

Call for papers:

From A to <A>: Keywords in HTML and Writing

A proposed collection edited by Bradley Dilger and Jeff Rice

In cultural and writing studies, the relationship between new media and writing has become an important area of inquiry, as online forms such as web pages, content management systems, social software, and weblogs continue to grow in popularity. Too much scholarship, however, focuses on the instruments of technology at the expense of cultural, ideological, and rhetorical forces. In *From A to <A>: Keywords in HTML and Writing*, we engage these areas of English studies by considering the complex relationships between writing and the markup and scripting languages which make up the web—such as Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). By foregrounding the influences of markup which are less directly “technological,” our proposed collection will address the many ways both novices and advanced users of technology create, consume, and shape writing and new media.

From A to <A>: Keywords in HTML and Writing takes an innovative approach to the “keywords” genre by using markup tags as keywords. Following the keywords genre, essays should focus on a single tag or unit of markup, and break down that tag’s etymological, historical, social, and cultural meanings. For example, while the tag `<table>` is often used to organize data in rows and columns, its role in web design cannot be ignored. Tables bring the grids of modernist graphic design to the web, with its underlying demands for rationalism, order, and regularity. For this and other tags or units of markup, the editors invite essays which engage similar inquiries. The resulting collection of essays will illustrate how the markup tags present in all web writing influence, shape, and affect the ways we read and write.

Essays can consider these and related questions:

- What rhetorical issues are raised by individual tags? How does writing influence markup? How do markup languages and tags influence writing? How do markup languages produce or influence rhetorics? As theorists of writing, do we yet understand the relationship between composing and the code underlying documents we compose?
- What ideological issues are raised by markup and writing? How does markup influence culture, and how are cultures reflected in the technologies of markup, scripting, and encoding?
- What is the pedagogy of markup? How has markup changed, re-enforced, or problematized the various theoretical and pedagogical goals associated with writing studies? How does markup inject cultural and ideological forces into educational contexts?
- As a discipline, is rhetoric and composition equipped to confront the issues which arise from the technologizing of writing?

- How do content management systems, from weblogs to web application development platforms, change the relationship of writers and writing culture to markup and encoding?

Please email the editors a 500 word abstract which indicates the markup tag you wish to work with and outlines the issues you plan to consider. For a list of essays which have already been accepted to the collection, visit <http://faculty.wiu.edu/CB-Dilger/taga/>. We welcome your questions and comments.

Timeline

Abstracts	Aug 1, 2006
Acceptances	Aug 15, 2006
Drafts	Nov 1, 2006
Return drafts	Dec 1, 2006
Final essay	Feb 1, 2007

Contact information

Bradley Dilger, Assistant Professor of English, Western Illinois University
cb-dilger@wiu.edu * <http://wrecking.org/cbd/>
309-298-2212

Jeff Rice, Assistant Professor of English, Wayne State University
jrice@wayne.edu * <http://ydog.net/>