

SINCE DURACK (1997)

The Continued Work of Documenting Women's
Contributions to Technical and Professional
Communication

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Key Threads of Feminist Research in Technical and Professional Communication (TPC)

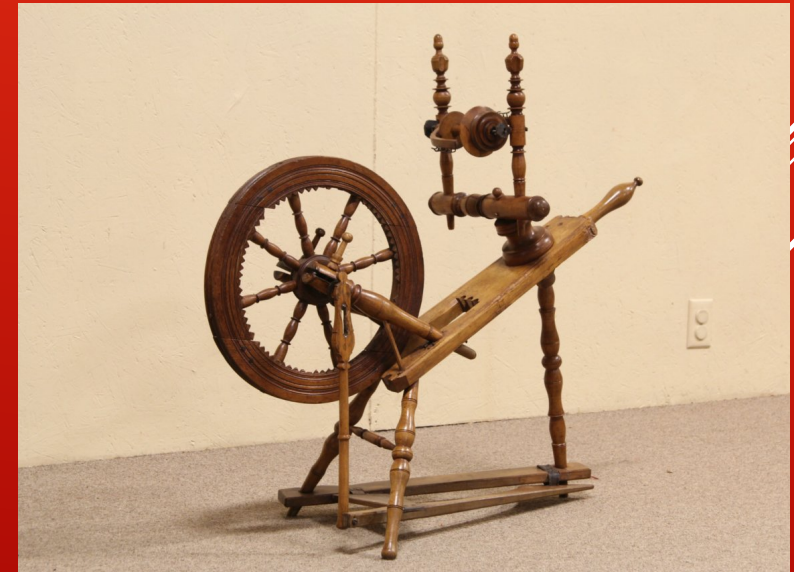
1. Sexist language and equal opportunity
2. Gender differences
- ★ 3. Recovery of women's historical contributions to technical communication
4. Critiques of representations of women and of representations that exclude women



Overman Smith, E., & Thompson, I. (2002). Feminist theory in technical communication: Making knowledge claims visible. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 16(4), 441-477.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2018.1518950>

- Technology
- Work
- Workplace

“‘[W]hat counts’ as technical writing is derived from what is considered *technology*, what we consider *work*, and where we understand the *workplace* to be” (p. 100, italics in original).



Redefine technical communication:

1. Exist within government, industry, and in the intersection between public and private spheres;
2. Have a close relationship with technology, which refers to knowledge, actions, and tools (of all genders); and
3. Seek to make tacit knowledge explicit (p. 107).



Durack, K. T. (1997). Gender, technology, and the history of technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 6(3), 249–260.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15427625tcq0603_2

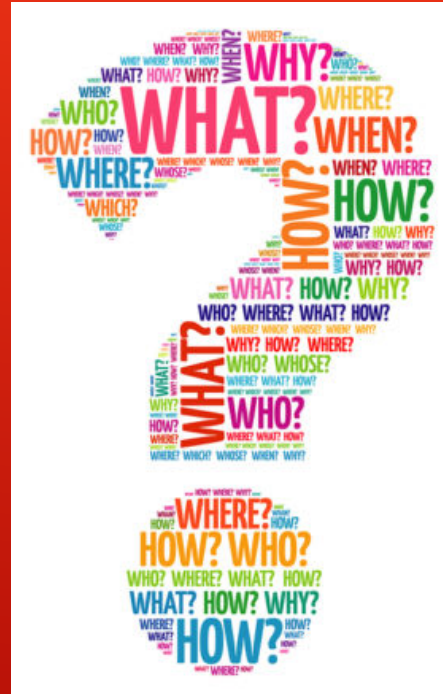


Haller, C. R. (1997). Revaluing women's work: Report writing in the North Carolina Canning Clubs, 1912–1916. *Technical Communication Quarterly* 6(3): 281–292.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15427625tcq0603_4

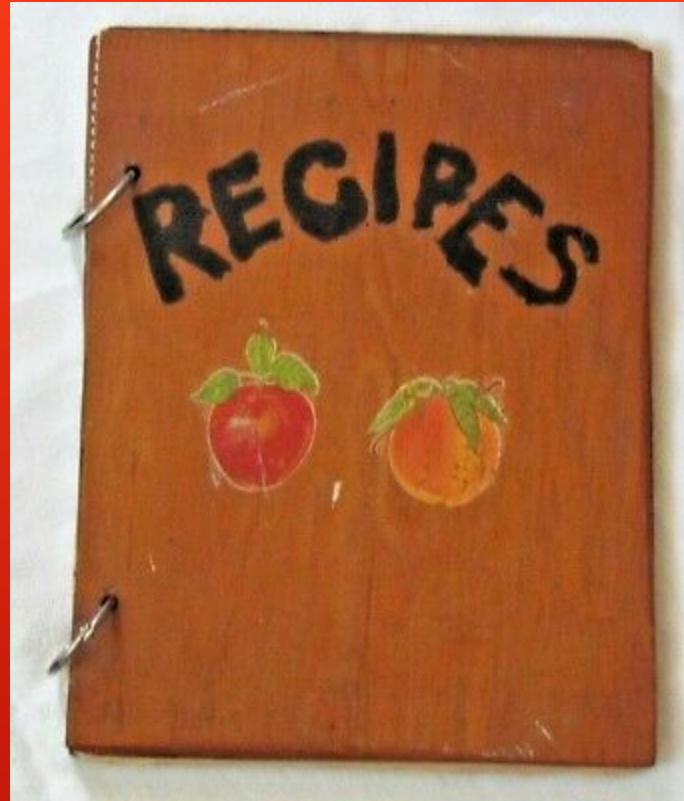


Rauch, S. (2012). The accreditation of Hildegard von Bingen as medieval female technical writer. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 42(4), 393–411.
<https://doi.org/10.2190/TW.42.4.d>

Feminist scholarship should “ask questions that attempt to account for the complex relationships that exist between technology and conceptions of gender in society” (p. 66). Technologies “are typically incorporated into existing institutions and practices, which cause them to reinforce status-quo meanings of phenomena such as race and gender rather than foster new meanings” (p. 68).



Koerber, A. (2000). Toward a feminist rhetoric of technology. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 14(1), 58–73.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/105065190001400103>



Moeller, M. E., & Frost, E. A. (2016). Food fights: Cookbook rhetorics, monolithic constructions of womanhood, and field narratives in technical communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly* 25(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2016.1113025>



Hallenbeck, S. (2012). User agency, technical communication, and the 19th-century woman bicyclist. *Technical Communication Quarterly* 21 (4), 290-306.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2012.686846>



Petersen, E. J. (2014). Redefining the workplace: The professionalization of motherhood through blogging. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 44(3), 277–296.
<https://doi.org/10.2190/TW.44.3.d>



Jones, N. N. (2016). The technical communicator as advocate: Integrating a social justice approach in technical communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* 46(3), 342–361. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047281616639472>



Ledbetter, L. (2018). The rhetorical work of YouTube's beauty community: Relationship- and identity-building in user-created procedural discourse. *Technical Communication Quarterly* 27(4), 287-299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10572252.2018.1518950>



Raign, K. R. (2018). Finding our missing pieces—Women technical writers in ancient Mesopotamia. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication* Sept. 2018: 1–27.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0047281618793406>

Why is this important?

Women's fight for equality is not over. We have had the vote for a century now, and we have greatly increased opportunities for autonomy, employment, and education.

But, as the #MeToo movement shows, we still have a long way to go. Women everywhere suffer because of sexism. This conversation in technical communication is just one facet of how sexism harms women everywhere—their blogs are trivial, their inventions are stolen and claimed by men, their work is not considered work. It's wrong, and it needs to change.

What can you do to help “find our missing pieces” in technical communication?

I refer you back to the article I cited earlier by Natasha N. Jones, “The Technical Communicator as Advocate.” She suggests various approaches to research and participation in social justice technical communication.

