

Toolkit for New Media Writers

trAce Online Writing Centre

opening

Don't wait until you think you know what you're doing. You'll never take the plunge. The best way to learn is to do, to teach what you do to others, and to collaborate. Be prepared to learn new things and challenge your preconceived notions of your art. Don't consider it second-best. Use the technology. Think - what can I create that couldn't be done in print? Don't be put off by Luddite responses. Edit yourself: think radio not print. Get a high-speed connection. Back up your data. Get a web site, simple but professional looking, and keep it current. Give your writing away for free. Electronic work is shaping a brand new language of literature. Be connected to a writing community. The net conquers geographical or cultural isolation. Get a virus detector and keep it up to date. Learn basic HTML or Dreamweaver and web authoring. Learn to refine criteria when using a search engine. Investigate numerous sites in order to find those you initially feel comfortable with. Bookmark them. Use chat rooms and discussion groups to learn the conventions. Lurk for a while before you post. Organise your bookmarks/favourites well so you can find those valuable web pages again. Search for it/save it/organise it. Planning the project or site is very important. Good planning is essential to maintain direction. Read as much online work as you can. Try to solve technical problems before asking others. You'll discover that you are much more capable and knowledgeable than you imagined. Every problem attacked means an increase in your skill level even if you need help to solve it in the end. Each new writer coming to the web could be the one to show others the way. It's an exciting place to be. Learn to program. Learn to read. Learn to write.

the space

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Introduction

When you compose in or into hypertext, the space literally opens up. You live and read differently in the space between print and online.
Stephanie Strickland

This combined Toolkit and Guide provides inspiration, skills and support for writers working online with new media. It offers useful information for everyone, whether new or experienced, and is available in two parts in PDF format and online at <http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition>

Inspiration

"Be prepared to learn new things and challenge your preconceived notions of your art."

Consult the Guide to find out about new media writing, see what others are doing, and develop your own creative ideas. Visit the Toolkit to hear interviews with writers working in the field and read advice by the many writers who responded to our online survey on how they are using computers and the internet.

Technique

"Don't consider it second-best. Use the technology. Think - what can I create that couldn't be done in print?"

The Toolkit will help you to build a portfolio of technical expertise suited to the kinds of work you wish to make, whilst the Guide will introduce you to some of the best online writing and help develop your appreciation of this new form.

Connection

"Each new writer coming to the web could be the one to show others the way. It's an exciting place to be."

The web is vitally useful for connecting creative and imaginative people across physical and cultural boundaries. The Toolkit contains information on interactivity – how to connect with others, and how to support online collaboration as we meet, work and learn together on the web.

This toolkit offers a comprehensive resource of tools, advice and support for the new media writer. We also recommend our Guide, a brief and jargon-free introduction to New Media Writing. It considers:

- What is new media writing?
- Reading print
- Reading new media writing
- Origins
- What to install
- Reading list

Computer Basics

Definitions

Whatis?com is a searchable website with definitions for terms related to Information Technology:

<http://whatis.techtarget.com/>

TechWeb offers a uniquely useful Encyclopaedia of computer terms and concepts:

<http://www.techweb.com/encyclopedia/>

File Management

This Malaspina University-College website offers links to computer basics, file management, and how to use a PC's Help files. It is geared for users of Windows 95/98:

http://it.mala.bc.ca/ol_resources/learner_ol_tutorials/pc_basics.htm

Offered by the Valdosta State University of Georgia, this easy to understand webpage includes Windows interface and an introduction to file management:

<http://www.valdosta.edu/vsu/wks/ep/basics1/>

This online 'Computer Help Desk', by the Maharishi University of Management, includes information on everything from purchasing a computer to tutorials in **Microsoft Word** and **Excel**, **Eudora** and **Outlook Express** email, and browser use. It provides information for users of both PC and Mac operating systems:

<http://www.mum.edu/helpdesk/welcome.html>

Tools & Resources

See also Plugins

Housecall - better safe than sorry, scan your computer now with this free virus scanner:

<http://housecall.trendmicro.com/>

Grisoft Inc. is a high-tech company specializing in the development and marketing of anti-virus software for computer systems since 1990. Free download offered by AVG 6.0 Anti-Virus systems:

<http://www.grisoft.com/>

Reviewed by various magazines, ZoneAlarm stands up against commercial virus software and can be upgraded to commercial versions with more facilities. Look for the ZoneAlarm free download:

<http://www.zonelabs.com/>

O'Reilly & Associates is an information source for leading-edge computer technologies - a source for books, information on conferences, and web sites including **Open Source**, and peer-to-peer networking:

<http://www.oreillynet.com/>

SpywareInfo offers information on how to protect your privacy on the internet, remove an annoying piece of adware, or restore a hijacked browser:

<http://www.spywareinfo.com/>

Accessibility

WebAIM offers general information on laws and guidelines for web accessibility, as well as articles, viewpoints, tutorials, workshops, and courses for developers, administrators, and faculty:

<http://www.webaim.org/discussion/>

W3C's Web Accessibility Initiative

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

Section 508, enacted to eliminate barriers in information technology, for people with disabilities:

<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=3>

The Web Standards Project is a resource for issues and resources concerning accessibility:

<http://www.webstandards.org/learn/standards/wai/index.html>

Health

Compiled by the College of Letters and Science, University of California, this webpage offers links to information, services, products on computer related health issues:

<http://ls.berkeley.edu/lscr/support/faq/ergo/>

A practical guide with exercises to prevent and heal Carpal Tunnel Syndrome & Repetitive Stress Injuries:

<http://www.mydailyyoga.com/yoga/rsi.html>

Software

The Freeware Network provides free software resources with a fast and user-friendly interface, including browsers, multimedia tools, chat & messaging, desktop utilities, E-mail, Linux & Mac utilities, security tools, voice/video chat :

<http://www.fwnetwork.com/>

The GNU Project was launched in 1984 to develop a complete Unix-like operating system which is free software. Though these systems are often referred to as **Linux**, they are more accurately called GNU/Linux systems. This is also the website of the Free Software Foundation (FSF). The FSF's mission is to preserve, protect and promote the freedom to use, study, copy, modify, and redistribute computer software:

<http://www.gnu.org/>

Text

Word Processing

The Microsoft Word MVP FAQ Site includes Tutorials and articles on using Microsoft Word:

<http://www.mvps.org/word/Tutorials/index.html>

The State University Of New Jersey offers several tutorials including **Microsoft Word** (introduction, templates, tables, collaboration), **WordPerfect**, printer trouble-shooting, viruses, freezes and crashes, **Excel**, **Outlook Express**, **PDF** reader, PDF creation, and **WinZip**:

<http://getit.rutgers.edu/tutorials/wordperfect/>

Reference Tools

Research-It! - Your one-stop reference desk, includes thesauri, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and all sorts of other information:

<http://www.itools.com/>

Wikipedia is a multilingual project to create a complete and accurate open content encyclopedia:

<http://www.wikipedia.org/>

Organisations, Societies & Education

trAce connects writers and readers around the world in real and virtual space. We promote an accessible and inclusive approach to the internet with the focus on creativity, collaboration and training. This is where writers meet to experiment, create new work, and expand the potential of the global literary community.

Membership is free:

<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/>

The Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) facilitates and promotes the writing, publishing, and reading of literature in electronic media. Their website includes a searchable database of authors:

<http://www.eliterature.org/>

The Voice of the Shuttle (VoS) provides a structured and briefly annotated guide to online resources to the humanities disciplines as they interact with the sciences and social sciences and with new digital media:

<http://vos.ucsb.edu/>

A guide to online research resources provided by the University of California's Santa Barbara Department of English, including links to online books, electronic literature, new media writing and electronic journals:

http://transcriptions.english.ucsb.edu/resources/guides/learning/research_resources.asp

Located in the Presidio of San Francisco, The Internet Archive is a searchable library offering permanent access to historical collections that exist in digital format, including the International Children's Digital Library:

<http://www.archive.org/>

Poets & Writers, Inc. is a source of information, support, and guidance for creative writers. Founded in 1970, this nonprofit literary organization is located in New York City:

<http://www.pw.org/>

PrintMedia InBox is designed to keep you informed of the latest industry news. It has an email list and timely articles on print media:

<http://www.printmediamag.com/>

Computers and Composition, an international journal of teachers teaching online, hosted by The University of Texas at Austin:

<http://corax.cwrl.utexas.edu/cac/>

The Learning and Skills Hub has collected together and categorised web site links specifically for the use of educational people, under headings such as funding, teaching and learning and staff development:

<http://lshub.ngfl.gov.uk/>

The American Press Institute's Journalist Toolbox has a searchable database of online resources for writers and editors and journalists:

<http://www.journaliststoolbox.com/>

Copyright

The Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO) provides links to information about copyright and intellectual property in 30 countries:

http://strategis.gc.ca/sc_mrksv/cipo/links/links_intl-e.html/

Compiler Press' Compleat World Copyright website is searchable by author, country, institute, journal, or media:

<http://www.compilerpress.atfreeweb.com/>

Experimental

Storyspace is a hypertext writing environment that is especially well suited to large, complex, and challenging hypertexts. Storyspace focuses on the process of writing, making it easy and pleasant to link, revise, and reorganize. Storyspace is available for Windows and Macintosh computers:

<http://www.eastgate.com/Storyspace.html>

An index of software for 'creativity & idea generation', including product reviews:

<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~caveman/Creative/Software/index.html>

Vannevar Bush's original 1945 article which invented hypertext:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/unbound/flashbks/computer/bushf.htm>

The Electronic Labyrinth, a study of the implications of hypertext for creative writers looking to move beyond traditional notions of linearity.

<http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/elab/elab.html>

Mark Bernstein on hypertexts:

<http://www.eastgate.com/HypertextNow/archives/Electronic.html>

The Hypertext Kitchen, an online newsletter for hypertext writers:

<http://hypertext.pair.com/>

Audio/Visual

General Information

A discussion of the differences between .gifs and .jpegs, the most commonly used files for images and graphics on webpages:

<http://www.weav.bc.ca/weavnews/article.htm?34>

An article discussing image editing software for both PC and Mac. A useful read before deciding which software to purchase. Includes links to all major products like **Adobe Photoshop**, **Jasc Paint Shop Pro**, **Corel Photo-Paint**, **Procreate Painter**, as well links to free image editing software:

http://graphicssoft.about.com/library/products/aabyb_imageedit.htm

Image Editing

GIMP is freely distributed software suitable for such tasks as photo retouching, image composition and image authoring:

<http://www.gimp.org/>

ShortCourses is a resource for digital photography, video, film scanners,

<http://www.shortcourses.com/>

AOL's Software Toolbox page with links to many image-editing software products:

<http://hometown.aol.com/royalef/toolbox.htm>

Jasc Software provides tools for digital image editing and image management including many affordable products like **Paint Shop Pro** and **Animation Shop**. Most products can be downloaded free for a 30 day trial:

<http://www.jasc.com/>

Adobe Systems Incorporated offers top-of-the-line software products including **Photoshop** and **Illustrator**, as well a free download of the well-known **Acrobat Reader** for reading Portable Document Files (PDF):

<http://www.adobe.com/>

Scanning

Wayne Fulton's site offers scanning tips and explains the basics of digital images and other documents to help you get the most from your scanner:

<http://www.scantips.com/>

Animation

CoffeeCup offers an animator to create animated .gifs for your web pages, and also allows you to save your work as .swf **Flash** files. The site offers a limited free version as well a trial version of the full-featured software:

<http://www.coffeecup.com/animator/>

Several animation tutorials from Wired News:

<http://www.wired.com/animation/articles.html>

Audio

Sonify.org is a community resource with information about adding interactive audio to the web, wireless and digital devices:

<http://sonify.org/index.html/>

Virtually Ignorant offers tutorials of the basics of adding audio to your webpage, using wav, midi, or streaming audio formats:

<http://www.virtuallyignorant.com/audio.htm>

FreeRip **MP3** is a free application for recording digital audio tracks directly from compact discs, without going through your sound card and saves tracks as CD-quality **WAV** files or encodes them to **MP3** compressed format:

<http://www.mgshareware.com/frmmain.html>

Sonic Foundry's software products **Sound Forge** and **Acid** are digital audio editors for editing, recording, encoding, and mastering nearly any form of digital audio including **WAV**, **AIFF**, **MP3**, and more:

<http://www.sonicfoundry.com/products/default.asp>

Syntrillium Corporation's **Cool Edit** is software for recording, editing, and mixing up to 128 high-quality stereo tracks with just about any sound card. The site includes user forums and tutorials:

<http://www.syntrillium.com/cep/>

FindSounds has a configurable search facility for locating sound files on the web, the files are downloadable:

<http://www.findsounds.com/>

An index of sounds - birds, computers, phonemes, screams, sound_effects - offered by the Tokyo University of Science's SunSITE:

<http://sunsite.sut.ac.jp/multimed/sounds>

Interactivity

General Information

Tutorials offered by AT&T Worldnet Service on subjects including netiquette, searching, email, mailing lists, newsgroups, chat (IRC), FTP, telnet, gopher:

<http://www.wurd.com/eng/wurdsite.htm>

Nancy White's tips for good online participation techniques:

<http://www.fullcirc.com/onlinetechniques.htm>

Email

Eudora is a free, full-featured webmail product offered by QUALCOMM Incorporated. An alternative to Outlook Express or other email software:

<http://www.eudora.com/>

Microsoft Outlook, a tool to help simplify e-mail communication, streamline group planning and scheduling:

<http://www.microsoft.com/office/outlook/default.asp>

How-To Guide for Outlook Express:

<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?scid=http://support.microsoft.com/support/ie/outlookexpress/win32/howto/default.asp>

Communication Tools

Tutorials offered by Course Technology (part of The Thomson Corporation) including **MOO, MUD, ICQ, chat, newsgroups, instant messenger**, and links to many other tutorials relating to the internet and computers:

<http://www.course.com/newperspectives/internet3/t08.cfm>

MOO (Multi-User Domain Object Oriented) is a computer program that allows multiple users to connect via the Internet to a shared database of rooms and other objects and interact with each other and the database in synchronous time:

<http://www.du.org/dumoo/imooinfo.htm>

MOO Links, including "The Beginner's Guide to MOOing at trAce", LinguaMOO, LambdaMOO:

<http://www.northpoint.org.uk/moo.html>

An online virtual learning environment, enCore is designed for educational use, digital community building, online writing projects, online conferencing, distance education programs, or just about any educational endeavour that aims to incorporate a rich and versatile online presence. Includes a list of online MOO resources:

<http://lingua.utdallas.edu/encore/>

Savitar is shareware MUVE client (or MUD client by another name) for Macintosh computers:

<http://www.heynow.com/Savitar/>

zMUD is the world's leading MUD/Telnet client for PC/Windows:

<http://www.tucows.com/home/preview/194246.html>

IRC (Internet Relay Chat) is a virtual meeting place where people from all over the world can meet and talk:

<http://www.mirc.com/>

ICQ or 'I Seek You' is a popular method of communication that allows for instant messaging, chat, email, SMS and wireless-pager messages, as well as transfer files and URLs:

<http://web.icq.com/>

NetMeeting is the Microsoft Windows real-time collaboration and conferencing client:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/netmeeting/>

Collaboration Online

Swiki.net is a place where you can store and maintain files, discuss ideas, display schedules, and share other resources related to a common interest or project in one place:

<http://www.swiki.net/>

Wiki Wiki Web is a website written by its users. Anyone can change any page or create new pages. Wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit webpage content and supports hyperlinks:

<http://c2.com/cgi/wiki>

Blogging

Blogger is a web-based tool that helps you publish to the web instantly:

<http://www.blogger.com/>

The Eatonweb Portal offers a comprehensive list of worldwide blogs, searchable by category, language, country, or alphabetically:

<http://portal.eatonweb.com/>

The CyberJournalist List is probably the internet's most complete directory of journalists' weblogs:

<http://www.cyberjournalist.net/cyberjournalists.html>

An annotated list of weblogs used by researchers and academics as a part of their research practice:

<http://cmc.uib.no/jill/txt/researchblogs.html>

Community

Howard Rheingold's Virtual Community Services, including the Brainstorms

Community where "a few hundred people around the world communicate about technology, the future, life online, culture, society, family, creativity, history, books, music, media, health, home, mind, phun (sic), work and academiaville":

<http://www.rheingold.com/index.html>

An online community network where you can create your own online community or search for interesting communities you might want to join:

<http://www.ezboard.com/>

Communities Online aims to address issues of sustainability, regeneration, social inclusion and healthier economies by focusing on the use of new communications technologies in communities and neighbourhoods:

<http://www.communities.org.uk/>

The InterActivist Network disseminates information about news-worthy events often overlooked or misrepresented by mainstream media and includes a mailing list and information on "community action using new media and technology to invigorate notions of public dialogue":

<http://www.interactivist.net/>

Web

General Information

Webopedia is a site where you can search for answers to questions about terms used on or about the web:

<http://www.webopedia.com>

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) develops specifications, guidelines, software, and tools. It is a forum for information, commerce, communication, and collective understanding. On this page, you'll find W3C news as well as links to information about W3C technologies and getting involved in W3C:

<http://www.w3.org/>

Browsers

W3Schools.com's browser information section where you can learn about the most common web browsers:

<http://www.w3schools.com/browsers/default.asp>

Microsoft's **Internet Explorer** homepage where you can download the most recent version of IE or search for older versions:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/default.asp>

Netscape Network's list of available archived products, including all of Netscape's browsers, from version 2.0 to 6.2:

<http://www.netscape.com/download/archive.html?cp=dowarc>

The Opera browser uses less memory and less space on your hard drive than other browsers, and opera.com also offers free email:

<http://www.opera.com/>

Web Searching

Offered by the University of South Carolina, these tutorials include short, succinct lessons on how to use search engines, with links to more advanced techniques:

<http://www.sc.edu/beaufort/library/bones.html>

A comprehensive list of search engines on the World Wide Web, compiled by the Centre Universitaire d'Informatique (University of Geneva):

<http://cui.unige.ch/meta-index.html>

Spider's Apprentice is a useful website for learning how search engines work, and a good resource for improving your web searching skills:

<http://www.monash.com/spidap.html>

Web Site Building

A list and descriptions of the most popular commercial **HTML** editors:

http://www.w3schools.com/software/software_html.asp

Free 'Web-building' tutorials, from basic **HTML** and **XHTML** tutorials to advanced **XML**, **XSL** and **WAP** tutorials:

<http://www.w3schools.com/>

Chami.com offers a wide range of useful tutorials and tools including HTML-Kit, a full-featured **HTML** editor for free download:

<http://www.chami.com/html-kit/>

A short list of free **HTML** Editors available for free download:

<http://www.pagetutor.com/pagetutor/makapage/list/index.html>

Offered by the University of North Carolina, the Word to Web tutorial shows you how to convert **Word** documents to **HTML** by using special features in **Dreamweaver**:

http://oasis.unc.edu/documentation/oasisdoc/word_web.htm

This color converter displays web-safe colors with a great interface for choosing either RGB values or hexadecimal numbers:

http://builder.cnet.com/webbuilding/pages/QuickReference/Color/converter.html?tag=st.b1.7690-8-6732699-1.txt.bl_converter

A webpage displaying web safe colours that render true on most operating systems:

<http://www.december.com/html/spec/colorsafes.html>

Dave Raggett's short guide to styling your web pages using W3C's Cascading Style Sheets language (**CSS**) to set the types and colours of text fonts and links:

<http://www.w3.org/MarkUp/Guide/Style>

WebReference.com is a resource for almost everything you will need to know about creating webpages, including tutorials on authoring, graphics, design, multimedia, programming and promotion:

<http://www.webreference.com/>

WS_FT95 (**FTP**) is software for transferring files from your computer to a server. It is free for non-commercial and educational users:

<http://www.ipswitch.com/support/ws ftp le support.html>

A site offering free software for uploading files (**FTP**) to a web server, including forums and a knowledge base:

<http://www.smartftp.com/>

JavaScript tutorials - learn how to make your pages dynamic and interactive:

<http://www.w3schools.com/js/default.asp>

If you want to see how javascripts work on your website, these free, original **DHTML** scripts and components can be cut-and pasted for instant use:

<http://www.dynamicdrive.com/>

Multimedia

Offered by the The University of Wisconsin-Madison, the 'DoIT' pages give advice on viewing and producing streaming media, with demos of existing streaming media content and links where plug-ins can be downloaded:

<http://www.doit.wisc.edu/streaming/index.asp>

A site offering many free Java applets, Perl, slide shows, and other useful code:

<http://www.codebrain.com/index.html>

FlashCFM provides resources for creating **Flash** and **ColdFusion** applications, with tutorials, forums, articles, and an active mailing list:

<http://www.flashcfm.com/>

Tutorialfind is a resource for tutorials on Macromedia products such as **Flash**, **Director**, and **Dreamweaver**:

<http://www.tutorialfind.com/tutorials/macromedia/>

Ultrashock is a professional community for multimedia developers, a blend of educational content, resources, and entertainment presented in a professionally designed environment. It provides forums, tutorials and book reviews:

<http://www.ultrashock.com/>

A site offered by multimedia designer Adam Montandon focusing on innovations and experimentation within the fields of new media and digital culture:

<http://www.stormsky.com/>

Software

Launched in 1993 as a software download site, Tucows is headquartered in Toronto, Canada. It offers a software library containing over 30,000 titles and reviews:

<http://www.tucows.com/>

TuDogs offers free software and services as well:

<http://www.tudogs.com/>

A browseable and constantly growing index of software and freeware offered by programmers and designers:

<http://www.freewareweb.com/>

Macromedia Incorporated offers cutting edge software tools for creating hypermedia content. The list includes Dreamweaver, ColdFusion, Flash and Director:

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/>

Research & Discussion

The Rider University in Lawrenceville, NJ hosts this forum on the Psychology of Cyberspace. Its purpose is to share ideas and resources concerning all facets of individual and group experience on the internet - including identity management in cyberspace, private and group e-mail communication, chat and message board communities:

<http://www.rider.edu/users/suler/psycyber/psycyber.html>

The Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) promotes the innovative application and use of information and technology systems in education across the UK:

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/>

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society is a research program founded to explore cyberspace, share in its study, and help pioneer its development:

<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/>

Lawrence Lessig is Professor of Law at Stanford Law School and founder of the Stanford Center for Internet and Society - his site is invaluable for anyone interested in information on and discussion about the future of the internet:

<http://cyberlaw.stanford.edu/lessig/>

An evolving list of internet sites provided by the Portland State University's Center of Excellence in Writing including online journals and resource sites, and homepages:

<http://web.pdx.edu/~pdx00282/cew/cew.htm>

The journal Leonardo is the leading journal for readers interested in the application of contemporary science and technology to the arts and music:

<http://mitpress2.mit.edu/e-journals/LEA/home.html>

A reading list created by Dr. Reinhold Grether with seven thousand links covering net artists, researchers, and publicists:

<http://www.netzwissenschaft.de/kuenst.htm>

Digital Web Magazine is an online magazine for professional web designers, or people who want to use web design to self-publish. It offers many useful links and tutorials on web-related subjects:

<http://www.digital-web.com/>

Contentious - a 'Web-zine for writers, editors, and others who create content for online media':

<http://www.contentious.com/>

Plugins

Always keep your Flash/Shockwave player up to date with the latest versions, as the newest webworks in Flash cannot be read by earlier browsers:

http://www.macromedia.com/shockwave/download/download.cgi?P1_Prod_Version=ShockwaveFlash&P5_Language=English

<http://sdc.shockwave.com/shockwave/download/frameset.fhtml?>

The Adobe Acrobat Reader lets you view and print PDF files on all major computer platforms:

<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>

QuickTime is required for some animation, sound and audio clips:

<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>

I-tunes for playing audio on Macintosh:

<http://www.apple.com/itunes/download/>

Windows Media Player (for video):

<http://windowsmedia.com/download/download.asp>

Winamp for playing audio in Windows:

<http://www.winamp.com/download/>

Choose the free RealOne Player at:

<http://www.real.com/>

Interviews

The following interviews were conducted during research for Mapping the Transition from Page to Screen.

All audio files are in mp3 format. Mp3 players can be downloaded from <http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/toolkit/web.htm#plugins>

[Randy Adams](#) interviewed by Kate Pullinger, Nottingham, UK, July 2002
<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/audio/randy.m3u>

[Catherine Byron](#) interviewed by Kate Pullinger, Nottingham, UK, July 2002
<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/audio/catherine.m3u>

[M.D.Coverley](#) interviewed by Sue Thomas, Los Angeles, USA, October 2002. 1995 NEH workshop at UCLA; the importance of structure; making order out of chaos; the virtual spaces where online work resides; dreaming of unexplained directories; subjective spaces in the brain; favourite tools; conceptualising hardware and software applications; the qualities needed by hypermedia authors.
<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/audio/coverley.m3u>

[Katherine Hayles](#) interviewed by Sue Thomas, Los Angeles, USA, October 2002. Part 1: differences between science and the arts; issues raised in 'Writing Machines'
<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/audio/hayles1.m3u>

[Katherine Hayles](#) interviewed by Sue Thomas, Los Angeles, USA, October 2002. Part 2: imagining the online space; issues raised by Mapping the Transition from Page to Screen
<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/audio/hayles2.m3u>

[Alan Liu](#) interviewed by Sue Thomas, Santa Barbara, USA, October 2002. Part 1: History of the Voice of the Shuttle; early days of the web; ELO's PAD project and the importance of archiving; why writers should get their hands dirty and learn a little programming; the spatial topology of writing online.
<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/audio/liu1.m3u>

[Alan Liu](#) interviewed by Sue Thomas, Santa Barbara, USA, October 2002. Part 2: The Laws of Cool and the influence of business culture on popular software applications; key moments in the classroom; visual design; the paradigm of the lone genius author is not only a threatened species, but probably never existed in the first place; software development for the creative community.
<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/audio/liu2.m3u>

[Talan Memmott](#) interviewed by Kate Pullinger, Nottingham, UK, July 2002
<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/transition/audio/talan.m3u>

Advice

We asked respondents to our 2002 survey of Writers using Computers and the Internet (<http://trace.ntu.ac.uk/process/index.cfm?article=25>) what advice they would give to writers considering working online. Here are just a few of their many suggestions:

- All aspiring writers, whether they write fiction, non-fiction, poetry or plays, need to look beyond the flashy aspects of the Internet. Buried beneath the surface of the graphics and pretty text is the mother lode of information that a writer can use for research and for insight into a host of subjects. All writers should learn how to navigate the Internet through their favourite search engine, and I heartily recommend they learn more than one of these. The faster and more comprehensive the search, the better the writing that can come of all this knowledge. In the old days, we went to the library. Now the library can come to us.
- Allow yourself *plenty* of time to explore gently and think about what you're doing, what routes you would like to pursue and which ignore. Also, be very open to change plans, to turn your perceptions upside down as you gather more evidence and see what is out there, what can be done and what is difficult to do. Accept no one else's view or manifesto of what it is you should be doing or how it should be done. What do they know about your writing? If you trust them to tell you the 'best way' then why not let them write it for you? Listen to their advice, learn, and then decide for yourself.
- Be professional and develop a wide network of others for research, writing and educating yourself in a wide range of subject matter.
- Be very certain what kinds of rights you are negotiating when you agree to have your work published on the web. Be aggressive about protecting all rights you do not assign. Infringement is probably the biggest problem with web publishing. Writers can only blame electronic publishers for so long -- in the end, the most savvy writers will prevail on the web and maximize their earning potential. I say, learn the ropes, be up on litigation, and be aggressive about your rights.
- Collaborative writing groups are able to produce a lot of material very quickly, we've also developed our own group shorthand and performance language(s). However, in collaborative situations, and especially where one or more members needs to publish for academia or credit etc. it is important to clarify to some degree authorship and ownership.
- Do lots of surfing and reading of what's out there, and trAce is a good place to start - though there are lots of other good places for writers too. Take part and respond - join discussion groups and forums and give feedback, you'll get a lot more from your online interactions that way.

- Don't wait until you think you know what you're doing. You'll never take the plunge. The best way to learn is to do, to teach what you do to others, and to collaborate.
- Don't be put off by Luddite responses
- Edit yourself: think radio not print.
- Get a high-speed connection, be sure to proof your own work twice, back up your data, and be sure you provide links for what you have online on your own website or any resume/promotional material you have.
- Get a web site, simple but professional looking. You'll save heaps of time communicating: this is your CV and PR, provided you keep updating it and adding to it.
- Give your writing away for free, if you are not living from royalties of exclusive publishing contracts. I recommend using a copyleft like the "Open Publication License" or the "GNU Free Documentation License". Making writing freely available on mailing lists and my web site greatly increases its circulation and popularity and, for me personally, has had nothing but positive effects.
- Go for it! Use the web as a resource to gather and display, and most of all enjoy it. Take your time and use it as an opportunity to forge links and build up a profile. Working as a writer can be a lonely business. The web allows you to meet other writers and share your thoughts, views and frustrations.
- I cannot stress enough the importance of researching on the net. Even if you can't find your topic using key words, there is always someone out there who will kindly respond to your questions over the email system. I have had lots of information in this way from all over the world.
- I consider my Internet access an integral part of the tools I use to write. Although I write primarily fiction and poetry, nearly every new project results in a degree of research that is most easily and efficiently conducted on the Internet. Despite the fact that my longer works typically require a great deal of text research, my initial inquiries are made online and the list of resources comprised of titles gleaned from Internet sites. I have no doubt that, given the kind of research I do, working online saves me a great deal of time and energy.
- I hope that all the writers working online will come to understand that their electronic work is shaping a brand new language of literature. As such, we are all engaged in a powerful process for innovation and change.
- It's important for writers to be connected to a writing community, and the net conquers geographical or cultural isolation.

- Keep an email address just for displaying in public, but make sure it's not your usual email address. You'll receive heaps of spam once your email address is shown online. Get a virus detector and keep it up to date.
- Keep your web site current.
- Learn basic HTML or Dreamweaver and web authoring: having an online presence is now an essential aspect of being 'visible' as a writer, and it can be expensive to employ someone else to create the site for you. The DIY approach also means that you have complete control over the content, frequency of updates, etc.
- Learn to program. Learn to read. Learn to write. Learn to see. Learn to hear. Learn to listen. File>Move to Folder>Drafts. Be prepared to learn for the rest of your life. Don't get nostalgic.
- Learn to refine criteria when using a search engine. Investigate numerous sites in order to find those you initially feel comfortable with. Bookmark them. Use chat rooms and discussion groups to learn the conventions.
- Lurk for a while before you post. It really helps to learn the culture of a particular message board before one participates actively.
- Make sure you understand publishing rights and be wary of online publishers. You may want to check to make sure they are legitimate.
- Make use of all the interactive, kinetic, programming or aesthetic resources that the digital medium affords you.
- My writing has mainly been restricted to email and my own website rather than contributing to open-sites, and I do think that copyright can be a problem as it seems that some people assume that as it's on the web it's free and can be used as they like, but I'd rather take the risk and post my work on my website, and be a part of the community of writers out there sharing their work, than not do so. It does seem that the web is one of the most exciting mediums for writers, and it'd be a shame to miss out on it.
- Organise your bookmarks/favourites well so you can find those valuable web pages again. Search for it/save it/organise it.
- Planning the project or site is very important. It is so easy to get bogged down in the technical details, good planning is essential to maintain direction.
- Read as much online work as you can access, make sure you have a good understanding of usability.
- Resist the temptation to take the media to its limits. Concentrate on carefully chosen and well-edited text and image. Remember those still using older, slower machines.

- Take a subsidised training course, e.g., in business, website design or production training.
- The Internet really has, I believe, changed the status quo of publishing. It is possible to publish yourself at very little cost, as well as opening up vast areas in which to experiment and explore. For me personally, the Internet makes my life as a writer seem that little bit less isolating and restrictive.
- There are excellent publishers online, and very good literature. Finding workshops is no problem, and it's fascinating to see how many writers love to connect with each other and share their stories, help each other, and encourage each other. It is a vast community out there, and one that is easy to become lost in. A few places to start: Critters Critique for Science Fiction. Zoetrope studios for the literary-minded. trAce online writing centre - of course! There are Yahoo groups dedicated to different genres, from sci-fi to mystery to romance.
- There is no such thing as 'writing' online... the verb is inadequate... as the medium requires other skills in addition to text production such as a bit of scripting, graphical awareness, a sense of the changes in the society in which the technology is embedded... so be prepared to learn new things and challenge your preconceived notions of your art.
- Try to solve technical problems before asking others. You'll discover that you are much more capable and knowledgeable than you imagined, and every problem attacked means an increase in your skill level even if you need help to solve it in the end. Open yourself to all possibilities and impossibilities. Be proactive and experiment daily. Make sure you have plenty of time to learn and interact.
- Working online, I believe, is truly fulfilling. At your fingertips is a world of literary wealth just waiting to be unearthed. It is especially invaluable if you happen to be a freelance writer with a family to take care of, and operating from home. I know there is a debate raging about 'writing for pay' but I feel that if you get to practice your writing on a website (acceptance with no pay) you are still the winner – you get a by-line and a free bio, and a link to your homepage. Not only does your writing world open up, your opportunities to publish multiply.

Credits

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webdesign, and a broad range of resources, news, discussions and research. **The trAce Online Writing School** offers web-based courses for writers working in print and new media.

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