Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States

2019 Refereed Proceedings
March 13-16, 2019
Houston, TX

Kelly A. Grant, President
Carol S. Wright, President-Elect and Program Chair
Kayla Sapkota, Secretary-Treasurer
Leslie Ramos Salazar, Historian
Laura Lott Valenti, Past President

Danica L. Schieber, Editor
College of Business Administration
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Editor's Note

Welcome to the 45th meeting of the Association for Business Communication-Southwestern United States. Many thanks to the planners, program chairs, reviewers, presenters, and other contributors responsible for making this fantastic conference program possible. Special thanks go to Carol Wright, President-Elect and Program Chair of ABC-SWUS, who has assembled a fascinating program that will appeal to anyone who is interested in business communication pedagogy and research.

The program this year includes 30 presentations by authors from United States institutions across the country, as well as from India. 3 full papers from the conference, 27 presentation abstracts, and 1 poster presentation abstract are included in this proceeding. I would like to extend special thanks to the proposal and paper reviewers: Traci L. Austin, Marsha L. Bayless, Tammy L. Croghan, Kelly A. Grant, Susan Evans Jennings, Margaret S. Kilcoyne, Chynette Nealy, Lorelei Amanda Ortiz, Leslie Ramos Salazar, Kayla Sapkota, Lucia S. Sigmar, Danica L. Schieber, Laura Lott Valenti, and Ashley Hall.

Each year completed papers that are submitted for the program are considered for the Federation of Business Disciplines Distinguished Paper Award. This year's distinguished paper was awarded to Traci L. Austin, Lindsay C. Clark, and Lucia S. Sigmar of Sam Houston State University for their paper entitled "Just Get to the Point: Persuasive Strategies for the iGeneration." They will present their paper on Thursday, at 8:30 a.m.

In these proceedings, you will also find information on previous program chairpersons, Distinguished Paper Award recipients, and recipients of the Outstanding Research and Outstanding Teacher awards.

Please make plans to join us next year in beautiful San Antonio for the 2020 Conference on March 11-13, 2020, at the Hyatt Regency San Antonio. The call dates for next year's papers and presentation proposals are October 1, 2019.

We hope you enjoy the 2019 conference program and take this opportunity to share new ideas, make new contacts, and explore the gorgeous and diverse city of Houston. Definitely go try some Texas barbecue. It's amazing.

Danica L. Schieber
Editor

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Future International, National and Regional Meetings

2019 – 2020

For more information visit:
http://businesscommunication.org/conferences

2019 ABC Asia and the Pacific U.S. Regional Conference
July 8-12, 2019
Wellington, New Zealand

2020 ABC Europe, Africa, and Middle East Regional Conference
August 26-28, 2020
Vienna, Austria

Association for Business Communication 84th Annual International Conference
October 23-26, 2019
Detroit, MI USA

2020 Association for Business Communication-Southwestern United States
March 11-13, 2020
San Antonio, TX, USA

ABC-SWUS Program Chairpersons 1973 - Present

2018-2019	Carol S. Wright
2017-2018	Kelly A. Grant
2016-2017	Laura Lott Valenti
2015-2016	Susan Evans Jennings
2014-2015	Kathryn S. O'Neill
2013-2014	Traci L. Austin
2012-2013	Randall L. Waller
2011-2012	Lucia Sigmar
2010-2011	Margaret Kilcoyne
2009-2010	Faridah Awang
2008-2009	Marcel Robles
2007-2008	Ann Wilson
2006-2007	Carolyn Ashe
2005-2006	Harold A. Hurry
2004-2005	Lana W. Carnes
2003-2004	Marsha L. Bayless
2002-2003	Betty A. Kleen
2001-2002	William Sharbrough
2000-2001	Carol Lehman
1999-2000	William P. Galle, Jr.
1998-1999	Anita Bednar
1997-1998	Timothy W. Clipson
1996-1997	Debbie D. Dufrene
1995-1996	William J. Wardrope
1994-1995	Roger N. Conaway
1993-1994	Donna W. Luse
1992-1993	F. Stanford Wayne
1991-1992	Beverly H. Nelson
1990-1991	Marian Crawford
1989-1990	Marlin C. Young
1988-1989	Sallye Benoit
1987-1988	Tom Means
1986-1987	Lamar N. Reinsch, Jr.
1985-1986	Sara Hart
1984-1985	Betty S. Johnson
1983-1984	Larry R. Smeltzer
1982-1983	Daniel Cochran
1981-1982	Nancy Darsey
1980-1981	John M. Penrose
1979-1980	R. Lynn Johnson
1978-1979	Raymond V. Lesikar
1977-1978	Jack D. Eure
1976-1977	Phil Lewis
1975-1976	Dale Level
1974-1975	Bette Anne Stead
1973-1974	Sam J. Bruno

Call for Papers
Federation of Business Disciplines
Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States
March 11 - March 13, 2020
San Antonio, TX

Please submit a proposal or paper related to **business communication topics** for presentation at the 2020 ABC-SWUS Conference in San Antonio, Texas. Research papers or position papers related to **business communication topics** in the following areas are encouraged:

Communication Technology	Technology and Education
Innovative Instructional Methods	Business Education Issues
International Business Communication	Paradigm Shifts in Communication
Training and Development/Consulting	Interpersonal Communication
Nonverbal Communication	Executive/Managerial Communication
Legal and Ethical Communication Issues	Organizational Communication
Healthcare Communication	Language and Communication Theory

- Papers or proposals should include a statement of the problem or purpose, methodology section (if applicable), findings (as available), a summary, implications for education and/or business, and a bibliography.
- If you are submitting a proposal only, it should contain 750 to 1,500 words and must be submitted on the ABC website: http://www.businesscommunication.org. Click on the link for the **2019 ABC-SWUS Conference**.
- If you are submitting a completed paper, please submit your proposal online as indicated above. Then e-mail the completed paper to knsapkota@asub.edu by **October 1, 2019**. All submissions must be in Microsoft Word.
- Personal and institutional identification should be removed from the body of the paper. Identify yourself and your institution only on the cover page. Submissions will be anonymously reviewed.
- A cover page is required with the title of the paper and identifying information for each author: name, institutional affiliation, address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address.
  For your research to be considered for the Richard D. Irwin Distinguished Paper Award, you must submit a completed paper rather than a proposal by the submission deadline, **October 1, 2019**.
- Submitted papers should not have been previously presented or published, nor should they be under consideration or accepted for presentation elsewhere.

FBD Statement of Academic Integrity
Your paper should not have been previously published or previously presented at FBD. Please indicate to the Program Chair if your paper is currently under submission to another FBD association. If your paper is later accepted by another FBD association, it is your responsibility to notify the appropriate Program Chairs.

- Upon receiving notice of acceptance, all authors and co-authors are expected to **pre-register for ABC-SWUS and FBD** at http://www.fbdonline.org.

Deadline: Papers and proposals must be received by October 1, 2019.
Proceedings Deadline: Accepted full papers must be received by January 16, 2020.

For information, contact Kayla Sapkota, Program Chair, via e-mail at knsapkota@asub.edu

Outstanding Educator Awards

for

The Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States

This top tier ABC-SWUS award began in 2001 to honor outstanding educators in ABC-SWUS who were already recognized by our association. To be eligible for the award, recipients must have received the ABC-SWUS Outstanding Teacher or Researcher Award, served as an ABC-SWUS regional officer, or received the distinguished paper award in the last five years. The award winners are as follows::

2019	Traci L. Austin, Sam Houston State University
2018	Judith L. Biss (posthumously), Stephen F. Austin State University
2017	Susan E. Jennings, Stephen F. Austin State University
2016	Tim Clipson, Stephen F. Austin State University
2015	Margaret S. Kilcoyne, Northwestern State University
2014	Lucia Sigmar, Sam Houston State University
2013	S. Ann Wilson, Stephen F. Austin State University
2012	Marcel M. Robles, Eastern Kentucky University
2011	Harold A. Hurry, Sam Houston State University
2010	Geraldine E. Hynes, Sam Houston State University
2009	Roger N. Conaway, Tecnológico de Monterrey, campus San Luis Potosí
2008	Bobbye J. Davis, Southeastern Louisiana University
2007	Betty A. Kleen, Nicholls State University
2006	William Wardrope, University of Central Oklahoma
2005	Betty S. Johnson, Stephen F. Austin State University
2004	Marsha L. Bayless, Stephen F. Austin State University
2003	Lillian H. Chaney, University of Memphis
2002	Debbie DuFrene, Stephen F. Austin State University
2001	Anita Bednar, University of Central Oklahoma

The Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States
Outstanding Researcher and Teacher Awards

These awards were developed and first awarded in 1992 to recognize the accomplishments of the region's members. Nominated candidates are evaluated by a panel of previous award winners. No awards were given in 1998, 2001, 2003, 2007 or 2013. The association began alternating the awards every other year in 2000 between researcher and teacher. In 2011 the Outstanding Teacher Award was renamed the Marlin C. Young Outstanding Teacher Award in honor and memory of his contributions to the ABC-SWUS organization. In 2018, the Outstanding Researcher Award was renamed the Raymond V. Lesikar Outstanding Researcher Award to mark the contributions of another significant contributor to the ABC-SWUS organization. The following recipients each received a plaque and award of $100 (the award was changed to $200 in 2008):

2018 Danica Schieber, Raymond V. Lesikar Outstanding Researcher Award

2017 Judith L. Biss (posthumously), Marlin C. Young Outstanding Teacher Award

2016 Geraldine Hynes, Outstanding Researcher Award

2015 Margaret Kilcoyne, Marlin C. Young Outstanding Teacher Award

2014 Lucia Sigmar, Outstanding Researcher Award

2013 Brenda Hanson, Marlin C. Young Outstanding Teacher Award

2012 Susan Evans Jennings, Outstanding Researcher Award

2011 S. Ann Wilson, Marlin C. Young Outstanding Teacher Award

2010 Margaret Kilcoyne, Outstanding Researcher Award

2009 Harold Hurry, Outstanding Teacher Award

2008 Roger N. Conaway, Outstanding Researcher Award

2008 Geraldine E. Hynes, Outstanding Teacher Award

2006 Janna P. Vice, Outstanding Researcher Award

2005 Bobbye Davis, Outstanding Teacher Award

2004 William Wardrope, Outstanding Researcher Award

2003 Marcel Robles, Outstanding Teacher Award

2002 Lillian H. Chaney, Outstanding Researcher Award

2002 Jeré Littlejohn, Outstanding Teacher Award

2000 William Sharbrough, Outstanding Researcher Award

1999 William Wardrope, Outstanding Teacher Award

1998 Betty Kleen, Outstanding Researcher Award

1998 Robert Olney, Outstanding Teacher Award

1997 Al Williams, Outstanding Teacher Award

1996 Betty S. Johnson, Outstanding Researcher Award

1995 Marsha L. Bayless, Outstanding Researcher Award

1995 Anita Bednar, Outstanding Teacher Award

1994 Nelda Spinks, Outstanding Teacher Award

1993 Timothy W. Clipson, Outstanding Teacher Award

1993 F. Stanford Wayne, Outstanding Researcher Award

1992 Debbie D. DuFrene, Outstanding Researcher Award

1992 Beverly H. Nelson, Outstanding Teacher Award

The Association for Business Communication
Southwestern United States
Irwin/McGraw-Hill Distinguished Paper Award Recipients

2019 Traci L. Austin, Lindsay L. Clark, and Lucia S. Sigmar
Just Get to the Point: Persuasive Strategies for the iGeneration

2018 N. Lamar Reinsch and Vicki Gates
Communication Strategies for Human Resource Managers and Other Counselors: Extensions and Applications of Equity Theory

2017 Jon M. Croghan and Tammy L. Croghan
Improving Performance Evaluations: The Role of Intrapersonal Communication, Message Strategy, and Age

2016 Melissa A. Barrett and Geraldine E. Hynes
The Little Creamery that Could: Weathering a Crisis and Maintaining Brand Loyalty

2015 Mark Leonard, Marsha Bayless, and Timothy Clipson
Media Selection in Managerial Communication: Exploring the Relationship between Media Preference, Personality, and Communication Aptitude

2014 Kathryn S. O'Neill and Gary L. May
Using Business Cases to Foster Critical Thinking

2012 En Mao, Laura Lott Valenti, and Marilyn Macik-Frey
Status Update – "We've Got a Problem" – Leadership Crisis Communication in the Age of Social Media

2011 Betty A. Kleen and Shari Lawrence
Student Cheating: Current Faculty Perceptions

2010 Jose Guadalupe Torres and Roger N. Conaway
Adoption and Use of New Communication Technologies in an International Organization: An Exploratory Study of Text Messaging

2009 Susan Evans Jennings, S. Ann Wilson, and Judith L. Biss
Is Email Out and Text Messaging In? Communication Trends in Secondary and Post-Secondary Students

2008 Debbie D. DuFrene, Carol M. Lehman, and Judith L. Biss
Receptivity and Response of Students to an Electronic Textbook

2007 William J. Wardrope and Roger N. Conaway
Readability and Cultural Distinctiveness of Executives' Letters Found in the Annual Reports of Latin American Companies

2006 Janna P. Vice and Lana W. Carnes
Professional Opportunities for Business Communication Students That Go Beyond the Course Grade

2005 Lillian H. Chaney, Catherine G. Green, and Janet T. Cherry
Trainers' Perceptions of Distracting or Annoying Behaviors of Corporate Trainers

2004 Patricia Borstorff and Brandy Logan
Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness: Organizational Life, Gender, and Ethnicity.

2003 Ruth A. Miller and Donna W. Luce
The Most Important Written, Oral, and Interpersonal Communication Skills Needed by Information Systems Staff During the Systems Development Process

2002 Roger N. Conaway and William Wardrope
Communication in Latin America: An Analysis of Guatemalan Business Letters

2001 Annette N. Shelby and N. Lamar Reinsch Jr.
Strategies of Nonprofessional Advocates: A Study of Letters to a Senator

2000 Donna R. Everett and Richard A. Drapeau
A Comparison of Student Achievement in the Business Communication Course When Taught in Two Distance Learning Environments

1999 Susan Plutsky and Barbara Wilson
Study to Validate Prerequisites in Business Communication for Student Success

1998 Jose R. Goris, Bobby C. Vaught, and John D. Pettit Jr.
Inquiry into the Relationship Between the Job Characteristics Model and Communication: An Empirical Study Using Moderated Progression Analysis

1996 Beverly Little, J. R. McLaurin, Robert Taylor, and Dave Snyder
Are Men Really from Mars and Women from Venus? Perhaps We're All from Earth After All

1995 Bolanie A. Olaniran, Grant T. Savage, and Ritch L. Sorenson
Teaching Computer-mediated Communication in the Classroom: Using Experimental and Experiential Methods to Maximize Learning

1994 James R. McLaurin and Robert R. Taylor
Communication and its Predictability of Managerial Performance: A Discriminant Analysis

1993 Mona J. Casady and F. Stanford Wayne
Employment Ads of Major United States Newspapers

1992 Betty S. Johnson and Nancy J. Wilmeth
The Legal Implications of Correspondence Authorship

1991 Rod Blackwell, Jane H. Stanford, and John D. Pettit Jr.
Measuring a Formal Process Model of Communication Taught in a University Business Program: An Empirical Study

Conference Program

ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

2018-2019 OFFICERS

President	**Kelly A. Grant,** Tulane University
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Secretary/Treasurer	**Kayla Sapkota**, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Historian	**Leslie Ramos Salazar**, West Texas A&M
Proceedings Editor	**Danica L. Schieber,** Sam Houston State University
Immediate Past President	**Laura Lott Valenti,** Nicholls State University

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Marsha L. Bayless, Stephen F. Austin State University
Tammy Croghan, Northwestern State University
Kelly A. Grant, Tulane University
Susan Evans Jennings, Stephen F. Austin State University
Margaret S. Kilcoyne, Northwestern State University
Chynette Nealy, University of Houston Downtown
Lorelei Amanda Ortiz, St. Edward's University
Leslie Ramos Salazar, West Texas A&M
Kayla Sapkota, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Danica L. Schieber, Sam Houston State University
Lucia S. Sigmar, Sam Houston State University
Laura Lott Valenti, Nicholls State University
Ashley Hall, Stephen F. Austin State University

CONGRATULATIONS!

Recipient of the 2019 Federation of Business Disciplines Paper Award

Just Get to the Point: Persuasive Strategies for the iGeneration
Traci L. Austin, Sam Houston State University
Lindsay C. Clark, Sam Houston State University
Lucia S. Sigmar, Sam Houston State University

Recipient of the 2019 Federation of Business Disciplines Outstanding Educator Award

Traci L. Austin
Sam Houston State University

ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

March 14, 2019 (Thursday)

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Window Box

ABC – SWUS and ABIS Joint Breakfast

All ABC-SWUS and ABIS presenters and members are invited to enjoy a delicious breakfast

ABC-SWUS or ABIS Association Name Badge REQUIRED for Attendance at Breakfast

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Joint Session with ABIS	Window Box

ABC-SWUS and ABIS Joint Session

Co-Session Chairs/Association Vice Presidents and Conference Chairs:
Carol S. Wright, Stephen F. Austin State University
Shane Schartz, Fort Hays State University

ABC-SWUS Best Paper: *Just Get to the Point: Persuasive Strategies for the iGeneration*
Traci L. Austin, Sam Houston State University
Lindsay C. Clark, Sam Houston State University
Lucia S. Sigmar, Sam Houston State University

ABIS Best Paper: *Moving Toward Better Equipped Students in Excel*
Lori Soule, Nicholls State University
Sherry Rodrigue, Nicholls State University
Betty Kleen, Nicholls State University

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Exhibit Hall

FBD Coffee Break

Please make plans to visit the exhibits for information on the latest books and newest educational technologies. Let our exhibitors know how much we appreciate their presence and continued support!

Great Door Prize Drawings take place at **10:15 a.m.** in the Exhibit Area. *Must be present to win.*

ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

March 8, 2019 (Thursday)

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Arboretum 5

Looking at Business School Curriculum

Session Chair: **Lamar Reinsch,** Lubbuck Christian University

Reflecting Critically on Business Curriculum: Integration via Blogging
Jonna Myers, Southwestern Oklahoma State University
Amanda Evert, Southwestern Oklahoma State University

"You want to Survey… ALL of our Alumni?" Navigating Potential Barriers to Institutional Data-Gathering
Christopher McKenna, Stephen F. Austin State University

How Aristotle Missed the Ploiarion
Lamar Reinsch, Lubbuck Christian University

March 8, 2019 (Thursday)

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. Joint Session with ABIS Arboretum 4

Impacts of Social Media

***Guest ABC Presenter at ABIS Session B**

Session Chair: **Ashley Hall,** Stephen F. Austin State University

Generation Z and Social Media – An Inventory of Use
Julie C. McDonald, Northwestern State University
Margaret Sepulvado Kilcoyne, Northwestern State University
Begona Perez-Mira, Northwestern State University
Sarah Wright, Northwestern State University

11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Lunch on your own**

ABC – SWUS Executive Board Meeting and Luncheon
By Invitation Only (Boardroom B)

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Arboretum 5

Improving Oral Communication Skills of Students

Session Chair: **Chris McKenna**, Stephen F. Austin State University

Power Posing Revisited
David Allen Ward, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Moving Students Past "You did great!": Using Daily Speeches and Peer Feedback to Improve Students' Assessment of Presentation
Ashly Bender Smith, Sam Houston State University

Once Upon a Time: Using Storytelling in Business Communication Classes to Teach Oral Communication Skills
Marsha L. Bayless, Stephen F. Austin State University
Laurie Rogers, Stephen F. Austin State University

A Pilot Study on the Use of Automated Speech Coaching Software in Online MBA Business Communication Courses
Leslie Ramos Salazar, West Texas A&M University

March 14, 2019 (Thursday)

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Exhibit Hall

FBD Coffee Break

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Great Door Prize Drawings take place at **3:15 p.m.** in the Exhibit Area. *Must be present to win.*

Poster Session

Relevance: Linking the Real World to the Business Communication Classroom by Actual Example
Marsha Bayless, Stephen F. Austin State University

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Concurrent Session I Arboretum 5

A Deeper Look into Communication Skills

Session Chair: **Debbie D. DuFrene**, Stephen F. Austin University

Peer Review in the Business Writing Classroom: Does it really help? Or is it just a waste of time?
Leticia A. French, University of Houston Clear Lake

Promoting Deeper Audience Awareness in the Business and Professional Communication Classroom: A Content Analysis
Danica L. Schieber, Sam Houston State University
Vincent Robles, University of North Texas

Investigating How Students Perceive Their Communication Skills
Ashley Hall, Stephen F. Austin State University
Carol S. Wright, Stephen F. Austin State University

Improving Persuasion Skills through Peer Reviewed Blog Posts
Rebecca Dowden, University of St. Thomas

Using Verbal De-Escalation to Reduce Conflict
Debbie D. DuFrene, Stephen F. Austin State University

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Concurrent Session II Arboretum 5

Concurrent Session held with Association for Business Information Systems

Using Technology for Student Engagement
Session Chair: Degan Kettles, Brigham Young University

Job Readiness: LinkdIn
Sandra H. Bevill, Arkansas State University
Karen McDaniel, Arkansas State University
H. Steve Leslie, Arkansas State University

Interactive and Innovative Decision-Making Communication Framework
Carolyn Ashe, University of Houston- Downtown

ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

March 8, 2019 (Thursday)

5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Exhibit Hall

FBD Presidential Welcome Reception

Everyone is invited to attend this FBD conference-wide social event. Visit with long-time friends and make new ones as you enjoy light appetizers and live music. A cash bar is available and a limited number of drink tickets will also be distributed. Stop by to relax and wind down from the day's conference activities before heading out to other association and cultural events or dinner.

ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

March 15, 2019 (Friday)

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Arboretum 5

ABC-SWUS and ABIS Joint Breakfast

All ABC-SWUS and ABIS presenters and members are invited to enjoy a delicious breakfast

ABC-SWUS or ABIS Association Name Badge REQUIRED for Attendance at Breakfast

8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	Arboretum 5

Interacting Outside the Classroom

Session Chair: **Ashley Hall**, Stephen F. Austin State University

Perceptions of Risk and Responses to Product Warning Messages
John M. McGrath, Trinity University
Harry Wallace, Trinity University

Utilizing Facebook Groups for Communications in a Nonprofit Setting
Kayla Sapkota, Arkansas State University-Beebe

Examining Sexual Persecution in Digital Communication through Haptic Communications
Leslie Ramos Salazar, West Texas A&M University
Soumen Mukherjee, VIT University, Vellore, India

Simulated Internship: Increasing Student Engagement, Enhancing Skills Application in Business Communication Courses
Deirdre (Dee) Fuchs, Tulane University

Questionable Communication in Greenwashed Advertisements: Does Customer Confusion Alter Purchase Intentions?
Amy Roe, Eastern Kentucky University
Marcel Marie Robles, Eastern Kentucky University

10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Exhibit Hall

FBD Coffee Break

Please make plans to visit the exhibits for information on the latest books and newest educational technologies. Let our exhibitors know how much we appreciate their presence and continued support!

Great Door Prize Drawings take place at **10:15 a.m.** in the Exhibit Area. *Must be present to win.*

ASSOCIATION FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION
SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES

March 15, 2019 (Friday)

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ABC Business Meeting	Arboretum 5

ABC SWUS Business Meeting (all members welcome)

Presiding: **Kelly Grant**, ABC-SWUS President
Tulane University

12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	**Lunch on your own**

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Arboretum 5

Using Communication to Engage with Others

Session Chair: **Ashley Bender Smith**, Sam Houston State University

Cultivating Students' Cultural Literacy through Research and Writing: Instructor and Librarian Collaboration
Hui-Fen Chang, Oklahoma State University
Kristina Schaap, Oklahoma State University

Contextualizing the Digital Skills of Professional Communication Students in Hispanic-Serving Institutions
Kenneth Robert Price, Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Rethinking Theory and Praxis in Biz Comm: A Call for Civic Engagement
Jessie Lynn Richards, University of Utah

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Exhibit Hall

FBD Coffee Break

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March 15, 2019 (Friday)

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Arboretum 5

Improving Collaborative Communication Strategies

Session Chair: **Dianne R. Garrett**, University of North Caroline at Greensboro

Teamwork in the School of Business at a Four-Year University
Michelle Dawson, Missouri Southern State University
Beverly Block, Missouri Southern State University
Stephanie Schartel Dunn, Missouri Southern State University

Using Social Collaborations to Develop Team Skills
Chynette Nealy, University of Houston Downtown

Innovative Technology Implementations: Communication Strategies for Project Success
Lila Carden, University of Houston
Raphael Boyd, Clark Atlanta University

Using a Design Thinking Hands-on Project as the Context in a Business Communication Course
Diana R. Garrett, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

A Business Communication Course – Planning a Study Abroad Experience in Thailand
James G. Ward, Fort Hays State University
Scott Jones, Fort Hays State University

Please make plans to visit the exhibits to receive information on the latest books and newest education technologies.
◆
Please let exhibitors know how much we appreciate their presence and continued support!

Make plans to join us in San Antonio in 2020!
47th Annual Conference
March 11-14, 2020
Hyatt Regency San Antonio
San Antonio, TX

Just Get to the Point: Persuasive Strategies for the iGeneration

Traci L. Austin

Lindsay C. Clark

Lucia S. Sigmar

Abstract:

Nonprofit fundraising has an enormous impact on the lives and professions of those in higher education. Yet little scholarly study has been made of the processes and products of fundraising. This research examines the effectiveness/impact of AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) versus more direct rhetorical strategies. Our preliminary findings indicate that our iGeneration participants, who represent an emerging audience for university fundraisers, prefer the direct strategy over AIDA.

Introduction

For many non-profit and educational organizations, fundraising is a necessary and vital part of doing business, and in many cases, it may ensure an organization's survival. For the past few decades, however, the task of raising funds for higher education institutions has grown progressively more difficult. In 1990, for example, 18% of college and university alumni gave to their alma maters; by 2013, that number was less than 9%—a drop of 50% (Allenby, 2014). This ongoing trend has particularly impacted annual giving, that is, small, one-time gifts raised through such means as telephone solicitations, e-mail or direct-mail appeals, or events (Blackbaud, 2017). While the occasional mega-gift from a wealthy benefactor will grab headlines, the gifts from alumni, family, and other individuals that once formed the backbone of university annual giving programs are shrinking in both number and size (Marklein, 2010).

This trend is especially distressing to university advancement professionals and administrators because annual giving programs are designed to do more than simply raise money in the short term; rather, they are intended to create long-lasting relationships between the institution and individuals that will lead those individuals to make repeated and ever-larger gifts over a span of years or decades. In addition, increased monetary giving often goes hand-in-hand with other kinds of engagement; active donors often also give of their time and expertise. In the minds of many advancement professionals, then, fewer annual donors today means that their universities and their students face a dearth of various resources in the future (Council on Advancement and Support of Education, 2013).

The key to reversing this trend—and regaining those lost relationships— is identifying the most effective ways to persuade donors, especially young alumni, to donate to and engage with their alma maters (Allenby, 2014). According to Warwick (2000), the primary means by which organizations recruit new donors is by using written persuasive appeals sent by direct mail. Even in today's digital environment, the conventional fundraising letter-by- post continues to be a popular channel for soliciting current donors and recruiting new ones. However, little empirical research exists to give practitioners guidance in this task. Much of the advice given on how to compose these annual giving appeals comes from fundraising practitioners drawing upon their own professional experience, both good and bad (e.g. Kuniholm, 1995; Rosso, 1996; Ahern, 2007). As a result, most annual giving professionals are left without a proven, evidence-based strategy for creating and delivering effective messages.

A brief survey of college-level, business communication textbooks reveals that subject matter experts consistently propose AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) as one of the most persuasive, rhetorical, sales strategies in both spoken and written discourse. For example, Cardon's *Business Communication: Developing Leaders for a Networked World* (2018, p. 320), Schwom and Snyder's *Business Communication: Polishing Your Professional Presence* (2019, p. 175), Lehman, Dufrene, and Walker's (2018, p. 141) *BCOM9,* and Guffey and Loewy's (2018, p. 345) *Business Communication: Process and Product* all specifically mention the AIDA strategy in writing unsolicited sales messages. Similarly, Flatley and Rentz (2010) also advocate gaining the audience's attention, then building a persuasive case, and "driving for the sale" in sales messages, although the acronym AIDA is not specifically mentioned (pp. 157-164).

While AIDA is commonly employed in business education, and in fields such as sales and advertising, this strategy is largely unknown (and unused) in higher education fundraising messages. Upton (2002) reviewed a corpus of nearly 1,000 direct mail fundraising letters and found that they tend to follow one of three distinct rhetorical patterns—none of which closely resembles the traditional AIDA strategy. While Upton examined the persuasive strategies that appear in fundraising messages, he did not identify which rhetorical strategy is the most effective in raising money, nor did he explore how generational differences impacted these messages. This study examines whether a younger demographic prefers the AIDA strategy taught in most college-level business communication courses over a direct persuasive strategy. Further, this study has the potential to inform curricular development focused on practical persuasion for the 21st Century.

Review of Literature

While AIDA is commonly found in many modern business communication textbooks and manuals, the *moves*[1] are deeply rooted in nineteenth-century advertising practices in the United States. Elias St. Elmo Lewis, a prolific advertising practitioner and writer, is usually credited with envisioning the moves that eventually came to be known as AIDA. Cody's *Success in Letter Writing: Business and Social,* published in 1906, mentioned the notion of AIDA. However, Lewis' widely published 1908 book, *Financial Advertising, For Commercial and Savings Banks*, firmly grounded the strategy in a business communication context:

The three elements in any successful advertisement must occur to any man who will analyze the advertisements that have appealed most strongly to him. He will find that the advertisement . . . had to first attract him (p. 95).

Next, according to Lewis, the advertiser must keep the customer's interest, a concept he termed "attention prolonged" (p. 126). If done effectively, attracting attention and arousing interest will lead to the potential customer's conviction that the argument is sound and arouse in him a desire to act (p. 162). For Lewis, the action itself was a natural consequence of the three essential elements; consequently, he did not formalize the idea of a call to action.

Lewis' principles were quickly adopted into practical manuals covering aspects of business behavior and communication that were popular in the early twentieth century. In Arthur Sheldon's *The Art of Selling: For Business Colleges, High Schools of Commerce* (1911), the moves had been formalized into a series of steps recognizable as AIDA, and were acknowledged as the preferred strategy for writing a persuasive sales message:

Every buyer's mind passes, more or less quickly, through well-defined stages of thought and feeling in making a purchase, and therefore it is your duty and advantage to adapt your argument to the law governing those stages. They are:

[1] Swales and Feak (2000, p. 35) define move as a "bounded communicative act that is designed to achieve one main communicative objective."

1. Favorable attention

2. Interest

3. Desire

4. Decision and Action (p. 146).

These four rhetorical moves were eventually published in Edward K. Strong, Jr's. *Psychology of Selling and Advertising* (1925), with acknowledgement to Elias St. Elmo Lewis, and were subsequently carried forward in business manuals throughout the twentieth century, including many business communication textbooks in use today.

Message Strategies: AIDA and Direct

Business communication textbooks consistently emphasize the importance of adapting communication strategies based on the audience's anticipated reaction. For example, the direct or deductive approach is commonly recommended when a writer expects the audience to react in a positive or neutral way to the message content (Guffey & Loewy, 2018). In direct strategy, the main idea of the message comes first and is followed by details that support it (Lehman, Dufrene, & Walker, 2018). A forwardlooking closing typically ends the message (Guffey & Loewy, 2018, p. 308). In contrast, the indirect or inductive approach is recommended when the writer anticipates resistance to the message. In this strategy, supporting or persuasive details come before the main idea (Schwom & Snyder, 2016, p. 87). The assumption is that, by the time the audience has read through the details, they will be more receptive to the main idea, which is typically an appeal to take action or accept an idea. A goodwill close usually ends the message (Schwom & Snyder, 2016). Therefore, AIDA is typically recommended for unsolicited sales messages, in particular, since the audience may be resistant to the message (Guffey & Loewy, 2018, p. 299). Figure 1 shows a comparison of the direct and indirect approaches.

Figure 1. Comparison of the Direct and Indirect Approaches (adapted from Lehman, Dufrene, & Walker, 2018)

Our hypothesis is that a combination of both the AIDA and direct strategies may be more persuasive to a today's traditional college students, who are members of the iGeneration (iGen). According to Twenge (2017)[2], members of the iGeneration prefer communication through more direct channels, such as social media, texting, and chat. These preferences for fast and truncated communication may influence their reaction to various traditional persuasive strategies.

Discourse and Corpus Analysis of Fundraising Messages

Largely descriptive in nature, discoursal corpus analysis was applied to the genre of fundraising messages in the latter half of the twentieth century as academicians investigated the many strategies and techniques that fundraising practitioners employed in their persuasive materials. For example, Abelan, Redeker, and Thompson (1993) explored the rhetorical patterns within the genre; Bhatia (1998) and Connor (1997) examined the functions of fundraising discourse; and Connor and Gladkov (2004) used Aristotelian logos, pathos, and ethos in their textual analysis of the genre.

[2] Twenge (2017) defines the iGeneration as a demographic group of digital natives born after 1995, characterized by a preoccupation with technology.

However, it was the work of John Swales (1981 and 1990), and later, Thomas Upton (2002) and Ulla Connor (Upton & Connor, 2001) who focused discourse analysis on more corpus-based moves applied to an entire class of fundraising messages. The Indiana Center for Intercultural Communication (ICIC) contributed significantly to this study of fundraising communication by collecting a large corpus of fundraising material from more than 230 nonprofit organizations. The ICIC Fundraising Corpus included more than 900 documents and totaled more than one million words. The documents came from five fields in the nonprofit sector—education (including higher education), health, human services, arts/culture, and conservation/environment (Upton, 2002).

In 2002, Upton conducted a corpus and genre analysis of the ICIC messages to identify common patterns in the rhetorical organization of annual giving letters. He found seven distinct moves in the corpus of messages:

- Move 1: Get attention
- Move 2: Introduce the cause and establish the credentials of the organization
- Move 3: Solicit response (either financial donation or other action)
- Move 4: Offer incentives (can be either tangible or intangible)
- Move 5: Reference insert (pledge form, return envelope, brochure, or gift)
- Move 6: Express gratitude (for past, current, future financial or other support)
- Move 7: Conclude with pleasantries

After identifying the individual moves, Upton looked for common move sequences in the letters in the corpus. He identified two template letters or "prototypes." The most frequent pattern, which Upton calls **Prototype One**, includes only two moves and is found in more than 85% of the letters in the corpus:

- Move 2: (Introduce the cause/establish credentials)
- Move 3: (Solicit response)

Prototype Two includes the following moves, in the following order:

- Move 2: Introduce the cause and establish the credentials of the organization
- Move 3: Solicit response (either financial donation or other action)

- Move 2: Introduce the cause and establish the credentials of the organization
- Move 3: Solicit response (either financial donation or other action)
- Move 5: Reference insert (pledge form, return envelope, brochure, or gift)
- Move 6: Express gratitude (for past, current, future financial or other support)

Neither of these distinct rhetorical prototypes resembles the traditional AIDA strategy (2002). Interestingly, Move 1: Get Attention, which corresponds to the first A in AIDA, appears rarely; only 15% of letters have at least one example of this move. Moves 2 and 3, however, appear in 93% and 97% of the letters, respectively (2002, p. 10). So it is clear that, in practice at least, AIDA is not widely used in a genre that is intended to be persuasive. The corpus analysis methodology that Upton uses to analyze persuasive appeals is further discussed and applied in Upton and Cohen (2009). While Upton identified a number of common rhetorical strategies used in direct-mail solicitations, he did not identify which ones were actually successful—in other words, which ones raised the most money and led to deeper and longer-term relationships between the institutions and their donors (2002). Further, Upton's study does not consider the effect of these fundraising appeals on specific demographic groups. Rather than analyzing the rhetorical moves (or combination of moves) in a corpus of fundraising letters, this study attempts a more practical outcome: determining which strategies are more effective in raising money. In addition, we focused our inquiry on a demographic of rising interest to university fundraisers, the iGeneration (Twenge, 2017). Currently, traditional U.S. undergraduate students are members of iGen and will be targeted in their universities' fundraising efforts upon graduation. Therefore, identifying the strategies that this generation finds persuasive, with the intent to recruit them as annual donors today and retain them as major donors in the future, is a top priority for higher education institutions.

Methodology

The methodology for this project was modeled on a study by Goering, Connor, Nagelhout, and Steinberg (2011) in their analysis of the effectiveness of persuasive techniques in fundraising letters. To begin our project, we developed hypothetical fundraising letters based on the authors' fundraising experience. The letters, some of which followed the AIDA format and others which followed a more direct strategy, are from a university requesting money for scholarships in the College of Business. The respondents, 142 students in a junior-level business communication course at a regional university, were asked to imagine that they were alumni of the university.

At the beginning of the course unit on persuasive communication, before classroom discussion of persuasive techniques, respondents were given three pairs of letters to read. Each pair consisted of one AIDA letter and one direct letter. The students were then asked to assume that they could donate a total of $100 to each pair of letters and could divide those funds however they wished. They were asked to donate more money to the better letter. The donated amount per pair had to equal $100 but could not be split $50/$50.

Of the responses, 112 were collected from face-to-face classes; in these instances, the instructor distributed one pair of letters at a time along with a response sheet. An additional 30 responses were collected from online classes, in which students were presented with the three pairs of fundraising letters at once.

In addition, students were asked to write a brief paragraph explaining their donation choices for each pair. By analyzing the amount of donations given in response to the individual letters and the qualitative responses, we were able to judge which strategies may have been the most persuasive. Appendix A contains the response sheet and the demographic sheet distributed to the students. Appendices B, C, and D contain the three pairs of letters, respectively; each letter contains annotations of the moves for easy reference.

Results

The findings indicate that traditional undergraduate students, who represent an emerging audience for university fundraisers, may prefer a more direct strategy over an indirect strategy. When analyzing students' donations to each pair of fundraising letters, we determined that each direct message in all three pairs received the most donation dollars. Table 1 shows the dollars allotted to each letter within each pair:

In Pair A, the indirect (AIDA) letter solicited $6,440 and the direct letter solicited $7,970, a difference of $1,530. Similarly, in Pair B, the indirect letter solicited $6,876, while the direct letter solicited $7,944, a difference of $1,068. While these amounts are not striking, the student explanations of their donation decisions reveal particular attitudes towards specific persuasive moves that suggest subtle preferences.

The largest disparity in donations occurred in Pair C. Students donated $10,797 to the direct strategy letter and only $3,703 to the indirect (AIDA) letter. In further analyzing the rhetorical moves of those letters, as well as examining the qualitative comments made by students on their scoring sheets, we determined that students were averse to the attention-getter in the indirect letter: “You never write. You never call. Just off on your own adventure with never a thought about us. But we're here and doing our best to enhance the value of your degree” (Appendix B). In addition, many students indicated that they stopped reading after the first line explaining the “unprofessional,” “rude,” “demanding,” and “inappropriate” tone of the attention-getter. Due to this aversion, the majority of students gave $0 to this letter.

However, when students liked an emotional appeal within the letter, they were motivated to give some money ($10 to $30 out of the $100) despite an ineffective attention-getter. Those who donated cited a move that came at the end of the letter explaining that any amount would go directly to help students cover school costs.

Overall, however, the letters that used a direct strategy raised $26,711 in donations, while those letters that adopted an indirect AIDA strategy raised only $17,019, a difference of $9,692. In higher education fundraising, this could mean a 37% loss, which is substantial.

Table 1. Donations by Letter

Pair	Letter	Donation Amount
Pair A	Letter 1 (indirect)	$6,440
	Letter 2 (direct)	$7,970
Pair B	Letter 1 (indirect)	$6,876
	Letter 2 (direct)	$7,944
Pair C	Letter 1 (indirect)	$3,703
	Letter 2 (direct)	$10,797

Regarding letters in Pairs A and B, where the donations were not extremely disparate, the persuasive elements of the direct letters may have swayed students to donate more.

Pair A (Appendix C)

Letter 1 in Pair A follows closely the AIDA strategy for indirect persuasion by beginning with an attention-getting move: "Lights! Camera! Action! It's almost time for the annual XXXX University's College of Business Student Awards Ceremony. Faculty presenters to the stage! The envelopes, please!" The letter asks for donations to fund student scholarships and indicates how the scholarship monies may be used to help students pay educational expenses such as tuition, housing, books, and supplies. The majority of respondents reported they felt the letter was informative, but clear preferences emerged in the data about the use of the attention-getting strategy at the beginning.

While students did not have as strong a reaction to the tone of this initial move (as they did in Pair C, Letter 1), the majority of student responses indicated that the attention-getter was ineffective, sounded like an advertisement, or was not relevant to the subject of the letter. Although the letter content was perceived as thorough and credible by outlining where and how donation dollars would be used, the attention-getter worked against the persuasiveness of the letter. This prompted students to donate some money ($10-40) to this letter due to the informative nature of the message.

Similarly, the informative and direct nature of Letter 2 seemed to be the most persuasive to the students. In this letter, the writer does not gain the audience's attention first; rather, he begins the letter with Move 2, which explains and establishes the credibility of the cause: "As an alum of the XXXX University College of Business Administration, you know that the CoBA has a rich tradition in business education, shaping the talents and genius of some of XXXX most noted entrepreneurs."

Letter 2 presents the accomplishments and reputation of the school and includes a direct request for donations in the first paragraph: "Please consider making an impromptu investment in the future of business education by being part of a XXXX renaissance of business." Most students appreciated the tone, transparency, and control of this message; the most common responses were "straightforward" and "clearly explained," and students liked being able to designate which program or scholarship their donation would support. This preference was most prominently acknowledged by students in the 18-to-21-year age bracket.

However, a trend emerged among those students who donated more money to the more indirect Letter 1 in this pair. A possible correlation exists between the gender and age of students who found Letter 1 more persuasive: those who preferred the indirect letter were almost always age 25 or over and male. In addition, some females over 25 years of age reported Letter 1 as more persuasive based on the attention-getter. This finding supports our hypothesis that iGeneration students value directness and explicitness in persuasive messages.

Interestingly, students under 25 who donated more to Letter 1 (indirect) identified the same persuasive element that swayed their decision: emotional appeal. Those students (both male and female, aged 18 to 24) claimed that Letter 1's focus on the importance of student scholarships and helping students "achieve their dreams of a college education" influenced their decision, suggesting for higher education fundraisers a potential angle for appealing to this generation.

Pair B (Appendix D)

In Pair B, the same trends emerged regarding age demographics; several students 25 years and older donated more money to the indirect letter because of the attention-getter. Additionally, the persuasive power that influenced students who donated to Letter 1 was linked to being able to make a difference (impact). Several students commented on the power of a $10 donation as well as the emotional appeal in the letter: "...sadly, many of these students cannot afford the ever-growing costs of a college education." Not only did students feel that the *ask* of $10 was reasonable, but several identified the emotional appeal in the letter as effective: "With your help, these dedicated young people can reach their dreams." Significantly, this emotional appeal resonated with the 18-24 age demographic.

Though the main persuasive strategy identified as effective by students for Pair A was information, the majority of students had the opposite reaction to Pair B, Letter 2. Like other direct letters, the writer begins with Move 2 and offers background information on the endowment fund. He also offers an update on the progress of donations and asks for donations in Move 3 of the third paragraph.

Many students found this Letter 2 to be "too long," "too formal," "wordy," and "boring"; although it provides thorough information in an attempt to be transparent, the lack of concision renders the message less persuasive for many students. However, the issue of impact again appears to be the strategy that persuades students to donate more money to this letter.

Like Letter 1 in Pair A, students responded to the potential for increased impact of their gift by having their donations matched in Move 4. Students explained that while the letter was boring and long, they were motivated by the potential for additional impact.

In summary, it appears that iGen students appear to be persuaded by emotional appeals, the opportunity to make a greater difference, and the chance to directly help other students.

Conclusion

These findings suggest that demographic differences in communicative preferences may be influenced by technology, specifically social media and mobile communication. Not only are these technologies blurring the distinction between our personal and professional lives, but the use of wearable technologies is also becoming more common. Digital communication has enormous potential to create a paradigm shift in the ways that people strategically communicate with each other.

Another interesting observation in our study concerns the attention getting device or the "A" in AIDA. As reported in Upton's (2002) article, the "Get Attention" move was rarely observable in the ICIC corpus. In the present study, this same move was frequently the part of the letter the students did not find impressive or persuasive. The majority of students who allocated more dollars to the letters that adopted a direct strategy did so because they appreciated the efficiency and transparency of the letter. They appreciated that the information was "up front" and that the point of the letter (the *ask)* was at the beginning. Several students commented "get to the point" as their preferred communicative method.

This finding suggests that persuasion for a younger demographic should be rooted in fact, transparency, and information, rather than in an effort to gain the audience's attention or by building rapport.

Though our sample size was robust, a few changes could result in a more informative analysis of the data. Further breakdown of age brackets in the under-25 category would be beneficial to indicate tolerances of specific generational boundaries. Additionally, in future research, the use of actual fundraising letters to manage the content of the persuasive appeals may control for the adverse reactions we noted in Pair C. Using actual fundraising letters may also raise students' motivation to donate.

The small number of students in this study who identified the attention- getter in the indirect letters as more persuasive (and who donated more based on this assertion) were older and in a higher income bracket than typical iGeneration students. While this correlation deserves additional analysis, the findings suggest that further study of generational differences in response to fundraising strategies is promising. Specifically, future research could reveal which channels are more effective at reaching and impacting the iGeneration.

In addition, our future research will be focused on the iGeneration's response to the discourse moves of negative or bad news messages. These findings may further underscore a paradigm shift in the ways in which practitioners develop strategies for indirect messages and may affect how business communication message strategy is taught at the college-level.

In closing, the results of this study will enable fundraising and communication practitioners to create messages whose persuasive elements are based on research and not simply on tradition or anecdotal experience. The findings from this study also have the potential to inform curricular development focused on practical persuasion for the 21st Century.

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Appendix A

Directions:

Score Sheet – Persuasive Letters

1. Read both letters in Pair 1. Imagine that you are an alumna/us of both the programs in the letters. (They are from different majors, so you'll need to pretend anew for each letter.)

2. Think about which letter is more persuasive. In other words, which one does a better job of making you want to donate to their cause?

3. Imaginethatyouhavebeengivenatotal$100todonatetothetwouniversities. Decide how much of the $100 you want to give to each university. You may give the entire $100 to one university if it does a fantastic job of making you want to donate; you may also divide the money between the two (for example, $25 to one and $75 to the other).

4. You may **NOT** split the donation directly in half ($50 to one and $50 to the other). The two amounts must be different, even if only by a few dollars.

5. You must donate in whole dollars (that is, no cents!).

6. When you have made your decision, fill out the section for Pair #1 below.

7. Then answer question(a)forPair#1

8. Follow the same procedure for Pair #2.

9. When you have finished reviewing both pairs of letters, fill out the demographic information on the back of the sheet and return it to the instructor.

Pair 1 Amount you'd like to donate to the university in Letter 1: ___________ Amount you'd like to donate to the university in Letter 2: ___________

a) Why did you choose to divide up your donation in the way you did?

Pair 2

Amount you'd like to donate to the university in Letter 1: ___________ Amount you'd like to donate to the university in Letter 2: ___________ a) Why did you choose to divide up your donation in the way you did?

Pair 3

Amount you'd like to donate to the university in Letter 1: ___________ Amount you'd like to donate to the university in Letter 2: __________ a) Why did you choose to divide up your donation in the way you did

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1) What is your age?

◻ < 18 years

◻ 18 to 24 years

◻ 25 and above

2) What ◻ Male

is your gender? ◻ Female

3) Which categories best describe you?

◻ White

◻ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

◻ Black or African-American

◻ Asian

◻ American Indian or Alaska Native

◻ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

◻ Other

4) What

is your major: ____________________________

5) What ◻ Freshman

is your year in school:

◻ Sophomore

◻ Junior

◻ Senior

□ Graduate student

6) How many years have you attended [university name]? □ Less than 1

□ 1year

□ 2 years

□ 3 years

□ 4 years

□ More than 4 years

Demographic Information

Appendix B

INDIRECT (AIDA) - Pair C, Letter 1: $3,703 donated

T.J. Smart, Chair Department of Business Communication College of Business Administration XXXX University P.O. Box XXX XXXX February 1, 2018 [Your Name] [Your Address] [Your City, State, and ZIP] Dear [Your Name]: You never write. You never call. Just off on your own adventure with never a thought about us. But we're here and doing our best to enhance the value of your degree. XXXX University is growing and so is the Business Communication Department. So, we thought you ought to know what we've been doing. Much of our energy lately has been devoted to preparing the proposal for the master's degree in Business Communication. The proposal has been approved the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and we will be open for business with our new MS program in Fall semester, 2018. One of the Department's goals is to create a scholarship fund for students in our new master's degree. In fact, this is such an important issue that every one of the full-time faculty has made a gift to this initiative. Faculty can be a pretty serious force when they believe in the rightness of something like this! We would be honored if you, as an alum, would join with the faculty in supporting the new scholarship fund. Even a gift of $25.00 will make a huge impact. If every Business Communication graduate takes this opportunity to pass along the gifts they have received, then in a few years, we can offer full scholarships to every Business Communication graduate student. So, fill out the enclosed form, and we'll be delighted to hear from you. Sincerely yours, T.J. Smart Chair, Department of Business Communication	Move 1: Get attention Move 2: Introduce the cause and establish the credentials of the organization Move 3: Solicit response Move 4. Offer incentives Move 5. Reference insert Move 6: Express Gratitude Move 7: conclude with pleasantries

DIRECT - Pair C, Letter 2: $10,797 donated

T.J. Smart Associate Dean of Student Services XXXX University P.O. Box	Move 2: Introduce the cause

XXX XXXX February 1, 2018 [Your Name] [Your Address] [Your City, State, and ZIP] Dear [Your Name]: As Associate Dean for Student Services, I would like to introduce a new scholarship program designed to help disadvantaged students pursue in business at XXXX University. I have talked with, and attempted to recruit, many XXXX students for the doctoral program at the school of accounting. XXXX University competes with 20 other business schools throughout the region for the very brightest and most highly qualified candidates. Some candidates have declined our invitation to enroll at XXXX because other schools have been able to offer scholarships, stipends, or other means of financial assistance. Recently we lost two outstanding candidates to out- of-state universities which offered $10,000 scholarships to cover their tuition, books, and supplies. To boost XXXX's enrollment of students from XXXX, I have made a commitment to donate $1,000 annually toward the establishment of a XXXX Student Scholarship program. Our goal is to award scholarships in the amount of $10,000 to first-year business students to pay for supplies and equipment required in the first academic year. I am excited about this new program and invite you to join me in building a strong foundation for the project. Your gift will help us reach our immediate goal of awarding at least one scholarship to a student for the fall semester of 2018, and our long-term goal of awarding several $10,000 scholarships each year. Thank you for considering our request for your contribution to the scholarship fund. I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have about this program--please call me at XXX-XXX- XXXX. Sincerely yours, T.J. Smart, Ph.D. P.S. Checks should be made payable to the XXXX Foundation. An envelope and giving card are enclosed for your convenience.	and establish the credentials of the organization Move 3: Solicit response Move 4. Offer incentives Move 6. Express gratitude Move 7: Conclude with pleasantries Move 5: Reference insert

Appendix C

INDIRECT (AIDA) - Pair A, Letter 1: $6,440 donated	
T.J. Smart, Dean College of Business Administration XXXX University P.O. Box XXX XXXX February 1, 2018 [Your Name] [Your Address] [Your City, State, and ZIP] Dear College of Business Alum, Lights! Camera! Action! It's almost time for the annual XXXX University's College of Business Student Awards Ceremony. Faculty presenters to the stage! The envelopes, please! Excitement abounds as some 300 students and proud parents and grandparents are preparing to fill the Parker Conference Center for this annual event. The event is CoBA's opportunity to recognize the winners of scholarships ranging from $50 to $3,000—scholarships made possible by alumni like you. We would like to offer a special way for you to participate in this memorable ceremony—by donating to one of the more than 50 scholarships available to CoBA students. With support from you and fellow alumni, the students of today are able to pay the ever-increasing costs of tuition, housing, books, and other expenses. In short, you can help them achieve their dreams of a college education. To donate to student scholarships, please complete the enclosed form and mail it with your check made payable to the XXXX College of Business Administration by March 15. This is a great way to make a dynamic donation to the students of XXXX CoBA. The students' appreciation and enthusiasm for what they are doing will go a long way to thank you for your encouragement and support. Sincerely, T.J. Smart Dean, XXXX College of Business Administration	Move 1: Get attention Move 2: Introduce the cause and establish the credentials of the organization Move 3: Solicit response Move 4. Offer incentives Move 5: Reference insert Move 6. Express gratitude Move 7: Conclude with pleasantries

DIRECT – Pair A, Letter 2: $7,970 donated

T.J. Smart, Dean College of Business Administration XXXX University P.O. Box XXX XXXX February 1, 2018 [Your Name] [Your Address] [Your City, State, and ZIP] Dear [Your Name]: As an alum of the XXXX University College of Business Administration, you know that the CoBA has a rich tradition in business education, shaping the talents and genius of some of XXXX most noted entrepreneurs. In fact, an impressive number of business leaders with national reputations are products of the XXXX program, succeeding despite old—often inadequate— facilities. Please consider making an impromptu investment in the future of business education by being part of a XXXX renaissance of business. Areas where support is needed are identified below: ____GENERAL FUND. These funds allow the school some flexibility by putting your gift to work in an area that most needs it as circumstances arise. ____SCHOLARSHIPS/AWARDS. Students need to be recognized and rewarded for their abilities and efforts. Your gift in this area has a direct impact on a student's continuing education. Please identify whether you wish to support the General Scholarship Fund or a particular scholarship (indicate name of this scholarship here:________________) ____VISITING SCHOLAR SERIES. Assistance is needed to continue this program which brings in some of the nation's most noted business leaders to speak with students and faculty as well as the public. ____SATURDAY SCHOOL. The Saturday School offers various business classes for young and old alike who wish to improve their business knowledge but are not full-time XXXX students. Your assistance will allow the continuance of offering these programs at reasonable rates. ____FACULTY ENRICHMENT. Our faculty needs support for continuing education to maintain the knowledge base necessary for teaching and to meet with faculty members from other schools to exchange ideas and information at national meetings. Thank you for your gift! Please make checks payable to: Sam Houston State	Move 2: Introduce the cause and establish the credentials of the organization Move 3: Solicit response Move 4. Offer incentives Move 5: Reference insert Move 6: Express Gratitude Move 7: Conclude with pleasantries

University College of Business Administration, check the area from the above-listed categories where you'd like your gift to support, and return both items in the envelope. Sincerely, T.J. Smart, Dean	

Appendix D

INDIRECT – Pair B, Letter 1: $6,876 donated	
T.J. Smart, Dean College of Business Administration XXXX University P.O. Box XXX XXXX February 1, 2018 [Your Name] [Your Address] [Your City, State, and ZIP] Dear [Your Name]: Just a moment of your time, if you can, to talk about a ten dollar bill. True, it won't buy much today, but multiply that ten dollars by 12,453— the number of living alumni of the XXXX University College of Business Administration—and you have $124,530. Not a small amount at all! With such an amount, the College of Business Administration could offer scholarships to dozens, and perhaps hundreds, of students whose dream it is to attend Our University and to receive the best business education anywhere. Even small gifts from alumni like you can make a huge impact on the life of a student. Our University strives to attract the best and brightest young people from across Texas—though, sadly, many of these students cannot afford the ever-growing costs of a college education. With your help, these dedicated young people can reach their dreams of becoming skilled business professionals just like you. To make a gift, fill out the enclosed form and return it with your check in the enclosed envelope. You may also make a gift online by going to	Move 1: Get attention Move 2: Introduce the cause and establish the credentials of the organization Move 3: Solicit response Move 4. Offer incentives Move 5: Reference insert Move 6. Express gratitude Move 7: Conclude with pleasantries

www.xxxx.edu/giving. The future business professionals thank you. Sincerely, T.J. Smart Dean, College of Business Administration	

DIRECT – Pair B, Letter 2: $7,944 donated

T.J. Smart, Chair Department of Accounting College of Business Administration XXXX University P.O. Box XXX XXXX February 1, 2018 [Your Name] [Your Address] [Your City, State, and ZIP] Dear [Your Name]: As you know, we are in the process of building an endowment fund in graduate accountancy at XXXX University which will honor Dr. Timothy J. O'Leary, a man whose leadership played a significant role in our school and profession. The Dr. Timothy J. O'Leary Accounting Endowment Fund will greatly benefit our faculty and students by providing funding to support teaching and research in our graduate accountancy program. Your support of this endowment in the past has been greatly appreciated. I am pleased to report to you that we have raised $87,000 toward our initial goal, which is to reach $100,000 by January 2019. In a time when higher education, and graduate programs in particular, are suffering from a lack of funding, we are positioning ourselves to remain a leader with outstanding faculty, students, and private support from alumni and friends of the program. As we approach our goal, a graduate of our program has offered to match all new gifts (dollar for dollar) until we reach the $100,000 mark. To help us take advantage of this generous offer, I'd like to ask you to consider an additional contribution to the Dr. Timothy J. O'Leary Accounting Endowment Fund. This fund is extremely important to us, and your ongoing participation will be greatly	Move 2: Introduce the cause and establish the credentials of the organization Move 4. Offer incentives Move 3: Solicit response Move 6. Express gratitude Move 7: Conclude with pleasantries

appreciated. You have helped us get to this point, and I hope that you'll extend your support. All contributions are tax-deductible. I thank you for your consideration of this request – it will really make a difference! Sincerely, T.J. Smart, Ph.D. Chair, XXXX University Department of Accounting	

Examining Sexual Persecution in Digital Communication through Haptic Communications

Leslie Ramos Salazar
Soumen Mukherjee

Introduction

Sexual harassment, or the "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct [behaviors] of a sexual nature," often results through haptics or touch communication (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 2016). According to Hornstein (1984) "sexual harassment refers to repeated demands or continuing behavior of supervisors or co-workers that add a discriminating condition or term of employment or create a harmful work environment for women" (p. 233). Interestingly, traditional sexual harassment often results from haptic communication, or communication through physical touch such as a touching body parts that are perceived to be off limits to others (e.g., buttocks), except one's romantic partner (Andersen, 1999).

However, given the increased reliance on the use of technological communication tools to initiate and maintain social bonds, the range of haptic communication intensities in cross-sex relationships has evolved in recent times. Haptic communication in online environments is called virtual haptic communication, or virtual touch, and this is defined as "a tactile feedback technology that takes advantage of users' sense of touch by applying force, vibrations or motion to the user" (Brewster, 2001). It has clear that technological devices such as cellular phones, tablets, laptops, and iWatches have enhanced users' vulnerability to online sexual harassment given that perpetrators may target their victims using technology regardless of the geographical location or intimacy levels. Social networking and microblogging sites, email communications, and instant messaging have also enabled haptic communications to emerge in digital environments to establish closer psychological bonds between complete strangers in the virtual space, or to enhance the intimate bonds between existing cross-sex friends and romantic partners. However, these newer technological developments have also created a new realm of sexually harassing behaviors. There is a game called *Quiver* where women are actively sought out for harassment purposes, and so the game creators set up a virtual shield of sorts that could surround one's avatar and prevent people from touching them if they so choose to do so.

The digitization of haptic communication ranges from nonintrusive to more intrusive behaviors that are perceived to be sexual harassment at different intensities by the targets of these offenses. Examples of less intrusive virtual touch behaviors include flirtatious behaviors such as 'poking' or 'liking' someone's status, 'loving' someone's Tweet message, or touching a screen using a sexualized 'selfie' image. Other intrusive forms of sexual harassment through haptic communication include using technological devices such as touching an avatar or a virtual representation of a person with a joystick and using a web-camera to self-touch as a target is watching to sexually harass others in an abusive manner.

Since haptic communication has evolved in digital environments, risks for online sexual harassment and digital sexual abuse have become more prevalent. Online sexual harassment, also known as Internet sexual harassment, is defined as sexual harassment that occurs via technological devices such as a computer or mobile device across Internet mediums such as chats, forums, social networking sites, e-mail, or instant messaging (Sexual Harassment on the Internet, 2010). Unlike in face-to-face conversations, computer-mediated communication has enabled complete strangers to interact using virtual touch that serves to express intimacy (psychological and physical closeness) accompanied with sexual desires rapidly and with much higher frequency than non- virtual interactions. Since the initial relationship development process is mainly motivated by amorous exchanges and the incidents of virtual infidelity or participating in cybersex by exchanging sexualized videos or images to achieve sexual arousal, and as such, virtual infidelity with a person outside of one's long-term romantic relationship has been increasingly noted in long- term relationships (Parker & Wampler, 2003; Vossler, 2016). Thus, the probability of virtual haptic harassment manifestations by offenders has increased manifold.

In a critical review, Boothroyd (2009) theorized the development of haptic communication using digital communication technologies, which has led to a variety of ethical relational challenges, including sexual harassment, in recent years. Earlier Yee and Bailenson (2007) expounded a notion called *virtual interpersonal touch*, or the use of virtual haptic devices to permit one person to touch another person. In fact, dissimilar emotional states, such as fear or joy, could to different degrees be encoded and inferred using these haptic digital devices. Adopting virtual haptic devices to sexually stimulate or arouse another person using computer devices may facilitate the development of short-term "hook up" relationships or long-term romantic relationships with complete strangers, or with previous ex-partners. Individuals in committed face-to-face relationships may choose to explore their sexuality with others using virtual haptic devices with those whom they met online, and this can lead to *online infidelity*, or performing virtual sex outside of a committed relationship (Atwood, 2005). Also, exploring the use of virtual haptic devices to touch others in chatrooms or video games in a flirtatious manner can lead to online sexual harassment, especially when website hosts lack civility policies and norms, which can produce ethical harm in virtual realms (Alapack, Blichfeldt, & Elden, 2005; Vanacker & Heider, 2012).

One reason for the frequent use of virtual haptics to engage in the sexual gratification process may be due to an increasing interpersonal problem called *touch deprivation*, or the need for affectionate touch (Punyanunt-Carter, 2009). Touch deprivation has been documented to be a problem in American society within the last decade, and a study found that 72% of Americans experience loneliness from being touch deprived from close relationships (Floyd, 2015; Marcus, 2016). Research studies demonstrate that individuals who do not receive enough physical affectionate touch are more prone to negative effects such as depression (Field, 1995), aggression (Field, 2002), and health problems (Derlega, Cantazaro, & Lewis, 2001). Due to this touch deprivation, individuals may use technology without others' consent to achieve "virtual interpersonal touch" as a substitute to traditional touch in relationships (Saadatian, 2014). According to Floyd (2014), affectionate touch deprivation is often experienced by lonely and depressed individuals that lack the competence to fulfill their touch desires from face-to-face relationships, and for this reason, individuals who are deprived from physical touch are motivated to seek affectionate virtual touch from others in online environments. Online environments are also less intimidating and enable individuals to remain anonymous and express secret desires without feeling rejected by others in person or without the fears of being caught for engaging in abusive behavior (Wolak et al., 2008). While it is not possible to engage in physical touch with another via computer-mediated interactions, touch deprived individuals can coerce others to obtain virtual touch to fulfill their tactile desires (Wolak et al., 2008). Deprived individuals, for example, can become physically stimulated from giving or receiving virtual touch by using tactile technologies to engage in virtual kissing (Saadatian 2014), virtual hugs (Tsetserokou, 2010), and intimate sexual activities (Solon, 2015). If deprived individuals are not able to receive virtual touch with consent, individuals can use coercion or force to receive affectionate virtual touch from others using manipulation techniques to sexually abuse others online (Wolak et al., 2008). As studies suggest, touch deprived individuals also suffer from anxiety and attachment disorders, which can lead to the use of aggression and violence in relationships (Floyd, 2014; Field, 2002), and helps to explain why individuals that seek affectional virtual touch sexually harass others in online settings via haptics.

The purpose of this article is therefore to examine haptic communication as a subset of sexual harassment by discussing its transcendence from face-to-face settings to digital environments. More specifically, in the present research, we will a) review the prevalence of online sexual harassment literature through haptics in gendered communication, b) conceptualize the evolution of the definitions of haptic communication and sexual harassment, from face-to-face to digital settings, c) review the effects of online sexual harassment on both women and men, d) describe the impact of haptic communication on sexual harassment in the workplace, and e) discuss the future directions for haptic communication and sexual harassment scholarship.

Literature Review of Online Sexual Harassment and Gender

Previous studies have widely documented the prevalence of online sexual harassment against men and women across different types of virtual abuse including via the emergent area of haptics, or virtual touch.

Online Gender Harassment Perpetration

As far as the prevalence of perpetration is concerned, some studies have examined the perpetration rates of online gender harassment. Since predators may have easy access to victims through the use of social media and mobile devices and they believe that are less likely to get tracked for their misconduct, it has become easier for offenders to sexually victimize individuals online (Chawki & Shazly, 2013). A 2010 study found that 18% of online sexual harassment offenses occur in chat rooms, and these offenses are tailored to the young, both men and women (Chawki & Shazly, 2013). Also, about 82% of offenders who adopt the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, use them to investigate a victim's page (Chawki & Shazly, 2013). Studies have reported that online offenders tend to adopt the use of the Internet to harass up to 75% of girls and 25% of boys aged 13 to 15 years of age (Chawki & Shazly, 2013). As far as gender is concerned, a few studies suggest that mid-adolescent boys (ages 13 to 18) are more likely to engage in online gender sexual harassment in comparison to girls (Raskauskas & Stolz, 2007; Smith et al., 2008). However, girls were found to be more likely to spread rumors online (Wolaak et al., 2006). Other studies report mixed findings suggesting that both males and females perpetrate at proportional levels (Li, 2006; Wolak et al., 2007).

Online Gender Harassment Victimization

In a Pew Research Center study, Duggan (2014) found that 19% of participants witnessed others being sexually harassed online and 18% reported being cyber-stalked by another person. Similarly, the study also found that 6% reported being sexually harassed by others through the Internet. For the most part, young women between the ages of 18 and 24 were more likely to be sexually harassed or stalked on the Internet through social media. Approximately 25% of the young women reported experiencing sexual harassment online (Duggan, 2014). Generally, men are slightly more likely than women to experience at least one of the behaviors of online harassment, 44% vs. 37%

(Duggan, 2014; 2017). Additionally, males regardless of age were more likely to experience online sexual harassment when playing online games in comparison to other online activities such as using social networking sites, websites, or instant message applications (Duggan, 2014). In terms of explicit know-hows, men are more likely than women to bump into name- calling, embarrassment (in terms of displaying lewd pictures like showing men's genitals), and physical threats. Of the persecution reported, the majority of internet users experienced online harassment via a social networking site or mobile app (Duggan, 2014). In the gaming environment of Second Life, 38% of women and 13% of men reported receiving unwanted sexual advances to engage in cybersex through their avatar (Behm-Morawitz & Schipper, 2015). Also, Behm-Morawitz and Schipper (2015) found that female avatars are more likely to experience online gender sexual harassment in *Second Life* in comparison to male avatars. More specifically, female avatars that use provocative clothing and appear physically fit with enlarged breasts are more likely to experience sexual harassment in comparison to "non-sexual" female avatars that use conservative clothing, appear overweight, or appear physically unattractive (Behm-Morawitz & Schipper, 2015). Physically attractive avatars in Second Life are at risk for experiencing haptic harassment given that players can use sexual features, which enables intimate virtual touch activities with another avatar, such cuddling, kissing, fondling, and displaying different types of sexual positions using multi -love pose furniture (Kidd, 2007). Users can also use digital sex toys on other avatars and can type "sexual scripts" to direct their avatar's touch behavior on others using an instant message (IM) feature (Kidd, 2007). Thus, websites, online games, email accounts, discussion sites (e.g., Reddit), and online dating websites/apps have emerged as virtual spaces where women continue to report online sexual harassment, including haptic harassment.

Additionally, a study by Priebe and Svedin (2012) investigated the prevalence of online sexual harassment due to their gender and sexual orientation has emerged in both heterosexual and homosexual youth. The study found that sexual minorities, especially gay boys, had four times increased odds of being sexually harassed using mobile devices through text messages and six times increased odds of being exposed to sexual pictures or sexual videos in comparison to straight men (Priebe & Svedin, 2012). Gay boys reported being primarily harassed by same-sex individuals. Interestingly, sexual-minority girls also reported almost twofold of increased odds of experiencing online harassment via mobile phones in comparison to straight girls (Priebe & Svedin, 2012). The girls reported being harassed by both boys and girls. This study suggests that youth who are considered sexual minorities tend to be at risk for the prevalence of sexual harassment through "rude comments" or "received sexual solicitations" via websites, social networking sites, or mobile devices in comparison to heterosexual youth (Priebe & Svedin, 2012; Suseg, Skevik, Valset, & Mossige, 2008).

To add, a similar study found that 94% of youth ages 16 to 24 indicated being sexually victimized through the Internet for their sexual orientation, and they reported receiving invectives and being physically or sexually abused (Mustanksi, Newcomb, & Garofalo, 2011). Other studies found that young people are more likely to experience sexual victimization in online settings than middle-aged people. These studies demonstrate the pervasiveness of online gender harassment experienced by young victims (Mitchell, Ybarra, & Korchmaros, 2014; Holt, Bossler, Malinski, & May, 2016).

Online Workplace Harassment

Not only are youth being sexually victimized online, but the prevalence of working adults' online sexual harassment is also notable. In a study of heterosexual women in the workplace, 41% reported being sexually harassed through the Internet through unsolicited pornographic videos or images, or through being cyberstalked through social media (Griffiths, 2000). Another study found that 17% of women reported being sexually harassed at work via colleagues or supervisors through e-mail messages with explicit visual photographs and 49% reported receiving offensive emails with sexual connotations about their sexual identity (Whitty, 2004). Online workplace harassment can also occur outside of employees' regular work schedule. Individuals that report online sexual harassment at work may receive sexually explicit or suggestive images, videos, or text messages from a colleague or a supervisor after work (Ricotta & Marks, 2017). As far as haptics are concerned, individuals may report being coerced into engaging in cybersex during or after work, or exchanging self-touching sexual photographs or videos using a mobile device (Cooper, Golden, & Ferraro, 2002). Interestingly, one of the main reasons why workplace predators harass their colleagues at work using online platforms is due to mental illness or sexual addiction (Cooper, Golden, & Ferraro, 2002). Another explanation is due to broken workplace romantic relationships. Mainiero and Jones (2013) report that inappropriate online sexual harassment cases occur in the workplace from ex-romantic partners at the office using social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to harass victims using haptics. Ex-partners, for example, would use instant text messaging and other technological devices to sexually harass the victims inside and outside of the office context. As a result, workplace contexts increase the immediate threat of victims because they can be sexually abused via haptics in both physical and mediated settings due to the physical proximity with the predator from a broken workplace relationship (Mainiero & Jones, 2013). For instance, a victim may receive physical touches on the thigh from an ex-partner at work and also requests to engage in cybersex using virtual touch to stimulate the predator's sexual desires outside of work hours. As such, receiving both physical and online haptic sexual harassment from ex-partners can be emotionally devastating and uncomfortable for the victims of this type of abuse (Mainiero & Jones, 2013). Given the online sexual victimization occurring in the workplace, victims and bystanders need to become aware of their organization's policies regarding online sexual harassment and report these behaviors to Human Resources, or their direct supervisors (Barak, 2005). Individuals may also sign "love contracts," which are contracts signed by both partners after a workplace relationship has ended that prohibits unethical conduct regarding the use of digital abuse, which can prevent online sexual harassment via haptics at work (Tyler, 2008). As we can see, adults are also vulnerable to online workplace harassment.

Virtual Haptics Sexual Harassment

The exploitation that has been largely limited to verbal and textual messages has transferred through virtual haptics through the exchange of self-touching photos and videos, and through the touch of avatars through virtual reality technologies. In the Second Youth Internet Safety Survey, Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Wolak (2007) collected national data, which represented 1,500 youth ages 10-17 years who use the Internet, and found that 4% of these youth reported receiving unwanted sexual requests to send pictures of themselves touching their private parts or displaying nudity to complete strangers or others whom they met online.

This behavior occurs in online video games using virtual avatars as well. For instance, A Second Life teen victim reported that she was sexually harassed during her first week of playing the game, she reported that she met a male avatar who took her to a nude beach and he asked her to go skinny-dipping with him (Allendale, 2007). Before she realized it, she noticed that the penis of the avatar appeared and it started to have sexual intercourse with her nude avatar (Allendale, 2007). With feelings of disgust and betrayal, she felt that those sexual behaviors were not consensual and asked him to stop multiple times using the text feature of the game (Allendale, 2007). When he finally stopped, she got dressed again and left him isolated at the beach (Allendale, 2007). She realized how naïve she was to trust another virtual user that quickly and how easily one can be manipulated into having non-sensual cybersex in Second Life (Allendale, 2007). This experience highlights how quickly and unexpectedly virtual haptic sexual harassment can occur in simulated video game environments. Unfortunately, users in virtual games such as Second Life continue to be at risk for virtual haptic sexual harassment, however, no studies have investigated the exact prevalence of incidents of sexual harassment. Second Life's Linden Lab has developed policies to prevent these sexual harassment offenses by promoting mutual respect among the avatars and also offering one-to-three day suspensions to avatar predators who get reported by the avatar victims (Bugeja, 2010). As such, users need to be cognizant of the possible virtual haptic sexual abuse risks involved when playing these video games.

Another study found that of a sample of 2,051 adolescents as part of the National Survey of

Children's Exposure to Violence, 96% of those ages 10 to 17 years reported being harassed online through websites or social networking sites, or through unwanted online sexual solicitations via email or instant messages. Moreover, victims indicated being harassed at least one time using off-line victimization (Mitchell, et al., 2011). In addition, 9% of online youth reported being sexually offended online for several years through being flashed through webcams or through rated-R pictures (Mitchell et al., 2011). Not only are youth being sexually harassed via haptics by strangers, but also by their peers and ex-romantic partners. Another study found that 6-8% of youth have reported being coerced into engaging in unwanted sexual haptic activities such as engaging in cybersex and sharing self-touching pornographic videos and images (Kopecky, 2017). For this reason, youth continue to be at risk for virtual haptics sexual harassment.

Adults also report being sexually harassed through receiving unsolicited pornographic videos and images. According to the Pew Research Center (2014) 25% of women 18 to 24 and 13% of men 18 to 24 reported sexual harassment incidents through the Internet by receiving unwanted sexual graphic material or unwanted messages referring to touching their sex organs. Several offenders have also been reported engaging in haptics sexual harassment using threatening emails and messages on Facebook by extorting nude photos and self-masturbating videos to engage in cybersex with women in the states of Alabama, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Wisconsin (Wilson, 2010; Chawki & Shazly, 2013). As we can see, the frequency of online haptic sexual harassment in online settings continues to be a major social problem.

Defining Haptic Communication and Sexual Harassment

The conceptualizations of haptic communication and sexual harassment in gender communication have transformed within the last decade given individuals' use of communication technologies. Haptic communication emphasizes the process of touching another person to express relational closeness or affiliation including a handshake or a hug (Andersen, 1999). However, with the advancement of technology, individuals adopt technologies and social media to sexually harass others through virtual touch. Due to the access to digital communication technologies, many times harassers are choosing to sexually harass others through the use of virtual touch communication. Hence, it is of prime importance for the researchers pursuing studies on digital-gender harassment to understand the various definitions of haptic communication and sexual harassment.

Prior to delving into the complexity, we must first try to understand harassment in general and sexual harassment in particular. Harassment consists of the deliberate crossing of our emotional or physical safety boundaries. The legal definition of harassment, according to Black's Law Dictionary is: "A course of conduct directed at a specific person that causes noteworthy emotional distress in such person and serves no legitimate purpose" or "Words, gestures, and actions which tend to annoy, alarm and abuse (verbally) another person." Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical demeanor of a sexual nature. Harassment in the virtual world can occur at any time while video chatting in a chatroom platform, instant messaging, playing a multiplayer videogame, or participating in social networking sites such as Facebook.

To date, very little research has examined haptic communication as it relates to sexual harassment given the ethical restrictions of doing so in laboratory settings (Murphy, Discroll, & Kelly, 1999). However, precursor nonverbal cues have been found to trigger physical touch or haptic communication in face-to-face settings to promote sexual interest. For instance, two studies found that males express dominance in conversations leading to sexual harassment by expressing sexual interest cues such as smiles, head cants, and flirtatious glances, and these may lead to severe physical forms of touch including the grabbing of the buttocks (Simpson, Gagestad, & Biek, 1993; Murphy, Discroll, & Kelly, 1999). A flirting workplace study found that video coders of sexual harassment incidents rated male supervisors' touch advances towards female subordinates as sexual harassment, while they rated female supervisors' touch advances towards subordinate males as "friendly" flirting behavior (Keyton & Rhodes, 1993), thereby suggesting that touch in sexual harassment contexts can be perceived differently depending on the perpetrators' sex.

Prior to discussing the differing conceptualizations of sexual harassment in face-to-face and virtual settings, the following table provides examples of how to distinguish between tactile sexual harassment that occurs in both settings, as well as the intensity of each activity.

Intensity of Harassment	**Sexual Harassment (Face-to-Face) & Touch**	**Sexual Harassment (Online) & Virtual Touch**
Mild	poking a person's arm touching a person's non-private physical body parts	over "liking" or "poking" using Facebook excessive "hearting" using Twitter
Moderate	5. hugging a person too intimately, or for a	touching a digital *avatar* from social media in an unwanted

	prolonged period of time 6. massaging a person's lower back 7. kissing a person in an unwanted manner 8. touching a person's thigh 9. rubbing oneself against another person	manner touching a video game avatar inappropriately using another avatar sharing sexually explicit pictures of one touching him or herself without consent sending inappropriate sexual texts, images, or videos requesting a nude or sexually explicit pictures or videos displaying offensive self- touching videos

Severe	10. touching a person's private body parts such as the breasts 11. rubbing one's genitals with another person 12. engaging in oral sex 13. engaging in sexual intercourse	sending inappropriate videos via email or social networking sites such as masturbation or smooching virtually touching the private parts of another person's avatar without consent including the breasts or groin engaging in unwanted virtual sex with another's avatar engaging in cybersex with a technological device forcing or pressuring another virtual user to use technological devices such as We-Vibe Sync or electronic sex toys operated from computers or mobile devices to vibrate the physical genitals of another person in an undesirable manner

Defining Haptic Communication and Sexual Harassment in Face-to-Face Settings

Broadly defined, haptic communication, or touch communication, is a type of nonverbal communication that "influences and reflects the nature of social relationships between individuals" (Thayer, 1986, p. 13). Haptic communication refers to the ways in which individuals and other animals communicate and interrelate via the sense of touch. In addition to providing facts about exteriors and consistencies, touch, or the haptic sense is a constituent of communication in interpersonal associations that is nonverbal and nonvisual. Touch is imperative for humans and is central in conveying physical tenderness. In face-to-face settings, haptic communication, or haptic touch is defined as touch that enables humans to connect and communicate internal emotions with others in relationships (Gallace & Spence, 2008).

A study by Hertenstein, Holmes, Kerestes, and Verkamp (2006) suggested that there are three types of touch, such as *simple touch,* including grabbing someone's hand; *protracted touch*, including a quick embrace; and *dynamic touch*, including a deep massage. Touch in face-to-face settings can include positive behaviors such as handshake between colleagues, a hug between friends, or a kiss between partners. Positive touch behaviors may function to comfort a partner in pain (Dolin & Booth-Butterfield, 1993), to influence a person to engage in certain behaviors (Morrison, Loken, & Olausson, 2009), or to initiate sexual attempts (Bisson & Levine, 2009). Touch can also include negative behaviors such as a slap in the face from a bully, a punch in the stomach from a relative, or a pinch on the butt from a colleague. Negative touch behaviors can also function to manipulate, harass, intimidate, or disempower others. Legally speaking, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC, 2016), sexual harassment in the context of haptics in face-to-face settings can include:

- giving a massage around the neck or upper shoulders
- touching a person's physical body (face, hair, buttocks, etc.)
- touching a person's clothing or attire
- hugging
- kissing
- patting
- stroking
- touching or rubbing in a sexual manner
- standing too close

Sexual harassment can include quid pro- quo harassment and hostile working environment.

Quid pro-quo harassment or "this for that" refers to threatening a person to engage in unwelcome sexual behavior to obtain or retain employment, or receive bonuses. For instance, a boss can request an intimate night out with an employee, and if the person declines this request, the boss may threaten that employee by suggesting that they may lose their job. *Hostile working environment*, on the other hand is unwelcome sexual behavior that occurs at work, which affects employees' ability to function properly at work. For example, employees may massage their colleague each time they see their colleague, and employees might intimidate their colleague with unwanted, ambiguous, or overly friendly touches. Yet, a hostile working environment could also be created without the use of physical touch. Virtually speaking, employees may share self- touching pornographic images, videos, or websites using a mobile device or a computer at work during the lunch break, which can cultivate distress and embarrassment in colleagues that witness this unwelcome behavior. Working in a hostile working environment could lead to feeling negative emotions such as anxiety, embarrassment, guilt, shame, disgust, and stress (Spector, 2017). Feeling these negative emotions from experiencing a hostile work environment overtime can also lead to decreased self-esteem, enhanced risk for depression, and low job satisfaction (Szymanski & Feltman, 2015).

Sexual discrimination can also be defined in a political context given the abuse of power. As in the case with quid pro-quo harassment, individuals may adopt haptic communication in work environments to abuse their authority over others. An individual in a position of power, for instance the CEO of a company or a manager in an organization, may hold certain authority over others and may abuse their power by using quid pro quo harassment to discriminate against others' sex or to abuse others in sexually explicit ways. Recently, Harvey Weinstein, the producer and co- founder of the Weinstein Company and Miramax, was fired and expelled from the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences for the use haptics in sexual harassment cases through masturbating, unwelcome touching, and forcing oral and vaginal sex on women who worked for his company (Farrow, 2017). Dominique Huett, an actress who worked for him, filed a lawsuit against him because Mr. Weinstein forced oral sex on her and touched her without her consent (Gabler, Twohey, & Kantor, 2017). While several women reported unwanted touching behaviors at work events and at his office, several other women remained silent and did not report these sexual harassment offenses in fear of losing their jobs or career reputation (Gabler, Twohey, & Kantor, 2017).

On the other hand, *gender-based discrimination harassment* occurs when one harasses a person due to their gender by expressing femininity or masculinity. Gender-based discrimination can occur with the use of haptics, and this can occur in same-sex or cross-sex relationships at work, or in other settings. A person, for instance, may physically assault or interfere with a cross- gendered person's quality of life, and this can occur in non-sexual ways due to lack of tolerance to this person's cross-gender lifestyle. For example, La'Ray Reed, a transgender employee, experienced gender-based discrimination during work hours at McDonalds. Her supervisor would call her "boy-slash-girl" and would grope her genitals, and would make her use a storage closet as a bathroom since she was not allowed to use either male or female bathrooms (Wong, 2017). Upon being fired due to her transgender identity, she filed a lawsuit against McDonalds (Wong, 2017). Additionally, Mikana Milho, another transgendered individual, was victimized of gender-based discrimination through haptics as she was serving her community service duty for stealing a handbag (Schladebeck, 2016). Her supervisor touched her buttocks inappropriately, requested to touch her breasts and kiss her, and asked for sexual favors to fulfill his curiosities in exchange of early release on her community service duties (Schladebeck, 2016).

Defining Haptic Communication and Sexual Harassment in Digital Settings

Touch is imperative in social interaction and indispensable in forming bonds and building trust (Henley & Henley, 1977), and these characteristics are also expected in virtual touch. As touch based interface in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) escalates the efficacy in communication, it helps in expressing desires, building trust, and realizing behavioral changes. Haptic is a term derived from the Greek word "*haptikos*" pertaining to the sense of touch. HCI is the newest technology to arrive in the world of computer interface devices. The nature of haptic communication has evolved given the development of digital environments. Haptic communication that occurs through sexual harassment ranges from mild to severe forms of virtual touch. Mild forms of virtual touch can include excessive 'liking' or 'poking' of someone's picture or video, moderate forms can include sending sexually explicit pictures (Biber et al., 2002), and severe forms can include virtually touching the private parts of someone's avatar or engaging in cybersex. For instance, tactile feedback technology can be used to sexually intimidate other users in virtual reality environments such as Second Life through the touch of avatars, which simulate and enhance tactile vibrations (Brewster, 2001).

Online sexual harassment with haptics can include sending graphic material, such as pornographic films or lewd images Virtual touch expedites electronic diffusion of human tactile stimuli, permitting end users to recognize the textures and contours of remote objects. Besides conveying the sensation of everyday objects, the technology can also be used to enhance approachability, maybe through the transmission of Braille characters. Many times, *reverse- electro-vibration*, popularly known as virtual touch, itself becomes the initiating point for online sexual harassment that can lead to severe forms of online sexual harassment, such as cyberrape. It is one area of haptics used with virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology.

VR space has some social gaming apps where people can log in to interact and socialize, such as *Rec Room,* where one can team up with other players to complete quests or play against in games like paintball. Also, *VRChat*, vaunts full body avatars that actually move with you with lip- sync to simulate real-life emotions; *The WaveVR,* where you have your own personal area, called a 'Cave' has a wardrobe so you can customize your avatar, a dance floor and your own personal dj booth. So, you can start an abrupt virtual party. Participants use VR gear and sometimes a phone. VR gear refers to the input devices, clothing and equipment worn by people who engage in virtual reality. This includes:

i) Virtual reality glasses or goggles

ii) Data gloves

iii) Head mounted displays (HMD)

iv) Data suits

v) Workbenches

vi) Joysticks

This also includes haptic expedients, which empower the user to feel a sense of touch when they manipulate an object within a virtual environment. Virtual reality goggles are a major part of the set up and can be acquired by gamers as well as people engaged in many forms of virtual reality research in institutions and universities. The foremost difference between virtual reality gear in the past and now is that back then, the trend was towards outsized, bulky looking gear, which was scratchy and unfathomable. And, over it had a space-age appearance and a high price tag, which may have been a turn off for the commercial sector. But today, virtual reality gear has become slighter, daintier and more affordable. The bulky television sized head mounted display (HMD) has been replaced by lighter models, which fit neatly over the front of the face. Head mounted display take the form of a pair of goggles or helmet with a screen in front, which displays 3D (three dimensional) images. Many of these contain headphones and/or speakers so that the wearer receives audio/video output as well. Most displays are connected to cables although there are several wireless models available.

Head mounted displays also contain a tracking device, which means that the images displayed to the wearer change as he/she moves their head. This also changes their point of view. Logging in through the apps creates an experience similar to entering a chat room. However, the difference is that he/she appears to everyone there, and one can speak with others, hug them, or touch them, in real time. Although moderators are constantly on their toes to regulate harassment in VR chat-rooms, cases of enforced and unwanted kissing and smooching have been recorded several times (Perry, 2008; Igbokwe, 2016).

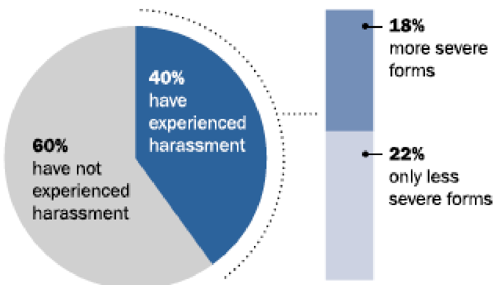
Haptic communication may also occur in hybrid settings or in online-only communication settings. For example, in cross-gendered conversations in a social networking site such as Facebook, when a male continually expresses sexual interest through a “poke” or through multiple “likes,” women can become vulnerable to electronic sexual harassment. Many times even men feel susceptible when women send them obscene smileys to tease their “manhood” in private chat- rooms in the social networking sites. Unlike in face-to-face settings, where physical touch occurs, virtual touch differs, yet it is still harmful and a cause of perpetual agony for both genders. For instance, the emotional and psychological impact of virtual touch on female victims may have a bearing on their mental progression. We all know that humans mimic each- other’s expressions and emotions when we’re talking in person. This emotional septicity is a big part of how we show empathy and build relationships with other in a society. But online, we’re missing that crucial element of empathy and sensation. Or, we were—until emoticons and emojis came into existence!

Scientists have discovered that when we look at a smiley face online, the same parts of the brain are activated as when we look at a real human face. Our mood changes and we might even alter our facial expressions to match the emotion of the emoticon. As a genial and widespread vernacular form, emoji now serve to smooth out the rough edges of digital life. While emojis originated as diverse sets of emoticons used chiefly in Japan, they’ve now been established as a global standard that works across all modern devices. Since users can pick from hundreds of emojis, many of which have taken on a new layer of meaning, it’s not surprising that people would find ways to combine them to create even more sexually explicit suggestions. In the U.S., three consecutive tongue emojis (representing repeated licking) are the most widely used explicit emoji/emoticons chain – more than four times as common as the runner-up of two aubergine emojis. Other emoticons that appear commonly within these chains are the “splashing sweat” emoji (sometimes used as a stand-in for any bodily fluids), the peach emoji (referring either to buttocks or female genitalia), and a finger pointing at an OK sign – a not-so-subtle reference to intercourse often embarrass a woman both psychologically and physically. More recently, emojis have been used with the iFeel_IM! Technology, which enables Second Life users in intimate relationships to exchange virtual hugs and tickles by inserting emojis into the chat textbox such as (>^_^)> and >:D< to express different intensities of hugs and kisses (Tsetserukou, Neviarouska, Prendinger, Ishizuka, & Tachi, 2010). Users feel haptic vibrations from the use of these VR emoticons with the use of technology such as EmoHeart, HaptiHeart, HaptiButterfly, HaptiHug, and Hapti Tickler (Tsetserukou et al., 2010).

A 2014 survey by Pew Research Center, confirms the rampant increase of on-line harassment, which is further manifested in the following table:

Four-in-ten internet users are victims of online harassment, varying degrees of severity

Among all internet users, the % who have experienced harassment or not and the % who have experienced more vs. less severe forms of harassment ...



Source: American Trends Panel (wave 4).Survey conducted May 30-June 30, 2014. n=2,839.

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Cyber-sexual harassment (CSH) includes similar criteria to the face-to-face definition of sexual harassment, but the difference is the use of computer-mediated communication (Biger, Doverspike, Baznik, Coer, & Ritter, 2002). Ritter (2013) defines cyber-sexual harassment as composed of three unique characteristics, including anonymity, acceptability, and aloneness. Unlike face-to-face settings, cyber-sexual harassment behaviors can occur among individuals who remain anonymous by using pseudonyms or false identities when conducting unwanted cyber-sexual behaviors. Anonymity makes it difficult to identify and find online predators. These anonymous individuals are less accountable for their online digital abuse behaviors because they may perceive no negative consequences from their behaviors. *Deindividuation* occurs when anonymous individuals perform behaviors they would normally not perform in everyday life, but because it occurs in online environments, individuals do not take personal responsibility for their uncivilized online behaviors (Postmes & Spears, 1998; Lee, 2008), and this explains why online sexual predators may not judge their own actions to be malevolent. Additionally, Blanchard's (2004) Virtual Behavior Setting Theory supports the idea that online communication is accessible solely through computer communication, and as a result, deindividuation occurs because it lacks the "physical attributes" used in physical settings.

Cyber-sexual harassment behaviors that occur online can be easily dismissed as unthreatening in comparison to face-to-face sexual harassment behaviors. Without clear boundaries or rules of unacceptable digital behavior, victims may not easily identify cyber-sexual harassment, and as a result, many not confront it, or cope with it in a proper manner. Cyber-sexual harassment may have perceived *acceptability* compared to in-person sexual harassment. A predator, for example, may hold beliefs that it is okay to express sexual prejudice virtually or to adopt abusive behaviors given that it occurs online through the Internet or through technological devices. *Aloneness* refers to individualized cyber-sexual harassment behaviors. Predators may feel that isolated events such as masturbating in front of a web camera are not punishable by the law, and may feel that given the online environment, it is normal to engage in digital abuse, as long as it is not in person. These three characteristics are identified as unique to cyber-sexual harassment in comparison to traditional sexual harassment.

In virtual reality environments, for example, a female game designer, Renee Gittins, reports the sexual harassment through virtual haptics that she experienced within a virtual reality (VR) game AlstpaceVR (Roose, 2016).

"A man turned to me in virtual reality and aggressively rubbed his character's chest...his chest with his hands, while remarking over the voice chat, 'Look at me! I'm rubbing my tits at you!' The only response I could muster was letting out a small, insincere "heh" laugh...I was astonished by the discomfort I felt, though. It was palpable" (Roose, 2016).

Given this example, the man remained *anonymous* using a pseudonym name, and since the inappropriate self-touching using an avatar occurred in the context of a social video game his identity remained hidden. This sexual harassment behavior can be easily dismissed given the *accessibility* of virtual environments since this behavior can only be perceived using the monitor of a television or mobile device screen. After encountering this isolated experience, Gittins felt disturbed, but powerless because she did not know her own civil rights as an online victim, or how to cope with this type of situation (Roose, 2016). Also, since the man only engaged in this behavior *one specific time* with this random user, it is unlikely to be punished by the law or by a moderator of the video game. As a victim, Gittins reported feeling negative visceral experiences that felt "too real" to her personally because she empathized with her avatar while wearing her VR gear in a virtual reality environment (Roose, 2016).

Another victim of video game harassment reports a severe form of tactile online harassment via

QuiVR, an online multiplayer (co-op) virtual reality game about using archery in teams to defeat invading monsters. Jordan Belamire blogged about her emotionally traumatic experience with online sexual harassment. She recalls a floating player named BigBro442 with a helmet, bow in hand, and another free-roaming hand, which he used to virtually "rub" her chest. As soon as this happened, she cried, "Stop!" while laughing from the embarrassment, which only made things worse, as soon as she ran away he chased her around and kept virtually grabbing and pinching the chest of her avatar. When he got closer to her avatar, he "shoved his hand toward [her] virtual crotch and began rubbing" (Belamire, 2016). As this was occurring, her husband and brother-in-law were witnessing the incident, but they both laughed since the behavior was easily dismissed as a "joke" as they only saw it through a computer screen and did not feel the emotional distress that she was feeling through the virtual reality system, which felt too real (Belamire, 2016).

Similarly, with this example, the perpetrator adopted an *anonymous* name, BigBro442. The accessibility of the virtual environment dismissed the seriousness of the online sexual harassment incident, which is demonstrated by the laughs of her own husband and son-in-law. Since this behavior only occurred *one specific time*, the victim cannot reclaim her dignity by accusing the perpetrator through policy or the law. Despite it occurring only one time, the *personal distance* of the predator's avatar to the victim's avatar can trigger an uncomfortable shock in the victim leading to involuntary paralysis or the inability to react promptly, especially during the first unexpected instance. As Belamire (2016) noticed that the avatar was harassing her, she felt shocked and for a moment could not react, but after a few seconds, she would run away, but the avatar kept chasing her to continue to grope her avatar's genitals. In this instance, once the predator is within a victim's perceived personal distance, victims might not know how to "escape" or "stop" the unwanted virtual groping behavior. After similar online sexual harassment incidents were reported by the media, the QuiVR developers responded by adding a "power gesture" feature to the QuiVR game to prevent and cope with online sexual harassment via their video game (D'Anastasio, 2016). This "power gesture" enables players to add a "personal bubble" option to make sexual offenders' avatars disappear from the "personal bubble" of the victims (D'Anastasio, 2016). Additionally, if victimized players click two triggers, the predators will disappear from the screen of the victims and the predators (D'Anastasio, 2016). While the QuiVR website does not reveal any real consequences for harassing other players, players have provided positive feedback regarding the use of this "superpower" feature because it empowers them to prevent or halt online sexual harassment via this video game (D'Anastasio, 2016).

Sexual harassment that occurs in online environments is also called *online gender harassment*. Online gender harassment involves "a range of misogynist behaviors directed at women or men because of their gender" through the use of communication technology and social media (Biber, Doverspike, Baznik, Cober, & Ritter, 2002, p. 34). Online gender harassment can also occur through e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, or social networking messages. Behaviors that correspond with gender harassment include cyber-stalking, morphing or the editing of pictures in an explicit manner, cyber pornography, cyber sexual defamation, or cyber flirting (Hadler & Jaishanker, 2008). Barak (2005) developed four categories: active verbal sexual harassment, passive verbal sexual harassment, active graphic gender harassment, and passive graphic gender harassment. *Active verbal harassment* focuses on sending offensive and unwanted messages via e-mail or through social networking sites, while *passive verbal harassment* focuses on posting sexually coercive or sexually offensive messages about someone's gender, for more than one person to see. This can include sharing intimate details about a person's sexuality. *Passive graphic gender harassment* is more subtle, and it can include a website that has sexually explicit advertisements, or an offensive picture that is widely-dispersed for marketing purposes.

Active graphic gender harassment, on the other hand, emphasizes intense tactile and nonverbal behaviors that occur in online environments, such as displaying pornographic pictures or videos. This can also include engaging in virtual sex, cybersex, or sexting. Active graphic gender harassment can also involve haptics when individuals feel psychologically coerced into engaging in self-touching or masturbating rituals in front of a webcamera while a predator or multiple predators are witnessing the behavior. For instance, an individual user may receive requests to display or witness sexual videos via Chatroulette, which is a website that enables users to meet random individuals via a web camera and a microphone. Another example can include touch simulations in mobile dating applications (e.g., Virtual Girlfriend) that enable the intimate virtual touch of an avatar's body parts. If one is in an intimate virtual relationship and consents to receiving virtual touch, then this behavior is appropriate given the context of the relationship. However, if an ex-partner or a virtual acquaintance coerces another person to use touch simulations using mobile applications, then this behavior becomes involuntary, forced, and unwanted. Predators can also bribe victims by stating that in exchange of sharing sexual videos or participating in cybersexual activities, victims may receive money or gifts. Active graphic gender harassment also accounts for the relationship among the predators and victims of sexual harassment because it involves sending and receiving inappropriate touch behavior through technological devices. While clearly delineating what constitutes as sexual harassment can be difficult since cases are often unreported, another challenge in the scholarship includes how both men and women, regardless of their relationship with each other, are experiencing tactile sexual harassment.

The Effects of Online Sexual Harassment

Online sexual harassment has been noted to have several effects on the victims. Online harassment has led to negative mental outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and social problems (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Targets of online harassment have also reported feelings of hopelessness, despondency, and anger (Beran & Li, 2005). Victims of online sexual harassment also report feelings of emotional distress, which harmed their overall quality of life (Staude- Müller, Hansen, & Voss, 2012). Further, adolescent victims of online sexual harassment via Internet or mobile phone reported experiencing psychiatric symptoms, lower self-esteem ratings, and low sense of coherence (Priebe & Svedin, 2012). Another study by Van Royen, Vandebosch, and Poels (2015) found that adolescents suffer emotional consequences depending on the severity of the online sexual harassment on social networking sites. For instance, adolescents experiencing severe forms of online harassment in social networking sites such as receiving pornographic images, being asked to send nude images, or witnessing the non-censual use of their normal pictures that were modified to be sexually appealing in a public forum expressed feeling emotional distress (Van Royen, Vandebosch, & Poels, 2015).

Several studies highlight the severity of mental health effects caused by these unwanted behaviors. Duggan (2014) reported that 14% of online harassment victims reported being extremely distressed right after the incident, and when comparing the genders, 38% of the harassed women reported being extremely upset in comparison to 17% of the harassed men. A recent study of female video game players reported ruminating about sexual harassment offenses during and after playing video games with aggressors, even after withdrawing from the video game (Fox & Tang, 2017). Females who reported being sexually harassed via video games also attempted to prevent future instances of video game abuse by choosing gender-neutral or male avatars (Fox & Tang, 2017).

Online sexual pestering also can impact relationships negatively. For instance, an online haptic communication study found that females were more likely to experience feelings of envy, anxiety, and fear due to having their male romantic partner being sexually harassed by another woman through pictures being shown through the post walls within social networking sites (Miller, Denes, Diaz, & Buck, 2014). Some individuals report online sexual harassment from their ex- partners after terminating a romantic relationship through *doxing*, or the public posting of intimate information without permission (McIntyre, 2016). For example, partners may bribe or coerce their partners by saying that if they do not engage in explicit behaviors they will publically post their sexualized “self-touching” or “mutual-touching” images or videos that were previously exchanged through mobile devices or computers while the relationship was active (Choi & Lee, 2017). Victims of doxing may feel humiliated and threatened by the images or videos posted through social media, text groups, and websites by a former romantic partner (McIntyre, 2016). In New York, for example, Ian Barber was accused of three online sexual harassment offenses against his previous girlfriend (The Atlantic, 2014). Mr. Barber engaged in "revenge porn" with his ex- girlfriend by posting nude pictures of her using his Twitter account, and sending these nude pictures to her employer to get her fired (The Atlantic, 2014). However, the judge dismissed the three offenses because they did not correspond with the outdated law of sexual harassment. Thus, the results from this case greatly damaged his ex-girlfriend's reputation in the workplace and with her family.

The harassment of women online has emerged as a foremost subject of felonious apprehension recently. Nonetheless, a 2014 study from the Pew Research Center shows that, while the Internet can indeed be a nasty place, it is not exclusively hostile to women. The Pew online harassment study, based on a survey of nearly 3,000 Internet users in June 2014, found that 44 percent of men and 37 percent of women had experienced some form of online mistreatment, from name-calling to physical threats and irritation. The 2014 study reports that "the biggest gender gap was in the fairly mild category of being called offensive names, experienced by nearly a third of men on the Internet but only 22 percent of female users" (para. 2). According to a recent survey, about one third of all working men reported at least one form of sexual harassment in 2014. In 2011, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received 7,809 sexual harassment charges in the US and of these charges 16.1 percent were filed by men (EEOC, 2012). This percentage rose to 17.6 percent in 2005 (EEOC, 2012).

In fact, males recounted being more physically susceptible to women (10%, compared to 6% of women) (Young, 2014). Women were more likely than men to confess openly that they had been sexually harassed (9% versus 6%) and stalked (10% versus 7%); unremitting harassment was reported by 8 percent of men and 7 percent of women (Young, 2014). Remarkably, the Pew assessment also found that people perceived most online spaces to be amiable to women in general; 18 percent even said that the social media were more "convivial" to women than to men, while only five percent approved with the converse viewpoint.

Another study examined the gender differences of the effects of online sexual harassment based on discourse medium. Biber, Doverspike, Baznik, Cober, and Ritter (2002) examined the different types of sexual harassment (traditional versus online) and found that both men and women found misogynist comments toward women and comments about one's dress to be more harmful when received online (e.g., Facebook) in comparison to face-to-face settings. However, when examining online-sexualized pictures and online sexual jokes, women felt those were more offensive to them compared to the men of the study (Biber et al., 2002). These findings suggest that intense forms of online sexual harassment including haptic harassment or the experience of inappropriate virtual touch may impact women and men quite differently. Such that, women may experience and perceive haptic sexual harassment to be more disturbing in comparison to men. In sum, these studies suggest that both men and women may suffer from the effects of online sexual harassment, and future studies need to further examine the impact of haptics in online sexual harassment.

The Impact of Haptic Communication on Online Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Online sexual harassment is also rampant in typical workplace environments. Sexual harassment can endanger the victim's communicative and psychological wellbeing. Online sexual harassment in the workplace can cause significant stress and anxiety, and can even lead to the loss of confidence and may put at risk individual affiliations (Adams, 1988; Baba, Jamal, & Tourigny, 1998). Behaviors or actions linked with cyber sexual harassment include sending vulgar emails without any specific reason/s, making depreciating or sexually explicit remarks in emails and posting sexual smileys in social-networking chat-rooms. For example, Rachel Gronbach is a professional fashion blogger in New Zealand who reported frequently receiving unsolicited photos of a male visitor touching his genitals and explicit posts about her anatomy (Kansas City, 2016). As a blogger, experiencing this type of sexual harassment led to elevated levels of anxiety and discomfort in performing her everyday job duties.

Textual harassment has emerged with the use of mobile technology among co-workers in the exchange of offensive sex-based text messages that lead to sexting, cybersex, and/or physical sex (Mainiero & Jones, 2013; Baldas, 2009). Peer-to-peer textual harassment occurs when one coworker sends an offensive text message to another coworker through the submission of sexually explicit pictures, videos, or hyperlinks. Supervisor-subordinate textual harassment, on the other hand, occurs when a supervisor uses mobile technology to text messages containing lecherous symbols and smileys harassing the subordinate (Parker-Pope, 2011). Legally speaking, this type of sexual aggravation is called quid pro-quo (QPQ), which involves possible threats that affect the employment decision-making process such as promotion or termination. In this type of harassment, a supervisor inappropriately requests sexual favors through the use of mobile communication mainly smileys, or through social media in exchange of work-related incentives such as bonuses and promotions, which can benefit the subordinate’s career.

Social media harassment includes the use of social networking sites, microblogging websites (e.g. Twitter), apps (e.g., Periscope, Foursquare), and dating websites (e.g., Match, EHarmony). Employees in firms, for instance, who use WhatsApp on their phones have reported experiencing embarrassment and frustration from receiving pornographic images and sexual remarks toward their images from their colleagues and clients, and feel powerless to report this type of behavior (Padmaja, 2015). This type of harassment becomes unlawful when a sensible working person thinks about the behavior to be standoffish, antagonistic, or obnoxious. In the book *Smart Policies for Workplace Technologies: Email, Blogs, Cell Phones & More* (Society for Human Resource Management, 2009), Lisa Guerin advises making it clear that an officialdom's rules of conduct extend to e-mail and instant messaging as "the extremely informal nature of [instant messaging] makes it even more vulnerable" to harassment, incongruous anecdotes and annotations, and improper conduct. Harassers can use a number of tactics including flooding the victim with text messages and sending abusive or threatening messages. There are legal steps available for dealing with text harassment and the process usually starts with saving the evidence and filing a police report to document the harassment.

The need to develop stratagems regarding netiquette, or appropriate conduct using electronic communication, in the workplace is important (Lim & Teo, 2009). As the world becomes more allied over the internet, companies become more contingent on using electronic communication to conduct business across geographical borders (Beckman et al., 2013). To cultivate a safe "virtual" climate in the workplace, organizations also need to offer strict policies regarding online sexual harassment and these policies must illuminate ramifications of this objectionable type of behavior (Cooper, Safir, & Rosenmann, 2006).

Future Directions

Several future directions can continue to advance gender scholarship in the area of haptic communication and online sexual harassment. First, gender-based theories may be adopted to further understand cyberharassment given that the Internet has become a hostile environment for gendered digital abuse. For instance, cyberfeminism theories may be used to understand the intersections of online sexual harassment including gender, race, and sexual orientation (Morrow, Hawkins, & Kern, 2013). Cyberfeminism can extend Dill, Brown, and Collin's (2008) research that found that long-term exposure to virtual sexual harassment through video game characters transferred over to being more tolerant toward face-to-face sexual harassment and the acceptance of the rape myth. Future studies can adopt cyberfeminism by examining the role of power dynamics and heterogemoninity in the transcendence of attitudes towards digital abuse from online to physical settings. Cyberfeminist theories, including cyborg feminism, can also help to understand how individuals respond to the digitized human body in cyberspace environments through gendered lenses and how these digital responses might impact individuals' attitudes toward physical bodies in real life (Paniagua, 2012).

Sexual objectification is evident in the digital sphere (e.g., photographs, videos) and feminist scholars can advance this scholarship by scrutinizing the cultures and norms that lead to the trivialization of online sexual harassment through haptics. For instance, Fox, Bailenson, and Tricase's (2013) study found support of the Proteus effect and objectification theory, which indicates that women treat their bodies as objects, and they suffer psychological consequences from their selection and identification of "sexualized" avatars that display virtual cleavage, revealing clothing, and hyper-attractive bodies. This study also found that users exhibited blame attitudes toward others who become sexually harassed through virtual. Thus, future scholars can extend this study by examining the specific psychological effects of online sexual harassment through haptics that occur via sexualized avatars in these social virtual environments based on perceived harassment intensity across the sexes and sexual orientations. Future studies can also extend this research by investigating the harmful sexist language involved in the digital dialogues between men and women via chatrooms, social media, or virtual realities that may help explain the perpetuation of virtual haptic sexual discrimination.

Second, scholars may investigate the legal ramifications of online sexual harassment through haptic communication. Since online sexual harassment is considered a cybercrime in some states such as California and New Jersey, understanding the implications of cyberharassment laws can be beneficial. If aggressors perceive a negative cost to engaging in cyber nuisance, such as paying a large fine or spending time in jail, then aggressors might avoid cyber-harassing individuals based on their gender, which might prevent subsequent digital abuse behaviors. With the passages of anti-cyberharassment laws protecting victims against cyberharassment through haptic communication, managers and officials may take this issue more seriously in personal matters and in the workplace (Citron, 2009). Cyberharassment laws can also empower victims and witnesses to report these virtual touch violations as they emerge in online environments, and this civil rights approach can be an effective strategy to reduce the prevalence rates of cyberharassment (Citron, 2014). Without anti-cyberharassment laws in place, it is difficult for agencies to adequately punish persistent aggressors and/or protect the victims of online sexual harassment. Several states in the United States and nations around the world continue to lack cyberharassment laws, which would serve to empower the victims of these offenses. Offenders of online sexual harassment and gender harassment may continue to engage in this behavior if they perceive a lack of legal consequences for engaging in these behaviors. Meanwhile, judges and officials continue to struggle with numerous incoming online sexual harassment cases without the proper laws to help them resolve this issue.

Third, investigating technological strategies to prevent online sexual harassment can be fruitful. For example, several mobile apps have been developed to prevent and reduce online sexual harassment. Apps such as “Not Your Baby App” can be used through the iPhone to indicate the social environment and the aggressors to warn other potential victims about these digital aggressors with pseudonyms. The OnWatch mobile app can also be used to send messages through text messaging or social media directly to the police or to obtain emergency services. Another technological strategy to cope with cyberharassment can be social media pages or websites that serve to educate men and women about the behaviors that correspond with digital gender abuse. For instance, the Sexual Harassment Watch page on Facebook monitored by the Gender Friendly Organization (GFO) provides several educational videos, images, and quotes to educate its followers about digital sexual harassment through haptics. To combat the potential online sexual harassment that has emerged in the Virtual/Multiple Reality (VR/MR) space, Walker (2015) suggests using virtual reality simulated interventions such as “My Voice, My Choice” (MVMC) training program to prevent and cope with sexual harassment that occurs in online settings. Simulations include predator avatars who try to have “cybersex” with them or sexually harass their avatars through virtual touch. In these simulations, however, users can practice their use of assertiveness in speaking on their own and their avatar’s behalf to prevent future online sexual harassment. By investigating these strategies, scholars can discover how the use of these technologies impact how users cope with this issue and challenge the current digital gender abuse culture in digital settings.

Conclusion

This article provided an overview of the research-based findings regarding the issue of online gender sexual harassment and haptic communication. While distinguishing the conceptualization differences between traditional sexual harassment and online sexual harassment can be challenging, scholars continue to polish these constructs as they become more applicable in digital settings. With the increase use of technology and social media, the prevalence of online gender sexual harassment has become an international concern. An increase of online incidents of digital harassment has led to negative psychological, emotional, and physical effects. Online sexual harassment is not limited to geographical location, it may occur across distance and relational contexts. Victims of online sexual harassment may experience this abuse within the context of romantic relationships, work relationships, and acquaintance relationships. Future scholarship may continue to scrutinize this issue by using feminist theories, investigating current digital anti-abuse laws, and assessing innovative technological solutions against digital gender abuse. Because online gender harassment continues to affect men and women regardless of age or ethnicity, there is a strong need to continue to investigate possible solutions to prevent and cope with this issue as it occurs though social media, blogs, websites, video games, text messages, and mobile apps.

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Questionable Communication in Greenwashed Advertisements: Does Customer Confusion Alter Purchase Intentions?

Marcel Marie Robles

Amy Roe

Introduction

The most functional tool that companies use to catch consumers' attention is advertising, which helps consumers increase their knowledge about a company's products. Consumers may only look at an advertisement for a few moments; however, recent studies have shown that they are more likely to react favorably to an advertisement that shows environmental concern (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013; Matthew & Wonneberger, 2014). Consequently, many companies are taking advantage of this trend by creating more environmentally friendly products in hopes of improving the firm's green image and hopefully generating long-term customer loyalty to achieve a competitive advantage (Alves, 2009; Banerjee, Gulas, & Iyer, 1995).

To differentiate their products as being environmentally friendly, many companies are creating green advertisements or altering their product labels to emphasize how minimally their products impact the environment (Eccles, Ioannou, & Serafeim, 2014). Consumers rely on advertising messages to make product decisions; however, the credibility of some green marketing messages are often debated (Bickart & Ruth, 2012; Laufer, 2003). Consumers experience numerous advertisements each day, and it can become impossible for a consumer to differentiate truthful labels from other salacious marketing materials. While some companies have found authentic ways to minimize their environmental impacts, others have exaggerated their product's environmental qualities. This embellishment may be because consumers are willing to pay a price premium for products that are more environmentally friendly, and companies see this environmental desire as a chance to increase their revenue (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013). Consequently, an increasing prevalence of green marketing includes ambiguous

information such as "environmentally friendly" and "natural," as well as the use of images of nature (Laufer, 2003; Parguel, Benoit-Moreau, & Russell, 2015; Schmuck, Matthew, Naderer, & Beaufort, 2018).

The purpose of this study was to assess the honesty of greenwashed advertisements to determine if customers accurately understand the communication elements, including visual representations, on the products they are purchasing. Green advertising was examined carefully by combining the literature review with empirical data. Understanding the connection between consumers' perceptions of green marketing and greenwashing may help to adjust misguided expectations towards green purchases made in the future. The problem addresses the research question of whether consumers are able to identify the dishonesty in greenwashed advertisements and on product labels, and whether this ability, or lack thereof, alters purchase intentions.

For this study, purchase intent is defined with the motivation level an individual has to purchase a product based off the advertisement itself. Further understanding of this link may help to prevent greenwashing in the future if consumers are able to detect greenwashing efforts easily and effectively in a company's communications.

Literature Review

The following literature review discusses corporate sustainability, green marketing/green advertising, and greenwashing.

Corporate Sustainability

Corporate sustainability is a way to create long term stakeholder value with a business strategy that encompasses all the dimensions of how a business operates. Sustainability is a wide concept that includes ethical, social, cultural, economic, and environmental areas (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010). Companies are motivated to be sustainable in order to have competitive advantage in which they can increase their profitability (Eccles et al., 2014).

Products that are less harmful to the environment are being looked at by studies that show consumers may be more likely to purchase that product versus a non-environmental product (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013; Walker & Wan, 2012). This segment of people may also be willing to switch from a non-environmentally friendly product to a more earth friendly product (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013), or even pay a price premium for these green products (Walker & Wan, 2012). Due to this niche, companies are looking to differentiate their products through green brands to satisfy customers' environmental wants, and thereby improve their market share. By creating green products, organizations communicate to the public about their product's unique benefits versus other products in the marketplace.

Even if a green business strategy does not directly improve the financial performance of the company, it may work towards improving the image or reputation of the company in the minds of environmentally conscious consumers. Being proactive in this measure may be a powerful asset that leads to a competitive advantage for the company (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010). If a company is first in its group to commit to environmental policies, their customers may be more loyal to the company; and retention of loyal customers is a vital aspect of operating a business. Additionally, those companies without environmental policies may find themselves under public pressure to commit to caring for the natural environment (Montiel, 2008). A lack of a green product line or environmental practices may make a company fail in the marketplace.

Organizations that strive to win the market share of green consumers likely see investing in advertising campaigns as a way to improve their environmental position in the minds of consumers. Past research has shown how consumers' purchase intentions have changed through viewing green marketing campaigns (Alves, 2009; Banerjee et al., 1995; Laufer, 2003).

Green Advertising/Green Marketing

Once it becomes the norm within an industry to commit to environmental policies, Montiel predicted that other companies will follow because of social and moral obligations (2008). Due to these pressures, more and more companies are creating green marketing campaigns to help their image (Ko, Hwang & Kim, 2013). Green marketing involves the marketing of environmentally safe products (Ko et al., 2013) or products manufactured with environmental stability in mind (Schmuck et al., 2018). These green efforts do not go unnoticed by environmentally friendly consumers. According to Grimmer and Bingham's study, when presented with comparable prices, customers are more likely to buy products that are environmentally friendly (2013). Thus, more companies are eager to portray themselves as environmentally responsible.

The most crucial aspect of a company going green is their ability then to portray their pro-environmental image to their consumers, and thus advertising plays a vital role. Studies have shown how green advertising has increased in the last two decades (Matthes & Wonneberger, 2014; Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, & Paladino, 2014), which contributes to public consumers' awareness of the demand for environmentally friendly goods. As companies create green products that become popular in the market; in turn, more consumers tend to purchase environmentally friendly products because they are aware of their customers' demand for pro- environment goods (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010). Thus, the companies that are aware of both the demand and awareness of consumers are further encouraged to deliver green products.

A consumer's first impression may be influenced by the look of the advertisement or the product itself. The appearance alone of the advertisement or the packaging may communicate environmentally friendly aspects to the consumer. Literature has identified the role of nature images in green marketing campaigns and how this implicit connection creates a link with the product being advertised (Hartmann, Apaolaza, & Eisend, 2016; Nyilasy et al., 2014). Grimmer and Bingham noted that this connection with nature also bring out the consumers' feelings towards environmentally responsible behaviors (2013). This cognitive bias influences the ease in which the product's appearance of having green labels or items connected to nature readily identifies a product in the consumer's mind as being eco-conscious (Hartmann et al., 2016). For example, *Seventh Generation* cleaning products are authentically green products with white bottles having a large leaf on the front encompassing the brand name. The quick association in the mind of the consumer between the leaf and nature may communicate that the product is environmentally friendly; however, it is the brand's continual dedication to the environment that helps it maintain its competitive advantage (Haigh & Hoffman, 2012).

Besides using nature images as a backdrop, a product may have a certification label to convey green claims. Depending on the product category and country, there are up to 463 ecolabels that endorse a company's green attributes (Ecolabel Index, 2018). The *Fair Trade* label, *Non-GMO, USDA Organic, Green Seal, Forest Stewardship Council,* and other labels are looked at in this study. These labels are devices that offer assurances to consumers that the products they are about to buy have green attributes (Bickart & Ruth, 2013). Therefore, the labels assist consumers in making their purchase decisions based upon the communicated impact of the product on the environment.

While some green advertisements are created for educational purposes in helping the consumer understand the environmental issues at hand, others may be created solely to induce the public to purchase the company's products (Banerjee et al., 1995). While displaying environmentally friendly words and visuals on products is becoming the norm, just the appearance or assumption of environmental friendliness is beginning to look more promising for a company's bottom line.

Greenwashing

As green marketing has become more prevalent, so has the number of products that are advertised as being environmentally friendly. However, these growing expectations that a company must conform to environmental policies is in direct conflict with pressures from stakeholders to maintain efficient operations of a company. This clash leads a company to greenwash. Greenwashing is when a company claims their products or their operations are environmentally friendly, while publishing false or misleading advertisements and products (Laufer, 2003; Walker & Wan, 2012).

Greenwashing by corporations is not often done by lying outright. It most often occurs as misrepresentation of the truth by placing an emphasis on the company's environmental strengths, while withholding negative information or exaggerating the greenness of the product (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). The product labeling and advertisements are frequently used only to promote the idea that a product is environmentally sustainable.

When the product labeling is the emphasis, companies use the color green, leaves, or water droplets to make the consumer mindful of the environment (Schmuck et al., 2018). Specific terms may be used such as “natural” or “organic” on the packaging as well (Parguel et al., 2015). Advertisements may similarly show the product being picked from a tree or growing from the ground (Delmas & Burbano, 2011; Hartmann et al., 2016).

Greenwashing efforts are largely motivated by keeping or improving a company’s bottom line (Walker & Wan, 2012). This way, they can maximize profits by gaining a market advantage with their environmentally friendly image. However, the main rationale behind greenwashing is that corporations do not need to actually “walk the walk” to gain a green reputation. They can reap the benefits of a pro-environment reputation without actually spending the time or money to actually change their performances (Matthew & Wonneberger, 2014). In greenwashing, they gain the benefits without the associated costs.

In a 2010 study, companies were found to have used greenwashing to lure consumers into believing their products were environmentally friendly, while using tricky verbiage instead of hard facts (TerraChoice). From the 4,744 products in the United States and Canada that claimed to be green, 95% were committing at least one of the “seven sins of greenwashing” (TerraChoice, 2010):

1. The sin of the hidden trade-off occurs when a product is suggested to be green with emphasis on a single attribute without paying attention to other important environmental issues. This unknown trade-off ensues when items such as plastic water bottles are labeled environmentally friendly while the manufacturing process itself might make a bigger impact on the environmental friendliness of the product as a whole.
2. The sin of no proof transpires when an environmental claim is not supported by any evidence or third parties. A product might claim to be made with recycled materials, but it offers no proof to this claim. For example, a billboard advertising the large Hummer vehicle stated, “Thirsty for adventure. Not gas.” Despite the fact that all consumers know these vehicles do indeed require gas to operate, the message is falsely communicated.
3. The sin of vagueness arises when companies use poorly defined or very broad terms. Examples include “all natural,” “up to,” and “green.” These vague terms, without elaboration, may mean something different to each consumer. The phrase “up to 5% polyester from recycled plastic” can mean any number from 0 to 5, which does not help the consumer

identify the exact number.

4. The sin of worshipping false labels is when a product alludes to a third-party endorsement when no such alliance exists. This untruth communication often occurs with fake labels or fake seals of approval. A product might have a green certification- looking label that claims it is "100% pure," when such a label is not endorsed by the third-party and is simply a piece of internet clipart.

5. The sin of irrelevance occurs when a product includes information that is unimportant in order to influence customers into purchasing these items. The TerraChoice report gave the example of the "CFC-Free" claim on certain products, even though chlorofluorocarbon has been banned by law and thus is irrelevant (TerraChoice, 2010). This irrelevance could be analogous to advertising clothing as "Dairy Free" when no such claim is necessary for wearing a shirt.
6. The sin of the lesser of two evils results when a company argues that their product is more environmentally sustainable than other company's products. This instance can be depicted by American Spirit's All Natural Cigarettes**.** Ultimately, this environmental "all natural" claim distracts from the central problems the cigarette butts still harming the environment, not to mention the smokers ending up with health issues.
7. The sin of fibbing could be simply false claims or fabricated data. The TerraChoice Report found examples of two spa retailers claiming to be Energy Star Certified, but they were not (2010). These false claims led to fines for the two companies for their greenwashing. Another example is the Fur Council of Canada's advertisements that portray fur as being green, a claim that many consumers might argue is a complete lie.

Even as firms greenwash their products or advertisements to portray a more environmentally friendly face, risks are still attached to these tactics. Like the spa retailers in the above example, companies caught greenwashing may be liable to heavy fines. When external stakeholders catch on to companies' greenwashing activities, the unethical communication may destroy the customer loyalty that the company had hoped to gain from the green marketing in the first place.

The case of the German car producer Volkswagen and their "clean diesel" engines is a relevant example. In 2015, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that Volkswagen had installed software in 11 million cars that tricked emissions tests into believing these cars' nitrogen oxide outputs were within safety levels (EPA, 2017a). However, the EPA found that this software was programmed to only turn on during emissions tests and to trick the vehicle into giving the permitted levels of nitrous oxide. After the emissions tests, the cars were found to have given off up to 40 times the allowed level (EPA, 2017a), possibly polluting even more to save fuel. While 11 million vehicles worldwide were affected, only the 590,000 cars in the United States were ordered to be fixed. During that same time, Volkswagen's 2014 Sustainability Report pretended they were environmentally friendly by claiming they worked for both the benefit of people and environment (Department of Justice, 2018).

While not traditionally one of the seven sins, this marketing method was a deceptive scheme similar to the sin of fibbing in which a product claimed positive environmental benefits while really having fabricated data. Instead of green marketing devices, Volkswagen used a form of greenwashing their technology to mislead their customers. This instance of greenwashing led to the cost of a $14.7 billion fine (EPA, 2017b) and the trust of consumers as stock prices dropped 25% (Plungis, 2015). Not only did Volkswagen lose the trust of their customers, the public at large was affected as environmental protection policies of companies may be mistrusted in the future (Siano, Vollero, Conte, & Amabile, 2017). Besides the dip in stock price, the heavy fines, and compensation to the buyers of this product, the company spent further money on apology advertisements (Siano et al., 2017); money that could have been spent on developing the proper clean diesel engines in the first place.

Greenwashing as a way to deliver only the particular information that depicts an eco- friendly image is the case of The Coca-Cola Company with their Dasani PlantBottle products. Coca-Cola made changes to their products including the size of the bottles and the caps to reduce plastic usages (Coca-Cola Company, 2018). When they released the newer Dasani water bottles in 2009, called PlantBottle, it was claimed to be made out of up to 30% plant material and came with a reduced carbon footprint (Lee, Bhatt, & Suri, 2017). The water was advertised with a bottle coming out of a plant leaf on a white background, green arrows that look like the recycling symbol, and the ad saying, "Better by Design." The sins of the hidden trade-off, vagueness, and fibbing all are present in this example. By disclosing the information about plant material and carbon footprint, Coca-Cola is enhancing their positive environmental attributes while hiding the negative aspects. Even though these PlantBottles may use less plastic, mass production of plastic bottles still leaves a significant carbon footprint (Lee et al., 2017). Coca-Cola's overall manufacturing process can be considered harmful to the environment, as can the packaging of water in plastic bottles that still contain chemicals (Lee et al., 2017).

In 2013, Coca-Cola was accused by Denmark's Marketing Practices Act of greenwashing because their claim of 30% plant material did not have much documentation (Zara, 2013). Instead, it was claimed that some bottles only contained a maximum of 15% of plant material, thus making Coca-

Cola's 30% claims unjustified. Also, the insignia on the bottle containing three green arrows looks very similar to the recycling symbol. Perhaps, Coca-Cola was counting on the consumers' association with images of nature and green arrows in order to trick the consumer into purchasing a product that has better recycling qualities and is better for the environment than that of the competitor (Schmuck et al., 2018).

The Body Shop, a cosmetic and skincare company, was one of the first companies to stand against animal testing, and as such, is seen as a reputable eco-friendly brand (Livesey & Kearins, 2002). The company identifies their values on their website as being against animal testing and being passionate about protecting the planet (The Body Shop, 2018). The sin of the hidden trade-off became apparent as research found that some of their products contained chemicals that are known to kill skin cells or cause long term damage to marine life (Livesey & Kearins, 2002; TerraChoice, 2010). The company's practices came under further criticism in 2006 when it was announced that they were being bought by L'Oreal, a company that was known for cosmetic testing on animals.

Greenwashing may also occur when companies use cartoons to portray their environmental message, such as Mazda using the Dr. Seuss' The Lorax to promote their new Super Utility Vehicle (SUV). They used the sin of false labels in their "Truffula Seal of Approval," and the sins of no proof and vagueness when stating that the SUV had "sustainable zoom zoom" (Bowen & Aragon-Correa, 2014; TerraChoice, 2010). The irony lies in the fact that, while this SUV was called a high-environmental-performance vehicle, it requires fuel that comes from an industry that often harms the environment.

When Clorox launched their Greenworks product line, it was touted as being the newest eco-friendly home-cleaning product. Although the company is transparent in labeling all of its ingredients on their products and website, some of the products in the line contain synthetic dyes (Budinsky & Bryant, 2013). Clorox also caused some controversy over its association with the Sierra Club, an environmental group. While Sierra Club does not "endorse" Greenworks, its logo is featured on the bottles due to the amount of money Clorox donates from sales yearly (Hartmann et al., 2016). This partnership may be considered a sin of worshipping false labels or no proof as it is using Sierra Club as an expert reference for marketing their natural cleaners (TerraChoice, 2010). However, neither the EPA nor the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have any regulations for "natural" items (Consumer Reports, 2018).

Methodology

A pilot study was conducted using SurveyMonkey to fine-tune the green verbiage, advertisements, and eco-labels to be used in the main experiment. The pilot study consisted of several advertisements for products and multiple authentic and fake eco-labels that were shown to all survey participants. Before the presentation of these items, participants were asked two questions to test their knowledge of an authentic green eco-label and unauthentically green wording that might appear on a product. The survey participants were then asked to identify whether an advertisement for a "natural" product contained synthetic ingredients and whether another advertisement with images of nature swayed their thinking that they were donating to a National Park. This pilot study led to the choice of the advertisements that had the most conflicting answers towards identification of greenwash.

After the pilot study, the questions were reconfigured in a different order so to conform to the needs of this study. A Qualtrics survey was distributed via a Facebook link. In this main study, respondents were asked four questions to determine their familiarity with environmental conscientiousness. Respondents were then asked to choose a cleaning product between three options. Two of the products had different green items on them: a leaf or flower, "natural," different colored bottles, and varying levels of green. The third item had no associated items of greenness, but instead promoted its ability to kill bacteria. All questions in this survey were the same to all of the respondents. The survey then showed an advertisement mentioned in the literature review, the Dasani PlantBottle, and measured purchase intent related to the advertisement. This advertisement was chosen for the greenwashing question because of the available literature and because it committed multiple greenwashing sins (TerraChoice, 2010).

After being given a definition of greenwashing, respondents were then asked how strongly they thought The Body Shop's advertisement contained greenwashing. The following section of the survey contained product certifications that were authentic and certifications that were fake and randomly chosen. The participants were asked to choose as many certification labels as they recognized, with six labels being authentic and four being fake labels. The survey ended with two demographic questions about age and gender. The complete survey given to all respondents is in Appendix A.

Survey participants were sent the survey through a link posted on Facebook as well as to students in a business course at (University name). Respondents for this survey were diverse for the two demographic questions asked regarding age and gender. More detailed information about the respondents can be found in Appendix B. Overall, complete data were collected from 119 participants.

Analysis and Results

Through the pilot study, different advertisement components were identified. These elements included superficial images of nature (e.g., leaves, trees, flower) that had no direct tie to the production of the product, green attributes (e.g., "natural," "organic"), and the use of eco- labels (i.e., real and fake certifications).

The responses from the Qualtrics survey revealed that the way green products are communicated to potential customers is an important piece of buying intent. However, it appears that whether a product is authentically green, or whether it just passes itself off as green, is hard for participants to distinguish. Specifically, participants were almost equally likely to choose the cleaning product that was greenwashed and the product that was authentically environmentally friendly. These two products both had "green" heuristics that participants used as shortcuts to give their trust in the product being environmentally friendly. Instances included either a white or see-through bottle, a flower or a leaf, and words such as "natural all-purpose cleaner" versus "all-purpose natural cleaner." These cases show that green advertising and the product's appearance affect the consumer purchase intent as long as some of the packaging aspects hint at environmental icons.

Higher purchase intention was expected for the greenwashed Dasani advertisement. The participant's purchase intentions were measured using a five-point Likert scale for the question: "How likely are you to purchase this item based off the advertisement?" The participants were asked to select on the scale from *1-Extremely Unlikely* to *5- Extremely Likely*. The objective was to study the relationship between the participant's understanding of greenwashed advertisements and their responses to these greenwashed products. The respondents produced a slightly lower than expected level of purchase intention. This result did not support the initial idea that consumers would have a higher purchase intention with the greenwashed Dasani advertisement. However, this finding could be affected by the fact that 70% of the respondents said they either never buy water bottles, or they buy them only a few times a month.

After being given a definition of greenwashing and asked to look at a greenwashed Body Shop advertisement, participants were asked at what level they agreed with the statement: "The above advertisement contains elements of greenwashing." The 5-point Likert scale ranged from *1- Strongly Disagree* to *5- Strongly Agree*. The advertisement contained a depiction of the product hanging from a tree with fruit; and along with the definition of greenwashing, it was expected that the respondents would highly agree. However, even with this cue, 33% of participants chose *Agree* and 22% chose *Strongly Agree*, still leaving 45% who had differing opinions. Perhaps this finding contradicts the implication above, and consumers are not as aware of greenwashed advertisements.

Or, perhaps consumers are still hoping and trusting that companies are truly trying to be environmentally friendly.

A key finding was that even when cued about the definition of greenwashing before a question, only slightly more than half of the respondents chose some form of agreement to a greenwashed ad. This agreement position indicates that green consumer confusion may be affecting the actions of participants.

The last part of the study focused on the symbolism of eco-certifications and whether participants recognized the correct environmental icons. Out of 119 participants, 70 (59%) recognized the Non-GMO symbol; and 59 (50%) recognized the USDA Organic symbol. However, 48 participants (40%) incorrectly recognized a "100% Pure" eco-seal (which was actually a clip art). Additionally, only 18 of the 119 respondents (15%) recognized the Green Seal certification, which is used in conjunction with sustainable purchasing and operations. The incorrectly identified certification shows that specific features that are commonly used to symbolize environmental icons, the color green in particular, may influence consumer's perception of familiarity.

About 42% of the 119 respondents were between the ages of 28 to 33, 19% were between 34 and 39, and 18% were between 22 and 27. Approximately 74% of the respondents were female. Of the 119 survey respondents, only 28 (24%) correctly identified the term "natural" as not being regulated by the government and the term "organic" as being government regulated.

Conclusions and Recommendations

By carefully appraising the communication on products and advertisements, along with an extensive review of the literature, it can be shown that many companies are turning to trickery to deceive the customer. Because companies may turn to green advertising to promote their environmentally friendly products, it is up to consumers to become better educated about greenwashing methods.

Greenwashing is popular in the marketplace and because of the plethora of greenwashed ads, consumers are no longer able to interpret the features of a product accurately during an information processing time. Green advertising and greenwashed advertising is too similar and too ambiguous for consumers to make a relevant decision.

Therefore, consumers should be asking companies to change the way they produce their products. If consumers continue to push for truly sustainable products, the hope is that corporations will no longer put forth minimal effort to appear sustainable. Once more companies truly improve their environmental performance, consumers will be able to trust that the products they are buying are from a credible source.

Companies also must assess possible future issues that may arise if they are found to be greenwashing their products, which includes possible financial penalties or loss of consumer trust.

Some final recommendations for consumers planning to purchase environmentally friendly products starts with looking beyond packaging that is blatantly green. Consumers need to take the time to do online research about the manufacturer or the labels on the products. By clarifying which labels or certifications are authentic, consumers can make the most informed purchase decision. As a result of being better informed on their purchasing decisions, consumers can feel good about their positive impact on the environment.

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Appendix A Complete Survey Given to Respondents

Q1 Please indicate your agreement with the following statement: I am concerned about the environment. o Strongly Disagree (1) o Disagree (2)

o Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly Agree (5)

Q2 Please indicate your agreement with the following statement: I consider myself a green consumer. o Strongly Disagree (1) o Disagree (2)

o Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly Agree (5)

Q3 You can trust products labeled "natural" to be government regulated and thus free of toxic chemicals. o True (1) o False (2)

Q4 Buying products labeled "organic" is always a safe bet since it is regulated by the government. o True (1) o False (2)

Q5 How often do you purchase individual bottles of bottled water? Choose the option that best reflects your purchase behavior. o Never (1) o Few times a month (2)

o Weekly (3) o Daily (4)

Q6 Assuming you need to buy a cleaning product and these are all the same price, which would you purchase? You may only choose one. (Click to enlarge pictures.)

Q7 Please answer based off the advertisement below: How likely are you to purchase this item based off the advertisement?

o Extremely Unlikely (1) o Unlikely (2) o Neutral (3) o Likely (4)

o Extremely Likely (5)

Q8A After viewing this ad, please indicate in the next question the level of GREENWASH you feel is present in the advertisement. Greenwashing is when a company exaggerates or is dishonest about the environmental friendliness of their products.

Q8B Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statement: The above advertisement contains elements of greenwashing. o Strongly Disagree (1) o Disagree (2)

o Neither Agree nor Disagree (3) o Agree (4) o Strongly Agree (5)

Q9 Please indicate all of the product certifications that you recognize. You may choose more than one.

Q10 What is your age? o Under 21 o 22-27 o 28-33

o 34-39 o Over 40

Q11 What is your gender? o Male o Female

Table A: Age Frequencies

Appendix B Demographic Information

Age	**Number of Respondents**
under 21	3
22-27	22
28-33	51
34-39	23
Over 40	20
	Total of 119 Respondents

Table B: Gender

Gender	**Number of Respondents**
Male	30
Female	89
	Total of 119 Respondents

Reflecting Critically on Business Curriculum: Integrating via Blogging

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Abstract:

Engaging students in critical reflection is important for their long-term retention and practical application of course content (Fink, 2013). These reflections help students to develop their own sense of self (Larmar & Lodge, 2014) and a deeper understanding of business principles (Tello, Swanson, Floyd, & Caldwell, 2013). However, it is sometimes difficult to facilitate these conversations in a way where students have time to adequately communicate their thoughts, feelings, and understanding. Thus, we sought to create a virtual platform for students to reflect, challenge, question, and observe.

Using critical reflection questions authored by Torrez and Rocco (2015), and building on the work of Mezirow (1990), Myers and Evert developed a blog dedicated solely to critical reflections authored by students. Blogging has been used for similar purposes in the business classroom with great success (Chu, Chan, & Tiwari, 2012). For this project, various classes used the blog including Human Resource Management, Business, Communication, Principles of Marketing, and Intro to Business.

Access to manipulate blog content was controlled using revolving log-in information and monitored closely by faculty members. However, students were instructed from the beginning that this blog was a space for processing. Thus, they were able to comment, question, and challenge each other to arrive at new understanding of the impact(s) of certain assignments, guest speakers, and activities in the class.

In this interactive presentation, Myers and Evert will describe the process of creating the blog, as well as discuss the challenges and outcomes. Additionally, they will show how this cross-curricular activity equips students with important business competencies and personal development. Finally, Myers and Evert will empower attendees to brainstorm and share innovative initiatives and helpful tools to create critical reflection spaces for business students.

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"You Want to Survey... ALL of our Alumni?" Navigating Potential Barriers to Institutional Data-Gathering

Christopher McKenna, Stephen F. Austin State University

Abstract:

To land that all-important first job after graduation, students enrolled in both business- and non-business programs often depend upon developing mission-critical skills within business communication courses. Virtually every recent workplace-preparedness survey has ranked strong communication skills as essential for new workplace entrants. However, those surveys bear a common weakness: namely, they focus their inquiries only on broad skill categories like oral communication, written communication, and less frequently, listening and/or reading comprehension skills.

From both a curricular and a market-readiness perspective, however, how do we know whether our business courses target and develop the specific communication skills that managers and recent market entrants deem to be the most useful? Moreover, can we simply to assume that more of any type of communication-skill practice will do the trick for our students?

Finally, since business communication courses also serve non-business students, is it possible that the skills being taught in BCOM courses fail to focus on the skills that new market entrants from non-business disciplines might need the most?

The purpose of the author's current study, therefore, was to extend a survey of 50 granular communication skills—a survey designed to gauge the perceived importance of these skills during the first two years of a recent graduate's career—across all of the alumni on record for a roughly 13,000 student regional state university whose academic units have been organized into the following broad disciplinary areas: Business, Education, the Fine Arts, Forestry & Agriculture, the Liberal & Applied Arts, and Science & Mathematics.

Not unexpectedly, the scope of the survey and its design faced a number of institutional barriers, including (but not limited to):

• the perceived risk of "hassling" alumni normally targeted for fundraising efforts
• no pre-defined processes for outlining, approving, and carrying out such a survey
• a lack of clear accountability concerning access to alumni email lists
• troublesome limits on the number of email transactions that an individual or institutional email account may transact per day, and
• esoteric debates over everything from the names of the signatories on covering emails, to who would physically transmit the emails, to would receive bounce-back messages for non-deliverable emails, etc.

Since a survey of this kind had never been attempted before at the author's institution, and since other field practitioners may be debating how best to go about a survey of similar scope, this presentation will identifying the problems faced—and some of the most useful lessons learned—during this research survey process.

How Aristotle Missed the Ploiarion

Lamar Reinsch, Lubbock Christian University

Abstract:

Purpose and Significance

On the one hand, Aristotle gave considerable attention to oikonomike (economics) and to kapelike (capitalism) in the Nichomachean Ethics (trans. 1962) and Politics (trans. 1946). On the other hand, when he set out to describe the various types of rhetoric, he said nothing about a category of business-related communication. Why not?

The purpose of this paper is to try to answer that question, primarily through a review of what is known or surmised about the economic behavior of ancient Greeks and the associated attitude and understandings.

In the Rhetoric (trans. 2007), Aristotle identified three types of rhetoric which may be identified in modern English as deliberative, forensic, and epideictic (Pratt, 2012). Deliberative rhetoric is future-oriented and aims at persuading others to make policy decisions which are (in the mind of the orator) wise or expedient; Aristotle observed it most frequently in the legislative assembly. Forensic rhetoric is past-oriented and aims at persuading others to assess past actions in ways which are (in the mind of the orator) fair or just; Aristotle observed it most frequently in legal proceedings. Epideictic rhetoric is present-oriented and aims at persuading others to regard certain persons or actions as worthy of praise and honor (or of blame and dishonor); Aristotle observed it most frequently in civic ceremonies. Not one of these (deliberative, forensic, or epideictic) lends itself—at least not easily or naturally—to explaining or evaluating the rhetoric of business, a fact that has been repeatedly acknowledged if only indirectly (e.g., Cheney & McMillan, 1990; Johnson & Sellnow, 1995; Kallendorf & Kallendorf, 1985; Reinsch & Turner, 2014; Thro, 2009).

One possibility is that Aristotle observed the rhetoric of the marketplace, considered it carefully, and chose intentionally to exclude it from his work. (It is also possible that Aristotle intended to subsume marketplace rhetoric into one of the other three genres—but there is no evidence of such intent and, as already noted, marketplace rhetoric does not fit well into any of the three.) A more likely possibility—and the one explored in this paper—is that Aristotle regarded the rhetoric of the marketplace as unworthy of consideration and, and a result, overlooked it.

Clarifying the status of marketplace rhetoric in comparison to the genres identified by Aristotle will (it is hoped) help to provide a foundation for identification of a distinctive genre of business speechmaking. Identification of such a genre may, in turn, encourage business communication scholars to respond to the challenge offered by Dale Cyphert (2010) when she commented on the relative scarcity of published rhetorical criticism of business speeches. She regarded the scarcity as regrettable because, as she noted, business messages made up a large percentage of contemporary speech making. Almost a decade later, her observations still remain substantially accurate. Business speeches remain a staple of civic and professional gatherings and rhetorical criticism of those speeches remains rare, especially within the business communication academic community.

Methodology

The paper will advance arguments intended to explain Aristotle's omission of marketplace rhetoric. It will support those arguments with citations of academic literature from the field of economics history. The finished paper is expected to cite, among others Bresson (2014), Davisson and Harper (1972), Finley (1974, 1982, 1999), Inamura (2011), Neusner (1990), and Wilson (1992). At present most of the literature has been reviewed and portions of the paper have been drafted.

Findings

There is a possibility that additional literature review or the process of developing a complete written text will result in conclusions that differ from those currently anticipated. However, at present, the paper is expected to conclude: (a) that Aristotle had a positive attitude toward oikonomike (economics) but understood the term in a way radically different from modern economists; (b) that, in contrast to many modern humans, Aristotle held a strongly negative attitude toward kapelike (capitalism), a market based system that is foundational to the modern discipline of economics; (c) that Aristotle's perspectives were consistent with the prevalent upper-class attitudes and perspectives in ancient Athens; and (d) that these factors encouraged Aristotle to overlook the "rhetoric of the marketplace" as he surveyed and described important types of rhetoric.

Summary

The paper is, at present, a "work in progress" (appropriate for submission as a proposal rather than a completed paper). The finished product is expected to conclude that Aristotle, when he overlooked the "rhetoric of the marketplace," probably did so not because he had examined it carefully and found it wanting but because his class-based presumptions led him to believe that it was morally suspect and unworthy of careful attention. In doing so, Aristotle missed an opportunity. He "missed the ploiárion" (small ship or boat).

Implications

In the short term, the primary value of this paper will be for those who teach public speaking and who rely directly (or indirectly) on Aristotle in doing so. For such scholars this paper is likely to provide a fresh perspective on how Aristotle conceived his three genres and why his system makes no reference to business rhetoric.

In the longer run, the primary value of this paper will be for those who study (or wish to study) business speech making. This paper should provide part of a foundation toward the possibility of identifying and defining a genre of business speaking and, perhaps, eventually addressing the lacuna noted by Cyphert (2010).

As noted by Cyphert (2010), business communication academics who, as a community recognize the importance of oral presentation for business success (e.g., Blazkova, 2011; Galbraith et al., 2014) and continue to include speechmaking in the educational curriculum (Marcel, 2017), do not generally engage in the rhetorical criticism of business speeches. Further consideration of speech genres, and a clearer understanding of the reasons for the absence of marketplace rhetoric from

Aristotle's seminal work, may help to explain (and even to reverse) this state of affairs.

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Generation Z and Social Media – An Inventory of Use

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Abstract:

A majority of Americans use Facebook and YouTube, but young adults are especially heavy users of Snapchat and Instagram.

Introduction

As the millennial demographic begin aging a new group of young people are emerging--Generation Z (Gen Z). While we use to believe that Millennials are the social media obsessed generation, Generation Z is taking this to a whole new level, spending longer on it daily than any other generation.

Gen Z (currently somewhere between 13-24 years old depending on who you ask) has never known a world that didn't involve follows, likes, and views of their own original content. Connecting with others, be it friends, family, teachers, or businesses, is as easy as a tweet, double tap, or status update. This group represents nearly one fourth of the U. S. population and their impact on everything from education to retail trends to political issues can be huge. Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with the internet as a regular part of their everyday routine. Since the youngest Gen Zers are in their teens, many have grown up in a world where social media has always been part of their lives, too.

But what social networks do Gen Z really want to use? And what might higher education educators learn from these choices?

According to recent information from the Pew Research Center, around 45% of students say they are online "almost constantly." That number has grown significantly from when Pew conducted the survey a few years ago. Between 2014 and 2015, less than a quarter (24%) of teens reported that they were online all day.

Data in a recent report by Criteo shows that Gen Z spends more time on mobile devices (an average of 11 hours per week) and streams more content (an average of 23 hours of video content a week) than any other generation. That's almost one full day spent watching (rather than say, reading) content.

Problem

Just how much are current students using these social networking sites to communicate with each other? How are they using them, how much information do they share with others, and how much time do they devote to communicating with these tools? The purpose of this study will be to try to answer these and other related questions by surveying and reporting students' use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Instant Messaging. Objectives of the study will be: (1) to gather and report information about the students' current use of the social networking sites, and (2) to gather some basic demographic information about currents students regarding communication practices involving social media.

Population

The population for the study will be students enrolled during the fall, 2018 semester in several different courses offered in the College of Business and Technology at a small regionally accredited four-year university in Louisiana. Those courses include Business Communications, Computer Information Systems, and a Business Administration senior seminar course. The survey will be completed on a voluntary basis. Approximately 300 students will be given the survey.

Methodology and Data Analysis

In this exploratory study, the data will be collected using an online survey/questionnaire created in SurveyMonkey. It will be given during the first two weeks of October 2018. The survey asks the students to rate their use of several different social media platforms and to answer several questions about their use of mobile devices and those platforms. Demographic data will also be collected. Likert-type questions will be used to rate their use. A copy of the survey will be included in the final paper. The responses will be downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. We will report the findings using descriptive statistics in the form of tables. Some demographic data will also be reported.

Implications for Education

The need to understand students uses of current social media, as well as to develop appropriate methods for possible integration of these into business courses, is clearly important. This research contributes to our understanding of what students expect from a university course and examines factors that may contribute to differences among students' expectations This data can be used to understand the mindset of these current Generation Z students and to determine what if any changes might need to be made to our face to face and online courses. It may also help instructors design and deliver business courses that motivate students, enables them to achieve academic learning outcomes, and improve their business communication competencies in the 21st century workplace.

References

A full list of references will be provided in the completed paper.

Power Posing Revisited

David Allen Ward, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Abstract:

Few ideas in communication have had such contested legacies as Amy Cuddy's notion of "Power Posing." It's not often that a theory about interpersonal interaction engenders both a lucrative book deal and death threats. But such is the story that surrounds the afterlife of Cuddy's enormously popular 2012 TED talk ("Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are") and best-selling 2015 book Presence: Bringing Your Best Self to Your Biggest Challenges.

Both assert the powerful effect of an expansive, confident physical posture—on the person adopting it—before important events like job interviews and formal presentations. Preparing for performances like these with a few minutes' worth of private "power posing," such as Wonder Woman's trademark fists-on-hips stance, will lead not only to increased feelings of strength and confidence but also to elevated levels of testosterone and cortisol. This latter claim regarding the connection between power poses and hormone levels in the body would become the focus of much of the controversy surrounding Cuddy's work.

In fact, in recent years, Cuddy is perhaps as well known for being the focus of severe criticism as she is for her original ideas about body language and self-confidence, as fellow researchers and academics have stepped forward to dismiss her work as pseudo-science. Susan Dominus's lengthy October 2017 feature story in The New Times Magazine ("When the Revolution Came for Amy Cuddy") tracks the animus of scholars who, when unable to replicate Cuddy's findings, took to their blogs and online discussion boards to disparage her scholarship and to portray power posing as an engaging idea that fails to withstand careful scientific scrutiny. In this telling, Cuddy is the telegenic target of rigorous and uncompromising statisticians, whose work has led to a "replication crisis" in the social sciences.

But the criticism has provoked a response. In the wake of these attacks, Cuddy's own co-author retreated from the idea that power posing has any measurable positive effects. And Cuddy herself left her high-profile position at Harvard Business School for a lectureship in the university's social psychology department. But she continues to assert the value of power posing to the media and in public presentations, as well as to defend herself against what she sees as bullying tactics and unwarranted public shaming.

For an instructor in business communications, this narrative raises a simple question: what to do with Cuddy's power-posing idea in the classroom. Despite its widespread appeal, is it indeed emblematic of a superficial, pop-science approach to human interactions? Or does it actually offer a useful tool for a speaker to become confident and self-assertive? And is there value in unfolding the scholarly controversy for students and to interrogate the image of Cuddy as a successful female scholar treated unfairly by male counterparts in public discourse?
My session will propose answers to these questions—bolstered by my experience at the Wisconsin School of Business—and offer a forum for input from fellow business communication instructors on these issues.

Moving Students Past "You did great!": Using Daily Speeches and Peer Feedback to Improve Students' Assessment of Presentation

Ashly Bender Smith, Sam Houston State University

Abstract:

In their accreditation standards, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) lists as one of the key general skill areas for business graduates the ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing (AACSB, 2018, p. 35). The National Association of Colleges and Employers' annual Job Outlook reports since 2013 have consistently ranked oral communication as a top-five desired skill in candidates. Moreover, business professionals often express concern about students' oral communication skills.

However, in order to improve their oral communication skills, students need to be able to critically analyze and provide detailed, constructive feedback on oral presentations. This presentation discusses the implementation of a Daily Speeches assignment and regular, guided peer feedback as pedagogical tools for improving students' ability to deliver effective feedback about professional presentation skills.

The presentation will briefly discuss the logistics of implementing the Daily Speeches and Peer Feedback assignments and then review the results of a trends analysis on the students' written peer feedback. A trends analysis of the students' written peer feedback suggests the delivery skills and aspects of a presentation that students feel most comfortable assessing. In addition, the concrete and constructive nature of the students' peer feedback suggests that regular performances and peer feedback are useful pedagogical tools for enhancing students' ability to assess others' and improve their own professional presentation skills.

Brief Course & Assignments Overview

The Daily Speeches and peer feedback assignments were implemented in a sophomore-level business presentations course during the Fall 2018 semester. Each section of the business presentations course is capped at 30 students.

The Daily Speeches assignment requires roughly one-third to one-half of the students to deliver a one- to three-minute presentation about the day's topic. Daily Speeches are typically impromptu presentations for which students respond to prompts like, "Describe one characteristic you look for in a teammate." Sometimes students are given the Daily Speech topic in advance so that they have time to prepare. For example, a topic for which students would be given time to prepare would be something like, "Tell us about a podcast, movie, or book that all business professionals should listen to, watch, or read."

During the Daily Speeches, students are randomly assigned to provide feedback to the presenter regarding one of four delivery aspects: verbal, nonverbal, verbal filler counter, and timer. Verbal feedback addresses the appropriateness of content and word-choice, organization, volume, vocality, and other verbal aspects that are not verbal fillers. Nonverbal feedback focuses on aspects like gestures, stances, movement, and other non-verbal communication. The verbal filler counter tallies the number of verbal fillers and lists the types used. The timer records the length of the presentation. These roles are based loosely on roles common in Toastmasters International club meetings (Toastmasters International, 2018).

In addition to completing and providing feedback on these Daily Speeches, students provide peer feedback on major presentation performances to members of their small peer group. All major presentations in the class are video-recorded. Students are asked to write and share with their peer group a self-reflection for each major presentation. Students then provide written peer feedback on each peer group member's performance and self-reflection. Prior research demonstrates that providing video recordings and requiring self-assessment can be useful for improving students' understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and their ability to make improvements (Schere, Chang, Meredith, & Bastistella, 2003; Ritchie, 2016). Because self-assessment scores are susceptible to over- and under-estimation of personal performance, incorporating peer feedback can improve a student's understanding of his or her performance (Campbell, Mothersbaugh, Brammer, & Taylor, 2001; Ritchie, 2016). Moreover, students report high levels of appreciation for and valuing of peer feedback on oral presentations (De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2012; Ritchie, 2016).

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Once Upon a Time: Using Storytelling in Business Communication Classes to Teach Oral Communication Skills

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Laurie Rogers, Stephen F. Austin State University

Abstract:

Background Theme

Narratives, or stories, are defined as a sequence of events, mental states, or happenings interrelated with each other (Bruner, 1990), and are being used in both the classroom and the boardroom to create a culture of learning, commitment, and collaboration. The research on the ability of storytelling to improve or enhance communication overall, as well as specifically in written and oral communication, is readily available in the literature. It is being used to improve community (Gentry, 2014), to encourage the connection between sender and receiver (Damadaran, 2017), and to improve written and oral communication in the K12 classroom (Wells, 2013). Interestingly, storytelling also consists of tools suitable to different business teaching and use, including topics of communication (Denning, 2006).

Using Storytelling in General

Storytelling creates connections between the abstract and the reality (Burke, 2010). For example, we apply the story to our own experiences, and what was once a vague instruction on 'when to use a positive news deductive outline' becomes a clear picture of a desired outcome as we relate our message to a known and familiar narrative. Additionally, storytelling used in the classroom can supply a means for students to develop relationships with their peers. In one study, students viewed the storytelling curriculum as promoting 'real world' skills they can transfer outside of the classroom and into their lives (Stewart, 2017). "Students need, for both learning and life, not only to be able to provide relevant and focused answers but also to learn how to pose their own questions and how to use talk to narrate, explain, speculate, imagine, hypothesize, explore, evaluate, discuss, argue, reason and justify" (Alexander, 2008, p.4).

Using Storytelling in Oral Communication

Vocally sharing stories improves oral communication technical skills by helping the presenter relax, connect with the audience, and develop basic presentation skills such as making eye contact, vocal modulation, and speech syntax (Denning, 2006). Storytelling allows the speaker to draw upon his or her natural, nonverbal behaviors. Additionally, oral storytelling may increase the confidence of the communicator due to the sharing of a familiar topic with a receptive audience (Damodaran, 2017; Walker, 2018). In the university classroom, it is important for the instructor to acknowledge the diverse cultures present, and to be aware of the probable varied communication exposures the students may have had. Thus, using story to break down communication barriers in the university classroom is a valuable tool.

Since oral communication can be more informal, direct, and natural than written communication (Glonek & King, 2014), and because fostering a human connection is necessary in most business communication (Denning, 2006), storytelling lends itself as a natural method of teaching oral communication, and specifically oral business communication, in the business communication

classroom.

Purpose and Methodology

This presentation will report on the perceived impact of using storytelling to teach communication skills in a business communication class, as well as offer strategies to implement storytelling as a business communication teaching tool. It is the intention of the authors to both tell stories and to invite their students to tell stories. While these may be in oral, written, and even digital narratives, the focus for this study will be oral communication.

In this presentation, the perceived benefits of using storytelling in the classroom will be provided, expounding upon the literature. Additionally, the presenters will share their own experiences using business narrative-based engagement in their classrooms, outlining the observed affects and outcomes on the students' oral communications. The authors will collect qualitative data during the teaching sessions to assess the data and draw their conclusions. These conclusions will be shared in the presentation.

Outcomes

The presenters will utilize storytelling, or narrative, in their classrooms Fall of 2018, and collect qualitative data by making observations and by note taking. Their notes will be compiled and condensed into several main common themes, which will then be shared in the Outcomes.

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A Pilot Study on the Use of Automated Speech Coaching Software in Online MBA Business Communication Courses

Leslie Ramos Salazar, West Texas A&M University

Abstract:

Rationale

Business colleges and universities often integrate online business communication courses in their curriculum to enable students to improve their oral communication skills. Employers often expect graduates to be competent verbal communicators and often judge graduates' oral communication competencies during the interview process (Keyton et al., 2013; Yale, 2014). Competent communicators display verbal communication attributes such as authenticity, confidence, assertiveness, clarity, energy, personability, and persuasiveness, and these are perceived to be marketable oral communication skills to employers (Spitzberg, 1993; Downing, 2011). While educators often implement at least one presentation speech in their business communication courses, the improvement process is often not assessed overtime in a personalized fashion (Yale, 2014). Also, oral communication skills are more difficult to assess in online classes than traditional classes. Qualitative comments and ratings may be provided to students regarding observed growth; however, little statistical evidence is presented to the students to help them understand their verbal communication strengths and weaknesses.

To address this problem, VoiceVibes, an online software was developed to coach users to become competent communicators by detecting common verbal communication attributes using scientific algorithms. Educators across the U.S. in higher education institutions have been implementing VoiceVibes as a tool to guide students' improvement of the vocal attributes of speakers. However, to date, no study has documented the impact of using automated coaching software in online MBA business communication courses. Thus, the purpose of this pilot study was to explore the improvement of oral communication skills using VoiceVibes in MBA students.

Methods

Two online MBA courses entitled, Business Communication for Health Care Managers were assessed in a public and regional Midwestern university. Participants included 48 participants including 13 males and 20 females. In this study, participants used the VoiceVibes application to monitor their improvement of verbal communication skills. Participants recorded voice discussion board posts to assess their communication skills using VoiceVibes. Participants recorded sound files of a minimum of 90 seconds in length. The first and third sound files were used across two MBA classes to determine whether students enhanced their scores based upon different verbal communication attributes.

Analyses & Results

This study examined the VoiceVibes data using paired t-tests using SPSS 22.0. Paired sample t-tests revealed that participants improved their authenticity when comparing the first ($M = 5.03$, $SD = 0.85$) and third voice file ($M = 6.36$, $SD = 0.69$), $t(33) = 34.05$, $p < .001$. Participants also enhanced their assertiveness when comparing the first ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.61$) and third voice file ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 1.42$), $t(32) = 15.937$, $p < .001$. Participants also enhanced their verbal confidence when

comparing the first (M = 5.30, SD = 1.33) and third (M = 5.37, SD = 1.20) voice file, $t(33) = 23.05$, $p < .001$. However, other positive verbal cues were not improved when comparing the first and third voice file such as clarity, energy, personability, and persuasiveness. Also, no sex differences were found across verbal attributes.

Implications for Education in Business Communication

The results of this study yield implications for online business communication courses. First, using automated software such as VoiceVibes may be beneficial to online students of business communication courses. Given that students improved their assertiveness, authenticity, and verbal confidence, educators who implement VoiceVibes or similar software may encourage their students to improve their verbal communication skills using multiple recordings. Second, assessing students' verbal communication is often challenging and software can be used as a tool to gain insight into statistical data about students' verbal communication skills. Third, given that students struggled to improve on verbal communication attributes such as clarity, energy, personability, and persuasiveness, educators that know these student struggles may implement improvement exercises in their courses to help students improve upon these verbal skills. Fourth, implementing online assignments that require the use of VoiceVibes may increase students' participation levels across the semester to examine students' overall improvement. Lastly, because no sex differences occurred in the data, this app might reduce gender bias in educators' qualitative perceptions of verbal communication quality. However, researchers need to continue to explore sex differences using the VoiceVibes application with a larger student data set to examine the reduction of gender bias in verbal communication assessments.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study examined the use of VoiceVibes on graduate students in online MBA business communication courses. Findings revealed that VoiceVibes may improve online students' assertiveness, authenticity, and confidence. Overall, educators that implement VoiceVibes in their courses may help improve students' awareness of their own verbal communication skills in business communication courses.

Peer Review in the Business Writing classroom: Does it really help? Or is it just a waste of time?

Leticia A. French, University of Houston Clear Lake

Abstract:

Whether or not to require students to participate in a peer review process in the upper level (Jr. and Sr.) business writing classroom: that is the question. Does it really help students become better business writers? Or is it just a waste of everyone's time? Truthfully, it depends – it depends on how peer review is brought into the classroom. Done well, giving and receiving feedback can be a rewarding learning experience for writers, reviewers, and faculty. But done poorly, and this rewarding activity can turn into a complete waste of time for everyone.

For this presentation, I will introduce a brief overview of the arguments for and against incorporating Peer Review in the Business Writing classroom followed by my own argument that peer feedback can be beneficial to readers, reviewers, and faculty, as it stimulates critical thinking, promotes an engaged classroom, and encourages personal responsibility. When implemented with care, peer review becomes a vital part of the writing process; it should be not only encouraged, but the art of giving peer feedback should be actively "taught" in our classes.

Part of the argument against incorporating peer feedback in the writing classroom is the students' general reluctance to give feedback. Tim McMahon of The Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University College in Dublin, as well as Raoul Mulder and colleagues for the University of Melbourne in Australia suggest several reasons for this reluctance - all of which provide the basis for further discussion of this topic.

The arguments for incorporating peer feedback in the writing classroom include increased grades (Mulder, 658), and increased time for faculty (Gielen, 145). These arguments are further supported by Kwangsu Cho of the University of Pittsburgh, whose research demonstrates that "multiple student responses equal those of one teacher."

After discussing the reasons for and against using peer review in the Business Writing classroom, this presentation concludes with a discussion of ways to reduce student and faculty fears about implementing a peer feedback in the classroom. And to help ensure that peer feedback process are beneficial to everyone, I will present a variety of ways to improve or implement peer review processes in the business writing classroom.

Promoting Deeper Audience Awareness in the Business and Professional Communication Classroom: A Content Analysis

Danica L. Schieber, Sam Houston State University
Vincent Robles, University of North Texas

Abstract:

Problem

Business and professional communication (BPC) scholarship agrees students should be able to analyze and respond to business audiences. For example, Salerno (1988) notes that without helping students to develop deeper audience awareness, they will use business communication strategies, such as buffers, in merely "mechanical and obvious" ways (p. 44), ways that work against the purposes of the message, such as maintaining rapport with employees or maintaining business with customers. But more research can reveal how students actually consider their audience when they write.

In a previous study (presented at the 2017 ABC-SWUS Conference and forthcoming in Business and Professional Communication Quarterly) we analyzed how students considered their audiences in reflections that accompanied an assignment in which they wrote five different business messages to five different audiences in response to a customer-service error described in a case. The students contacted two customers and three people within their organization, one of which was a manager. As a follow-up on the previous study, this study will analyze the content of the students' business messages and cross-reference them with the reflections the students wrote and an audience-awareness rating from experienced business communication instructors.

Methodology

We are in the process of employing content analysis to the content of the student messages (31 students, 135 messages). The following outlines current progress and proposed progress before the conference.

Completed Work

We have already segmented the messages into units (the utterance or purpose of phrases or sentences), reaching convergence between us through discussion and cross-checking. This process enables us to code each unit with a label that describes the purpose of that content unit. We have also created a preliminary coding scheme for analyzing those content units, including one round of reliability coding to pilot the codes. Lastly, we have also already reached a reliable agreement between two experienced business communication instructors as they evaluated each message (1–4) for audience awareness.

Work to be Done by the Conference

By the conference, we will have reached a reliable and complete coding scheme with an appropriate Cohen's kappa and Krippendorf's alpha. We will have preliminary findings of the relationship between low rated messages and the content within them. We will also have preliminary findings of the relationship between high rated messages and the content within them.

Findings

The preliminary coding scheme includes the following codes (apologizing, thanking, valuing, stating, explaining, planning, promising, suggesting, and requesting). Based on exposure to the data throughout the study, we see that lower rated messages appear to have less representative content (explaining, stating) and directive content (suggesting, requesting) and more expressive content (apologizing, thanking, valuing), suggesting that these students seem to use formulaic language they may think audiences want to hear. Higher rated messages focused on fixing the problem for the customers or co-workers with representative and directive content, suggesting that these students may have realized that they viewed the audience as primarily seeking solutions to their problem.

Implications

This study can help BPC instructors to identify effective ways to promote audience awareness in their students and to better understand students' writing decisions. While some instructors have sensed the propensity in their students to use formulaic language in their business communication, this study could confirm it and provides concrete examples of how students effectively and ineffectively responded to a specific workplace audience.

Summary

In a follow-up study to what was presented at last year's ABC-SWUS conference, we present a coding scheme for identifying the language in students' business messages to customers and coworkers in a case. We compare these results to how students reflected on the way they responded to their audience. We also compare these results to audience-awareness ratings of these messages by business communication instructors familiar with the assignment and the case. Early exposure of the data suggests that less effective messages use formulaic language while more effective messages are more targeted to the audiences in question.

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Investigating How Students Perceive Their Communication Skills

Ashley Hall, Stephen F. Austin State University
Carol S. Wright, Stephen F. Austin State University

Abstract:

Statement of Problem/Purpose

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) routinely finds that employers view strong communication skills as desirable traits among new hires. When NACE surveyed employers about skills they value, 80.3% of employers said written communication skills, 67.5% indicated verbal communication skills, and 54.7% responded with interpersonal skills (NACE, 2017). This study was fueled by a desire to investigate whether college students understand the importance of communication skills in the workplace and to better understand how the students perceive their own skills.

Methodology

This study used a convenience sample of students enrolled in an undergraduate business communication course. This sophomore-level class is part of the university's core curriculum, thus reaching students in a variety of majors. Pre- and post-experience surveys were administered in the Spring 2018 semester to ascertain whether responses changed after having completed the business communication course. This IRB-approved research study utilized paper surveys for face-to-face students and an electronic version of the same survey for online students. While 373 pre-experience surveys were received, only 227 post-experience surveys were collected. Over 91% of the respondents were traditional college students ages 18-22 years old. The majority (approximately 46%) were sophomores; however, there was diversity in classification ranging from freshmen to seniors. The sample consisted of students majoring in programs across all six colleges within the university.

Findings

This study asked students to rate their written and oral communication skills. Over half of the study participants rated their written communication skills as "Excellent" or "Good" (60.59% in the pre-experience survey and 70.92% in the post-experience survey). However, a lower percentage rated their oral communication skills at the "Excellent" or "Good" level (55.62% in the pre-experience survey and 65.04% in the post-experience survey).

After asking about their perception of their own communication skills, students were asked the importance of communication skills in the workplace. Approximately 65% of survey respondents indicated that written communication skills are "Very Important – I need to have these skills when I graduate." While 6% rated the skills "Needed, but these can be learned on the job" in the pre-experience survey, that percentage fell to 3% after completing the business communication course. In the post-experience survey, students rated oral communication skills as more important than written communication skills in the workplace. Over 80% of respondents indicated that oral communication skills are very important, as compared to only 65% who ranked written communication skills at that level.

The survey also asked participants to rank the following communication skills in order of importance in the workplace: interpersonal communication, written communication, oral communication, and nonverbal communication. The following ranking was most often reported. 1) Interpersonal communication, 2) oral communication, 3) written communication, and 4) nonverbal communication.

Participants were asked which communication type they feel is their strongest. In both the pre- and post-experience survey, interpersonal was selected most often and nonverbal was chosen as the strongest communication type the fewest. Written and oral communication were chosen with about the same frequency, though oral communication slightly exceeded written communication. Similarly, respondents were also asked to identify their weakest communication type. In the pre-experience survey, oral communication was chosen over 40% of the time and was 12% higher than the next category – written communication. In the post-experience survey, oral communication was still the most frequently selected answer choice (36%) but written communication was only 5% behind.

Of those who completed the post-experience survey, nearly 96% felt that completing the business communication course prepared them "to some degree" or "to a great degree" to be an effective communicator.

Summary

Through this study the researchers sought to better understand how students rate their own communication skills as well as the importance they placed on those skills in the workplace. The majority of students felt they were at least "good," or effective in communicating orally and in writing. In addition, the vast majority (96%) felt the business communication course helped them improve their communication skills to some degree.

Implications

As business educators, we have a responsibility to prepare our students for the workplace and ensure they have the necessary skills to both get hired and succeed in their job. Communication skills are routinely cited as crucial skills employers seek in new hires. Results from this study can be used to inform instructors on how students perceive their own communication ability.

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Improving Persuasion Skills through Peer Reviewed Blog Posts

Rebecca Dowden, University of St. Thomas

Abstract:

"Don't raise your voice, improve your argument"-- Desmond Tutu

At the heart of all communication is persuasion. As speakers and writers, we want to persuade our audience to see the world as we see it. Persuasion can be as benign as describing scenery or as fervent as arguing for a political point of view. As educators of future business leaders, we want our students to be effective at persuading others so that they can be successful in sharing their ideas, their talents, their points-of-view, and their many business ventures. In Business Communications courses, the art of persuasion is taught through many assignments such as oral and written presentations, letters, proposals, reports, etc. These assignments can all be effective, although challenging for students, but they can be a particularly difficult hurdle for students whose first language is not English or English speakers who are not proficient in their skills.

Business Communication educators have many challenges in helping ESL and English speaking students, who are lacking in proficient writing and speaking skills, to become successful communicators, but learning to persuade can be one of the most difficult. Therefore, we are always searching for new and effective approaches to help improve the very important skill of persuasion. Several studies have shown that business students who are asked to write blog posts as part of their assignments in a business communications course and who have participated in a peer review of these blog posts show improvement in their persuasion skills. Modeled after an earlier study, where only ESL students have been studied, I have set out to study both ESL and non-ESL students who have been placed in a MBA business communications proficiency course. The course focuses on improving graduate students' writing and speaking. The study will test the hypothesis that blog style writing combined with peer reviews of the writing will not only help the ESL students, but all the students in the proficiency class, improve their persuasion skills.

The students have been placed in the proficiency course if they are applying to the MBA program but have less than a 3.0 GPA in their undergraduate degree. The university does not require the GMAT for admission; therefore, the student's GPA is crucial in their placement in the MBA program. The study includes a pre-test and a post-test at the beginning and end of each of the two semesters. The study will be conducted over two semesters with two different groups of students. The tests will score various aspects of persuasive writing such as stating the claim or position, supporting the position, organizing the argument, and using correct grammar, punctuation, and citation (if needed). In this presentation, Dr. Rebecca Dowden will discuss the past studies that have been conducted on this topic, and she will detail the aspects of her study and its implications. In addition, she will discuss the ways the assignment can be implemented in an array of courses, and the various ways to design the assignment to fit different student populations.

Using Verbal De-Escalation to Reduce Conflict

Debbie D. DuFrene, Stephen F. Austin State University

Abstract:

Introduction

Many people from both sides of the political isle deplore the public and virulent attacks heard daily in U.S. politics, attacks that aim to destroy credibility rather than advance any common good. Many fear that such breakdown in public discourse is threatening the very core of democracy. While some would argue that discourse in the U.S. has always been messy and controversial, the difference today is that everyone has a megaphone. Tweets, blogs, and online reader comments require no knowledge of the issues at hand, resulting in a proliferation of errors and disinformation (Leskes, 2013).

The rampant use of inflammatory speech is not confined to the political arena. Anyone can reach an audience of millions through social media with facts, opinions, and lies, and it is easier now than at any time in history to denigrate, threaten, and harass others (Schwartz, 2018). Concern over defamatory and hateful conversation has led to conversations about the dangerous practice in homes, schools, and workplaces. Obviously, much pain and embarrassment could be avoided if people were always calm, rational, and intentional with their words. Inflammatory language is one of the most common causes of conflict escalation.

Purpose

The purpose of the presentation is to raise awareness about the importance of using de-escalating language to reduce conflict and provide techniques for doing so.

Findings

It should go without saying that listening is key to good communication. Conflicts arise when one party misinterprets what the other has said and either does not respond or responds incorrectly. Other conflicts drag on because one or both sides will not stop until they feel heard and understood. The conflict often dissipates once feelings and positions are acknowledged.

Semantics is another cause of conflict. People often assume that the meanings of words are concrete and understood the same by everyone. Words, however, can have different shades of meaning and emotional impact for different people. How words are received is also heavily impacted by expression, intonation, body language, and stress pattern. Conflict escalates wildly when emotions run high; a cooling off period is often needed before meaningful dialog can occur (Akin, 2003). A number of specific verbal techniques can be employed to de-escalate a conflict situation:

• Avoid negative trigger words. Every business communication instructor teaches this principle; yet unnecessarily negative words can be found in many business documents.
• Avoid the cliché "calm down." Telling the other person to calm down will likely garner a louder than necessary "I am calmed down!" (Taylor, 2014).
• Use "I statements" in the place of "you statements." While you can be used in a non-accusatory way (You did a fine job), it can also come across as accusatory or punitive (Why didn't you consider

those options?) I statements are a way of communicating a problem to another person without accusing that person of causing the problem. The technique avoids blame and the defensiveness that results from the other party. Example: I feel we could respond to customer concerns more effectively (Murphy, 2017).

• Avoid "buts." But almost always precedes negative news and has a way of canceling out whatever came before it. Example: I agree with what you said, but…

• Respond to the other person's preferred sensory mode (sight, sound, touch, smell). The preference is often revealed in one's phrasing (I see what you mean, I hear what you're saying, I'm getting a feel for it, etc.). Echo the same sensory mode to put the other person at ease (How does this option look to you? It does sound like you did a lot of work, etc. If you cannot match the sensory mode, use not sensory word choice (Akin, 2003).

• Get the other person to say "yes." It is very difficult for someone to stay angry with you if they are agreeing with you. Use clarifying questions and summaries (So you are feeling frustrated with XYZ, is that right?) to confirm the other person's point. By doing so, you create the opportunity for the person to say "yes"; the more often you can get the person to agree, the quicker the conflict will de-escalate (Taylor, 2014).

• Offer conciliatory statements. Extending the proverbial olive branch can arrest or slow a de-escalating spiral. Example: I'm willing to try implementing the first part of your suggested plan and see what happens (Akin, 2003).

• Be aware of your own nonverbal messages. Your own clinched fists and folded arms may be sending a strong message that you are combative, regardless of what you say.

Application

Conflict is a part of everyday life. Verbal de-escalation skills are essential in reducing and resolving conflict, whether at work or in one's personal life. Business communication students can benefit from discussions of civil discourse and how to use de-escalating techniques to manage conflict effectively.

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Job Readiness: LinkedIn

H. Steve Leslie, Arkansas State University

Karen McDaniel, Arkansas State University

Sandra H. Bevill, Arkansas State University

Abstract:

With over two million students receiving their first bachelor's degree each year and over half a million earning their second or third undergraduate degree, almost three million students earn an undergraduate degree each year (NSC Research Center, 2017). In the past, these numbers have been used to indicate to students how competitive the job market is—and it is.

Recently, the news has been better for college graduates. However, this has become a good news-bad news situation. The good news is that the unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in almost two decades with higher starting salaries; the bad news is that job prospects have fallen with employers saying they plan to hire fewer new graduates (Dickler, 2018). Thus, college grads find themselves in a better, yet still very competitive, job market.

While authors and pundits decry the rising cost of education (and rightly so), the facts are that college graduates have significantly higher lifetime earnings, on average, than high-school graduates, and the unemployment rate for college graduates is about half that of high school graduates (Avery & Turner, 2012). For these reasons, most students indicate their primary reason for attending college is career related.

So if the job market is looking good, but very competitive, what should students be doing to ensure they can best compete for these jobs? One important tool college students should be using to secure the better jobs their degrees should afford them and to advance in their careers is LinkedIn. Florenthal (2015) discusses a study cited by Farrell (2012) that showed almost "90% of sampled companies admitted that they searched for candidates on LinkedIn" (p. 17). Unfortunately, while college students and recent graduates are the fastest-growing group on LinkedIn, of the over 500 million LinkedIn accounts, only about 40 million are college students (Aslam, 2018).

To get an idea of how prepared students are, we created a Job Readiness Survey which we administered to students at an AACSB-accredited School of Business during the 2017 to 2018 academic year.

The purpose of our presentation will be to discuss some of the findings of our survey, particularly the sections pertaining to LinkedIn, and to offer information and suggestions for faculty interested in helping their students become better prepared for the job search.

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Interactive and Innovative Decision-Making Communication Framework

Carolyn Ashe, University of Houston- Downtown

Abstract:

The purpose of this exploratory research is to investigate decision-making outcomes involving University of Houston Downtown undergraduate face-to-face and online students. The beginning sessions draw on the framing created by Everyday Democracy in their issue guide, "Helping Every Student Succeed: Schools and Communities Working Together." These sessions also draw on the conversations held with over 100 Houstonians on March 29, 2017 to understand better their thinking about concerns and aspirations around quality education access.

Methodology

Interact-to-Innovate will:
• host several small group deliberations at the same time. Each group will be made up of around eight to ten participants and one to two student leader facilitators from different backgrounds.
• meet together for weekly sessions.
• set its own ground rules. Ground rules help set a tone of respect and also facilitate results.
• encourage a consideration of the issue from many points of view.
• create opportunities for participants to consider where they agree and have common ground.
• incorporate student facilitators who won't take sides and who help manage the discussion. They are not there to "teach" or "educate" the group about the issue.
• start with personal stories, then encourage the group to look at a problem from many points of view. Next the group talks about how they want things to be. Finally, they make plans for action and change.

STEPS IN AN "Interact-TO-Innovate" FRAMEWORK:
SESSION 1: CONNECT THROUGH DIALOGUE WITH EACH OTHER
• Construct bridges of understanding.
• Talk about what a quality education means to us.
SESSION 2: DELIBERATE THE PROBLEM
• Discuss information about how students are doing in Houston.
• Talk about why we believe some students do not succeed in school.
SESSION 3: ENVISION OUR BEST FUTURE
• Create a "picture" or a "vision" of our Houston Community where students are able to do their best.
• Talk about how to make our visions from Session 3 happen.

SESSION 4: PLAN FOR ACTION
• Create a "picture" or a "vision" of our Houston Community where students are able to do their best.
• Talk about how to make our visions from Session 3 happen.

SESSIONS 5 - 11: INNOVATIVE ACTION
• During this phase, participants will meet weekly to engage in mind mapping, role delegation, task distribution, assignment completion reporting, communication and implementation.

SESSON 12: PUBLIC CELEBRATION

• We will end our semester with a public celebration and a presentation of our actions that we were able to achieve.

Summary/Conclusion

Where will this lead:
Each team involved will design and implement a project that both analyzes the root causes of the issues and designs a workable team action project. The projects will then be presented at a community "action forum," where community members, leaders and decision makers will be present. At this action forum, each team will present and explain their project ideas. Teams will meet every week leading up to their presentations putting their project ideas into action. Some will choose to stay committed to the projects for 2019.

Findings (reflect the results of the student group presentations at the end of the fall semester, December 2018.)

Perceptions of Risk and Responses to Product Warning Messages

John M. McGrath, Trinity University

Harry Wallace, Trinity University

Abstract:

Statement of the Problem: Skin cancer is the most prevalent cancer in the world and its incidence has been rapidly increasing in the United States. Diagnoses of new cases of melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer, have increased by 53 percent in the last decade, and an estimated 9,320 people will die of melanoma in the United States in 2018. One explanation for increases in melanoma is the wide-spread use of indoor tanning beds. Although a causal relationship between ultraviolet radiation emitted by tanning beds and skin cancer is well established, it is unclear whether the primary users of tanning beds, young women, understand and appreciate this risk. From a communication perspective, it is also unclear whether a written product warning would influence young women to change their behavior with respect to tanning bed use.

Method:

This study utilized an on-line questionnaire methodology to ask tanning bed users about their perceptions of risk and their responses to written warnings. Two hundred and ten women aged 15-29 who had used a tanning bed at least once in the last year responded to questions about risk and to a depiction of a tanning bed warning label. The warning label was designed in accordance with the technical writing guidelines published by the American National Standard Institute and the warning label standard, ANSI 535.4. These research-based guidelines recommend utilizing a signal word, a specific identification of the risk, how to avoid the risk and the consequence of not avoiding the risk. Participants' perceptions of risk were recorded before they were shown the warning label. Additional data was gathered regarding reactions to specific parts of the warning label. Participants were not informed about the purpose of the study. The study was approved through a university human subjects committee.

Findings:

Preliminary findings indicate that most tanning bed users were aware that tanning beds could cause cancer but were nonetheless willing to take that risk. However, when shown and asked to a respond to a warning label, the majority of participants said they would "definitely stop" using tanning beds and over 75 percent said they would "definitely" or "probably stop" using tanning beds. Participants also indicated which parts of the label captured their attention the most and they gave information about the believability of separate messages on the warning label.

Summary:

Tanning beds in the United States are most frequently used by women between the ages of 15 - 29. Research shows that 38 percent of woman will have used a tanning bed by the time they turn 25, and in doing so will have increased their chances of developing melanoma by 75 percent. It could be that current health risk messages about skin cancer are not prominently featured, are not getting through or are not persuasive. This study suggests that a well-designed, well-written warning label that follows specific guidelines for technical communication may influence tanning bed users in a

way that would cause them to stop or reduce their tanning bed use. The FDA has classified tanning beds as Class II medical devices that involve moderate to high risk because of the well-known relationship between ultraviolet radiation and skin cancer. However, the current FDA warning label requirement states that warning labels need only include: "Attention: This sunlamp product should not be used on persons under the age of 18 years." This study suggest that a more detailed warning label that follows research-based guidelines and that reveals more specifically the risks and consequences of tanning bed use has the potential to influence behavior in a way that would help reduce the incidence of melanoma among young women, as well as other tanning bed users.

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Utilizing Facebook Groups for Communications in a Nonprofit Setting

Kayla Sapkota, Arkansas State University- Beebe

Abstract:

Nonprofit organizations commonly host numerous volunteers, creating high personnel management requirements. Precise and timely communications among coordinators and volunteer groups and individuals can be challenging, especially if management occurs across expansive geographic areas. This case study presents a scenario in which project managers of the nonprofit Cave Research Foundation use social media as a method of tackling the issue of communications across large geographic areas among volunteers and team leaders.

The Cave Research Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization whose purpose is to facilitate research, management, and interpretation of caves and karst resources; form partnerships to study, protect, and preserve cave resources and karst areas; and promote long-term conservation of caves and karst ecosystems. The organization was founded in 1957 with the specific purpose of engaging in conservation and cartographic activities within the Mammoth Cave system in Kentucky. Since then, the organization has grown to include projects on various state and federal lands across the U.S., with a larger organizational structure according to five main operations areas.

The Ozarks Operations area includes management of projects within a 3-state region, including Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Over 250 volunteers work within this region, making it one of the largest and most active within the greater Cave Research Foundation's activities. After becoming aware of a neighboring operation area's intended use of Facebook groups, the Ozarks Operations area's management team decided to organize such a group of its own to aid in communications with volunteers. This presentation details the development process for the use of this new tool, along with the rules and guidelines for appropriate use and ways of addressing "hiccups" along the way. Overall, the implementation of this tool has provided an easily accessible venue for sharing expedition dates, sharing updates on the status of projects, and planning future trips utilizing the calendar feature. While not all members of the organization use Facebook, the implementation of this group has proven to be an effective way to engage and motivate new members to become active in the organization or to "reignite" existing members to become involved again.

Examining Sexual Persecution in Digital Communication through Haptic Communications

Leslie Ramos Salazar, West Texas A&M University

Soumen Mukherjee, VIT University, Vellore, India

Abstract:

Ever since traditional sexual harassment through haptic communication has extended into digital realms, cases of digital abuse have increased. This article identifies this digital abuse phenomenon by comparing and contrasting face-to-face versus digital sexual harassment. More specifically, this study contributes to the understanding of haptic communication and sexual harassment, or sexual harassment by physical touch and “virtual” touch with technology in social interactions.

Simulated Internship: Increasing Student Engagement, Enhancing Skills Application in Business Communication Courses

Deirdre (Dee) Fuchs, Tulane University

Abstract:

Imagine starting your first class session by handing out name tags and employee handbooks. This is how I began an experiment in the Spring of 2016 that has transformed my management communication course from ordinary to innovative. During this first class session, I explain that I am the owner and operator of The Foxy Companies, a holding company owning and operating three very different business franchises. Each semester, I host a group of interns that help me address communication issues specific to these very different businesses.

The handbook continues to outline intern responsibilities, which are essentially the goals of the course. As such, students learn to analyze audiences, develop professional documents and presentations, and improve their overall clarity, conciseness, and precision while communicating. The course begins with written assignments, each focusing on an issue within my franchises. For example, students must write an email recommending the best location for a new pet store. Students must also prepare a report analyzing the most popular flavors for my Kona Ice franchise. By the end of the course, my "interns" work in pairs to research and recommend a new franchise purchase for my consideration.

Since introducing the course as a simulated internship, I have found improved student engagement, and more enthusiasm about the class. Students are still completing a range of communication assignments (which challenge them to consider style, tone, formatting, and navigation), to analyze specific audiences, to select the best channel choice, and to research and reference external information sources. But, allowing students to feel a part of a company – even a fictional company – has made each assignment more meaningful and memorable, according to student feedback.

This workshop would provide an overview of the course by reviewing the "intern handbook" (aka syllabus), and examining sample assignments and student work submissions. Video sampling of student pitches (their culminating assignment where teams pitch an idea for a new franchise purchase) would also be reviewed in the workshop. The session would close with student feedback data based on their experience in the course.

Questionable Communication in Greenwashed Advertisements: Does Customer Confusion Alter Purchase Intentions?

Amy Roe, Eastern Kentucky University

Marcel Marie Robles, Eastern Kentucky University

Abstract:

The most functional tool that companies use to catch consumers' attention is advertising, which helps consumers increase their knowledge about a company's products. Consumers may only look at an advertisement for a few moments; however, recent studies have shown that they are more likely to react favorably to an advertisement that shows environmental concern (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013; Matthew & Wonneberger, 2014). Consequently, many companies are taking advantage of this trend by creating more environmentally friendly products in hopes of improving the firm's green image and hopefully generating long-term customer loyalty to achieve a competitive advantage (Alves, 2009; Banerjee, Gulas, & Iyer, 1995).

To differentiate their products as being environmentally friendly, many companies are creating green advertisements or altering their product labels to emphasize how minimally their products impact the environment (Eccles, Ioannou, & Serafeim, 2014). Consumers rely on advertising messages to make product decisions; however, the credibility of some green marketing messages are often debated (Bickart & Ruth, 2012; Laufer, 2003). Consumers experience numerous advertisements each day, and it can become impossible for a consumer to differentiate truthful labels from other salacious marketing materials. While some companies have found authentic ways to minimize their environmental impacts, others have exaggerated their product's environmental qualities. This embellishment may be because consumers are willing to pay a price premium for products that are more environmentally friendly, and companies see this environmental desire as a chance to increase their revenue (Grimmer & Bingham, 2013). Consequently, an increasing prevalence of green marketing includes ambiguous information such as "environmentally friendly" and "natural," as well as the use of images of nature (Laufer, 2003; Parguel, Benoit-Moreau, & Russell, 2015; Schmuck, Matthew, Naderer, & Beaufort, 2018).

The purpose of this study was to assess the honesty of greenwashed advertisements to determine if customers accurately understand the communication elements, including visual representations, on the products they are purchasing. Green advertising was examined carefully by combining the literature review with empirical data. Understanding the connection between consumers' perceptions of green marketing and greenwashing may help to adjust misguided expectations towards green purchases made in the future. The problem addresses the research question of whether consumers are able to identify the dishonesty in greenwashed advertisements and on product labels, and whether this ability, or lack thereof, alters purchase intentions.
For this study, purchase intent is defined with the motivation level an individual has to purchase a product based off the advertisement itself. Further understanding of this link may help to prevent greenwashing in the future if consumers are able to detect greenwashing efforts easily and effectively in a company's communications.

By carefully appraising the communication on products and advertisements, along with an extensive review of the literature, it can be shown that many companies are turning to trickery to deceive the customer. Because companies may turn to green advertising to promote their

environmentally friendly products, it is up to consumers to become better educated about greenwashing methods.

Greenwashing is popular in the marketplace and because of the plethora of greenwashed ads, consumers are no longer able to interpret the features of a product accurately during an information processing time. Green advertising and greenwashed advertising is too similar and too ambiguous for consumers to make a relevant decision.

Therefore, consumers should be asking companies to change the way they produce their products. If consumers continue to push for truly sustainable products, the hope is that corporations will no longer put forth minimal effort to appear sustainable. Once more companies truly improve their environmental performance, consumers will be able to trust that the products they are buying are from a credible source.

Companies also must assess possible future issues that may arise if they are found to be greenwashing their products, which includes possible financial penalties or loss of consumer trust. Some final recommendations for consumers planning to purchase environmentally friendly products starts with looking beyond packaging that is blatantly green. Consumers need to take the time to do online research about the manufacturer or the labels on the products. By clarifying which labels or certifications are authentic, consumers can make the most informed purchase decision. As a result of being better informed on their purchasing decisions, consumers can feel good about their positive impact on the environment.

Cultivating Students' Cultural Literacy through Research and Writing: Instructor and Librarian Collaboration

Hui Fen Chang, Oklahoma State University

Kristina Schaap, Oklahoma State University

Abstract:

Communication is vital to business operations, and effective cross-cultural communication is critical to success in the workforce. Written Business Communication classes at the Oklahoma State University strive to develop a rigorous and robust curriculum that aims to help students develop skills necessary to efficiently and effectively produce written communication in a diverse workplace. Students not only learn essential business writing principles and develop important critical thinking skills through various writing projects, but they also gain practical skills in research and cross-cultural communication.

The purpose of this presentation is to introduce an assignment taught in a Written Business class that is designed to engage students with research, writing and communicating cultures. The assignment provides students with the opportunity to research different cultures and learn about how other countries conduct business. In the past, students have enjoyed the cultural aspect of this type of project; they become more invested in the assignment and in researching their topics. In the process of research writing for their reports on cultures, students will perform proper research, demonstrate abilities to gather, evaluate, incorporate and document report information. To further enhance students' learning experiences, the instructor of Written Business Communication collaborates with an academic librarian to teach students how to research, select and cite appropriate content for their cultural reports.

Methodology

Content analysis will be used to evaluate students' final reports on cultures. Content analysis provides the course instructor and the librarian a valuable lens to understand the ways in which students interpret cultures, their viewpoints and make sense of different cultures. The method also offers an opportunity to determine how well students organize, integrate and synthesize their sources to achieve effective written communication. A survey questionnaire will be administered after students' submission of reports to assess students' learning experience with the research and writing of a cultural report.

Benefits for Students

Researching Different Countries and Cultures: Students develop an understanding of how other countries conduct business. They experience life away from the classroom and enhance their multi-cultural literacy. This provides an opportunity to further develop their research skills, and also improves their cultural understanding by working with a variety of information sources.

Expanding Research and Writing Skills: In the process of research writing, students put into practice the business-writing principles that they have been learning throughout the semester. The instructor - librarian collaboration further provides students a learning environment that allows them to improve their research skills. Students learn about the research process of topic

development, information gathering, evaluation of information sources, and communication of formation. In addition, through the research process, students gain practical search techniques in locating information and learn from a variety of sources that include scholarly, academic and popular business sources available beyond the World Wide Web.

Benefits for Educators

Researching Different Countries and Cultures: Generally, students love this aspect of the writing project. They enjoy researching their countries as well as writing about their findings. They invest more time and care in the project, which in turn creates stronger documents. In this assignment, students become the instructor while the instructor learns from the student, thus facilitating a student-centered environment.

Facilitating Students' Engagement in Research Process and Critical Thinking

Engaging students in critical thinking about research is important to the overall learning objective of Written Business Communication classes at OSU. Collaboration with the library and the librarian creates a learning environment outside of classroom that engages students with library research and information gathering as parts of the research process. It further allows students to learn about building research techniques, critical evaluation of sources, and effective use of information to accomplish written business communication.

Expected Takeaways

In this presentation we will share with the audience the design and development of this assignment, as well as findings from the analyses of students' final research output and survey data.

Contextualizing the Digital Skills of Professional Communication Students in Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Kenneth Robert Price

Abstract:

Introduction

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are defined as colleges or universities where total Hispanic enrollment constitutes a minimum of 25% of the total enrollment with at least 50 percent of those students being the first generation in their families to attend college. HSIs have historically had fewer financial resources, which has prevented many from being able to compete for the best faculty, upgrade and maintain facilities, and establish or improve technological infrastructures.

Professional communication has undergone a paradigmatic shift with the incorporation of digital technology into its instruction and practice. With these digital forms of professional communication come a new set of programmatic problems, particularly for Hispanic-Serving Institutions: problems in receiving funding for the expensive technology necessary to create them; problems in finding the training necessary to prepare instructors to teach technologies that they themselves never received formal instruction in; and problems in supporting both the classroom and workplace instruction of these forms of professional communication.

Statement of problem

The newer, technology-intensive forms of professional communication—such as visual reports, information graphics, electronic questionnaires and surveys, and EPUBs—come with a new set of problems for professional communication programs. The foremost problem in supporting the classroom instruction of digital technology, particularly in Hispanic-Serving Institutions, is in having the resources necessary to develop the digital skills students need to be able to compete when entering the workplace. This also includes having qualified instructors who are conversant in both professional communication theory and practice and who possess the requisite computer skills necessary to prepare students who can immediately fill industry positions without subsequent computer training.

In teaching professional communication, the instructor must not only be familiar with its theory and practice, but also proficient with a variety of software applications. For many faculty, familiarity with technology is more than merely a hurdle in connecting with their students; for those who teach technology-intensive areas of technical communication, a lack of expertise with the technology can call into question their authority over the subject matter.

To stay current or at least abreast of their students, instructors must look for professional development resources to become proficient with the very technology they are asked to teach and the very technology students are, in effect, paying to learn. Preparing professional communication students to compete in a knowledge-based workforce requires a new model of education and training, a model of lifelong learning that other STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields have adopted to keep up with the rapid change in technology.

Statement of purpose

The purpose of this session is to examine the best practices for integrating digital technology into professional communication course curricula as well as determining the requisite skillset instructors need to graduate professional communication students from Hispanic-Serving Institutions. By detailing innovative and updated pedagogical practices for professional communication students, attendees will engage in an important conversation about a student population that has historically been vastly underrepresented in professional communication programs, with developing marketable digital technology skills as the primarily goal.

Rethinking Theory and Praxis in Biz Comm: A Call for Civic Engagement

Jessie Lynn Richards, University of Utah

Abstract:

This paper focuses on two interrelated aspects 1) the difficulty of translating academic discourse to larger publics; and 2) an argument that scholars should work to do just that. This paper explores a communicative relationship between charity work and academic discourse and theory, ultimately arguing for an engaged academic community of business communication scholars using their specialized knowledge to advocate for social change.

First, this paper discusses several difficulties inherent in communicating academic discourse in public debates by describing the work of a charitable organization to use communication theories to construct and address a public. Academic discourses have a notoriously difficult time finding purchase in public debates. Indeed, academic research tends to remain in academic circles, circulating outward into the public sphere variably, if at all.

Using Warner's conception of public, defined in three senses, the second two of which matter for this paper. The first is a concrete public--a group of people all in one place experiencing the same thing. He defines this public as "a crowd witnessing itself in visible space." This is a group of people sharing an experience together, such as the theatre or a ballgame, to borrow two of his examples. The other kind of public is a bit more diffuse, dispersed, and diverse. This is "the kind of public that comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation." This public is organized by textual relationships that create a composite public organized around like beliefs, texts, ideas, and the like. In this paper, I am concerned with two physical and textual publics that overlap, sometimes textually and other times physically. First is a public of domestic violence victim-survivors, or those women who have or are currently in abusive relationships. The second is a charity, oriented toward helping educate about domestic violence issues and to fund domestic violence causes. These two groups are publics in the sense that Warner talks about.

Sometimes, one group may find themselves in the same room together, discussing issues of domestic violence, and other times, they participate in the public through the circulation of Facebook memes, news articles, funding requests, white papers, reports, websites, and the like. In the case of the charity, such texts are circulated to members of the community who follow the charity on Facebook, board members, friends and donors of the charity, and others generally concerned about domestic violence.

Each group, the victim-survivors and the charity, make up their own public, with texts that are central to that specific group. But they also overlap in the second sense that Warner discusses--they participate in the circulation of texts about domestic violence sometimes with each other directly and at other times indirectly. In some cases, the charity also communicates about issues of domestic violence to people who are victim-survivors, either still in an abusive relationship or out. These communications are the centerpiece of our talk today, as we discuss how we participated in the constitution of a public by translating professional documents into documents that could circulate in everyday contexts.

Secondly, this paper argues that business communication scholars can engage in the public sphere to make social change using a "Collective Impact Model" approach as a way to develop and fund organizational programs that foster civic engagement. This approach enables researchers to tackle "complex social problems with multiple layers of stakeholders, all with different perspectives and disagreement about the causes and best solutions." According to Kania and Kramer (2011) "Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, yet the social sector remains focused on the isolated intervention of individual organizations." Thus, despite the challenge of translating academic discourse to a public sphere, scholars of communication theory are uniquely positioned to do just such work.

Teamwork in the School of Business at a Four-Year University

Michelle Dawson, Missouri Southern State University
Beverly Block, Missouri Southern State University
Stephanie Schartel Dunn, Missouri Southern State University

Abstract:

When applying for a job, prospective employees tend to emphasize hard skills – the specific knowledge and abilities required for a particular job. These are typically skills that can be clearly defined and measured. However, employers consistently say it is also necessary for candidates to highlight soft skills to show why they are the best candidate for the job. Therefore, when seeking employment, soft skills can be as important as hard skills.

Employers consistently place performing as a team player as one of their most requested soft skills. "Being a team player means not only being cooperative, but also displaying strong leadership skills when necessary." The use of team assignments in the classroom has increased not only for helping to provide employers the skills they are seeking from college graduates but also that there is pedagogical value in students working together in terms of breadth and depth of learning (Jacques 1991; Johnson & Johnson 1975).

A question to be answered: How much teamwork is being utilized in the school of business at our university? As instructors of Business Communication, we know that the Business Communication course includes several opportunities for students to practice working in teams. Our business students take the Business Communication course early in the business core. The course utilizes teamwork in a variety of ways, including class discussion, document editing and revising, written report preparation and presentation. This course hopefully helps lay the foundation for teamwork for upper division classes. But, how much teamwork is taking place in the other business courses?

Our research will determine from faculty how teamwork is being utilized in business core courses. We plan to survey business professors that teach business core courses in our university. Questions to be asked of our faculty will include:
o Do you use teamwork in your business core courses? If so, please list.
o Do you use teamwork in classroom exercises?
o Do you use teamwork in homework assignments?
o Do you use teamwork in large project assignments?
o Are there other teamwork activities in your courses? If so, please list.
o How many opportunities do students have to practice teamwork in your course(es)? Please explain.
o What finished product do you expect from team activities? Paper? Presentation? Class discussion? Other?
o What are the advantages for you when you use teamwork in the classroom?
o What are the disadvantages for you when you use teamwork in the classroom?
o Do you use peer evaluations in the students' grades?
o How do you assign grades for teamwork? (individual grades, one team grade, other)

Once we identify the degree to which our business faculty utilize teams in their business core courses, we will later survey our senior business majors to determine their perceptions of

teamwork activities in their business core courses to see if there is agreement with the faculty's responses. Once both groups are surveyed, we would like to determine if teamwork is being addressed sufficiently and how much is sufficient? What amount of team activity is effective to teach team skills?

Because of the important of possessing team work skills, the business school recently added a student learning outcome to address the success of students learning to work in a team environment. Our school of business is developing measures of teamwork exhibited in the courses in the business core. This research will help us work toward the assessment of teamwork. Through further work on our part, we as instructors for Business Communication plan to determine if we are doing enough in our course to prepare students for their group work in other business courses then ultimately to see if the teamwork skills they have learned has prepared them in their employment after graduation.

Using Social Collaborations to Develop Team Skills

Chynette Nealy, University of Houston Downtown

Abstract:

This proposal extends the findings of earlier research that examined developing team-based skills. Comparisons between academic and workplace challenges were made related to developing team-based skills, e.g. problem solving, meeting management, writing reports, delivering presentations and team member differences, e.g. age, cultural, gender, and technological (Nealy, 2005; Knudson, 2012; Colvin, 2006; Vines, 2003). Findings revealed gaps between academic (theory) and industry (practice) related to team member differences. Of particular interest to this author, a business communication professor, was the gap linked to team skills and technology. It is important to examine best practices to equip business majors with applicable team and technological skills for the 21st century workplace.

In this study team-based skills are examined through the lens of collaboration. In general, collaboration is defined as the process of working together to achieve a common goal. Given the inclusion of technology in this study, the definition for collaboration is extended to social collaboration. Social collaboration is the use of technology to enhance communication and teamwork within an organization (Shwom &Snyder, 2016; Mirosoft, 2013).

For the purpose of closing the gap between academic and industry expectations, extant literature suggests the significant influence of technology on workplace teams. Organizations are utilizing social media for internal communication and collaboration. Thereby, changing skills employers want from business graduates (Moshiri & Cardon, 2014; Bonner, 2012, Mitchell et al, 2010). Thus, changes in the workplace in recent years focuses more on team (collaboration) rather than the traditional chain of command. As a consequence, some organizations operate using the premise there is a correlation between team collaboration and productivity in the workplace. Thus, teamwork increases satisfaction and engagement among employees (Cardon & Marshall, 2015; Berry, 2006, 2011; Douglas, Martin, & Krapels, 2006; Lawler & Finegold, 2000).

As a result, academic settings guided by accreditation requirements responded to these findings, i.e. expectation gaps between industry needs and graduates, by suggesting business programs design course content inclusive of industry trends which might minimize deficiencies in skills such as: team collaboration and technology (AACSB, 2011, 2006, 2003). These requirements also mentioned the importance of assessing students' perceptions of employability skills in terms of preparedness via course content. Thus, this present study examines business majors' perceptions about industry expected team-based skills related to technology-mediated communication. Specifically, how a preferred industry app (Google Docs) facilitates teamwork compared to an academic Learning Management System (Blackboard).

A frequently asked question by students when organizing team projects is "Can we use Google Docs to work on the project rather than Blackboard? Given changing student demographics, i.e. generations, inclusive of traditional and nontraditional students there is a shift in technology preferences. For example, students seemingly prefer Google Docs, offered within Google Drives, because it allows more collaboration options with team members in real time. Whereas, Blackboard has limited interactive tools. Yet, Blackboard remains the preferred platform in higher education

(Kim, 2017; Rhodes et al, 2017).

To address this issue, team projects were used to examine students' experiences with Google Docs and Blackboard. In this pilot study, forty declared business majors participated in an 8-week project focusing team-based skills related to technology-mediated communication. There were eight teams with five members. The project's objective was to determine whether assignments in the classroom mirrored and/or equipped business majors with industry expected skills. Mini team writing assignments were used to capture experiences related to team collaboration via Google Doc and Blackboard. The project had two phases: four weeks using Google Docs and four weeks using Blackboard. Each phase used a (pre/post) assessment of "technology preferences."

The presentation will provide an overview of collaborative skills related to teamwork and technology-mediated communication. The presenter will share reality-based pedagogical strategies which might improve business majors understanding of expected industry skills focusing on teamwork and technology. Findings from this study will contribute to literature about bridging skill gaps between theory and practice. Business programs need to examine industry trends that influence methods to equip business majors with applicable 21st century workplace skills. Results from this study will also contribute to assessment data in terms of pedagogical strategies linked to collaborative learning. This data is relevant to developing and implementing "innovative" business programs and course content.

Innovative Technology Implementations: Communication Strategies for Project Success

Lila Carden, University of Houston
Raphael Boyd, Clark Atlanta University

Abstract:

Problem or Purpose:

There are obstacles that prevent successful innovative project implementations. Some of these obstacles include issues with the management of the project as well as issues related to preparing the organization for the transformation. For example, some of the project management-related issues include the lack of problem solving skills and dialogue, ineffective communication models, and lack of insufficient involvement of project stakeholders (Moussa, McMurray, & Muenjohn, 2018; Smith, 2002). Other reasons for unsuccessful project executions include resistance to change and ineffective change management strategies (Moussa, McMurray, & Muenjohn, 2018). Additionally, innovations that involve transformational changes usually are not successful due to a lack of employee engagement (Eisenbert, Johnson, & Pieterson, 2015). Most of these obstacles to project success can be mitigated by executing a communications strategy that includes a plan that focuses on a culture of employee inclusion, effective messaging, and strategy execution.

Methodology:

Conceptual Paper

Findings:

This research includes a framework that can be used for project communications management related to planning, managing, and monitoring communications tasks and activities (Project Management Institute, 2017). The framework is focused on mitigating misinterpretations and miscommunications by strategically selecting communication tools and techniques to facilitate management of the project as well as managing the overall change initiative.

Summary:

Innovative technology projects are ways in which organizations implement their strategic initiatives. These strategic initiatives usually include outcomes related to a products, services or results. These outcomes usually include changes to organizations and are focused on moving organizations from a current state to a future state. In order to effectively move the organization to the future state, there is a need to manage the communication with project stakeholders and prepare the organization for the transformational change. The framework in the study includes the tools and techniques used to engage and manage key project stakeholders as well as prepare the organization for the change initiative via a communications framework.

Implications:

The implications for this research include project managers and others who lead the communication efforts on projects. The focus is two-fold and includes managing the project

stakeholders and managing the organizational change related to the transformation. The implication for project managers as leaders of the initiatives include inclusion of stakeholders when developing the communications management plan (Project Management Institute, 2017). This plan includes the guidelines, tools, and techniques for face-to-face meetings, email messages, and online meetings. The communications plan also needs to include the planning, dissemination and monitoring of information throughout the project duration. For example, the communication strategy needs to include making the decision about the person responsible for communicating, identifying who should receive the communication, and the methods and frequency of the communication. Additionally, the stakeholders need to also be engaged in the project status during project execution and monitoring and control phases.

The implications also include communications steps that are needed for preparing the organization for the innovative change. This preparation includes Kotter's (1996) process for managing change and focuses on a communication strategy that is implemented after the leadership has mandated that the change will occur. Kotter's process further includes establishing a guiding association; developing and communicating a vision; encouraging employees to act on the vision; planning for immediate gains; integrating improvements to support more change; and institutionalizing new initiatives in the culture.

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Using a Design Thinking Hands-on Project as the Context in a Business Communication Course

Dianne R. Garrett, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Abstract:

More emphasis is being placed on hiring college graduates who are excellent problem solvers, excellent in team collaboration and excellent communicators too. See the figure below that details the top seven stills employers seek (NACE, 2018). Routinely communication and collaboration score at the top; however, more recently problem-solving moved up in priority.

At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, we updated the business communication class to incorporate the increasing pressure for students to have more problem-solving skills through hands-on experiences. The course is now the introduction to the innovative mindset through hands-on projects with a real business client.

In this session, we'll talk about blending (1) the value of problem-solving through a design thinking real-client project experience, (2) an innovative mindset (mindfulness, growth mindset, and strengths) the ways to help students advance in their collaborative behaviors (3) while maintaining the core topic of business communication as the foundational course curriculum. The result is we designed a new course that keeps the priority of business writing and public speaking and adds more learning in collaboration (relating in the workplace) and problem-solving using the design thinking approach in a real-world context. We have complete a pilot run of the course in spring 2018, and for fall 2018, we are in the first full term experience of the modified course.

Problem Statement:

In modifying the Business Communication course, we had four main questions to clarify in order to decide the course design.

1. How do we create a learning experience for 17 sections a term that is consistent with Writing Intensive, Speaking Intensive and AACSB stipulations?
2. What are the core course curriculum that must be included?
3. What is appropriate content items that we can exclude?
4. What is the fitting workload and pace of the workload for students and for instructors?

Methodology:

In this session, there will be a PowerPoint presentation with written notes that will be shared with the conference attendees. During the session, a question and answer time is planned for the audience to explore more of the presentations information and to discuss the ways that they might create a course with the trending employer needs for excellent problem-solvers, collaborators and communicators.

Implications to Education/Business:

The goal is to prepare students for the demands of the current business world by helping them advance in their problem-solving, innovative thinking, and collaborative work habits. Introducing the design-thinking approach to problem-solving, students have an additional skill that helps them compete for jobs in the marketplace.

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A Business Communication Course – Planning a Study Abroad Experience in Thailand

James G. Ward, Fort Hays State University

Scott Jones, Fort Hays State University

Abstract:

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to share the planning process for a business communication problems course, with a Study Abroad experience in Thailand, for a rural mid-western university. Students are primarily from small rural communities, of less than 3,000, and many are first-generation university students. The program is supported by DECA, the university business organization. The course is scheduled for Spring, 2019, with the Study Abroad component in July, 2019.

Course Description

This Study Abroad experience will academically prepare students to work in a global environment, virtually or face-to-face.
The 1-3 credit hour course is tied to the course objectives of two existing business communication courses. Learners will engage in the following global business communication topics: 1) collaboration and interpersonal communication; 2) the Ladder of Inference; 3) Mental Models; 4) Cultural Intelligence; and 5) the Continuum of Cultural Intelligence. A cultural awareness survey will be administered both pre and post-course.

The cultural component of the Study Abroad experience answers the question, What is Thainess?, the theme of the Thai National History Museum in Bangkok.

Course Details

The following three areas are addressed. 1. Collaboration and interpersonal communication; 2) Intercultural sensitivity, development, and competence, 3) Emotional Intelligence. A set of readings, videos, and podcasts is pre-determined. The milieu the Study Abroad experience is selected sites in Thailand, working in teams consisting of Thai university students and the hill tribes of northern Thailand. The northern site is a Royal Project of the King of Thailand and is an example of social enterprise. The purpose of the site is to train hill tribes in crop and handicraft production, and the elimination of opium production and slash and burn agriculture.

University Process for Approval

The four levels of approval and related challenges are described: Department Chair, Dean of the College of Business, General Counsel, Director of Study Abroad. The risk assessment process will also be explained. In addition, the presenters will share the process to secure funding for student participation in the Study Abroad component.

Distinguishing Features

Culture and business communication are addressed through an active learning model while in Thailand.

1. Global business communication is addressed within the framework of a major national social enterprise, sponsored by the King of Thailand, the Ang Kan Royal Agricultural Station in Chiang Mai Province and factory production at the First Royal Factory. The enterprise provides a full supply chain experience- from fruit and crop production to manufacturing and sales. The communication process in all areas is explored.

2. Students will have a daily worksheet to guide their observations of culture and communication. Each day ends with a mindfulness meditation period, led by a Thai, followed by learner blogging with photos and videos. A mindfulness meditation app will be downloaded prior to departure.

Sample daily worksheets and the syllabus will be shared.

Planning

The course and Study Abroad experience is co-planned by a faculty member with extensive ties to Thailand. The proposal to students includes photos of the sites, and leaders, students will visit. The faculty member has traveled and visited the sites and has met all the individuals involved in Thailand.
The cost analysis will be presented, based on a network of colleagues in Thailand: housing, food, transportation.

Thai Culture

Culture is addressed through the framework of the Thai national history museum in Bangkok: The King, the Nation, and Religion. The cultural theme is the answer to the question, "What is Thainess?" This theme begins with the Thai interactive history museum, the King Prajadhipok Museum in Bangkok, and the museum's exploration of multiple answers to this question. In addition, learners will attend a ceremony at a Thai temple and tour a privately-owned Thai company to contrast a for-profit Thai business to the King's social enterprise project. In addition, a set of audio podcasts about Thai culture is included in the pre-departure course.

Course Organization

In Spring, 2019 students enrolled in a pre-departure problems course. All readings, tied to the cultural and business communication goals, are provided within the Learning Management System, Blackboard. Only one book is required, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej Biography of a Pet Dog. The Story of Tongdaeng. Peer-reviewed articles and the book will be read and discussed in class prior to departure.

Partial Bibliography of Course Readings

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Poster Presentation

Relevance: Linking the Real World to the Business Communication Classroom by Actual Example

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Abstract:

Today's business students want to be able to relate concepts and theories in a textbook to the real world. In fact, not providing such a linkage can cause students to drift away or fail to see any meaning in the instruction. Perhaps the best way to bring the textbook to life is to provide linkages that students can grasp that will make the business world feel like a real place.

Purpose:

The purpose of this poster is to present two examples that can be used in the business communication classroom to provide a real connection to the workplace. The two example scenarios are described as follows:

Example 1 focuses on designing a resume to match a specific job. Most business communication textbooks propose using a general resume or vita that can be sent to any employer. This example will demonstrate how creating a resume that matches the employer's job description also increases the applicant's chances for securing an interview. A more effective way to design the resume would be to have the student create a focused resume to match the requirements of a specific job. Example 1 will describe how this process works. The objective is important to the business field for the following reasons:
• Globalization has increased the competition for jobs in the field of business
• Outsourcing has decreased the number of available jobs in the field of business
• Employers can afford to be more selective choosing between applicants as the available jobless pool grows
• Technology has eliminated many jobs, and increased the need for specificity in job qualifications
• Advanced degrees are becoming the norm rather than the exception.

This objective will be accomplished by increasing applicant chances for gaining interviews by:
• Instructing students on the objectives of the employer
• Teaching students the benefits to the employers in receiving relevant resumes
• Showing students how to shape their resumes to be a "match" for the employer's qualification requirements.
• Utilizing the job description as the "recipe" for crafting a resume that best meets the needs of the employer.

By constructing the student's resume to hi the "bulls-eye" of the target, to be the match for the employer's job requirements, their odds for success increase dramatically.
Example 2 is a way to bring technology in to the classroom through Twitter. While students are

familiar with the social use and purpose of Twitter, they have not yet focused on a business application for the format. This example will explore real life instances of Twitter use in the corporate world. First, the students will be exposed to a variety of examples of corporate tweets of different levels of effectiveness. Student teams will then be asked to do appropriate audience analyses. For example, assume a customer has complained on Twitter about a specific product or service. Corporations also use Twitter as a proactive tool to respond to real world issues and complaints. The business communication student will try to design a meaningful response based on the client audience and the needs of the company.

An actual example used in a business communication class was to have the students watch the president's state of the union address with the main theme of "America First". The assignment was to develop a tweet from an assigned company to express the company's support for the "America First" agenda. After each group of students wrote a tweet representing their company (examples were WalMart, Texas Instruments, Boeing, Bank of America, and 3M), they were then required to present the proposed tweets to the class. The class critically analyzed each of the tweets as to what perception the intended audience would have. The intended audience was the customers and world audience of the company. The example written by the group from WalMart was that not only was WalMart "America First" they were also the "World First". The WalMart team did not want to alienate part of the global audience with their tweet and adversely affect sales and profits for the company. This exercise using Twitter required critical thinking and effective writing within the parameters of a Twitter message to satisfactorily promote the company.

Results:

These two examples will serve as a starting board which would lead to other types of examples that could be used to add relevance to the business communication classroom. The authors will also provide a handout to distribute during the poster discussion to share key points and examples.