CRITICAL POWER TOOLS
Technical Communication and Cultural Studies
J. Blake Scott, Bernadette Longo, and Katherine V. Wills, editors

The first sourcebook for rethinking technical communication theory, practice, pedagogy, and research through a cultural studies lens.

The first book to focus on the intersection of cultural studies and technical communication, Critical Power Tools draws on various traditions of cultural studies to develop new or expanded theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical approaches to technical communication. Offered as a sourcebook for the field, the book is organized into three parts. The first section, emphasizing theory building, reconceptualizes key concepts or practices, such as usability, through a cultural studies lens. The second section illustrates alternative research methods through several case studies. The third section offers critical and productive pedagogical approaches, including specific assignments, applicable to both undergraduate and graduate courses.

“Lynda Walsh explores a provocative era in American history—the proliferation of fake news stories about scientific and technological discoveries from 1830 to 1880. These hoaxes, which fooled thousands of readers, offer a first-hand look at an intriguing guerilla tactic in the historical struggle between arts and sciences in America. Focusing on the hoaxes of Richard Adams Locke, Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, and Dan De Quille, the author combines rhetorical hermeneutics, linguistic pragmatics, and reader-response theory to answer three primary questions: How did the hoaxes work? What were the hoaxers trying to accomplish? And—what is a hoax?"

“I found the book to be quite informative, not only as a technical exploration concerned with how readers interact with texts that promulgate hoaxes, but also as a work providing helpful glimpses of the emerging roles of science and media in this period.” — Thomas M. Lessl, The University of Georgia

“As Walsh points out, there is no extended analysis of hoaxes in the rhetoric of science, and her book shows how important hoaxes are in understanding the history of professionalized science as it emerged in the United States. The relationship of science and the public is of utmost importance in science studies, and the author has identified a key source of historical information about this relationship.” — Ellen Barton, coeditor of Discourse Studies in Composition

Lynda Walsh is Assistant Professor of English at the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology.

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