Introduction

What is Kairos? When looked up on the web one comes up with several options. Is it the personification of the god of opportunity? Or is it something larger, such as the concept of the perfect moment in time. One online site states that it is an ancient a Greek word that refers to time. Ancient Greek had two such words (Chronos and Kairos). However, while Chronos referred to sequential time, Kairos referred to time outside of the ordinary –specifically “a time in between…. in which ‘something’ special happens”. This final definition is the one that resonates best after exploring the journal Kairos online. Unfortunately, as this final definition was found on Wikipedia, its credibility suffers. According to Mick Doherty – the journal’s founding editor – “Kairos... can roughly be interpreted as the rhetorical combination of understood context and proper timing.”

The Journal

Kairos - a journal of rhetoric, technology, and pedagogy – is an open access online journal whose readership is reported to be some 45,000 people per month. Although it is officially scheduled to be published twice a year, an examination of its twelve year history shows that it was only published once a year in 1999 and 2004, and it was published three or four times during the years of 1996, 2002, 2007, 2008, and 2010.

Editors

The editorial history of the journal is fairly straight forward and seemed to stem from a ‘grow your own’ editor in house approach. Mick Doherty was the editor from 1996 to 1998. In 1997 Doug Eyman joined the as the coverweb editor and in 1998 James Inman became the News editor. Eyman became editor of the journal in 1999 and held the title alone for 2 years. Then he shared the title of co-editor with Inman from 2001 to 2006. The coverweb editor seems to be the door through which future editors pass because Beth Hewett and Cheryl Ball held this position and became the future editors of the journal. Hewett and Ball shared the editor’s role in 2007 (with Inman and Eyman assuming the title of “senior editors”). But with the redesign in 2008, Ball became the journal’s single editor and she is the current editor, while Eyman became the lone senior editor and he remains so.
Journal Overview and Rationale

This is not your average everyday journal. They specifically state on their website that this is a journal seeking *webtexts* – something that they see as *texts* that leverage the special abilities of the web as they examine topics related to writing or English studies fields such as composition, creative writing, rhetoric... etc. While some of the articles published in Kairos are theoretical and scholarly, others are practitioner directed practical articles about subjects such as teaching with technology and its issues. Additionally, the journal looks for material that would not be able to be published in a normal hard copy print journal.

The Journal Composition

Kairos is divided into seven distinct sections – Topoi, Praxis, PraxisWiki, Inventio, Interviews, Reviews, and Disputatio. The Topoi section is where the larger scholarly works are published. Praxis holds large works as well, but the works published in this section are the more practical works for professional consumption. These include articles such as case studies or pieces about the pedagogy of writing instruction when using technology. The PraxisWiki seeks contributions from teachers and scholars on the front line of rhetoric and technology. It is a monitored wiki and to gain editing permissions to contribute one must seek it through submitting a 500 word text to the wiki editors (alternatively, the wiki editors may instead accept a current wiki page with significant revisions). The Inventio section is sort of the process section the magazine. It focuses on the how and why the webtexts were developed. Interviews in Kairos are published about scholars in the fields at the crossroads of rhetoric, pedagogy, and technology. The Reviews section boasts collective and individual reviews of specific printed texts (listed on their call for reviews page), technologies, as well as reviews of new media and non-printed texts. The Disputatio is the Kairos equivalent to letters to the editor section in a paper. It is designed to give voice to readers who wish to comment on or argue a point related to features in the journal.

Peer Review Process

Kairos continually accepts submissions. The editorial review process comes in three stages (or to use their term, tiers). In Tier One a specific section’s editor(s) looks over the submission (so a review would go to the Reviews editor, or a practice webtext would go to the Praxis editors). If the submission is found by the section editor to be of adequate scholarly quality it would move on to Tier 2 – in which the submission is examined by the editorial review board. The full board discusses the submission for two weeks (this consists of 45 members from universities all over the US) and at the end of that three board members write formal letters of review for the submission based on the collaborative assessment of the board. Once the submission makes it through
this step without being sent out, it is assumed the submission is accepted with revisions. During Tier Three in authors work closely with a three board member committee to address the editorial review board’s comments. At this point publication of the article is expected in Kairos once the authors perform the requested revisions to the satisfaction of the editors.

**Topics in the Journal**

This is a topically diverse journal and while it is technically about publishing webtexts at the intersection of technology, rhetoric, and pedagogy, some webtexts seem to just be simply interesting examples of using technology to communicate in different ways – for example, there is one called *Custom Orthotics Changed My Life* in the Disputatio section of the Spring 2010 issue which uses bullet points, pictures, text animations, charts, and tables in Power Point to communicate a story. Alternatively, some of the issues in the journal revolve around a specific theme – for example, the Manifestos issue of summer 2008.

**Contributors**

Unlike some of the other journals we’ve looked at over the semester, this one doesn’t seem to have a specific group of authors that it publishes regularly. Granted, pieces from the reviewing editors and other editors do show up on occasion, but not with enough regularity that it seems to be a matter of course. The cross section of contributors that were investigated seemed to show diversity in both location and in perspective.

**References**


Encyclo Online Encyclopedia located at http://www.encyclo.co.uk/define/Kairos

The Kairos Website located at www.technorhetoric.net