CHAPTER 14.

FLEXIBLE FRAMING, OPEN SPACES, AND ADAPTIVE RESOURCES: A NETWORKED APPROACH TO WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

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This story is the center of a Venn diagram with three very personal circles in graduate school: my desire to thrive as a pregnant and then parenting Ph.D. student;[1] my aim to elevate marginalized voices to make the world a more equitable place; and my innate drive to go faster in all things when possible. Since my current salary does not yet allow for the BMW 5 series of my dreams, going faster usually means creating more effective systems with life and work "hacks," technology, and strategic planning.

Now, reader, you might wonder what any of this has to do with archives, networks, or rhetoric and composition program administration (hereafter WPA) as the title forecast. But from my personal Venn diagram perspective, the relationships among networks, archives, and WPA work are actually very strong:

- Archives, though stereotypically presented as dusty and isolated collections of old White men's stuff, are about making things, especially documents, easily accessible to interested users. Archival theory explores how to do the organizing, with recent developments exploring the importance of names and organization in themselves to acknowledge that archives are not the neutral arrangements of neutral objects, but instead are the manifestations of rhetorically significant decisions. I'll talk more about this below.
- Networks as I discuss them here are technology-enabled ways of connecting digital objects. Moreover, networks and network theory can enable multiple names and points of access for objects, thereby

1 If you're interested in more on that story, see my 2019 article "Dressing for Childbearing, the Patriarchy, and Me: Auto-ethnography in Three Parts" in *The Journal of Multimodal Rhetorics*.

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identifying consensus and dissensus without having to move a physical file from one folder to another. It also allows for unlike things in previously unconnected places to become part of a shared ecosystem. Again, more on this below.

- WPAs are in the business of connecting people and resources, elevating voices, and putting people in touch with the right systems. Applying rhetorically informed theory to archival practice and leveraging cool tech stuff like hashtags from networks means that WPAs can do more of that work more effectively and more equitably because the resources are collaboratively named, more easily located, and accessible to a wider spectrum of users.

Part practical application, part praxis-driven research, relational architecture is the idea that institutional documents can and should be named, organized, and accessed by a lot of people, because no one person can, or should, have the power to define a closed set of keywords or applications. Recognizing the power of naming (Freire, 2001) and circulation (Graban, 2013; Gries, 2013; Yancey, 2004) and leveraging the power of digital tools, relational architecture creates a system in which all individuals are able to help decide on the nature of stuff in the archive or the documents in the Google Drive.

Though formulated separately from media artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer's use of relational architecture (1999), my independent applications of the term seek to subvert traditional power decision and rhetorical framers. Lozano-Hemmer pushed back on how people usually move through space, deploying through art the physical relational architecture that "exposes power and privilege, and engages people in questioning our role" in public spaces (Willis, 2009, para. 1). While Lozano-Hemmer refers to the relationships among people and in relation to the space they move through, I use it here to build user-generated database points based on the relationships that users (who are distinct from archivists) contribute to expand the possible circulation of those documents or other artifacts.

Readers might note that this chapter attends to networks from a distinct perspective than those described elsewhere in the collection. While many focus on the networks and systems that affect writing program work from a systems theory perspective, this chapter focuses on the digital network possibilities, considering how a multi-authored system like relational architecture can engage with what the editors described in the introduction as the deeply personal and highly systematic nature of administrative work. Those decisions, while mundane, are in fact critical because they establish institutional memory—the resulting assemblage determines what is prioritized, seen, and inscribed versus what is buried, forgotten, or even erased. This means if the goal of the WPA director is to provide knowledge and practice for the betterment of the writing community, then current and future practitioners must be able to access, apply, and influence those resources. This shift in perspective means that archival theory, seemingly unrelated to writing programs, becomes a critical component to the program's success and longevity because archival theory focuses on the rhetorical power of the organization of resources; it is about practical ways to deal with huge amounts of stuff. Moreover, for the WPA who seeks to develop and maintain resources that provide flexible framing, open spaces, and adaptive resources on a programmatic level, the system itself must also be flexible, open, and adaptive.

THE ORIGIN STORY

I began to engage with intentional record-keeping in the second semester of my Ph.D. program. Like the editors and John Tassoni in this collection, I had to grapple with obstacles concerning locatability when I was just trying to do my job. My classmates and I were compiling a shared annotated bibliography that grew increasingly unusable by the week, as we added pages of text.

Grad student by day and parent to a darling four-month-old by night, I needed the document to perform more effectively for me, so that I could be both the student and parent I wanted to be. I proposed tagging each annotation with hashtags, so we could use the search function and skip around as needed. I built and maintained a list of the collectively generated keywords, and we all benefited with a much more user-friendly document. It wasn't yet a network, but it was a system that augmented traditional alphabetical organization and added our critical engagement into our semi-official record. My daughter started sleeping through the night, I got an A in the class, and I left the hashtags behind. Or so I thought.

Pregnant with my second daughter just over a year later,[2] I began preparing for my comprehensive exams. Our exams were four questions to be answered in a 24-hour period with later oral defense of those answers. While comps are always high stakes, the pressure to pass and keep working towards graduation (with presumed salary at the end of the rainbow) increased the mental burden on my shoulders. I didn't have the luxury of failing with a toddler at home and newborn on the way, so I turned back to hacking the organization system.

2 Why do I keep telling you about my private reproductive choices? Two reasons. First, I want to normalize pregnant women in professional spaces, especially in graduate school. Second, my body and my status as a parent informed my exigency and the resulting courses of action as much as my professional training. It might surprise you to hear that I am uncomfortable with situating this information in a professional chapter, but I am doing so because I believe these elements are a critical part of the story and important to share.

I created a comprehensive Word document for my notes with specific information and formatting. Figure 14.1 is a screenshot of the system, demonstrating the required elements:

1. Microsoft Word customized formatting that supporting automatic table of contents updates.
2. Prefix designation ("c" in this example) to identity categorization.
3. Recursive self-generated hashtags within the annotation summary (terms designated by # symbol) to mark specific ideas in the text with page numbers to allow for direct quote-level searching later.
4. Summarized hashtags outside the annotation (the small, right-aligned text) to identify which hashtags existed in the overall entry to support resource-level searching later.
5. Closing the entry with my own thoughts, including how this piece fits into conversation with other sources (the small, hanging indented text).

social activity, #discourse, #collaboration and something like Kirsch and Royster's #feminism #methodology here because requires acknowledging engagement of the #reader/researcher as adding to #meaning making) (148). "#Text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination" (148); though the reader is only a receptacle for the #text, it is the only possible receptacle or even way for the #writing to exist (148). "The birth of the reader must come at the cost of the death of the author" (148).

issue of #gender and #feminism147ish because arguing that there is no one true meaning making, arguing for the unfixed and multiplicity of meaning making

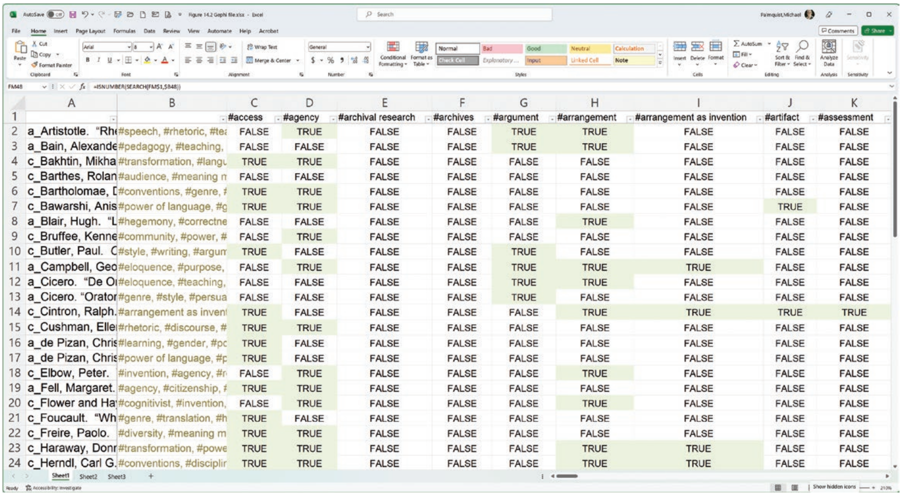
run bizarrely in conjunction with and against Bakhtin, with Barthes insisting that the focal point is the reader (#audience), while Bakhtin puts all focus and #meaning making on the #author. I'm not sure they contradict each other so much as might appear, but probably don't use this one unless you really need it because I'm not sure I understand it enough for comps purposes.

c_Bartholomae, David. "Inventing the University." (1985)

#conventions, #genre, #discourse, #writing as dialect, #classroom as artificial genre, #audience, #basic writing, #vocabulary, #stable criteria, #power dynamics, #privilege, #power, #agency, #language as #power, #hegemony, #access, #privilege, #naming, #power, #teacher, #ways of knowing, #classroom as artificial genre, #responding to student writing, , #agency, #power, #power, #privilege, #stable criteria, #hegemony, #marginalized, #agency, #power, #privilege, #language, #responding to student writing, #conventions, #ways of knowing, #transmission of knowledge, #writer, #access, #power, #agency, #stable criteria, #disciplines, #ways of knowing, #disciplines, #invention, #community, #credibility, #error, #context, #genre, #content, #error, #discourse

Bartholomae believes that every time a student writes, s/he has to "invent the university" because they're asked to incorporate #conventions, #genre, and #discourse because academic writing is #writing as dialect with #classroom as artificial genre of which the student has no working knowledge (#access, #privilege, #naming, #power) (403). Students present their best interpretation of #discourse because they know the #teacher, as part of that academic community, is the #audience that matters (#ways of knowing, #classroom as artificial genre, #responding to student writing) (404). This is why #basic writing students don't engage in #discourse because they're imitating rather than utilizing this classroom #writing as dialect because they don't have the #vocabulary, #agency, #power, familiarity, or #stable criteria; they #access what they know of commonplace academic jargon (#conventions) to mimic and approximate, but not master (#power, #privilege, #stable criteria, #hegemony, #marginalized)

Figure 14.1. My comprehensive notes.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1			#access	#agency	#archival research	#archives	#argument	#arrangement	#arrangement as invention	#artifact	#assessment
2	a_Artistotle. "Rhe	#speech, #rhetoric, #tea	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
3	a_Bain, Alexande	#pedagogy, #teaching,	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
4	c_Bakhtin, Mikha	#transformation, #langu	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
5	c_Barthes, Rolan	#audience, #meaning m	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
6	c_Bartholomae, D	#conventions, #genre, #	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
7	c_Bawarshi, Anis	#power of language, #g	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE
8	a_Blair, Hugh. "L	#hegemony, #correctne	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
9	c_Bruffee, Kenne	#community, #power, #	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
10	c_Butler, Paul. C	#style, #writing, #argum	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
11	a_Campbell, Geo	#eloquence, #purpose,	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
12	a_Cicero. "De Or	#eloquence, #teaching,	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
13	a_Cicero. "Orator	#genre, #style, #persua	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
14	c_Cintron, Ralph.	#arrangement as invent	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE	TRUE
15	c_Cushman, Elle	#rhetoric, #discourse, #	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
16	a_de Pizan, Chris	#learning, #gender, #pc	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
17	a_de Pizan, Chris	#power of language, #p	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
18	c_Elbow, Peter.	#invention, #agency, #r	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
19	a_Fell, Margaret.	#agency, #citizenship, #	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
20	c_Flower and Ha	#cognitivist, #invention,	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
21	c_Foucault. "Wh	#genre, #translation, #h	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
22	c_Freire, Paolo.	#diversity, #meaning m	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE
23	c_Haraway, Donn	#transformation, #powe	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE
24	c_Herndl, Carl G.	#conventions, #disciplir	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE	FALSE	TRUE	TRUE	FALSE	FALSE

Figure 14.2. My comprehensive tags in Excel.

The formatting in that Word document had both technological and rhetorical significance. While the visual aid helped me identify the separate elements, the formatting served a much larger purpose of allowing me to "select all text with similar formatting," copy that text, and then paste into a searchable Excel document like the snapshot in Figure 14.2.

Leveraging Excel's searching capacity was a critical step. Because while the large Word document was certainly comprehensive, it was not easy to use beyond one entry at time. Copying the text out of that document and then using filters in Excel meant that I could immediately see connections among texts as well as how I had analyzed those points of conversation.[3] Using Excel's formulas to operationalize my connections technologically meant that I essentially built a network interface so that I could see non-linear connections based on my keywords.

Though I originally attributed developing my system to fear of individual failure, I realize in retrospect it was also driven by a need for accessibility in the name of equity. Being a pregnant parent in graduate school imposed non-negotiable time and energy limitations, and my notetaking system meant that I aced my written and oral exams when I might have struggled or even failed otherwise. More than that, however, I realized I could change the nature of recordkeeping itself. Though at a micro level in this situation, I could find what I needed, leave a trail of my knowledge behind, and see how everything was connected to everything else. If shared publicly, folks who came after me could follow my path, use

3 That description makes it sound easy, but the process does require a decent level of comfort with Excel to get the data from the raw dump to this useable format. If folks are interested in getting step by step instructions on how to do this, I can work on it.

my knowledge to achieve their own goals more quickly, and leave their expertise behind for yet more folks, some of whom might need that additional hand up because they're not the body that was in power when the system was built. Though I didn't know it yet, this idea of organizing stuff would evolve from personal interest to professional contribution that I hoped would contribute to accessibility well beyond my own voice.

TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY ARCHIVAL THEORY

What I would discover is that archival theory is important to folks who don't consider themselves archivists, because it's really just a thoughtful conversation about the ways that people organize stuff. Archivists spend far more time exploring records-keeping than the average person—including the way that information is recorded, the system that holds the information, and the authority of the person contributing to the official record. Looking at organization from a writing studies perspective, archival theory can interrogate how the authoring and arrangement of physical or digital records of knowledge are themselves richly rhetorical, leading to conversations about how the infrastructure of archives can dis/able the kinds of resources and information that *can* be recorded. Embedding different ways of making meaning in systems matters, because historically, traditional archival theory and record-keeping have allowed only one interpretation: the dominant interpretation.

Joanne Evans (2014) called attention to "questions of whether the plurality of archival contexts should be better represented in our international archival description standards rather than their current tendency to assume that a mono-culture is achievable and desirable" (p. 8). She's pushing back here on the traditional singular descriptive practices that date back to 1898 with the publication of the *Dutch Manual* that established that r*espect des fonds* theory and practice that has dominated archival work to the modern era (Cook, 1997). *Respect des fonds* establishes what Laura Millar (2010) referred to as the "integrity of the archive" that has historically informed archive keeping. With the specific intent of taking artifacts out of circulation, Millar wrote "artifacts must not be "intermingled with archives from another source, and that all archives within that unified whole should be preserved in the order in which they were made and used" (2010, p. 268). Most respected archival bodies offer guidelines based on the *fonds* tradition, like the United States *Library of Congress Encoded Archival Description Best Practices*, the Canadian *Rules for Archival Description*, and Margaret Proctor and Michael Cook's British manual for archival description.

These traditional approaches limit records to basic information, such as unique identifying code of number, date and source of acquisition, brief description of materials included, notes on permissions to access, and present storage location (Millar, 2010). Even as Millar lays out best (traditional) principles for the process of record creation, however, she explained the system itself is limited and potentially flawed:

> Arrangement and description demand that the archivist impose an external and artificial structure on the archival materials, usually according to hierarchical levels . . . In reality, the archivist must sometime make more arbitrary decision, categorizing material according to a logic that may never have occurred to the creator. (2010, p. 146)

Since the act of naming in itself carries significant power (Freire, 2001), Evans, along with archival scholars like Terry Cook (1997; 2001; 2002) and Sue McKemmish (1994), have begun to push back against traditional practices. They argued digital records have changed the archivists' capabilities and that records can and should be move beyond traditional information to instead include extensive metadata and be authored by multiple parties (Cook, 1997, 2001; Johnson, 2017; McKemmish, 1994; Schwartz & Cook, 2002). Marlene Manoff examines the interdisciplinary nature of modern archiving, unpacking tensions between the tradition of the historical record with and against digital tools (2004; 2010) that also manifest in conversations of folksonomies, metadata, and stable ontologies (Guy et al., 2004; Guy & Tonkin, 2006; Nicotra, 2009; Shirky, 2008; Vander Wal, 2007). In fact, while technology can present the appearance of completeness and accessibility, Marta Werner wrote, "The archive is not as outsiders imagine it—a space of order, efficiency, completeness—but a space of chance meetings between what survives and those who come to look for it without knowing it is truly there" (2016, p. 481). Cook also emphasized the appearance of neutrality, warning that "[a]rchivists inevitably will inject their own values into [archival] activities" (1997, p. 38). Arguably, even if the arrangement and description do accurately reflect the creator's logic, the record still only holds limited information about the artifact from a specific perspective.

Some organizations, such as the Australian Records Continuum Research Group, argued for more inclusive design in the record-keeping and metadata systems themselves, describing their research as "exploring the archival multiverse, identifying and addressing the needs of a participatory archival and record-keeping paradigm, and continued extension and enhancement of continuum models" (Records Continuum Research Group, 2022, para. 3). Founding group member Sue McKemmish argued archivists must continue to expand their understanding of the information captured in the official record. She wrote that archival systems cannot fulfill their mission to preserve records in context and use if they cannot accommodate more than the physical grouping and description "to capture data about contextual and documentary relationships" (1994, p. 9). The turn towards understanding records as evolving imprints of circulation has attracted the attention of scholars in rhetoric and composition.

Liza Potts, in fact, maintained that rhetoric and composition is uniquely positioned to guide development of digital humanities projects "because of our knowledge of how to architect, manage, and improve both the process and the building of these products and services" (2015, p. 258), becoming what she referred to as "agent[s] of social change" who are able to "move on this moment and architect for experience, rather than simply archiving collections" (2015, p. 261). With attention already focused on reading and responding to existing archives as researchers (Enoch & Gold, 2013; Graban, 2013; Kirsch & Rohan, 2008; McKee & Porter, 2012; Ramsey et al., 2010; Solberg, 2012), the field has also begun to engage with the human hands at work in the processing and preserving of artifacts (Morris & Rose, 2009; Ramsey, 2010). As Tarez Graban et al. argued, "When historical metadata migrate from print to online spaces, rhetoricians must (re)define *open* and *access* so as to more ethically reach wider publics" (2015, p. 237).

Organizational principles are of note for writing program administration folks because archiving specifically, or organizing more generally, is the application and execution of coding, of a series of established conventions of making meaning through a series of agreed organizational principles. Those conventions, of course, inhabit, embody, and reproduce specific power dynamics and hegemonies, and relate directly to the widespread conversations in rhetoric and composition about the necessity of diversity and inclusion at all levels (Inoue, 2016; Lewiecki-Wilson et al., 2008; Yergeau, 2016). This means that even the writing program administrator who is just trying to keep organized runs the risk of imposing their own values and practices onto a collection of resources likely intended to support diversity and inclusion. Relational architecture, in fact, intentionally functions as a reminder that there is always a supersystem in which we function, and a network of actors who remain unconnected and unrecognized unless we invite them to author the system with us (more on that below).

Again, this matters to folks outside the archives because writing programs are all about using resources, a task easily hindered without understanding the network in which those resources exist. In this collection, for example, Mara Lee Grayson traces the history and mandates impacting development English courses at California State University, and Emily R. Johnston deploys cultural-historical activity theory to push back against oppression from within the system. Their focus on these systems, these networks of people, relationships, documents, and policies, parallel Barbara L'Eplattenier's (2009) and Katherine Tirabassi's (2010) archival infrastructure challenges of *how* to search for resources and even *what* to ask in order to affect change.

Archival theory also offers another lens through which to push for equity, with new digital tools potentially offering the chance to examine the gaps in the records, enabling what Janine Solberg (2012) described as "new habits, new ways of interacting with information, and new opportunities for serendipity as we move through texts" (p. 2013). She, like Tarez Graban (2013) and others, asserted digital technologies have the potential to enable researchers to do more than simply recover women's work, instead putting their "practices in context, and tracing them across the span of a life or career," particularly when those activities leave the academy to across genres, physical sites, or communities (Solberg, 2012, pp. 59-69).

But even these digital tools still require critical engagement. Elizabeth-Anne Johnson explained how she and her co-archivists, while working on a digitization project, might have "missed the fragments' description, improving our understanding of the fragments and their history" (2017, p. 37). As Solberg noted, "Description and indexing practices establish and perpetuate cultural and social values by allowing only certain materials to become visible to researchers, while obscuring others" (2012, p. 63). Johnson agreed, arguing that metadata (like the hashtags described throughout this piece) can and should be clearer about the decisions that the archivist makes in selecting, describing, and preserving materials:

> Whether or not archivists believe this to be true, describing archival material from a singular and authoritative point of view, as if the only way to convey the meaning of the record were to repeat how it was generated and its chain of custody, reinforces this paradigm of archival thinking. Records and their meanings are more complex than the recordkeeping paradigm allows; archival description must allow space for that complexity. (2017, p. 71)

The histories we make are knitted into our collective understanding of life; if voices and perspectives are absent from the record, they also become absent from our cultural memory.

RELATIONAL ARCHITECTURE IN AND FROM THE ARCHIVES

My interest in archival theory began in earnest when (spoiler alert) I was working in the archives. Like Tassoni and other writing practitioners, I searched and sorted through a variety of resources, none located in a central database, and none were labeled with anything remotely helpful. In my case, I was fortunate to eventually find an artifact that helped with my research questions through determination and a lot of luck. I was thrilled by the piece of the history of the Writing Across the Curriculum movement I had found, but also aware of the combination of access and luck that supported my discovery. Eager to build systems that go faster, I wondered if I could make life easier for those who followed and if I could make the records of the National Archives of Composition and Rhetoric as easy to access as my comprehensive notes had been.[4]

Motivated by the desire to make these resources accessible, to include the expertise of more than a singular archivist, and to make space for previously marginalized voices, I developed relational architecture as a records-keeping methodology that I would test in my dissertation (Morton-Aiken, 2017). I theorized that crowd sourcing contextual information from users and layering it on top of existing records would result in expanded knowledge, access, and agency. Users would be able to leave a trace in the system to augment what the archivist had already left behind, providing an opportunity for complexity and context that evolved alongside existing circulation and expanding inclusion.

Operationalizing the hashtags in my seminar and comps notes, resources in relational architecture are continually augmented by building connections with relationships identified by contributing-users. Used to its full potential, relational architecture acts as the digital string between unconnected items on a 3D corkboard, allowing users to add their own "folksonomy hashtags" (digital thumbtacks) to permanently and visibly connect these things going forward. Those "things" could be anything from actual artifacts in official archives to the filing cabinet full of stuff; as long as a digital record appears somewhere, the resulting web lets users see and use the knowledge of those who came before them.

Before the dissertation, I tested the theory in a small pilot research project, asking five faculty in rhetoric and composition to contribute their knowledge in the form of folksonomy hashtags to the artifact I had found. Figure 14.3 demonstrates the traditional archival descriptors that would have accompanied the entry without their contributions: artifact author (Elaine P. Maimon), date (1980), institution of the author (then Beaver College), and the institution of the audience (University of Maryland). Without a finding aid and with such limited knowledge in the record, that artifact would have been effectively inaccessible, especially for novices in the field. Though the document content outlined the framework for a successful WAC/WID program in 1980, the artifact would have remained valuable only to the privileged who already knew that it existed, let alone where to find it or its significance.

4 Bob Schwegler and I talk about the seminar I took with him in detail in "Recursion and Responsiveness" (Morton-Aiken & Schwegler, 2022) where my relationship with record-keeping formalized into something more methodological and specifically equity-driven.

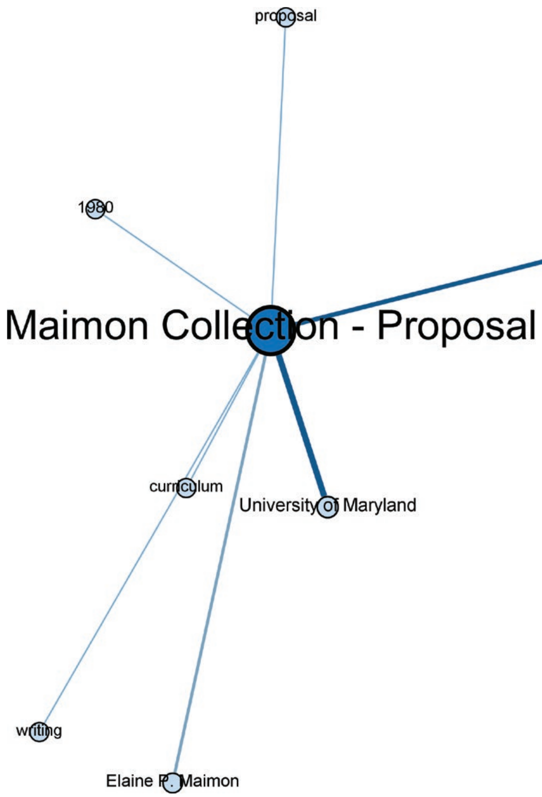


Figure 14.3. Maimon artifact with traditional archival descriptors.

Figure 14.4, however, adds faculty members' contributions, measurably increasing points of access, expanding the original record specialist knowledge from varied perspectives, and formalizing connections among previously disparate items.

Though this example specifically demonstrates relational architecture in the archives, the applications to the work of the WPA is similar—making helpful resources about writing known to more folks and accessible from more points of entry.

Relational architecture builds on scholarly work that exemplifies how researchers can and do read and respond productively (Enoch & VanHaitsma, 2015; Finnegan, 2006; Gaillet, 2012; Graban, 2013; Gries, 2013), and further develops methodologies that pushes back against the power inherent in the voices of official resources (Kirsch & Royster, 2010; Kirsch & Sullivan, 1992; Royster & Williams, 1999) to make the infrastructure itself able to support multiplicity, transparency, and evolving connectivity.

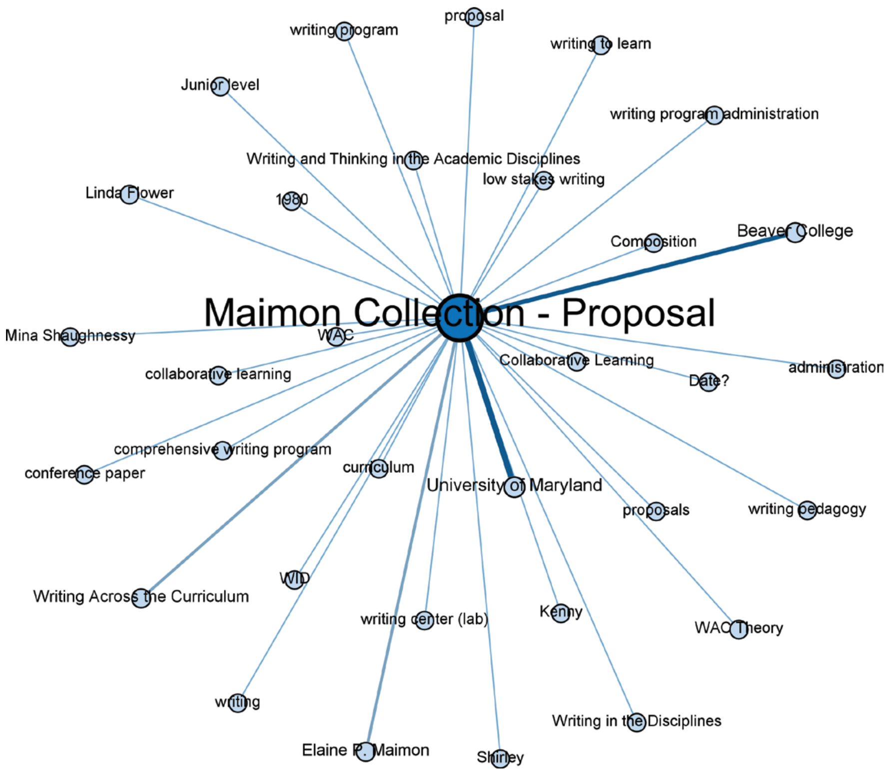


Figure 14.4. Maimon artifact with archivists and participants folksonomy hashtags.

Pulling back not only to view, but also to construct, the infrastructure of the archive as rhetorical means allows researchers to be *contributing* users who are more akin to "prosumers," blending former distinctions between experts and novices (VanHaitsma, 2015, p. 38), a markedly different approach to the suffering researcher so vividly described in the book *Dust* (Steedman, 2001). In this new position as agents of authority, all users who engage with the archives are now able to speak back to the archives rather than simply view them as powerless observers. More specifically, relational architecture changes the power dynamics of the archival infrastructure by acknowledging that multiplicities of experience, knowledge, and values already exist and should be equally represented in the official record. It illuminates archival processing work as rhetorical; recognizes the infrastructures itself as equally rhetorical to the human hands that process the collection; and records and values multiple kinds of knowledge as part of the official record and meaning-making system, all meaning making elements still at work in organization systems like writing programs or institutional bodies.

WHAT'S THE CATCH?

Unfortunately, relational architecture at this scale is still merely a theory. I used the networking software Gephi (Figure 14.5) for my project, asking contributors to submit hashtags via a Qualtrics survey. I manually cleaned and formatted the data from Qualtrics so that Gephi could build the resulting visual network. Relational architecture in its full potential would use folksonomy hashtags as digital points of origin to connect artifacts from distinct archival, institutional, or even disciplinary silos (see Morton-Aiken & Schwegler, 2017).

While some digital systems like Twitter or Imgur currently offer the ability to add keywords, they're not actually applying relational architecture, because it's not contributing rhetorically to the infrastructure, not connecting items that are outside the platform, and not identifying the weight (repetition) of contributions. Unlike Twitter's hashtags, for example, that are limited to the Twitter platform, relational architecture for archives would ideally sit outside those closed ecosystems, providing a pathway able to traverse a variety of platforms from small individual archives to the Library of Congress to sites like Twitter.

The resulting digital web would build connective tissue that is constantly cultivated by multiple users' articulations of one artifact's relationship to another, creating a trail of breadcrumbs and allowing users to see changes in data based on visualization programs.

While relational architecture originated as a rhetorically informed approach to archival practice and research, I share it in this context because it has value beyond the stacks and digital archives, also serving as a reminder that one way of naming, authoring, and contextualizing meaning-making tools is inevitably limited.

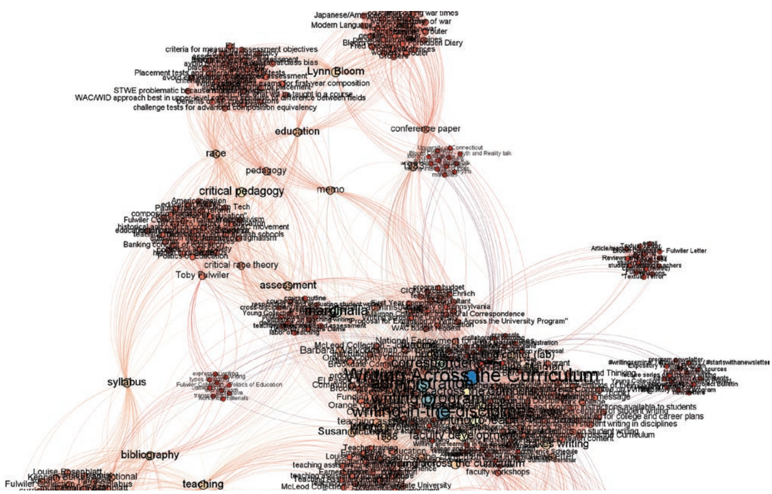


Figure 14.5. Gephi interface.

Particularly when applied to WAC/WID work as I describe later, relational architecture can remind writing program folks to purposefully include other voices and perspectives as we create and control program resources. To enact, as the editors described in the introduction collection, the understanding that writing programs are guided by ecosocial and networked systems frameworks, the stakeholder constituencies see each other not just as related entities, inorganic rooms that touch impermeable walls within buildings; but rather as vital, dynamic ecosystems within the eco-supersystem, with knowledge growing and interchanging not through rigid hierarchies but rather organically, *rhizomatically*. Therein lies the power of ecosocial systems and networks language.

Relational architecture as a lens encourages system builders to attend to multiple perspectives in all the rhetorical layers of the network and system because different perspectives can and should be articulated to the fullest context possible. As Anne Gere, et al. wrote in a recent article in *College Composition and Communication*:

> [C]ommunally revising disciplinary memory (of language history, language policy, and language discrimination) can provide powerful tools for promoting critical language awareness in the field and in the classroom . . . drawing attention to the structural nature of injustice in writing assessment and identifying structural opportunities for responding to them. (2021, p. 390)

Relational architecture offers a chance to push back against the archival habits, languages, and categories that Gere, et al. go on to write are "Privileged forms are codified and enforced as "standard," while the language varieties and discursive patterns of less privileged groups receive discrimination and ridicule" (2021, p. 385). Intentional engagement with our organizational systems, even as mundane as the filing cabinet, matters because "[w]hen we fail to think infrastructurally about our disciplinary practices and preoccupations, it becomes all too easy for us to take for granted that what we do in our classrooms is neutral. It isn't" (Gere, et al., 2021, p. 405).

BUT DOES ARCHIVAL THEORY REALLY AFFECT ME, THE ALREADY OVERBURDENED WPA?

I'm afraid so. As this collection demonstrates, the systems and supersystems we operate within inform so many of the actions we take, and recognizing those influences allows us to exert more agency and share more power when possible. The archival principles discussed here matter, because programs are all about paperwork, and increasingly, all about assessment–potentially with assessment artifacts that live outside the organizational scope of the writing program itself.

I learned this the hard way while working on a then new scientific communication initiative at the University of Rhode Island to integrate rhetorical practice into the training of STEM graduates (Druschke et al., 2018). I helped develop robust assessment protocols that would, we hoped, validate our training of science graduate students. Though the many layers were complex, the easy one was supposed to be establishing a general baseline by scoring previously submitted dissertation and thesis proposals held in storage on campus.

That's when we discovered firsthand just how much archival arrangement affects the work that researchers can do even outside of what is generally considered archival research. In planning the process, we'd never stopped to make sure that someone was actually holding onto the documents we needed. If we had, we would have discovered that, crucially, not all proposals were archived in special collections, there was in fact no special collections archivist on staff, and changes to graduate school policies meant that proposals were no longer being stored anywhere and that hardcopies were being destroyed for space. We needed those artifacts for a key element of our argument to the National Science Foundation. Though our methodology was well designed, that portion of the methodology—the comparison of our intervention to starting data—was irrelevant without artifacts. In other words, the baseline assessment at the core of our half a million-dollar grant was at risk, because the organizational system we assumed was in place had broken down.

Whether trained archivist or harried administrator, people keep things which are of value and discard that which are not, making easily accessible the items that are more valuable and shoving into storage boxes items of lesser value. Those decisions build and transform systems that change our abilities to do our jobs, much like the institution's policy shifted from keeping hardcopies on file to destroying those hardcopies, enacting changes to unwritten policies that we could not have anticipated.

All researchers can only examine the data points they first collect; for the WPA, this means locating the artifacts that illustrate writing program work in action. Though those artifacts often come from the site of WPA work, our science communication grant is a clear example of how WPA as researchers sometimes need to engage with systems beyond their control, even for projects seemingly removed from archival work. That means updating the traditional position that values archives solely to display dusty manuscripts from another century to recognize that archives are simply systems that can prevent, limit, or expand access and progress.

BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE . . .

Particularly in WAC/WID programs, participants should still have equal agency in meaning-making systems because those participants are a critical component of the program. After all, though we might be the writing experts in the room, there is no WAC program without participating faculty who bring disciplinary expertise to the table. More than simply putting worksheets, budgets, or agendas in logical filing sequence, relational architecture as a methodological lens reminds writing folks that even the decisions that undergird that sequence reflect the different ways of knowing and doing in different disciplines in different ways (Carter, 2007).

To fully value a WAC colleague's agency means examining the significance of power dynamics and understanding who and how individuals operate within systems so that not only are the facilitator's needs met, but that the system provides multiple points of connection for any users and from any discipline, to participate in and contribute to the building and organizing of resources current and historical. Instruments such as the Daly-Miller Apprehension Survey (Daly & Miller, 1975) give ways into such conversations, but the deployment of those instruments also requires attention to organizing in a way that complements the need to engage with non-writing faculty in WAC/WID programming to serve their needs as they, the participants, have defined those needs, rather than as a coordinator has dictated them (Adler-Kassner & O'Neill, 2010; Carter, 2007; David et al., 1995; Mullin, 2008; Russell, 2002; Walvoord, 1996). The key to organizing at any level is listening. As Mullin wrote:

> Those of us leading faculty toward different pedagogical understandings always have to be aware of how we are forwarding our own agendas, and we have to be flexible and open enough to reconsider our constructions of others and our definitions of their disciplines and ways of teaching. We can do this by actively listening. (2008, pp. 497-498)

Active listening requires engaging with and shifting to meet the needs of those users, and often manifests in the writing of resources such as workshop content, curriculum, or themes. But that listening should also be extended to the writing of the infrastructure of resources, to engaging with questions of system literacy as much as content, and to ensuring that user agency—allowing them to "interrupt" (Reynolds, 2009) or "talk back" (Royster, 1996)—is equitably enacted across all participants. Relational architecture is helpful, because it reminds organizers of WAC programs and activities that the organizing themselves are not neutral, and instead are a) originating-users needing contributing-users to fully deploy resources, and b) developing a system that needs to intentionally recognize and value multiple ways of knowing and doing.

This may mean opening up the physical filing cabinet for WAC faculty, perhaps with a table of contents where comments could be left or circulating documents through a Google Drive where participants have editing rights. Such collaborative leadership is risky and challenging. The results, while theoretically beneficial, might actually make the system more difficult to use. What if someone decides to literally write over the file system, or throw away documents because they don't understand their value? What if an administrator witnesses the messy, iterative process, declares it a failure because they deem it incomprehensive, and pulls all funding? What if colleagues assume that the program administrator isn't doing anything because they are delegating at best and allowing non-specialists to set the rules of engagement at worst?

Some assessment practices arguably offer a less risky method for securing feedback, but still do not necessarily position the WAC participant as contributing-user. While the participant is valued in that their feedback is requested, heard, and hopefully acted upon, authorship will remain solely with the director of those resources without the application of intentional and practical mechanisms for collaboration. This means that part of the practitioner's planning should include building in time and space to engage in conversation with those who will utilize WAC resources at the time of the writing and revising of those resources. After all, users are only able to actually use what they can find and request, and if they are not part of that naming process, they cannot be fortified with agency in the finding process.

Adopting the perspective of relational architecture reminds writing folks to recognize the layers of their work as rhetorical, as the arranger of writing resources including document, policies, and people. A networked approach specifically illuminates the habitual position of the writing program director as coder of these resources, and specifically calls for attention to the actual archive that writing coordinator develops almost accidentally as part of their day-to-day activities. As the authors of that infrastructure, they are inevitably writing personal and/or disciplinary values into the system, whether it's through the organization of the filing cabinet or the organization of the meeting to determine the new curriculum, effectively determining how (and if) other users, including future writing folks, will be able to access the resources selected to be preserved.

After all, one of the continuing challenges of WAC work is to make the faculty member, "likely to see [their] writing practices not as rhetorical devices but as business as usual or simply 'good science'" (Russell, 2002, pp. 16-17), aware of ideology reproduced within disciplinary conventions both in her own writing and in the teaching of writing to her students.

As the editors wrote in the introduction, the actors who built the system and network webs may not have designed them in ways which they function. Bringing awareness to these actors—powered and otherwise—means that the WPA is far better positioned to embed multiplicity, agency, and ease of access by working more intentionally with the guiding principles and practices of arrangement and agency in such systems. Relational architecture then becomes a powerful new lens through which to view the WPA as writer of the systems in general and writer of the archives in particular.

APPLICATIONS RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW

I originally developed relational architecture specifically as a feminist methodology for archives that stemmed from my desire to include and honor the perspectives of the "other" in traditional archival process and principles. I wanted to contribute to Evan's call for "thick" descriptions over traditional records because "[archival] processes and data structures need to be designed to capture and represent all rather than just part of our story in relation to the archival processing of records" (2014, pp. 8, 10). As I've demonstrated over these pages, however, the practical applications of relational architecture go much further than traditional archives.

Here's a few thoughts on how to leverage relational architecture to make writing program work a collaborative and inclusive system without breaking your brain or the budget:

- Digital applications
    - Use a shared digital repository, like Microsoft Teams or Google Drive, where all stakeholders have "edit" permission so they can augment and contribute with varied perspectives.
    - Keep meeting minutes in the shared digital files where all folks have access and can annotate as needed.
    - Use the "track changes" or "comments" function until a collaborative decision has been made on a draft so that louder voices or more aggressive contributors don't automatically drown out more vulnerable voices. (And look back through the revision file occasionally to make sure that this is actually happening.)
    - Use hashtags or other tagging system within documents (or in the metadata file information) so searching is more democratic and less reliant on simply knowing where something lives.

  - Create shortcuts to related documents within files and folders.
  - Create a unit email address (like "WPA@institution.edu") so that email archives are also handed down with the position.
  - Create a central document or database with hyperlinks to relevant resources.
- Hard copy applications
  - Make sure everyone has access to the filing cabinet. For example, don't keep it in a personal office that is often locked, and don't lock the cabinet itself unless everyone has keys.
  - Keep a notebook or other record on hand where folks can leave information about what they changed, renamed, moved, added, or removed.
  - Use sticky notes inside folders to leave information for others, including where else they might look for related resources.
- Digital and analog
  - Create a culture of curiosity, conversation, and collaboration.
  - Make space for all folks to voice their contributions and listen especially hard when folks from the margins share their thoughts.
  - Talk through naming conventions for programs and terms as well as the general organizational principles. Clearly name files with specific designations and institutional abbreviations so that folks can access without specialist knowledge (Write out terms for abbreviations like WPA or WAC if those are not standard within your institution).
  - Rotate through who takes notes during the meeting.
  - Keep notes of meetings and file all meeting minutes in accessible and clearly designated folders.
  - Make intentional organization a visible and valued part of the process by occasionally spending a few minutes talking through how you collectively want to organize stuff and distribute the labor.
  - Frame record-keeping as adding value, not as grunt work.

Deployed as a tool to fight traditional and singular dominant narratives, relational architecture is a daily mindset as much as a digital tool. This means that the challenges that face archivists—issues of access, arrangement, and agency—are critical to the work of the WPA as well. Relational architecture allows users to leave a traceable path behind so that WPAs and others who follow might better understand and navigate, as the editors wrote in the introduction, the "networks and systems [that] impose agency or act like agentive beings in that they may shape how writing program administrators work, impose deficit-based pedagogies or approaches, stifle emotional and physical well-being, and/or perpetuate problematic labor practices."

CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the potential that relational architecture offers to cultivate a more intentional, inclusive, and socially just approach to the organization, authoring, and accessing of writing program resources. Formalizing the pathways that the editors described in the battle to remove "basic" from the title of a class through multiple layers of human and non-human actors, I highlight the importance of interrogating the systems and supersystems that organize the "stuff" that makes up our writing programs. Though the methodology is most directly applicable to archival information infrastructure.

Relational architecture offers the chance to formalize what Tassoni, in another chapter of this collection, describes his efforts to trace the Basic Writing across multiple location, actors, and history, describing his work as the "story/assemblage is designed to help agents/agencies recognize their involvement in BW's interoffice, intercampus actor-network." It offers the opportunity to record and make accessible to future WPAs what Tassoni called, in an earlier draft of his chapter, the "dense network of competing and aligned interests and concerns and that, over the years, various individuals, programs, events, and offices have arisen to address and spur and squelch these interests and concerns," and to further what he credits as Jay Dolmage's (2017) legend that helped him understand where to look for information and "describe the network trajectories of the assemblage that is BW at Miami University."

Finally, however, intentional organizational frameworks like relational architecture do work in the nexus of thriving as a writing program administrator, elevating marginalized voices and making the world a more equitable place. It's about attending to our own system and keeping the rhetorical aspects of other systems in place as we negotiate differences across campus. While I realize that not every WPA or WAC director dreams of a BMW, I imagine they do dream of a paperwork world in which they can do the work they set out to do, they can better help all the people they want to help, and they can get it on by working smarter, not harder. Paying attention to where you put the stuff, what you name the stuff, who can get the stuff, and who writes the stuff will get you far. Whether it's program assessment, renaming Basic Writing, or merely challenging the hegemony, attending to organization as a rhetorical system *is* doing important rhetorical work in the world. It's not easy, but to reappropriate Home Depot's motto, it's how more doers get more done.

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