

something to enact change. The only lingering question in my mind is that if a shopping cart can have so much influence then why does anyone else think that CHAT or ANT'S view point are not the same side of the same coin?

## **Module 5 Overview**

### **Overview**

This module explores ideas about collaboration and automation in writing work (especially writing work that relates to technical and professional writing). The world of work we do with writing has rapidly changed. Production technologies, circulation technologies, new labor arrangements, emerging market needs, and other contemporary issues have simultaneously splintered writing work in two directions: 1) from what used to be an in-house specialization to a more dispersed generalist approach and 2) into very specialized niche fields (e.g. Instructional Design, Grant Writing, etc.). Whole books can be written about the particular histories of writing trends and genres; of course, we'll have to save that discussion for another class. Instead we can focus on two particularly useful frames for understanding the shifting practices of writing labor: collaboration and automation.

### **Collaboration and Automation: Same as it ever was**

New technologies often bring a fair bit of critique and hesitancy from the general public. Going back a generation or two, before the PC or cellphones and TikTok, cheap newsprint was blamed for youth delinquency. Similar arguments and trends followed each new form of media production or circulation. It should come as no surprise then that writing researchers and scholars have often been of the mind that hesitancy or critique of new technologies was overblown.

However, the way we do work with writing has changed several matters of degree over. Several of the affordances of new technologies are especially focused on how quickly and easily writing-focused tasks can be collaborated on or automated. It's not that computers and digital writing technologies invented collaboration and automation. For instance, it's probably fair to point out how collaboration has always been a given in writing production and circulation if only because it's not particularly common for the author to typeset, run the printing press, and such. Of course, automation is a bit trickier but you can look at a history of dictation machines to see what counted as "automatic" letter or note writing. Nevertheless, the scope at which digital technologies allow us to collaborate and enable automation are currently to a degree never before seen.

## The future of writing work

Regardless of the industry you land in, it's fair to say that you'll likely do some form of writing at some point. As companies jump on new management trends (horizontal leadership, ad-hocracies, etc.) the degree of interaction (internal & external) that's expected is unlike the siloed management paradigms of the past. It's practically a given now, if nothing else, that you'll write your own emails. Increasingly, it's also common now to fall into projects across company boundaries. All this means - you'll likely have to deal with collaboration at some point.

## What writing researchers say about writing collaboration?

For what it's worth, collaborative writing is a fairly significant topic for writing researchers but the payoff is pretty sparse for real-world application. In the simplest terms: writing is a social action inflected with social values of the past. There is sometimes a little resistance to thinking about social values but it's not complicated. Think about your resume. It's a particular genre of writing that attempts to ease along a particular activity in the world (usually get you a job). Even though your resume is digital it's probably an 8.5X11 page. You probably list your education or past experiences first (probably not your volunteer work or your references). You also probably don't include your picture on your resume (a social norm elsewhere). In brief: you know a bit about writing a resume because you've seen other people's resumes and you understand the function of resume within our own piece of the world. It's pretty clear in resumes. But sometimes we write things that we're unfamiliar with.

Writing researchers sometimes point to antecedent genres when they see how people write in the real world. An antecedent genre is just a similar writing activity to the new one you're working on. For instance, you may end up in a position where you need to write one-off job aids. Perhaps your team will have an example to go off of - but that's not always the case. Nevertheless, you can reach into your antecedent genre and know that it's not too unlike an instruction set and sometimes not too unlike a worksheet. Antecedent genres are the most simple terms of finding collaboration where it sometimes looks like there is none.

## Our readings this week

This week we'll read two pieces. The first is

[Working Alone Together Coworking as Emergent Colla.pdf](#)

Working alone together looks at coworking and uses activity theory to examine how the arrangements (social and material) inflect the working space differently. You'll notice that the author spends little time on digital interfaces or software - it's generally just a given in the field that collaboration happens in these digital spaces. Yet, despite this (and the weird bit about the vending machines) there are some useful lessons here.

The second piece is [Ethics of Algorithmic Audiences.pdf](#)

The Ethics of Algorithmic Audiences looks at, for lack of a better term, automated reading. The author here pitches a fairly different version of writing education. Can his approach be reconciled with traditional approaches?

## Work for this module

After you turn your reading responses in - I'll open up (11.3) the "Final Exam" description. The purpose of opening up the exam so early is to give you some time to chip away at it while you complete your group work.

## Reading Response 4

- Due Nov 5, 2021 by 11:59pm
- Points 10
- Submitting a file upload

Read [Working Alone Together Coworking as Emergent Colla.pdf](#) and [Ethics of Algorithmic Audiences.pdf](#)

Write your reflection (not short answers) and particularly focus on the following questions:

What specific forms does collaboration take in "Working Alone Together"? What role does the environment, technology, and other people play in how collaboration unfolds?

What is the thesis of "Ethics of Algorithmic audiences" and what implications might this thesis have for have for professional writing practices?

What connections do you see between the two pieces (e.g. does writing serve a similar role in both)?

## Reading Response 5

- Due Nov 19, 2021 by 11:59pm
- Points 10
- Submitting a file upload

Read [Algorithmic Circulation.pdf](#)

And write a reading response. I'm particularly interested in your articulation of the new/different skills in publishing in digital platforms when it comes to circulation as explained by Glotfelter.

# Introduction to Final Exam

Your final exam in this course is to create an [e-magazine. \(Links to an external site.\)](#) Your e-magazine should include a front cover, table of contents, back cover, and your 5 reading responses. It's up to you how much room your reading responses take up - they could be single pages or multiple pages. I will not be re-reading your responses and assessing on any edits you've made: this task is focused entirely on the technical and design aspects. With that said, it is not good enough to just drop your content onto the page. You should aim to incorporate images and other design elements alongside your content.

## Requirements

Below is a breakdown of the requirements for this exam. You'll be expected to fulfill the minimum content, design, and technical aspects in order to receive an above 50% grade.

### Contents

- Cover
- Back cover
- Five reading responses
- Table of contents

### Design

- Visually rich pages
- Cohesiveness
- [CRAP \(Links to an external site.\)](#) principles of design
- At least one drop cap

### Technical

- Proficient use of interaction and/or animation
- Proficient use of layers and layering
- At least one expert use of [text-wrapping \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

### Deliverables

You'll turn in two files for this assignment. A PDF file and an Adobe InDesign file. Technically, your e-magazine should be exportable to EPUB but there is no need to do that for this assignment.

## Due Dates

- Optional draft: 11/29 11:59PM
- Final deliverable (both files): 12/16 11:59PM

## Final

- Due Nov 22, 2021 by 11:59pm
- Points 16
- Submitting a text entry box, a website url, or a file upload

Submit your final draft of [Introduce Interactive Technology and Ethics](#)

## Group Evaluation

- Due Nov 24, 2021 by 11:59pm
- Points 7

A group evaluation link will be sent out for each group on 11/18

## Optional Prototype for feedback

- Due Nov 29, 2021 by 11:59pm
- Points 0
- Submitting a file upload

You should be working toward your final exam for this course [Introduction to Final Exam](#)

If you want my feedback on an early draft feel free to pop your work in here. Don't worry if it's a very rough draft or if you don't feel you exactly have a handle on it. My comments will be generative rather than evaluative.

This is OPTIONAL.