Blogging a Scholarly Identity

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About

Given that I'm using a blog to write about blogs as sites for scholarly identity development, it's hard to say if this web text is considered a blog or a journal article. I hesitate to position this web text in either category because I see blogs and journal articles as valuable sites for knowledge-making even though tenure and promotion committees may think otherwise. How we choose to represent our work as knowledge-makers is challenging--especially when we have to advocate for our work as bloggers. From the perspective of blogger Steven D. Krause (2007), there is distinction between "scholarship," which counts toward tenure at various institutions, and "Scholarship" (i.e. knowledge that contributes to the field broadly). Krause (2007) then suggests that blogs cannot count as "scholarship," but they can be used to produce "Scholarship" which often leads to "scholarship." While I agree that a blogger's ideas can help to create "scholarship" in the form of a journal article or a book (see Krause's BAWS project), I would prefer to view blogs on a continuum between "scholarship" and "Scholarship" rather than in one of two categories. Positioning blogs on a continuum represents a stronger connection between how knowledge-making is valued as "scholarship" and "Scholarship". It also provides opportunities for blogs to move along that continuum as they evolve in response to the evolution of bloggers' scholarly identities. That said, this web text would probably exist closer to the "scholarship"/article end of the continuum due to being published in *Computers and Composition Online*. Though its multilinear design and organization via categories and dates pull it closer toward the "Scholarship"/blog end, it does not represent a continuous sense of evolution after its publication date.

Reading This Web Text

Due to its multilinear qualities, this web text can be read in a number of ways. For those who choose to read with a wandering eye, feel free to start anywhere you please. For those who need to gather their bearings before reading, I've included a brief summary of the main sections.

Each post is linked to one of four categories. Within each category, the posts are arranged in reverse chronological order. The most recent post of each category serves as an introduction to the issues that are discussed in each category.

- In Sharing Our Identity Development, I explain why we need spaces to regularly reflect on how our scholarly identities develop over time across various experiences.
- In Using Multiple Blog Genres, I show how blogs function differently for academic bloggers when they are used in graduate courses, as catalogs, and as

networks. Ideally, incorporating a variety of uses further contributes to the development of those bloggers' scholarly identities.

- In Why We Need the Personal, I show the benefits and challenges of incorporating the personal throughout an academic blog. It is through these benefits and challenges that academic bloggers can have an opportunity to mend their fragmented identities.
- In Graduate Education and Computers and Writing, I explain how the issues I've raised in the other three categories have implications for graduate education, the academic blogger, and the computers and writing community broadly.

How I Came to This Project

Two years ago, in a graduate seminar about the history of rhetoric, I wrote a seminar paper in support of the scholarly nature of weblogs. To bridge my interests in weblogs and the subject matter of the course, I applied historical interpretations of the term kairos to an analysis of three scholarly weblogs. Then, I challenged the static nature of knowledge-making in print scholarship by suggesting we value blogs as knowledge-making places where moments of kairos can occur (i.e. writing at an opportune time and in an opportune space). While valuable to my development as a researcher at that time, I was unaware of the limitations I was placing on my understanding of weblogs in the computers and writing community by trying to validate them in comparison to print scholarship. The more I read about weblogs and how scholars in the field construct their identities, the more I wondered if we needed to reconsider the value weblogs in the computers and writing community. Could they reveal the nature of our developing scholarly identities in ways that represent us as more than academics writing and researching away in solitude in the dusty corners of university libraries?

Sharing Our Scholary Identity Development with Others (An Introduction)

In the computers and writing community, scholars can face a number of challenges when they advocate for the value of their work in response to the demands of other members in the C&W community, to members within their institutions, and to the larger discipline. For example, Rebecca Rickly (2002) explains challenges such as the tendency to become the "technology specialist" or to refrain from participating in discussions outside of the C&W community that exist at our individual institutions. In response to these challenges, Rickly (2002) advises graduate students and faculty to reflect on their work and how it's represented by asking "what does it mean to become a contributing member to the computers and writing community *and* a valued member of a department, institution, and discipline?" Rickly's (2002) question prompts us to be more aware of the development of our scholarly identities, but is this type of self-reflection only useful for us as individuals? By sharing our understanding of our scholarly identities with the rest of the C&W community and the larger discipline, we can communicate the broader scope of our identity development beyond the work that is valued by our local institutions.

To show our scholarly identities beyond what we list on our vitas and what we assemble for tenure and promotion review, we need the means to demonstrate our identity development across time and space. For example, my experiences as a teacher and a researcher have influenced the development of my scholarly identity, but they only represent the development of my identity at two distinct times and places. How might I, and other members in the field, learn more about the construction of scholarly identities across time and space? One place to start, perhaps, would be the computers and writing blogging community. Given the kairotic nature of weblogs as they serve as regularly updated spaces for bloggers to sustain and/or modify their identities, weblogs can reveal much about bloggers' identity development. From the perspective of blogger Derek Mueller (2007b), blogs can be read as “weird blend[s] of live performance and freezed motion” where he believes that “you can get a sense of me from my last entry that you wouldn’t get from reading the last 400 entries, but tomorrow I might write something else that might make you think of that entry and forget about the one you just read.” Mueller's (2007b) comments about blogging show the complicated nature of identity development and how blogs can reveal the evolution of a scholar's identity. Representing this evolution in weblogs is not only important for bloggers representing themselves to the C&W community, their institutions, and the larger discipline, but also important as a tool for reflection that allows bloggers to revisit the ways in which their identities have shifted over time and across space. Creating a public space for reflection to occur can make scholarly identity development more visible to those interested in studying it as a site of inquiry. It also makes it more visible to newer members of the field, such as graduate students and non-tenured faculty, who can benefit from seeing how their colleagues are furthering the development of their identities. Finally, it influences how the C&W community and the larger discipline represents itself as a humanistic field.

Scholarly Identity

In general, a scholarly identity reflects and projects how specific theory and practice distinguish/align one’s actions as a teacher and researcher from/with others in the field. Throughout our professional careers, our scholarly identities fluctuate based on a variety of experiences. For example, what we teach and how we teach influence and project our scholarly identities. As teaching experiences influence our scholarly identities, so do our actions as researchers. The topics we choose for inquiry, our methods for gathering research, the colleagues we choose to work with and publish with, and the journals we choose to publish in are all factors that contribute to the fluctuation of our scholarly identities throughout our careers. However, our scholarly identities would not be complete without attention to our personal lives and the experiences that exist within them. The personal and the professional components of our scholarly identities blend together to show our students and our colleagues that we are more than just stoic figures behind desks with long lists of publications.

My Experiences as a Researcher

For example, my scholarly identity as a researcher invested in computers and writing, feminist, and program assessment issues has been shaped by my experiences with the faculty I’ve worked with at Bowling Green State University. In a recently published article in *Computers and Composition*, Lee Nickoson-Massey, Kristine Blair, and I write about our experiences with integrating technology throughout graduate education from our various positions within the Rhetoric and Writing Doctoral Program. The act of writing and publishing collaboratively, while privileging our varying experiences, demonstrates to others in the field that I value collaborative research, which is an inherently feminist approach to scholarship. Further, publishing the article in *Computers and Composition* reflects my identity as an invested researcher the computers and writing community. Finally, the topic choice to examine graduate programs shows an aspect of my scholarly identity that is interested in program assessment.

My Experiences as a Teacher

From my experience, teaching an intermediate writing course that asks students to create an online portfolio for future employers projects my identity as a scholar invested in digital media and professional development for students. Asking students to play a role the assessment of their work and the work of their classmates also projects my identity as a scholar invested in writing assessment and feminist pedagogy. In addition to projecting my scholarly identity, teaching influences my scholarly identity by changing my understanding of its development. After realizing that my students had difficulty seeing digital composing as writing, I learned that I was not projecting my identity as a scholar seeking balance between the use of print and digital texts. In this case, I was unintentionally valuing digital over print texts. Such experiences are valuable to my professional development, but remain hidden from the larger institutional and computers and writing community unless I publish them in a widely read public forum. By keeping reflective anecdotes about professional development hidden, scholars cannot benefit from the experiences others as they reflect on their own sense of identity.

Using Multiple Blog Genres to Develop a Scholarly Identity

As I explain in Sharing our Identity Development, blogs can serve as places where various professional and personal experiences converge to represent the rich complexity associated with the development of our scholarly identities. However, not all blogs are used the same way and at the same time by scholars, which makes them unique sites for identity development. In this section, I've chosen to describe how the following three uses (course blogs, blogs as catalogs, and blogs as networks) reflect the development of scholarly identities over time and space. While these uses are not inclusive—scholars such as Barclay Barrios (2003) have explained additional perspectives on blog use—they do show how blogs can serve multiple purposes at multiple points in our identity development.

Course Blogs

For emerging scholars who are still experimenting with ways to develop their scholarly identities, blogging in graduate courses can be especially helpful. In contrast to face-to-face discussions that occur in the classroom or online discussions that occur within a course management site, course blogs can create more malleable spaces for graduate students to experiment with new ideas that can be revisited and modified over time. This can range from reviewing the changes in one's views over a single semester to reviewing the changes in one's views throughout an entire graduate program. Students who maintain their course blogs throughout their programs and into their roles as faculty, can then see the evolution of their identities due to the reverse chronological order of posts and the tagging/categorizing abilities of blogs. For example, Robin Murphy's "pre-tenure tracked-ness" blog shows how her identity evolved from being a graduate student keeping a blog for a course, to an ABD writing her dissertation five states away from her graduate program, to her current role as an assistant professor. While course blogs create opportunities for increasing the visibility of identity evolution, as it did in Murphy's case, they can also serve as spaces for graduate students to develop a sense of collegiality to further contribute to their scholarly identity development.

Learning how to distinguish one's opinions from others with the spirit of collegiality is essential to developing a sense of autonomy as part of one's scholarly identity. Creating opportunities for collegiality to flourish in course weblogs allows students to explore how their ideas are influenced by class discussions, readings, and material from other courses. For example, in "A Role for Blogs in Graduate Education: Remediating the Rhetorical Tradition?," a number of graduate students and their instructor reflect on how blogging activities facilitated discussion in the classroom and extended discussion beyond the classroom, which often led to exchanging ideas about potential conference presentations, publications, and dissertation topics (Colby et al., 2005). Though the authors described differing perspectives on the blogging activities, they all agreed that the activities led to a collegial community among students in the course. In this example, the relationship between the ideas that originated on the course blogs and the ideas that were applied to activities beyond the classroom shows a graduate student's investment in developing an identity beyond the classroom.

My Experiences with Course Blogs

As a master's student and as a doctoral student, I've felt the same sense of collegiality during coursework as it's facilitated through the use of an individual blog, but also have found it difficult to sustain that sense of community online once the course concluded. Blogging communities that are created for the primary use of extending or preparing for classroom discussion can easily lose their collegial feel when the course concludes. This challenge arises when bloggers are no longer connected by the shared interests and topics discussed in a particular course. Also, for students like me—my blogging experiences were primarily course-driven until about a year ago—it is easy to see a blog as a class assignment that is isolated from assignments in other courses. During most of my coursework, it was this mentality that prompted me to create four different blogs, one for each class that required one, and a very fragmented sense of how each course contributed to my understanding of the rhetoric and composition field. However, once I merged these blogs into a single blog for course assignments, research, candidacy exam preparation, and dissertation work, I started to think about it more as a reflection and an extension of my emerging scholarly identity. My decision to merge these blogs was most likely in response to finding my dissertation topic. Once I decided to focus on the role of technology use in graduate education for my dissertation, I felt the need to find a way to keep the inquiry process fresh in my mind because I was still in the midst of coursework and preparing for my candidacy exams. Creating a single space, one blog, for me to find intersections among multiple projects through the use of categories and helped me to stay centered as my identity continued to evolve while negotiating my dual role as a student and an emerging scholar.

Blogs as Catalogs

In the academic blogging community, scholars will often use their blogs as catalogs for their source material as they conduct their research. Catagorizing and tagging posts makes blogs useful as "storehouses" (Almjeld, 2006) for scholars who need to devote time to multiple research projects and professional interests simultaneously. Using a single blog for multiple projects can also help a scholar better see connections between each project, which in turn can complicate and enrich the knowledge-making process. While making these connections through the use of categories and tags is beneficial for the blogger, it is the process of reflecting on those connections and how they represent one's scholarly identity that is especially useful for bloggers and readers in academic blogging.

For bloggers, making these connections is important in that they help scholars attend to a fragmented sense of identity that can come from holding multiple research interests, multiple roles as teachers, researchers, and administrators, and multiple interests in our personal lives. This is not only useful for experienced scholars but also for graduate students who can benefit from seeing more clearly the connections among their coursework, candidacy exam preparation, dissertation research, and other professional development activities as their sense of identity shifts. For readers, reading blogs where there are already several posts tagged due to a shared research interest will give more information about the blogger and the topic than what they would find from the works cited page of a published article or book. What a scholar is reading, commenting on, and linking to will reflect that scholar's identity. Also, the connections among posts and the trajectory of the blogger's reflections on the source material reflects the identity of the blogger, which can assist readers as they reconsider their own understanding of the shared research interest, the source itself, and their identity development. Exposing developing thoughts about source material catalogs the amount of time and effort it takes to perform well as a scholar in a variety of spaces. Efforts usually remain invisible to readers of traditionally published texts, which is why we should find ways to accommodate for understanding scholarly identity development in multiple sites.

Blogs as Networks

While already used to communicate with others beyond attending conferences a few times a year, networking blogs in the computers and writing community can also reflect much about the development of scholars' identities. Enthusiasts, such as Henry Farrell (2005), have explained how blogs have to ability to serve as dynamic spaces in which timely dialogs can take place, therefore emphasizing the collaborative nature of scholarly discourse and research. Such dialogs are similar to the type of peer review we receive on publications in progress, though blogging tends to lend itself to a more frequently updated type of peer review that is useful when we're our ideas are still developing. This is due to the ability to read relatively short posts and the ability to post brief commentary in response to those posts. While this is an ideal use of blogs in the field, it is not always practical for newer members of the field to gain attention through their blogs and to participate in dialogs with prominent members who tend to receive a considerable amount of traffic on their blogs and are considered to be what Andrew O Baoill (2004) describes as “A-list bloggers.” From a scholarly identity perspective, however, "A-list bloggers" are not necessarily bloggers who have more developed scholarly identities. Instead, the difference between newer bloggers and "A-list bloggers" is that "A-list bloggers" have made the evolution of their identities more visible.

Here lies the challenge in looking at blogs as networks that influence the development of one’s scholarly identity. How do bloggers develop a network that will provide the sense of community they need to foster meaningful scholarly identity development? How will they find a means to represent their scholarly identities as unique from bloggers in their network while also in relationship to bloggers in their network? For bloggers who use these spaces to develop and maintain their scholarly identities, who you link to and who links to you reflects your scholarly identity. Though not impossible, O Baoill (2004) writes that “[t]o break into the consciousness of the blogosphere one needs to already have a reputation off-line or get significant numbers of links from already prominent bloggers, preferably over a short amount of time.” A blogroll, while in part reflective of a blogger’s identity, does not alone reveal the details of how that identity has developed within that network. Instead, it is the commentary in response to the posts on other blogs as well as the responses to commentary posted on one’s own blog that demonstrates the scholarly identity development over time and space. These networks among experienced and emerging scholars are mutually beneficial for all bloggers as part of the knowledge-making and professional development process. Unlike similar opportunities for developing these connections at conferences, blogging among experienced and emerging scholars can collaboratively discuss developing ideas at length beyond the time constraints they would experience at a conference. Much like other professional development activities, blogging to network requires regular reflection for it to work as a meaningful component of one's scholarly identity development.

Why We Need the Personal in Academic Weblogs

In discussions about academic blogging, there are plenty of cautionary tales about scholars including too much personal information. As a solution to these tales, some academic bloggers choose to blog under a pseudonym, others keep their ideas on separate professional and personal blogs, some avoid the personal altogether or wait until they have tenure to incorporate the personal sides of their identities. These choices, while sometimes necessary to stay employed, can contribute to the already fragmented sense of one’s scholarly identity. These choices also demonstrate how difficult it is to incorporate the personal in a weblog in tactful ways that can assist with furthering the development of one’s scholarly identity. Perhaps what makes it difficult is that we sometimes assume that everything personal is off limits in an academic blog. I agree that there are aspects of the personal (e.g. ranting about one's inner-most feelings about work and life) that should remain private, but there are also aspects that should remain public in academic blogs. In contrast to an elimination approach to the use of the personal in an academic weblog, I suggest that finding ways to make distinctions between the public personal and the private personal can be a means for reconciling a fragmented sense of identity in academic blogs.

Cautionary Tales

Using academic blogs as journals to aid in the process of reflecting on one's ideas about teaching and research is useful for scholarly identity development because the ease of which a scholar can post and then revisit those ideas over time. Though not in reference to blogging, the benefits of reflection have already been connected to our identities as teachers as described by scholars Wendy Bishop, Peter Elbow, and Donald Murray, and to our identities as researchers as described by feminist scholars such as Gesa Kirsch and Joy Ritchie. Unfortunately, as these scholars explain, reflection is not always valued by others in the academy because it's perceived as something that inhibits scholars from upholding objective stances as academics. In contrast to the type of reflective writing that is peer-reviewed in academic journal articles and books, one's personal or professional reflections on a blog are more easily viewed as problematic and/or nonacademic in the absence of peer reviewers. Faculty are often cautioned against reflecting on one's ideas and experiences when those reflections are emotionally heated or represent what those in authoritative positions frown upon. This presents a challenge for scholars who can benefit from incorporating the personal in their blogs as they develop their scholarly identities.

Using a blog to communicate one's personal identity can be difficult for members of the academy regardless of professional status if not approached with a certain level of discretion. For example, in 2005 a Southern Methodist University adjunct professor named Elaine Liner was no longer offered courses after her blog, "The Phantom Professor" received considerable attention from students, faculty, and administrators at her institution (Jaschik, 2005). Though Liner kept names and specific confidential, her choice to publish stories about student life and her experiences teaching at SMU was seen as using her blog in bad taste. From the perspective of students, teachers, parents, and administrators, this "bad taste" is mainly due to her frequent use of sarcasm when exposing controversial campus issues. Though SMU gave other reasons for asking her to leave, such as filling more adjunct positions with full time professors, they also explained that they were concerned about the Phantom Professor blog (at the time Liner's identity was not directly attached to the blog) (Jaschik, 2005).

Troubling as it is to read examples of faculty losing their jobs due to blogging, it's also troubling to read about devaluing the role the personal plays in scholarly identity development. For Liner, providing commentary on the stories students shared with her about campus life and commentary on her personal experiences gave her an opportunity to further develop her identity as a scholar. As a scholar, Liner's blog shows that for her it was not enough to focus primarily on her identity as a teacher in the classroom. She also needed to include her personal views on the community as a means to raise issues as journalist. In response to the university's decision asking her to leave, Liner's final comments on her post "With apologies to John Steinbeck: The Gapes of Wrath" characterize her identity within and beyond the classroom. Her blog, therefore, created a space for her identity to be visible when she would otherwise feel invisible or limited to her identity as an adjunct.

While the cautionary tale of Liner's blog demonstrates the challenges associated with keeping one's job while incorporating the personal, other cautionary tales demonstrate the challenges of incorporating the personal while on the job market. In The Chronicle of Higher Education, Ivan Tribble (2005) cautions all job seekers against keeping blogs that reveal information that's contradictory to how they've represented themselves to search committees. Tribble (2005) mentions that blogs can be a blessing for search committees, who do not always have easy access to applicants' print publications, but "in some cases, [found them] to be the dank, dark depths of the blogger's tormented soul; in other cases, the far limits of techno-geekdom; and in one case, a cat better off left in the bag." After receiving a number of outraged responses from the academic blogging community, Tribble (2005b) wrote a response to clarify his original perspectives on blogging and the hiring process. I understand Tribble's (2005b) final words about not "getting it" when it comes to blogging and his reference to those on hiring committees not getting it as well. So, how does an academic blogger show a search committee that the personal is an influential part of a scholarly identity and not a liability?

Here is where it seems that a balance between the personal thoughts and academic thoughts can reveal the sense of balance the job applicant values in his or her life. Posts that reflect on a blogger's personal investment within the local community, beyond the academy, can demonstrate to hiring committees that the job applicant is going to be more likely to relate to students and other faculty living in the area. Posts that reveal a blogger's personal hobbies can also demonstrate an applicant's ability to relate to other members within a department beyond sharing research and teaching interests. Ideally, blogs that demonstrate a balance between the rigor of academic inquiry and the value of personal experiences are blogs that reflect individuals who are less likely to be isolated members of the academic community. Hiring committees can consider hiring these types of job applicants as a means to show the public their investment in employing faculty who are willing to work beyond the ivory tower.

Public Personal and Private Personal

As I mention in my introduction, making distinctions between the public personal and the private personal can help us incorporate the personal in scholarly identity development. However, reflecting on one's thoughts about personal or professional experiences should be approached tactfully. While it may be acceptable to post your thoughts about a particular hobby (public personal), it's not considered tactful to post thoughts that you would only share with a close friend or a therapist (private personal). Further, choices for incorporating the public personal throughout one's blog should be driven by how a blogger wants to be perceived by her readers. Making these distinctions between the public personal and the private personal encourages reflective habits as well as provides a means to respond to some of the cautionary tales we see in academic blogging. For example, bloggers Derek Mueller and Clancy Ratliff incorporate the personal and the professional while making reflective decisions about the public personal and the private personal.

At first glance, it is clear that Mueller's blog incorporates the personal as well as the professional as part of his scholarly identity. For example, some of his tags include: Composition, Lost, Disciplinarity, Food, Basketball, Research, New Media, etc. In an interview with Derek Mueller (2007), I asked how he negotiates the personal and the professional in his weblog as it relates to his scholarly identity. With regards to how his identity is constructed and reflected in his blog, he says:

I don't have a strictly academic blog and I give myself permission to be real. It's not so much about worrying if potential employer X over here is going to be critical of my blog and thinking I'm only as good as my last entry. I mean if your last entry is a rant or is something because you've had a bad day, there's really that fine line between what's appropriate and what's not… In some ways I think it's good practice to self-censor in part because it's about figuring out how I want to represent myself. (Mueller, 2007)

Beyond blurring the line between the personal and professional aspects of his scholarly identity, Mueller's comments about the need to be "real" imply that having a blog that only represents one's identity in the academy is an unrealistic representation of that blogger. Yes, many times academic writing appears artificial—even this text can be perceived as an artificial blog as I explain in the About section—but it does not necessarily mean that it's not as meaningful as what we'd deem as real. Rather than view academic writing and/or academic blogging as unrealistic, I would venture to say it's incomplete without a responsible use of the real, the personal.

Similar to Mueller, Clancy Ratliff's tags demonstrate the relationship she sees between the personal and the professional aspects of her scholarly identity. Her tags include: Food and Cooking, Intellectual Property, Feminism, Personal, Rhetoric, Miscellany, Composition Pedagogy, etc. Like feminist approaches to inquiry that recognize and incorporate the personal biases of the researcher (see Kirsch & Sullivan, 1992), blogging the personal and the professional gives Ratliff an opportunity to challenge the dominant, masculine view of what it means to be an objective scholar. In an interview, Ratliff explains that her online identity is a mix of the personal and the professional. Ratliff says that "I try to add something to the conversation, and I'm not candid about what I think about everything, because there are a lot of definite assumptions in the field of rhetoric and composition about teaching and about student writing—about all kinds of things that are not really challenged" (Graupner & Denecker, 2008). Her personal components tend to be reflected in her posts about various "quirks," yet she acknowledges how she self-censors by saying "there are definitely topics that are off limits to me. Writing things about specific students and colleagues [for example]." Such attempts at self-censorship on one's blog, however, should not be interpreted as acts that devalue the personal components of our identities, rather as attempts to make a distinction between the public personal and the private personal.

In response to the cautionary tales of academic blogging, we should look for ways in which blogs represent the reciprocal relationship between the public personal and the professional. One example of this reciprocal relationship is represented in one of Ratliff's with the tags Miscellany, Personal, Politics, and Rhetoric. In this post, Ratliff includes pictures of her grandfather's primer to show connections to her personal life and then describes how the text in the primer could be connected to research in the history of rhetoric. In this case, and in similar cases on Ratliff's blog, it is clear that her scholarly identity reflects the valuable nature of how personal and professional experiences influence each other.

Reconciling a Fragmented Identity

Making space for one's personal life and one's professional life in the blogosphere challenges how scholars represent their identities. Some bloggers in the field keep a single blog for professional and personal purposes and others keep two separate blogs. For those who keep a single blog, it may seem somewhat challenging since it requires a certain amount of discretion in terms of how one represents one's work in comparison to one's life. At the same time, keeping two blogs is not necessarily a quick fix for tactfully representing the personal and the professional aspects of our identities. Keeping two blogs, one professional and one personal, can contribute to a sense of identity fragmentation for bloggers as well as an increase in workload. For bloggers, representing differing subjects, language use, and perspectives on two separate blogs can keep them from seeing how their personal and professional experiences influence each other.

For Steven Krause, keeping two blogs (one "official" and one "unofficial") gave him a chance to "keep things in perspective." In the "About" section of his current blog, a merged version of his two earlier blogs, Krause (2008) reflects on initial approach to blogging. He writes, "sometimes, it was (and still is) useful for me to remember that work and life are not the same thing." For scholars, learning to create divisions between work and life can be a difficult skill to master, so maintaining that division in the blogosphere can be an effective way to keep things in perspective. However, time spent trying to create a divide between the personal and the professional produces a division that is artificial. An example of this divide is provided in Krause's (2008) explanation about how people from his personal and professional lives started to cross the divisions he had created. Krause (2008) comments on readers crossing these divisions by referring to a colleague from the political science department at EMU and a student in one of his wife's courses (she is also a faculty member at EMU) who both read his "unofficial" blog. Krause (2008) also describes how someone he's known for over twenty years has expressed an interest in his book project, which was posted on his "official" blog. The choice to merge his blogs and mend this "fictional" split, as Krause (2008) refers to it, reconciles the representation of a fragmented identity to the blogger and his readers. Online, these types of divides or the absence of the personal entirely make it more difficult to see the full extent of how academic bloggers are developing and representing their scholarly identities as a result of their personal and professional experiences.

In the case of emerging scholars, like graduate students, maintaining a distant division between the personal and the professional creates additional challenges since they already experience that fragmentation as they move from having a student identity to having a scholarly identity. In the academic blogosphere, emerging scholars face the challenge of creating a space to stand among more experienced scholars who have had time to develop their identities and research agendas in more or less public spaces. Once on the job market, emerging scholars have to demonstrate themselves as members in the field yet at the same time distinguish themselves from other academics in the field. Without a strong sense of one's scholarly identity, it can be difficult to find ways in which one can preserve the personal and the professional in a single blog. For graduate students to use blogs as spaces to experiment with their identity development, they must also use blogs as spaces to have conversations with and among experienced faculty who can mentor emerging scholars about balancing the personal and the professional. Finally, for these conversations to be meaningful contributions to one's identity development, emerging scholars need to have a widely read blog and they need to read and comment on blogs maintained by more experienced scholars.

How Scholarly Identity Development in Weblogs Influences Graduate Education and the Computers and Writing Community

As bloggers continue to use their blogs for multiple purposes within their professional and personal lives, we are likely to see blogs as useful sites for better understanding scholarly identity development in the computers and writing community. Due to its ability to inspire reflection over time and space, blogging can reveal the nature of our identities to us and to others in the communities in which we live and work. As other sections of this web text indicate, using blogging as a site for scholarly identity development strongly influences the blogger. Though much of this web text focuses on the individual blogger, scholarly identity development also affects our understanding of graduate education and the computers and writing community.

Graduate Education

In graduate education, making one's scholarly identity present at one's institution and within the field at large is an essential component in the professionalization process for graduate students. As part of that scholarly identity development, graduate students need to navigate among a number of "visible agendas" (e.g. coursework, assistantships, exams/thesis/dissertation, faculty advisors and committees) and "hidden agendas" (e.g. responsibility, collegiality, and autonomy) (Moore & Miller, 2006). Using blogs as spaces for reflection as they pursue these agendas can create a valuable opportunities for better understanding one's scholarly identity development. This can then lead to developing a stronger sense of confidence as graduate students move from their roles as students to their roles as colleagues in the field.

Though blogging can be beneficial to graduate student identity development, it should not replace every professionalization strategy. Depending on the extent to which graduate students use their blogs, it is possible that for some students the time commitment associated with blogging can take time away from more traditional means for professional development. Not only does this have an effect on the professionalization process, but it also demonstrates the risk to further marginalizing the work of graduate students. For example, Eric Mason (2004) cautions graduate students and adjuncts by writing that "the people most likely to be powerless in institutional hierarchies can sometimes embrace those things [new technologies] most likely to draw attention away from the work of institutional hierarchies." Though Mason's (2004) caution is worthy of consideration, those who choose to refrain from using new technologies in order to avoid further marginalization are contributing to the perspective that posits technology against traditional scholarly work. Instead, we should be looking for ways to use blogs as a means to further enrich the benefits that come from participating in traditional scholarly activities.

To do so in graduate education, programs need to find a balance between educating their students via traditional professionalization strategies and educating their students through the integration of technology. This can mean more directly educating their students on how to develop an offline and online scholarly identity. For example, holding professional development workshops to discuss how to represent one's self as an academic on the job market is useful for graduate students and faculty, but alone it can be limiting if the discussion mainly focuses on face-to-face situations. This is where blogs could be used effectively as places for graduate students to focus their efforts at creating an online identity that is accessible to search committees. Creating and maintaining a blog early in one's graduate program can give students and faculty members a point of contact to experiment with the development of an online professional identity. In contrast to creating an online portfolio that is hosted on a website, updating and posting to a blog requires less time thus making it ideal for new graduate students. Like many professional development strategies, learning how to develop a scholarly identity takes time and requires the type of reflection that blogs can warrant through their cataloging and posting capabilities.

By using weblogs for reflective purposes, they can help graduate programs develop more systematic support among graduate students and faculty members for professional development. Like many traditional professionalization strategies, effective weblog use should be approached with the goal of creating ongoing dialogues among graduate students and faculty. That in mind, methods for situating weblogs as ongoing dialogues inside and outside the classroom can strongly affect the identity of the students, faculty, and the program. Therefore, there are a number of strategies students and faculty should consider when creating meaningful and sustainable uses of weblogs throughout the professionalization process.

Strategies for Using Weblogs in Graduate Programs

(1) Weblog assignments facilitated in graduate seminars should vary in type to inspire inquiry about the class itself as well as inquiry toward topics that may be revisited at later points in one's degree or research agenda. Looking back on my coursework experience, it would have been useful for me to blog about weekly readings for the

purpose of class discussion as well as in preparation for my candidacy exams—many of the course texts were also required reading for the exams. Asking students to make connections among course readings through blog posts and the use of categories or tags (within and beyond a single course) can promote useful face-to-face or online discussions that will encourage students to maintain their blogs beyond the classroom.

(2) Weblogs should facilitate collegiality among graduate students and faculty as they inspire collaborative work on developing research, conference papers, publications, pedagogy, preliminary exams, dissertations, and job market preparation. While I'm not suggesting that weblogs should be the only means for assisting in this type of work, I do think they can serve as supplemental components that provide insight into the professional development of a program's students. If students blog about their work outside the classroom, it gives readers (faculty and other students) an opportunity to stay in touch with their progress on various projects. Adding comments and suggestions, as well as finding common research interests among faculty and students, can create additional support and reduce the sense of isolation that students feel after completing their coursework.

(3) Weblogs should serve as points of reflection and discussion for how students develop their professional identities throughout their programs, which creates opportunities for students to become more aware of their transitions from students to scholars, thus furthering a demystification of that process. These points of reflection and discussion should occur at least once a year online and/or face-to-face among faculty advisors and their students. By having these reflective discussions regularly, students and faculty can share the responsibility of preparing for the job search at the end of the degree program.

(4) Weblogs should serve as representations of graduate programs to the university community and to the field at large as a means to reflect and project that program's identity. When a program publicizes its students' weblogs by providing links on its website, it gives prospective students and faculty a detailed picture of the program's culture. Some programs already provide links to students' online portfolios, as the Rhetoric and Writing Program at Bowling Green State University does, but these portfolios are usually not updated as often as one would see in a student weblog. Also, online portfolios are more likely to show well-polished work rather than the process one takes to accomplish that work, which is something more easily seen in a weblog. Since the information in student online portfolios and weblogs is equally reflective of the program's culture, a program should look for ways to publicly show both contributions to its identity.

The Computers and Writing Community

For the computers and writing community, blogging serves a place where various professional and personal experiences converge to represent the rich complexity associated with the development of our scholarly identities. This is important in the field for a number of reasons. First, it provides support and a sense of community among scholars whose work and identities can sometimes seem invisible aside from the polished versions we see in traditional publication venues. Maintaining a strong community is one of many things that scholars need to stay committed to working in the academy, which isn't always as supportive when it comes to tenure and promotion. Second, it gives us the opportunity to combat the isolation we can often feel as researchers. Blogging is especially important to identity development when a faculty member is the sole computers and writing scholar in a department. Third, it creates ways for us to find connections and to blur/separate the lines between our personal and professional lives. Understanding the distinctions we make among our personal and professional experiences allows us to keep things in perspective without compromising either aspect of our identities. Finally, it demystifies the professional development process we experience for others in the field, graduate students and new faculty in particular, who are learning how to be scholars. As higher education continues to change, promoting an increased awareness of what it means to be a scholar is essential to preparing our newest members in the field. Through the use of regular reflection in the shared space of the computers and writing blogging community, scholars can find new ways to attend to expectations within and beyond the academic community.

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