

ENG 177 Project 1: Mystory/Widesite/Cosmogram

Using WordPress, create a **smartly designed** widesite or cosmogram by gathering four situated memories (from family, school/career, history/community, and entertainment) into a mystory for entertaining insights or revelations about your place in the world. Represent each site with an image/text block, and create a fifth image/text block to embody your insights or revelation (if you have many, select one; if you have none, fake it). You may embed video, audio, social media, etc. but only in a smart, well-designed fashion. In a separate 300-word “About” statement, describe your cosmogram’s intellectual mood, metaphysics, and/or moral compass. Add to this statement a second 100-word “Design Decisions” statement reflecting on your design decisions using CAT.

Goals: to create a personal cosmogram
to experiment designing and thinking in “electracy”
to write narrative and exposition in written form
to compose maps and other visual forms
to learn WordPress, a high-powered Content Management System (CMS)
to reflect on your design and thinking process

You’ll be using WordPress, an industry-standard CMS, to situate at least 4 image/text memories geographically and conceptually, plus one add’l image/text that gathers them. *Figuring out how to design the user experience, structure your site, and create a suitable look and feel—that’s the challenge before you.*

Ulmer’s *Internet Invention* project draws on avant-garde techniques of Surrealist juxtaposition and Cubist montage to reframe both realist and constructivist epistemologies within that of postmodern revelation, what McLuhan called “collide-o-scope” or pattern recognition. This project calls on you to look for patterns between four different registers of your life and, from these patterns, to intuit a meta-pattern or “image of wide scope” with the potential to guide how you perceive, understand, and act in our contemporary networked world.

You should collect several memories in each category and then select four that “fit” well together. You’ll use a *realist epistemology* or theory of knowledge to identify significant memories (eg. “I was confused when *Can’t Be Tamed* came out”); a *constructivist epistemology* to bring them into a constellation (a system) (“who is the Einstein of my field? what is the pop song of my life?”); and *collide-o-scopie epistemology* to feel the fit or click of intuition (“holy smokes, I can connect Medieval lit to data visualization and dance my PhD!”). You can build out several memories in all four categories but focus primarily on one from each.

Fun Home and *Maps are Territories* demonstrated how stories, maps, and media shape both individual biographies and geopolitical histories. *Internet Invention* works between micro- and macro-worlds by carefully mapping stories, maps, and media into *mystory*, *choragraphy*, and *electracy*. Ulmer invents these neologisms (new words) in order to embody electracy image reason. *You should too, introducing 3-4 key terms, defining each clearly, and then carefully using them to describe and theorize your personal cosmogram.* (You can also use paleonyms for this, old words given new meaning; eg. computer.)

It’s important to remember that you’re building the first iteration of an experimental thinking machine that you could use your entire life and port to other platforms (Ulmer’s students have experimented using traditional papers and html sites). As an experiment, it’s likely to fail at first but that’s how iterative design works. One design thinking motto is “*fail fast to succeed faster.*” Web and widesites take time, crash, get rebuilt. Like life.

Deliverables

- A widesite built in WordPress consisting of 4 memory blocks and a
- 300-word “About” statement on intellectual mood, metaphysics, and moral compass, plus a 100-word “Design” statement using CAT to describe your design decisions

Evaluation

You’ll assess your work and others’ using the CAT framework, which will also be used to evaluate your widesite.

Deadlines

Draft wide sites due via weblink: W 9/24

Final wide sites due via weblink: W 10/1