

## Track Changes: The emergence of the visual in writing instruction

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## Beginning at the end . . . . .

- Director of MA in New Media Studies at DePaul University, Chicago
- Emergence of the visual: Horn's *Visual Language*, Tufte's *Visual Explanations*
- Increasing mentions of "new media" in CCC and CCCCs



College English

457 Visual Rhetoric in a Culture of Fear: Impediments to Multimedia Production  
Steve Westmark

## How did we get here?

- 1980s: development of desktop publishing
- Software and hardware
- Badly designed newsletters

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macintosh\\_II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macintosh_II)



<http://www.anickoftime.ca/xmas/xmletter.html>

## Technical writing and composition

- Secretarial pools go the way of the dodo
- Desktop publishing leads to guidelines on visual design for tech writers, who now do their own layout/formatting
- GML, SGML, HTML, XML

## Handbooks as metonymy

- Stand in for "what we think students need to know about writing"
- Inclusion of advice about visual design indicates the rise to prominence of visual design
- Writing now includes interface design: information design, information architecture, document design

## Technical Writing, Samuels, 1989

5	The Writing Process: As You Write	68
	Getting Started: Planned Versus False Starts	69
	Recognizing and Creating Structures	72
	Ordering the Sections of a Report	78
	Making Transitions	80
	Coming to a Conclusion	81
	Exercises	82
6	The Writing Process: Using Visual Aids	83
	When to Use Visual Aids	83
	Deciding What Kinds of Visual Aids to Use	84
	Exercises	105
7	The Writing Process: After You Write	104

Not document design, but some attention to the visual



## Visual explanations



FIGURE 14.3 Citing a database article from LexisNexis Academic.

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## Digital natives/net generation

- Want to learn skills explicitly
- These students assert that it is **not enough** to trust that writing abilities will be developed tacitly
- NSSE –focus on engagement, active learning



<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/digitalnatives/index.htm>

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## We're turtles, they're hares

Marc Prensky on "How Digital Natives Think Differently"

**Twitch Speed vs. Conventional Speed**

Parallel vs. Linear Processing

Random Access vs. Linear Thinking

Graphics First vs. Text First

Connected vs. Stand Alone

Active vs. Passive

Pave vs. Patience

Fantasies vs. Reality

Technology as Friend not foe

**Twitch Speed vs. Conventional Speed**

Little in real life moves as fast as the stimuli that confront "Generation Nintendo" learners on a daily basis: MTV, video games, streamed media; all these technologies develop an unprecedented level of media expectations. Learning offerings are challenged to not only meet the pace of "twitch speed", but to exploit this capacity to its fullest extent.

Instructions: Roll over text on left

<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/digitalnatives/index.htm>

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## What does it all add up to?

- Writing pedagogy intersects with these new students and the new demands for interactive or engaged learning
- Writing as new media—blogs, MySpace, MSN
- Graphic novels



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## Where are we now?

- Text/image is the norm, not the exception
- Students need to design information, not just word-process essays/documents
- Interface design (visual design) affects whether or not something gets read and how well it is understood

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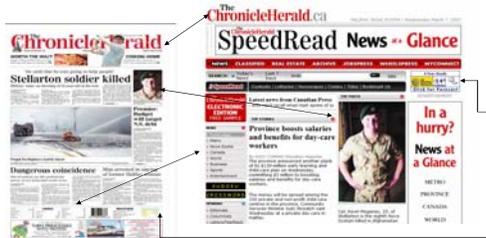
## Hot Text

- Writing for the web remediates (Bolter and Grusin's term) writing in print
- The look/interface of print newspapers has been changed by the advent of web-based versions of the same paper



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## Paper and online remediate each other



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## Brief Penguin Handbook

- First handbook to make visual rhetoric an organizing principle of the rhetoric section
- Extends it to the research section—visual learners
- Digital natives—do things on their terms, their way, online



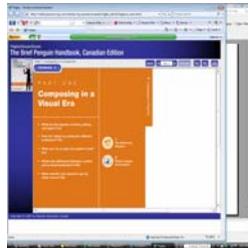
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## Plug, play and party



Increasing demands for student writers:

- Design documents
- Compose on screen
- Revise on the fly
- Exchange with peers
- Evaluate web sources



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