

DANIEL FERRERAS



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Daniel Ferreras is an associate professor of French, Spanish and Comparative Literatures at West Virginia University. His work on the Fantastic, the detective story, marginalized genres, and popular culture issues has appeared in French Literature Series, Hispania, Política, Lectura y signo, Excavatio and Popular Culture Review, and he's the author of *Lo fantástico en la literatura y en el cine* (Vosa, 1996) and *Cuentos de la mano izquierda* (Silente, 1999). A long-time advocate for open digital communication, he was the first faculty member from the West Virginia University (WVU) Department of Foreign Languages to direct a thesis under the electronic submission mandate nearly a decade ago and he is an active member of the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation / Institutional Repository Task Force, as well as a faculty spokesperson for the SPARC "Create Change" program.

Dr. Ferreras has participated in several ETD conferences and seminars, providing a unique faculty perspective on fundamental issues concerning the digital library and the reception as well as the future of scholarly communications.

PERSPECTIVES ON OPEN ACCESS, ETDS AND SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS

The Digital Axis of Communications

» Daniel Ferreras, West Virginia University
» Wednesday, June 10 4:45 p.m.–5:45 p.m.

Cybernetic communication has deeply altered the notion of text as well as the way we relate to it, and the three basic elements at the foundation of any human exchange, that is the sender, the message and the receiver, are naturally implicated in this fundamental mutation. The paperless text supposes a re-definition of the axis of communication for it implies a new conception of both production and diffusion, especially within Academia, where a text is never just a text, but represents rather a contribution to a wider field of research, or a necessary step towards graduation or promotion.

The re-positioning of the sender and the destinatory within the academic axis of communication is directly related to the nature of the message itself which, by becoming digital, affects the conception of information in relation to its reception: as the nature of the message has mutated, so have those of the sender and the destinatory.

Naturally, this new axis of communication is yet still to be fully comprehended and assimilated within the pre-existing academic structure, for it forces us to reconsider many values and notions which had been taken for granted before the cybernetic revolution. Is an essay in a digital form as valid and legitimate as its hard-copy counterpart? Can faculty direct theses and dissertations without taking into account their radically new scale of diffusion? Can scholars protect intellectual property when projected onto the digital field?

Within Academia, these questions are not merely cultural, but professional as well; hence the need to address them as the digital revolution is still unfolding. The sender of a scholarly message today must conceive his or her endeavor in function of a radically different destinatory, and the message itself is directly affected by the new quality of this exchange. The former axis of scholarly communication, upon which the entire academic structure was based, is slowly dissolving into a wide-open digital axis of exchange, challenging most accepted views in regard to scholarly and academic publishing. Some considerations, such as those related to university politics or to tenure and promotion, as mundane as they might appear, cannot be neglected as we re-define the entire structure of scholarly communication, for they play determining roles in the understanding of faculty's reaction when confronted to the inevitable triumph of digital diffusion.

KARLA HAHN



Association of Research Libraries (ARL)

Karla Hahn is the Director of the Office of Scholarly Communication at the Association of Research Libraries, a nonprofit organization of 123 research libraries at comprehensive, research-extensive institutions in the US and Canada. It has a long history of leadership in promoting positive change in the scholarly communication system. Key focuses of current activity include the assessment and implementation of new scholarly communication models; the development of alliances to advance of new systems of scholarly communication; and advancement of library outreach efforts to inform the educational and research communities on issues relating to scholarly communication. Hahn holds both an MLS and a PhD and has published extensively on issues relating to publishing, electronic communication and libraries.

BROADENING DISSEMINATION OF NEW KNOWLEDGE

Scholarly Communications in the Digital Millennium

» Karla Hahn, Association of Research Libraries (ARL)
» Thursday, June 11 8:30 a.m.–9:30 a.m.

The academy is defined by its commitment to the ongoing production of new knowledge through research and scholarship. Yet, knowledge that is not transmitted, effectively does not exist, Dissemination of new knowledge is now far less constrained than in the days of paper-based publishing, but the new capability brings new responsibility for academic and research institutions to shape their infrastructure, policies, and cultures to ensure the broadest possible dissemination of knowledge now and into the future. Not merely traditional forms of scholarly

works but a range of new products in new forms must also be considered.

A recent statement from leading higher education organizations has articulated strategies for campuses to pursue to promote dissemination of the new knowledge produced by their communities of faculty, staff, and students. Policies like those adopted by the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences and MIT suggest

that a culture shift is under way – with institutions obtaining limited rights in works created on campus. But policy is only part of the picture.

Dissemination infrastructure has been blossoming on campuses. New kinds of publishing and dissemination services are developing rapidly. What are the implications of these and related developments, and what underlying trends do they point to?

PATRICK CONNER



Professor in English / Director, West Virginia University Press

Patrick Conner is the Eberly College Centennial Professor in the Humanities and a professor of English at West Virginia University (WVU). As Director of the WVU Press from 1999 to 2008, he established best procedures for university presses in acquiring titles and marketing books which had not been pursued heretofore by the WVU Press and was responsible for creating unique imprints in both Appalachian and Medieval studies to bring greater recognition to WVU's research mission, particularly as it impacted Appalachian culture. Conner has been a long-term supporter of open access ETDs, and he is experienced in publishing ETDs as commercial monographs, as well.

He acquired Shirley Burns open access history doctoral dissertation, and assigned appropriate editors to bring it into the now popular book *Bringing Down the Mountains: The Impact of Mountaintop Removal on Southern West Virginia Communities*, which has been of immense value to persons concerned with approaches to the conjunction of mining and the environment. His own scholarship embraces early medieval studies and humanities computing. Conner won awards for his development of the Beowulf Workstation, and he founded ANSAXNET, perhaps the earliest discussion group dedicated to early medieval literary subjects. Conner knows what English professors, playwrights, and poets do when they understand computers and take them seriously in their professions.

PUBLISHING, OPEN ACCESS AND ETDs

A Panel Session on Student, Faculty and Publisher Perspectives

- » Patrick Conner, Professor in English / Director, West Virginia University Press
- » Thursday, June 11 9:30 a.m.–10:45 a.m.

The programming language, JAVA, which transformed the Internet, was introduced to the world at the Netscape Developer's Conference in San Francisco over thirteen years ago on March 5-7, 1996. At the time, those of us present were told that the future would require three dimensions for every resource we produced: everything would have to be interactive, ubiquitous, and distributed. A resource is said to be "interactive" when the user provides significant input or direction and the resource reacts dynamically and appropriately. A resource is said to be "ubiquitous" when it (or a major component of it) is both available everywhere and recognized everywhere as the best means of addressing the problem it is designed to handle. A resource is "distributed" when its components and the responsibility for them are variously located, and not required to reside on a single server.

A complete acquisition of these three properties still drives the development of the Internet and these same properties should drive the development of dissertations online more surely than they now do, but it's important to keep all three dimensions in perspective, to remember what a dissertation is for, and to understand a variety of needs tied to dissertations in order to aid our effort to move the development of ETDs and to bring disser-

tations to the next level. The NDLTD is striving to be ubiquitous, but it has not reached that point, nor has it neared the tipping point that would precede it; certainly, we can say that ETDs are distributed via the NDLTD, but a certain amount of fear among dissertation writers and directors has worked against fully open access and distribution. When a dissertation is embargoed to a single institution or campus, it is not distributed.

Finally, I come back to the first term, interactive. Our theses and dissertations are, by and large, digitized paper documents utilizing PDFs, and every theorist I know of the future of textuality will argue for the advent of interactive dimensions that we have not tried to develop. I see the shortcomings in these dimensions as symptoms of a problem that derives from two related situations: we dissertation-producing faculty seem agreed only in seeing a dissertation or thesis as the production that will certify a single student's degree, which diminishes collaboration to even less than the amount a good typist provided before the days of word-processing; moreover, we use the term "to publish" as loosely, if not more loosely, than we use the term "to edit," to the degree that, most of the time when we speak to each other about these things, we're talking about entirely different concepts.

Not only do we need to remedy both of these openly and in an organized fashion in order to advance the production of ETDs generally and the NDLTD specifically, but we need to do so in order to advance the forms scholarship should generally be taking at our universities, colleges, institutes and laboratories.

This panel also includes:

- » Cynthia Miller, Director, University of Pittsburgh Press
- » Clare Connors, University of Pittsburgh