

## Draft: Technology Section to be added to the Outcomes Statement

**Background and Rationale:** (prepared by Irv Peckham, Louisiana State University, and presented at WPA Town Hall Meeting, July 2007)

When a large group of writing program administrators and other composition scholars collaborated on the WPA Outcomes Statement, we considered including a statement addressing the interplay between technology and writing. We drafted a fifth section that came to be known, for lack of a better phrase, as the technology plank. After a good deal of discussion, we decided not to include the technology section at that time but to consider it after several years had passed.

Many of us have agreed that the time has come to include the technology section in the Outcomes Statement. After two years of intermittent discussions, we are ready to propose the section below for inclusion in the Outcomes Statement.

We have considered two issues we think deserve mention as we ask for approval of this section: one, whether to keep this as a separate section or weave the elements in with the existing sections; two, whether to include goals and strategies that would appeal to some of the more technologically sophisticated programs and teachers.

Although we were drawn to the rhetoric of interweaving technology with the other goals of writing instruction, we decided not to chance disrupting sections that have already met with approval from our colleagues not only in rhetoric and composition but in other fields as well.

By drafting this technology section, we have kept in mind the many colleges and universities where neither students nor teachers have ready access to digital technologies or the Internet. Indeed, we know of some schools in which teachers do not feel they can require typed copy, let alone electronic submissions. Keeping these schools in mind, we have drafted a statement that we hope will give them reasonable objectives without outdistancing their possibilities altogether, leaving them alienated from our shared purposes in teaching required writing courses. We therefore offer the statement below:

### **New Section:**

#### **Composing in Electronic Environments**

As has become clear over the last twenty years, writing in the 21st century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing. Therefore, although the kinds of composing processes and texts expected from students vary across programs and institutions, there are nonetheless common expectations, here added to a revised WPA Outcomes Statement:

By the end of first-year composition, students should

- \* Use available electronic environments for drafting, revising, reviewing, editing and submitting texts
- \* Locate, evaluate, organize and use in research electronic sources, including web databases and informal networks, and intranet sources
- \* Understand and exploit the different rhetorical strategies available in print and electronic texts

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn

- \* How research and composing processes and texts in their fields are influenced by digital technologies
- \* How research and application in their fields are communicated by means of digital technologies