

Metadata Instruction Set: Abstracts

Overview/Coverage

In this week's metadata assignment, you will be finding or creating **abstracts** for the webtexts in your section.

Cross-References

Please refer to the handouts "Metadata Project Description Sheets [English 354]" to help you determine what the above fields refer to. This instruction sheet will give you details on how to find and input the data into the Excel spreadsheet, "Blank Metadata spreadsheet," which you can download from <http://www.ceball.com/classes/354/spring11/assignments/metadata-project/>

Spreadsheet Tab

In this week's assignment, you will be working with the **Webtext tab** in the spreadsheet.

TERM: ABSTRACTS

Definition and Purpose of an Abstract

The Writing @ Colorado State University's website describes the definition and purpose of abstracts in the following way:

Abstracts, like all summaries, cover the main points of a piece of writing. Unlike executive summaries written for non-specialist audiences, abstracts use the same level of technical language and expertise found in the article itself. And unlike general summaries, which can be adapted in many ways to meet various readers' and writers' needs, abstracts are typically **150 to 250 words** and follow set patterns. Abstracts typically serve five main goals:

- Help readers decide if they should read an entire article
- Help readers and researchers remember key findings on a topic
- Help readers understand a text by acting as a pre-reading outline of key points
- Index articles for quick recovery and cross-referencing
- Allow supervisors to review technical work without becoming bogged down in details (<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/documents/abstract/index.cfm>)

In this assignment, you will need to find or write informative abstracts for **all webtexts** (including news, etc.) in your volume.issue. Here's how the Writing Center at UNC-Chapel Hill describes the purpose of an informative abstract:

The majority of abstracts are informative [as opposed to descriptive]. While they still do not critique or evaluate a work, they do more than describe it. A good informative abstract acts as a surrogate for the work itself. That is, the writer presents and explains all the main arguments and the important results and evidence in the complete article/paper/book. An informative abstract includes the information that can be found in a descriptive abstract (purpose, methods, scope) but also includes the results and conclusions of the research and the recommendations of the author. The length varies according to discipline, but an informative abstract is rarely more than 10% of the length of the entire work. In the case of a longer work, it may be much less. (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/abstracts.html>)

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Things to keep an eye out for when reading a webtext & writing its abstract

Here's how the UNC Writing Center describes the considerations in writing an abstract (*with notes about how this corresponds to writing abstracts for Kairos webtexts in italics*):

1. **Reason for writing:** What is the importance of the research? Why would a reader be interested in the larger work? *This is an overall statement about the significance and scope of the webtext. That is, generally, what is the webtext about?*
2. **Problem:** What problem does this work attempt to solve? What is the scope of the project? What is the main argument/thesis/claim? *For webtexts, this is usually the purpose of the webtext – what is the author making a claim about? If there is an introduction, the “problem” will usually be defined there.*
3. **Methodology:** An abstract of a scientific work may include specific models or approaches used in the larger study. Other abstracts may describe the types of evidence used in the research. *For webtexts, the methodology should also refer to the design of the piece, including what major media elements or technologies it uses to accomplish the design.*
4. **Results:** Again, an abstract of a scientific work may include specific data that indicates the results of the project. Other abstracts may discuss the findings in a more general way. *For nonscientific work, like webtexts, the Results may be presented as findings or conclusions.*
5. **Implications:** What changes should be implemented as a result of the findings of the work? How does this work add to the body of knowledge on the topic? *In webtexts, the implications and results are often the same.*

(This list of elements is adapted with permission from Phil Koopman, "How to Write an Abstract," <http://www.ece.cmu.edu/~koopman/essays/abstract.html>.)

When writing an abstract, include:

1. The thesis of the work, usually in the first sentence. (e.g., “Problem”)
2. Background information that places the work in the larger body of literature. (e.g., “Reason for Writing”)
3. The same chronological structure as the original
4. The same type and style of language found in the original, including keywords and phrases that quickly identify the content and focus of the work.
5. The abstract should only be **one paragraph** of 150-250 words.

Do not:

1. refer to other works (unless you're writing an abstract of a Review)
2. add information not contained in the original work.
3. define jargon terms (this is for the webtext itself to do).
4. add any opinions, reviews, or recommendations you have about the text.

See the UNC-Writing Center page on Writing Abstracts for more information and examples.

(<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/abstracts.html>)

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Finding vs. Writing Abstracts

Whether you need to find abstracts or write them will depend on what issue you're working with, although most abstracts that are already provided with Kairos webtexts will need some additional information added to them about the media used in the webtext. If/when you find an abstract, cut and paste it from the webtext into the Abstracts column of your spreadsheet.

Volumes 12.3–15.2

For these volumes/issues, "excerpted passages" are provided for peer-reviewed webtexts in the table of contents (see Figure 1). These passages are a place to start but do not represent a complete abstract. You will need to read/skim each webtext and write a more complete abstract that follows the goals/purposes outlined above. In addition, none of the frontmatter (Logging On column) or sidebar webtexts (Praxis, Interviews, Reviews) have abstracts, so you will have to create them.

The screenshot shows a webtext page with a grey header labeled "Topoi". Below it are two entries. The first entry is titled "The Olive Project: An Oral History Project in Multiple Modes" by Erin R. Anderson. It includes a small image of a book cover and a paragraph of text. The second entry is titled "Techno-velcro to Techno-memoria: Technology, Rhetoric, and Family in the Composition Classroom" by Patricia Freitag Ericsson & Paul Muhlhauser. It includes a small image of a book cover and a paragraph of text. To the right of these entries is a sidebar with sections for "Interviews" and "Reviews", each containing a link to a specific article and an index link.

Topoi

The Olive Project: An Oral History Project in Multiple Modes
Erin R. Anderson

This project is devoted to the memory of my grandmother, Olive. It is at once her life story and not a story at all. In a sense it represents the product of an intimate family collaboration and of the close journey we shared in collecting and preserving her oral history. But this project is not a product, nor is it entirely about my grandma, about me, or about the sentiment out of which it emerged. The Olive Project is about *process*, and at its core it is also about *you*, about your encounter with it, and about your participation in the ongoing process of composing memory.

Techno-velcro to Techno-memoria: Technology, Rhetoric, and Family in the Composition Classroom
Patricia Freitag Ericsson & Paul Muhlhauser

"Techno-velcro to Techno-memoria" is an intergenerational collection of techno-memories illustrating the impact of techno-literacies on family communication practices. Guests participating in "Techno-velcro to Techno-memoria" add their voices to create a rich resource of techno-rhetorical connections. Our guest-collaborators remember

Interviews

Becoming Book-Like: Bob Stein and the Future of the Book
Matthew K. Gold

Index: All Kairos Interviews

Reviews

MicroReviews :: Bibliography Builders: On the Web and Ready to Use
Nick Carbone

The Microreview feature is intended to present a series of condensed reviews of online work by an invited scholar. By providing an informed perspective chosen by the reviewer, readers can not only find out about this type of online work, but begin to understand how the online work may be relevant to their own scholarly and teaching practices.

Figure 1. This screencapture from 15.2 shows the excerpted passages that are paired with each of the peer-reviewed webtexts in newer issues of Kairos. You can start with these passages, but you also need to make sure the final abstract attends to all of the goals listed above.

Volumes 4.1–12.2

Webtexts in these issues have some abstracts that can be found in a few places, such as the CoverWeb Overview (see Figure 2) and in the webtexts themselves (see Figure 3). While the CoverWeb's version of the webtexts' abstracts will be somewhat thin in most cases, you can find what the editors have written about each text and use it as a basis to complete a more full informational abstract. As for finding the abstracts in the webtexts themselves, this will depend on whether the authors have decided to include them, and they—in most cases—won't be *called* abstracts within the nodes or navigation of the piece, so you'll have to read some of the opening pages to find an abstract-like piece of writing that seems to sum up the webtext. That's what the example in Figure 3 is like. For all other webtexts in these issues, you should search for or write abstracts.

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KAIROS >> 4.1 >> COVERWEB >>

CoverWeb Overview: Hypertext Fiction and Poetry

CoverWeb Contributions: Abstracts | Hypertext Resources

"It was a dark and stormy website..."

This issue's CoverWeb explores the use of hypertext fiction and poetry, both as textual resources and as creative exercises in the classroom.

Hypertext Poetry

Cheryl Ball, in *Heading South*, provides a vision of hypertext poetry that interweaves the lexia and images of three individual poems into a nearly infinite series of readings, essentially allowing the reader to create entirely new poems based upon the links he or she chooses to follow. A different vision of hypertext poetry is provided by Sadie Cornell, in her Honors project (completed under the mentorship of Donna Reiss), *Understanding a Vision: What is Hypertext?*. Cornell's vision provides a single lexia containing the entire poem, but the text of the poem contains many links to outside sources, thus infusing the poem itself with a sense of the author's notion of possible intertextual readings.

Figure 2. A partial abstract for some CoverWeb texts in the middle issues of the journal can be found in the CoverWeb Overview, written by the section editors.

Kairos 12:2

Space, Time & Transfer

In Virtual Case Environments

David Fisher, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
David Russell, Iowa State University
Joseph Williams, University of Arkansas at Little Rock
Dan Fisher, University of Central Arkansas

In this webtext we argue that the way in which an educational content/course management system (CMS) is configured and deployed can provide students with the sense that they are immersed in a time-space (or chronotope) that is different from the chronotope they experience in traditional classrooms.

This experience simulates social activity other than school-going, and therefore a set of motives for circulating texts unlike, though inextricably related to, the epistemic and sorting-and-ranking motives that Dias et al. (1999, p. 44) argue characterize academic writing and make transfer of genre knowledge difficult or impossible.

As this webtext addresses the idea of evoking extra-academic activity within the classroom, we attempt to illustrate the notion of a boundary zone (Konkola, 2001) by inviting readers to become part of a Virtual Case Environment (VCE) that evokes the day-to-day activity at a public relations and marketing organization, Lot49 Communications.

[Link to webtext.](#)

The authors would like to thank Anthony Ellertson and his students at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point for their significant contributions to the "Client Materials" area in the Lot49 VCE. We would

Figure 3. This webtext has an abstract built into the introduction of the piece. The first 3 paragraphs, once merged together into a single paragraph, can be used to create a good abstract. The media and tech requirements still need to be added though.

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Volumes 1.1–3.2

Some of the CoverWeb Overviews have excerpted passages for the CoverWeb texts, but most of these (like the passages for the other volumes) are not complete abstracts. Still, you can find the excerpts, occasionally, in the Overviews (see Figure 4).

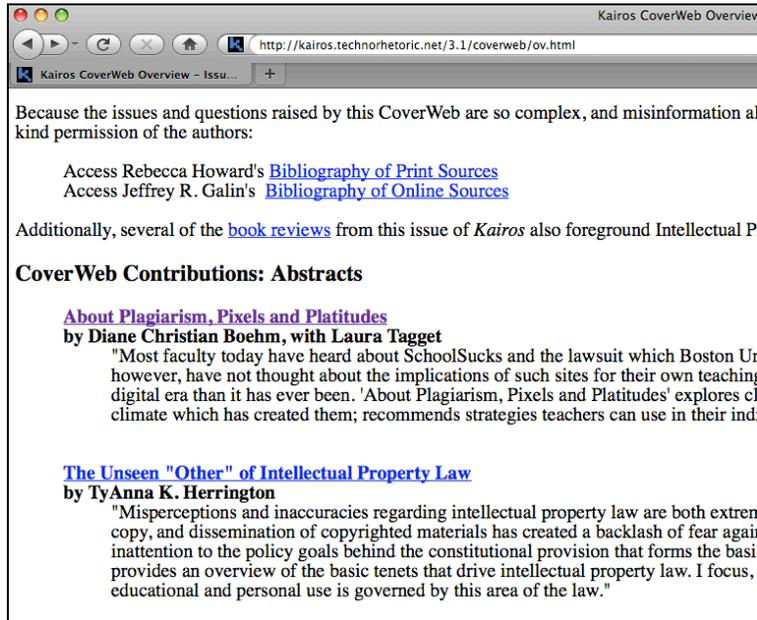


Figure 4. Excerpted passages for earlier issues of webtexts, in the CoverWeb Overview.

For Features in these early issues, abstracts were often included as part of the webtext's opening page (linked from the nonframes version of the TOC). See Figure 5 for an example. Most of these you can cut and paste, but for all non-Features webtexts, you'll probably need to write abstracts.

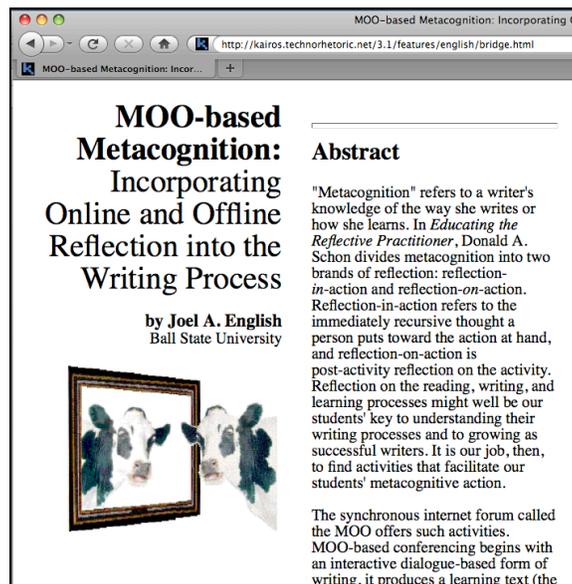


Figure 5. Abstracts are built into early Features webtexts