

ACTIVITY 4

INTERACTIVITY

SCAVENGER HUNT

TEACHER NOTES

This activity works well toward the beginning of a class in which students will be developing Web pages or other kinds of digital texts in which they have different resources than with print for developing relations with their audiences. But this activity can also be highly useful for a class in which the production of print texts is the focus, for it can help people think about how they might vary the strategies they use in print for engaging their audiences.

GOALS

In the course of this activity, students observe a range of “interactivities” on Web sites in order to consider how different kinds of interactivity encourage different relations among a text’s producer, the text, and the text’s audience.

TIME

The first part of this activity asks students to look at Web sites for approximately an hour and then to do a short piece of writing, which can be done as homework or in class. Discussion about their work follows.

LEVEL

As with the preceding activities, this activity works equally well with first-year and advanced undergraduate students as well as with graduate students.

ACTIVITY

Make a Web page or print out a listing of a very wide range of Web sites that fit into categories that makes sense for your class: choose educational or health or nonprofit or political sites. The list should include at least 30 Web sites. (Feel free to use the motley listing I have at

<<http://www.hu.mtu.edu/~ciwic/nmscavengerhunt/websites.html>>.)

Give students the list or point them to the Web site, and ask them (alone or in groups of 2) to:

- 1 Look widely across the sites listed.
- 2 Choose 4 different sites from 4 different categories.
- 3 List everything on those 4 sites that you would consider to be a sample of “interactivity,” and why.

After they have made their lists, ask them to work in groups of 2-3 to categorize the interactivities they listed according to the amount of engagement they think the kinds of interactivities ask of audiences.

After they have categorized the interactivities, ask them the kinds of relations with a text that the different interactivities ask of audiences. That is, did

some of the interactivities lead them to feel more or less respected by the makers of a text? Did some leave them feeling unengaged, and did some suck them in completely?

Encourage them to try to work out the conditions under which the different interactivities function as they do. That is, do they think that the kind of interactivity they see will function the same in a text about a different topic? What other conditions in a text contribute to how they responded to the interactivity?

Ask them to write for 5 minutes: what kinds of interactivities they saw today, and in what contexts, will help them build the kinds of relations they want with their audiences?

You might also ask them to think about how what they observed today could be applied in print texts that they produce.