In these scenes, Psy also parodies Orientalism by holding Asian women who appear to want to look more Caucasian as an object of exoticism and desire, in much the same fashion as an American or European male would. Also, by engaging in Orientalism, Psy is challenging the notion of knowledge/power from a Eurocentric perspective as well as parodying a centuries-old practice.

While popular culture is teeming with disposable hits, misses, and moments of complete enigma, every so often a brilliantly scathing satire of that culture slips into the mainstream. With *Gangnam Style*, Psy has managed to execute that satire from a rhetorical perspective on multiple levels.

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CHAPTER 5

Digital Audiences

Nicholas Douglas, a 16-year-old student in Port St. Lucie, Florida, noticed some suspicious activity near his campus locker. When he checked out his locker, he found that his iPhone had been stolen. Without any leads, the police could do nothing. Later that day, sitting with his cousin and sister, both of whom had their computers on, Douglas decided to search Facebook for traces of his stolen phone. He visited a Facebook page for a local trading service (similar to Craigslist), recognized one of the persons who had snooped around his locker, and contacted the suspect through his friend's account. When the number that called him back was his own, he knew he had the right guy and set up a sting with the aid of his school's resource officer.

While this scenario may sound more like a detective story than a rhetorical encounter, Douglas made a few clever decisions. He recognized that if the thief was stealing iPhones, he or she might be fairly tech savvy. Thus, his "audience" might be online somewhere trying to sell the stolen goods. He also realized he could use other people's avatars (his friend's) in order to mask his own identity and fool his audience, convincing him to meet in a public place. Douglas was quickly able to make use of the digital writing tools he had nearby, analyze the situation, and persuade his audience to act in the way that he wished.

The ultimate goal of any rhetorical communication is to get your audience to act (or not act) in a particular way. However, especially with digital texts, audiences also can be actors who interact with your texts in ways that go beyond simply responding to the text itself, and you should account for the possible ways this interaction occurs. In addition, your audience may not even be human. They may include search engine robots that scour the web on behalf of

search engines such as Google or Bing. This chapter will offer guidance on how to research and analyze your multiple audiences and how to design different texts to maximize their activity with online, digital audiences.

Most of the decisions you make when writing will revolve around your understanding of what your audience wants, expects, likes, dislikes, and will find persuasive. Determining these preferences requires a careful analysis of your audience, and you must screen them before writing. Thinking about how the audience might act in response to other rhetorical elements such *logos, ethos,* and *pathos* is a good way to start.

Accounting for Audience

Although Chapter 3 provides a much more detailed discussion about how you should account for audience when developing an argument, this section reiterates some of the important points and recasts them from a digital perspective. As discussed throughout the book, it is important to consider how your audience will react to your text. To ensure they take the intended action you wish them to take, it's best to identify your primary audiences. However, digital writing sometimes requires you to write for multiple audiences in tandem with your primary audience.

Primary and secondary audiences

Your primary audience is who you want to communicate with directly. This is the audience that will take the most direct interest in your writing, that will act on the requests you make, and the one you most need to persuade and account for as you develop your argument. However, although your primary audience will be the one to act upon your writing, secondary audiences might also take an interest in your writing and help you indirectly persuade your primary audience. For example, if you wanted your campus to protect an environmentally sensitive area on campus from further development, you would probably write directly to the university's president or another administrator. However, secondary audiences, such as other concerned students, faculty, local environmental groups, or other stakeholders, might help you persuade the primary audience if they also have the opportunity to hear your appeal. In other words, by also accounting for and arguing toward the secondary audience, you can help your chances of persuading the primary audience.

With digital writing technologies, this distinction between primary and secondary audience can become blurred. As discussed later in the chapter, you sometimes have to account for nonhuman audiences such as search engine

robots. Although your primary audience is a human audience, search engine robots are often the first to "read" your writing, indexing it for search engines so it will appear in search engine results, which helps you reach the primary audience. When thinking about the practices of search engine optimization below, you should consider how both humans and nonhumans become a primary audience.

Tertiary audience

Beyond primary and secondary audiences, other readers might come across your document and take notice. Although this third audience might not take direct action or offer advice, they might still make a judgment upon you as a writer based on your writing. For instance, if you create a YouTube response for your instructor based on the assignment in this book, your primary audience would probably be the author of the original YouTube video, with the secondary audience those who follow this author and could chime in with comments. However, other audience members who happen to come across the video through other searches would make up this third audience. They may have no direct stake in your argument, but still form a judgment based on your response. Thus, although any immediate writing might not be directed at them, this tertiary audience could become a primary or secondary audience in the future, and so you want to make sure your writing reflects well upon your *ethos*.

Social audience

Although messages have always been circulated by listeners, circulation becomes instantaneous and is multiplied through digital technologies. Instead of making photocopies and handing them out one person at a time, you can now send a message instantly to millions of readers. Digital rhetoric leverages this capability to not only reach an initial audience, but also to encourage that audience to further spread your message through forwards, retweets, shares, and other tools that promote the spreading of digital writing.

Because of the presence of social media, we might say that everyone is a tertiary audience member. But moreover, they are also social audiences, reading, responding to, commenting on, and retweeting what you write. Because of this interactivity and the ability for one of your texts to quickly circulate, you should consider how such an audience might help you reach primary and secondary audiences. Even though a social audience may neither be able to take direct action, nor directly influence the primary audience, they can still spread your text and create interest, which will help secondary audiences notice your

writing. As a digital writer, you need to be keenly aware of where your document may end up, and how it might be reappropriated. While you can't account for every potential audience, you should at least consider the negative consequences of placing a particular text online.

Selecting Elements for a Text

When you write digitally, especially when you combine images with words, you can think of writing as selecting from a database of material from which you choose elements, combine them, and make something new. How these different parts relate affects how the audience will respond to the overall text. As an analogy, you might consider the way a director selects actors for a movie production. To screen actors for a film is—in some ways—to literally screen them by placing them on film and seeing how they appear on the screen (Figure 5.1). How do they look? How do they move? How do they relate to other actors on a flat, two-dimensional medium? Just as you should user-test your designs before posting them online, directors want to see how an actor will test before casting him.

Credit: Everett Collection

Figure 5.1
This was a successful screen test for Henry Thomas for the movie *E.T.*

www.youtube.com/watch?v=VzCeOqBFu6w&list=PLF0548378A4359F2B

Credit: Everett Collection

Figure 5.2
Can you imagine Lance Henriksen as the terminator?

Credit: Everett Collection

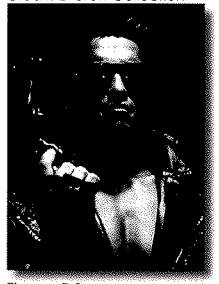


Figure 5.3
Of course, Arnold Schwarzenegger got the part.

Just think how different some well-known movies might be with a different cast. For example, in the film, *The Terminator*, director James Cameron originally considered Lance Henriksen for the lead role (Figure 5.2). However, after Arnold Schwarzenegger read for the part of Kyle Reese, Cameron decided to "revise" his choices, placing Schwarzenegger in the title role (Figure 5.3). Henriksen was cast as a minor character and still appeared in the film, but the movie would have been much different without Schwarzenegger as the overbuilt, intimidating presence, not to mention his signature line, "I'll be back." Luckily, most elements in your text, like

actors for roles, are digital, that is, interchangeable and rearrangeable, allowing you to be flexible as you write.

If you're a fan of the *Indiana Jones* movies, you might think that Harrison Ford is the perfect choice to play Indiana; however, he wasn't the first choice. George Lucas originally considered Tom Selleck to play the part (Figure 5.4). Selleck auditioned for the role but had already signed a contract to play Thomas Magnum in the television series, *Magnum P.I.*, when Lucas offered him the role. CBS, who created *Magnum P.I.*, wouldn't release Selleck from his contract, and because of this contractual conflict, Lucas and Steven Spielberg selected Ford for the part (Figure 5.5). You may find that contractual or legal conflicts, such as copyright issues around already existing media, force you to choose elements in a text that aren't your first choice. However, if you think creatively about what your audience really needs, you can usually overcome such constraints.

Credit: Everett Collection

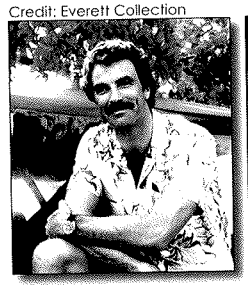


Figure 5.4
Tom Selleck in Hawaii to shoot *Magnum P.I.*

Credit: Everett Collection

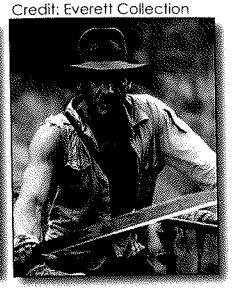


Figure 5.5
Now in his 70s, Harrison Ford still has what it takes to play Indiana Jones.

This analogy of film casting can be useful in thinking about how to "cast" your own production, even if it doesn't consist of live humans. Instead, your "actors" become the different digital elements that you include in the design—from images, to typefaces, to medium, to environment—all of which have to fit and work together for a text to be effective and act on your behalf toward your target audience.

You might select visual elements based on whether they "look" right for the role. For instance, you might use a certain typography because it looks right for a title or header, or because it fits a certain persona you're trying to capture for the tone of the text, or you may choose an image because its colors fit the color scheme of the design. If the image doesn't look quite right, you can use a digital photo editor (instead of makeup) to augment it.

You might think of an actor's performance as reflecting the versatility of a particular textual element. A particular element might look like it fits naturally

and conveys a particular message in one setting, but if the design of that text changes or is converted from one kind of genre (flyer) to another (video), will the element have the same effect?

Rhetorical Continuities

In terms of writing, an author's "voice" often becomes synonymous with an author's "style." You can also look for this kind of voice-as-style in digital texts. If you analyze a design as a whole, does it have an overall style, a voice, which transcends the individual parts? Do the textual elements have a particular voice or tone that matches the message you want to send? Even though an email often doesn't make the same use of images and visual elements as a website or blog post might, the format and layout (placing elements into discreet sections, using headers or bullet points) tells the audience about your organizational skills and attention to detail.

Finally, getting a second opinion—either through peer review or by having someone you trust analyze your writing—is important when deciding on how to screen individual elements for your overall project. Some elements might not work the way you see it, or some may be unnecessary and actually detract from the goal and purpose of your design. Since, hopefully, lots of eyes will fall upon your text, you want to make sure you solicit feedback from lots of people before making your design public.

Link

Building

Choose two or three movies you love to watch in which the main character is iconic (such as Arnold Schwarzenegger as the Terminator). Analyze why you think the actor is a good choice for the role. Now, for each movie, recast the main character of the film with other actors. How would the movie change? How do you think audiences would react to the main character? How does the actor embody rhetorical appeals such as *logos, ethos, pathos,* or even *kairos*? Write a thesis statement that makes the claim for your choice of actor, and include reasons and evidence for why you think this actor should be cast in the role. Share your casting ideas with the class, and discuss how they would react to such a change and if they're persuaded by your argument.

Search

Engine

Think of a fictional work you've read lately. If you had to cast the various characters for a movie, whom would you consider? Why? How would you consider the traits mentioned here, such as chemistry, looks, performance, and voice? Would you use well-known actors, or do you have people in your own life (who are not celebrities) that you would cast instead? Create a casting list, and for each character state your claim, reasons, and evidence for why a director might choose each actor. Share your suggestions with the class.

Future Audiences

Usually, you think about a future audience when writing. You also write for an imagined audience, an audience you try to predict will be like your actual audience. While these two audiences differ in many ways, some audiences are more futuristic and imaginary than others. The following examples provide some insights toward screening audiences you will probably never meet and toward thinking about how your designs will need to operate long into the future to affect those audiences.

This first example uses writing for a world that would no longer be digital. According to a report by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, current stores of nuclear waste could take as long as three million years to decay to normal levels. Because of this danger, the world's nuclear waste must be safely stored to shield humans from the radiation emitted from spent fuel rods and other forms of used nuclear materials. Even when safely stored, humans must be warned of the potential dangers at these storage sites, for the waste stored in them can pose danger for tens to hundreds of thousands of years.

Since humans have existed for much less time than it takes nuclear waste to decay, no one knows what languages, cultures, or even physical features will exist at that time. Governments and scientists have to design technical documentation that can warn future audiences about the impending threats, warning them not to enter waste facilities. This task is quite difficult. As an analogy, consider how you would tackle trying to read the inscriptions on the Egyptian pyramids if you were the first to find them. While you might have unleashed the curse of King Tutankhamen, future archaeologists might unleash something much worse.

Such future warnings are already being designed and created, but this rhetorical situation raises certain questions about future audiences that may be unan-

swerable. For instance, no one knows the languages that future audiences will use, nor does anyone even know if future humans will still "see" using eyes. Consider the following two readings about writing for these future audiences.

DIGITAL Connections

New Symbol Launched to Warn Public About Radiation Dangers

Press release by the IAEA

With radiating waves, a skull and crossbones, and a running person, a new ionizing radiation warning symbol is being introduced to supplement the traditional international symbol for radiation, the three cornered trefoil.

The new symbol is being launched today by the IAEA and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to help reduce needless deaths and serious injuries from accidental exposure to large radioactive sources. It will serve as a supplementary warning to the trefoil, which has no intuitive meaning and little recognition beyond those educated in its significance.

The new symbol is aimed at alerting anyone, anywhere to the potential dangers of being close to a large source of ionizing radiation, the result of a five-year project conducted in 11 countries around the world. The symbol was tested with different population groups—mixed ages, varying educational backgrounds, male and female—to ensure that its message of "danger—stay away" was crystal clear and understood by all.

The new symbol, developed by human factor experts, graphic artists, and radiation protection experts, was tested by the Gallup Institute on a total of 1,650 individuals in Brazil, Mexico, Morocco, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, China, India, Thailand, Poland, Ukraine and the United States.

The long-standing international sign for radiation appears in Figure 5.6. While this warning sign is an elegant symbol, it doesn't offer much other context. In an attempt to update it, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) revised the warning to the one in Figure 5.7. The IAEA describes it in this Digital Connections.

From this description, you can see how thoroughly the IAEA attempted to account for audience when designing the new warning label. Its target audience is literally anyone and everyone, and the research the organization conducted reflects this.

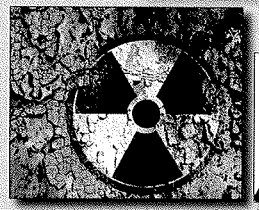


Figure 5.6
Original radiation warning sign outside the Chernobyl accident site

Credit: International Atomic Energy Agency

Figure 5.7
New radiation warning sign

DIGITAL Connections

Building a Better Radiation Warning Symbol

By John Brownlee

The old radiation symbol was certainly a timeless masterpiece of paranoid Cold War aesthetics, but it only makes sense if you already know what it means. If confronted with the relic of such a symbol on the side of a barrel of toxic ooze that has been dug-up a hundred thousand years from now, how would the super-intelligent space monkeys of the future know it was a danger to them? The radiation warning symbol would tell them nothing: our simian descendants would crack open that container with an industrial sized can opener and start smearing the fluorescent toxic waste through their hair like styling gel.

John Brownlee, writing for *Wired* magazine, discusses the problem of the new warning that could occur despite extensive user testing by the IAEA.

To prevent this, the International Atomic Energy Agency is launching a new symbol, which they hope more clearly spells out the threat to those who don't already know what a radiation symbol means. But what is that threat? According to the new symbol, it's when a blowing fan causes a gigantic skull to chase a man into the side of an equilateral triangle, which then probably knocks him cold.

There's a lot of weirdo problems with this symbol, the biggest one being that it still uses the original radiation symbol without any sense of context.

You want to warn people a hundred thousand years in the future that there's dangerous radioactive elements about? All you need is two panels stenciled on the side of every barrel of nuclear sludge (Figure 5.8). In panel one, a monkey wearing a space suit and with a throbbing, exposed brain levers open a barrel of sludge. From the sun in the background of the panel, you can tell it's early morning. And in panel two, the monkey is just a skeleton standing in a sloughed-off puddle of his own melted skin at midnight, silently screaming before the open background. An arrow leads readers in the intended direction of the comic. Who's going to mistake that warning sign?

Credit: Ben Crum

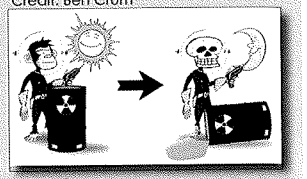


Figure 5.8
You shouldn't monkey around with radiation.

Credit: U.S. Dept. of Energy

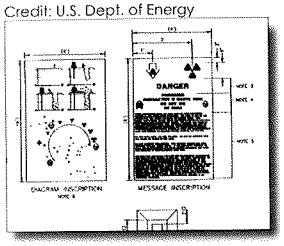


Figure 5.9
The plans for these larger markers include inscribing them in seven languages.

In addition to the new symbol, some locations, such as the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in Carlsbad, New Mexico, will include 25-foot tall granite markers located around the WIPP facility, engraved with a message in seven languages: English, Spanish, French, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and Navajo (Figure 5.9). Even if several of these languages become extinct or radically altered, future audiences will hopefully be able to make sense of the text should they still use any of the other seven languages.

In addition to these monument-size markers, the WIPP facility also will include 9-inch clay markers buried throughout the site, information rooms at the surface and underground, as well as radar reflectors and magnets, so future detection technologies should be able to tell that something strange is located at the site (Figure 5.10).

Credit: U.S. Dept. of Energy

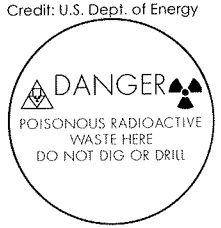


Figure 5.10
These 9-inch clay markers will be buried throughout the site.

To tackle this problem, WIPP uses a variety of branding strategies, including different kinds of markers, several languages, and other techniques to get the

audience's attention and ensure the message is understood. Similarly, companies often create many different kinds of advertisements, in diverse languages, using focus groups and test screenings to make sure the ad resonates with each kind of audience. Even though the WIPP location isn't trying to sell a product, many of its problems and tactics relate to those used by marketing companies. Of course, any brand message can fail, and only time (a lot of time) will tell if the WIPP site and IAEA are successful in their strategy.

KLM, Inc., a management consulting company, frames the radioactivity communication problem in terms of branding:

> *If there ever was a brand challenge, this could be it. How can we communicate the mortal, and almost unending, danger of radioactive waste across all present and future cultures and civilizations and possibly, even to nonhuman alien beings from outer space?*

These examples are important for you to consider because digital texts, more so than written documents, can potentially last much longer, circulate more widely, and be received by more audiences. This means you should thoroughly consider all your possible audiences when designing and composing a digital text. While you might not consciously compose for an audience that will live 10,000 years from now, it's quite possible that such audiences will be able to search some future database or digital museum for ancient Facebook posts or digital documents, some of which might be yours. You might not care what they think about your writing, but maybe you should. However, future audiences just one, five, or ten years in the future could have significant meaning for your job, relationship, or other aspects of your life. Keep the future audiences of your digital texts in mind.

Link

Building

Revisit the nuclear waste example above. Research more into this issue and what particular audiences the IAEA or WIPP considered. Can you think of any potential audience members that they neglected? Can you think of alternative ways to reach these audiences? Argue why you think IAEA or WIPP should consider another audience that they neglected. Remember to support your claim with reasons and evidence.

Search Engine

Using the information in this example, as well as the research you conducted in the Link Building prompt above, design your own warning symbol for the nuclear waste site and a strategy for branding the WIPP location. How would it differ from the current WIPP strategy and IAEA symbol already in use? How would it accommodate audiences better than the current strategy? Make a claim based on your analysis, and support it with reasons and evidence.

Extraterrestrial Audiences

The nuclear waste example could apply to alien visitors as well. How would you warn these E.T.s to stay away from radioactive dump sites so they don't accidently unleash an intergalactic disaster? Moreover, if future cultures can't recognize current symbols or languages, how would a being from another planet? While this hypothetical audience might seem far-fetched, many attempts have been made to create messages for this audience. While you might never have to construct a text for aliens, thinking about such a task can help you consider earthly audiences in a more sophisticated way.

Figure 5.11
Carl Sagan, pictured here, helped to create the Pioneer 10 plaque.

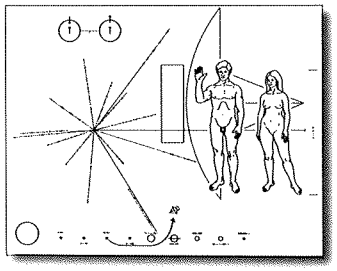


Figure 5.12
Pioneer 10 plaque designed by Carl Sagan and Frank Drake with the artwork by Linda Salzman Sagan

In 1972, the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) planned to launch the Pioneer 10 spacecraft (and, a year later, the Pioneer 11), which would be the first human-built object to leave the solar system.

In case an alien species intercepted the spacecraft, journalist Eric Burgess suggested that the Pioneer should carry some sort of message to inform the aliens about the spacecraft's origins.

Burgess approached Carl Sagan, who had previously discussed ways humans might communicate with extraterrestrials, and NASA agreed to let Sagan design a message to be attached to the Pioneer 10 (Sagan's wife at the time, Linda Salzman Sagan, created the artwork for the design).

Sagan chose to create a visual message in the form of a metal plaque (see Figures 5.11 and 5.12). Given the limited space, he could only convey limited information, and selected details he thought his audience might want to know. First, he included basic scientific facts he figured any intelligent, space-going life form would already know, such as the most abundant element in the universe, hydrogen, and its atomic properties (top-left corner).

The large, line-based schematic on the left indicates the position of the sun in relation to the center of the Milky Way galaxy, as well as fourteen other pulsar stars. Portraying this many pulsars provides a way to ensure the aliens can triangulate the origin of the spacecraft, even if some pulsars are missing, much as the multiple languages used at the WIPP location allow for cross-referencing of different languages.

The longest line that extends to the right represents the sun. Note how this line reaches toward the proximity of the human diagrams, helping to establish a line of trajectory to the creators of the spacecraft. To help ensure that aliens can find Pioneer 10's point of origin, Sagan also included a diagram of the solar system, noting the trajectory of the spacecraft from the third planet from the sun, Earth.

Of course, now that Pluto is no longer a "planet," one should hope that any aliens don't count from the outside of the solar system, otherwise they might deduce the spacecraft was launched from Venus. Aliens, like many human cultures, might read from right to left instead of left to right, or they may try to read the plaque upside down. In addition, when the plaque first appeared publicly, *Scientific American* pointed out that the arrow-based symbol derives from arrows used for hunting and warfare. If an extraterrestrial audience never invented such tools, they would be unclear the arrow represents direction and movement. Then again, all of this assumes that they categorize "planet" the same way humans do, or that they even reason with "categories" at all.

Finally, a diagram of human beings appears on the right side of the plaque. This diagram offers a nude perspective with most of the anatomical features of both a male and female. While many humans had negative reactions to depicting these figures in the nude, this choice probably makes sense to beings who might not use clothing.

Sagan also designed the male to provide the typical gesture of a wave. Of course, Sagan had no idea how an alien race might interpret this gesture; they might find that it offers a sign of aggression. However, Sagan also wanted to show that humans have limbs that can be articulated, as well as an opposable thumb. Behind the diagram of the humans is a line drawing of the Pioneer 10 spacecraft itself, drawn to scale to provide a way for aliens to determine the approximate size of earthlings.

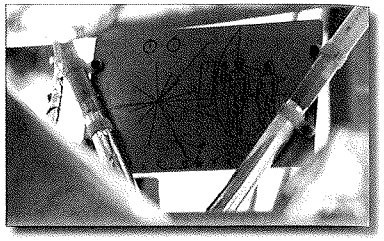


Figure 5.13
The Pioneer 10 plaque was mounted so that it faced into the space probe.

You also might think about the constraints between balancing environment with audience, especially considering that most devices that read digital texts don't do very well in harsh conditions. As you can see in Figure 5.13, NASA decided to place the plaque facing toward the spacecraft. Given the amount of small space debris Pioneer 10 might encounter, this orientation helps protect the message from being destroyed. In addition, the material of the plaque was made of gold-anodized aluminum to minimize corrosion (since gold does not rust). Hopefully, the aliens that intercept the spacecraft will eventually remove the plaque and notice the image (even if they notice with senses other than sight). However, they might also miss it, or assume the piece of metal is blank on both sides.

Link Building

Research and analyze later plaques that were designed for spacecraft launched after Pioneer 10, such as the Voyager, which contained a golden "record." How and why did NASA change the design? What modern ways of extraterrestrial communication are being used, if any? How have these designs and media changed? Which seem the most probable of being decoded by an alien race? Write a brief essay that argues which design you think seems the best, and make sure to support your claim with reasons and evidence.

Search Engine

Assume that you're an alien from another planet who just landed on Earth. As you explore, you find a dime on the surface of the planet. Since you have no preexisting knowledge of the planet's cultures or languages, and thus can't decode the writing, what kind of information can you deduce from the other features of the dime? Analyze the possible options, and create a list of possible meanings or assumptions about humans, and share them with the class.

Transnational Audiences

While you will probably never have to write for audiences that will exist 10,000 years from now, nor extraterrestrials, you do have to consider the various ways in which audiences that do not share your language or culture might view your digital texts. Figure 5.14 demonstrates a simple failure to communicate with a transnational audience. This image provides visual instructions on how to remove fallen rocks from a railroad track for South African miners who could not read alphabetic text.

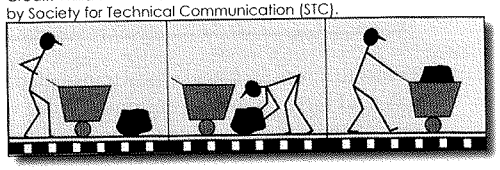


Figure 5.14
While English speakers read this graphic from left to right, other cultures may read it from right to left.

At first glance, the image provides a pretty clear set of instructions. In frame one, the miner finds a rock; in frame two, the miner picks up the rock; in frame three, the miner carts the rock away. For the miners, the image also provides a pretty clear set of instructions. In frame one, cart a rock to the tracks; in frame two, set the rock on the tracks; in frame three, leave the rock on the tracks. As you've probably concluded, the South African miners read the image from right to left (as many cultures read), and thus for them the instructions meant the opposite of what they were intended to convey by the image's creator. A simple user test or conversation with some of the miners might have avoided this error, but the designer failed to screen his audience properly.

Building

Link

Analyze various traffic signs used in other countries. How well do these signs match with U.S. traffic signs? How do they differ? How might you read these signs differently than their intended meaning? Could accidents result from these misreadings? Write a short essay that makes a claim based on your findings. Remember to support your claim with reasons and evidence.

Engine

Search

Return to the traffic signs you analyzed in the prompt above. How do these signs make use of *pathos, ethos, logos,* or *kairos* to appeal to their readers? Do their shapes convey a particular appeal? Their colors? The typefaces? Using reasons and evidence as support, make an argument about how you think these traffic signs make use of rhetorical appeals.

It's easy to screen for a single, local transnational audience. When you're McDonald's, and serve 68 million customers a day with restaurants in 119 countries, user testing and accounting for these various audiences can be more difficult. To make their nutritional information more globalized so anyone could understand protein from carbohydrates, McDonald's attempted to create universal icons to represent each of these categories. The fast-food giant wanted to avoid any icons that might be ambiguous in meaning, especially meanings that might offend other cultures. To avoid these pitfalls, McDonald's teamed up with the marketing firm ENLASO to head the research. As Maxwell Hoffmann explains:

> *McDonald's and ENLASO focused on five main nutrient visuals (calories, fat, carbohydrates, protein, salt) that would be used globally on packaging, and also designed and evaluated half a dozen supplemental nutrient visuals that might be needed in some locales. The team had to deal with four main challenges:*
>
> 1. *What visuals can communicate the desired nutrients?*
> 2. *Does the visual work in 109 countries without evoking negative or socially/politically inappropriate connotations?*
> 3. *Will the visual print or display well in all media, including packaging?*
> 4. *Does anyone else already own rights to the image that might prevent it from being used in this context?*

Figure 5.15 depicts a screenshot from McDonald's nutritional information app that also shows the final icons that were agreed upon. However, several other icons were considered before these icons were selected.

Credit: McDonald's

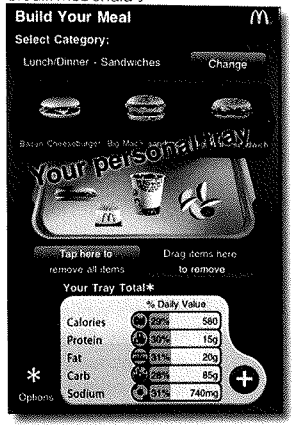


Figure 5.15
This McDonald's nutritional counter shows the final nutritional icons.

For example, Figure 5.16 is one of the early icons that ENLASO tested. Take a moment and analyze the icon. What do you see? While McDonald's intended the image to represent grain or wheat, ENLASO ultimately classified it as an icon at high risk of being misinterpreted based on their market research. What did many respondents think it looked like?

A "scary alien" of course, such as that in Figure 5.17, which is the brand mark used for Dell's Alienware line of computers. Other ambiguous icons were also rejected. Many thought Figure 5.18 looked like either a slippery slope or the neck and head of a bird, perhaps signifying a bird sanctuary, while some users thought Figure 5.19 resembled a marijuana plant.

Other icons also confused transnational audiences. Besides calories, protein, fat, carbohydrates, and salt, McDonald's attempted to create icons for other nutritional information, such as calcium. Figure 5.20 depicts an original design of a bone, which makes sense when connected to calcium.

However, some users thought of dog bones or dog food when looking at the icon, which also has potentially insulting meanings in some Muslim cultures.

Figure 5.16
This early nutritional icon referring to "fiber" was widely interpreted as being an "alien."

Figure 5.17
If you look at Dell's Alienware brand mark, you can see why many saw Figure 5.16 as an alien.
Credit: Dell

Figure 5.18
This early nutritional icon for "fiber" was widely interpreted as being a "bird."

Figure 5.19
This early nutritional icon for "fiber" was widely interpreted as being a "marijuana plant."

Figure 5.20
While you might think of a "bone" as referring to calcium, not all audiences understood it this way.

Even if a design looks innocent at first, it might be perceived by audiences from other nations and cultures as unclear, or even worse, insulting. Do your best to research the cultures you're writing for, and when possible, get feedback from members of those cultures to avoid any negative reactions.

Building

Link

Create an icon for "candy" with transnational audiences in mind, similar to what McDonald's attempts in the example above. Consider how your icon uses rhetorical appeals, such as *logos, ethos,* or *pathos,* to reach your audience. After you've created the icon, analyze how different cultures think of candy. Some might consider candy to mean all kinds of sweets, while others have specific ideas of what a "candy" is. Also, think critically about what other objects your icon might resemble for these audiences. Once you've gathered this information, revise the icon to better reflect your research, and share both icons with the class.

Engine

Search

Suppose you work for a design firm and you're hired to create a company brand mark for a fish and aquarium shop that is opening stores in both the United States and China. How would you analyze your audience? What kinds of information would you gather to discern the differences between the two nations? Would you also have to consider cultural variance in each country as well? What kinds of design choices might you have to make so that each audience recognizes that the brand mark is for "pet" fish and not "food" fish? After you create the brand mark, how would you ensure the audience responds to it in a desirable way? Compile a research plan of what you think you would need to consider, and share this plan with the class.

Digital Audiences

Although the previous examples provide extreme possibilities for your audience, you'll most likely deal with more "earthly" readers of your texts. However, this doesn't mean that all of your audiences will be human. More and more, the audiences that read your digital texts are lines of computer code called "web robots." Human and nonhuman alike, both of these audiences will interact with your texts in ways not possible with printed documents, and you should be aware of how you might construct your texts in order to reach them and get your point across.

Audience as actors: rhetorical velocity

So far, this chapter has mainly considered how audiences use the texts that writers produce. In this sense, they become actors but usually as end users. However, audiences also can become actors that serve your rhetorical purposes. Jim Ridolfo and Dànielle Nicole DeVoss have theorized such a practice they call "rhetorical velocity" through which a rhetor anticipates how her audience will make use of a particular text or document to further her own purposes.

For instance, Ridolfo and DeVoss offer the example of an author disseminating a press release. Rather than this press release simply being read, the author anticipates that the audience will remix and remediate it into other texts, such as online or print news articles, blogs, or video content, whether live or recorded. In this way, the original audience doesn't just consume a text but reshapes and delivers this text to other audiences, who then may remix it again. The press release reaches a maximum velocity where as many people see it as possible, thanks to the actions of these audience-actors.

You might say that comedian Stephen Colbert practiced rhetorical velocity on his television show *The Colbert Report.* Occasionally, Colbert offered a "Green Screen Challenge," in which he filmed himself doing something in front of a green screen (used for special effects), and then distributed the video footage on his website (Figure 5.21). He challenged his audience to take that video footage and edit and remix it to create something new. His audience, who become authors, uploaded the new videos to his site, and he played them on the air, providing content for his show.

Credit: Comedy Central/Viacom Entertainment Group

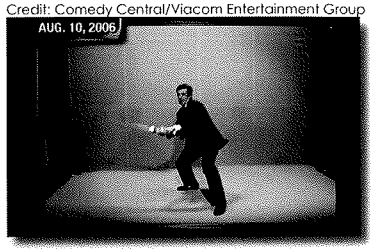


Figure 5.21
Stephen Colbert's Green Screen Challenge prompted audience participation that also produced content for the show.

Credit: Comedy Central/Viacom Entertainment Group

Figure 5.22
Colbert would reuse his Green Screen Challenge to create a "feud" with the band the Decemberists.

The band the Decemberists mimic this idea by asking fans to create their own music videos of the band playing their song "O Valencia!" in front of a green screen. This request was noted by Colbert, who, in gest, accused the Decemberists of stealing his idea and challenged them to a guitar duel, further using the original

green screen idea to create new material for the show (Figure 5.22). The "Green Screen Challenge" creates a more nuanced relationship between author and audience that turns the audience into actors and the author into the audience.

Credit: Volkswagen/Deutsch, Inc.

Figure 5.23
This Volkswagen commercial was widely shared.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Feq0ypUnv3k

Viral videos also exhibit some characteristics of rhetorical velocity. In 2011, Volkswagen released a Super Bowl advertisement in which a child dressed as Darth Vader attempts to use the Force to move objects (Figure 5.23). This video quickly spread across the Internet, and as the online advertising industry magazine *Advertising Age* states, "With 600 placements, the video is on pace to become one of the most-watched viral ads of all time."

The next year, Volkswagen created a trailer for its actual Super Bowl advertisement, generating buzz for a commercial as movie companies do for their films. While such advertisements do not necessarily invite users to manipulate and repost their works of media, the companies that produce them are hoping audiences will actively share the videos through YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, spreading the commercials to a much wider audience.

Credit: Blendtec

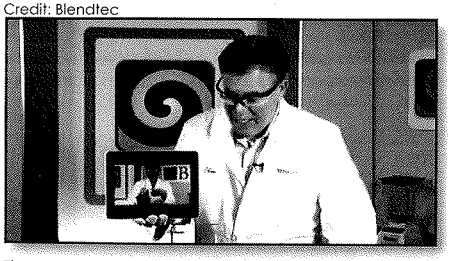


Figure 5.24
Will it blend? This question has made it a popular meme.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=lAl28d6tbko

Finally, Internet memes also can integrate users and make them into actors. Some companies have begun to create their own memes, which circulate online. For instance, the company Blendtec, which makes blenders, created a meme called "Will It Blend?" in which they attempt to blend a variety of objects (Figure 5.24).

DIGITAL Connections

How to Effectively Market with Memes (Without Forcing It)

By Matthew Branson

Other companies, such as Virgin Media, incorporate existing memes created by others as a way to tap into the recognition of the meme. Consider this article from Matthew Branson from *BlueGlass Archive*.

Virgin Media opted to use an existing meme for their marketing and advertising campaigns. Recently, "Success Kid" has been spotted on their advertisements and website (Figure 5.25). This adorable, fist-pumping boy is a variant of a meme born on Flickr in 2007.

Credit: Stephen Cannon

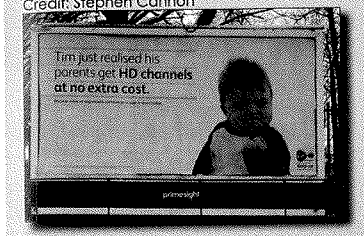


Figure 5.25
Virgin Media used a preexisting meme to sell its product.

Pros: Using "Success Kid," Virgin Media can tap into a new audience without alienating any of their other customers. If their users don't know about "Success Kid," they will simply see a cute mascot. If they do know about the meme, they could associate him with the brand and generate potentially risk-free traffic. Such a campaign requires significant research about your customers.

Cons: Without actively engaging in the meme's community and encouraging the growth of it, it could shorten the meme's lifespan and the source of free traffic. Eventually, the meme could lose popularity and leave Virgin Media looking for a new one.

Also, if the buzz behind the meme is not being properly tracked, things could take a turn for the worst if the meme were to change. Without seeing Virgin Media's results, it's impossible to tell whether or not this strategy will bring them long-term success. It is still an interesting take on leveraging memes for marketing and paves the way for future companies.

In this case, the creator and subject of the photograph become actors in the design of an advertisement of which they are also a potential audience.

[. . .]

FreeCreditReport.com's foray into the world of Internet memes came to an abrupt halt. In 2007, after being targeted by two major lawsuits, the company attempted to rebuild its brand by releasing online videos and commercials depicting people with poor credit being helped by its services.

Internet communities soon caught wind of the company's history, however, and began creating their own parody videos poking fun at the company's services (even the FTC joined in). These spread virally across the Internet, further damaging the brand. Since then, the company has had to refocus its efforts in other campaigns.

The moral of the story is that Internet memes can work both ways—for you or against you. It's very important to properly research any marketing campaign before starting it to minimize your chances of being labeled something you may not be able to hide from.

Building Link

Visit www.knowyourmeme.com, and analyze the various memes on the site. Why do you think these memes gather audience attention and participation? What features do they all share? How does each meme invite participation beyond simply viewing the clip? How does each meme use rhetorical appeals, such as *logos, pathos,* or *ethos,* to help reach its audience? After you've analyzed these memes, develop a claim based on your answers to these questions. Make sure to include reasons and evidence for your claim.

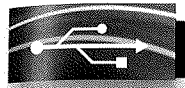
Search Engine

Consider your favorite Internet memes and viral videos. Analyze what they have in common. Why do you consider them worth watching? Why do you think others watch them? Have you shared any of these memes or videos online with friends? Why or why not? Write a short essay that argues your claims above, and make sure you include reasons and evidence to support these claims.

Nonhuman digital audiences

You may think your online audience consists of humans. Who else would be visiting your website or online documents? Those aliens mentioned earlier? Perhaps. More likely, though, your website is read by robots. No, not alien robots; instead, most web traffic is driven by nonhuman audiences such as search engines and web robots.

These robots scour the web looking for connections or associations between key words that search engine users enter, what kinds of search engine results they click on, and how such key words appear on other sites. Essentially, these robots try to make web searches more useful so when you search for something like "Internet memes" you get relevant content.



DIGITAL Connections

51 Percent of Total Online Traffic Is Non-Human

By Peter Murray

Consider this article by Peter Murray, published on singularityhub.com. What are the rhetorical implications of more than half of web traffic being nonhuman?

It probably is no surprise to most that much of online traffic isn't human. Hacker software, spam, or innocuous data collection from search engines all get their slice of the bandwidth pie. But what might surprise you is exactly how much bandwidth is consumed by humans versus non-humans. It's pretty much an even split.

Actually, a slight lead goes to the non-human, web-surfing robots.

According to a report by Internet security company, Incapsula, 51 percent of total online traffic is non-human. There's more bad news. Of the 51 percent, 20 percent of the traffic is accounted for by search engines, the other 31 percent are the bad bots.

Here's the breakdown:

- 49 percent human traffic, 51 percent non-human traffic

Non-human traffic:

- 5 percent hacking tools
- 2 percent comment spammers

- 5 percent "scrapers," software that posts the contents of your website to other websites, steals email addresses for spamming, or reverse engineers your website's pricing and business models
- 19 percent other sorts of spies that are competitive analyzers, sifting your website for key word and SEO (search engine optimization) data to help give them a competitive edge in climbing the search engine ladder
- 20 percent search engines and other benevolent bot traffic

The report was based on data compiled from 1,000 of Incapsula customer websites.

We always knew it was us against the machines. But until now the arms race had generally referred to virus versus anti-virus, malware versus anti-malware. Symantec wasn't warning us about the perils of non-human traffic. For web-based business owners though, that extra traffic can turn into lost business. TagMan recently reported that a delay of just one second in web page load time decreases page views by 11 percent, customer satisfaction by 16 percent, and conversions—the number of people who buy something divided by the number of visits—by 6.7 percent. Incapsula says it's easy enough to get around the hacker, scraper, and spam software, but that most website owners aren't equipped to spot the infiltrators.

We already knew that robots did some amazing things, now we learn that they're doing things we're not even aware of—at least not the extent. They're not alive, yet they're surfing the web more than we are. So who will win in the end, human or machine? Better monitoring tools—for free—would help. You can't get rid of the critters if you don't know they're there in the first place.

In relation to rhetorical velocity, you can make rhetorical use of nonhuman audiences. You can use search engine robots, writing so they index pages according to key words and help other audiences find your texts. For example, if you wanted to get search engine robots to index a site about apartments in your town, you would include key words in the HTML code such as "apartments," "rental units," "rental houses," or other terms you think a human audience would enter. Doing so becomes a means of reaching and persuading your audience to view your page.

While thinking about robots, you also have to screen your human audiences and how you think they'll search for your product or service. In addition, especially for this particular search, you should think about location. Because your apartments are probably in a fixed geographical area, you should include geographical key words within the site as well, such as the city in which the apartments are located, as well as the state (since many states have identical city names).

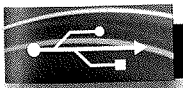
Such key words appear in several places. One of these locations is the <meta> information in the header of a website (Figure 5.26). This information is specifically targeted at web robots, and the human audience never sees it unless they right-click on a site and select "view source."

```
<meta name="robots" content="noodp, noydir" /><meta name="description" content="
Facebook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work,
study and live around them. People use Facebook to keep up with friends, upload an
unlimited number of photos, post links and videos, and learn more about the people they
meet." />
```

Figure 5.26
Nonhuman audiences, such as search engines, use metadata to index websites.

One of the other primary locations is within the page content itself, which is seen by both robots and humans. However, writing for each of these audiences requires a rhetorical and stylistic balance. Typically, the more times you include a key word such as "apartments" in a paragraph, the more a robot will think that the key word "apartment" is relevant to your page.

However, as you've probably learned from other writing classes, using the same word too many times in a sentence or paragraph does not meet most humans' stylistic preferences. For example, if you used the word "apartments" ten times in a single paragraph, the human audience would probably think your writing was too repetitive. While you might use synonyms to overcome this stylistic blunder, these synonyms can detract from how the web robot will view your page. Addressing both of these audiences is tricky, but you need to consider them simultaneously, for if the web robot doesn't think your site is relevant to a particular key word, then you'll never reach your final human audience.



DIGITAL Connections

In addition to simply posing as audiences, web robots sometimes become actors that respond to writing.

Are You Following a Bot?

By Andy Isaacson

One day last February, a Twitter user in California named Billy received a

tweet from @JamesMTitus, identified in his profile as a "24-year-old dude" from Christchurch, New Zealand, who had the avatar of a tabby cat. "If you could bring one character to life from your favorite book, who would it be?" @JamesMTitus asked. Billy tweeted back, "Jesus," to which @JamesMTitus replied: "honestly? no fracking way. ahahahhaa." Their exchange continued, and Billy began following @JamesMTitus. It probably never occurred to him that the Kiwi dude with an apparent love of cats was, in fact, a robot.

Andy Isaacson, writing for *The Atlantic*, discusses this phenomenon.

JamesMTitus was manufactured by cyber-security specialists in New Zealand participating in a two-week social-engineering experiment organized by the Web Ecology Project. Based in Boston, the group had conducted demographic analyses of Chatroulette and studies of Twitter networks during the recent Middle East protests. It was now interested in a question of particular concern to social-media experts and marketers: Is it possible not only to infiltrate social networks, but also to influence them on a large scale?

The group invited three teams to program "social bots"—fake identities—that could mimic human conversation on Twitter, and then picked 500 real users on the social network, the core of whom shared a fondness for cats. The Kiwis armed JamesMTitus with a database of generic responses ("Oh, that's very interesting, tell me more about that") and designed it to systematically test parts of the network for what tweets generated the most responses, and then to talk to the most responsive people.

Can one person controlling an identity, or a group of identities, really shape social architecture? Actually, yes. The Web Ecology Project's analysis of 2009's post-election protests in Iran revealed that only a handful of people accounted for most of the Twitter activity there. The attempt to steer large social groups toward a particular behavior or cause has long been the province of lobbyists, whose "astroturfing" seeks to camouflage their campaigns as genuine grassroots efforts, and company employees who pose on Internet message boards as unbiased consumers to tout their products. But social bots introduce new scale: they run off a server at practically no cost, and can reach thousands of people. The details that people reveal about their lives, in freely searchable tweets and blogs, offer bots a trove of personal information to work with. "The data coming off social networks allows for more-targeted social 'hacks' than ever before," says Tim Hwang, the director emeritus of the Web Ecology Project. And these hacks use "not just your interests, but your behavior."

A week after Hwang's experiment ended, Anonymous, a notorious hacker group, penetrated the e-mail accounts of the cyber-security firm HBGary Federal and revealed a solicitation of bids by the United States Air Force in June 2010 for "Persona Management Software"—a program that would enable the government to create multiple fake identities that trawl social-networking sites to collect data on real people and then use that data to gain credibility and to circulate propaganda. "We hadn't heard of anyone else doing this, but we assumed that it's got to be happening in a big way," says Hwang. His group has published the code for its experimental bots online, "to allow people to be aware of the problem and design countermeasures."

Web robots can shape both social architecture, as well as the cyber-infrastructure of the Internet. As you can tell from this article, much of the material that these robots read involves a user's personal information. These robots then use this information for or against the user. While you probably won't build your own bot, you can learn how to write toward this audience and manipulate them to your rhetorical advantage.

The Web Ecology Project has started a spin-off group, called Pacific Social, to plan future experiments in social networking, like creating "connection-building" bots that bring together pro-democracy activists in a particular country, or ones that promote healthy habits. "There's a lot of potential for a lot of evil here," admits Hwang. "But there's also a lot of potential for a lot of good."

The practice of writing for these robots is called search engine optimization (SEO), briefly discussed in Chapter 2. Many complex practices of SEO exist and are constantly being invented, and no one knows the precise algorithms that search engine companies such as Google or Bing use to identify which sites get ranked higher than others. Although the audience is robotic and code-driven, writing for robots is a constantly shifting rhetorical situation, for search engine companies may change their algorithms at any time. If you don't think a computer-based algorithm can be both a significant audience and actor, con-

sider the many online dating sites that help match potential partners or the *TEDx* Talk by Kevin Slavin in Figure 5.27. Toward a practice of basic SEO, which is essentially pitching an argument to an algorithm, the guidelines below offer some information and techniques to help you write for your robot audiences.

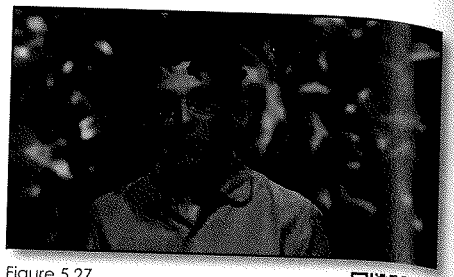


Figure 5.27
Kevin Slavin explains how algorithms shape the world.
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TDaFwnOiKVE

Understanding User Stats and Page Design

Rhetorically, page design matters, for it creates a sense of *ethos* that makes users trust the site and stay once they find it. This *ethos* drives the business of search engines and how to write for them.

A search engine's product is search results. Google's goal, put simply, is to give the audience the website that provides exactly what they're looking for in the top spot in the results. Google does not want spam in the results, nor does it want a harmful page in the results (such as one that might steal a user's identity or put a virus on his or her computer). Such results hurt the company's *ethos*, and the user would lose trust in Google.

Search engine companies have spent millions of dollars trying to write programs that can understand the syntax of the key word terms the user inputs. They want to know the user's goal—what the user is trying to achieve. If you put "Nike," into Google, the search engine wants to know if you are looking for information, the Nike corporate website, product reviews, or websites that sell Nike products. The search engine categorizes many terms based on what it thinks the user is looking for and yields different types of results based on this estimation.

Search engines are in a constant state of evolution, tweaking their algorithms so that their top results are increasingly the correct result. You might say, then, that Google is performing a constant rhetorical adjustment. But how does Google know if the correct result is displayed? The company tracks and keeps user statistics.

If searchers click on your link in the search engine results, go to your page, but decide it wasn't what they were looking for and bounce off the page (by hitting the back button), Google will count this against your page for that search term. Google has no way of knowing why the user bounced off. It could be because the page is not about the key word term, or that the user was looking for a page where she could buy something when your page is more informational, or because the page has really bad design. But when people bounce off, it counts against you and your web page's *ethos*. If lots of people bounce off (and the bounce rate is a higher percentage than those who stay at your site), your page will fall in the search rankings. Therefore, it's very important to establish that your web page is about the subject, is well designed, and is designed for web reading. Rhetorically, page design drives how people respond to your site, and search engines track that response. The more an audience trusts your information and remains on your page, human or robot, the more likely they'll accept your argument, and the better your web page will show in search results.

Key word research

Researching a key word is a part of the rhetorical analysis you should do when developing online texts and perhaps the most important step in SEO—and the one that is probably the most neglected. If you do not properly research and analyze the search volume for your subject (how many times a key word is searched for over a certain period), you are bound to head off in the wrong rhetorical direction. Before you begin optimizing, you need to determine which key word terms you are optimizing for.

- Never "guess" what the popular key word phrase will be, or its search volume. Often, users "dumb down" the syntax they enter into search engines and use key word phrases they would not use in their normal writing or speech. For instance, the key word combination "gainesville apartments" gets more than four times as much search volume as "gainesville florida apartments."
- You could probably come up with a list of more than 500 terms that people might use when searching for an apartment, but there is a short list of terms that will account for the majority of the search volume. These terms will be harder to compete for, but if you can come up high in the results, you will receive far more viewership.
- Since, at this point, you're probably not committed to an entire SEO campaign, you may be best served focusing on the long-tail terms: hundreds of low-traffic terms which, when aggregated, account for a large amount of traffic. This means you will need to greatly vary your

text within the actual visible content on the page to include as many of these terms as possible.

- In order to gain the most traffic, your link should appear "above the fold" in the first page of the search results for the term (the fold refers to the bottom of the monitor, so users don't have to scroll down to see your link). Very few search users click to the second or third page of their search results.
- A page that is optimized for the term "apartments in Gainesville" may not necessarily rank well for the term "Gainesville apartments." You'll have to optimize the page separately for each of the terms you are focusing on.
- As always, you will need to determine the target audience: laypeople will use different key word terms than an expert—but there may be significantly less search volume for these technical terms.

Selecting key words

Once you have researched and analyzed how people search—and what they typically search for—you can build your key word list you can use when crafting a rhetorically effective page design.

- Begin by listing all of the related terms to your main key words. If you're writing an article on apartments, write down all of the words that relate to apartments. For example:

  apartments, apartment, housing, rental, home, dorm, flat, townhouse, loft, room, room for rent, one bedroom, pet friendly, apartment complex, for rent, rental, landlord, real estate, dorm, roommate, sublease, sublet

  If you're writing about a specific location, make a list of areas, states, counties, or cities that pertain to that area. Terms that are categories get the highest search volume. Users generally start their search wide and narrow it down from there.
- There are lots of free tools that allow you to research search volume, such as Google AdWords Keyword Planner (adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal) or goRank (www.gorank.com/analyze.php). These sites will help you identify how dense key words appear on your page, as well as the key words users input to search for a particular site. Find out the search volume for each of the terms and decide on which terms you want to focus on in your first round of SEO. For best results, you might focus on optimizing for the top ten terms first. If you're unsuccessful, go back and focus on the next most popular key words after the top ten.

Links

Both incoming and outgoing links affect your page. Incoming links (links on other pages that point to your page) have a very big impact. Google seems to think of incoming links in a similar way to "votes" or "likes." Again, rhetorically, this affects the *ethos* of the page's author. The text of the actual link (known as anchor text) is critically important, as is the subject of the original page and how it ranks for a term.

Link building is one of the most important (and difficult to manage) factors in SEO. If you can find a page that is about your subject that is listed in the Google search results and ranks well for the term, and you can get that page to link to your page, you will sometimes jump up in the search engine results. If and when you request a link, however, make sure you supply the owner of the other page with the exact text you want the link to read, using the key words you determined from your earlier research. In terms of *logos*, this helps the robot and human audiences clearly understand the subject of the link.

Title tags

If you "right click" on a web page and "view source," you can see the code that makes up the web page. Near the top of this code, you'll find a variety of <meta> tags, including the <title> tag (Figure 5.28).

```
<TITLE>Sean Morey, Sean W. Morey, Rhetoric and Composition,
New Media, Electracy</TITLE>
```

Figure 5.28
The <title> tag tells a search engine robot what a web page is about.

This information appears in the very top of the browser and is also looked at by Web robots. The <title> tag is one of the most important on-page SEO factors. Typically, you can include 70 characters within this tag—give or take—for the bigger search engines like Google. Search engines usually ignore characters beyond this amount. To reach this nonhuman audience, you should place important key words at the beginning of the tag.

Include both specific and categorical terms in this tag, and think wisely about how you include these terms because their placement affects both the ranking on search engines by web robots and actual click-throughs by human audiences. Remember that in most cases, the <title> tag is one of the biggest factors

affecting your web page's ranking, and for your human reader it's also the bold, blue underlined text in the search engine results pages. This tag not only optimizes the page for a robot audience, but must also encourage an actual click by the human hand. In other words, a good <title> tag has to be written not only for a good ranking, but also for humans.

As has been expressed above, this is the real rhetorical problem of SEO—you are writing for two completely different audiences, which have very different needs. If you are writing about a company, you need your category term and the company name. All words used in the <title> tag must be used in the content of the page as well. For example, when optimizing for a company like Coca-Cola, you should include the top volume search term for your subject (such as soft drink, soda pop, etc.) and the company's name (Coca-Cola). You should also include a message to the user, who will read the <title> tag and think that the page sounds helpful and therefore click on it. For instance, "soft-drink | Enjoy the taste of Coca-Cola Classic, Diet Coke, and Coke Zero | The Coca-Cola Company." The <title> tag uses a combination of *logos* (what the page is about) as well as *ethos* (who is the author of this page) in order to help make an argument about the relevancy of the page.

File names

Just as you name your Word documents, you typically also name your individual web pages. While the most common "home" page for a website is "index.html," your other pages may be named with descriptors such as "contact.html" or "aboutus.html." How you name these pages affects how web robots index these pages, and you should use names that are relevant to both robot and human audiences. For example, a file name such as 0939201.html is pretty much meaningless to both humans and robots, while a file name titled "videoresume.html" conveys more information to both audiences. Consider file names as an appeal to *logos*, a logical rhetorical connection between what the audience is expecting and the actual content of the page.

Header tags

Often, you will organize your web pages with headers, just as you organize other kinds of documents such as letters, memos, reports, and various technical writing genres. On web pages, you code these headers using header tags, which are often written as <h1>, <h2>, <h3>, etc.

These header tags should be used like subtitles in the content of the page, and should be followed by paragraphs of visible text that use the same key words as in the headers.

For instance, in the earlier example of a website about apartments, the title might be "How to Find the Best Gainesville Apartments." The headers might then be "Cheap Apartments in Gainesville"; "Finding a Roommate in Gainesville"; and "How to Apply for Gainesville Apartments." Each of these header tags use key words that also appear in the title, and these key words should be repeated in the paragraph that follows each header. Don't repeat header tags (use only one <h1>, <h2>, <h3>, etc.), and the <h1> tag usually carries the most weight with web robots. Header tags should be stylized so they look like headers for the human reader, so use a larger, bolded font. As an appeal to *logos*, header tags help to logically structure the document so both humans and robots can find important sections.

Include key words in the main text

When composing the text the human user will read, you can insert key words into specific sentences in order to best write for web robots. Like headers, key words can be thought of as another appeal to *logos*.

- Use the top key word term (the one you chose to use in your title) in the first sentence of the first paragraph.
- Use that same key word term several times throughout the rest of the text (but no more than 1.5 to 2 percent of the text should be one single key word phrase). SEO experts often discuss finding the sweet spot in terms of key word density, so don't overdo it. Typically, you want between 2 and 7 percent of your text to be made up of all of the key word terms you researched earlier.
- Use variations of the key word term in the text: Gainesville apartments, apartments in Gainesville, Gainesville housing rentals. Not only does this replicate your key words for a robot audience, but it also creates stylistic variability for the human audience.
- Proximity matters. If you include the sentence "Gainesville apartments for rent are cheaper than you might think," Google will see the proximity of "cheaper" to "Gainesville apartments." The closer together the words are, the more likely you are to rank well for any given terms.
- Include key words at the beginning of a sentence.
- Bolding, italicizing, or underlining a key word may increase results.
- Write for a general human audience. Google and other search engines seem to like simple sentence structure.

Tag multimedia with key words

Images, video, and other kinds of multimedia often include an <alt> or <image title> tag in their code. You should include the key word terms in these tags for any multimedia you embed in the page content. These tags not only help web robots index the page, but they also help screen-reader software identify the content of the multimedia for blind users who must rely on textual descriptions to understand what the visual content is about.

Make it original

For each separate page on your website, make sure that each one includes original content. Google does not favorably rank websites that have two or three pages with the same information. If you're including a new page on the site, make sure it's unique. Although robots don't have emotions, you might think of them getting "bored" the way humans might if they see or hear the same information over and over again. Although perhaps far-fetched when it comes to these robots, you might consider originality as an appeal to *pathos*.

Revise

Just like any kind of writing, you should revise how you code your page for SEO as you develop new incoming links, new content, and gain new information about how people search for your site. If you don't rank high for your targeted search terms, keep changing your approach. Remember, however, that it takes time for web robots to reach your site and return, so several weeks may pass before you notice results.

Rhetorical Continuities

We often understand new writing technologies based on the ones that came before. As an example, when film was developed, it often relied on plays and books as source material before original screenplays were developed. The first written poems were simply spoken poems that were written down. Likewise, web page design often uses elements of familiar writing documents in order to assign their structure. For example, just as a written document has a title, headers, margins, footers, and other features, we often use these same terms when describing the parts of a web page. You might note, as you examine other digital genres, how similar terms are used across these different kinds of digital writing.

Link Building

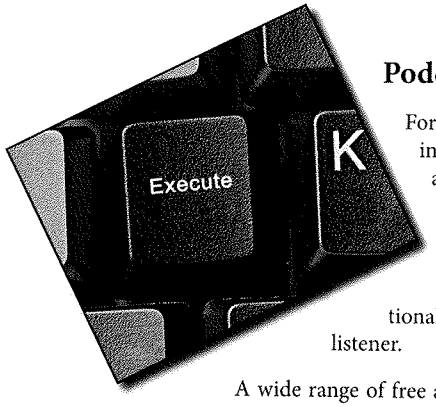
Look at the "page source" of a variety of websites. Compare how these sites use (or don't use) the SEO techniques mentioned above. Do they make good use of the <title> tag? Do they include key words in the page's main text? Do they include key words in the <alt> tags for images? Analyze the web pages for these features, and make an argument for how well each page writes for search engine robots. Include reasons and evidence to support your claim.

Search Engine

Select a website not discussed in the Link Building prompt above. Engaging in the same analysis, write an SEO report on the site, noting what the site does well to write for nonhuman audiences, as well as what it does poorly. In an essay, argue for suggestions you think will help improve this aspect of the site. Make sure you include reasons and evidence to support this claim. After you've composed the report, share your findings with the class.

KEY Terms

casting
file name
future audience
header tag
key word
link
rhetorical velocity
screening
search engine optimization
title tag
transnational audience
web robots



Podcast

For this assignment, create an explicit or implicit argument and distribute it through a podcast. If explicit, make sure you incorporate a claim, reasons for that claim, and evidence. If your argument is implicit, consider how to win over your audience, such as by using anecdotes, presenting a fictional story, or by emotionally appealing to your listener.

A wide range of free audio programs can provide the basic software you need to make a podcast. Ideally, you will have access to a decent microphone, but some basic desktop computer microphones or webcam mics can be effective. While creating a podcast may seem simple beyond the initial technological setup, the following tips offer further suggestions to ensure your podcast sounds its best.

Make sure you revisit the rhetorical tetrahedron through your drafting and revising process.

Planning: Write a script or overall outline of what you plan to argue. This script will help keep you on track while recording and make sure your argument or story is the most logical or engaging. This script also can help you structure your claim, reasons, and evidence. Also, consider listening to podcasts created by others, such as the radio news organization National Public Radio. These podcasts can give you ideas about how to structure your own.

Testing, testing: Before recording your whole podcast, test your microphones and recording software a few times. Play back some of these test recordings and notice if the audio has too much static, too much background noise, too much hiss, too little volume, or if certain sounds like "p's" or "s's" stand out. If so, you might place a windscreen or "pop shield" in front of the mic to cut down on these sounds, or place a piece of paper between you and the microphone, testing this setup further to see if the sound improves. You can make some adjustments with an audio editor in postproduction, but it's best to record the sound as cleanly as possible before moving to postproduction.

Identity: While this principle is more important for a sustained, serial podcast, consider creating some sort of "identity" for your podcast. What does your podcast offer that others don't? What's your podcast's particular niche? You also might consider creating some sort of theme or catch phrase that's unique to your podcast.

Structure and organization: While you will hopefully organize and structure your podcast in the planning phase, make sure it has a coherent beginning, middle, and end, either as an explicit or implicit argument. Within this three-part structure, introduce what you're going to talk about, discuss it, and then restate what you just discussed or its conclusion. Since your audience can't go back and "read" what you said through audio easily, such structure helps them to remember.

Don't read: Although you should have a script or outline, try not to read the document when recording. You might read small sections of it, but try to sound spontaneous and free flowing. Reading from a script tends to dull the material, sound unnatural, and decrease emotion in the voice.

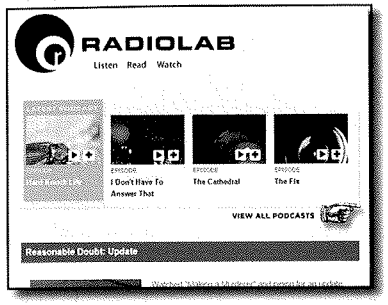
Length: Although variable, try to determine the appropriate length for your podcast. If too short, you won't be able to present a whole argument to the listener. However, if you create a podcast that is too long, the audience may stop listening, either from boredom or time constraints. Try to find a middle range—usually at least five minutes, but no more than 15 minutes.

Content: Since content is key, make sure you present something worth listening to. Why should an audience download your podcast? What does it have to offer? What will they learn? Will they be entertained? As always, you can't deliver your argument if your audience tunes out.

Review and revise: Just as you should ask your peers to review and comment on your written works, ask a classmate to listen to your podcast. Ask him where the content sounded dull, where he became confused, and if the audio quality detracted from the message. After you note his feedback, go back and revise or rerecord any material the reviewer found problematic.

Delivery: While you can electronically deliver your podcast in many ways, iTunes makes it simple to disseminate your podcast and allow anyone on the service to download it. Although you still have to host the podcast file on your own web space, iTunes allows many more people to find it by including it in its database. You can read more about submitting podcasts to iTunes here: www.apple.com/itunes/podcasts/specs.html.

From DIGITAL Writers

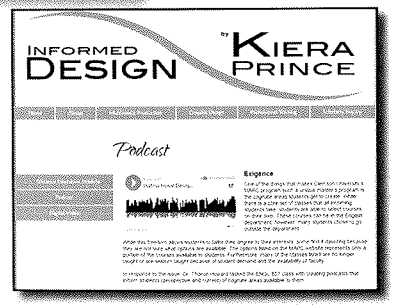


www.radiolab.org/story/312245-rodney-versus-death/

As an example of a podcast, consider this episode from the podcast program *Radiolab*. What argument is the podcast trying to make? What kinds of evidence are presented? Research the program's sponsors and benefactors. Based on this information, who do you think the podcast's primary audience might be? How does the program's podcast cater to that audience? How does this topic or format fit radio in a way that it might not fit a more visual-based medium?

Radiolab is a radio-based program and podcast that examines the connections between science, philosophy, and human experience.

STUDENT Example



Informed Design by Kiera Prince

people.clemson.edu/~kieraw/podcast.html

As a student podcast example, go to Kiera Prince's podcast, titled "Instructional Design." How is Prince's podcast structurally similar to the *Radiolab* podcast? Does she present similar evidence?

Prince produced this podcast while a student at Clemson University.

CHAPTER 6

Digital Research

Sitting in his high school biology class, then 15-year-old Jack Andraka was learning about antibodies and became interested in analytical methods using carbon nanotubes. Something clicked, and he realized this technology might be used to help diagnose pancreatic cancer, a disease that had claimed his good family friend. Poor early detection of this disease is one reason it is so deadly. He decided to do more research out of class. However, as a high school student, his access to lab resources and scientific research materials was meager compared to that found in a research university. Undeterred, Andraka decided to start with "a teenager's two best friends: Google and Wikipedia." In addition to these sites, Andraka also used YouTube and free online journals to research his problem and eventually to invent a new test to catch pancreatic cancer in its early stages (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1
Jack Andraka developed a cancer test before he could legally drive.
www.ted.com/talks/jack_andraka_a_promising_test_for_pancreatic_cancer_from_a_teenager

As Andraka's case shows, the Internet can provide a wealth of information if you know where and how to look. As with any writing project, digital writing requires significant research to ensure your document has the best chance of reaching your desired audience with your intended message. Research not only helps you understand the nuances of your topic, but it also helps you evaluate different sources and points of view about your topic and better understand the audience that will read your message. However, compared with more traditional kinds of writing, additional kinds of research are often necessary when composing a text with digital media and technology.