Chapter 17: Choosing a Medium, Genre, and Technology for Your Communication (pp. 493-)

-“When writers use a specific communication technology, they need to understand the impact that the technology will have on that communication. You do not always have a choice of which technology or medium you can use. But when you do, you need to understand the potential and limitations of each, and you need to make your choice in a rhetorically sound way” (p. 493).

Communication Technologies (p. 494)

-“Communication technology is not necessarily an electronic device. Because writing is itself a technology, every tool that we use to write is a kind of communication technology. Some communication technologies, such as word processing software, encourage revision while others, such as pen and paper, act to discourage it” (p. 494)

Publishing Your Work (p. 494)

-“If you publish to a broad audience, and especially if you publish on the Web, you need to remember that those who view your work will be forming an opinion of you and your ideas that is based solely on what they see and read” (p. 494).

-“Whether you publish in print or in an electronic medium, you will enhance your credibility if you choose an appropriate genre” (p. 495).

Selecting a Genre and a Medium (p. 495)

-“In choosing a genre and medium, you need to consider carefully the audience, the context, and the purpose for your writing” (p. 495).

Deciding on a Genre for Your Work (p. 495)

-The genre you use for your writing is usually determined by your rhetorical purpose: Who is your audience, and what are you trying to accomplish with that audience? Sometimes, of course, whoever asks you to write will dictate the genre:

- Your employer asks you to construct a formal proposal.

- Your art teacher asks you to construct and present an oral report that uses visuals in the form of handouts, overhead projector slides, or a PowerPoint presentation (for more on presentation software, see page 503).

- Your Aunt Hanna asks you to send her a letter outlining your recent move to a new city, and she especially likes photographs printed in the letter.

- Your college president requests e-mail responses to a proposed new student fee.
Much of the time, though, you will select the appropriate genre based on your audience and rhetorical purpose:

- If you want to suggest to the president of your college that your campus library needs longer operating hours, a formal letter or proposal is probably the best approach (chapter 8 focuses on persuasive writing).

- If you want to provide information to your community about an upcoming campus art exhibit, a brochure or poster might be the best genre (Chapter 6 focuses on informative writing).

- If you want to analyze an upcoming school bond tax proposal, a wiki or blog might be useful genres with which to present your analysis—ones that allow others to also chime in (Chapter seven focuses on analytical writing; for more on blogs and wikis see page 499).

Once you have decided on the genre, you will have to decide which medium will be the most effective in presenting the information (or your argument, evaluation, request, and so on). And your writing might take several forms. For example, if you are writing to share an experience (see Chapter 4), you might outline your shared experience in one of these forms:

- In print form, as an essay for your writing class
- On the Web, including several pictures, to share with family and friends
- As a PDF file on the Web that readers can download and print
- In an audio or video clip that you can e-mail readers and/or make available as a Web link

**Writing Activity (p. 497)**

**Selecting a Medium**

With several of your classmates, consider the following writing tasks. For each one, decide what medium might be appropriate to get your message across to the audience indicate.

- A group consisting of you and your neighbors wants to collect comments and information on a problem with an illegal dump near a school and present them to the town council.

- To increase public awareness of the different organizations on campus, your group has been asked to send information to various civic clubs such as the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Elks. With the material will be a request for donations to your school organizations.

**Considering Design (p. 497)**
“In addition to choosing a genre and medium for your work, you will need to decide on a design for it” (p.497).

Technologies for Computer-Mediated Communication (pp. 497-)

“Your choice of a medium for your work may depend not only on the writing situation and the genre you have chosen but also on the availability of computers and the Internet to you and your audience, and on your- and their- comfort level with using them” (p. 49seven).

The following technologies give you additional tools and options for writing and publishing your work in different media.

E-mail (p. 498)

Tone: Be aware of basic rhetorical issues: tone, audience, and ethos.

Audience: Since e-mail message can be forwarded to anybody, be aware of and cautious about it.

Ethos: Consider using different addresses for different purposes.

Threaded Discussions (p. 498)

“A threaded discussion is simply e-mail that, instead of being sent to individual address, is posted on the virtual equivalent of a bulletin board. Participants add their comments in the appropriate place- either as an extension of a previous message or as a new topic or “thread.” The advantage is that everyone can see what the other participants are saying” (p. 498).

“Threaded discussions can help instructors and students perform a variety of writing tasks. If the class is being offered entirely online, threaded discussions are a substitute for in-class discussions. If the class meets face-to-face, threaded discussions are one way to work collaboratively on a class assignment or participate in a discussion outside of class” (p. 498).

Synchronous Chat (p.499)

“At its most basic level, synchronous chat is simply a way to communicate with someone else in real time using text. Two types of synchronous chat are the virtual text-based worlds in MUDs (Multiple User Domains) and MOOs (MUDs Object Oriented). These days most people who use synchronous chat are likely to be using some kind of instant messaging (IM)” (p. 499).

“Synchronous chat provides an incredibly powerful environment for brainstorming” (p. 499).

Blogs (p. 499)

“Blogs are a type of online journal. Like pen-and-paper journals, blogs often feature personal, reflective writing, but blogs are posted on the Web and are therefore public documents” (p. 499).
Wikis (p. 499)

-A wiki is “a page or collection of Web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content” (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki). A wiki allows readers not only to read what is posted (as in a blog) but also to add or modify the content.

Word-Processing Software (p. 500)

-Word processors such as Microsoft Word, OpenOffice, and WordPerfect have always performed four basic functions: inserting text, deleting text, copying and moving text, and formatting text. One important advantage that word processors offer is that they are a very forgiving technology. Changes are easy to make. This ability to revise texts easily opens up all kinds of possibilities for writers. Major revisions become easier because moving chunks of text from one place to another takes only a few simple manipulations of the mouse. Editing your text becomes easier because you can make minor changes with just a few keystrokes, instead of having to retype the entire paper. In addition, other functions allow a writer or writers to edit a text and peer reviews to make comments on it.

Peer-Review Applications (p. 501)

-As increasing numbers of writers use computer software to collaborate, the software keeps improving. The programs that writers use for this purpose fall into two distinct categories: collaborative tools built into standard word-processing programs, as discussed on page 500, and Web-based editing programs.

Graphics Software (pp. 501-502)

Desktop Publishing Software (p. 503)

Presentation Software (pp. 503-504)

Technologies for Constructing Web Pages (p. 504)

-Web pages are computer files that can be viewed using software called a browser. Examples of browsers are Internet Explorer, Safari, and Firefox.

Chapter 18: Communicating with Design and Visuals

-Whether you are designing an elaborate poster or a simpler one, use the same standard design principles that are the focus of this chapter.

Consider the following principles of design and make rhetorical situations:

-What are you trying to accomplish with your text, and how might design images help you achieve your goals?
-What kind(s) of design elements and images might appeal to your audience?

-How can the available technology affect the design and image choices you make?

**Principles of Document Design:**

Whatever their rhetorical choices might be, writers can use the design principles of proximity, contrast, alignment, and repetition to craft more effective texts.

**Proximity**

Whenever you vary the amount of space between and around text elements so that related items are close to one another, you are employing the principle of **proximity**.

**Contrast**

**Contrast** is the design features that sets some aspects of a page from others. Primary colors: red, yellow, and blue. **Secondary colors** are formed by combining primary colors. **Complementary colors**.

**Alignment**

**Alignment** is the design feature that provides a consistency in the placement of text and graphical elements on a page.

**Repetition (or Consistency)**

When you use **repetition** or **consistency**, you apply the same design features to text elements with similar rhetorical functions, doing so consistency throughout the text.

**USING A SINGLE DOCUMENTATION FORMAT**

**DESIGNING TO MAKE DOCUMENTS EASIER TO READ**

**USING TYPEFACES AND TYPE SIZES CONSISTENTLY**

**USING BULLETS, NUMBERS, ROMAN NUMERICALS, AND LETTERS CONSISTENTLY**

**USING WHITE SPACE CONSISTENTLY**

**USING GRAPHICS EFFECTIVELY**

**Common Kinds of Visual Texts**

**Tables**
**Tables** organizes information in columns and rows for readers, helping them make comparisons between or among pieces of information or sets of numerical data.

**USING TABLES EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR TEXTS**

**Bars and Line Graphs**

**USING GRAPHS EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR TEXTS**

**Charts**

**USING CHARTS EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR TEXTS**

To use charts effectively in your texts, consider the following questions:

- Is there a process, a key relationship, or the components of something within my text that I could illustrate with a chart?

- How will the chart help my audience better understand a particular point in my paper?

- How can I organize the chart so that readers can see patterns in the information?

- Do I have access to the technology (a color printer, for example) that will enable me to construct the chart and/or present it effectively?

**Photographs**

**USING PHOTOGRAPHS EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR WRITING PROJECTS**

To decide when and how to use photographs in your writing, consider the following questions:

- What kind of photograph will most effectively support my purpose?

- What impact will a photograph have on my text?

- How will my audience respond to each of the photographs that I am considering?

- Where might I place the photograph in my text? Why?

- Do I need permission to use a particular photograph?

- How might I ethically manipulate the photograph to use in my text? For example, can I crop, or cut out, part of the photograph that includes extraneous material?

- If the photograph is an electronic document, is the resolution high enough for use in a print document?

- Will the technology that is available to me accurately reproduce the photograph?
Drawings

**USING DRAWINGS EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR TEXTS**

To use drawings effectively in your texts, consider the following questions:

- What in my text could I illustrate with a drawing?
- How could a drawing meet the needs of my audience?
- Can I use an existing drawing, or do I need to construct one?
- Do I need permission to use an existing drawing?
- Do I have access to software that I can use to construct the drawing?

Diagrams

**Diagrams** are drawings that illustrate and explain the arrangement of and relationships among parts of a system.

**USING DIAGRAMS EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR WRITING**

To use diagrams effectively in your writing, consider the following questions:

- What in my text could I illustrate with a diagram?
- What effect will the diagram have on my readers?
- Can I use an existing diagram, or do I need to construct one?
- Do I need permission to use an existing diagram?
- Do I have access to software that I can use to construct the diagram?

Maps

Cartographers use maps to record and show where countries, cities, streets, buildings, colleges, lakes, rivers, and mountains are located in the world or in a particular part of it.

**USING MAPS EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR TEXTS**

To use maps effectively in your texts, consider the following questions:

- What information could a map offer to my audience?
- If there is an existing map that will serve my purpose, do I need permission to use it?
- If I have to draw my own map, what tools do I need?
-What data do I need to construct the map?

-What information do I need to include in the caption for the map?

-What technology do I need to present the map effectively?

**Cartoons**

**USING CARTOONS EFFECTIVELY IN YOUR TEXTS**

To use cartoons effectively in your texts, consider the following questions:

-How will a cartoon support my purpose?

-Given that readers usually associate cartoons with humor and/or satire, how might humor or satire affect my readers?

-Do I need permission to use a published cartoon, or is it in the public domain?

**Designing New Media**

Most of the principles of good design for print texts still hold for new media with minor exceptions. For example, serif fonts appear to be more readable in print while sans serif are more readable to online. Whether you are crafting Web pages, PowerPoint presentations (meant to be presented as static presentations or as videos), or any other forms of new digital media, you should keep basic principles of effective design in mind.

**Using Visuals Rhetorically**

As you consider using visuals, think about using them rhetorically to achieve some specific purpose with a specific audience.

**Considering Your Audience**

Readers are more likely to expect visuals in some genres than in others. Lab reports, for example, commonly include tables and graphs. This principle applies to any visuals that you plan to use in your writing. As you consider using a particular visual, ask yourself the following questions:

-Does my audience need this visual, or is it showing something that my readers already know very well? What information might a visual add?

-How will this audience respond to this visual?

-What other visual might they respond to more favorably?

-Will this audience understand the subtleties of this visual?
-How do I need to explain this visual for this particular audience?

**Considering Your Purpose**

-You will have a general purpose for any writing project- to record and share experience, to explore, to inform, to analyze, to convince or persuade, to evaluate, to explain causes and effects, to solve problems, or to analyze creative works.

Before using any visual, ask yourself these questions:

-How will this visual support my purpose?

-How might this visual detract from my purpose?

-Why is this visual necessary?

-What other visual or visuals might support my purpose more effectively?

**Using Visuals Responsibly**

Permissions

Distortions