

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE SECTION

Instructions: Provide a thorough explanation of the following information about your proposed scholarly research activity.

1. **Abstract:** (200 words or less)

I hope to travel to the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) conference in Dublin, Ireland, leaving on October 30th and returning on November 7th.

Although the conference program is not yet available, I've included in my application the acceptance notifications for the pre-conference workshop on teaching undergraduate students that I'm co-organizing with Adrienne Shaw of Temple University. The two of us first offered this workshop at last year's virtual conference and co-organized it with Emily van der Nagel of Monash University in Melbourne, Australia.

In addition, during the conference proper I'm scheduled to present my research on two different paper panels: one about internet histories and the other about sound studies and the internet.

2. **How will your project promote RSU's [mission](#):** (100 words or less)

The RSU mission includes: "To provide students with a diverse, innovative faculty dedicated to excellence in teaching, scholarly pursuits, and continuous improvement of programs." Participation in the annual conference of the primary international digital studies organization allows me to hear presentations from top scholars doing cutting-edge social science, and to network with them. As always after I've attended a conference, I will incorporate the ideas I've brought home into courses I teach like New Media and Society (and more).

The idea for offering an undergraduate teaching workshop arose directly from my experience of teaching RSU students. With its primary focus on doctoral students and academic faculty, AoIR overlooked the central higher education population: undergraduates. This workshop centers them.

3. **Problem Statement and/or Project Description:** (350 words or less).

Project description: Travel to Dublin, Ireland for the Association of Internet Researchers annual conference to run the second annual Undergraduate Teaching Workshop for faculty around the world who primarily teach undergraduate students. Workshop participants discuss the use of digital tools in undergraduate teaching, share resources, talk about what they learn from their students about online platforms

and technology use, and discuss how they can integrate ideas from AoIR scholars into their course curricula.

4. **Research Strategy:** (750 words or less). Describe the significance of the proposed project and associated activities. It is here the rationale of the proposal is addressed, describing research methodology. The research proposal submitted to the conference can be useful here.

1) As stated on the attached [supplement], the significance and rationale of the undergraduate teaching workshop is to address an overlooked area at AoIR conferences that is of critical importance to many AoIR members. Co-organizer Adrienne Shaw and I will offer a half-day undergraduate-teaching-focused workshop for the 2022 conference. The idea behind this workshop is that undergraduate teaching is a big part of our academic lives, and in the classroom (on campus or virtual), our students' understandings of social media and internet use don't always align with broader press or research narratives. What do we learn from our students about the internet, how are we using the internet to teach, and what's the best way of bringing AoIR research into our classrooms? How do we use the internet in teaching when our students don't have broadband access, aren't digitally-savvy, and when our institutions do not offer robust technical infrastructures or support?

In discussion of shared best practices, the workshop attends to the ways that teaching loads, expectations, terms, and more are different in different regions of the world. For that reason, the workshop is discussion/conversation-based so we can all learn from and with one another.

2) The internet histories panel is comprised of five papers that focus on different historical case studies that explore hidden, lost and forgotten histories of the internet and networked computing. Shining light on marginal figures, alternative platforms, unanticipated consequences, and lost network practices, these papers bring careful historical analysis to a diverse range of topics that include the history of shareware, the evolution of the alternative video streaming platform D-Tube, the biography of a woman computer programmer struggling with mental illness, the history of networked popularity through a case study of WAIS (Wide Area Information Server), a preweb search and retrieval system designed for commercial users, and an analysis of the political stakes and archival challenges that arose when Twitter suspended Donald Trump's Twitter account. The papers illuminate alternate ways of thinking about crucial issues surrounding digital economies, copyright, governance, privacy, popularity, infrastructure, and the preservation of public histories.

My contribution to the panel – "Biography, History, and Network Infrastructure: A Case Study" – is based on archival research I did at the Iowa Women's Archives. I came across the papers of computer scientist Margaret Schlosser Wu, a woman whose papers provide an insight into hidden histories of the intersection of human, machine,

and institutional infrastructures. Histories of computer networks like the internet are histories of people, and these histories are often hidden histories. People are as much the hardware and software of digital networks (of infrastructure) as any cable or semiconductor or string of code. I examine the boundaries of computer networks in part by drawing on infrastructure studies, and using the archived papers of Margaret Schlosser Wu. as a case study. Susan Leigh Star and Geoffrey Bowker write, “Under some circumstances the human body becomes infrastructure” (2002, 151). I discuss this notion of infrastructure and illustrate how boundaries between machine, code, and mind blur and even break down. Breakdown has historically been a defining feature in the lives of infrastructures, including in communication and information networks like the internet.

3) The sounds studies panel explores the theories, concepts, and methodologies appropriate to the exploration of the “vibratory power” of transduction where sound and other digitally mediated forms of reverberation create bonds of resonance and solidarity. Three papers engage in a critical interrogation of sound as epistemology and ontologies in digital networked media, with a focus on streaming internet radio. More specifically, these papers examine diverse uses and experiences of streaming ‘radio’ and its deployments for community building, emotional sustenance, and an online reconstitution of place. These papers consider which methodologies are appropriate and useful to examine the affordances of streaming radio, enabling analysis of ideas of ‘community’, intimacy, territorialization/deterritorialization, and questions of what comprises ‘radioness’ itself.

My contribution is "Resonance and Reflection in the Spaces of the Walmart World Radio Network." Walmart is unique among retailers because the music broadcast in its stores is programmed and distributed by Walmart. Its network is heard by millions of people in the United States every day. Walmart first produced and disseminated its own radio service to its stores in the early 1990s, but the service stopped in 2009 (Lytle, 2019). In 2016 Walmart relaunched its radio service with an in-house search for DJs that invited store employees to audition. The DJs hired through this process were given live shows that they programmed.

Like Spotify playlists created by friends and influencers and shared with others, and also mirroring algorithmic music recommendations on sites like YouTube, playlists on the WWRN are not defined by genre – that is, as a particular class or kind of text (Chandler 2020) – but rather by feeling. The move away from genre in practices of music-listening and playlist-production, which is largely based in the affordances (of access, of the practices of recommendation systems) of user-driven platforms like Spotify, probably doesn't signal the end of genre in popular music. It does, however, create emotionally-structured soundscapes and colonize spaces (by infiltrating the home or the car with the soundtrack of Walmart, or with more subtle commercial practices of other streaming services) that warrant investigation on many levels, including the level of the self in society.

To understand the network, I primarily used ethnographic methods, which meant spend a lot of time in a Walmart Neighborhood Market taking field notes and writing down playlists. I also streamed the Walmart World Radio Network at home, and I used archival research on the network and on similar attempts at alternative radio broadcasters in my paper.

As I continue to write my book *Gender and Technology: An Introduction* for Polity Press (manuscript now due at the end of winter break), it will be quite helpful to participate in a conference at which top scholars in my field will discuss ideas relevant to my current teaching, research, and writing.

5. **Evaluation Methods:** (350 words or less)

Describe how the results of the project will be measured or evaluated. Include the information that will be used to collect, track, and assess progress and results. Include goals and measurable objectives.

These projects have already been evaluated through the process of peer review. Fewer than half of proposals submitted to the conference were accepted, so they have been recognized as projects of significant value. We, the organizers of the undergraduate teaching workshop solicit input from participants after the workshop to assess how useful it proved to be to participants. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive after last year's virtual workshop: in fact, the president of AoIR specifically requested early this year that we once again offer the workshop at this year's in-person conference.

The internet histories panel that I'm on is one of two panels on the topic. A prominent digital studies scholarly journal has already requested that the panel papers comprise a special issue of the journal. That speaks to the high quality of papers on the panel as assessed by experts in the field.

6. **Benefit to Students:** (300 words or less)

Describe how RSU students will either directly or indirectly benefit from the project. For example, students might have a direct role and be compensated for their work, students may satisfy a service-learning requirement, or student may benefit educationally from the research.

I think that I mostly covered this under question 2. Attendance at and participation in this small, select conference will allow me to hear and participate in discussions of important digital studies work by prominent scholars from around the world, and to get feedback on my own work. The undergraduate teaching workshop very obviously benefits my students by introducing me to teaching tools and approaches to use in my classes. I will incorporate the ideas I've brought home into courses I teach like Media

Theory, New Media and Society, and Gender and Technology (and the new course that I'm developing, Principles of Visual Communication).

7. **Timeline:** (No word limit)

It is recommended that the timeline be presented visually, such as a chart or calendar for clarity.

- October 30-31: travel to Dublin
- November 1: meet with workshop co-organizer, and other meetings
- November 2: preconference workshop
- November 3-5: conference
- November 6: post-conference meeting with co-editors of proposed anthology; meet with colleagues from Microsoft Research - New England about projects.
- November 7: travel to Tulsa

8. **Budget:** (No word limit)

A budget and budget narrative are required at the time of submission. Line-item expenditures should be documents with applicable justification. There is no required format for this section, but dollar amounts and explanations are required and should be as specific as necessary to identify and justify the requested funding amounts.

All budgets will be reviewed by the Office of Accountability & Academics prior to review by the Scholarly Activities Committee. During this initial review, the budget will be modified as needed, with the proposal returned to the submitter for revision.

Per diem for Dublin (one meal is included at conference):

October 30, travel day:	\$0
October 31, travel day, arrive in Dublin:	\$46
November 1, meetings & workshop prep:	\$93
November 2, pre-conference workshop:	\$93
November 3, conference	\$93
November 4, conference	\$93
November 5, conference	\$62 (dinner provided)
November 6, meetings	\$93
<u>November 7, travel day:</u>	<u>\$46</u>
PER DIEM TOTAL	\$635

Airfare (two other quotes attached: both with \$75 checked bag fee not included. I bought my ticket early in case prices went up, and at a fare that included one checked bag)

TOTAL **\$769.37**

Hotel, Cassidy's Hotel (conference held at Maynooth University, so there's no conference hotel. I chose the least expensive non-hostel in reasonable walking distance of Maynooth.)

October 31-November 7 \$124.89/night

Taxes and fees \$78.69

HOTEL TOTAL **\$991.75**

Conference registration

TOTAL **\$420**

Incidental expenses (airport parking, airport shuttles, Uber, etc.)

TOTAL **\$200**

BUDGET REQUEST TOTAL \$3016

9. Attachments:

This section allows additional pages for relevant documents as needed. All documents should be sent to Dr. Mary Millikin in Office of Accountability & Academics at mmillikin@rsu.edu.

Attachments

- Cover letter
- CV
- Out-of-state travel form
- GSA per diem rate information