THESIS

TEACHING DIGITAL ETHOS: EMPHASIZING THE RHETORICAL IMPACT OF

HYPERTEXTUALITY AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

TEACHING DIGITAL ETHOS: EMPHASIZING THE RHETORICAL IMPACT OF
HYPERTEXTUALITY AND INTERTEXTUALITY IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

The need to adapt traditional techniques of rhetorical analysis to new and emergent forms of digital technology is one of the current challenges confronting rhetoric and composition pedagogy (Warnick, 2001; Hocks, 2003; Warnick, 2005; Fife, 2010). Digital ethos functions as an illustrative example of this challenge as composition courses attempt to address the ways credibility is constructed and maintained in web-based environments (Hocks, 2003; DigiRhet.org, 2006; Clark, 2010; Fife, 2010; Walker, et al., 2011; Gillam & Wooden, 2013). Current scholarship and textbooks indicate that the field continues to rely on traditional rhetorical analysis techniques to teach digital ethos, including an emphasis on ethos as the product of a single text with fixed boundaries (Enos & Borrowman, 2001; DigiRhet.org, 2006; Downs & Wardle, 2007; Clark, 2010; Fife, 2010). However, because the Internet is a hypertextual system of internetworked texts, it is necessary for FYC courses to teach a construction of ethos that considers texts as they are linked and circulated within the system. I argue in this thesis for a digital ethos heuristic that emphasizes (1) the relationships constructed through hypertextual links and (2) the ways in which those relationships create intertextual meaning that impacts and influences digital ethos construction. In this way, we can begin to adapt techniques of rhetorical analysis both to acknowledge and to critique the ways in which web-based technologies impact how we are to understand and teach composition in the current moment.

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Intertextuality in the Digital Environment

Chapter 1: Introduction

Much of the discussion in the rhetoric and composition community in recent years has

been about the impact of digital technology on the composition classroom (Enos and

Borrowman, 2001; Hocks, 2003; DigiRhet.org, 2006; Clark, 2010; Fife, 2010). There are widely

differing opinions about the ways technology changes how we analyze and utilize digital

sources, but it is clear that the Internet has considerably increased the information available to

students, as well as their access to all manner and variety of information resources. The need to

adapt traditional techniques of rhetorical analysis to new and emergent forms of digital

technology is one of the current challenges confronting rhetoric and composition pedagogy

(Warnick, "Rhetorical Criticism" 2001; Hocks, 2003; Warnick, "Looking" 2005; Fife, 2010).

Digital ethos functions as an illustrative example of this challenge as composition courses

attempt to address the ways credibility is constructed and maintained in web-based environments

(Hocks, 2003; DigiRhet.org, 2006; Clark, 2010; Fife, 2010; Walker et al., 2011; Gillam and

Wooden, 2013).

In recent years, rhetoric and composition pedagogy has promoted writing as a social

activity largely dependent on context (Downs and Wardle, 2007; Gillam and Wooden, 2013).

However, current composition pedagogy does not reflect a sufficient emphasis on the elements

of the digital context that impact ethos construction, and instead treats digital ethos as the

product of an isolated text or author. Digital ethos may be impacted by many elements, including

the hypertextual[1] networked structure of digital texts, intertextual[2] meaning created by the textual

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[1] "Hypertextual" refers to the networked structure digital texts achieve through hyperlinks, active text which, when clicked, links to a point in another digital document.

network, acceleration of information availability and absence, speed at which information

becomes irrelevant, opportunities for remixing of texts, and increased quantities of information.

However, the inclination has been to rhetorically analyze ethos in digital environments in much

the same way we have analyzed ethos in a book or print article: without considering contextual

digital elements. Both recent scholarship (Enos and Borrowman, 2001; DigiRhet.org, 2006;

Downs and Wardle, 2007; Clark, 2010; Fife, 2010) and First Year Composition (FYC)

textbooks[3] with a rhetorical foundation approach their discussions on teaching digital ethos from

a perspective that is a product of, and may be better suited to, print culture. These sources present

ethos, regardless of whether it is to be found in print or digital sources, as the product of

rhetorical choices made within a single text and often by a single author. Significantly, ethos is

often presented as created by referencing or providing outside sources to support an argument

within a single text. However, the rhetorical impact and influence of hyperlinking other digital

sources, and the intertextual meaning created by the hypertextual links, is not fully explored with

relation to the networked technology, capabilities, and culture of digital environments.

What is missing from the current discussion in composition pedagogy on digital ethos is

an exploration of specific ways digital technology influences the rhetorical construction of digital

ethos. To teach digital texts as we would print texts is not an accurate picture of how ethos

information functions in digital environments. The connections and relationships between texts

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[2] "Intertextual" refers to the implicit and explicit verbal and visual references within one text to one or more external texts.

[3] A survey of recent rhetoric and composition textbooks intended for first year composition classrooms shows a tendency to ignore the digital context, most specifically the networked structure of digital texts. For example, Faigley's *Good Reasons* (2012) and Lunsford et al.'s *Everyone's an Author* (2013), in discussing ethos, focus on how one author establishes ethos in an isolated text, often by providing references to other texts. The authors of these textbooks, however, do not discuss or recommend that students consider what impact those other texts might have on the author's or text's ethos construction, a significant omission in light of the networked structure of digital environments.

become more explicit through the capabilities that current digital technology affords through hypertextual linking of information. Hypertextual connections also create intertextual meaning which influences ethos construction within and beyond texts. Because the digital environment is a hypertextual system of internetworked texts, it is necessary to teach a construction of ethos that considers texts as they are linked and circulated within the system. I argue in this thesis for a digital ethos heuristic that emphasizes (1) the relationships constructed through hypertextual links, and (2) the ways in which those relationships create intertextual meaning that impacts and influences digital ethos construction. In this way, we can begin to adapt techniques of rhetorical analysis both to acknowledge and to critique the ways in which web-based technologies impact how we are to understand and teach composition in the current moment.

This thesis makes four important contributions to discussions on digital pedagogy in the composition classroom. First, it offers another way of teaching students to analyze digital ethos that is more in line with current Web 2.0 technology and the presentation of information in digital environments. The structure of the digital environment has contributed significantly to the impact of secondary texts on ethos, and composition pedagogy should reflect that. Second, it furthers discussion of hypertextuality, which much of the scholarly community agrees has not been utilized as originally conceived or to its fullest potential (Johnson-Eilola and Hea, 2003; Orr, 2003; Baehr and Lang, 2012). Scholarly discussion on hypertextuality has tapered off in recent years (Baehr and Lang 40), but this thesis attempts to foreground practical ways hypertextuality facilitates, broadens, and complicates the relationships among the information we access and the ways we teach digital ethos in relation to rhetoric and composition. Third, it furthers pedagogical discussion on intertextual relationships among texts in the digital environment, and how those relationships contribute to digital ethos construction among texts in

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a network. Digital texts are connected to the network of texts in which they participate, and the intertextual relationships developed with those other texts reflect back upon the ethos of digital texts in significant ways. Finally, this thesis furthers discussion on the theory of intertextuality and its benefits to the field of rhetoric and composition. Intertextuality, traditionally a literary criticism theory, has not frequently been employed in our field; but, as I intend to show, it can provide significant benefit to the ways we rhetorically analyze information and relationships between texts.

I will begin my discussion by reviewing and summarizing current scholarly conversations on digital ethos, hypertextual theory, and intertextuality, as well as by arguing for specific intersections between those conversations relevant to this thesis. Following this review of current scholarship, I will provide an analysis of a digital text in order to demonstrate the ways hypertextual links create intertextual meaning between texts and the resulting impact on the construction of digital ethos. Finally, I will conclude by discussing a number of implications for this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Both the value and relevance of the argument of this thesis are grounded in three major

theoretical concepts: ethos in digital environments, hypertextuality as both a structure and a type

of textuality, and intertextual relationships between digital texts.

Digital Ethos

The focus and key term of this thesis is digital ethos[4], which is a significant element

within the larger context of digital rhetoric. Mary Hocks argues that "digital rhetoric describes a

system of ongoing dialogue and negotiations among writers, audiences, and institutional

contexts, but it focuses on the multiple modalities available for making meaning using new

communication and information technologies" (632). She describes digital rhetoric as a

discipline concerned primarily with communication practices occurring in context, in this case a

context constructed through digital information technology. Within that discipline, while digital

ethos is only one element of a larger persuasive process, it is an element which contributes

significantly to believability, trust, and authority in web-based communication. As an element of

digital rhetorical processes, which Barbara Warnick argues are studied "within contexts

constrained by their cultural matrix as well as their intertextual environment" ("Rhetorical

Criticism" 61), it is essential that we consider the context—the interrelated conditions—

surrounding digital ethos. Kristie Fleckenstein argues that "no single element of a rhetorical act

composes itself autonomously. Instead, it evolves on the basis of the flow of information,

enabling rhetor, audience, place, and language to create each other mutually through the

establishment of relationships" ("Cybernetics" 328). Digital ethos is no exception; it is

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[4] There are other terms for this concept—Fleckenstein calls this "cyberethos" ("Cybernetics" 325), while Enos and
Borrowman term it "techno-ethos" (94)—but "digital ethos" appears most often in current scholarship on ethos in
web-based environments.

constructed in conjunction with other rhetorical elements (such as logos and pathos) within a text, as well as across other texts in the hypertextual environment. For the purposes of this thesis, digital ethos is defined as credibility constructed through intertextual relationships established between digital texts in the context of hypertextual environments.

In a fundamental sense, digital ethos begins with classical, rhetorical ethos. Digital ethos has its roots in the classical ethos of ancient Greek rhetoric and addresses the persuasive value of credibility. The classical concept of ethos was largely constructed by two elements: credibility and character. Aristotle argued that the way an orator presented a speech could demonstrate credibility, and therefore persuade an audience. For that reason, Aristotle argued that ethos could be considered the most persuasive of the rhetorical appeals, especially in situations where doubt exists (107). After all, "we believe good men more fully and more readily than others" (Aristotle 105-07). However, credibility was achieved primarily by what was said and how it was said. He argued, "This kind of persuasion...should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak" (Aristotle 107). In this sense, ethos is constituted through the authority communicated in the content of the speech.

Other philosophers argued that character, the habitual practice of virtuous behavior, was equally as important as credibility. The Greek philosopher Isocrates believed that "the argument which is made by a man's life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words" (56). Isocrates' emphasis of good character over an *appearance* of good character that might be performed in a rhetorical act would be further explored by the Roman philosophers. The Roman rhetorician Quintilian maintained that a good man establishes his character long before he speaks (Enos and Borrowman 96). For Quintilian, an orator should be the *vir bonus,* a good man, and demonstrate a habitual character of moral virtue (Brinton 167). He claims, in fact, that unless a

man is a *good* man, he cannot be an orator: "For it is impossible to regard those men as gifted with intelligence who on being offered the choice between the two paths of virtue and vice choose the latter" (Quintilian 357). Behavior and choice play a large part, for Quintilian, in developing into a good man. Ethos in this sense, as argued by Isocrates and Quintilian, is based largely on the character of the orator, established over time and only after demonstrated through a rhetorical act. Credibility is not discounted, but without character, they argue, there can be no credibility.

Scholarship on web credibility and digital ethos often considers and incorporates one or both of these traditional approaches—credibility and character—in its discussions, but there is no consensus on what digital ethos entails. Some of the early scholarship on the World Wide Web and ethos focused on the construction of web sites and the delivery of digital information. The primary question in this scholarship is how to determine the credibility of websites as a whole based on the appearance of the site's structure and information[5]. Other scholarship has elevated authorship on the web, and an author's credentials developed over time, to the principle element responsible for digital ethos construction. From this perspective, identifiable authorship, with established habits of character determined by achieved titles or demonstrated experience, attached to a text is the primary method for establishing credibility (Warnick, "Looking to the Future" 331). However, authorship online is not always easy to determine, and some digital genres are not designed for singular authorship (Fleckenstein, "Who's Writing"; Warnick, "Looking to the Future" 328). An author may not be identified online, or authorship may be

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[5] Enos and Borrowman's "Authority and Credibility: Classical Rhetoric, the Internet, and the Teaching of Techno-Ethos" is a good example of this. The authors analyze three Holocaust denial websites in order to demonstrate ways credibility is constructed through colors, placement, and other features.

collaborative and credibility dispersed across a wide range of contributors, such as on a wiki or discussion board.

Other approaches to digital ethos have included a standard checklist of items to determine web text credibility. Mark Meola argues that undergraduates are dogmatically taught a standard checklist of canonical items in discussions of digital ethos analysis: authority, accuracy, objectivity, currency, and coverage (332). This also includes the CRAAP test, the tongue-in-cheek name of a standard test created to guide students in analyzing the reliability of website information. The criterion of the CRAAP test are currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose, which include various questions related to website credibility and digital ethos (Wichowski and Kohl 231). Warnick identifies the following as the elements of traditional models of credibility assessment as applied to websites: authorial identity, credentials of the author, site sponsor, and author affiliations ("Online Ethos" 257).

Each of these lists of standard items for web text credibility has a focus on the authority and credentials of an identified author, which is ultimately problematic. Warnick points out that "since the inception of the World Wide Web, authorities on source credibility have advised researchers and critics to emphasize identifiable authorship as a primary criterion for judging the credibility of a source" ("Looking to the Future" 331). This is problematic because using authorship as the primary criterion ignores all other dimensions of digital environments, of which there are many. Warnick claims that this focus on authorship is a remnant of print-centric approaches, which "do not always apply well to new media because there are many dimensions of hypertext, Web-based media, visual communication, interactive environments, and adventure games that print-based critical tools simply miss" ("Looking to the Future" 328). She argues that this model does not work well because of the way website users process and evaluate

information. They are more likely to "make rapid choices and decisions based on a number of aspects" ("Online Ethos" 257). A broader discussion of ethos and aspects of the digital environment which affect its construction is more likely, consequently, to communicate the complexity and collaborative construction of digital ethos.

Meola, from a library science perspective, argues that when teaching undergraduates to evaluate website content credibility, we need to "chuck the checklist". He advocates for a website credibility model that focuses on comparison and corroboration of site content: "In using external information to evaluate Web sites, information is located within its wider social context, facilitating reasoned judgments of information quality" (Meola 338). He argues that corroboration addresses the veracity of information and comparison can provide the necessary social context for evaluation. Meola does not necessarily reject the traditional concerns of ethos analysis mentioned previously, but he frames them in terms of a contextual model of credibility judgment. Similarly, I do not argue the "checklist" is obsolete, only that a broader discussion of digital ethos should include external, contextual information in evaluations.

Scholarship certainly supports a contextual approach to digital ethos. Fleckenstein and others actually argue that classical Greek and Roman conceptions of ethos were not just focused on credibility and character, but were much more contextual than the passages I have mentioned would indicate. Ethos was not created by the orator only through behavior or speech, Fleckenstein claims, but rather through a participatory and collaborative act of construction with the listeners that was also dependent on where the speech act was occurring. She argues, "Ethos is not located in the speaker or in an audience or in a site. It is dispersed throughout the ecology of speaker, audience, scene, and city-state" (Fleckenstein, "Who's Writing"). In this scenario, the context creates ethos, rather than any one element. Fleckenstein makes this argument in order to

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show similarities between "fourth century BCE Athens and twenty-first century cyberspace" ("Who's Writing"). Both of these environments, she asserts, bring together sight and sound, visual and verbal, in the context of an ensemble performance between content producers, content consumers, the content itself, and digital environment. Nedra Reynolds agrees with her about the similarities between classical Greece and contemporary Internet. She argues that ethos is constituted by a set of components which are "sanctioned by [a] group, and more readily recognizable to others who belong or who share similar values or experiences. The classical notion of ethos, therefore, as well as its contemporary usage, refers to the social context surrounding the solitary rhetor" (Reynolds 327). There may be an individual author, which is not always the case in the digital environment, but regardless, ethos is not constructed solely through that author. Instead, it is a social, contextual construction.

Fleckenstein and Reynolds are not the only theorists to argue that digital ethos requires a contextual approach. Warnick argues that in analyzing the ethos of websites, both the structure and the content, judgments should be "driven by social and normative factors that have to do with the nature of the Web environment and by values and priorities attaching to context and community values" ("Online Ethos" 259). In this scenario, the website cannot be analyzed outside the context of the network of sites or texts that exist on the Internet. To do so removes it from the cultural context in which it was created. Similarly, to judge digital ethos without considering the network of digital texts in which it was created ignores the hypertextual and intertextual factors that created it. Even early on in the development of hypertextual technology, Carolyn Miller argued that "the concept of ethos stands neatly between individual character shaped by action and cultural character as determined by a complex of interacting systems, one

of them being that culture's technology" (229). The increasing presence of digital technology makes her claim even more relevant now, thirty years later.

Discussions of digital ethos are missing two primary elements which contribute overall to a more developed, contextual sense of ethos in web-based environments: intertextuality and hypertextuality. When combined in a digital environment, intertextuality and hypertextuality work hand in hand. Graham Allen argues that "hypertext makes author, text, and reader into joint participants of a plural, intertextual network of significations and potential significations" (202). The hypertextual organizational structure of the Web links texts together through deliberate hyperlinking. Hyperlinks create relationships between texts which explicitly indicate that additional information and meaning related to the first text can be found on the other end of the link. Jeff White suggests a connection between hyperlinks and ethos as well: "A link within a hypertext document signifies lack, an incomplete 'knowledge' within the existing node. It suggests a relation to another node which will allow the reader the option of 'knowing more'; how it renders this relation is its ethical dimension".

A hypertextual link makes a rhetorical gesture in which digital ethos is constructed. A hyperlink indicates significance and meaning beyond the actual wording of the linked text, and a persuasive intention behind the link; it is deliberately included to influence the reader. A hyperlink also connects one text to another—ultimately, to a network of texts—which reflects back upon the information in the first text. The information in the second text, combined with that of the first, creates intertextual meaning. How the link performs these three functions, how it creates significance, intention, and intertextual meaning, may include multiple considerations: placement in the text, whether it is linking to internal or external pages, wording of the actively linked text, whether the link is active when the reader clicks on it, the type and content of text on

the other end of the link, and the relationship between the two linked texts. How the reader encounters the hyperlink, where it takes them, and what message is intended and communicated by the link is all a part of the ethos constructed.

It should be acknowledged that the nature of the digital environment is precisely what complicates discussions of digital ethos such as the one I propose. The decentered, nonlinear, networked structure of hypertext complicates pinpointing a starting and ending point of rhetorical analysis. Viola Lasmana argues that "because of the open and intertextual nature of digital texts, interpretation could become a monstrous task to take on, and the issue becomes one of reconciling the vast amount of resources on the Web with one's own judgment and ability to be critical of the information available" (75). However, this should not prevent the discussion of digital ethos evaluation in a hypertextual environment. Rather, it can be a starting point to classroom conversations on the highly contextual nature of digital ethos.

Bertram Bruce argues that "the reader must see a specific web page in relation to the web as a whole." He refers not only to web documents, but also "the social practices associated with the web—what genres and textual conventions are invoked, who controls the technologies, and whose interests are served by particular communications" (11). Discussions of credibility on the Web cannot focus on single texts because, in theory, there are no single texts on the web (Bruce 10). The web is a text in itself (Bruce 6; Warnick "Online Ethos" 263). Similarly, ethos does not originate from a single element of credibility, text, or author in digital environments, but rather is constructed by all of these elements. My definition of digital ethos as a contextual phenomenon is contributed to by two critical, integral components: hypertextual links and intertextual relationships; I will now discuss these terms.

Hypertextuality

In digital environments, hypertext is one of the primary mechanisms that ties texts together and encourages nonlinear reading of texts. Hypertext is both a technology and the digital textuality that it enables. As such, hypertextual links are a productive location to begin analyzing textual relationships in web-based environments and the rhetorical practices behind those relationships. It will be beneficial in this section to discuss the development of the two key definitions of hypertextuality and the theorists from both disciplines—computer science and literary criticism (Landow, "Hypertext 3.0" 1; Baehr and Lang 39)—who are most commonly associated with those definitions. The conceptualization and early development of hypertextual technology occurred before theories of hypertext textuality were popularized; however, ultimately, the concerns of both disciplines converge.

The first significant definition of hypertext is as a technology that enables networked digital environments. These environments allow the connection of textual elements, or nodes[6]—text, images, video, audio, and combinations of these. We know this technology best as the World Wide Web, as well as the active hypertextual linking that emphasizes specific text and connects it to some other node within the hypertextual environment. The first conception of hypertext technology can be traced to a 1945 article by Vannevar Bush in *Atlantic Monthly* that discussed a "mechanically linked information-retrieval machine" called a memex (Landow, "Hypertext 3.0" 9). He was looking for a way to organize and ease access to collected research, and conceptualized a different way of classifying information. Bush suggested a machine that would allow a reader to annotate texts electronically, as well as join them with links that could

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[6]Ted Nelson calls these textual elements "chunks", Roland Barthes refers to them as "lexias" ("S/Z" 13), Bolter calls them "topics" ("Writing Space" 35), and White "nodes". Baehr and Lang acknowledge the variation of terms: "nodes, chunks, or lexia" (41). I have chosen to use "node" because of its specific meaning as an intersection in a network.

then be accessed again at a later time. The reader would in some sense be creating a text as they

established a path through the research, associating concepts, linking and annotating independent

documents as they went. Bush argued that the human mind worked by associating ideas[7], and

that applying that same theory to information retrieval would be productive in a way current

information models were not. His device would work by "associative indexing, the basic idea of

which is a provision whereby any item may be caused at will to select immediately and

automatically another. This is the essential feature of the memex. The process of tying two items

together is the important thing" (Bush). Bush never completed a working model of the memex,

but his ideas would eventually become what we know of as hypertext.

The actual term "hypertext" was coined by Ted Nelson[8] in the 1960s (Landow,

"Hypertext 3.0" 2; Bolter, "Writing Space" 34; Baehr and Lang 39; Joyce 177). He defines it in

his self-published 1980 manuscript, *Literary Machines*, as "non-sequential writing—text that

branches and allows choices to the reader....As popularly conceived, this is a series of chunks

connected by links which offer the reader different pathways" (Nelson, "Literary Machines" 2).

Nelson's work, like Bush's, began with a desire to allow a writer to make "organizing decisions"

in his text ("Literary Machines" 25). In the 1970s and '80s, he and others created electronic

storage software called Xanadu, a revolutionary hypertext system. *Literary Machines*, a report on

Xanadu, is notable in itself because it is a hypertext in print form, or an example of hypertext

textuality. Nelson gives his readers a plan for reading that at first glance appears to be sequential

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[7] There is some research to suggest that his claims about associative memory, taken up by Landow and Bolter among others, are not accurate. See Michelle Kendrick's "Interactive Technology and the Remediation of the Subject of Writing" and Davida Charney's "The Effect of Hypertext on Processes of Reading and Writing".

[8] It is worth noting that, in more recent years, Nelson seems to have become somewhat disillusioned with hypertext. In 2004, Nelson argued that hypertext is a simulation of print technology, and therefore has many of the problematic hierarchical design features that print technology has. "To my way of thinking, the great disadvantages of these traditions are hardly recognized, and so few alternatives have been considered" ("Cosmology").

and contrary to his own definition of hypertext: begin at Chapter Zero, read Chapter One, Chapter Two, and then the ending. However, this book has multiple Chapter Ones (and Twos, Threes, Fours, and Fives) and you can choose which of any chapter to read during any pass through the book. Additionally, some sections of the book are not numbered because they are not intended to be read sequentially, and no plan is suggested for Chapters Four and Five, as Nelson specifically tells his readers. He describes his recommended reading pattern as less infinity and more pretzel in shape, doubling back, over, and through. His manuscript allows the reader choice (though with implied[9], if not explicit, sequentiality) in selecting nodes of text to read which may result in different pathways through the book. This is the essence of hypertext. Though, like Bush's memex, Xanadu was never completed, these ideas made possible contemporary versions of hypertextual systems.

While hypertext as a technology developed, new conceptions of hypertext as a type of textuality, the second significant definition of hypertext, were being explored. The technology and textuality conceptions of hypertext were remarkably similar in the ways they constructed information. Jay David Bolter argues that this similarity is because we can "regard the programmer's data structures as formalized versions of the textual strategies that writers have exploited for centuries" ("Writing Space" 38). At the time Nelson was working on his conception of hypertext, literary theorists were challenging traditional textual strategies and proposing new ones. Roland Barthes was a significant contributor to these new conceptions of textuality. He argued that the literary institution was determined to separate producers of texts from consumers of text, which resulted in two types of texts: writerly and readerly. The writerly

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[9] The structure of a book and reading conventions tell the reader to start at the beginning of the book and read, left to right, to the end: the "canonical order" (Bolter, "Writing Space" 35). By numbering the chapters, Nelson is also giving a structural order to the reader.

texts, more theoretical than material, were concerned with what it was possible to write. These

were open texts with room for multiple meanings. Readerly texts were complete texts, the

meaning already established, and all that was left was for the reader to accept the text or reject it

(Barthes, "S/Z" 4). Barthes lamented the split between the reader and writer and suggested an

ideal text in which this rift would be healed:

> In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able
> to surpass the rest...; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several
> entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it
> mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach*, they are indeterminable...; the systems of
> meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based
> as it is on the infinity of language. (emphasis in original; "S/Z" 5-6)

This ideal textual form achieved the aims of the writerly text, an ongoing production, while

allowing writer and reader to converge; the reader is a "producer of the text" rather than a

consumer (Barthes, "S/Z" 4). This description of textuality is analogous to what Nelson hoped to

achieve with Xanadu, and, in the ways it altered the role of the reader, to what Bush had hoped to

accomplish with the memex.

Barthes's reconceived textuality and the developing information technology attracted the

attention of a new group of English studies scholars who, according to Baehr and Lang, were

looking to revive literary studies with a new relevance (40). These scholars argued that the

emerging technology perfectly illustrated the theories that Barthes proposed and provided a

challenge to hierarchical notions of reader and writer, theory and practice, formality and

freedom. Largely, these new forays into literary technology focused on hypertext fiction.

Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Amy C. Kimme Hea argue that "hypertext scholars, wanting to test

the boundaries of narrative and free story from linearity, were not merely advocating a new view

of storytelling but rather were challenging us to write the world differently" (417). They argued

that the unlimited potential of hypertextual features, such as interactivity, nonlinearity, links

allowing multiple pathways through texts, links suggestive of cognitive associations, open-endedness, and collaborative authoring, would allow the reader to gain control over the text and reshape it for this new world view (Baehr and Lang 41-42; Johnson-Eilola and Hea 416).

Hypertext at this point in its development was drawing farther away from print conventions, though print texts were still the standard against which hypertext was measured. This is in part because, as Bolter argues, hypertext is the next step in writing technology and a remediation of print technology ("Writing Space" 24). Digital technology begins with print as its starting point, but changes the look, feel, and structure of the text. Bolter argues that "a hypertext is like a printed book that the author has attacked with a pair of scissors and cut into convenient verbal sizes" ("Writing Space" 35). Unlike a deconstructed book, however, the hypertext does not lose its sense of order and organization because the author of the hypertext provides electronic links which define relationships between the pieces. In this sense, the writer controls the relationships between nodes, but the reader also has agency in creating relationships. Rather than an axial structure, like a scholarly book with endnotes where the reader constantly returns to the primary text, hypertext allows for a networked structure with non-hierarchical elements that might produce a different reading every time (Landow, "Hypertext 3.0" 70). Because there is no central text, and because texts can link to any number of other, dispersed texts, a hypertextual network of texts can extend indefinitely, unlike a print text (Bolter, "Topographic Writing" 111). Hypertext allows for increased mobility between texts because there are more entry and exit points to each text, which also function as connections between texts, much like Barthes's ideal textuality. New hypertext systems, such as Storyspace, Hypercard, Supercard, and others, were intended to be the portals through which the new remediation of print would be realized.

At this point in the history of the development of hypertextuality, the conceptions of

hypertextuality as technology and as textuality began to converge. Storyspace, a well-known

hypertext system in the literary hypertext community, was one of the first and most important

documents to bridge this gap. Storyspace was created by Michael Joyce, Jay David Bolter, and

John B. Smith in the 1980s and was tested over a number of years in a comprehensive

community college (Joyce 39). This software had many similarities to Bush's memex, Nelson's

Xanadu, and Barthes's textuality: "Storyspace...allows the writer to link notes, create a database

to gather and link places, create new places from existing text, and create and link paths through

the documents" (Joyce 53-54). Places, here, refers to individual, editable nodes, containing

written text or images, which could be grouped together in different configurations and with

different hierarchical structures (Joyce 53). Storyspace was not used only for "hyperfiction", but

also as a writing and thinking tool, and in writing classes across multiple disciplines (Joyce 39).

Joyce and Bolter incorporated many of the ideas of Barthes, Bush, and Nelson into

Storyspace and their own hypertextual scholarship. Joyce describes two types of hypertext,

exploratory and constructive, that bear more than a passing resemblance to Barthes's writerly

and ideal texts. Exploratory hypertext most closely resembles the writerly text, allowing the

reader to create meaning by choosing the reading path and creating annotations. Constructive

hypertext, on the other hand, is closer to Barthes's ideal text: "[The reader] should be able to

extend the existing structure and to transform it, harnessing it to her own uses" (Joyce 180). The

idea, in Barthes's text as well as Joyce's, was to make the reader an active producer. While Joyce

would give almost complete agency to the reader, Bolter argues that the relationship between

reader and author in hypertext becomes more adversarial and the reader must fight for control of

the text ("Writing Space" 168). He sees the reader not as harnessing the text for her own

purposes, but traveling "the links [constituting] a path through a virtual space and the reader becomes a visitor or traveler in that space" (Bolter "Writing Space" 29). Even with differing views, however, both Joyce and Bolter agree the role of the reader changes in hypertextual environments.

Literary hypertext programs advanced the concepts of hypertext textuality and technology, and in the 1980s and '90s, computer science accepted hypertext as a legitimate discipline (Bolter, "Writing Space" 38). It was also in the 1990s that the Internet became a public domain. Some form of it had been in use since the 1960s, and a more updated version of the Internet since the 1980s, but in 1990 Tim Berners-Lee proposed the World Wide Web. Like Bush and Nelson, Berners-Lee wanted to facilitate data retrieval, and his system separated data into nodes connected by links (McEneaney). Unlike Nelson, however, Berners-Lee included a protocol to take hypertext global (Bolter, "Writing Space" 39). The first graphical browser, Mosaic, was released in 1993, and growth of public traffic on the Internet increased by a factor of 10 (Bolter, "Writing Space" 40; McEneaney). In Web 1.0, the initial phase of the World Wide Web, many of the capabilities imagined by early hypertext theorists, such as flexible, collaborative authorship, were not available. Rather, as Craig Baehr and Susan M. Lang argue, "Hypertexts developed in 1.0 shared more rhetorical features with their printed counterparts than with the flexible, adaptable 'docuverse' envisioned in theory" (46). At least partly because of the failure of Web 1.0 to deliver on Barthes's ideal textuality and Nelson's networked information model, discussions about new technologies moved away from hypertext theory by the end of the 20th century (Johnson-Eilola and Hea 417; Baehr and Lang 40). With Web 2.0, however, some of the features originally conceived of are becoming a reality.

Web 2.0 technologies allowed for the features early hypertext promised but did not deliver. Through Facebook, Myspace, Twitter, wikis, blogs, and discussion boards, the line separating writer and reader that Barthes lamented has been blurred, collaborative authorship has become a reality, and usability and accessibility are becoming priorities in Web 2.0 capabilities (Baehr and Lang 47). Baehr and Lang argue that "Web 2.0 content became more data-driven, multi-platform, multi-purpose, collaborative, and socially-mediated" (47). The textuality envisioned by Barthes has become more of a reality in Web 2.0, allowing for interconnections between texts with multiple entry and exit points, reaching, theoretically, as far as the eye can see.

The mobility and openness of digital texts in Web 2.0 has another consequence: intertextuality. Warnick claims that "the hypertextual environment, the ease of cut and paste, the potential for using some else's HTML code, and other factors make it easy for website producers to play one text off against another" ("Looking to the Future" 330). Current hypertext technology and available structural tools have made it easier to be explicitly intertextual (Baehr and Lang 46). Hypertext links are an overt form of intertextuality, providing a structural link to another document. Bruce argues that because each page, or node, is linked to the web through its hyperlinked connections, readers must consider the entire network of texts in evaluating meaning (10). In addition to explicit intertextuality, hyperlinks also create an implicit intertextuality. As Bolter contends, "Whatever else the first element (page on the World Wide Web) means, it now has an added meaning as the source of a connection, and the second element now takes on meaning as a destination" ("Writing Space" 37). In this sense, the hyperlink is symbolic in that it represents something other than the text that is actively hyperlinked. Bolter argues that "the writer of a hypertext indicates these [symbols] by defining a link (anchor on the World Wide

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Web) from one element to another....She is in effect creating two new writing elements" ("Writing Space" 37).

Bolter's explanation of the symbolic nature of hypertext also indicates a rhetorical dimension of hypertext, in that it contains an inherent element of intention. Bolter points out that "a link from element A to element B causes the reader to assume that B somehow explains A....The movement itself from A to B is taken by the reader as a rhetorical gesture. The movement is a meaningful juxtaposition of the two elements, which have become symbols of hypertext" ("Writing Space" 38). The reader has expectations that the linked node will speak to the original text in some way. As Landow argues, "Hypertext links condition the user to expect purposeful, important relationships between linked materials" ("Hypertext in Literary Education" 189). The linked node is expected to provide a comment, explanation, or additional information on the first text, and if the linked text disappoints the reader's expectations, that too can impact the original text (Landow, "Hypertext in Literary Education" 189). The reader expectation of significance and the impact of one text on another will become important in my in-depth discussion of digital ethos.

The textuality envisioned by Barthes and the technological capabilities imagined by Bush and Nelson have been somewhat realized in contemporary hypertext, namely through the World Wide Web. The new question is where to go with hypertext scholarship. Warnick argues that "there will be an increased need in the near future for the work of critics with an understanding of what's under the hood, as electronic texts in time become more complex and immersive" ("Looking to the Future" 332). Now that the information structure is there in hypertextual environments and users have increased access and mobility within it, the focus of inquiry may shift to how we navigate and experience hypertext through multiple levels of connection and

meaning. My intention in this thesis is to explore some small part of this hypertextual structure and the intertextual meaning that is created by and resides within it. In the following section, I will discuss the intertextual relationships created by hypertextual links and how those relationships can impact digital ethos.

Intertextuality

Intertextuality has much in common with hypertext in that they both address networked textual relationships. Hypertextuality does so primarily through a structural perspective, while intertextuality does so primarily from a content perspective. Intertextuality is a complex and debated term with a rich history in semiotics, literary criticism and textual analysis, and, more recently, rhetoric. Warnick describes it as being "so unstable that nearly every theorist or critic writing about it defines it in a different way" ("Rhetoric Online" 95). And though the term was coined in the mid-1960s, Michael Worton and Judith Still contend that intertextuality as a practice of connecting ideas among texts has existed since the beginning of recorded human history (2). Intertextuality occurs in many different contexts and among different types and genres of texts, but intertextuality in hypertextual environments has the most applicability to this thesis. For the purposes of this thesis, hypertextual intertextuality is the creation of relationships between digital texts connected by hypertextual links, and the contextual meaning created by those relationships. A discussion of significant features of intertextuality and their applicability to digital environments will be useful in explaining this definition.

The first important characteristic of intertextuality is the relationship between a text and the exterior texts that exist beyond it. Julia Kristeva first coined the term "intertextuality" in the mid-1960s (Worton and Still 1; Orr 20; Allen 15) to describe the ways forms of language interact to disassemble and construct texts in new arrangements. She was concerned with the ways

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language was constructed within a text and the ways a text referenced language outside of itself, particularly in discourse that was already established (Allen 34). Texts are not original works, she argued, but rather amalgams of language, style, and structure of other texts. Kristeva suggests that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (66). She identified as significant the role exterior texts play in the creation of meaning of any given text (66). Specifically, the meaning of a text is dependent upon the reader's knowledge and understanding of exterior texts and the ability to apply that understanding to the original text, the crux of intertextuality. How much the reader understands depends "not only on the text, but also on the reader's literary competence and the cultural memory" (Juvan 125). For example, a text might contain an allusion referencing a second, exterior text. The reader's knowledge and understanding of the exterior text will determine whether they understand the allusion, which in turn may impact the meaning communicated by the first text. In this sense, the exterior texts have equal importance and standing to the original text.

In the 1970s, Michel Riffaterre also acknowledged the importance of exterior texts in creating intertextual meaning, but he argued that meaning does not come from outside the text ("Self-Sufficient Text" 45). Rather, intertextuality allows the reader to more fully engage with the structures and elements that exist within the text. He argues, "The term indeed refers to an operation of the reader's mind, but it is an obligatory one, necessary to any textual decoding. Intertextuality necessarily complements our experience of textuality" (Riffaterre, "Intertextual Representation" 142). The intertextual meanings within a text do signify something other than themselves—a connection to exterior texts—but what they point to, Riffaterre contends, is "a significance determined by the rules of a grammar valid only for this text" ("Self-Sufficient

Text" 45). A text does reference exterior texts, he argues, but only in order to provide more

significance and depth of meaning within the text.

The exterior texts Kristeva refers to exist in what Riffaterre terms the intertext[10], the next

important element of intertextuality. Riffaterre cautions stringently that the intertext is not "a

collection of literary works that may have influenced the text or that the text may have imitated.

Similarly, it is neither a context that may explain the text or its effect on readers, nor one that

may be used as a basis of comparison to point out the author's originality." ("Intertextual

Representation" 142). Rather the intertext is a theoretical corpus of textual fragments from

multiple texts that is referenced by the text in both implicit and explicit ways. As Kristeva puts it,

"The word in the text is oriented toward an anterior or synchronic literary corpus" (66). For

Riffaterre, the intertext is necessary and specific to the text which references it. The reading of

the text is not complete or satisfactory unless it is looked at through the lens of the intertext

(Riffaterre, "Intertextual Representation" 142). However, the primary meaning-making for him

occurs within the text itself with the intertext as merely a supporting player (Allen 118).

For Barthes, the intertext is much more than mere support, and he envisions it as a freer

and wider-ranging entity than Riffaterre. Barthes made a clear distinction between what he called

the "work," a concrete text, and the "Text", an entity which functions as an intertext. A "work,"

as Barthes describes it, is what you might find on the shelves at a library; it is a singular

"fragment of substance" ("Image" 156). A "Text", on the other hand, is a plural entity defined by

relationships, and most closely resembles a network or web: It is "woven entirely with citations,

references, echoes, cultural languages..., antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through

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[10] "Intertext" is used by both Riffaterre ("Intertextual Representation" 142), and Barthes ("Pleasure" 36). Barthes'
concept of the "Text" shares many characteristics with "intertext," while he also similarly refers to this concept as
the "text-between" ("Image" 160). For my purposes, I am using "intertext" as a representative term for these similar
concepts.

and through in a vast stereophony" ("Image" 159-160). This conception of the "Text" builds on and expands Kristeva's "mosaic of quotations", while also resembling the intertext by referencing a larger cultural context. For Barthes, the intertext is representative of cultural knowledge and experience gained from all of the texts connected in a network, and "every text is an intertext" (trans. in Orr 33). The intertext for Barthes, then, is exactly what Riffaterre claims it is not: a collection of works, a context, a comparison, and everything else.

Barthes posits that we cannot escape the intertext; we experience and seek to understand texts, which then influence the way we experience or understand texts. The intertext is "the impossibility of living outside the infinite text—whether this text be Proust or the daily newspaper or the television screen: the book creates the meaning, the meaning creates life" (emphasis in original; Barthes, "Pleasure" 36). According to this view, the process of intertextuality and the intertext heavily influence textual analysis because they are how we come to understand not only the text, but the world as well.

Warnick argues that "intertextuality's major rhetorical benefit comes from its use of resources in the larger intertext to involve the user in the construction of the text's meaning" ("Rhetoric Online" 119). It is not unlike, she continues, classical rhetoricians using well-known cultural premises and topics to engage an audience in the persuasive process. If the reader recognizes an allusion, or makes a meaningful connection intended by an author or authors between linked texts, persuasion is that much more likely. The intertext, the cultural knowledge a text references, can be used as a rhetorical device to engage and guide the reader.

The third significant characteristic of intertextuality is the gaps that are identified in the text, either explicitly or implicitly, which indicate the need to consult the intertext. Riffaterre defines intertextuality in one respect as a "system of difficulties to be reckoned with" because the

text presents the reader with a gap that requires action to fill ("Intertextuality" 781). That action may be many things, including interpretation, substitution, juxtaposition, or application of information. The action required to fill the gap may depend upon the type of intertextuality and whether the gap reveals itself explicitly or implicitly.

Laurent Jenny was the first to differentiate between explicit and implicit intertextuality (Juvan 43). Explicit intertextuality, including imitation, parody, citation, montage, and plagiarism, is "all those texts which leave their relationship to other texts visible" (Jenny 35). Explicit intertextuality, then, is an observable phenomenon to the reader. Implicit intertextuality, on the other hand, represents "the literary work's covert relations with linguistic, generic or stylistic codes and 'archetypal models'" (Juvan 124). Implicit intertextuality is not observable, but rather subtle and largely symbolic (Jenny 34). It can be difficult for the reader to identify implicit, more so than explicit, intertextuality.

Riffaterre privileges implicit intertextuality over explicit intertextuality. In fact, he does not acknowledge explicit signs as being intertextual, because they do not require the active participation of the reader, a characteristic he deems crucial. For him, implicit intertextuality identifies itself through what the text does not say, and the intertext fills in those missing elements. This necessitates that "readers have to hypothesize, rebuild, or just wonder, a task they are not at liberty to avoid, since it is dictated by gaps in the fabric of the text" (Riffaterre, "Intertextuality" 781). In the case of explicit references, he argues, readers can ignore them, or may not even see them, because the connection is already made for the reader. Implicit intertextuality, on the other hand, cannot be ignored because the gaps in the text hinder complete meaning without the application of the intertext (Riffaterre, " Intertextuality" 781). Jenny would disagree as he sees explicit intertextuality as also requiring the reader to take action to fill in

missing elements. He contends, "Each intertextual reference is the occasion for an alternative: either one continues reading, taking it only as a segment like any other, integrated into...the text, or else one turns to the source text, carrying out a sort of intellectual anamnesis" (Jenny 44). The reader can bypass the gap or choose to reference the cultural knowledge of the intertext in order to unpack the text.

The last important element of intertextuality to consider is the stability of the intertext in the process of intertextuality. Intertextuality for Kristeva was not merely a static product, the result of text and exterior text interacting and a determination of meaning reached; it was more specifically a process of transformation. She claims, "The text is therefore a *productivity*, and this means... that it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another" (emphasis in original; Kristeva 36). The text becomes the location, product, and process of an evolving intertext created by the relationship between text and exterior texts. This means that the intertext could be specific to the text in question, as the text influences what specific references from cultural knowledge are relevant. A different text would call into memory different cultural references, creating another intertext.

A cautionary element related to stability is the role of the reader in relation to the intertext. The creator of a text might make specific references to the cultural knowledge of an intertext, but the reader's ability to reference the same cultural knowledge can impact the meaning of a text. Barthes's approach to intertextuality brought the reader front and center as the creator of the intertext (Orr 34). Barthes rejected the central authoritative figure of the author as the determiner of the signs and meaning of a text and granted that authority instead to the audience, which was then allowed to create meaning based on each member's personal

interaction with the text. For Barthes, the text was a playground of possibilities for the reader (Orr 34). The reader was free to make associations, intended by the author or not. The agency of the reader creates the intertextuality in Barthes's view, and not the writer. Riffaterre, on the other hand, rejected Barthes's total empowerment of the reader to determine the intertext. The text, for Riffaterre, demanded a meaning that readers could agree on, which would be impossible with Barthes's freedom of meaning. Riffaterre clarified explicitly that his own conception of the implicit intertext was significantly different from Barthes's, "which proclaims the reader's freedom to associate texts at random...a response by definition personal, shared with others only by chance: this is hardly the disciplined reading the text in its structured entirety demands of the reader" ("Semiotics" 195). Riffaterre's approach to the role of the reader, however, does not take into account the possibility that the reader may not know an intended reference.

Intertextuality is complicated by the inherent problem of reader knowledge base, which has obscured efforts to utilize intertextuality in textual analysis and research in the past (Orr 37). What the readers know or experience changes the way they interpret the intertext. As Worton and Still point out, "A text is available only through some process of reading; what is produced at the moment of reading is due to the cross-fertilization of the packaged material…by all the texts which the reader brings to it" (1-2). The texts readers have been exposed to or the experiences they have encountered, which are difficult to predict, will therefore produce very different readings of any given text or texts. If the author employs an allusion that the reader is not familiar with, the intertextual meaning is lost on the reader. The intertext for this reader is different, then, than that of a more knowledgeable reader who understands the allusion. In this circumstance, explicit intertextuality can provide more assurance that a reader will recognize and be able to fill a gap in the text.

Hypertextual intertextuality employs each of the significant characteristics of intertextuality discussed: relationships with exterior texts accessed through the intertext and explicit forms of intertextuality which identify gaps in the text and require the reader to perform an action. Digital technology allows texts to employ explicit intertextuality in the form of hyperlinks, which clearly identifies to the reader both a visible gap and a connection to an exterior text. Hyperlinks are explicitly indicated to the reader, usually through hypertextual conventions of underlining and colored text, and the convention also dictates that the link provides a structural connection to another text. It is possible for hyperlinks, although inherently explicit, to be implicitly intertextual in that the wording of the linked text may not indicate what kind of information a reader can expect on the other end. Hyperlinks also, as Bolter and Landow argue, indicate to the reader that clicking on the link will reveal important information that explains or otherwise speaks to the original text in a purposeful way (Bolter, "Writing Space" 38; Landow, "Hypertext in Literary Education" 189). The information accessed in a link represents an element of the intertext, as part of a larger network of texts or textual fragments. The network of texts would seem to be contrary to Riffaterre's, though not Barthes's, conception of the intertext as a theoretical body of knowledge, but because the network of texts is potentially infinite (Bruce 6; Warnick "Online Ethos" 263), there is a theoretical element to the network. The network of linked texts as a whole functions as the intertext.

The demonstration of intertextuality through hypertextual linking is ultimately what supports the conception of digital ethos in this thesis. In the following analysis I will demonstrate digital ethos as a hypertextual and intertextual phenomenon.

Chapter 3: Data Set Analysis

The scholarship related to these areas indicates that our teaching of digital ethos in composition classrooms is lacking in attention to hypertextuality and intertextuality. Here, I am going to argue for a method of digital ethos analysis to address that absence. I propose a heuristic, which Merriam-Webster defines as "exploratory problem-solving techniques that utilize self-educating techniques" ("Heuristic"), to investigate the construction of digital ethos in hypertextual, intertextual environments. A heuristic, in this case, will be more effective than a hermeneutic, because it outlines a specific series of steps in approaching the investigation, as well as providing the self-educating element on the application of those steps to other textual situations.

The heuristic I propose was originally envisioned as an assignment for a composition course grounded in rhetorical theory. This would be appropriate in an FYC course, as the heuristic illustrates basic rhetorical and textual concepts in digital ethos and hypertextuality, which are typically discussed in such introductory courses. Intertextuality could be a complex concept for FYC students to understand, but the theory could be discussed primarily through examples of what information and additional meaning texts add to each other, either implicitly or explicitly. The term "intertextuality" may also be dropped in favor of terminology that is more easily understood by students. The complexity of the heuristic could be easily adapted to both simpler and more difficult iterations, and could be applied differently in varied classroom contexts. It has considerable flexibility in application as elements can be added or removed, and the scope of the project can be limited or expanded. I will address some of those opportunities for expansion toward the end of this section.

The heuristic is designed to demonstrate assignment objectives through four major steps: 1) choose a focal text, 2) map the hyperlink network, 3) identify the intertextual relationships and contributions provided by the hypertextual links, and 4) interpret the ethos of the focal text through the lens of the established intertextual relationships. In order to understand the purpose and process of applying each step, it will be beneficial to discuss each one in more detail.

The first step of the heuristic is to choose a text from which to begin the evaluation of networked digital ethos. This step may seem slightly contradictory, as starting with one text could contribute to notions of ethos in isolated texts which I am trying to complicate. However, there are specific reasons to have a discussion with students on identifying a focal text. First, the text provides a starting point for gathering information about the hypertextual network and a point of comparison for that information. Second, some elements of a text, for example the number and type of hyperlinks, may be more useful in performing this exercise than others, depending on how the heuristic is applied, and identifying those elements in a text may allow the exercise to be more productive. Primarily, and for most applications of the heuristic, the presence of multiple links, or as many links as are feasible for the assignment in the allotted time, is preferable for demonstrating the connections between texts. Multiple links in the focal text allow students to explore multiple connections with the text in the hypertextual network. For this reason, texts without links may, including multimedia pages without links, not be the best place to begin the heuristic[11]. Having said that, however, the focal text could be any type of text that is conducive to the exercise, and the departure point could be anywhere on the Internet. Another element of discussion which may be productive in choosing a text is to emphasize that this text is

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[11] It would be possible to demonstrate hypertextuality without links in a text, but the process would essentially be working backwards to identify which texts link the focal text, or how the text is linked within a web page. This approach could be more difficult and time-consuming than the one I suggest.

merely a starting point, and holds only the priority or emphasis in the exercise that the instructor and students choose to give it. As Barthes argued, "We gain access...by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one" ("S/Z" 5-6). Therefore, terminology such as "primary", "first", "source", and "center" should be avoided as they imply a hierarchical structure that is misleading.

In instructing students to identify a text, the elements discussed above should be highlighted. An ideal text for an assignment exploring the construction of digital ethos in hypertextual, intertextual environments will contain multiple links, the number of which may vary based on the needs and objectives of the assignment. Also depending on the objectives, the links may need to provide connections to specific types of websites or texts. For example, based on the parameters of the assignment, a text that links to blog posts might be preferable over one that links to news articles. The links should be active and not "dead" links, meaning they should link to the texts indicated and not to error pages, in order for the intertextual relationships to be established. The subject, length, and complexity of the text will be dependent on the needs of the assignment, and so from that respect, the text could be any page on the web which contains hyperlinks.

After choosing a focal text, the next step is to map the hypertextual links, or nodes, in the text in order to create a snapshot of the hypertextual network. Online tools called link extractors can assist with this process and make it easier for students to identify and follow the links. These tools come in various forms—web-based sites, browser add-ons, and software—and create a data list of the links on a page[12]. This step allows students to begin to map the hypertextual network, of which the focal text is only a part. Most importantly, it provides a visual element to the

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[12] The one I used to analyze the data set for this thesis was an add-on to the Mozilla Firefox browser called SEO Quake, which I found through a Google search on link extractors.

exercise and allows students to illustrate the network transcending the texts. Within the map, the hypertextual characteristics envisioned by Bush, Nelson, and Barthes become visual: primarily, networked connections between texts and non-sequentiality. While the links may be listed sequentially within the text, the map can demonstrate the actual lack of sequentiality within the hypertextual network. The map can also demonstrate connections between the linked texts, which may not be evident within the focal text. Ideally, this step, and others in the heuristic, could be performed within a computer classroom. In that case, mind-mapping software or programs with drawing tools, such as PowerPoint, would be preferable to create this map.

However, it is not always possible for a class to have access to computers for whole class periods or multiple class periods. In the event of no computer access, this step could be performed without the aid of technology quite easily. For example, copies of the linked texts could be distributed to students standing in different parts of the room, and a ball of string or yarn passed among them to illustrate the connections between texts. Alternatively, the hyperlink map could be illustrated on a chalkboard or dry erase board.

Once the hyperlinks have been mapped, attention turns from the hypertextual structure of the network to the intertextual structure. The purpose of the third step, identifying the intertextual relationships and contributions provided by the hypertextual links, is to make connections between the information in the texts and to look for intertextual relationships created between the texts. As Riffaterre argued, texts contain gaps which are intended to be filled by the function of intertextuality. Here, the hypertextual links are the gaps, as discussed in the previous section, and the texts they link to are the gap-fillers. The linked texts function as the intertext, or cultural information as Barthes discussed, that supplies the missing knowledge. Texts supply information through relationships that might be classified in particular ways. This may require some use of

the student's judgment to decide where a text best fits within the classified intertextual relationships. This step also requires students to become familiar with the content of the focal text and the linked texts in order to make comparisons and define relationships. Questions that might be asked of students during an investigation of digital ethos using this heuristic could include: Does the linked text repeat information in the focal text? Does the linked text provide new information? Does the information in the linked text impact the understanding of the focal text in a specific way? These questions ask the students to contrast the information in the linked texts against the focal text in order to determine what each linked text adds to the discussion taking place within the networked texts. Who participates in the discussion is also a worthwhile conversation. What kinds of texts and voices are participating in the discussion and how does that impact the discussion occurring within the intertextual network? A network of texts from major news outlets and government agency sources may have a different conversation taking place than one consisting of blogs and popular magazines, even if both networks address the same issue. The cultural knowledge of the intertext will be different for different networks. Another element of this step is identifying potential relevant second generation links that might speak to the intertextual relationships of the hyperlinked network of texts. This information can impact on the focal text in identifying common links in the network not provided by the focal text.

Once the intertextuality of the texts has been evaluated, the final step in the heuristic is to use the intertextual relationships established in Step 3 to interpret the digital ethos of the focal text. Here, the traditional conceptions of ethos have some application, as students attempt to decide whether the focal text establishes credibility with believability, trust, and authority. However, their constructions of ethos focus on the context of the digital network, argued for by

Fleckenstein and Warnick, as established through intertextual relationships. Based on the kinds of information exchanged between texts, and the kinds of relationships established, how is the ethos of the focal text impacted? Are the texts exchanging information in ways that corroborates, contradicts, or informs the focal text? Are there other identifiable relationships between the hypertextual linked texts? Are there still visible gaps, and consequently missing intertextual relationships, in the intertextual network of information? These questions ask students to evaluate the ethos of the focal text based on the relationships they have identified as being established between the texts in the hypertextual, intertextual network. Digital ethos is, in the process of this heuristic, built by the intertextuality and hypertextuality of the network.

There is an important caveat that must be mentioned here. As alluded to in the literature review, the network of texts on the Internet is theoretically infinite. Because texts can link to multiple texts, and there is no central text, the hypertextual network of texts could extend indefinitely (Bolter "Topographic Writing" 111). As a result, it can be argued that the web itself is a text (Bruce 6; Warnick "Online Ethos" 263). It is clearly unfeasible to evaluate the digital ethos of the entire Internet, especially over the course of one composition class. For that reason, I suggest choosing a stopping point for the heuristic evaluation. This may mean determining a specific number of links at which to cease navigating. It could also mean determining a specific generation of links at which to stop. The links contained within the focal text may be considered first generation, the links contained within first generation texts may be considered second generation, and so on. Another alternative would be to follow a specific path of hyperlinked texts and evaluate the digital ethos through the network created by the path. For example, a student might pick one link in the focal text to click on, then one link in the first generation text, then one in the second generation text, finally stopping at an agreed-upon generation of texts. What this

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means is that the network being evaluated by the student is only a piece, a snapshot. Consequently, the digital ethos constructed from any given network snapshot is particular to that network, and the evaluation will change for another network. Where the network stops will determine what digital ethos can be deciphered because the stopping point of the network determines which texts are included or excluded. The network snapshot is not the whole network, and the ethos constructed is particular to each network, but the network snapshot can be considered a representation of how networked digital ethos functions in the Web as a whole.

The objectives for an assignment investigating hypertextual, intertextual digital ethos might also change based on the context in which the heuristic is applied, and the elements that are included in the exercise; however, there are objectives that may be demonstrated in most uses of the heuristic. In the first objective, students should be able to identify hypertextuality as the organizing structure for the network of texts, most explicitly through the hypertextual links. Step 2 of the heuristic helps student visualize the structure by creating actual representations of it, whether that is a digital image or another form. In the second objective, students should understand that information in connected texts acts on the meaning of other texts in the network through intertextuality. Step 3 of the heuristic allows students to make the connections between texts through the types of information exchanged and the relationships created between texts. The relationships indicate how the information has acted upon the focal text. In the third objective, and as a result of the first two objectives, students should recognize that no text is isolated on the Web, but rather that each text is part of a network of texts connected by hypertextuality and intertextuality. All of the steps in the heuristic help students to understand this concept, as connections between texts are identified and analyzed. In the fourth objective, students should understand that digital ethos is constructed, at least in part, by hypertextuality

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and intertextuality in the network. The steps of the heuristic, while identifying the connections between texts, show that credibility is constructed through those links and the relationships created by them. Finally, students should understand that digital ethos is distributed across the network of texts and not isolated to a single text. The fourth step of the heuristic primarily identifies the ways digital ethos is established through the hypertextual, intertextual network of texts.

In the following application of the heuristic, I will demonstrate the hypertextual and intertextual connections between the focal text and the exterior texts hyperlinked within it. Those links will demonstrate specific intertextual relationships between the texts, which in turn impact the digital ethos of the focal text in significant ways. This is a flexible heuristic, and it can achieve the objectives I have identified in multiple ways. Here, however, is one application of the heuristic at work.

Step 1. Choosing a focal text

In order to work through this heuristic, it is important to choose a starting point or a point of departure. The data set for this discussion is a text that addresses the phenomenon of the *"Kony 2012"* video. I chose this text because of the rampant popularity of *"Kony 2012"* on college campuses, and because it contains the necessary elements for a productive application of the heuristic. Because of my experiences with the *"Kony 2012"* phenomenon in my classes, I was familiar with several texts I had encountered. One that stood out to me was "On Kony 2012." "On Kony 2012" was posted on March 7, 2012 to *The Daily What*, a section of the *Cheezburger* network of humor websites, which claims to "keep you current on interesting and funny Internet culture" ("What is Cheezburger?"). This text is a good starting point to analyze digital ethos because it contains 24 varied research sources linked within the text, which explore

in-depth the background, relevance, and criticism of *"Kony 2012"*. The linked network of texts

provides a robust discussion of the subject and ample opportunity for intertextual relationships to

impact the digital ethos of the focal text.

"Kony 2012" was posted to *YouTube* on March 5, 2012, and quickly received over 100

million views in a record-setting six days. It became not only the fastest-growing social video

campaign in history ("Update: Kony Social Video Campaign"), but also the most viral video of

all time (Wasserman). The video was produced by the nonprofit organization Invisible Children

(IC) and was an appeal supporting efforts to capture Joseph Kony, the Ugandan leader of the

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Kony has been indicted for crimes against humanity by the

International Criminal Court and accused of enslaving children as soldiers, among other deeds.

"Kony 2012" garnered support from celebrities and the public on Twitter, Facebook, and

YouTube; however, it also received an almost instant backlash in public opinion. Invisible

Children was accused of oversimplifying the situation in Uganda, perpetuating colonialist

attitudes about saving Africans from themselves, misleading IC's donors, and complicating other

efforts to capture Kony and assist the children who were his victims. In a very short time span,

the Internet was inundated with response videos, blog posts, news articles, tweets, and Facebook

posts—to name just a few mediums—in which the merits and negative aspects of the video, its

creators, and IC were debated heatedly. The plethora of types and number of texts on the Internet

addressing the "Kony 2012" phenomenon makes this topic ideal as the subject of my data set for

this thesis. "On Kony 2012" is only one example of the texts produced in response to the video,

but it is a strong example due to the number and variety of hyperlinked sources it provides.

In order to evaluate the intertextual relationships created by the hyperlinks in the focal

text, some discussion of the content of the focal text will be helpful in providing context for the

relationships. "On Kony 2012" is an article intended for the audience of the Daily What, and as such, it is written in informal language and clearly takes a biased view of the subject to argue against the credibility of "Kony 2012". The article refers to the "Kony 2012" video as "the latest fauxtivist fad sweeping the web" and tells the readers "you clearly won't stop sending me that damn video until I say something about it, so here goes" ("On Kony 2012"). Though the author acknowledges the danger of Kony, the purpose of the article is very obviously to challenge IC's intentions and credibility, chiefly the way donations to the organization are distributed. The organization claims that the donations go to the children being exploited by Kony, but the financial records cited by the article challenge that claim, and challenge the readers to rethink their attempts to help: "Sending money to a nonprofit that wants to muck things up by dousing the flames with fuel is not helping." Rather, "On Kony 2012" suggests an alternative to funding IC: "Want to help? *Really* want to help? Send your money to nonprofits that are putting more than 31% toward rebuilding the region's medical and educational infrastructure, so that former child soldiers have something worth coming home to" (emphasis in original). The article also admonishes readers to do their research before donating to charitable causes. Attempting to follow its own advice, "On Kony 2012" provides considerable support in the form of hyperlinked sources to back up the claims it makes. It also directly quotes a passage with hyperlinks from the blog *Visible Children*. The hypertextual map shows that that text is also linked by or links to many of the other texts, indicating that it could be source material for "On Kony 2012".

Step 2. Mapping the hyperlink network

After choosing the focal text, the next step is to map the hyperlinks provided in the text. "On Kony 2012" contains 24 unique hypertextual links within the body of the article, some of

which link to each other, creating a robust network. In this step, mind mapping software, of which there are many varieties available, was used to create a visual representation of the links in the "On Kony 2012" text. In the first map, color was used to distinguish between different links. Figure 1 shows the hyperlink map of "On Kony 2012" and demonstrates the hypertextual relationships between the texts and the channels for the intertextual network to be established.
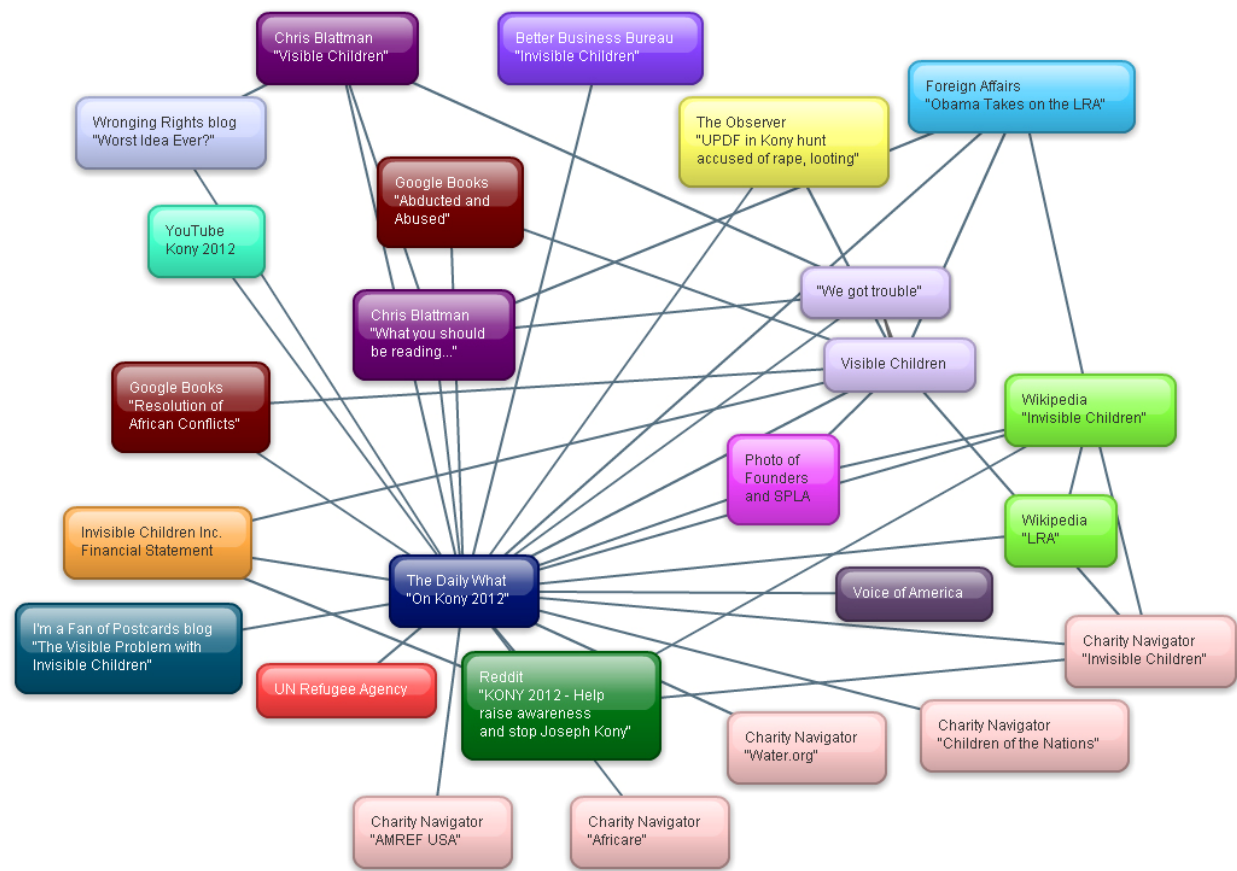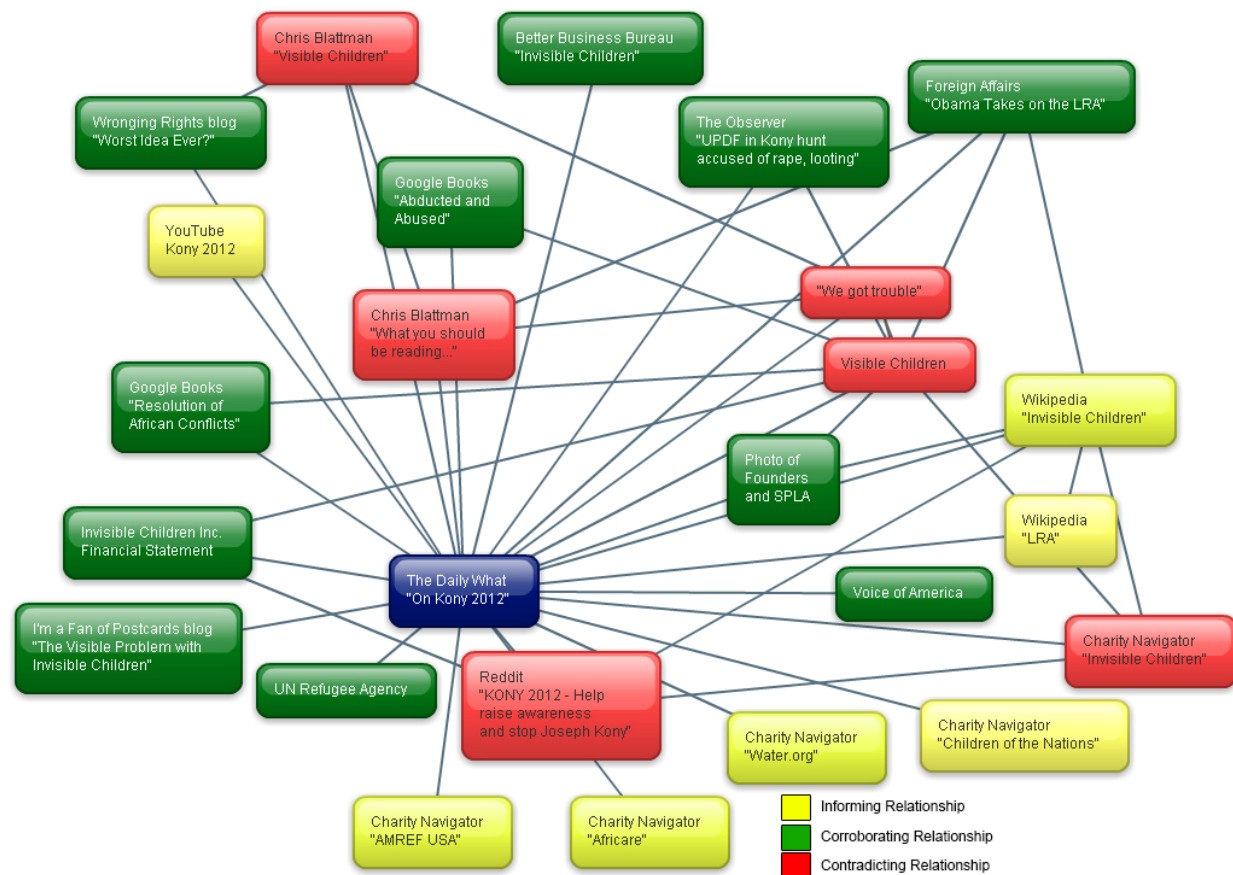

Figure 1. Visual hyperlink map of "On Kony 2012"

Step 3. Identify the intertextual relationship contribution of the hypertextual links

"On Kony 2012" contains a total of 24 hyperlinks. The explicit intertextual gaps in the article are apparent, indicated by blue, underlined hyperlinks, and by a lack of detailed information on the elements hyperlinked within the text. The article contains one "dead" link that no longer works, and the domain name in the address is not accessible. In this case, a gap is

established but not filled. The remaining linked texts provide considerable intertextual

information to fill the gaps in the article, and this results in the establishment of particular

intertextual relationships that may be classified as follows: informing, corroborating, and

contradicting. Figure 2 shows the hyperlink map of "On Kony 2012" color-coded to show the

three intertextual relationships.

Figure 2. Visual hyperlink map of "On Kony 2012," showing intertextual relationships

Informing, corroborating, and contradicting may not be the intertextual relationships

identified in other applications of the heuristic, but they were the clearest relationships within

this network of texts. Some of the links develop relationships with the focal text that might serve

more than one of these categories, but for the purposes of clarity I will group those texts under

the relationship heading they most fulfill. I will now discuss each of these types of intertextual relationships and what they contribute to the focal text.

Informing. The texts that fall under the informing relationship with the focal text are largely texts intended to be factual and objective, at least as far as the genre of text is concerned, for example, the encyclopedic nature of *Wikipedia*. Whether they are in fact objective is open to interpretation, but that is not the focus of this investigation.

"Kony 2012" - YouTube. The one text I am including in the informing category that is not intended to be objective is the "Kony 2012" video itself. This text could have been used to either corroborate or contradict the focal text, but the focal text does not employ the hyperlink in that way and for that reason I am classifying it as informing. The hyperlink for the *YouTube* video is presented to provide the reader with access to the video, but does not discuss any details about the video or its intended purpose. If this is a reader's first exposure to the topic, they would very likely need to click on the link to form an understanding of what the video was about, which indicates the first gap in the text.

Wikipedia. The next two texts which create informing relationships are from *Wikipedia*. Rather than provide a direct link to the official organization website of IC, "On Kony 2012" instead links to two *Wikipedia* articles for considerable background information. The first is introduced with the wording, "The organization behind Kony 2012[13] — Invisible Children Inc. — is an extremely shady nonprofit" ("On Kony 2012"). While the statement itself is clearly biased, indicated by the judgmental, negative connotation of the wording, the link is presented in such as a way as to indicate that to find out what IC is, the reader can click on this link. The *Wikipedia* article on "Invisible Children, Inc." gives history for the organization, its awards, and

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[13] This refers to the "Kony 2012" video (quotations omitted in original).

its filmography, and discusses the criticisms leveled against it, both before and after the release

of "Kony 2012", in much greater detail than "On Kony 2012". However, the *Wikipedia* article

does not indicate that IC is "shady". The *Wikipedia* page also links to or discusses three of the

links in "On Kony 2012": an article published in *Foreign Affairs* online magazine, *Charity

Navigator*'s rating of IC as a credible charitable organization, and a controversial photo that was

taken of the three founders of IC. I will discuss each of these in more detail in reference to other

intertextual relationships.

The IC *Wikipedia* article links to another *Wikipedia* article, the "Lord's Resistance

Army" page, which is also linked by "On Kony 2012". The focal text introduces this link with

the text, "Let's not get our lines crossed: The Lord's Resistance Army is bad news" ("On Kony

2012"). Again, this hyperlink is introduced in such as way as to indicate that information about

the background of the LRA can be found on the other end. The article is providing some

corroboration in explaining why the LRA is "bad news", but that is the not the main argument of

the article. The LRA *Wikipedia* page discusses the militant organization Joseph Kony leads. The

history of the LRA, conflicts they are involved in, ideology, warrants issued by the International

Criminal Court, foreign involvement, and popular cultural references are explained. This last

section includes a reference to the "Kony 2012" video, though it gives very little information

("Lord's Resistance Army"). The LRA page links to an article in a Ugandan newspaper, *The

Observer*, which is also linked by "On Kony 2012", as well as to *Visible Children*, a blog which

is a major contributing source to "On Kony 2012". This linked source, the LRA *Wikipedia* page,

informs the reader about a tangential topic related to the focal text's main argument, and so is

classified as informing.

Charity Navigator. The last few texts I am classifying as informing are all pages on the *Charity Navigator* website. *Charity Navigator*, also linked by the *Wikipedia* and *Reddit* texts, describes itself as unbiased, objective, and the "largest and most-utilized evaluator of charities" in the United States ("Overview"). The site awards a score to charitable organizations on their financial performance, accountability, and transparency by evaluating their revenue, expenses, and financial accounting practices. The focal text presents these particular links, which are the *Charity Navigator* pages of four charities representing the child soldier cause, as alternatives to IC. "On Kony 2012" suggests, "[Here](#) [are](#) [just](#) [a few](#) of those charities. They all have a sparkling four-star rating from *Charity Navigator*, and, more importantly, no interest in airdropping American troops armed to the teeth into the middle of a multi-nation tribal war to help one madman catch another". A review of the links shows that the charities all still have four star ratings, as the focal text claimed in 2012. The linked pages in this case demonstrate that the author has done some research on alternatives if IC is not an acceptable option. The wording of the linked text indicates clearly what gap these texts are filling, and the texts inform the claims of the focal text through examples. Again, because these texts were not addressing the primary argument of the text, they were classified as informing.

Ultimately the main function of texts included in these informing intertextual relationships is to do what their name implies. They serve to inform the focal text's argument without actually corroborating or contradicting the main points of the argument. The *YouTube* video would actually contradict the claims of the article, but the article positions the linked video as the element to which it is responding, negating the contradicting information. *Wikipedia* provides history and discussion of criticisms without overtly taking either side. *Charity*

Navigator provides factual data on charities unrelated to IC. They primarily provide background or additional, surplus information on the main elements of the subject discussed in the focal text.

Corroborating. The texts which fall under the corroborating intertextual relationship are texts whose primary impact on the focal text is to corroborate the content and claims of the focal text. Not surprisingly, the majority of the links in "On Kony 2012" perform some corroboration of the author's claim, because as a rhetorical gesture, a hyperlink is most often provided to support the information in the focal text (Landow, "Hypertext in Literary Education" 189). Eleven of the links in the focal text serve primarily to support and confirm the claims presented in "On Kony 2012", and are classified as corroborating intertextual relationships. This does not mean that all of the information in each of these eleven texts completely corroborates the focal text, but merely that the majority of the content in the linked text corroborates that of the focal text. Some of the texts included in this category were not created to support claims questioning the credibility of IC, but the way they are presented in the focal text creates a corroborating relationship.

IC's Financial Statement. The first corroborating text is a good example of a text not intended to corroborate an argument like that of the focal text. "On Kony 2012" uses IC's financial statement from 2010 and 2011 to call into question the distribution of their funding. The author of the focal text indicates that only 31 percent of IC's funding "go toward actually helping anyone [pdf]" ("On Kony 2012"). The other 69 percent, "On Kony 2012" claims, "go to line the pockets of the three people in charge of the organization, to pay for their travel expenses (over $1 million in the last year alone) and to fund their filmmaking business (also over a million)". "Line their pockets" is an inflammatory accusation and indicates strong bias. The bias, combined with the generalized funding details provided by the focal text, could serve as a gap

that encourages the reader to seek knowledge, i.e. specific funding details from IC's financial

statement, to fill it. The bias might lead the reader to question the veracity of the information,

while the gap indicated by the hyperlink and lack of funding details might encourage the reader

to read the report and corroborate the claim made in the text.

Better Business Bureau. The next link in the focal text which creates a corroborating

intertextual relationship is intended to point out, again, that IC is not a credible nonprofit

organization. "On Kony 2012" indicates that IC has "been criticized by the Better Business

Bureau for refusing to provide information necessary to determine if IC meets the Bureau's

standards." The text linked is the Better Business Bureau (BBB) charity review of IC. As of

October 2013, the page still had a sign sporting a red exclamation mark and the message "Did

not disclose". The review explains, "This charitable organization either has not responded to

written BBB requests for information or has declined to be evaluated in relation to BBB

Standards for Charity Accountability" ("Invisible Children"). The BBB qualify that response

from the charity is not mandatory, but as the BBB is an organization intended to review business

and charity credibility, the implication by the focal text is that IC is therefore not credible. The

gap provided by the wording of the text and the explicit intertextuality of the hyperlink is a clear

indication that the text will and does corroborate the information in the focal text.

Photo. The next corroborating linked text is a photo of the three founders of IC: Jason

Russell, Bobby Bailey, and Laren Poole. This photo has raised a considerable amount of

criticism from IC's detractors because it features the founders holding automatic weapons and

posing with members of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) (Gordon). The wording in

"On Kony 2012," quoted from the blog *Visible Children,* which introduces the link is innocuous

enough: "The group is in favour of direct military intervention, and their money supports the

Ugandan government's army and various other military forces. Here's a photo of the founders of

Invisible Children posing with weapons and personnel of the Sudan People's Liberation Army."

The wording is less biased than other language in "On Kony 2012", but that is perhaps because

the text was quoted from another source, the blog *Visible Children*. However, the linked text

does corroborate the focal text's claim that the IC group has ties to the SPLA. There is also more

information related to the photo to be found within the intertextual network of the texts linked to

the focal text.

The *Wikipedia* article "Invisible Children, Inc." also references the photo, though it does

not link directly to it. *Wikipedia* explains that it was "a joke photo taken at the 2008 Juba Peace

Talks in the Democratic Republic of Congo that would have been 'funny to bring back to our

friends and family'" ("Invisible Children, Inc."). The quote provided is cited on *Wikipedia* from

the "Q&A" on the IC website. The article further explains that the photographer who took the

photograph, and was critical of the organization's questionable practices, had explained the

context as "the Invisible Children founders being bored at the stalled peace talks and deciding to

have some fun posing with weapons and SPLA members" ("Invisible Children, Inc."). The

additional information provided by *Wikipedia* fills gaps in the focal text that were not available

from the link directly referencing the photo, but rather from a different linked source within the

focal text. This is therefore not a gap that was indicated in the focal text, but is perhaps a more

implicit intertextual gap.

The Observer. The next text which creates a corroborating intertextual relationship is an

article in the Ugandan newspaper, *The Observer*, "UPDF in Kony Hunt Accused of Rape,

Looting." The wording in "On Kony 2012" which introduces the link argues that the SPLA,

much like Joseph Kony and the Ugandan army, has been accused of "rape and looting". The text

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linked is the article in the Ugandan newspaper; however, while the article does cite allegations against the Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) for rape, it does not mention the SPLA. In this case the gap is filled with additional information, but not completely. This text only partially corroborates the information of the focal text, and the corroboration occurs mostly in conjunction with other texts in the hypertextual network. Texts within the network (*Reddit*, for example) show that IC has publicly supported the efforts of the UPDF to pursue Kony, and other texts (*Voice of America* and Child Soldiers International) show that there is an established relationship between the SPLA and the UPDF.

      Google Books. The next two corroborating links are search results within texts accessed through *Google Books*: *The Resolution of African Conflicts: The Management of Conflict Resolution & Post-conflict Reconstruction* edited by Alfred G. Nhema and Tiyambe Zeleza, and *Abducted and Abused: Renewed Conflict in Northern Uganda* by Annette Weber and Jemera Rone. The hyperlinked wording in "On Kony 2012" is, "[These](#) [books](#) each refer to the rape and sexual assault that are perennial issues with the UPDF, the military group IC is defending," and the searches point out passages in the books that directly speak to the accusations. Clicking on the links takes you to search results within the texts using the highlighted keywords "UPDF rape". Each text is accessed through the search at a section of the book exclusively focusing on incidents of rape and sexual abuse by the UPDF. Some of the stories included in the sections are graphic and disturbing, and indicate frequent assaults on women of all ages. The language in the sections of both books is an implied condemnation of the UPDF's actions: "Although these [rapes] might not constitute a systematic attack, they are so widespread as to constitute a crime against humanity" (Apuuli 62). In the context of the quote from the focal text, these sources

provide fairly damning evidence against the UPDF, and by extension, IC, which supports them. As such, the texts create a strong corroborating intertextual relationship with the focal text.

       Voice of America and Child Soldiers International. The eighth and ninth corroborating links in the focal text demonstrate why "On Kony 2012" is critical of IC: primarily because IC does not demonstrate understanding of the possible consequences of its own actions. The focal text acknowledges that Kony and the LRA need to be stopped. However, "On Kony 2012" argues that IC's agenda of "propping up Uganda's decades-old dictatorship and its military arm, which has been accused by the UN of <u>committing unspeakable atrocities</u> and itself <u>facilitated the recruitment of child soldiers</u>," is not the way to go about it. The texts linked in that sentence are the *Voice of America*, an international broadcaster funded by the U.S. Government, and Child Soldiers International, which is affiliated with the United Nations (UN) Refugee Committee. The *Voice of America* linked text is a press release discussing a recently released report by the UN Refugee Committee on the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The report identifies "over 600 major crimes including mass rape, targeted killings of civilians and other crimes against humanity from 1993 to 2003. The report implicates armed forces from Uganda" (Onyiego). The second linked text is a summary of the report and accuses the DRC of recruiting child soldiers with the help of the UPDF. The summary states, "Reports that the UPDF has trained and equipped thousands of young recruits, including many children, continued into 2001" (Child Soldiers International). Both of these texts supply considerable information that the UPDF may be committing the very crimes of which Kony is accused, and provide corroborating information to both the focal text and the *Google Books* links.

       I'm a Fan of Postcards and Foreign Affairs. The next two links provide corroborating information to the focal text's claim that IC is making an unnecessary call for action against

Kony, as he may have already been defeated and the United States is already taking action. A post on a blog, *I'm a Fan of Postcards*, linked by the focal text suggests that Kony has already run off to the Congo and is in danger of starving to death. The post, which is linked by the wording, "if [Kony] isn't already dead" was written in 2006, however, so the accuracy of the information could certainly have changed by 2012. The post, "The Visible Problem with Invisible Children," also provides no source for its own information, so it cannot be corroborated beyond the second generation of links. However, the post does corroborate the information in the focal text and addresses the gap established by the hyperlink. The other text, an article in *Foreign Affairs* magazine, "Obama Takes on the LRA: Why Washington Sent Troops to Central Africa," was written in 2011. The wording used in the focal text to link to the article discusses already ongoing efforts to capture Kony: "The United States is already plenty involved in helping rout Kony and his band of psycho sycophants" ("On Kony 2012"). The *Foreign Affairs* article actually discusses numerous participants involved in discussions and efforts related to the LRA and Kony, including non-governmental organizations, journalists from many nations, and the UN Security Council. The article addresses renewed interest in the LRA's activities because of President Obama's decision to send troops after Kony. The intertextual gap in "On Kony 2012" would lead the reader to expect information about United States involvement in routing Kony, which it does, but it also provides much more information related to other nations' involvement. In this respect, the text more than corroborates the information in the focal text, and actually provides more information to fill the gap created by the hyperlink. Additionally, another text within the hypertextual network, a blog by Chris Blattman, praises the authors of the *Foreign Affairs* article because "few have studied the LRA longer or more in depth" (Blattman

"What You Should be Reading"). Blattman reinforces the authority of the article, which in turn reinforces the claims of the focal text.

      Wronging Rights. Another blog, *Wronging Rights*, also creates a corroborating intertextual relationship with the focal text. The blog post "Worst Idea Ever?" addresses IC's 2009 "Abduct Yourself to Free the Abducted" campaign, and expresses concerns that IC is naïve and oversimplifying the situation in Uganda and Kony's activities. They also include the controversial "fun" photo of the founders of IC holding automatic weapons. The authors echo "On Kony 2012" in their concern that IC is oversimplifying a very complex problem. As an example, they argue, "Choosing to simplistically define Congolese women as 'The Raped' and Ugandan children as 'The Abducted' constrains our ability to think creatively about the problems they face, and work with them to combat these problems" (Taub and Cronin-Furman). The idea of oversimplification is also an element of the gap presented in the focal text. In order to link the blog post, "On Kony 2012" uses the wording, "Myopically placing the blame for all of central Africa's woes on Kony—even as a starting point—will only imperil many more people than are already in danger." While the actual wording that is linked might imply a gap indicating a text which discusses how Kony is partially responsible, the sentence implies that IC is oversimplifying the subject, which the linked text supports. This text clearly corroborates the information provided in the focal text.

      The main function of the texts which create corroborating intertextual relationships with the focal text is to support and verify the information contained within "On Kony 2012". Some do so explicitly and directly, while others require the information contained within other parts of the intertextual network to do so. The photograph of the founders of IC and *The Observer* article are much more powerful corroborating sources with the additional content of the intertextual

network behind them. The Financial Statement of IC uses the organization's own text against them to corroborate information about the misuse of donations. The BBB implies that IC may not be a good steward of the donations they receive as they are not willing to provide financial information to the organization. *Google Books*, *Voice of America*, and Child Soldiers International provide significant evidence of wrongdoing on the part of the military forces in the area, forces which IC has publicly supported. The two blog posts and the *Foreign Affairs* article further back up claims made by the focal text regarding efforts already in place against Kony, and call into question IC's own call for action. Each of the intertextual relationships created by the hyperlinks in the text strengthens the content of the focal text, and reinforce the claims that IC is a questionable organization.

Contradicting. While the rhetorical gesture of including hyperlinks to sources which corroborate the claims of a text might be expected, it would seem unusual to include hyperlinks which contradict the claims in the focal text. However, five of the links in the focal text engender contradicting intertextual relationships. Some of the texts actually corroborate the particular gap identified in the focal text by the hyperlink, but, when considered in their entirety, they actually contradict some of the major claims of "On Kony 2012". Another text's information has changed since the focal text was published and now actively contradicts the information in the focal text. The contradicting intertextual relationships have a significant impact on the intertextual information of the focal text.

Charity Navigator. At the time "On Kony 2012" was written, the same week "Kony 2012" was posted on *YouTube*, IC only had a two-star rating on *Charity Navigator*, out of four stars, for their accountability. "On Kony 2012" explains the rating as IC not allowing their financials to be audited by an independent entity. However, the *Charity Navigator*'s page on IC

shows that the organization's rating was upgraded to four stars as of June 2012. It also has the

highest rating, as of October 2013, within a category of charities doing similar work ("Invisible

Children"). None of these similar charities listed by *Charity Navigator* are the same as the

alternative charities suggested by the focal text. The information in this text directly contradicts

that of the focal text, partially because the organization was upgraded only a couple of months

after the article was written. Additionally, while the focal text claims IC would not allow their

financials to be audited, another text, *Visible Children*, says the rating is because they do not

have an external audit committee (Oysten, "We Got Trouble"). This information also, within the

intertextual network, contradicts the focal text.

 Visible Children. The second contradicting intertextual relationship demonstrated by a

text is by the *Visible Children* blog. Interestingly, the focal text directly quotes a paragraph from

the blog, and while the focal text links the blog, it does not link the actual blog post, "We Got

Trouble," which was the source of the quote. The omission of the blog post link functions as its

own gap in information, though like the photo and *The Observer* article, it does so as implied

intertextuality. The lack of a link to a specific post could prompt a reader to seek out the source

of the quoted text, as I did[14]. Twelve of the 24 links in "On Kony 2012" are either quoted

directly from that post or were also linked within that post. That would seem to indicate that "We

Got Trouble" was an initial source used by the article. The post, published on March 7, 2012, is

described by its author, Grant Oysten, as "one of the first and most widely-read essays about

Kony 2012[15], this is *the famous one* and was the first post on this blog" (emphasis in original,

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[14] This post was located through a Google search using the quoted text in the article; however, the post is also accessible by a "Best Of" link on the *Visible Children* blog main page menu (Oysten, "Best Of"), and by a note at the top of the blog, "New to the blog? Get caught up here."

[15] Quotations omitted in original.

"Best Of"). "We Got Trouble" begins by announcing that Oysten does not doubt the sincere intentions of IC. The author goes on to say that though he respects IC's intentions, he is against the Kony 2012 campaign. The blog post then focuses attention on the financial activities of the nonprofit, its low rating on *Charity Navigator*, and the militant and potentially dangerous approach to activism the organization encourages. Much of the post corroborates information in the focal text, but I chose to classify it as a contradicting text largely because of the supportive role the post takes with IC. The focal text goes out of its way to paint IC as willfully, dangerously ignorant, while this text clearly attributes the organization with good intentions. The intertextual relationship established by the link calls into question the tone and approach of the focal text.

    Reddit. The third text which creates a contradicting intertextual relationship is a discussion board post on a *Reddit* thread titled, "Kony 2012 - Help Raise Awareness and Stop Joseph Kony". The post was apparently published by someone working for IC, as indicated by their use of "we", and addresses accusations and concerns within the thread. The links to the post in "On Kony 2012" are indicated by the hyperlinked wording, "arguing" and "hasn't been since 2006". This gap in the text, and its first indicator, telegraph fairly clearly what will be encountered on the other end of the link, namely arguing. The second indicator refers to the suggestion, apparently by IC's own admission in the post, that Joseph Kony is no longer active in Uganda ("On Kony 2012"). IC's representative does state in the *Reddit* post that "The LRA left northern Uganda in 2006. The LRA is currently active in Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and South Sudan. IC's mission is to stop Joseph Kony and the LRA wherever they are and help rehabilitate LRA-affected communities" ("Kony 2012 – Help Raise Awareness"). In this case, the second gap is corroborated by the linked post, although the

response from IC responds to the criticism in such a way that implies critics are merely nitpicking and missing the larger issue. The post on *Reddit* addresses and attempts to refute many of the claims in the focal text, including the financial disbursement of donations, which directly contradicts the focal text's claims. A reader seeking the fill the gap in the hyperlinked text of "On Kony 2012" might find that the information in the linked text is sufficiently convincing. The responses on the discussion board to the post are many and repeat many of the claims in the focal text, but the official response from IC at the top of the page is the first thing the reader would see.

      Chris Blattman. The last two texts which create contradicting intertextual relationships are posts on a personal and professional blog by Chris Blattman. The first blog post, "Visible Children", was written in 2009, and references the IC campaign, mentioned by the *Wronging Rights* blog, called "abduct yourself". The *Wronging Rights* post is actually a response to Blattman's blog post. In "Visible Children", he praises IC for its efforts: "Their movie did more to bring the Lord's Resistance Army and the war in northern Uganda to US audiences, especially Congress, than any other advocacy organization on the planet. That deserves credit" (Blattman, "Visible Children"). However, he is taken aback at the name and nature of their campaign. Blattman expresses concerns about the naiveté and cavalier attitude IC expresses in its films. He argues, "There's also something inherently misleading, naive, maybe even dangerous, about [IC's] idea of rescuing children or saving of Africa" (Blattman, "Visible Children"). The last sentiment certainly corroborates the claims of the focal text, but that corroboration is largely offset by the strong complementary stance Blattman takes towards IC.

      The second linked blog post by Blattman, written in 2011, is "What You Should Be Reading if You Want to Understand the US and the Lord's Resistance Army." This post

addresses the same topic as the *Foreign Affairs* article: US troops sent to Uganda after Kony. Blattman is skeptical and suggests, "100 US advisers and an inept, unmotivated Ugandan army does not sound like a recipe for a successful attempt. So sadly I do not expect Kony on a platter any time soon" ("What You Should Be Reading"). He turns out to be right, of course, as "Kony 2012" is produced the next year. Interestingly, both of his posts have a link at the top that connects to a post written just days after "On Kony 2012" and "We Got Trouble" linked to his site, which addresses "Kony 2012" and IC. This post, titled "My Thoughts on Kony 2012 (and a Defense of Invisible Children?)," does not condemn either "Kony 2012" or IC, but it does raise concerns he has about both. Blattman admits, "My discomfort with Invisible Children, as with many advocacy organizations, has been the worry they don't take this duty [of not making things worse] seriously enough" ("My Thoughts"). By the time he wrote the post, "Kony 2012" had been out for almost a week, and Blattman credits IC with attracting so much attention to the issue ("My Thoughts"). Again, this post, while it may corroborate specific information in the focal text, has more impact in contradicting the overall claim by "On Kony 2012" that IC is a reprehensible organization.

The texts which create contradicting intertextual relationships with the focal text mostly participate in more than one intertextual relationship with "On Kony 2012". Other than the *Charity Navigator* page, all of these texts corroborate some information within the focal text. However, their primary relationship with the focal text is as a contradicting source of information. *Charity Navigator* directly and fully contradicts the information provided in the text, and the gap created by the hyperlink, although the implication is that the information was true at the time the article was published. *Reddit* contradicts the focal text largely because the hyperlink directs readers to a post by IC, which gives it a chance to defend its organization

against criticism. The *Visible Children* and Chris Blattman blog posts contradict the focal text in their assertions that IC has good, valuable intentions which have benefitted the cause for which it works. All of these texts serve to call into question the information in the focal text, as well as tone, language, and possibly the focal text author's intentions in contrast to IC. These are implicit gaps in the text, and reference implicit intertextual relationships with the text in the intertextual network.

The intertextual relationships created through the hyperlinks in the focal text provide additional information, corroborate, or contradict the information in "On Kony 2012". Some clearly fill the gaps created by the hypertextual links, while others do so less directly. All of the relationships created, however, directly impact the digital ethos of the focal text, which I will now discuss.

Step 4. Interpret the ethos of the focal text through the network's intertextual contributions

As Fleckenstein argues, digital ethos construction is a collaborative act and involves the creators of text, the texts themselves, and the reader ("Cybernetics" 328). In the heuristic I propose, the reader plays a large part in piecing together the ethos of the digital network of texts constructed by hyperlinks. The hyperlinks provide the structure for the network, as well as indicate intertextual gaps within the information contained in a text. An intertextual analysis of the hyperlinked texts shows where the connections are between information, and where contradictions or corroborations exist. After analyzing the intertextual relationships, the student steps back and looks at those relationships as a whole, and how they connect the network together. The network functions here as the intertext which informs all the texts within it, in that it is a "cross-fertilization", as Worton and Still term it, of all the texts within the network (1-2).

That cross-fertilization helps us to understand the texts and is what we use to analyze the construction of ethos within the network.

The intertextual relationships identified in Step 3—informing, corroborating, and contradicting—play a significant role in the digital ethos of the focal text. Specifically, the digital ethos of the focal text is seen at the end of this process through the lens of the established intertextual relationships of the hypertextual network of texts. As a reader, the impression of the sample focal text's digital ethos I perceive through the lens of the intertextual relationships identified during Step 3 is a positive one. This is largely because the contradicting texts help to mitigate the very problems in the focal text that they call attention to. With that mitigating influence, the informing and corroborative relationships provide a robust intertextual network.

The informing intertextual relationships allow the focal text to provide much more background information than the single post on an entertainment site might be able to provide, which results in actual and vicarious authority. They do so largely without questioning or challenging the focal text because their purpose and place in the text is merely to inform. The focal text seen through the informing intertextual relationships allows "On Kony 2012" to appear well-researched and informed on a breadth of topics related to the issue under discussion, which attributes actual authority to the text. The provided link for the "Kony 2012" video indicates that the author has seen the text under discussion, even though the actual wording of the text does not discuss any details. The *Charity Navigator* links show that the author has researched alternatives to the IC campaign. The texts which inform the focal text also attribute vicarious authority to the focal text as the provider of the hyperlinked background information. The focal text is not delivering the background information, *Wikipedia* is, but the focal text is the source of the information through the hyperlink. The informing texts also provide readers with the knowledge

and intertextual information to fill in some of the implicit gaps in the text, perhaps unintended by the focal text, such as the explanation of the photo referenced on *Wikipedia*. Ultimately, the informing intertextual relationships broaden the information available through the text and attribute information to the text, which provides both actual and vicarious credibility to the focal text.

Corroborating intertextual relationships would seem to provide the most clear-cut contribution to the focal text's digital ethos. The corroborating texts directly or indirectly back up and confirm the information within the focal text, such as confirmation of the UPDF and SPLA rapes provided by the *Voice of America*, Child Soldiers International, and the *Google Books* texts. Each of these sources shores up the authority of the focal text by confirming the claims it makes. The corroborating intertextual relationship created with IC's financial statement is doubly powerful because the linked text, produced by the organization under attack in the focal text, is used to help discredit them. Doing so provides more authority to the focal text, which has researched the documentation directly from the source, IC. Some of the texts also expand or elaborate on the claims made in the focal text, such as *Foreign Affairs*, which provides even more evidence against the necessity of IC's campaign and therefore reinforces the focal text's claim. In many cases, a broader and deeper understanding of the focal text's points was achieved by the other corroborating texts. The background of the photo of IC's founders was given considerable context by the information referenced in the *Wikipedia* article on IC, and corroborated by the *Wronging Rights* blog. With the additional intertextual corroborating relationships now attached to the photo, the information related to the photo in the focal text becomes broader and more reliable through its intertextual connections. The range of corroborating texts also contributes to the ethos of the focal text. An international magazine, the

BBB, IC's own financial statement, an international newspaper, published books, a UN agency, an international broadcaster funded by the U.S. government, and blogs all provide support and corroboration for the focal text, and might appeal to vastly different audiences. The breadth of sources alone might be impressive, but each reader is also likely to find a source that meets their impression of a credible source, which potentially lends that credibility to the focal text. The focal text again receives vicarious authority through these sources by demonstrating the relevance of each of their arguments in supporting the focal text's claims. The corroborating intertextual relationships shore up the focal text's credibility by supporting the text's claims, and enhance it by elaborating on those claims.

While the corroborating intertextual relationships might seem like the most obvious positive contribution to the focal text's ethos, as a reader, I was more affected by the contradicting intertextual relationships. The focal text as seen through this lens might suffer some in credibility, and initially this focal text does. The *Charity Navigator* page on IC certainly makes it seem like the focal text jumped the gun in their condemnation of the charity, though at the time "On Kony 2012" was published, it was accurate information. The *Reddit* discussion board allows IC to respond to the criticisms leveled at it, and so gains credibility from their measured response, even though some of their comments in the post are used against them. The Chris Blattman and *Visible Children* blogs paint IC much more favorably than "On Kony 2012" does, which calls into question the tone, language, and bias of the focal text. Any of these would seem to damage the credibility of the focal text, but I found that through the intertextual lens, these issues were mitigated by the intertextual network of texts. The balanced approaches of the other texts alleviated the concerns I had about the focal text's bias, and as a part of the intertextual network, the focal text benefitted from my impression of the more balanced texts.

The inclusion of the *Reddit* link, while probably intended to attack IC, allowed me as a reader to hear their side of the conversation, which mitigated my concerns about IC being left out of the focal text except for the video link. The fact that the *Charity Navigator* link no longer delivered on the intended punch to IC was alleviated by the fact that other texts had also linked the site, with the same intention, so the focal text was not the only one jumping the gun. The contradicting intertextual relationships, while suggesting that the information and approach of the focal text might be suspect, also managed to alleviate those concerns by providing other perspectives and alternative information.

"On Kony 2012" includes an unusual amount of links for a single text. This text contains more hyperlinks than most of the other articles linked in this particular hypertextual network, though all of them include at least one link. The network I have outlined could extend out beyond the texts I have discussed, but it would quickly become unmanageable. I expected in applying this heuristic that each intertextual relationship would accomplish what its category suggested: inform, corroborate, and contradict. In the case of the informing and corroborating relationships, this was mostly true. Each of those categories of texts shored up the credibility of the focal text by either providing additional information or confirming and elaborating on information already in the focal text. The contradicting intertextual relationships, however, were a surprise. Not only did these relationships provide the biggest support for positive digital ethos, but they were also the intertextual relationships that best illustrated the impact of hypertextual, digital ethos. It is clear from the heuristic results that intertextual relationships among texts in digital environments can and do have a significant impact on digital ethos.

Opportunities for Adaptation of Heuristic

The heuristic as I employed it involved many texts and would have taken FYC students quite a while to complete. That may seem a daunting task to instructors interested in incorporating it into a course. On the other hand, it is also possible the heuristic does not cover important functions that other instructors might wish to cover in a class. The heuristic I have presented has specific steps, but it is also a flexible model for digital ethos evaluation. The heuristic could be expanded to function as a unit involving multiple writing and analysis assignments—weekly blogs, image maps, papers, final projects—and could also be simplified as an exercise for a single class period. Additional expanding elements could also be added, for example asking students to record hyperlink access order and path. It is possible that changing the order in which texts are accessed could change the final evaluation of network digital ethos. Doing so would also highlight the nonsequential nature of hypertextuality and intertextuality. Students could also be asked to evaluate the ethos of the focal text and re-evaluate that ethos throughout the heuristic process. Doing so would allow students to explore traditional elements contributing to ethos and compare the focal text's ethos to the digital ethos of the network. Other elements of rhetoric, such as logos and pathos, could also be explored throughout the heuristic process. Ways to simplify the exercise could involve reducing the amount of links explored or choosing a focal text with only a few links. The heuristic is flexible enough to allow varying applications in different classroom contexts. Ultimately, the heuristic allows students to visualize and understand the ways in which hypertextually linked texts interact in an intertextual conversation, and that the conversation contributes significantly to the digital ethos constructed among them.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

My intention in this thesis has been to show that viewing a digital text through the lens of the intertextual, hypertextual network in which it resides on the World Wide Web can reveal a much more complex conception of digital ethos. I argue specifically for a heuristic for teaching digital ethos that emphasizes both the hypertextual characteristics of the digital environment and the intertextual relationships which are created by hypertextual links. In highlighting these elements, the intertextual conversation in which the digital text participates becomes clearer. The intertextual relationships with other texts in the conversation then reflect back upon the credibility of the individual digital text.

As Fleckenstein has argued, no rhetorical element composes itself autonomously, but rather through the flow of information ("Cybernetics" 328). Digital ethos is a rhetorical appeal concerned primarily with the credibility of communication practices occurring in context, in this case a context constructed through digital information technology. As such, digital ethos is heavily impacted by the technological structure of hypertext in web-based environments. Information which impacts ethos flows through the hypertextual links between texts, which can themselves be accessed in non-sequential and variable orders. The hyperlinks represent an absence of specific information within a text, which is filled by the content of the network of texts, the intertext, in which any digital text participates. The intertextual relationships which are created by hyperlinks and fill the gaps in textual information also contribute significantly to the ways ethos is constructed in digital texts. These relationships, informed by the intertext of the network's cultural knowledge, create a lens through which the ethos in a digital text can be evaluated. I argue that teaching digital ethos outside the context of its intertextual, hypertextual

network shows a reliance on traditional methods of teaching ethos that no longer fully represent texts students might encounter in digital environments.

There are four important implications of my argument to rhetoric and composition pedagogy. First, the conception of digital ethos in this thesis has applicability in terms of Stuart Selber's understanding of rhetorical literacies. Selber proposes a system of three literacies to address the overall concept of digital literacy, which continues to be a pressing concern of the rhetoric and composition discipline (New London Group, 1996; Selfe, 1999; Selber, 2004; Yancy, 2004; Leu et al., 2004; Lankshear and Knobel, 2007; Clark, 2010). The first two literacies Selber identifies are functional literacy, which addresses the complexities of the computer as a tool (35), and critical literacy, which asks students to question the political, economic, and social contexts of computer technology (81). His third component of digital literacy, rhetorical literacy, places an emphasis on practice, and students become producers of texts while integrating functional and critical literacies (Selber 145). Selber stresses that these literacies must work together and that none take priority over any of the others (24). The heuristic proposed in this thesis asks students to employ some elements of both functional and critical literacies in their exploration of the hypertextual, intertextual environment. In relation to functional literacies, students must navigate the hypertextual environment by utilizing browser software. Students must also understand and apply the function of hypertext to the heuristic. For critical literacies, students are asked to think about the ways information is connected and referenced in digital environments, and the impact those connections can have on the discussion of an issue and the ethos of a text or network of texts. Classroom discussions could expand on this literacy skill by asking students to interrogate the power structures behind the networks they analyze. Additionally, the hypertextual map and the analysis students produce as a result of the

heuristic ask them to begin implementing rhetorical literacy strategies by considering the ways they can create and contribute digital texts. Selber argues that without these multiliteracies, students "will find it difficult to participate fully and meaningfully in technological activities" (24), and the proposed heuristic allows one opportunity for those literacies to develop.

The second implication of this thesis also speaks to the production of digital texts by students in composition classrooms. In order to produce an effective and measured digital text, students will need to learn which hypertextual, intertextual, and rhetorical elements help to construct texts, particularly texts with positive digital ethos, in digital environments. Exploring the characteristics of hypertextuality and the intertextual relationships created by hyperlinks provides a better understanding of digital networks in which students' digital texts will participate. Through the heuristic, students will be encouraged to consider the implications of how linked texts impact others intertextually within the hypertextual network when producing and publishing texts in web-based environments. With the understanding of these elements, students can then make conscious choices about employing hypertextuality, intertextuality, and those elements working together in the context of digital environments to produce effective rhetorical texts. DigitRhet.org suggests that digital rhetorical pedagogy should emphasize the importance not only of analysis, but also of practice. Rather than continue to reinforce the role of students as consumers of digital texts, we should give them the opportunities to become producers as well (DigitRhet.org 253). The heuristic I propose provides some opportunities for digital text production, with the potential to develop others.

The third implication of my argument to rhetoric and composition pedagogy is the rhetorical significance of intertextual, hypertextual networks. I have chosen to emphasize these elements of digital environments in order to illustrate the impact on digital ethos construction;

however, digital ethos is not the only aspect of rhetorical analysis that these elements might impact. It is possible that intertextual connections established through hypertextual links could also have a significant impact on the development of pathos and logos throughout a network of digital texts. The persuasive impact of the emotional and logical appeals distributed throughout the intertext and how they reflect back upon the appeals made in individual digital texts is worth exploring. Production of digital texts which considers the impact of intertextual, hypertextual relationships might also significantly impact the rhetorical canons. Consideration of the network of texts could affect students' strategies of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery of persuasive digital texts. How texts are conceived, created, and executed to take into account the hypertextual and intertextual characteristics of web-based environments has the potential to change significantly the way these concepts are discussed in composition classrooms.

The fourth implication of this thesis is that it highlights the importance of emphasizing new strategies of analyzing rhetorical elements in the digital environment, particularly in light of how difficult it is to avoid traditional evaluations of ethos. In employing the heuristic I propose, I found it difficult to not focus on traditional ethos evaluation methods such as authorship credentials, breadth and integrity of references, and the formality of language used in the text. That indicates to me how entrenched these concepts are as comprehensive and demonstrable elements of ethos analysis. It is more comfortable to continue to focus on these elements because they are much more tangible and identifiable than trying to make sense of vast, complex networks of texts. However, in endeavoring not to comment on traditional elements, I was able to illustrate other valuable methods for exploring credibility in online texts. It is my hope that this thesis can contribute to the ongoing discussion in the rhetoric and composition discipline in

regard to adapting rhetorical strategies to new digital technologies (Warnick, "Rhetorical Criticism" 2001; Hocks, 2003; Warnick, "Looking" 2005; Fife, 2010).

Michael Joyce has argued, "This is the trouble with hypertext, at any level: it is messy; it lets you see ghosts; it is always haunted by the possibility of other voices, other topographies, others' governance" (179). If this is true of the digital environment, if it is haunted by a multiplicity of voices in diverse spaces, we must not ask students to pretend that there is only one voice speaking, in isolation. Rather, let us illustrate the intertextual conversation that is confusing, chaotic, and connected, and in which students may participate. It is not unlike Burke's "Unending Conversation" metaphor, in which students might enter the digital environment and see an ongoing conversation, extending far beyond what is visible and knowable. They might look around and discover that no one has or can trace the entire path for them, so they explore what they can, make connections and gain understanding, and then contribute their own text to the ongoing, endless, digital conversation.

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