WIDE
writing in digital environments research center

university development presentation
May 2005
WIDE Research Center :: Goals

• To help business, industry, government, education, and community organizations design and distribute information to clients, customers, students, and the public

• To support MSU faculty doing innovative interdisciplinary research on how to design digital information

• To provide the infrastructural support necessary for faculty to conduct research and to secure external funding

• To help establish MSU as a leader in the area of digital writing research
WIDE :: Project Snapshot

**Title:** Online Interactive Learning for Writers

**PI(s):** Janet Swenson & David Sheridan MSU Writing Center

WIDE Investment: $15,000
External Funding: $82,000

First in a planned series of interactive modules that integrate multimedia content and online spaces for reflection and discussion to offer learning experiences for individuals and groups.
WIDE :: Project Snapshot

**Title:** Capital Area Community Information

**PI:** Jeff Grabill

**Funding:** $87,000 University Outreach Grant

CAC Voices helps to make public information accessible to the public. But can non-expert (citizen) users of complex information technologies use the tools? Can they write, create media, and share information?
WIDE :: Identity & Research Perspective

1. Focus on writing, understood from four perspectives:
   • writing as TEXT/ARTIFACT
   • writing as PROCESS
   • writing as ACTION/EFFECT
   • writing in SOCIAL/CULTURAL NETWORKS

2. Focus on teaching and training in writing

3. Focus on particular scenes of writing and writing instruction
   • classroom (physical, virtual, hybrid)
   • community (physical, virtual, hybrid)
   • workplace (physical, virtual, hybrid)
Impact

• WIDE is unique to Michigan State and emerging as an engine for innovation
• WIDE is concerned with advanced technologies but committed to access and technological literacy
• WIDE is one of the few research centers that concerns itself with basic research, community outreach, and corporate consulting
Impact

• Want to make a difference in undergraduate education at MSU?
  – Focus on the first year writing classroom (7,000 students every year)
• MSU’s writing program innovations are leading the country
• WIDE is providing necessary support for new uses of computer technologies and new literacy instruction
Why Support Research in Digital Writing?

- Lifelong Learning
  - Not just basic skills, but continuous improvement in writing
  - Support for learning to write in new genres & new situations throughout students’ lives
  - An ongoing, meaningful relationship with MSU

The digital environment makes these goals realizable in a way not previously possible.
How to Make a Difference

• Endowment support for WIDE ($3m)
  – Seed innovations in research, teaching, and outreach
  – Support community-based work necessary for the land-grant institution of the 21st Century

• Endowment support for writing ($4m)
  – Ensure world-class writing and literacy instruction
    • First year writing
    • BA in Professional Writing
    • Graduate programs in rhetoric and writing