


The Writing Center and its Virtual Space: Some 'Room' to Grow for the Future



Rusty Carpenter
Coordinator and T&T PhD Student
University Writing Center
University of Central Florida

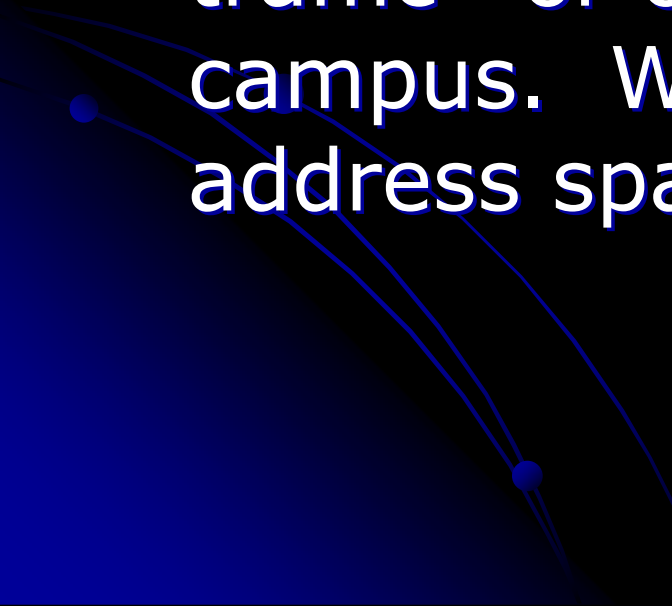
Presentation for the International Writing Centers Association
Conference, April 2007

The Politics of Space

Believing that what writing centers do is more important than where they are located or how reporting lines are drawn, it is easy for directors simply to make the best of whatever space and administrative structures they are offered. And, to a degree, this priority is correct; neither style nor location is a good substitute for substance. However, although location is not everything, it too is important, for material spaces have political edges that are costly if ignored (Peterson Haviland 85)

The Politics of Space

For the foreseeable future, writing centers will be located wherever there is space, whether located centrally—near the flow of student traffic—or on the perimeter of campus. Writing centers will have to address spatial concerns.



Physical Space in the UCF UWC

- 35 Writing Consultants
- 8 concurrent f2f consultations
- 2 online consultations
- 2 phone consultations
- 1 desk person

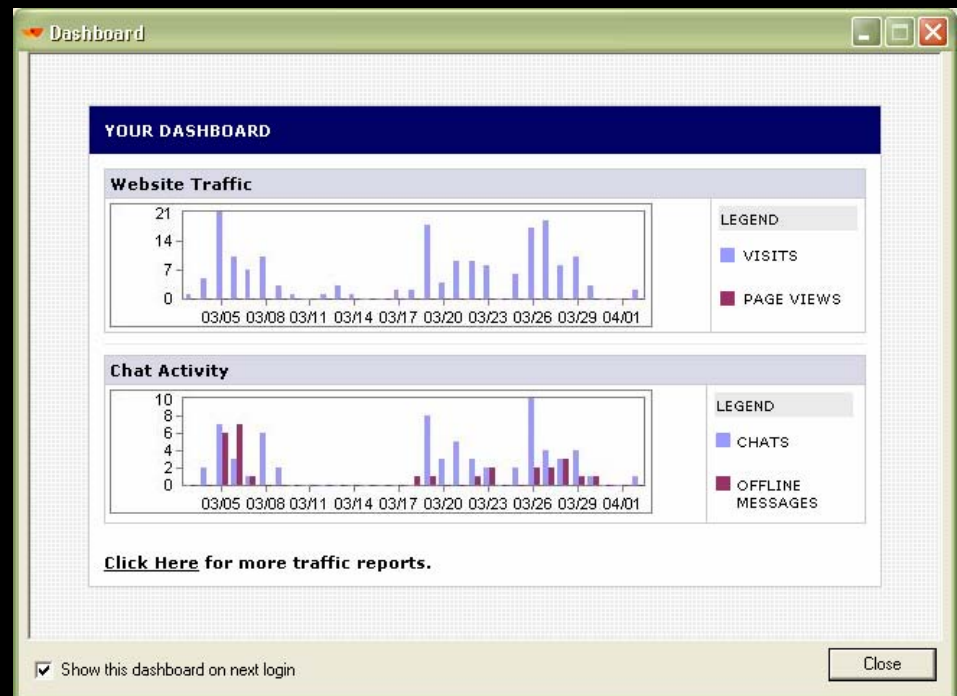


Virtual Space in the UCF UWC

* Virtual Presence: www.uwc.ucf.edu

- 82,457 hits
- 2,659 hits per day
- 2,158 files
- 144 KnightOWL synchronous online consultations

* Stats based on March 2007



The Remediation of Print?

- The printed writing space is remediated in that it is absorbed and repurposed by the virtual writing space.
- “It is easy to see that hypermedia applications are always explicit acts of remediation: they import earlier media into a digital space in order to critique and refashion them,” Bolter and Grusin explain (53).

Writing Consultants in Virtual Writing Spaces: The Remediated Self

Kastman Breuch has discussed remediation in terms of face-to-face and electronic communication, examining the degree to which electronic communication “borrows” from face-to-face communication (8).

Virtual Space: Some Liberating Factors to Consider

- Virtual space is less competitive than physical space
- Fewer spatial restrictions on the Web
- Writing centers can maintain face-to-face physical spaces *and* solidify online presence
- Writing centers can reduce dependency on physical spaces and the elements of physical space (i.e. tables, chairs, and, most importantly, square footage)

Resources

Bolter, Jay David, and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge: MIT P, 1999.

Kastman Breuch, Lee-Ann. *Virtual Peer Review*. Albany: State University of New York P, 2004.

Peterson Haviland, Carol, et al. "The Politics of Administrative and Physical Location." *The Politics of Writing Centers*. 85-98.

Contact Me

Rusty Carpenter

University Writing Center

University of Central Florida

rgcarpen@mail.ucf.edu

