Outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BGP Learning Outcomes: English Composition &amp; Oral Communication (ECOC)</th>
<th>GSW Course Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECOC 1. Formulate</strong> effective written and/or oral arguments which are based upon appropriate, credible research.</td>
<td>Engage in the electronic research and composing processes, including locating, evaluating, disseminating, using and acknowledging research, both textual and visual, from popular and scholarly electronic databases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECOC 2. Construct</strong> materials which respond effectively to the needs of a variety of audiences, with an emphasis upon academic audiences.</td>
<td>Demonstrate the importance of values systems in academic writing, including the abilities to write effectively to audiences with opposing viewpoints, to participate in an active learning community that values academic honesty, and to recognize the place of writing within learning processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECOC 3. Analyze</strong> how the principles of rhetoric work together to promote effective communication.</td>
<td>Practice the processes entailed in academic writing, including recursive processes for drafting texts, collaborative activities, the development of personalized strategies, and strategies for identifying and locating source materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECOC 5. Utilize</strong> rhetorical strategies that are well-suited to the rhetorical situation, including appropriate voice, tone, and levels or formality.</td>
<td>Demonstrate rhetorical knowledge through writing in a variety of academic genres and to a variety of academic audiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECOC 6. Demonstrate</strong> critical thinking, reading, and writing strategies when crafting arguments that synthesize multiple points of view.</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions of academic writing, including format and documentation systems, coherence devices, conventional syntax, and control over surface features such as grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and spelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills through approaching academic writing assignments as a series of cognitive tasks, including engaging in multiple modes of inquiry, synthesizing multiple points of view, critiquing student and professional writing, and assessing source materials.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>