

Project 1: Collaborative Review of Website/Journal

Scenario

You are a member of large editorial team charged with developing a new product for your company, Purdue University. You have joined with several other editors to investigate existing models to see whether *The Writing Instructor* (the electronic publication) or *WPA: Writing Program Administration* (the print publication) has anything substantial to learn from the successful efforts of other organizations that have produced similar publications.

Prompt

Working in collaborative teams, write a 5-7 -page report that thoroughly describes the target publication, discusses your research methodology, and analyzes and synthesizes your findings using specific principles from the *Web Style Guide* and the *MLA Style Manual* to support your analysis. Visual material should be included in an appendix. In addition to the report, your team's 15-20 minute oral presentation will provide an overview of the target publication and synthesis of your results, using visuals as needed. Your audience for the presentation, as it is for the report, is the editorial board of *The Writing Instructor* or *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, as well as their production and general editors.

Options

A. Collaborative Review and Usability Study of a *Networked Journal/Website*.

Using the *Web Style Guide* as your primary resource but drawing from the *MLA Style Manual* where needed, this option involves summarizing, testing, and critiquing one of these networked journals: *Romantic Circles*, *Kairos*, or the History Cooperative/ *American Historical Review*. Links to each of these sites can be found on the TWI "Technologies and Models" node,
<<http://flansburgh.english.purdue.edu/twi/technologies.html>>.

B. Collaborative Review and Readability Study of a *Print-Based Journal*.

Using the *MLA Style Manual* as your primary resource but drawing from the *Web Style Guide*, this option involves summarizing, evaluating, and critiquing the contents and design of one of the following journals: *College English*, *College Composition and Communication*, or the *Journal of Advanced Composition*. You should focus your attention on the most recent issue of the journal, but you will also need to review past issues so that you can see how the design and content has developed over the years. See Dr. B. if you can't locate copies in the library or elsewhere.

Format of the Written Report

Your written report (5-7 pages, not counting appendices) should contain the following sections:

1. Overview: Here, identify your subject and provide any necessary background information to help your reader process the analysis to follow. (~ 1 paragraph)
2. Research Methodology: In this section, concisely describe each of the steps your team took to investigate your website or journal. You should explain any critical decisions you made, as well as why you chose not to research any particular aspect of your subject, which is certainly acceptable given their scope and the purpose of this project. (~2-3 paragraphs)

3. **Analysis:** This section will be the bulk of your report. You should make every effort to apply the principles of design discussed in the *Web Style Guide*, the *MLA Style Manual*, or in class, citing these principles specifically for clarity, precision, and persuasiveness. Your report should focus more on articulating the features of your subject than on arguing a particular critique, the latter of which is not that necessary in a report such as this. (~4-6 pages)
4. **Summary:** In this concluding section, you should synthesize your findings and summarize them clearly and concisely, using lists if necessary. Don't waste time repeating information that has already been clearly explained, such as aspects of your research methodology. (~2-3 paragraphs)

Format of the Oral Report

You will have 15-20 minutes for your oral presentation. Your goals should be to describe your subject to the audience, to explain briefly the steps you took to complete your research, then to walk us through your analysis using visual material to illustrate. Your team will have access to the instructor's computer and the projector. You may use Netscape, PowerPoint, or any other software you choose to help with the presentation. You should provide a one-page, printed handout that summarizes and synthesizes your findings (see Step 4 under "Format of the Report.") Your audience will ask you questions and provide oral and electronic feedback.

Grading

This project counts as 20% of the course grade and breaks down as follows:

Written Report:	70%
Oral Presentation:	<u>30%</u>
Total:	100%

Each member of the team will be asked to complete and turn in to me (privately) a Collaborative Project Evaluation form, which I will use to determine individual grades on each aspect of the project. Teams will receive oral and written feedback from peers following the Oral Presentation, after which they should revise the written report further.

Written reports should follow the guidelines provided here. I will pay close attention to see that the teams have used the reference texts (*Web Style Guide* and *MLA Style Manual*) to guide the written analysis, which should be thorough, clear, and precise. Teams may submit drafts to me for review prior to the Oral Presentation if they choose. Oral Presentations should involve each member of the team, should address the audience clearly and audibly in an engaging way, with effective use of visual material.

Important Dates

Oral Presentations will take place on January 30 and February 1 (Sign-ups on 1/16/01)
The revised, written report is due on February 6. Submit your report in print form at the start of class.