

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Technical Communication Quarterly
Special Issue—Vol 24, Number 1 (Winter, 2015)

Contemporary Research Methodologies in Technical Communication

Guest editors:

Brian McNely, Ball State University
Clay Spinuzzi, University of Texas, Austin
Christa Teston, University of Idaho

In 1998, Patricia Goubil-Gambrell edited a special issue of *Technical Communication Quarterly* in which methodological approaches to the study of technical and professional communication were explored. In her introduction, Goubil-Gambrell argued that “Defining research methods is a part of disciplinary development,” and that the articles in that special issue “show where we are now” (p. 7). Since 1998, the nature of work in technical communication and the practices that mediate that work have evolved. These evolutions are due in part to shifts in technology, changes in organizational power and politics, and the dynamic nature of the very spaces in which technical and professional communication takes place.

We wonder, therefore, how do we best study, report on, and build knowledge about where we are now as technical and professional communicators? What methodological approaches best afford the rigorous and responsible collection, analysis, and reporting of data related to how technical communication happens now—in an age where knowledge work is even more explicitly mediated by and embedded within a wide range of writing technologies, social software, and seemingly ubiquitous access to information?

We solicit manuscripts of 6,000–7,000 words (25–30 double-spaced pages, including references and notes) that revisit, extend, and update the aims of the 1998 special issue on methodology. Submissions might highlight, model, and/or examine how researchers deploy particular methodological approaches toward the building of knowledge in the field of technical communication.

In addition to actual models of methodological approaches deployed in specific contemporary investigations of technical communication, some questions motivating manuscripts for this special issue might include the following:

- How have recent changes in theory and theoretical sources led to methodological changes in technical communication? How have they reconfigured existing methodology, and how have they led to new methodologies?
- What new methodologies are being "home-grown" to deal with the unique challenges of technical communication?
- What are the pressing methodological questions that technical communication faces over the next decade?

- What changes in communication technologies, organizations, values, and social arrangements require methodological developments?
- What strides have been taken toward the modification or development of methodological approaches that account for differences and/or inequalities related to gender, race, disability, access, expertise, and any other kind of professional, social, technological, or cultural chasm?
- What counts as an object of study, a practice, “data,” and/or a researchable question, given the ways writing technologies are so embedded in communicative practices?
- What kinds of mixed-methods and experimental approaches are appropriate for the changing landscape of technical communication?

Submission Procedures

Proposals should be 1-2 pages in length (500–1,000 words) and include a cover sheet with identifying information. With the exception of the cover sheet, the proposal should be free from identifying information.

Proposals may be in .doc, .txt, or .rtf file formats and should be sent via email attachment to Brian McNely (bjmcnely@bsu.edu) by February 15th, 2013.

For proposals that are accepted (notifications will be delivered by May 15th, 2013), first drafts of manuscripts will be due by September 15th, 2013, with finished manuscripts due by May 1st, 2014. Scheduled publication of the special issue will be January, 2015.

The guest editors especially welcome inquiries and would be happy to discuss manuscript ideas with you—please email Brian McNely (bjmcnely@bsu.edu) with any questions about potential submissions.