

Michael L. Black

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Current:

Assistant Professor of English
University of Massachusetts Lowell

Sept. 2015 – Present

Past:

Associate Director
Institute for Computing in Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences
National Center for Supercomputing Applications
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Aug. 2014 – Aug. 2015

EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Doctorate of Philosophy in English

May 2014

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
Master of Arts in English

May 2008

University of Louisville, Louisville, KY
Bachelor of Arts in English, Minor in Philosophy
Summa Cum Laude

May 2006

BOOK PROJECT

“Transparent Designs: Personal Computing and the Politics of User-Friendliness”

This project investigates the ideal of “transparent design” in personal computing as it emerged and evolved during the 1970s and 80s using an archive of popular periodicals, reference manuals, and technical literature. It challenges readers to examine the assumptions about the politics of technology present in what has become the everyday language we use to talk about our computing practices. I argue that we must resist the definitions of usefulness, usability, and simplicity that technologists deploy to assert their authority over computational culture and instead insist on the value of complex engagements with technology.

Status: Manuscript in revision, under contract with Johns Hopkins University Press

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles:

Black, Michael L. “Usable and Useful: IBM’s and Apple’s Attempts to Define Usability in the Early Days of Personal Computing.” *Science, Technology, and Human Values*. 45.3 (2019): 515-537. DOI: 10.1177/0162243919865584.

Brown, Nicole M., Ruby Mendenhall, Michael L. Black, Mark Van Moer, Assata Zerai, and Karen Flynn. “In Search of Zora / When metadata isn’t enough: Rescuing the Experiences of Black Women through Statistical Modeling.” *Journal of Library Metadata*. 19 (2019): 141-162. DOI: 10.1080/19386389.2019.1652967.

Mendenhall, Ruby, Nicole M. Brown, Michael L. Black. "The Potential of Big Data in Rescuing and Recovering Black Women's Contributions to the DuBois-Atlanta School and to American Sociology." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40.8 (2017): 1231-1233.

Black, Michael L. "The World Wide Web as Complex Data Set: Expanding the Digital Humanities into the Twentieth Century and Beyond through Internet Research." *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* 10.1 (2016): 95-109.

Brown, Nicole M., Ruby Mendenhall, Michael L. Black, Mark Van Moer, Assata Zerai, and Karen Flynn. "Mechanized Margin to Digitized Center: Black Feminism's Contributions to Combatting Erasure within the Digital Humanities." *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* 10.1 (2016): 110-125.

Black, Michael L. "A Textual History of Mozilla: Using Topic Modeling to Trace Sociocultural Influences on Software Development." *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 9.3 (2015).

Underwood, Ted, Michael L. Black, Loretta Auvil, and Boris Capitanau. "Mapping Mutable Genres in Structurally Complex Volumes." *Proceedings of the IEEE: Big Data 2013*. <http://arxiv.org/abs/1309.3323>

Black, Michael L. "Narrative and Spatial Form in Digital Media: A Platform Study of the SCUMM Engine and Ron Gilbert's *The Secret of Monkey Island*." *Games and Culture*. 7.3 (May 2012): 209-237.

Book Chapters:

Littlefield, Melissa and Michael Black. "Critical Receptions: Reading Technology and Literature in the Twentieth Century." *Critical Insights: Technology and Humanity*. Ed. Carol Colatrella. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Salem Press, 2012: 46-62.

Other Publications:

Black, Michael L. Review of Digital Research Confidential: The Secrets of Studying Behavior Online, edited by Eszter Hargittai and Christian Sandvig. *IEEE Technology and Society Magazine* 37.2 (2018): 7-9.

Black, Michael L. "The World Wide Web." *SAGE Encyclopedia of the Internet*, 3rd Edition. Ed. Barney L. Warf. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2018. 980-985.

In Process:

Black, Michael L. "The World Wide Web as Media Ecology." *Geographies of the Internet*. Ed. Barney L. Warf. New York, NY: Routledge (In press, expected June 2020)

Black, Michael L. "The Futility of Piracy: How Early Copy Protection Continues to Influence Popular Conceptions of Software's Materiality" Preparing for submission to *enculturation*.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Upcoming:

“Learned Objectivity in Programming Pedagogy.” Conference on College Composition and Communication. Milwaukee, WI 2020 (Accepted, but conference cancelled)

“Why the Digital Humanities Needs a Critical History of Usability.” Modern Language Association Annual Conference. Seattle, WA 2020.

Past:

“Usability and Crisis: Tracing the Origins of Today’s Invisible Personal Computers.” Society for Cinema and Media Studies Annual Conference. Seattle, WA 2019.

“User-Friendly Classrooms: Interconnections Between Today’s Media Composition Software and the Unusable Computers of the Early 1980s.” Thomas R. Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition. Louisville, KY 2018.

“Studying Digital Literacy Using the Internet Archive and Geocities.” Conference on College Composition and Communication. Portland, OR 2017.

“Digital Literacy at Scale: Measuring HTML Tag Usage in the Internet Archive.” Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Annual Conference. Atlanta, GA 2016.

“Programming as Writing Process: Using Source Code Repositories as Archives.” Thomas R. Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition. Louisville, KY 2016.

“Pinning Down the Materiality of Open Source Software: A Brief History of Mozilla Firefox.” Conference on College Composition and Communication. Indianapolis, IN 2014.

“Shut Out By Copyright: Methodological Problems (and Possible Solutions) in the Cultural History of Software.” Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Annual Conference. South Bend, IN 2013.

“‘Transparent’ Computing and the Politics of Operating Systems.” Neoliberalism 2.0: Technology and Resistance Across Borders. Urbana, IL, 2013.

“User Friendly? The ‘Transparent’ Design of Personal Computers.” Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Annual Conference. Milwaukee, WI, 2012.

“Don't Phreak Out! Ma Bell is Watching: Recovering the Hacker in the Fictional Systems of Thomas Pynchon, Joseph McElroy, and William Gaddis.” Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts Annual Conference. Indianapolis, IN, 2010.

“Creating ‘More Narrative’: How The Reader-As-Hyperdetective Can Solve the Case of the Missing Endings in Paul Auster's New York Trilogy.” The Louisville Conference for Literature and Culture after 1900. Louisville, KY, 2009.

Black, Michael L., Bonnie Friel, Joan Jasak, and Matthew Lombard, “An Evaluation of Portrayals of Telepresence and Romantic Relationships in Film and Television.”

PRESENCE 2008: 11th Annual International Society of Presence Research Conference.
Padua, Italy, 2008.

“Public Opinion in the *U.S.A.*: Mediated Containment in the Novels of John Dos Passos.”
South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference, Atlanta, GA, 2007.

ACADEMIC AWARDS & HONORS

Smalley Dissertation Completion Fellowship. University of Illinois. Fall 2013 – Spring 2014.

INTERSECT: Network for Neuro-Cultures Fellowship. College of Liberal Arts and Science,
University of Illinois. Fall 2012 – Spring 2013.

PAST RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS

Research Assistant, Institute for Computing in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences.
National Center for Super Computing Applications. 2013-2014.

Research Assistant, Prof. Ted Underwood. University of Illinois. 2012-2013

Research Assistant, Prof. Melissa Littlefield and Prof. Spencer Schaffner. University of Illinois,
Fall 2011

Graduate Assistant, Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory. University of Illinois, 2010 –
2012

Editorial Assistant, Acquisitions Department. Temple University Press. Fall 2007

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (AS INSTRUCTOR OF RECORD)

University of Massachusetts Lowell, English Department

- English 2000: Critical Methods.
- English 2390: Introduction to Professional Writing.
- English 3690: Reading and Writing New Media.
- English 4020: From Newspapers to Newsfeeds.
- English 4080: Principles of Technical Writing.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, English Department

- English 116: Introduction to American Literature.
- English 109: Introduction to Fiction (Advanced Composition).

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Academic Writing Program

- Rhetoric 100: Tutorial for Rhetoric 101/102.
- Rhetoric 101: College Writing I (With Tutorial).
- Rhetoric 102: College Writing II (With Tutorial).
- Rhetoric 103: College Writing I.

Temple University, First Year Writing Program.

- English 50: First Year Writing.

TEACHING HONORS

“Excellence in Undergraduate Education”. English Department, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Fall 2008 – Spring 2009

“Outstanding Instructor.” First Year Writing Program, Temple University. Fall 2006

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Peer Reviewer (Journals):

Arts
Configurations
Digital Humanities Quarterly
Games and Culture
Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History
Science, Technology, and Human Values

Peer Review (Conferences):

Digital Humanities (2020, invited)
Association for Computers and the Humanities (2019)

Campus Service:

Faculty Senator (Elected), English Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Fall 2016 – Present.

Department Service:

Experiential Learning Committee, English Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Fall 2019 – Present.
Assessment Committee, English Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Fall 2017 – Present.
Journalism and Professional Writing Advisory Committee, English Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Fall 2016 – Present.
Graduate Studies Committee, English Department, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Fall 2015 – Spring 2016.
Outreach and Training Committee, National Center for Supercomputing Applications, University of Illinois, Fall 2014 – Spring 2015.

MEMBERSHIPS

Association for Computers and the Humanities
Conference on College Composition and Communication
Modern Language Association
National Council of Teachers of English

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST, LAST UPDATED MAY 2020