
# Web Writing

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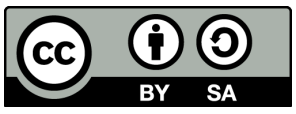
A Member of The Pennsylvania Alliance for Design of Open Textbooks





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# About the Author

Dr. A. Nicole Pfannenstiel is a digital rhetoric scholar who studies web writing, social media, Open Educational Resources (OER) and learning. Her work focuses on learning through and with technology, blending connected learning theory, games theories, and digital rhetoric and composition to support learning and writing.

Dr A Nicole Pfannenstiel

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- What is web writing? Why should I understand it differently?
- Is web writing new? Why is there so much on data in this book?
- How can a thoughtful approach to reading and organizing support my work with digital texts?

## Introduction

The internet was made available to the public around 1993. While early access was limited due to dial-up access, personal computer access and affordability, and more (including infrastructure, the wiring and cable necessary to make the internet work), people began engaging with and creating web content as early as 1993. For many readers of this book, the internet has existed since before you were born.

Even in those early days of the internet, web writing existed, web pages existed, and web forums existed. People who could afford access, or gained access through work, school, and their local library, "surfed" the web and connected. Early technology-in-education adopters like Elizabeth Losh (2014) explain the work of internet users in finding connection. In her book *The War on Learning: Gaining Ground in the Digital University*, Losh tells a story of working with high school students in an early computer lab. While using city websites, the students found ways to send each other messages and notes. Earlier generations shared secrets through elaborately folded notes written with multicolored pens (this was my high school experience at least); computer-mediated generations moved those same writing practices to digital spaces.

### Goals of This Book

This is why **web writing** is so fascinating.

This is also why **web writing** is so complicated. Web writing is not one, uniform thing. Web writing, when successful and effective, changes to meet the needs of readers within a given space, within the culture and purposes shaping that space and user needs. I can write and publish this book, digitally. I can share it on the internet so it joins the billions of books in a subgenre within web writing. And I can tailor the language, examples, overall structure, and purpose to clearly meet

the needs of undergraduate writing students. But this book is NOT designed for ALL web writers! It is designed for students, in classes.

Web writing allows for multiple audiences to coexist within one space. I can watch TikTok about makeup, then cooking, then a news report, clearly understanding who I am as a different audience member for each of those videos, shifting how I understand based on my place as an audience member. Additionally, I can watch a TikTok video about cooking, then a YouTube video about cooking, clearly expecting different videos and video lengths which impact how I understand, clearly understanding who I am as an audience member.

The goal of this brief introduction is to build the foundation for the remainder of this book.

This book is NOT a how-to-write-the-perfect-web-content guide. I am wary of guides professing to have all the answers as the internet changes with each view, like, and comment.

This book is a rhetoric-based guide to help web writers determine how to write effectively for a given situation. This means we spend more time analyzing audiences, spaces, writing processes, and writing changes over time (content strategy and content management). This book is a guide to critically engaging with the spaces of the web to create meaningful writing for the time, space, and audience.

## Making Choices in Web Writing

At a very basic level, the words we use change to demonstrate context and time awareness to our audience so they feel like they are readers of our messages. As shown in the Figure 1 Twitter examples, web writers use words and images to convey meaning and sentiment. In these examples, the tweets were posted for students in a Web Writing class as the first tweets they would see in the course hashtag.

The first tweet started a Winter semester and used snowflake emojis, drawing on the imagery associated with the northern hemisphere's Winter season. While most students enrolled in the course finished the Fall term just days before the start of Winter, winter also includes the celebration of many different holidays. The connection to seasonal imagery was specifically used to connect the term to seasons and not holidays to ensure all students felt welcome.

The second tweet was posted during a Fall semester. I shared an image with students to celebrate the American holiday Thanksgiving. This second image includes an image, hashtags, and emojis for Fall. Looking back on my posted tweet, the image was chosen to draw attention at a time when competition for student attention is fierce. All students were on break, while working resting up for final exams and the final semester push. The choice of image includes a typical Thanksgiving dessert while also showcasing my personality by including a decorative plate and Fall leaf emojis. The mix of text and images work to convey more than just the text.

In each tweet, I made choices to adapt my content based on what I know about my audience and context. Just as the semesters change, and our adjectives change, the ways we communicate on the internet will change over time—sometimes slowly (Facebook has survived a surprisingly long time), sometimes rapidly (TikTok really benefitted from the stay-at-home orders surrounding COVID-19 and grew quickly). Approaching web writing knowing how to analyze the situation will empower all writers to adapt their writing to remain relevant as the internet and social media change.

## Using Data To Make Choices in Web Writing

The infrastructure of the internet not only builds and renders what we see, turning zeroes and ones into pictures and text, it also records visits, views, interactions, and more. Even before social media, websites tracked and displayed the number of users who had accessed the site or a given page. Social media went further, actively quantifying and displaying numbers of likes, views,

followers, and more. From early sites like Friendster and MySpace, data (number


FIGURE 1.1: Two class tweets posted by Dr. A Nicole Pfannenstiel for students in Web Writing. First tweet posted for a Winter start, second tweet posted for a Fall start, third tweet posted for a Summer start.

of likes, comments, etc.) provided the feedback. In face-to-face or phone conversations, tone of voice, speed of talking (or signing, like in ASL), body gestures, facial expressions, and more provide clues to the participants on how well the communication is going. In the void of zeroes and ones of the internet, these clues became quantified through the display of number of likes, number of comments, and more. Data provided through likes, views, followers, and more

provides important information to content creators about the effectiveness of their content, within the context, for a given audience. Data offers an important element of analysis for rhetorically situating posts and generating additional posts.

As a final note, web writing is a huge category of genres and spaces of writing. Web writing includes:

- Website writing,
- Social media writing,
- Image creation and sharing,
- Video creation and sharing,
- Audio creation and sharing.

Web writing also includes:

- Visiting sites,
- Logging in to social media,
- Leaving comments,
- Leaving likes,
- Writing in discussions,
- Engaging with others online in text, audio, and visual modalities.

The rhetorical practices explored in this book can be adapted to these various modalities and spaces. Since the internet changes rapidly, the focus is building skills, not perfecting one form of writing.

We will focus heavily on social media writing in this book as it presents a range of modalities with text, audio, and visual components to help us build skills through complex writing and analysis tasks. Social media also includes tools for engaging the content including buttons for likes, comments, shares, follows, views, and more. As internet users we often fail to notice how our engagement, even simply stopping and viewing a video, leaves data on the internet, data that influences writing. Every time we navigate the internet, we join and participate in ongoing conversations through navigating and logging in. If we then choose to like/

dislike, comment, follow, subscribe (and more), we publicly participate in those ongoing conversations. Social media actively displays data to followers and users of the spaces; it actively displays participation in the conversation. Almost any Instagram user can find an account (if it is public) and see how many likes a specific image received. Similarly, users can see the description of the image and the comments of other users, accessing image- and text-based information shared by the account and data about the performance of posts.

This book focuses on understanding the **rhetorical practices** useful to web writing by looking at social media because the data is so publicly available. This book defines rhetorical practices as the way content creators, web writers, and content analysts situate [multimedia] text within a context (or social media platform) to share with a specific audience. Chapter 2 provides additional key terms to help readers understand, analyze, and create web writing.

We can observe the public conversations being written and engaged by public social media users through words, images, posts, videos, audio, likes, dislikes, hearts, comments, views, and more. We can observe the conversation feedback from audiences for a specific post. We can observe the lack of conversation feedback from audiences for other posts. This is much more difficult with websites and much more ethically problematic in closed communities like fandoms and special interest groups who have made internet-security decisions to privatize and protect their conversations- to be accessible to only vetted accounts.

Despite the focus on social media, the rhetorical practices can and should be transferred to all writing spaces. As you graduate with your bachelor's degrees and embark on your careers, you will likely learn to use internal web writing like company shared drives, or programs like *Slack*, or both. The ways to approach writing (the skills) we explore and build throughout this book will help with those transitions and will help you see how to approach writing effectively for the different needs of those spaces within your future positions. Additionally, many students will go on to join special interest groups online. As internet users, we will find spaces that meet our information/community needs and communication expectations. Again, the practices and habits of mind developed within this book will help you navigate those spaces as a reader and writer. I know you hear this too frequently, but some of the internet spaces you will need to navigate in your professional life and personal life may not exist yet. The practices discussed in this book are designed so you know how to learn how to read and write, so you can use the spaces in ways that meet your needs!

# Reading Digitally

First, a note about reading.

While technology classrooms and digital textbooks are becoming more common, physically annotating books is still "the norm" in higher education. You have probably purchased commercial textbooks with the expectation to annotate those texts. Your instructors expected you to annotate and know how to identify the most important/meaningful information within that text for their class. However, given the price of textbooks, and the restrictions with rentals, it is possible your annotation practices were more influenced by costs and rental restrictions than learning.

This book is obviously a digital text. There are tools for adding annotations, highlighting, and drawing out important elements, as with printed materials. To focus on learning, I want you to think about **how and what to notate**. It is worth a brief discussion on how to take useful notes and why. In future work situations, in future life situations, you may not have a printer or you may not have time to find a way to access a hard copy of the text. Learning to read and retain information you've read online will be important at some point in the future, so we'll practice that throughout the semester.

The notes here will help with reading for understanding, reading for purpose, retaining information, and applying information you've read! These practices can and will help you in future digital reading and print reading situations.

## Read for Purpose

Before reading anything, readers should have a purpose in mind. Why are you reading?

- Reading for pleasure
- Reading to build background information on a topic
- Reading to learn about a topic
- Reading to understand arguments surrounding a topic
- Reading to reinforce skills, especially reading and writing skills
- Reading for information to make a decision
- Reading to strengthen writing practices

These are just some examples of reading for a purpose—reading with a goal in mind. In this class, as much as I would love for the reading to be enjoyable, reading for purpose will help guide your reading. In many classes, students read to understand vocabulary and key terms, then apply that information on exams.

This is a writing class—that won't work. At all.

Instead, think about how the readings connect to your learning, your understanding of your own writing, your development of your understanding of your writing process, your completion of assignments in this class. This class is about building writing practices, a key step in the writing process is reading. We read to understand how others write. We read to understand how others within the field write about the topic. We read to understand how others within the field develop arguments and new ideas to extend the topic.

Use that to help you understand the readings, to take notes. Note the key ideas you're developing. But, more importantly, note the skills you're developing:

- How are you learning to pre-write?
- What does that invention and brainstorming process look like?
- How are you analyzing the audience to understand how to write?
- How are you analyzing the space/context to understand how to write?
- How are content creators looking at existing content to create their own twist on those ideas?
- How are they reinventing existing ideas to appeal to the same audience?
- How are you learning to draft and organize?
- How do you use existing texts, publications, social media posts, and other web writing to understand how information is organized specifically for that audience?

To be more effective with learning, you need to determine how the reading fits with your understanding of your own writing. I can't magically help you write more effectively in digital and non-digital spaces, but I can expand what you know about writing, how you know about writing, how you know your writing skills, and how you apply what you know about writing so you recognize the needed elements of a given writing situation for effective communication. Your

job is to determine how you can shift your understanding of writing for the better to integrate what I'm teaching so you produce effective communication.

Remember: everyone should have a writing process—a coherent and repeatable approach to producing an appropriate text, with correct grammar and style, for the audience and situation. You are coming to this class with a writing process you've been using and refining for years. We will continue to build that practice so the approaches you repeat will help you produce better, more effective writing for the situations you encounter.


FIGURE 1.2: Word cloud reminder of key words of the writing process.

## Take Notes

In this class I provide questions to help you analyze the assigned readings. Use the questions as a guide for developing your purpose for reading, which will help you develop an approach to writing. Spend time reflecting on your understanding of writing to improve your practices and approaches in given writing situations. Writing is not just selecting words and sentences but truly understanding the situation, the needs of the situation, the requirements of the situation, the needs of the audience, the expectations of the audience, the expectations of the space, the information available, the information expected, the tools and modes expected and available, and so on. Using the key concepts from this course to understand your thought approaches to the assignment connected to reading will help you develop an accurate, meaningful purpose for reading and notes.

## To Help You Read More Effectively, Don't:

### Write Exact Definitions of Words

- Definitions vary in different situations with different audiences. Definitions also ignore the cultural value and meaning of words. While you need to have a basic recall of some ideas, consider how to understand core concepts not as

definitions but as culturally valued concepts within a discourse community for a specific audience.

### Take Notes To Use Quotes Later

- Reading for the PERFECT quote is a huge time suck; the more effective use of time is to summarize chunks of the reading so you have a working idea of what you read.

## To Help You Read More Effectively, Do:

### Summarize the Text After You've Finished Reading

- Consider your purpose for reading as this will affect your summary. Consider and connect the summary to what is meaningful to a given discourse community and for a given audience.
    - Throughout this book and the class assignments we will read across a variety of genres and discourse communities. Tweets written for specific groups, Instagram posts written for another, and a textbook written to support writing development. Knowing your purpose while reading AND being able to summarize the reading is fundamental to your success as a learner.
- Consider the author's purpose for writing.
    - What claims are being made? Why?
    - What does this tell us (reader/analyzer) about who the audience is, or who the author-creator-designer expects the audience to be?
    - What does this tell us about the discourse community's expectations? What are the expectations of that group within that space?
- What evidence is used? Why?
    - What does this tell us about audience and discourse community?
    - What does this tell us about the cultural expectations of creators and audience members?
    - What ideas connect directly to the assignments I'll be creating for that class space? Why?
- Consider the author's intended audience and how they would receive the text.

    - How do you recognize how an author-creator-designer signals to the audience?

- Consider how this reading connects to other readings. How does this reading build a context for a given topic?

    - How do discourse communities build an overview of what matters?

    - How do these ideas and examples build an overview of the culture of a discourse community?

    - Why does this matter?

Notice the techniques, grammar, and style used by the author.

Write down how the reading connects to the assignments—how you'll use the ideas (yup, I'm saying this more than once because it is that important; applying reading knowledge within the work is expected within college, especially at the advanced writing level).

- Careful attention to your own understanding of application is key to understanding the readings AND improving your writing practices.

Write down how the readings influence how you understand the key concepts.

- Careful attention to key concepts that you can use and adapt when you encounter unfamiliar writing situations will help you as you progress toward graduation and in your future beyond higher education.

Write down how the readings influence how you understand your writing process.

- Careful attention to your writing practices is key to how you'll approach future situations. I've heard SO many stories of students who earned a good grade ONCE on an essay written in less than an hour. These examples ignore ALL the other times when this approach failed. Don't approach situations with a faulty mindset; instead, really consider how you approach reading and writing, and be more open to positive approaches so your writing is more effective. In the future, this could be the difference in you earning the promotion, or your peer. Get the promotion, get the money, get the job, get the degree. An open mindset, with a better working knowledge of what writers need to know, and what reading and writing practices actually work is an important first step.

Keep in mind, the better developed your purpose for reading, and the more aware you are of your strategies, the more you can skim through the readings while gaining more information from the text. Pay attention to how you read, how you understand, and develop goals for reading. This will help you with future reading and writing situations.

## What To Do Next

Develop a plan for taking notes for this class! Get a notebook, get a stack of paper, and keep it all in a folder. Start a digital folder for this class. The medium is up to you, but you need a plan. You need to start the work of improving your process with a clear plan for how to stay organized.

Since this book is associated with a class, make a plan now for how you'll note:

- Connections between the reading and class assignments
- Connections between the reading and your development as a writer
- Connections between your development as a writer and writing in situations beyond the class

Some of the class assignments may include note shares. Reflecting on learning (in assignments and less formally) asks you about your reading strategies, so think about your approaches because you may be sharing these with me and your classmates. While sharing is important for learning, mindfully engaging with your approaches to writing will empower you as a learner! The more you know about learning, the more effective your learning will be. Get your money's worth from this class by putting in a bit of effort now to make a plan for how you'll take notes and how you'll stay organized.

## Reflection Activities:

- Write down 3 things you learned about digital reading that will help you as a student.
- Write down 2 things you learned about digital reading that will help you in your future career.
- Write down 2 things you learned about notetaking that will help you in this class.

- Write down 3 things you learned about notetaking that will help you as a student this semester.
- Write down 1 thing you learned about your writing practices that will help you this semester.

# Organizing Your Files: Information Literacy

Information literacy is the way people access, know to access, and read and write in digital spaces. This is incredibly important because different words, images, and spaces influence and shape how we will read, how we will make meaning. As you work through this course, you'll be asked to work in different spaces, for different audiences. The language you use, the images, the ideas will all shape who your audience is and how they understand your space.

While information literacy is very basically reading and writing, it's really the complex ways we make sense of the information we're surrounded by—the complex ways we access meaningful information for specific purposes. It is also the complex ways we plan to keep, store, file, and organize the information we create.

Even what we consider "information" is dependent on audience, context, and purpose. If I'm working with my son on writing, academic information like the five-paragraph essay is meaningless—he's only 7. I need to use and discuss information that will be most meaningful to him and that will gain and keep his attention. This combination of audience, context, purpose, meaningful information, reading, writing, and creating is information literacy. Underlying all these ideas is critical engagement! We need to think critically in all of these spaces.

## Information Literacy as a Student

This book is digitally published; as a learner, you benefit from approaching the digital textbook with a plan. Additionally, as a student, approaching each semester with a plan for maintaining your files in an organized fashion is a must. Computers die every day. While writing my dissertation, my laptop died. Smoke and burning smells, no screen, the works. Because I approached the writing in an organized fashion—I routinely backed up my files to my email (cloud-based storage was still too new to be the "right" approach)—when my laptop died, I had a back-up copy of the chapters that were less than 24 hours old. I lost a bit of time replacing the device, but I barely lost any progress.

As a student in a writing class, you can expect major projects that undergo multiple submissions and draft revisions. You need to know which file is the draft and which is the final. You need to be able to track and show the changes you made as a writer to improve your draft. You also need a digital organizational strategy.

Importantly, most learning management systems show the uploaded file name to your professor; you NEED to demonstrate your care and consideration for your own work in their class through meaningful file names. If I post a tweet for a class, I add the class hashtag and I add course-specific information to clearly note the context for that information to show the audience I was thinking of them as I posted it. I'll use a work example: I am collaborating with Professor S and sending my work to her. If I upload "Document7.docx" as an email attachment, the "Document7.docx" is part of the overall web writing communication to Professor S. I am telling Professor S that I put in effort to complete the work, but not enough to organize the file and add a meaningful name to it. Once downloaded, Professor S may have to return to my email over and over to discover the file saved to her desktop because the naming convention makes it impossible to identify. Professor S is not too pleased to be working with me anymore because of the amount of time she dedicated to finding the saved file on her computer.

Instead, if I upload "Web Writing Content Analysis Draft" and then "Web Writing Content Analysis Final", I am telling Professor S much better information about my efforts. Not only did I name the file so I know what assignment I completed, I renamed the final for the final draft demonstrating efforts to track changes, to understand my own learning, and to actively revise work for that class. I am demonstrating a level of care for who I am as a learner in that class, through my web writing practices.

Develop a plan, now, for naming and saving conventions. Names communicate a lot.

Web writing is not just paragraph and essay text. Hashtags, tags, file names, thumbnails, descriptions, and alt text (for screen readers and other accessibility devices) are always part of web writing. Always. Since this is a web writing book, I urge you to pay extra attention to all the elements of web writing as you navigate your work as students this semester. With just a little attention to file names, your uploaded assignments can quickly convey the effort you put into your coursework.

You should be noticing a theme in this book; I am prompting for a lot of reflection, sharing, and strategy to support writing processes. You should also notice that web writing is not, and never will be, teaching you to write the perfect tweet. Web writing is complicated, everywhere, and meaningful. Build a writing process that considers the large and small ways writing and web writing communicate to readers/audiences.

Before you even begin developing assignments, consider the following:

- A naming convention
    - Especially one that allows you to know what the assignment is
    - Especially one that allows you to know what class the assignment is for
    - Especially one that allows you to know what draft the assignment is
- Folders for longer projects
    - Keeping parts of a project together is important!
- A back-up storage plan
    - When will you upload the documents to One Drive (or another suitable alternative)? “My computer died/crashed” is the new “The dog ate my homework” excuse that few professors believe. Back everything up!

I see incorrect files uploaded constantly. I see file names that have nothing to do with assignments, constantly. As your reader, the name of your document is the FIRST title I see; it’s your first impression as an assignment submitter. Think through what you want me (and all faculty) to see as they start reading your work!

## Reflection Activities and Questions:

- Write down file organization strategies you’ve used in the past, if any.
- Write down your file organization strategy. How will you organize this class this semester?
- Write down your file organization strategy for all your classes this semester.
- Write down your plan for naming conventions. How will you name your files in meaningful ways? How will tracking separate drafts help you as a writer?

You are advanced undergrads; I know you have successfully navigated school for a while. However, considering your strategy and approach now is so important. You are at a point in your educational journey where you have strong skills you can refine to carry you into what life will bring you next. You are at a point where you can name your skills as you refine them to strengthen your resume and cover letter writing. You are at a point where you can refine the skills you’re

currently using in jobs, clubs and organizations, and internships to continue to grow as a learner and digital citizen.

Use your time in this class to develop your writing and web writing skills, to know and name those skills to serve your needs in the future!

To reiterate, thinking through file organization, developing and using strong naming conventions, and tracking versions of documents through revisions are important elements of digital writing. Writing for the web extends beyond just paragraphs. Every time you share a file, or upload a file for class, you are web writing. If you write and digitally submit a ten-page research essay for a Chemistry course, you are a web writer. If you write and digitally submit a two-page reader response for a Literature course, you are a web writer. You web write as you consider how to name and organize files for your courses. You web write as you navigate the course and submission space. You web write as you navigate the submission buttons within the course, potentially writing notes to your professor alongside the submission. Web writing, as we'll explore throughout this book, is all the communicative elements within the internet. Pay attention to all the pieces as you work through them.

## Chapter Review

After reading this chapter you should have the following:

- A working definition of web writing that includes how long web writing has been around and all the various, multimodal elements comprising web writing.
- A working strategy for digital reading and notetaking. This entire book is digital—most of the web writing texts you encounter, engage, and work with are digital. Given all the digital reading you do, it is highly unlikely you print even half of it. A conscious working strategy for meaningfully approaching digital reading will serve you in this class, with this book, and throughout your life!
- A working approach to saving files and organizing your student documents. I know you have been a student for a number of years; now that the focus is web writing, considering all the subtle ways web writing exists (like file names) is paramount to successfully conveying who you are, how seriously you want to be taken, and how much effort you put into projects. Again, this will serve you as you navigate your undergraduate and possibly graduate studies. This will also serve you long beyond higher education.
- A plan for moving through this digital resource in a way that benefits your classroom learning and your real-life learning. The internet touches so many parts of our everyday lives, recognizing the purpose of writing when we encounter it on the web is critical to navigating life.

### Further Reading:

Fenton, N. and Lee, K.K. (2014). Nicely Said: Writing for the web with style and purpose. Peachpit Press.

Hopman-Droste, R. (2022, January 6). Digital reading strategies to improve student success. *Pearson*. https://www.pearson.com/ped-blogs/blogs/2022/01/digital-reading-strategies-to-improve-student-success.html

Lawrence, D. (2022). Digital Writing: A guide to writing for social media and the web. Broadview Press.

# Chapter Two Web Writing With the Rhetorical Situation

## Chapter Checklist

- How does a rhetorical approach to web writing prepare me to be a more effective web writing creator and consumer?
- What are the course's key concepts?
- How can I apply the course's key concepts as part of my analysis process?

### Key Words From This Chapter:

This chapter will build a webbed rhetorical situation diagram. I highly recommend you create a digital or hand-drawn version for yourself with your notes. To help guide your drawing, revisit this key words list after you've read the chapter to ensure you include all the key elements.

- text
- clear
- useful
- context
- audience
- information architecture
- user experience
- discourse community
- purpose

# Rhetorical Situations

In first year writing courses you often learn about the rhetorical situation, or the rhetorical triangle. The goal is for the elements of the rhetorical triangle to assist writers as they create for specific purposes, with audiences, within a context. The rhetorical triangle can also help us analyze and understand how the choices made by an author or text respond to the ways purpose, context, and audience interacted and intersected as the author created that text.

## Traditional Rhetorical Situation

The rhetorical situation is often described as text, context, and audience. A creator considers the text they are creating, how it fits within the expectations (and limitations) of the context, and what the audience expects and will understand. A creator doesn't (and shouldn't) always start with the text—contexts call for specific messages. We will work through an example to consider how text, context, and audience are interdependent for us as an audience, and interdependent for us as content creators. This will help us add to our understanding as we consider the complexities of digital content, especially web writing.

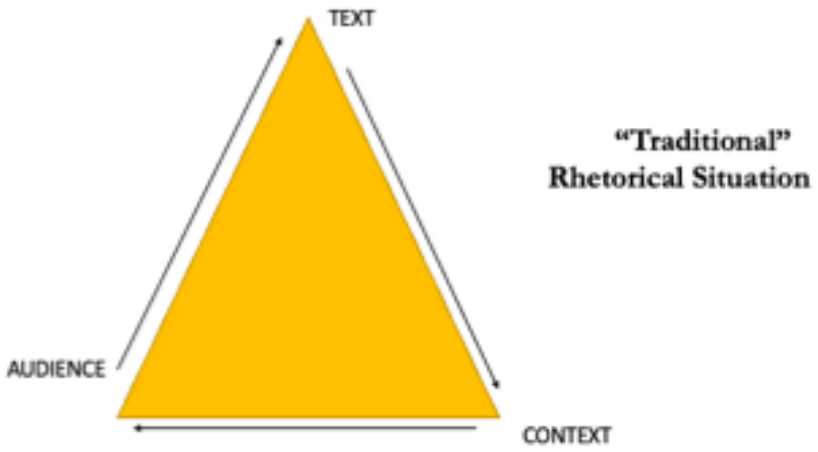


FIGURE 2.1: The "traditional" rhetorical situation.

You should also note that the rhetorical situation can help us:

- brainstorm ideas
    - building an understanding of context and audience expectations
- revise ideas
    - refining and revising our writing and text to meet audience and context needs
- research ideas
    - analyze and understand what texts are appropriate,

- analyze what texts need from grammar, style, and genre

Applying the elements/skills from the rhetorical situation is not a one-time thinking act but something that is revisited throughout the writing process. It also allows for the writing process to adapt and change as writing situations change.

Let’s work through an example: The scenario we’ll use is communicating information to parents and students about a snow day at the local elementary school. Typically, this decision is made around 5 or 6 in the morning.

At one point, school closures were listed on the local news and radio; students and parents needed to turn on their TV or radio and wait to see or hear if their school or school district was listed. Once phone calls could be automated, the messaging shifted to phone calls. Snow days are not a result of the internet, but they represent how writing situations have significantly changed partly due to digital tools!

If I am the school sending the message about school cancellation, a phone call communicates the information effectively. I have the phone number for the parents and/or adult guardians for students in my district so I can call and leave a message. With an automated machine, the machine can do most of the work. Digital tools have increased the efficacy of communicating snow day information to families. I can add my teachers and staff to the automated list, and I’ve notified all my students, their guardians/adults, AND my employees by 6 am. This phone message (text) will reach my audience (students, parents/guardians/adults, and staff members) quickly and efficiently based on information they have provided to me (context). As the school administrator communicating the information, this system is fantastic.

As the parent (audience) receiving the message (text), I am not quite as happy. I was awoken by a phone call at 6 in the morning. As the recipient needing to understand the text, my context is slightly different. I am now in the situation of not needing to be awake at 6 am to prepare my child for school; the context of weekday has suddenly shifted based on the text I received as an audience member. I now no longer need to rush out of bed, and it’s snowing, because it is a snow day, so it is cold and I don’t want to get out of bed. As the recipient, the system is not great. I could have slept longer. I await the day when technology improves (like a text message).

Alternately, as the working parent (audience) receiving the message (text), I now need care for my child for the day so I can go to work. Instead of preparing

lunch and helping my child pack their backpack, I am calling my support list to find support for the day. As the recipient, the system is fine. It clearly communicated what I needed to enact my working-parent snow day plan. The change in technology doesn't change my needs.

This scenario communicated one text (snow day school cancellation) through one medium (phone call) to one audience (parent/guardians). The context for the two audiences was vastly different so the audiences reacted very differently. This situation gets even more complex when creators must consider multiple audiences (students and teachers) and other contexts. For the snow cancellation, students want the day off, celebrating the communication. Teachers are more conflicted as they must now adjust lesson plans, potentially move tests, potentially shift their entire day to remote teaching. Even straightforward communications are as richly complex as human beings.

Based on the example, you should now see how the rhetorical situation can help us:

- brainstorm ideas
    - starting with context and audience helps us write and communicate in meaningful ways
- revise ideas
    - considering context and audience needs helps us refine and revise our writing and text
- research ideas
    - analyzing and understanding what texts and arguments are appropriate and effective,
    - analyzing what texts need from grammar, style, and genre

## Updated Rhetorical Situation

Importantly for web writing, the internet offers a vast array of spaces and ways of creating and sharing texts. In post-Web 2.0, content creators do not necessarily need training and specialized skills to create. Many programs and spaces make it easy to include or incorporate words, images, videos, emoji, gifs, and more into created texts. Many spaces (websites, social media sites, etc.) also make it easy to share the created texts with friends and followers.

With the internet and it's more accessible design, the rhetorical situation/triangle makes even more sense as a way to understand how to create appropriate messages for a specific audience within a specific context and how to understand messages created for specific audiences.

This is important; this book, and we as analysts, are approaching communication on the internet (text, words, images, colors, designs, posts, content, video, audio, and so many other elements) as communicative. Content creator are sharing some*thing*, with some*one*. Because communicators have a vague to concrete idea in their heads who the some*one* is, the rhetorical situation offers ways to generate communicative text, to revise communicative text, and to publish communicative text.

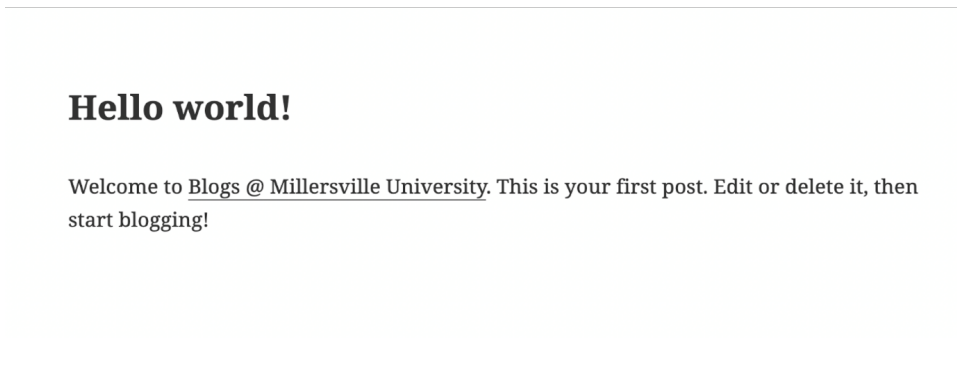


FIGURE 2.2: The automatically created first post in Wordpress blogs, titled "Hello world!"

When a user creates a new blog through Wordpress, a first "Hello world!" post is automatically created. Very simply, this post conveys that the entire world accessing the internet may be an audience of the created blog. While the entire world *may* be an audience, may is a very key word in this phrasing. If I create a blog to document my love of sea turtles, the entire internet will not be interested. This is where the rhetorical situation offers useful ways to develop writing in meaningful ways to create content for my audience, not the world.

What I am calling the "updated" rhetorical situation adds culture and purpose to the original text, context, and audience elements. I find it more helpful and instructive to consider culture as a way of considering the influence across audience, context, and text. As active participants in many different cultures, students typically find this helpful as well. Adding culture provides a way to connect the updated rhetorical situation to their everyday life. Culture also offers a way to actively transfer learning across situations. For instance, understanding what matters in a writing course benefits from considering the culture (what texts are assigned, what do they highlight, what assignments are graded). Similarly, understanding what matters in a Biology course benefits from considering the culture (what texts are assigned, what do they highlight, what assignments are graded). I also add purpose as a reminder to consider how we convey why our writing matters to the audience within the discourse community.

First, purpose. The purpose of the text must be clear and useful. I am going to say this again because the design of the internet, the architecture of the internet, and how we consume content impacts the amount of time a user will spend with text. A web writer and/or content creator must create texts (videos, images, posts, etc.) that clearly convey why they are meaningful to the reader. The texts must be clear and useful to that audience and the reason for engaging must be clear and useful to that audience.

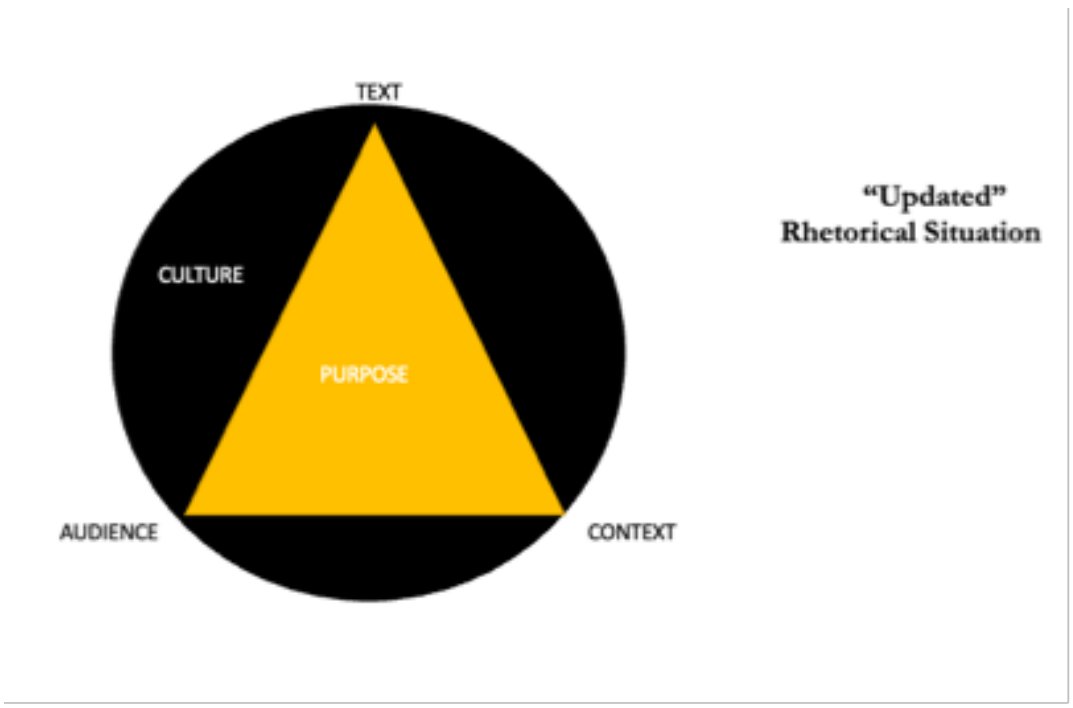


FIGURE 2.3: The "updated" rhetorical situation

Traditionally, the rhetorical situation looks at the interplay among text, context, and audience. As an educator, I always add purpose. I think it is important for writers to consider "so what?" and "why does it matter?" as they consider how their writing-creating communicates a point/message and why that point/message matters. If I actually created a sea turtle blog, I would need to communicate so what and why it matters. Am I writing information on sea turtle biology and habitat? Am I writing on the impacts of global warming and what reducing plastic straw use can do? These both have scientific elements; my choice of purpose AND style will start to determine who the possible audience is likely to be.

I must clearly explain to the audience, quickly, with the appropriate image and/or video and/or textual tools that 1) they are the audience and 2) they will benefit from engaging with my content. Clear and useful on the internet does not always mean short.

If I am a 5th grade teacher looking at websites to help my students learn about sea turtles (audience = teacher AND students), I will prioritize text and images, but the language must be clear and useful to 5th graders.

If I am a world traveler heading to Hawaii for a snorkeling adventure (audience), I will be looking for images, but also information on migration patterns to know if the Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle will be near the island I'm visiting during my trip. My information goals are very different, even though my topic is still "sea

turtles.” In this second example, clear and useful take on a whole new meaning and will require very different content.

If I am a reptile lover who enjoys watching turtle videos for fun (audience), not only am I now seeking video format content instead of textual content but clear and useful will be very different.

As we analyze existing web writing, create web writing, create web writing style guides, and create content strategy reports, we need to consider and explore the purpose of content, and how clear and useful impact the development of that content, the audience engagement with that content, and ultimately the ways the content creator/writer develops additional content for that space. Purpose becomes a very important way of understanding the interaction among text, context, and audience.

Second, culture. When we think of simple internet or text communication like emojis, the purpose includes elements of culture, how humans communicate culturally, and how humans communicate large bits of information quickly and efficiently. Emojis also demonstrate coded language. I am sure we’ve all explained the meaning of an emoji to someone or used an emoji to hide meaning from someone peeking over our shoulder.

Returning to my sea turtle blog example, considering culture will impact what assumptions I make about what my audience knows. Will I assume my audience knows the seven different species of sea turtles or should I spend time explaining this? Will I assume my audience knows about the various diets and migrations of the species or will I explain this?

If I am a 5th grade teacher looking at websites to help my students learn about sea turtles (audience = teacher AND students), I will look for content that describes the biology and ecology surrounding sea turtles (culture) at a level appropriate to learners in my learning space, with language appropriate to my learners. The language choices, approach to presenting science, and inclusion of diagrammed images represent the cultural content choices made by the author that matter to me as an audience.

If I am a world traveler heading to Hawaii for a snorkeling adventure (audience), I will be looking for images, but also narrative experiences of other travelers, of people in the know, to ensure I have the enjoyable experience I am anticipating. I am focused on the stories as culture: I want to know what others experienced so I can develop my own plans for an enjoyable adventure.

If I am a reptile lover who enjoys watching turtle videos for fun (audience), I am now looking for entertainment with new information. I have a baseline knowledge that I want to further in ways that I find enjoyable. This is the most complex culture as "enjoyable" and "fun" differ widely. There are identifiable cultural patterns that content creators tap into as they create this content; it is not an entirely unobtainable goal.

This modified rhetorical situation provides the main elements useful to understanding and creating writing, especially web writing. These elements should be used as ways to understand what you read and to understand what you write. These elements can be built upon as you progress as a writer in future writing situations. Consider now how you can carry these elements with you.

## Reflection Activities:

- Create a list of texts you've created as a college student.
- Create a list of texts you've read as a college student.
- Create a list of what college students should know about being a college student. How is this culturally reinforced within your classes?
- Create a list of web spaces you regularly visit as a college student (context).
- Write down two reasons writing assignments help students learn (purpose).
- Write down one thing you learned about writing in future writing situations.

# Rhetorical Situation: Adding Web Key Concepts

Rhetoric and the rhetorical approach provide a lens for understanding, a way of systematically working through critical thinking. Traditional rhetoric is heavily based on conversation, especially oral conversation. For this reason, building on the ideas of text, context, audience, purpose, and culture by adding additional key concepts helps us more effectively use the rhetorical approach specific to the rich multimedia spaces possible through social media (and the internet in general).

The rest of this chapter explores key concepts that help us apply the interconnections between text, context, audience, purpose, and culture to the rich multimedia spaces. These key concepts help us explore how all web content is not created for all web users!

Additionally, a rhetorical approach and understanding of key concepts is a strong way for students to know and understand and name their own writing (Adler-Kassner and Wardle). This facilitates transfer—which is the important piece for you all. The more you can name how you know how to understand what writing matters, the more effective you'll be as a writer.

## Key Concept: User Experience

User experience shapes the possibility of understanding—a user must find, navigate, and understand to engage web content. If any part of that causes issues, the user will move on.

User experience is often abbreviated as UX. When we think of "writing" and/or English, we typically picture literature and physical books. This is even more true because we associate "English" with school-based learning, and K-12 English typically includes literature. As students transition to higher education, these ideas often shift because writing courses (also called composition courses) come from a rich tradition based on rhetoric, looking at writing and argument development specifically. It is this tradition, writing and argument development, that connects user experience to our discussions of web writing.

We started with rhetorical situation to build a background understanding of how text, context, and audience work together to shape 1) how we develop web content and 2) how we understand web content. We will now add user experience to understand how the context requires and expects us (as savvy internet users) to navigate, engage, and interact with the web content. We'll start here and work through the remaining key concepts. All the key concepts

work together and ANY one can serve as a starting point for considering the others. User experience is NOT more important than any other; it is simply where I'm choosing to start building on the rhetorical situation.

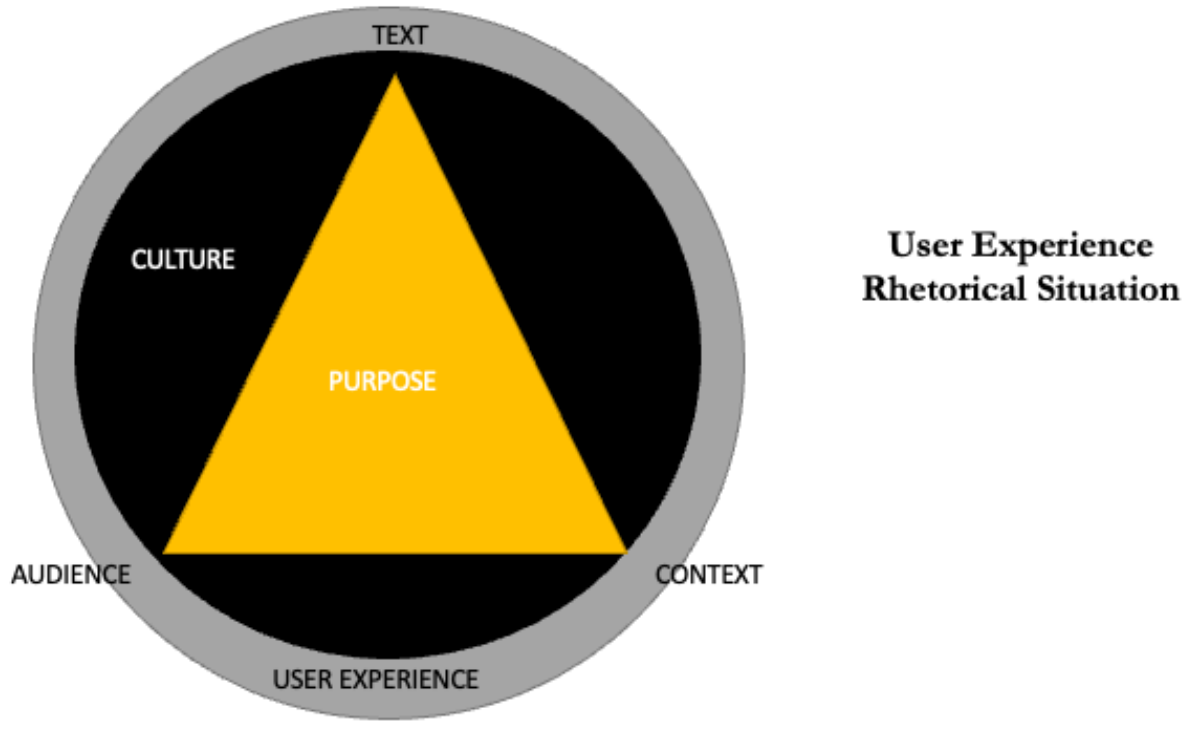


FIGURE 2.4: Including web writing key concept user experience in the updated rhetorical situation.

If I am developing a web-based text, the context matters. In most cases, the context dictates the form and shape my writing will be displayed in. Let's work through an example—a tweet—to explore the user's experience.

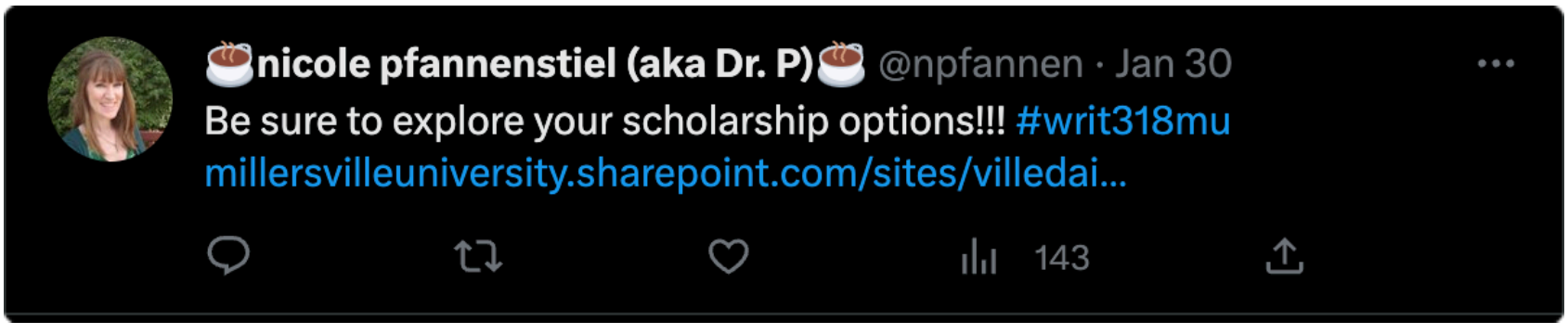


FIGURE 2.5: Link to scholarship opportunities shared with a web writing class by Dr. A Nicole Pfannenstiel.

When thinking through how to share this student-centered information with my students, I considered the following:

- How students would find the message.
    - In this example, I used a course hashtag I often employ when I teach Web Writing as a class. Since I know my students regularly access this hashtag, and many choose to follow me, my tweet sharing scholarship opportunities is very likely to be read by students enrolled in my class that semester.

Since I also know students who completed courses with me in prior semesters continue to follow me, I have the additional audience of former students. I know this because of how students use and continue to use the platform. Their choices communicate to me about their user experience.

- How students would understand who they are as audience members.
    - In this example, I paid attention to word choice, structure, and content focused on student-related or relatable ideas. I was simple and straightforward, with a link to all the information on scholarships students would need.
- How students experience web content.
    - In this example, I did not add images to add elements of fun. Instead, I started with a verb and mentioned money as the key to convey follow the link.

To summarize, user experience considers:

- How a user navigates, understands, finds, and experiences web content withing a webspace. This includes the content available (discourse community), the structure of the content (information architecture), the multiple audiences existing simultaneously with varying content (audience), and the recognition of who we are as audience members for each individual piece of web content.
- How to approach designing content, word choice, structure, multimodal images, and more so audience members can navigate through the space in expected ways to find, interpret, understand, and respond (with a like!) to the web content.
- Clarity: a user must be able to find and understand the content created, but not all users have the same expectations or reading and meaning making abilities. Clear labels, clear navigation, and clear experience building built for the user is so important!
- Usefulness: a user must want to click, read, interact with, connect with, comment on, like, dislike, or otherwise USE the content!

## Key Concept: Information Architecture and Discourse Community

When building web content, we must always consider how and where the content/writing/images are in relation to other content/writing/images. This is a combination of information architecture and discourse community. These concepts remind us of the digital nature of all web writing.

Basically, information architecture are the decisions to place pieces of content in specific locations, in relation to other pieces of content.

Discourse community is the cultural, language, grammar, and style expectations of the audience/users.

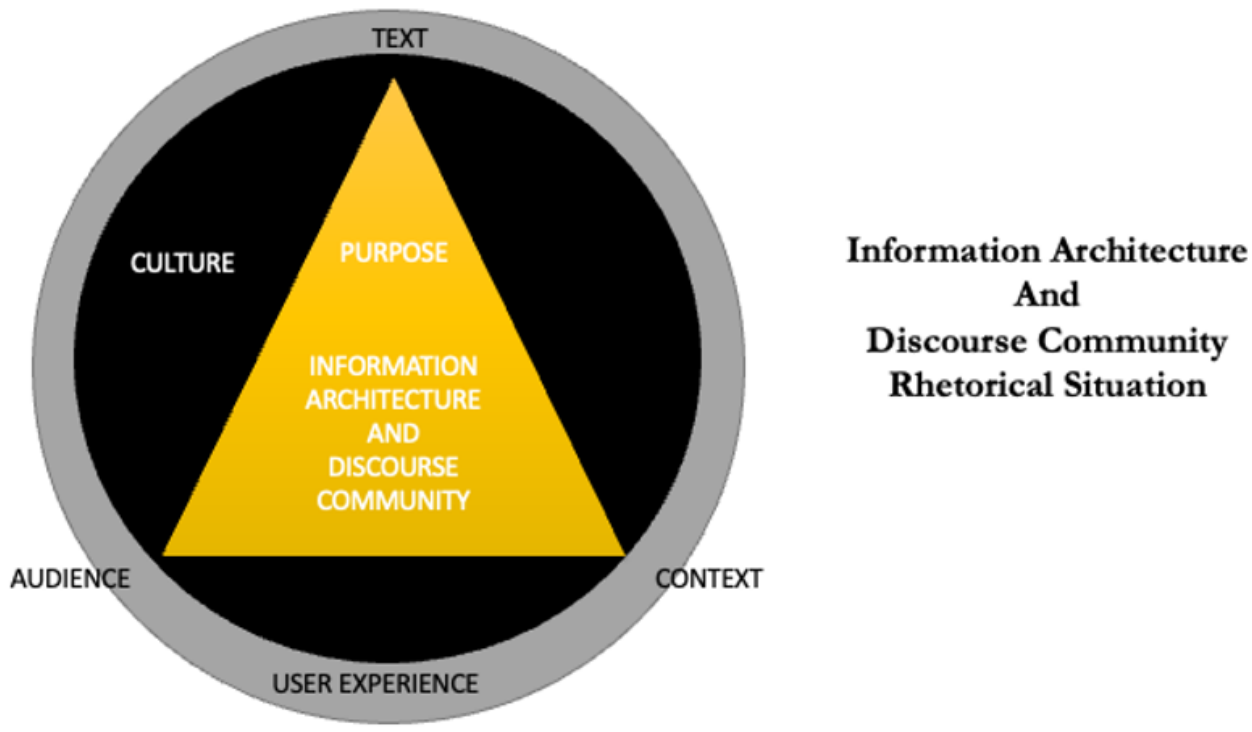


FIGURE 2.6: Including web writing key concepts information architecture and discourse community in the updated rhetorical situation.

In this book, I include headings, and in this chapter I have chosen to include a heading for each of the key concepts. Since there are key concepts related to the rhetorical situation, and additional elements (UX and information architecture, etc.) I have included "key concept" in the heading. These choices, the location in relation to other text within the book, make up the information architecture. I am building in design elements to convey meaning—headings matter. Additionally, by adding "Key Concept," I am building understanding in the discourse community of the course. I assume students understand that repetition of words increases their value within the course—so "key concept" is important, as are the key concepts.

As I put together this book, I built the sections, examples, and images digitally. This book is truly born digital, expected to be read (freely) digitally, designed to be engaged digitally. The decisions I made about where to place information (information architecture) started with considerations of user experience and digital texts. The decisions I made about what language to use and how to use images and examples started with considerations of user experience and digital texts.

But these considerations were not just about digital texts: I considered a student audience or student reader. How much content with no images could a student (audience) work through? How much are they used to working through (discourse community and culture)?

To summarize, information architecture and discourse community considers:

- How a website/space is structured. Information architecture includes the links between pages. For instance, within a course shell, I've created Module folders, with pages within the folder—that is information architecture. I've embedded notes within that folder within that course in a way that makes sense to students familiar with online courses. For instance, this chapter is included within the "What is Content" folder to help students build an understanding of analyzing web content. The notes connect to the folder name and purpose, the structure reinforces the connections. (NOTE: for students less familiar, this structure MAY be confusing, leaving out some students from sense making JUST based on structure.) Similarly, discourse community is how the language, image, sound, and color choices influence sense making. Humans love to look for patterns, so we look for ways to connect and name the pattern. Seeing folders labelled "Week 1" and "Week 2" convey a pattern, they are language decisions that communicate meaning to the reader, they communicate student.

- While designers expect audiences to navigate in specific paths, people move through information in interesting ways. In understanding information architecture and discourse community, we can consider how to use language, text, images, colors, sounds, community clues, and cultural clues to help users successfully understand and navigate the space.

- Clarity: a user must recognize the language and organization and must 1) know what to do with the content and 2) know why the content includes them (discourse community).

- Usefulness: a user must want to click, read, interact with, connect with, comment on, like, dislike, or otherwise USE the content! I know this sounds

familiar 👍. A user must feel like a member of the audience based on the words used, the structure of the information provided, and their understanding of how and why to use the content.

## Key Concept: Audience

Audience is both the most straightforward and the most complex key concept. As a reminder, audience is included in both the "traditional" and "updated" rhetorical situation graphics, it is that important. We know the basics of audience—usually we consider gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, culture, nationality, regionality, education, and a few more. However, in online spaces both attracting and signaling audience is MUCH more complicated.

Going back to the "Hello World" welcome from above, even the most profound blog is just another blog without an audience. Building in such a way (information architecture) that the audience can find and recognize themselves (discourse community) as members of the blog readership is complex. In contemporary times it also likely requires the "correct" use of multiple social media platforms where the potential audience is present.

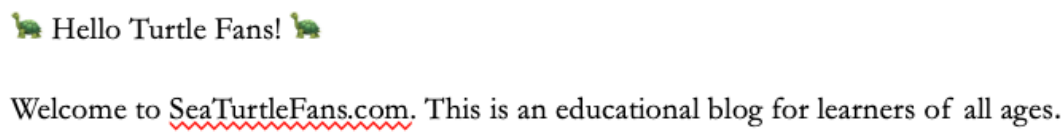


FIGURE 2.7: An update to the "Hello World!" post created for a specific turtle fan audience.

Drawing on the "Hello Turtle Fans" from Figure 2.7, I've updated the "Hello World" Wordpress idea, with specific audience communication. This blog is not meant for everyone, it is meant for turtle fans interested in learning from an educational blog. The form and style (information architecture and discourse community) mirror the original Wordpress post, with very specific audience differences.

As of today (2022–2023), if I want undergraduate students to read my blog, I probably won't use Facebook to advertise. If I want undergraduates students to read my blog, I'll start with TikTok. The space matters, knowing how to use the space matters, then creating the content in the blog in ways that the audience recognizes matters.

Audience demonstrates the many, many ways the key concepts overlap and interrelate.

Most important, remember that "everyone" is never an appropriate answer to who is the audience. Even this book does NOT have an audience of everyone. It is publicly published, for free, but clearly written for an upper-division undergraduate audience. I've made choices to appeal directly to that audience. Could everyone benefit from reading it? Maybe, but probably not. Is it freely available to everyone? Yes, but that doesn't mean that the audience is everyone. The more detailed and nuanced I can be with who the audience of my web content is, the more likely I will be able to directly connect with that audience using appropriate language, grammar, and style choices, in addition to appropriate web spaces to connect with where they spend time and are likely to see my post.

To summarize, audience considers:

- Who is "supposed" to use the space. This concept seems straightforward; we design for a specific audience. However, the internet has so many different users that any audience member could find our space for various reasons. The goal is to predict who should use the space and why so that can be communicated to audience members quickly.
- While this seems straightforward, major audiences may have competing interests. We'll see this repeatedly with our major assignments in this course. Use critical thinking when considering audience; this is NEVER an easy, straightforward answer.
- Clarity: a user must recognize themselves as audience members, not just one of a million Twitter users, or one of a million Facebook users, or one of a million YouTube users, but one IN a million.
- Usefulness: a user must want to be part of an audience and want to know that content creation is up-to-date with their needs within the community.

## Key Concept: Purpose

This is an important part of the rhetorical situation, but I want to discuss this again briefly. I must make language, grammar, and style choices to convey to my audience why they should read/look at my content.

Drawing on the "Hello Turtle Fans" from Figure 2.8, I've made even more effective updates to the "Hello World" Wordpress idea. This time, I clearly

communicated what this blog will include: educational information on the Hawaiian Green Sea Turtle including migration and photos. This shift in language did not significantly increase how much I wrote, it changed the words I used. The use of migration and education will likely mean some readers will use the space for research, while others will choose to look at different spaces ('educational' can be intimidating to some audiences). Making choices, through language, grammar, and style conveys why – why sea turtle fans should look to this space specifically.

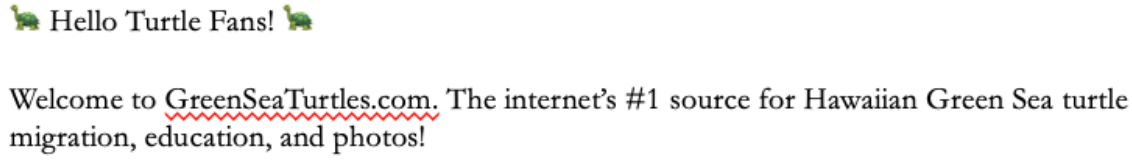


FIGURE 2.8: A further update to the "Hello World!" post created for a specific turtle fan audience, with purpose.

This is an important place where the web writing ideas presented in this book differ from web marketing. The rhetorical situation does not magically make marketing easier, it does not magically sell products. Instead, working through the key concepts of the rhetorical situation helps a creator communicate meaningful information to their intended audience (purpose), in the space the audience is likely to exist (context and information architecture), using texts and language the audience will recognize (culture and discourse community).

To summarize, purpose considers:

- Why should users explore the space, what will they gain, and how should they make sense of the content? This idea goes beyond just the communication of meaning making and considers how to communicate to users/audiences why they should care about the content and how that influences how they make meaning.

- While this seems to be entirely tied up in the meaning of the content, purpose can also be communicated through information architecture and discourse community: how does your space create community and structure the information in meaningful ways for your users?

- Clarity: a user must understand why they should read, interact with, view, like, subscribe, etc. Why does the content matter? Why does the content fit within the discourse community and culture of content creation? Why does the content offer something a little bit new?

- Usefulness: a user must want to watch—even entertainment content offers purpose (entertainment). The purpose must be easy to recognize by the audience!

## Meta Moment

I repeatedly reminded you all to connect your reading notes to the assignments you're being asked to complete. Have you looked at the writing assignment for this week/module?

Think through how you're tracking notes from this page so they are useful to your assignment. HINT: I wrote all this, so I know the definitions—that is NOT what I'm looking for. How are YOU applying these ideas in meaningful ways to your learning to already begin building connections?

## Reflection Activities:

- Write down your definitions for the key concepts.
- Write down where you can use each concept as part of your writing process.
- Write down your strategy for using these concepts as part of your analysis for the work this semester.

Take 10–15 minutes to develop your writing and web writing skills, to know and name those skills to serve your needs in the future!

## Chapter Review

After reading this chapter you should have:

- A working understanding of the rhetorical situation
- A richer understanding of how a rhetorical approach to web writing prepares you to be a more effective web writing creator and consumer
- A richer rhetorical writing approach that includes the course key concepts?

### Further Reading:

***Naming What We Know: Threshold concepts of writing studies*** edited by Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle. The University Press of Colorado, 2015.

***Nicely Said: Writing for the web with style and purpose*** by Nicole Fenton and Kate Kiefer Lee. Peachpit Press, 2014.

# Chapter Three Content Strategy and Content Management

## Chapter Checklist

- What is content? How can we understand content so it is useful?
- What is content strategy?
- How can I analyze existing content to understand content strategy?

### Key Words From This Chapter:

This chapter will build a webbed rhetorical situation diagram. I highly recommend you create a digital or hand-drawn version for yourself with your notes. To help guide your drawing, revisit this list of key words after you've read the chapter to ensure you include all the key elements.

- Content
- Content management
- Content strategy
- Content analysis
- Data

## What Is Content?

In the "simplest" sense, everything is content. For this chapter, we will narrow content from everything to web content. To save time writing and reading, I will shorten "web content" to simply "content" for this chapter.

When we consider web writing specifically, we need to think about content beyond paragraphs of text and consider how pieces of communication function within the spaces they are published. Consider how images, emojis, hashtags, colors, design, and spaces encourage patterns in created content for specific audience.

In the more complicated sense, content should be clear and useful, designed for the space, written for the audience, and meaningful.

While I've said this previously in this book, the goal of this book cannot be to teach you to write a tweet or a blog or web content. By the time I finish typing this sentence, months before you read it, ways of creating content will have changed for some group on the internet. Clear and useful differ by audience, space, user experience, and more. Instead, we'll focus on how to use key concepts to determine what is clear and useful content for different situations.

We'll focus primarily on analyzing social media content in this final chapter, to understand content strategy. The approaches outlined here can be adapted to analyze content for individual and company websites and for posting on multiple platforms with a goal of developing content strategy.

While it seems content is just text, content doesn't exist without the user, the user experience, navigating the information architecture, the design of the space, and the data underlying the space. So content is the images, sounds, videos, colors, shapes, words, grammars, languages, fonts, and meaning as it exists within spaces (not always web-based, but we'll focus on web-based in this class). Content is also timely; the audience focus also means the content must be accessible to the audience when they need it, updated in a timely manner. Content starts with a focused audience, then slowly shifts toward a more general audience to continue to increase readers/viewers.

Content also includes data. Even before social media likes and follows, web pages and forums tracked, displayed, and shared views and clicks. Measuring traffic to a site or to a piece of content is built within the structure of the internet. For our purposes, connecting to how and when and where data provides feedback on content is an important element of content.

Likes, views, interactions, and follows all inform the content creator and the viewing audience about the data. As a viewer of social media content, we all use the engagement of others to understand the quality of the content—did I find an awesome Instagrammer, or is the content not useful? As content publishers, we all use the engagement of others to understand the perception of content publishing—did I post a picture people don't like, or do I need to wait for all my friends to get out of class?

This also means content needs to be reassessed and updated on a regular basis. It won't remain timely and accessible to the same audience forever! Additionally, audiences change! Starting with the idea that content and web writing should be rhetorically situated strengthens content strategy approaches, making content management more effective. Content should be written/designed for an anticipated audience—accounting for their needs, their ways of making sense, their language use, their preferences, their experiences, their expectations.

# Definitions

### Content

- Posted images, designs, text, paragraphs, hashtags, emojis, colors, spaces, videos, and more.

### Content Management

- Active management of content, content posting, and content updating to ensure it remains aligned with content strategy and is clear and useful to the audience.

### Content Strategy

- Goal-oriented approach to creating, releasing/publishing, and assessing content within a given space. This book focuses on content creators' content strategy using publicly viewable data to understand strategy decisions. Includes understanding and setting a content posting strategy and web writing for content cohesion.

### Content Analysis

Measured assessment of content performance, using available data to inform a content strategy.

## Content Strategy

Content strategy means the strategic consideration of content, format, structure, and functionality across a web space. Content strategy considers how to plan the content to be meaningful for expected users at the right time. Yes, all the possible content ideas are great—and important—but if delivered at the wrong time in the wrong place, they'll never be seen. They'll be a series of very pretty zeros and ones hiding in the vastness of cyberspace. Web writing needs content strategy. All web writing should consider audience, information architecture, purpose, user experience, and rhetorical situation so it will be viewed and used as designed.

Content strategy is using words and data to create and publish content that supports meaningful, interactive experiences. Rachel Lovinger first described content strategy in 2007, although it was and had been her job for a couple years. Since that time, and the massive subscription to various social media sites, and the growth of content creators, definitions of content strategy have similarly grown and changed. What remains constant and key to our understanding: content strategy requires 1) meaningful engagement with various pieces of data, 2) meaningful engagement with the content style. Content strategy looks at how the content is "doing" in the space—the data behind the content. The data can show and record use. The data shows, records, and displays audience engagement. Content strategy looks at likes, interactions, comments, time of day, day of the week, time of year, AND elements of the content to determine effectiveness for the audience experience of that content. Content strategy cares that the users/audience know how to make meaning, that the users/audience know what to do with the content, that the users/audience enjoy the style and focus of the content shared.

Content strategy needs to include the key concepts from this class and the situating of strategy within data analysis—more likes does not mean something is automatically "good" or "good strategy." It's complicated! Use your understanding of text, context, audience, discourse community, information architecture, purpose, and user experience to help you analyze the content and data surrounding the content to understand content strategy decisions. While the focus of this book is analyzing existing content strategy, these ideas can be adjusted and used to develop and implement a content strategy yourself. Content strategy implementation is not the focus of this book. For those interested in moving toward content creation, I highly recommend starting with a content analysis of other content creators as the beginning of the content

creation journey. I value content analysis so much, it is the focus of this whole chapter.

Content strategy is strategic: it relies on setting goals that align with 1) the space, 2) the content creator mission, and 3) the connections with the audience. The strategy and goals need realistic measures. Most content creators shouldn't expect 1,000 likes on their first video. Content creators shouldn't expect to know all the right hashtags from their first post.

Content requires continuous maintenance; the internet shifts and changes, so content strategy focuses on setting and resetting goals to meet changing audience needs. Data must be gathered regularly. Content including words, colors, design, composition, space, hashtags, tags, format, and so forth must be assessed regularly.

This use of data to inform writing and content creation is part of the overall push toward data-driven decision-making. But, with fierce digital competition because content creation is relatively easy (at least for those with access to the internet and a decent device), using the data available in meaningful ways matters.

This is the key component to content strategy. You've probably heard the old saying "if a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, did it really fall?" We could modify that for web content by asking "if content exists on the internet with no views, does it really exist?" If content exists on the internet with a million view in one day, is this meaningful? Sustainable? Is it better to have 1,000 likes in one day or 100 likes per day for 10 days?

Let's make these ideas more concrete with an example. If I am starting a new coffee blog (have I mentioned I love coffee?), should I compare my **first week's Instagram posts** likes, comments, and follows to Starbucks'? Should I track the date I post? Should I use hashtags? There are a lot of elements that need to be considered so I can build a true understanding of content strategy so I can use content effectively.

If I start a new coffee blog and my family likes and interacts with my posts, do I need to subtract family numbers for an accurate understanding of how readers like my discussions and descriptions of coffee flavors and brewing approaches?

Could I just post and see what happens? Absolutely. However, this book is about building a meaningful content strategy to achieve goals. We'll continue to discuss content strategy as a meaningful part of any content publishing attempt.

Content strategy is an emerging field. Understanding content strategy within an industry is constantly changing; content creators, businesses, and institutions all want to use good content strategy to reach their audience. Understanding content strategy within academia, to help businesses, and to help prepare students for jobs that are open and ready to be filled is also constantly changing.

To provide an example, do you remember back in April 2020? ALL the ads used "pandemic" language without using pandemic language? Companies created content to react to a global event, quickly. They used words like "global event" and "major changes" without saying COVID-19. Then, as global citizens became exhausted by the lockdowns, they created new content, new language, new imagery. THIS is how fast content strategy must adjust.

As the internet changes, as users find new ways to exploit tools, content strategy changes. Content creators, business, institutions, and others must set goals, analyze data, and try new things as they create content within constantly in-flux spaces. The goal of content strategy and content analysis in this book is to demonstrate how to collect and analyze data, and how to add to the academic understanding of content strategy.

## Basics of Content Strategy

Content strategy starts and ends with goals.

- Content should further the *goals* of an organization. It should communicate the goal, connect the goal to the audience that matters, and embody the goal. Every post needs to connect to goals.

- Content should be *analyzed* based on the goals. This means the data analysis AND content analysis of posts can be directly connected to something that matters to the business side of an organization: their organizational goals and missions. While businesses and marketing consider this branding—for this class and our focus on writing, design, and data, we're focused on learning goals—how does the content build a meaning for the audience? How does the language and style of the writing and the design clearly indicate the value of the content to help meet the goals.

- Content strategy should be able to identify what *type* of content, in what space, will help a content creator meet their goals.

- Content strategy is a consistently assessed process; the key concepts of discourse community, user experience (UX), information architecture,

audience, purpose, ethos, AND content should be considered regularly in line with the data collected about how the content performs.

Content strategy is measurable and should include benchmarks.

- The focus of web writing and content strategy is usability and usefulness!
    - Does the audience know what to do with the content? How to read and engage with the content?
    - Does the audience know how to interact in meaningful ways with the content?
    - Does the audience continue to check the content? Then, do they continue to interact with the content?
    - Does the audience know how to find the content? Does the audience know what to do once they find the content?
- An incomplete list of ways of measuring usability and usefulness:
    - Number of likes on a post. What does this mean if post A receives 12 and post B 100?
    - Number of followers
    - Types of followers
    - Use of hashtags
        - Do new hashtags increase followers?
        - Do hashtags matter in that social media space?

Content strategy connects to audience.

- The content of the post—images, words, design, etc.—should engage the audience in a meaningful user experience, in ways that matter IN THAT SPACE!
    - This requires that content strategists (YOU) become familiar with what a space allows and does not allow—what are the affordances?

Content strategy should be purposeful.

- This means a schedule. Not just “Post once a week,” but a thought-out, discussed “Post messages like Message A on Tuesdays at 9 am. Post messages like Message B on Thursdays at 5 pm,” for example. You need to do this thought work and connect this purpose to the measuring (#2) and the goals (#1).

Content strategy should clearly communicate a cohesive message to the followers of that social media space! Here is a final example:

When we “own” the site, like a website URL, we can track views and we can track where visitors entered our site from (did they find us on Google, did they find us on a list of 100 Top Safe Liberal Arts schools, did they find us on a list of 10 top Writing Studies programs?). However, some of that data could tell us the wrong thing.

For example, a lot of colleges have animal mascots and/or animals on campus. At the school I work with, we have swans on our pond. If we post a picture of the swans on Instagram, could an animal rights group read that post the wrong way? How many of our views, likes, and comments on that post are motivated by nostalgic fondness for the swans? Might some be motivated instead by concern for the swans’ welfare?

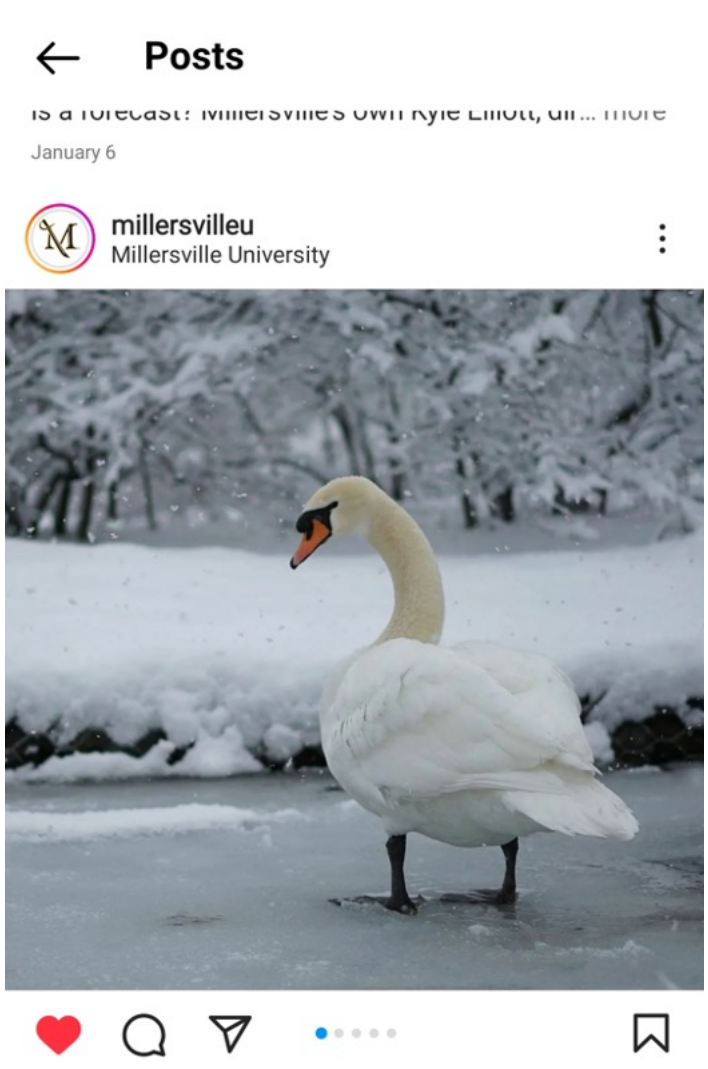


FIGURE 3.1: An Instagram post with our campus swan.

Keep in mind that Instagram followers likely include students, parents, community members, staff, faculty, and alumni—an incredibly diverse population. Students, staff, faculty, and alumni likely feel nostalgia for the campus, for the pond, and for friends and campus life. However, we read the image in a VERY SPECIFIC way. Our comments and likes are nostalgic comments and likes.

An animal rights group could look at the situation VERY differently. Is the campus providing the necessary mental stimulation for the swans? Is the campus meeting the necessary dietary and habitat needs of the swans? While most of us who have been on campus know we’re proud of our swan pair and take great care of them, one single image, capturing one moment

in time, shared on Instagram might not have the same effect for all groups. The number of likes is not enough to understand engagement with this post; the comments could completely change the content strategy.

If the swan post has 100 likes and 10 comments, out performing all other posts that week, can I, as the Instagram content creator and web writer, simply say "Perfect, let's post more images of swans"? OR should I read those comments?

Great news—the content creator and web writer who created the post took the class that influenced the development of this book—they know to read the comments. We need to see what people are saying to build a stronger understanding of engagement with the post, to understand the audience and audience needs to continue creating and posting successful content. We do not know the discourse community/communities viewing the post unless we read the comments. For a public account representing a public university, this comment reading work is incredibly important. If I switch back to my coffee example from earlier in this chapter, as an individual creating an Instagram account showcasing coffee, the audience and discourse community are more narrowed, coffee enthusiasts. As an analyst of the account, it is more important that I understand how the content creator interacts with (or does not interact with) the comments. Is the content creator interacting with the audience in the comments (information architecture)? This is the work of content strategy.

# Content Analysis

In both higher education and the real world, content analysis means a few different things. For the purposes of this book, content analysis is the analysis of publicly posted social media content to understand content strategy decisions. The remainder of this chapter walks through the steps of a content analysis to help analysts understand how to develop questions, collect data to answer those questions, and develop a content strategy to move forward with.

A brief note: the content analysis discussed here focuses on social media content because the data is public, and easy to view. Because the focus is publicly viewable data, there are some questions unanswerable through this approach, unanswerable by outside viewers. Viewing follower increases and decreases is incredibly difficult when we do not "own" the account. This content strategy analysis approach can be modified and used by a content creator starting or revising their own content strategy, but the focus will be on using likes, comments, views, and other public data to understand and plan content strategy.

## Identify Content Creators

The first step in a content analysis is to determine what created content will be analyzed. Since the goal of this work is to understand content strategy, a multitude of posts will be necessary. As the analyst, you want to understand decisions and content performance over time.

Conceptualize the overall project: think about, define, and describe the project. This begins with identifying the content creators and the social media space that will be analyzed.

Brainstorm why this is important content to study. Videos on YouTube with millions of views are important, but why? What can that information tell us? I don't think that tells us Americans spend too much time on the internet—I think it can tell us a lot about how viewers engage with ideas, culture, fandoms, special interests, and more!

When considering comparisons of multiple content creators, reduce the variables. Content comparison and analysis should focus on content published in one space, like YouTube or Instagram or Twitter. Additionally, look for content created for the same audience to ensure comparability.

Analyzing the content strategy for a YouTuber creating makeup videos alongside a YouTuber creating video game walk-throughs won't result in fruitful findings.

While the audience may be a similar group, the difference in video focus changes how that audience approaches understanding and engaging with the content.

Questions to consider:

- What does “content” mean for these content creators and audiences?
- How does the content shape the user experience?
- How does the space shape the user experience?
- How does the space shape the content?
- How does the content creator build a genre?

## Audience Analysis

Who are you as an audience member? This is something we don’t often ask ourselves, something we don’t often consider. But, especially online, our decisions to be an audience in spaces influences what we are advertised, what we have access to, what we see.

What do we need to know about the audience? When discussing and analyzing the audience as a key concept and part of the Web Writing Rhetorical Analysis, there are tons of audience characteristics to consider. For this class and this project, we’ll focus on four areas

### Age/Demographics

Different groups of people have different experiences, different goals, and different priorities. Basic demographics are always important to know, and guess, as they change ***how*** we interact with content.

As students, it’s likely that you will move. Your age group and my age group have that in common—we both may need information on moving. However, I’m a parent with a full-time job, so the concerns surrounding my move are likely different than yours. I care about house size, bedroom size, number of bathrooms, AND school district, snow clean-up duties, and yard maintenance. We may have similarities, but the differences will cause us to read a space completely differently. I will look at Homes for Sale differently to meet my needs, even if we are both purchasing. I worked at a university during Hurricane Katrina and helped displaced students re-enroll in graduate school. I likely look at flood zones differently than you do. I’m from the desert—hot, sunny Arizona. I see

backyard fire pits as an epic danger—a sentiment not shared in wet, muggy Pennsylvania.

As you work through this element of your audience analysis, consider:

1. Age

2. Race

3. Gender

4. Socioeconomic status

5. Region/geography

Not all elements will matter at all times, consider the content, the ways of knowing and reading, and proximity as you determine which elements matter to your analysis.

**Ways of Knowing and Reading**

My life experiences have taught me to read and write in specific ways, combined with how spaces communicate information and my familiarity with those patterns.

As you work through this element of your audience analysis, consider:

- What is your knowledge of the topic and space?
- What are you expected to know how to do? Navigate? Read big words? Converse on specific topics? Use specific types of details? Own specific things
    - This category can be huge; think through the assumptions of spaces (which cross over with the categories below too) and how those assumptions shape our reading, writing, communicating, and meaning-making practices!
- What are you expected to know how to navigate? What should be clicked and why? How do you know?
    - Languages written with the Roman alphabet (English, Spanish, Italian, etc.) read from left to right; we then design web pages and newspaper pages and books to model that reading pattern. When my son finds a manga book, there are A LOT of image clues that we should read the book

"backward" because it's modeled on a right-to-left reading pattern instead. Uncover and notice these practices that completely shape how we read, write, communicate, and make meaning!

- What are you expected to know? What terms, ideas, backgrounds, histories, or ways of interacting are expected?

**Interests and Expectations**

Unless we're forced, we don't frequently visit sites and spaces that don't interest us.

Also, if we're forced, we'll read and make meaning in TOTALLY different ways than when we visit for fun, and because the content aligns with our interests.

Spaces make assumptions about what we know. Family groups and friend groups have inside jokes that shortcut meaning making AND require us to know something. Digital spaces overexplain or under-explain based on what an audience knows, which will then impact who visits and with what frequency. If a space overexplains, I'll visit as I'm learning. Then I'll find a more advanced space to connect with people with similar interests.

I'm a knitter, so I may start my knitting exploration on YouTube with very basic "How-To" videos that cover a specific stitch. But then I'll find a community like Ravelry that shares patterns once I have the basics down. My frequency in each space is impacted by my interest, expectations, AND expertise.

As you work through this element of your audience analysis, consider:

1. Why do you visit/experience the content?

2. What are your expectations?

3. What do you hope to gain (which will/should align with communication purpose)?

You will likely find a LOT of connection between answers in "Ways of Knowing and Reading" and answers in "Interests and Expectations."

**Proximity**

Many, many years ago I taught a group of sixth graders at a Saturday Cram School (based on Asian Saturday schools). I was teaching a creative writing course. At the time, students were ***obsessed*** with the book ***Eragon*** (the one

about dragons). For this creative writing class, they essentially wrote fan fiction. They were sixth graders unfamiliar with the scope of fan fiction available online, even unfamiliar with the term fan fiction. They saw their work with the text as creative writing and we moved forward with that shared understanding.

This is a situation of proximity; the students were creating a genre of text/ content without knowing the rich history of fan fiction and user-generated content creation. The students were exploring complex meaning-making practices, isolated in a small proximity, so I didn't cause issues with their parents. I balanced the creative engagement with fan fiction writing students wanted with their parents' expectations for the course (their parents wanted poetry and "true" fiction).

I share this example not just to nerd out on fan fiction but to point out how complicated proximity is. In a physical sense, I need to be able to physically access spaces—I might need a car to get to them, I might need them to have space for a shopping cart because I have my child, or I might need to know they even exist. This is complicated by other physical needs—do I need space for a wheelchair?

Digital proximity operates very similarly; I need to know something called "fan fiction'" exists to know to search for it. I need to judge the interaction of people within the space to understand if this is a welcoming space for me and my needs.

As you work through this element of your audience analysis, consider:

1. Why do you know about this space? Access to both digital and in-person spaces requires that you first learn about them in some way.

2. Why do you know how to access this space?

Questions to consider:

- What is the audience expected to know? Why?

- What do you know? Why? Why does this matter?

- Why do audience members repeatedly (if they do) seek out new content created by these creators?

    - NOTE: there is one wrong answer—everyone. There is NO page/account made for everyone!

## Research Question

The research question provides direction for content analysis. The research question should focus on studying your research topic—the content created for a specific audience to understand content strategy.

All students will develop a research question to guide their analysis work—a question that can be answered with publicly collectable social media data. I'm going to say that again: there are numerous questions that can be asked related to content creation and content strategy, but for this analysis, with our limitation to publicly viewable social media data, the answers to the question need to relate to what can be viewed.

The research question should express why your topic is important to study—the purpose of your time and effort on this analysis. The research question, and subsequent data analysis, will relate directly to the content strategy: the goals and objectives of content creation and content posting to connect with a specific audience. The work of this content analysis is to develop a "case study" of content strategy so you can offer meaningful insights about content and content strategy.

Most importantly, the research question must be answerable with the viewable data! As viewers and followers of social media spaces, we can see likes and comments and we can see the successes and failures of certain types of content; however, we cannot see increases and decreases in followers over time.

Questions to consider:

- What is unique about the content created for that audience?
- How can you study engagement with those unique elements? Use these ideas to help write your research question!

# Method and Data Collection

Research methods are the step-by-step processes engaged to systematically study an event—in this case, to systematically collect content creator data. Since the internet changes constantly, a clear method that includes the date and time data was collected is critical to clear, unbiased data collection.

Remember that the method of collection must focus on collecting data that will address the research question. Given the focus on social media, I am focusing on ways to collect and analyze likes, comments, views, content patterns, and more.

While qualitative and quantitative data can be very complex (and many websites and social media sites provide account owners sophisticated data analytics), understanding the basics allows analysts like us access to meaningful data to support claims about content and content strategy. For content creators building content strategy plans, a basic understanding of quantitative and qualitative approaches allows a content creator to realistically compare their engagement data to the public data of other content creators.

## Quantitative Methods

Quantitative methods are approaches that look at and compare numbers. Social media spaces provide a lot of access to engagement data like comments, likes, views, and more. Quantitative approaches communicate that audience members were inspired enough by the content published that they engaged and clicked. Internet users are often described as mindless scrollers. The quantitative data shows otherwise, but not all content inspires engagement! Quantitative data shows which posts inspired higher levels of engagement.

Let’s consider a YouTube example, one comparing YouTube videos. For this example, let’s say the data was collected on 03/01/2023 at noon. I purposely looked at data two months old to ensure adequate time for followers to access, view, and engage with the video. To collect this data, I accessed each YouTube account, then went to the first video they posted for 2023. I started by accessing the first video for Content Creator A, then B, then C, then D. I added the data—number of likes and number of comments—to my data-tracking chart:

This quantitative method approach collects comparable data, but it is only showing a small portion of the picture. What is missing is enough data to develop a pattern of content strategy. When collecting quantitative data to answer the research question, the post date, likes, and comments of multiple videos for each content creator needs to be collected and organized.

## Qualitative Methods

Where quantitative methods look at data, qualitative methods look at and compares text. Social media spaces often provide space for followers to comment. Social media spaces provide space for content creators to post titles, captions, and more. Additionally, individual posts can be analyzed for their topic focus, use of color or background detail, inclusion of additional people, and so many more elements. Qualitative methods allow analysts to consider the detailed decisions content creators may choose to engage, the trends within comments, and more.

Let’s use the same YouTube example, the one comparing YouTube videos. For this example, let’s say the data was collected on 03/01/2023 at noon. I purposely looked at data two months old to ensure adequate time for followers to access, view, and engage with the video. To collect this data, I accessed each YouTube account, then went to the first video they posted for 2023. I started by accessing the first video for Content Creator A, then B, then C, then D. I added the data and title of the video to my data-tracking chart:

Again, this qualitative method approach collects comparable data, but it is only showing a small portion of the picture. What is missing is enough data to develop a pattern of content strategy. When collecting qualitative data to answer the research question, the possibilities for textual analysis, video/image analysis, and comment analysis are endless. Developing a rubric to systematically analyze the data will be necessary to draw meaningful conclusions, and to notice meaningful patterns.

## Mixed Methods

Most content analysis methods will require a mixed-methods approach, some quantitative some qualitative, to situate the numbers and findings. A mixed-methods approach draws on both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research question. It is often most useful to use the qualitative approach as a way to further analyze and explain the quantitative data.

**YouTube Quantitative Data Comparison**

| Content Creator | Video Post Date | Number of Likes | Number of Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| Content Creator A | 01/01/2023 | 150 | 21 |
| Content Creator B | 01/01/2023 | 400 | 25 |
| Content Creator C | 01/02/2023 | 160 | 60 |
| Content Creator D | 01/02/2023 | 320 | 12 |

Again, let's use the same YouTube example, the one comparing YouTube videos. For this example, let's say the data was collected on 03/01/2023 at noon. I purposely looked at data two months old to ensure adequate time for followers to access, view, and engage with the video. To collect this data, I accessed each YouTube account, then went to the first video they posted for 2023. I started by accessing the first video for Content Creator A, then B, then C, then D. I added the data—number of likes and the title of the video—to my data-tracking chart:

Again, this mixed-methods approach collects comparable data, but it is only showing a small portion of the picture. What is missing is enough data to develop a pattern of content strategy. In this example, it appears that "Waffles for Lunch" is the most engaged video. This may be due to the title or the content of the video. While there is too little data to understand trends and patterns, there may also be too little data to know if "Waffles for Lunch" is actually the most engaged video.

Let's add one additional column to this data collection to further consider various elements of data that may be useful. Something to note is that if you realize you need additional data to address your research question, the original data may be different because time has passed. Collecting as much data on the first pass as may be necessary will be useful to try to reduce the need to collect data again.

With this new information, "Waffles for Lunch" may have the most likes, but the

**YouTube Qualitative Data Comparison**

| Content Creator | Video Post Date | Title |
|---|---|---|
| Content Creator A | 01/01/2023 | Bananas for Breakfast |
| Content Creator B | 01/01/2023 | Waffles for Lunch |
| Content Creator C | 01/02/2023 | Tomato Dinner |
| Content Creator D | 01/02/2023 | Oatmeal Smoothie |

number of likes to number of followers is more extreme. We could add or

consider number of views, comparing the number of likes to the number of views to understand and contextualize what the number of likes means.

Social media spaces provide a significant amount of data to viewers; careful consideration of what data is collected is really important to successfully answer the research question.

Questions to help you consider how to develop a systematic approach to data collection and what to collect:

- What is available in the space?
- What can be counted, measured, and collected?
- What is "typical" content? How do you know?
- What does the data show is "typical" data and how does that compare to your assumption? For most of you, you will select and follow content creators you are already interested in—that's fine. Set aside your assumptions and experiences, analyze the data that exists. What do the images/videos show?

**YouTube Data Comparison**

| Content Creator | Video Post Date | Number of Likes | Title |
|---|---|---|---|
| Content Creator A | 01/01/2023 | 150 | Bananas for Breakfast |
| Content Creator B | 01/01/2023 | 400 | Waffles for Lunch |
| Content Creator C | 01/02/2023 | 160 | Tomato Dinner |
| Content Creator D | 01/02/2023 | 320 | Oatmeal Smoothie |

  What do the words tell us? What do the language choices convey? What work do these various content elements do to convey genre to the viewer, which helps the audience understand the post?

- How does this data answer/address your research question? Again, we cannot ask the content creators questions, we cannot know the stats behind the pages. We can build a case study based on publicly viewable data—analyzing the posts, collecting likes, comments, shares, and so forth. When connected together, what can the public data tell us about the choices content creators are making, and what does that tell us about content strategy? How does this answer YOUR research question?

Remember, graphing the data you collected will help SHOW your point about content strategy. The goal is to use the data to show your conclusions.

**YouTube Mixed Data Comparison**

| Content Creator | Video Post Date | Number of Followers | Number of Likes | Title |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Content Creator A | 01/01/2023 | 700 | 150 | Bananas for Breakfast |
| Content Creator B | 01/01/2023 | 500 | 400 | Waffles for Lunch |
| Content Creator C | 01/02/2023 | 200 | 160 | Tomato Dinner |
| Content Creator D | 01/02/2023 | 500 | 320 | Oatmeal Smoothie |

## Data Analysis

Web writing is so much more than typing words in a Twitter box—it's typing the right words, for the right audience, at the right time AND knowing how to understand "right" (measure/assess). One of the first steps to analyze the data starts with your working definition of content strategy. As the focus of the research question, content strategy should be defined. This should start with what content strategy for content creators like those you follow looks like; identify and discuss the major elements of "content strategy" for these content creators.

Remember the following:

- Connect YOUR analysis to how the content creator is/is not meeting content strategy goals.
- Use the content and data to SHOW how you arrived at your definition of content strategy.
- Use the content and data to SHOW why content strategy matters.
- Use the content and data to SHOW why your work here matters, the value of your academic exploration.
- Use the content and data to SHOW how content creators can access, analyze, and understand their own content strategy, similar to your approach in this assignment. What is the mixed-methods approach, and why will it continue to work?

This reconnection of content strategy to the work of analysis demonstrates what we've really been moving toward understanding: *the work of content* in web writing, or how space, tools, affordances, data, words, and design affect how the audience understands something a content creator communicates.

Again, content strategy requires that content creators set goals and assess; the data you collect as part of this research project demonstrate what the content creator's goals and strategies look like.

Keep in mind that digital analysis is far more dependent on the specific space, audiences within the discourse community, and click count associated with the tools that develop information architecture (click count and data created to quantify user experience).

## Chapter Review

Content strategy! What approaches to content strategy can we assume the content creators are using? What suggestions can be made? How can you offer guidance for reassessing strategy routinely to support better content creation?

Questions to consider:

- Why does your analysis matter?
- What conclusions about content strategy can you draw from building your case study? What is the content strategy at play? Why does it matter?
- What are YOUR recommendations for content strategy? Why do your suggestions matter?

After reading this chapter you should have:

- A working understanding of the developing field of content strategy
- A richer understanding of how to analyze web content to inform effective writing
- A richer rhetorical web writing approach that includes understanding data analysis and data informed content management

### Reflection Activities

After reading this chapter:

- Write down your definitions for content and content strategy.
- Write down where you will modify and adapt the content analysis overview to meet your assignment and writing needs.
- Write down your strategy for using this approach to content analysis as part of your project.

Take 10–15 minutes to develop your writing and web writing skills, to know and name those skills to serve your needs in the future!

## Further Reading:


- Butler, P. (2018). ***The Writer's Style: A Rhetorical Field Guide.*** Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado/Utah State University Press.

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