Communication

The central role of communication in developing trust and its effect on employee involvement


“Communication plays an important role in the development of trust within an organization. While a number of researchers have studied the relationship of trust and communication, little is known about the specific linkages among quality of information, quantity of information, openness, trust, and outcomes such as employee involvement. This study tests these relationships using communication audit data from 218 employees in the oil industry. Using mediation analysis and structural equation modeling, we found that quality of information predicted trust of one’s coworkers and supervisors, while adequacy of information predicted one’s trust of top management. Trust of coworkers, supervisors, and top management influenced perceptions of organizational openness, which in turn influenced employees’ ratings of their own level of involvement in the organization’s goals. This study suggests that the relationship between communication and trust is complex, and that simple strategies focusing on either quality or quantity of information may be ineffective for dealing with all members in an organization.”

Joseph A. Dawson

CEOs’ hybrid speeches: Business communication staples


“Closely examining a number of contemporary speeches given by CEOs, this study highlights differentiating features of two business speech genres that together account for a large number of corporate speeches. These genres, which are exemplified by speeches given at events such as industry conferences or company ceremonies, are unlike other business speech genres in that they pursue two main communication ends at once. They take on an assignment set by the speaking occasion while simultaneously pursuing the speaker’s commercial objective. CEO speakers construct the hybrid speeches of these two genres by drawing on and modifying single-purpose speech types regularly used today both in business and in other sectors. Recognizing the dual communication purpose of hybrid speeches is critical for understanding their unusual structures and for developing appropriate standards to evaluate them.”

Joseph A. Dawson

A descriptive account of the investor relations profession: A national study


“Despite being a practice of vital importance for corporations, investor relations commands little attention in scholarly research. The studies of investor relations from a strategic communication standpoint are almost nonexistent in the United States. At the same time, investor relations today is undergoing a major shift from financial reporting to building and
maintaining relationships with shareholders. The article reviews literature to define the current body of knowledge and state of research in investor relations. Then, the article reports on a survey of Fortune 500 companies to identify major investor relations practices at corporations: investor relations activities, their target audiences, their place in organizational structure, the education of investor relations officers, and what problems investor relations officers face.”

Joseph A. Dawson

Obfuscating the obvious:
Miscommunication issues in the interpretation of common terms

“We communicate via many forms every day. When what we say or write is misunderstood, the fault may lie with either party. One source of miscommunication is the different meaning people place on commonly used words and phrases. In this article, the authors report preliminary results from a study on such miscommunication and lay out an agenda for research on improving business communication based on the Integrative Model of Levels of Analysis of ‘Miscommunication,’ developed by Coupland, Wiemann, and Giles.”

Joseph A. Dawson

Performing sustainable development through eco-collaboration: The ricelands habitat partnership

“Performativity’ theory offers a useful framework for illuminating the role that organizational discourse plays in engendering new social imaginaries. In this article, the authors demonstrate this point through a genealogy and textual analysis of the Ricelands Habitat Partnership (RHP), an eco-collaboration between the rice industry and environmental advocates in California’s Sacramento Valley. Articulated here as a story of enemies becoming friends, the RHP gives life to a vision of more (if not perfectly) sustainable agriculture, where sustaining business and the natural environment can go hand in hand. The authors argue that sustainable development (like democracy or other abstract concepts) becomes ‘real’ for businesses and for society at large through local enactment. That is, new understandings and practices of sustainability are brought into being and institutionalized through the stories that they generate. Attention to the performative effects of language points to the ethical dimensions of our own research and writing. It suggests the need to consider the potentially world-changing effects of stories that we choose to tell.”

Joseph A. Dawson

Education

Adding value for students and faculty with a master’s degree in professional writing

“This article describes an interdisciplinary professional writing program and its benefits for students (in terms of knowledge, habits of mind, and developing careers). The authors present qualitative research findings about habits of mind and knowledge domains of successful students, which may prove valuable for faculty teaching in similar programs as they consider curriculum design, or for faculty pondering issues of career development for master’s degree graduates.”

Brent Henze

Applying digital storytelling technology to a problem of practice in education

An instructor of English in South Korea introduced digital storytelling to help students overcome their inhibition about speaking English and view their peers as partners rather than as competitors when they recorded each other’s stories. Digital storytelling
Recent & Relevant

offers the students a low-risk avenue to introducing themselves and building rapport with peers in the English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom.

Lee S. Tesdell

**Boundary negotiations: Electronic environments as interface**


“Boundaries have long been a concern of literacy scholars, who are very much interested in how individuals cross boundaries and gain membership/genre expertise in new activity systems. Consequently, much attention and research has focused on issues of transition and transference: entering the academic community and acquiring academic literacy, writing across the disciplines, moving from undergraduate to graduate school, or transitioning from school to workplace settings. Less attention has been paid to boundary interactions involving other activity systems, especially those associated with home and popular culture. Drawing upon genre theory, I explore how the popular discourses and literacy practices prevalent in today’s media-savvy, image-literate culture intersect and interact with academic discourses and literacy practices in electronic environments. Understanding how popular culture and classroom genres intersect via the interface of technology can help students use what they already know (i.e., apply the various literacy skills they already practice) in learning new strategies and new conceptions—in short, new literacies.”

Lee S. Tesdell

**Collaborative dialogue between Thai EFL learners during self-access computer activities**


“Previous studies have shown that second language (L2) learners use language to reflect on language form when they carry out collaborative classroom-based activities, and that they generally remember the language forms that they had discussed. The current study similarly investigated whether learners reflect on and remember language forms, but focused on learners’ interaction during self-access computer activities … The results indicated that the learners’ LREs [language-related episodes] involved lexical items more often than grammatical forms, and that they successfully resolved the majority of their LREs while they were collaborating. However, their test performance indicated that they only remembered less than half of the lexical items and one third of the grammatical forms that they had discussed. Suggestions are offered for teachers and administrators interested in integrating collaborative self-access computer activities into English L2 courses.”

Lee S. Tesdell

**The first weeklong technical writers’ institute and its impact**


“Rensselaer’s Technical Writers’ Institute, the first program of its kind, had a profound impact on technical communication. It enabled technical communicators without formal education in the field to gain important knowledge, provided a forum for communicators from different industries to meet in order to solve mutual problems, played a key role in defining the field and its needs, encouraged recruitment (including the hiring of more women), promoted professional societies and formal degree programs, and seriously affected industry training programs by enabling them to use institute teaching materials. Knowledge gained through the Technical Writers’ Institute enabled Rensselaer to develop many other innovations.”

Kimberly C. Harper

**How technical communication textbooks fail engineering students**


“Twelve currently popular technical communication textbooks are analyzed for their treatment and discussions of the types of writing that engineers produce. The analysis reveals a persistent bias toward humanities-based styles and genres and a failure to address the forms of argument and evidence that our science and engineering
students most need to master to succeed as rhetoricians in their fields. The essay ends with recommendations and calls upon instructors to reenvision the service course in technical communication.”

Kimberly C. Harper

**The interlanguage grammar of information management in L1 and L2 developing writing**


“Applying concepts from second language acquisition research to developing writing, we explore the commonalities of L1 and L2 writers on the specific level of linguistic choices needed to order information within and across sentence boundaries. We propose that many of the kinds of constructions in L1 and L2 writing most difficult to categorize, labeled as errors, are in structures that are, from the writers’ perspective, principled attempts to meet their obligation of managing information.”

Tim Hadley

**Learner-created lexical databases using web-based source material**


“The use of authentic text has been argued to increase learner awareness of lexical form, function, and meaning…. The Web provides ready-made material and tools for both learner-centered reading and vocabulary tasks. This study reports on the results of a project in which Japanese university EFL students made use of the Web as a living corpus to investigate the specific contexts and collocative properties of lexis. Using an online database, students created a communal dictionary composed of lexis and example sentences culled from Web sources, along with examples of their own devising. The language database was then used to facilitate peer teaching of lexis. Work produced indicates that learners paid attention to lexical form, function, and meaning when composing.”

Lee S. Tesdell

**Mediating power: Distance learning interfaces, classroom epistemology, and the gaze**


“Distance learning’s interfaces—from corresponding through the postal service to the televised talking head—have traditionally been designed from the top down, supporting banking models of learning or, in writing instruction, current traditional rhetoric pedagogies. Due to temporal and spatial constraints, these interface designs often support (or encourage) one-way communication from the instructor to the student. Students mostly interact with the instructor by asking questions or submitting work, and they tend to have little correspondence with other peers. These methods clearly privilege the instructor’s knowledge and evaluation. Furthermore, these interface designs empower the instructor to gaze upon the students and assess them—often not as a corporeal body but as a corpus of texts. Thus, each interface adopted for distance learning sets up a power dynamic in which the capability to share the roles of creating knowledge is juxtaposed with the instructor’s capability to normalize the students and reify their own authority through their gaze. In this article we examine the traditional classroom interface through the correspondence course interface, the simulated classroom interface, and the synchronous video interface to raise questions about the infrastructures of distance learning and their implications for student learning.”

Daniel Drahnak

**Practitioners’ views about the use of business email within organizational settings: Implications for developing student generic competence**


“Although extensive research has been done on teaching emails and on the use of emails in organizations, little research exists about how to incorporate organizational practitioners’ views as the voices of the community of social practice. To remedy this pedagogical gap, this article uses a genre approach...”
to discuss organizational practitioners’ views on the use of email in organizational settings. It also develops seven teaching and learning stages for situated learning and teaching in business communication based upon the presented study findings.”

**Student ethos in the online technical communication classroom: Diverse voices**


“As teaching technical writing online becomes more widespread, teachers and scholars are identifying ways to increase teaching/learning efficacy. One way of accomplishing this goal is by continually reflecting on different types of student ethos being constructed in an online course. The changes that occur in the ethos development process can be contextualized through activity theory, which emphasizes the dynamic, evolving nature of social environments. Activity theory’s focus on cultural history and tools makes it ideal for exploring active communication among multiple participants in an online technical communication environment. The triangle of human activity adapted and developed by Engestrom (1987) provides a framework for exploring ethos as an object within an online course’s activity system.”

**Using online corpora to develop students’ writing skills**


“Large corpora such as the British National Corpus and the COBUILD Corpus and Collocations Sampler are now accessible, free of charge, online and can be usefully incorporated into a process writing approach to help develop students’ writing skills. This article aims to familiarize readers with these resources and to show how they can be usefully exploited in the redrafting stages of writing to both minimize the teachers’ workload and encourage greater cognitive processing of errors. An exploratory investigation comparing the use of these two online corpora in Japanese university writing classes is then described. This suggests that the participants in the study were able to significantly improve the naturalness of their writing after only a 90-minute training session and that the majority of students found these online resources beneficial, although there was a marked preference for the COBUILD Corpus and Collocations Sampler.”

**Trends in industry supervisors’ feedback on business communication internships**


“The purpose of this empirical study is to explore expectations of industry insiders and identify how student interns are performing in relation to those expectations as defined by 11 performance areas . . . . While the results suggest that student interns tend to meet their supervisors’ expectations in many areas, performance categories such as initiative, writing skills, and oral communication skills require increased attention in the ways we prepare students for their internships and post-graduation employment and, perhaps, the ways we help onsite supervisors develop expectations for and evaluate our interns.”

**Best practices from the outside in**


The author discusses “a small technical documentation group in a content management company and how they made the move to DITA (Darwin Information Typing Architecture).”
**Content management on the other side of the fence: Copyright and licensing controls**


This article will “assist you and your organization with managing some of the issues and emotions associated with publishing electronically . . . . [and] work through some of the issues associated with protecting copyright for publications distributed in electronic formats both by download and on physical media.”

*Sherry Southard*

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**Devising collective knowledges for the technical writing classroom: A course-based approach to using Web 2.0 Writing technologies in collaborative work**


“Technical and professional writing pedagogies have traditionally understood collaborative writing as an aggregate, cooperative venture between writers and subject matter experts. In contrast, this tutorial argues that Web 2.0 technologies offer technical and professional communication pedagogies more advantageous conceptions and practices of collaborative writing. The tutorial analyzes how new media technologies create a different collaborative writing environment and then discusses how these environments help collaborative writing methods create an alternative writing situation. The study concludes by examining the outcomes of student Web 2.0 research projects and by offering technical and professional writing instructors new pedagogical strategies for teaching collaborative writing.”

*Gowri Saraf*

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**Examining the information economy: Exploring the overlap between professional communication activities and information-management practices**


“The information economy is based on the collection and the exchange of data and ideas. We all either contribute to or use materials from the information economy in most aspect of our everyday lives. Few of us, however, understand all the nuances of the information economy or the communication factors that affect its operations . . . . [This special issue] examines the connections between communication technologies and the products, practices, and services that constitute the information economy. In their introduction, the authors describe what they call ‘information economy’ and its expansion, citing sources.”

*Gowri Saraf*

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**Going global: A case study of rhetorical invention, packaging, delivery, and feedback collection**


“When the primary aim of global, professional communication expands to include rapport building in addition to information sharing, basic parts of the communication process must be reevaluated. Such an assessment was conducted through a case study of a team that adapted a U.S. training seminar for a Japanese audience. The team’s strong emphasis on the communicative aim of relationship building illustrated how traditional conceptions of rhetorical invention, packaging, delivery, and feedback collection might be revised. For practitioners and educators, the findings of this case study prompt a reevaluation of the rhetorical abilities that are required in global professional communication contexts.”

*Gowri Saraf*
**Recent & Relevant**


To understand granularity, the author “examined the specific needs of not only our clients and their staff, but our managers, program developers, Information Architect, editors, and writers . . .. Looking from the outside in gave us the perspective we needed.”

Sherry Southard

**Integrating cost effective information in a global organization**

The author shares “some of [her] experiences from the GECM [Global Enterprise Content Management] integration in several companies throughout USA and Europe, focusing on the processes and interaction [they] implement in the analysis, structuring, and creation of the information . . .. to give a . . . view of different aspects of this integration and dive into the details to illustrate these aspects.”

Sherry Southard

**Legal and ethical issues of the corporate blogosphere**

“In the increasingly competitive global economy, corporations throughout the world must take advantage of all the marketing and communication tools available to them, including blogging. Blogs allow corporations to connect with their stakeholders in a more personal way and, thus, strengthen their image, brand, and customer loyalty. Instant feedback is available through comments posted on the corporate blog, saving organizations large sums of money otherwise spent on market research. However, entering the blogosphere poses a number of risks for a corporation, such as potential damage to the corporate reputation and customer loyalty as well as legal liability. Conflicts still exist between the rights of bloggers and a corporation’s interests. Blogs may be restricted by legal and ethical boundaries, which may differ across countries. This paper presents the benefits and risks associated with corporate blogging around the world and provides some interesting success stories as well as lessons learned. It also offers a compilation of guidelines for effective blogging and suggests topics for future research.”

Gowri Saraf

**Micro factors influencing the attitudes toward and the use of a mobile technology: A model of cell-phone use in Guinea**

“Previous studies have often highlighted macro factors as explaining the adoption and use of cell phones in developing economies. However, micro factors, which directly affect the end user’s motivations, have been underinvestigated. We examine the influence of micro factors on both individuals’ attitude toward and their use of cell phones . . .. Results show that mobility, familiarity, social influence, and resources possession influence the attitude toward and the use of cellular telephones. In contrast, the hypothesis that subscription conditions are the main influence on cell phone use is not verified.”

Gowri Saraf

**Moving into someone else’s single sourcing house: Are we (best) practicing what we preached?**

The author describes how an Integration department moved from having been “involved in the decision making, the testing, the changes, and the training . . .. [to an environment where] the tools had already been chosen, the power users had already been trained, the high-level organization of information had already been done . . .. [as they learned to use] ST4 as a documentation tool.”

Sherry Southard
Recent & Relevant

**Targeting an audience of robots: Search engines and the marketing of technical communication business websites**


“This paper explores the extent to which technical communication businesses with Web sites are attempting to reach an audience of prospective clients through an intermediary audience of search engines. It draws on a survey of 240 principals of these businesses, brief interviews with half of them, and an analysis of their sites. Results show that search engines are among the most helpful methods leading people to these business sites and that higher levels of such search engine helpfulness are strongly associated with higher percentages of clientele who originate through these sites. Most businesses take search engines into account at least minimally; however, meaningfully pursuing that audience requires ongoing investments that some technical communication businesses are reluctant to make.”

Gowri Saraf

**Using microformats: Gateway to the semantic web [tutorial]**


“This tutorial explains and describes the use of several microformats, which make information marked up in HTML available for use in applications outside traditional Web browsers. Because microformats consist of minor additions to the HTML backbone of common Web pages, they represent a simple but significant move toward what Tim Berners-Lee has called the ‘SemanticWeb’—but without requiring the technical and practical shifts and time demands of a complete XML-based semantic Web development approach. Microformats also provide technical communicators with literacies and a conceptual foundation to approach more advanced semantic Web technologies and suggest ways to refine current Web design practice.”

Gowri Saraf

**Management**

**A content analysis investigating relationships between communication and business continuity planning**


“This study provides an exploratory content analysis of business continuity planning (BCP) literature. The researchers systematically sampled multiple databases and codified artifacts using a set of variables developed by the research team. Based on the analysis, arguments are presented concerning the nature of BCP, the state of the BCP literature, and the nature of the conversations taking place in regard to BCP among academics, government/legal institutions, the media, and trade industries. Finally, the researchers demonstrate gaps in the current knowledge on BCP and suggest future directions for applied and theoretical research.”

Joseph A. Dawson

**Listen for the answers**


“Global employee engagement survey results released by the IABC Research Foundation reveal opportunities for communicators to have greater influence on delivering messages that encourage employees to remain productive, and to understand how their work contributes to achieving organizational priorities …. [Use of social media] is not the solution to effective employee engagement” but provides more tools for employee communication, including listening to employees’ perceptions about workplaces.

Linda M. Davis

**Principles for effective virtual teamwork**


“Virtual teamwork is different than face-to-face teamwork in many ways so it takes overt and explicit effort to design new work processes to make it
successful. The biggest challenges for virtual team members are competing demands for attention, ambiguity of remote communication, establishment of personal relationships, and the need for accessible, stable, and user-friendly technology. The [nine] principles presented here are drawn from our experience with virtual teams across numerous organizations and are the result of many successes and failures. The principles are intended to help designers, managers, and virtual team members improve the effectiveness of their virtual team."

Sherry Southard

The role of leader motivating language in employee absenteeism

“This study investigates the relationship between strategic leader language (as embodied in Motivating Language Theory) and employee absenteeism. With a structural equation model, two perspectives were measured for the impact of leader spoken language: employee attitudes toward absenteeism and actual attendance. Results suggest that leader language does in fact have a positive, significant relationship with work attendance through the mediation effect of worker attendance attitude.”

Joseph A. Dawson

Exit, voice, and sensemaking following psychological contract violations: Women’s responses to career advancement barriers

“Much of the theory guiding career development research is grounded in studies of men’s careers in professional positions. In addition to largely ignoring the career experiences of women, the career literature pays little attention to overcoming barriers to career advancement in organizations—a challenge many women and men both face over the course of their career development. Using survey data, analyses of in-depth interviews, and a focus group discussion with female executives in the high-tech industry, this study finds variations of three responses: exit, voice,
and rationalizing to remain are used by women in response to career barriers. These responses form the foundation of a career barrier sensemaking and response framework presented in the study. Findings indicate that perceived organizational sanctioning of career barriers and the organization’s commitment to the career advancement of other women also influence participants’ responses to barriers and their strategies for sensemaking, respectively.”

Joseph A. Dawson

**Time to socialize: Organizational socialization structures and temporality**


“Organizational socialization is a communicative practice that affects and is affected by organizational temporality. The relationship between organizational socialization practices and organizational temporality is empirically explored through a questionnaire focusing on Ballard and Seibold’s temporality dimensions and measures emphasizing structural dimensions of socialization tactics. Findings indicate that the perception of time as scarce is related to organizational members’ development of formal structures that promote socialization of newcomers. Further, findings suggest that organizational members holding a future temporal focus may engage in the development of formal socialization structures that provide social support for newcomers and help newcomers predict their career path within the organization.”

Joseph A. Dawson

**Research**

**The linguistic representation of rhetorical function: A study of how economists present their knowledge claims**


“This article deals with how economists present their new knowledge claim in the genre of the research article. In the discipline of economics today, the claim is typically included not only in the obvious results/discussion section(s) but also in three other locations of the article: the abstract, the introduction, and the conclusion. The present study considers whether the rhetorical function of each of these three text parts has an impact on the linguistic realization of the claim. The corpus consists of 25 articles from two international journals, *European Economic Review* and *Journal of International Economics*. The investigation shows that economist authors commonly draw their readers’ attention to the claim by means of signaling expressions such as *Our main finding is that . . .*, not only in the introduction but also in the conclusion. The simple present seems to be the preferred tense in the claim sentence, even in the conclusion (*We find . . . / We argue . . .*). The discussion of these findings includes the views of discipline insiders, providing clear indications of the strategic nature of the research communication process.”

Edward A. Malone

**Publishing**

**Book history in premodern China: The state of the discipline I**


In this bibliographical essay, the author surveys scholarly studies of book production (chiefly xylographic) in China from roughly the 8th to the 18th centuries. She divides her survey into six categories: the study of books and printing, the search for China’s print revolution, patterns of book production and distribution, the impact of print on society, publishing and the state, and reading practices. Of particular interest is her summary of the debates about when a printing “revolution” might have taken place in China. The author concludes her survey with suggestions for future research—for example, calling for comparative studies of China’s book culture with other book cultures.

Edward A. Malone
**Recent & Relevant**

**Scientific Writing**

**Beyond the screen: Narrative mapping as a tool for evaluating a mixed-reality science museum exhibit**


“This article describes the authors’ work as formative evaluators of a mixed-reality science museum installation, Journey with Sea Creatures. Looking beyond the focal point of the screen to the spatial and temporal surroundings of the exhibit, the authors employed a technique they call retrospective narrative mapping in conjunction with sustained onsite observations, follow-up interviews with museum visitors, and the development of personas to better understand the user experience in multimodal informal learning environments.”

Valerie J. Vance

**Confronting rhetorical disability: A critical analysis of women’s birth plans**


“Through its analysis of birth plans, documents some women create to guide their birth attendants’ actions during hospital births, this article reveals the rhetorical complexity of childbirth and analyzes women’s attempts to harness birth plans as tools of resistance and self-education. Asserting that technologies can both silence and give voice, the article examines women’s use of technologies of writing to confront technologies of birth. The article draws on data from online childbirth narratives, a childbirth writing survey, and five women’s birth plans to argue that women’s silencing, or rhetorical disability, during childbirth both prompts and limits the birth plan as an effective communicative tool. The data suggest that the birth plan is not consistently effective in the ways its authors intend. Nonetheless, this analysis also demonstrates that the rhetorical failure of the birth plan can be read as, and thereby transformed into, rhetorical possibility.”

Tim Hadley

**Ethical or unethical persuasion? The rhetoric of offers to participate in clinical trials**


“Based on a sample of 22 oncology encounters, this article presents a discourse analysis of positive, neutral, or negative valence in the presentation of three elements of informed consent—purpose, benefits, and risks—in offers to participate in clinical trials. It is found that physicians regularly present these key elements of consent with a positive valence, perhaps blurring the distinction between clinical care and clinical research in trial offers. The authors argue that the rhetoric of trial offers constructs and reflects the complex relationships of two competing ethical frameworks—contemporary bioethics and professional medical ethics—both aimed at governing the discourse of trial offers. The authors consider the status of ethical or unethical persuasion within each framework, proposing what is called the best-option principle as the ethical principle governing trial offers within professional medical ethics.”

Tim Hadley

**Gestural enthymemes: Delivering movement in 18th- and 19th-century medical images**


“This article contributes to recent efforts to add life and movement to rhetorical studies by focusing on the representation of movement in medical texts. More specifically, this study examines medical texts, illustrations, and photographs involving movement. By identifying how figures of speech epitomize arguments, this examination follows a shift in the way arguments about movement are represented, a shift from static, visual arguments to gestural enthymemes, as they are named, arguments that are made in movements; these shifts are linked to developments in medical technologies involving photography. These arguments about and using movement attempt to ‘capture’ or express the moments within which life, through the embodied gesture, resides. This extended understanding of the enthymeme broadens current
understanding of argument to include delivery, links medical and rhetorical discursive practices, and informs how we make sense of and study the relationships between technology and rhetoric both in the past and present.”

Tim Hadley

**A grounded investigation of genred guidelines in cancer care deliberations**


“Genred documents facilitate collaboration and workplace practices in many ways—particularly in the medical workplace. This article represents a portion of a larger grounded investigation of how medical professionals invoke a wide range of rhetorical strategies when deliberating about complex patient cases during weekly, multidisciplinary deliberations called Tumor Board meetings. Specifically, the author explores the role of one key document in oncological practice, the Standard of Care document. Each Standard of Care document (one for every known cancer) presents a set of national guidelines intended to standardize the treatment of cancer. Tumor Board participants invoke these guidelines as evidence for or against particular future action. In order to better understand how genred, generalizable guidelines like Standard of Care documents afford decision making amid uncertainty, the author conducts a temporal and contextual analysis of the document’s use during deliberations as well as a modified Toulminian analysis of a representative sample. Results suggest that, while on its own the document achieves an authoritative, charter-like purpose, it fails to make explicit a link between individual patients’ experiences and the profession’s expectations for how to act. Implications for how genred, generalizable guidelines—given the way they encourage certain ways of seeing over others—organize and authorize work are discussed, and a modified Toulminian approach to understanding the relationship between claim and evidence in multimodal texts is modeled.”

Tim Hadley

**Internet health and the 21st-century patient: A rhetorical view**


“Internet health—here, the public use of information Web sites to facilitate decision making on matters of health and illness—is a rhetorical practice, involving text and trajectories of influence. A fulsome account of it requires attention to all parts of the rhetorical triangle—the speaker, the subject matter, and the audience—yet most scholarship on Internet health focuses on the speaker only: it typically raises concerns primarily about the dangers of unreliable sources, suggesting that, where speakers are reliable and information is accurate, Internet health simply empowers patients. This essay turns attention to the other elements of the triangle. It argues that health information is a complex entity—not only transmitted but also transformed by the Web—and, further, that Internet-health users are a complex audience—not only informed but also transformed by the Web. Rhetorically-minded researchers are well positioned to study not simply the informed patient but rather, more comprehensively, the wired one.”

Tim Hadley

**Lydia J. Roberts’s nutrition research and the rhetoric of “democratic” science**


“This article examines nutritionist Lydia J. Roberts’s use of the ‘democratic approach’ as a rhetorical strategy both to build solidarity among scientists and to enact participatory research in a rural Puerto Rican community. This example suggests that participatory scientific methodologies are not necessarily democratic but may function rhetorically to serve nondemocratic purposes.”

Brent Henze
**The trial of the expert witness: Negotiating credibility in child abuse correspondence**


“This article reports on forensic letters written by physicians specializing in identifying children who have experienced maltreatment. These writers face an extraordinary exigency in that they must provide an opinion as to whether a child has experienced abuse without specifically diagnosing abuse and thus crossing into a legal domain. Their credibility was also at issue because, in this jurisdiction, child abuse identification was not recognized as a medical subspecialty and because the status of expert witnesses is currently being challenged. Through an analysis of 72 forensic letters combined with interview data from six letter writers and five letter readers, we determined that these writers used linguistic and rhetorical strategies that allowed these letters to function as boundary objects or objects that traverse several communities of practice. The most salient strategy was the use of evaluative lexis—adjectives and adverbs which allowed for a range of interpretations and constrained those interpretations at the same time.”

**Technology**

**Ballot box communication in online communities**


“The participation of individual users in online communities is one of the most noted features in the recent explosive growth of popular online communities ranging from picture and video sharing ... and collective music recommendation ... to news voting ... and social bookmarking .... Unlike traditional online communities, these sites feature little message exchange among users .... Recognition of this new type of user participation is crucial to understanding the dynamics of online social communities and community monetization. The new communication features in online communities can be best summarized as Ballot Box Communication (BBC), which is an aggregation mechanism that reflects the common experience and opinions among individuals .... Simplification, the many-to-one nature, and implicit influences on users are three major characteristics of BBC compared with CMC (Computer Mediated Communication).”

Sherry Southard

**A blind person’s interactions with technology**


“The study described here is an in-depth exploratory and descriptive case study of a blind individual using various technologies in her home. Previous studies in lab settings compared interactions against a set of heuristics or with a control group, allowing researchers to isolate events in order to understand how users interact with specific technologies on a narrow range of tasks. We took this study out of the lab and into the home to get a better sense of the nuances of everyday life influencing how a blind user interacts with technology. It differs from the usability approaches in several ways .... The combination of functionality and socially situated meaning determines for the user the actual usability of a technology to accomplish specific tasks. These technologies hold meaning that affects the ways individuals understand themselves in relation to the communities to which they belong.”

Sherry Southard

**Get ready for Intranet 3.0**


“The term [intranet] describes the integration of a range of employee-facing services delivered via technologies that are melding into the fabric of the organization. This amalgamation of deep-lying services, applications and communities is reshaping where work is done, how it is done, and the ease by
which it can be completed ... It will change the way we work.” The author discusses examples of businesses using the company intranet to drive efficiency and productivity.

**Linda M. Davis**

**How culture influences IT-enabled organization change and information systems**


“Business process reengineering (BPR) represents a well-defined way to realize the potential benefits of information technology. ... This article develops such an understanding internationally by reporting on 12 BPR initiatives in six countries with differing cultural profiles. We first discuss the concept of national or societal culture and outline our comparative research approach. We then summarize how and why specific dimensions of culture influence both IT-enabled organizational change and the accompanying types of IS [Information Systems] before considering the implications of our findings.”

**Sherry Southard**