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# Continuing the Conversation: From Conference Presentation to Publication

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Because we recognize that many students in graduate and undergraduate courses focused on writing center theory and practice are offered advice and encouragement on how to repurpose class assignments into conference presentations or to represent the results of research conducted during writing center sessions into posters but are likely to find few articles that “offer practical wisdom on how to achieve this essential goal” (Murphy 5), we offer our narratives in an attempt to fill that void. Our narratives describe two common approaches to moving research from a conference presentation to a published article: Alexis began with a brief conference paper, whereas Lindsay had an article in progress prior to presenting her argument and analysis at a conference. By offering readers a glimpse into our motivations for presenting conference papers and sharing how we went about revising our arguments after the conferences, we hope to provide insight into processes for transitioning a conference presentation into a published article and to offer strategies about how to extend scholarly conversations that begin at a conference into scholarly publications in academic journals.

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“Publish or perish” is a maxim most writing studies professionals in higher education have encountered and have had to respond to in some facet of their job. More and more frequently, this maxim is one that graduate students and even undergraduate students must respond to as well. As English disciplinary historian John Guillory remarked in 1995, the demands of the academic job market have resulted in a “new domain of preprofessionalism,” a state-of-affairs in which graduate students are increasingly

expected to “do everything that their teachers do—teach, deliver conference papers, publish” (170). A more recent posting on *The Chronicle of Higher Education* by academic career coach Karen Kelsky in June 2015 informed graduate students that to be competitive on the academic job market, they should expect to “have an impressive record of sole/first-author peer-reviewed publishing.” A quick perusal of assistant professor or writing center director equivalent job ads on the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) webpage supports Kelsky’s assertion. Several job ads include within the desired qualifications of candidates items such as:

- “Publications on any aspect of writing center administration, composition studies and/or work with ESL writers”;
- “A demonstrated dedication to research and scholarship, preferably in rhetoric/composition”; and
- “A research record in one or more of the following: underrepresented and/or global rhetorics, English Education, linguistics, assessment, WAC/WID, history of rhetoric, cultural studies, and digital rhetorics/humanities” (“Positions”).

A similar research and publication expectation is also becoming more prevalent for undergraduate students applying to graduate programs. A 2002 study by Joseph R. Ferrari, Stephanie Weyers, and Stephen F. Davis concluded that “undergraduates should actively seek to have publications accepted in student-based and general professional journals to enhance their chances of being admitted to doctoral programs” (Hart 11). As scholar of undergraduate research Alan Jenkins notes, “in most disciplines, and indeed in the academic community at large, writing for the purpose of publishing in journals” is often “the central way” in which we establish our credentials within our scholarly communities. As a result, undergraduates who aspire to graduate programs are more and more frequently “being invited, indeed required to enter into that community” (Jenkins 6) by publishing their research in undergraduate or professional journals.

Given these realities, graduate and undergraduate students in writing center studies interested in advancing in our field must consider the broader implications of this “trickle down” effect of the “publish or perish” maxim. Presenting a poster or delivering a paper at a professional conference is rarely sufficient any longer, though such public presentations of research are certainly worthwhile starting points for scholarly publication. As writing studies scholar Chris Anson remarks, “putting in a proposal for a conference paper (if it’s accepted) forces you to complete enough work to make your ideas presentable, and the results are then more easily transformed into a publishable piece” (qtd. in Swift). It is important to remember, however, that “there is a vast difference between a brief conference paper and an extended, fleshed-out journal article”

(Olson 22), as Alexis's narrative below demonstrates.

Because we recognize that many students in graduate and undergraduate courses focused on writing center theory and practice are offered advice and encouragement on how to repurpose class assignments into conference presentations or represent the results of research conducted during writing center sessions into posters, but are likely to find few articles that “offer practical wisdom on how to achieve this essential goal” (Murphy 5), we offer our narratives in an attempt to fill that void. Our narratives describe two common approaches to moving research from a conference presentation to a published article: Alexis began with a brief conference paper, whereas Lindsay had an article in progress prior to presenting her argument and analysis at a conference. By giving readers a glimpse into our motivations for presenting conference papers and how we went about revising our arguments after the conferences were over, we hope to provide insight into some processes for evolving a conference presentation into a published article and offer some strategies about how to extend scholarly conversations that begin at a conference by publishing in academic journals.

### **Alexis's Narrative: Changing Perspective and Reconceiving Audience**

In the spring of 2010, several years into my first tenure-track academic job, one of my graduate school friends called me to ask if I'd be willing to collaborate with another graduate school friend<sup>1</sup> and her on a conference proposal for the 2011 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). The three of us had taken numerous classes together in graduate school, and we shared scholarly interests in civic rhetoric, computers and writing, and feminist rhetorical practices. My friend Laura drew my attention to one specific bullet point from the conference's Call for Proposals that had particularly caught her attention: "How do theories of civic engagement intersect with composition, rhetoric, writing, and the world we all live in?" She had recently become interested in how international women's groups were using social media to facilitate online organizing and civic engagement, and she knew that our other friend—a breast cancer survivor—had been thinking in complex ways about the rhetorical strategies used by participants in online breast cancer forums. *Was there an online platform related to “rhetorical constructions of women as change agents empowered by technology” that I had been observing or in which I was participating?* she wondered (McGrath). Actually, I replied, there was.

In 2009, after attending the Officer Women Leadership Symposium at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, I had signed up to

participate in the Academy Women eMentor Program<sup>2</sup>, a “cutting-edge web-based technology to provide a dynamic resource of personalized career guidance, advice, support and inspiration for women officers who share a common history with their women officer and officer veteran mentors” (“Welcome”). Laura thought an analysis of this web-based women-only mentorship program would complement her and Angela’s presentations well. She proceeded to write an introduction to the panel indicating that the presentations would focus “on women’s civic engagement as it is performed within online forums, social networks, and other spaces on the web” and would be informed by “theoretical and analytical perspectives from rhetoric/composition, computers and writing, and media studies, as well as feminist theory” (McGrath). With those parameters in mind, the three of us sent several drafts of our individual presentation descriptions back-and-forth, submitted our proposal, (happily) received notification of acceptance, wrote our brief conference papers and prepared our PowerPoints, and finally presented our panel titled “Rhetoric, Technology, and Women’s Civic Engagement” at the 2011 CCCC.

For the purposes of the presentation, I created fifteen PowerPoint slides (including the title slide and the Works Cited) and wrote a relatively short six-and-a-half page document to use as my general speaker’s guide. As I conducted my research and prepared my presentation, I kept in mind the framing language of Laura’s introduction, such as “women’s civic engagement” and “feminist theory,” as well as the “Interest Emphasis” of “gender” we had included in our proposal. I also considered the audience we could likely expect to attend our panel at CCCCs, many of whom tend to appreciate practical pedagogical applications in addition to hearing about theory. My individual presentation, “The Embodied Politics of the Academy’s Women’s eMentor Program,” primarily consisted of a rhetorical analysis of the eMentor program in light of third wave feminist ideals, focusing on the three forms of “embodied politics” identified by feminist scholars Natalie Fixmer and Julia T. Wood. After talking through the notable differences in women’s communication styles in public versus password-protected, private, single-gendered online spaces that I and another scholar had observed, I concluded by discussing what implications my findings might have for college writing instructors and college writing classrooms, suggesting that professors could have students examine what “rhetorical competence” means and how different understandings of that term and how it is recognized (or not) by participants could affect whose voices get heard in different types of online forums--including course-based course management systems.

I enjoyed doing the primary and secondary research and sharing my conclusions with the small (but appreciative!) audience at C’s, but I had not yet considered how I might

expand the argument beyond my somewhat surface-level analysis. That is, I had not thought intentionally about how I might make my argument suitable for publication, let alone what journal might be appropriate for such an article. I had not, in other words, followed the sage advice of Gary Olson, co-editor of the guide *Publishing in Rhetoric and Composition*, to actively research and compose with a particular journal in mind (24).

Fortunately, however, soon after the conference was over, I received an inquiry email from writing studies scholars Rusty Carpenter and Melody Bowdon informing me that they were in the process of “co-editing a special issue of *Community Literacy Journal* on digital technologies and community literacy” and had “noticed that [I had] presented on a relevant topic at CCCC 2011” (Carpenter). They invited me to submit a manuscript for consideration. Though I had not conceived of my argument as situated within literacy studies, I could readily see how my project was related to digital technologies and the formation of a community among the participants. Therefore, I gratefully accepted their invitation and quickly set to work to try to add depth and substance to my nascent argument.<sup>3</sup>

The first draft I submitted to the journal was an expanded version of my conference presentation (now up to 12 pages of written text), which I began by developing an argument about women’s civic rhetoric and public voices (starting with the agora in ancient Greece) and interrogated those concepts within numerous online spaces (as compared to the two I had considered for the conference presentation). For the equivalent of my literature review, I dropped several sources having to do with classroom implications and added several new ones focused on women’s public voices in face-to-face and virtual spaces. After laying out the literature review, I provided an analysis of the language used by the administrators of the eMentor program’s website. I concluded the draft with claims about the ways in which the eMentor site enacts feminist principles and helps military women to have their voices heard in their often male-dominated workplaces. In retrospect, I realize that though I had appropriately eliminated the pedagogical implications portion of my conference presentation, I was still largely focusing my argument on “women’s civic engagement” and “feminist theory” (the guiding terms of the original conference proposal) rather than considering how best to suit my essay to the community literacy focus of the journal.

Not surprisingly, because I had not sufficiently refocused the manuscript to reflect the journal’s mission instead of the theme of the conference, the first round of reviewers remarked upon this oversight.<sup>4</sup> Due to my relative lack of attention to the journal’s eponymous emphasis on community literacy, two of the three reviewers pointed out that

I needed to “do more” to connect my argument to “issues related to” community literacy. Similarly, based upon the digital technology focus of the special issue, the reviewers also encouraged me to be “more explicit” about and to include more analysis of the digital platform when assessing the literacy practices and community building displayed by the participants in the eMentor program. Finally, the reviewers encouraged me to provide more specific examples of the participants’ interactions within the online spaces, rather than focusing on the language viewable on the public pages of the website. As one reviewer remarked, “the author focuses [too little] on the eMentor project.”

In their feedback, the special issue editors concurred with the reviewers that I should “incorporate the notion of community literacy” earlier and more often (the question, “Community literacy connection?” appeared in several marginal comments throughout the annotated draft I received from the editors), to focus more specifically on the community of *military* women participating in the eMentor program (not just women in general), and to offer some context from my own experiences as a female Naval officer in a highly masculinized workplace.<sup>5</sup> The editors also assured me that they and the reviewers “found the topic very compelling” (indeed, I was bolstered by comments from the reviewers such as “I think this piece has a lot of potential,” and “I think this article has great promise and I would LOVE to see it in print”), and therefore I was offered the opportunity to revise and resubmit the manuscript to make it more suitable for the community literacy and digital technologies focus of the special issue.<sup>6</sup>

The feedback I received from the reviewers and editors was quite helpful to me as I went about reformulating my argument and adding more concrete examples related to the specific site of my investigation. Keeping their suggestions and observations in mind, I worked more diligently to shift my mindset from a focus on online civic rhetoric and women’s language practices in networked spaces to a more targeted focus on the literacy practices of the women in the eMentor program and how those practices contributed to building community among that specific group of women. I revisited my literature review and did some additional research on literacy practices and other mentoring programs designed to build community among women in traditionally masculine work environments similar to the military. I then set about including more specific examples of the composing practices used by the women participating in the eMentor program. Recognizing that I was unable to find sufficient examples of the participants’ language within the eMentor portal itself, I expanded my analysis to the group’s Facebook page, as well. I also reorganized the essay so that the first paragraph introduced readers to my critical approach—not only conducting a feminist analysis of women’s voices in an online space but also demonstrating how the interactions instantiated an understanding

of community literacy as a means of promoting change within a workplace culture. Six weeks after receiving the reviewer and editor feedback, I resubmitted my revised manuscript.<sup>7</sup>

I completed relatively minor organizational, stylistic, and sentence-level revisions three more times based upon feedback from the editors of the special issue (the revised manuscript was not sent out for another round of peer review). The first time I was asked to accept editorial changes such as the addition of a clear, straightforward statement of purpose at the end of the first paragraph (see Mathewes on the importance of “signposting”) and some minor wordsmithing. The penultimate request for revision included a question about a citation and a request to revise some particularly long-winded sentences (one of my bad habits as a writer!). Just over one year after receiving the invitation to submit my work, I received notification that my article, “Inquiring Communally, Acting Collectively: The Community Literacy of the AcademyWomen eMentor Portal and Facebook Group,” was going to be published.<sup>8</sup>

This experience not only reinforced the wisdom of Olson’s advice to *begin* researching and writing with a specific publication in mind and but also reassured me that (with a substantial amount of additional research and writing!) a nascent project that begins life as a conference presentation only *can* be adapted and expanded into a journal-worthy publication, even if it hasn’t initially been conceived with that specific journal’s audience or scholarly framework in mind. The experience also reinforced for me the value of the peer review process and how informed readers provide us with informed advice to guide our revisions and make our writing and thinking better. Thankfully, in this particular case, the reviewers and the editors provided me with consistent, rather than conflicting, advice and gave me encouraging as well as critical feedback. Melody Bowdon even offered me the opportunity to “chat by phone” if I had questions about the feedback and requests for revision (“Acceptance”). However, had I started my research with the *Community Literacy Journal* audience in mind, I not only would not have had to reconceive the audience and purpose of my research so thoroughly but also I might have been able to use the conference venue as a space in which to receive feedback on my preliminary argument, as Lindsay describes doing so in her narrative.

### **Lindsay’s Narrative: Meaningful Dialogue, Informing Perspectives**

During a course in the first semester of my doctoral program, I explored the concepts of using gaming in composition courses in order to engage students in practices with which they are already familiar, more specifically, problem solving, complex thinking, and

collaboration. With the encouragement of the course professor, Dr. Gian Pagnucci, I revised the course project into a conference presentation for Computers and Writing 2010: “Virtual Worlds,” with the conscious goal to follow up the presentation with a manuscript to be considered for publication in *Computers and Composition*.

My conference presentation focused how instructors can use the skills gained in gaming to promote students’ engagement with composition studies. I focused on changing the viewpoint of resistance to gaming—such as claims about how gaming is creating digital zombies who have a difficult time cognitively and struggle nowadays to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills—to embracing the skills gamers develop and changing the way we teach in order to reach students who actively engage with gaming. We can reach these students, I claimed, by building on their digital literacies through gaming while still teaching them writing processes that we deem important. In addition to drawing upon the scholarship previously published about gaming and digital literacies—which served as my literature review—I also discussed the ways to apply *Mafia Wars* to a composition course. I concluded the presentation with two questions: 1) What are our pedagogical assumptions about gaming and should they be challenged? and 2) What’s there in gaming that is fundamental that educators can make sure of?

When I initially submitted my Computers & Writing conference proposal, I received feedback from the reviewers that included a “revise and resubmit,” questioning whether or not Facebook games such as *Mafia Wars*—the focus of my research—could in fact be classified as gaming and disagreeing with my claim that this type of gaming involves complex strategizing. One reviewer was concerned that the tone of the question and answer period of the presentation might become strained due to my atypical classification of gaming. The reviewer explained that “using ‘game’ in a non-standard way is not well received by ‘gamers’”. So, using the term when the group won’t accept it means that the session will be tense at best.” Ultimately, the reviewers stated that “the idea has merit; it needs a bit different terminology to avoid gamer hot buttons.” I found myself grappling with this concept of gaming and what constitutes a “game.” The reviewers’ comments about gaming consequently impacted not only the shape of my conference presentation but also the manuscript I eventually submitted to *Computers and Composition* as well.

By simultaneously working on my conference presentation along with my manuscript for publication, I allowed one to inform the other. As I developed the conference presentation, I continually updated the manuscript by adding more research to the literature review classifying gaming and framing my own concepts of gaming to reflect

the additional knowledge I was including in the PowerPoint. For example, I included an article from my local newspaper about the distractions of gaming in connection with statistics about how often users play *Facebook* games. I then juxtaposed this information with that of researchers who have found that the majority of gamers are “practicing complex thinking, problem solving, strategizing, investigating, and understanding rules and codes of simulated worlds (Alexander, 2009; Colby & Colby, 2008; Gee & Levine, 2009; Merchant, 2009; Squire, 2006),” to substantiate my claim that “Gamers must learn to read visual cues and negotiate their positions in the virtual world in order to be successful while gaming” (Sabatino 42). While I couldn’t provide these more concrete details during my fifteen minute conference presentation, I could include them in the manuscript.

Toward the beginning of my presentation, I shared the Computers & Writing (C&W) abstract reviewers’ comments and surveyed the audience to see how they would classify Facebook gaming. The brief discussion among those in the room, most of whom supported my claims about Facebook gaming, added to my conception of how games are classified and helped me frame claims about the ways that gamers engage in complex thinking and problem solving. By engaging the audience and receiving their feedback, I was able use the conference presentation as an opportunity to develop my ideas and apply those to my manuscript. For example, the face-to-face conference discussions about Facebook gaming allowed me to preemptively address this debate in the introductory sections of the manuscript and also prepared me for future resistance I might face or questions I might be asked. To this extent, I allowed my conference presentation to inform and shape my manuscript. Within a few weeks of finishing my Computers and Writing presentation, I revised my manuscript and submitted it to *Computers and Composition*.

After my manuscript underwent a double blind review, I was offered the opportunity to revise and resubmit. I received comments from the reviewers stating that my call for integrating *Mafia Wars* into a composition course was “an intriguing idea” and that I had “good things to say,” but ultimately they requested that I more fully develop the concepts of how the game would affect students’ critical thinking, encourage and foster collaboration, and increase engagement. The reviewers also suggested I focus on specific ways that this type of gaming could be integrated in composition courses by including examples of assignments. Additionally, one reviewer suggested that I “create an extra-textual website that offers more fully developed assignments for [my] audience.”

By creating separate sections for each concept (critical thinking, collaboration, and

engagement), I was able to make a case for each one and more clearly describe how these interactions in gaming also reflected activities that happen in the composition classroom. I decided the best way to exemplify the decisions gamers needed to make and the complex thinking that is involved with playing the game was to include screenshots of the game. Initially, I had not planned to include images, but as I revised that section, I realized there was no way to fully articulate to someone who has never played a game how these choices appear on the screen. I went back to the game and created high-quality screenshots that could exemplify these gaming concepts. Once I had images I was satisfied with, I combed through *Mafia Wars* and *Zynga* in order to make sure I was not in violation of copyright by choosing to include these images in my manuscript.

Additionally, as I worked on these revisions, I revisited my discussions at Computers and Writing and reflected on the ways I had responded to the audience's questions about classroom applicability. By re-enacting and replaying this portion of the conference experience, I was able to see how those concepts so easily expressed face-to-face to an audience of mostly like-minded C&W scholars were not as concretely demonstrated on the page. Therefore, as I revised the manuscript, I drew more directly upon my teaching experiences and integrated the assignments I had described during my conference presentation.

As a part of the revise and resubmit process for *Computers and Composition*, I was also required to submit a letter explaining how I addressed the reviewers' comments. Composing this response aided my revision process as I continued to tease out the reviewers' suggestions and saw more opportunities to build upon my argument. After submitting the revised manuscript, the reviewers responded with an "accept with revisions." The revisions they requested included reorganizing the sections about *Mafia Wars* and a recommendation that I develop an argument "in the problem solving section [about] pure problem solving as [I had done] with the engagement and collaboration sections." The reviewers stated that my "additions and revisions work well" and one stated that he or she had "enjoyed reading the piece." My manuscript went through one final round of revisions prior to publication.

The *Computers and Composition* reviewers' comments were very thorough and extremely helpful. While the revision process felt daunting at times, by the time my article was ready for publication, I was thrilled to see the ways it had developed. This experience showed me the importance of knowing the theme and focus of the journal, as Alexis mentions above. I also learned that conference presentations can be approached as an opportunity to have meaningful conversations with scholars in the field and to receive

direct feedback on research projects before they are sent out to for publication. While my research focus and main concepts only changed slightly in the revision process, the ways I framed my ideas were productively altered through my experiences at Computers and Writing as well as the feedback I received from reviewers at *Computers and Composition*.

Due to the benefits of this method, I plan to follow a similar strategy at the 2015 International Writing Center Association conference in Pittsburgh. A graduate school colleague, Dr. Maggie Herb, and I aim to explore our research questions and share preliminary data with participants about the movement of centers into libraries. Through feedback we receive during our roundtable discussion, we will determine the best focus of our research in order to concentrate on issues that are of most concern to library-based center directors. I now approach conference presentations and related discussions as the beginning of a conversation about my research and I plan to extend those conversations, develop concepts, and reach a wider audience through publication.

Having reflected about our experiences of moving a conference presentation to a publishable manuscript, we offer general tips and suggestions in the next section for those looking to do the same:

### **General Tips and Suggestions**

- The conference is a venue to spotlight your work for publication. As seen in Alexis's narrative, conferences represent opportunities for journal editors and others to extend an invitation to expand the conference presentation into a publication.
- Use the conference presentation as an opportunity to engage others in conversation about your research. As demonstrated in Lindsay's narrative, the conference presentation can help you engage with a real audience and receive in the moment feedback. The feedback you receive at conferences can also inform the direction of your research and impact the ways you revise your manuscript.
- Work on your conference presentation along with your publishable manuscript, when applicable. As you are generating ideas for your presentation, or trimming ideas to meet your allotted presentation time, continue to work on your manuscript by expanding those concepts in the manuscript and allowing your presentation to inform your manuscript.
- Refocus the manuscript to reflect the journal's mission instead of the theme of the conference. While the presentation may have been applicable for the conference, not all the information included will necessarily be relevant to journal. Alexis's narrative signifies the importance of adjusting the conference paper to align with the journal's mission before submission.

- Review recent articles published in the journal to see how (or if) your scholarship fits. Additionally, this gives you a clear understanding for what the journal is looking for and how they organize their research.
- Revisit your literature review to ensure it includes current conversations in the field. By continually updating your manuscript throughout the process, you can integrate more relevant ideas. If a significant amount of time passes between your conference presentation and when you prepare your manuscript for submission, you may miss an opportunity to include insight from recent scholarship.
- Review the journal's manuscript submission guidelines to ensure your submission is formatted correctly, uses the correct citation format, fits within the accepted length requirements, etc.

## Conclusion

The conversation about your research doesn't have to cease once a conference ends. Presenters should seek additional venues in which to share their research and strive to move their conference presentations into publications—especially in this era of increasing pressure to publish.<sup>10</sup> Conference presentations provide opportunities to share ideas, to learn what most interests the audience, and to understand what questions still remain. Through presentations, we can gain perspectives about our scholarship and determine the best directions to take to advance our research. In this article, we offered narratives about our processes as concrete examples of how we moved our research from conference presentations to published articles. We recognize that these examples are not the only ways to revise conference presentations into published manuscripts, but we hope that scholars find our experiences informative. We also hope that as writing center scholars seek to publish their research they will submit their manuscripts to *The Peer Review!*

## Notes

1 As a side note, I highly encourage readers of this article to maintain close ties with their graduate student friends—especially those with whom they share a research interest and/or have collaborated on research projects with. Not only will these collaborations likely continue once you and your colleague establish yourselves in your faculty positions, but these connections will help to keep you connected to a cohort of like-minded scholars and practitioners, something you may take for granted in graduate school but may find yourself missing once you leave—especially if you find yourself at a smaller institution where the number of fellow faculty in your field may be few, or none.

2 The program has since changed its name to the Office Women eMentor Program.

3 The turnaround time for submission was rather short, given that the editors had already received several completed manuscripts for the special issue but had unexpectedly had some contributors withdraw their submissions.

4 Depending on the editorial process of the journal, “[i]n certain cases reviewers are faced with a list of questions to answer; in other cases they have to take a series of criteria into consideration [which was the case for special issue of *The Community Literacy Journal*]; or are required to tick long lists of items or to give marks. On the other hand, they might receive no instructions at all, or just a simple reminder of moral values (e.g., promptitude, constructive nature of comments, courtesy, legibility) to bear in mind when writing a report in free-text form” (Pontille and Torny 69).

5 As a junior officer, I served on an amphibious assault ship with a crew of approximately 3000 sailors and Marines, only 2 of whom were also women.

6 For more advice on how to respond to reviewers’ and editors’ comments, see Steve Price’s article in this journal.

7 Unlike Lindsay, who had to write a formal response indicating how she had addressed the reviewers’ comments, I was not asked to do so when submitting my revision to the special issue editors.

8 Although the *CLJ* special issue has a 2011 publication date, it was not actually printed until fall 2012. I received the final acceptance email notification on July 10, 2012.

9 As I explain in my *C&C* article, “*Mafia Wars* is a casual game on Facebook that involves joining a fictional mafia family with Facebook friends and fighting other mafias. Additionally, *Mafia Wars* requires players to ‘build their virtual criminal empires by collaborating with their friends to complete crime jobs, fight and rob other Mafia crews, run underground businesses and purchase criminal must haves like weapons and getaway cars’ (“Mafia,” n.d.)” (Sabatino 44).

10 Indeed, Charles Mathewes speculates that “as financial pressures on academic publishers grow, and their willingness to publish scholarly monographs shrinks, articles are likely to become an ever more important means of disseminating ideas, advancing conversations, and gaining the kind of recognition necessary for tenure and promotion”

(17).

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