Negotiated spaces: constructing genre and social practice in a cross-community writing project

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Negotiated spaces: Constructing genre and social practice in a cross-community writing project

by

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A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Rhetoric and Professional Communication

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2003

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Chapter 1
Situating Genre Use in a Cross-Community Writing Project

I think it just takes time to really shape the space—to understand it, shape the words and the texts and the images together.
Larry, Landscape Architect

The epigraph above is part of an interview with a research participant involved in a writing project that included people from different disciplines and professions including architecture, landscape architecture, professional communication, graphic design, and family services. The participants came together to develop an illustrated, print guide to help professionals in a variety of fields related to design, construction, and facilities management ensure that public buildings and sites are accessible to people with disabilities. The project dealt with social, physical, and discursive spaces and, as Larry’s comment suggests, giving shape to them in text. On one level, the team was concerned with the built environments described in the guide, spaces that have been articulated, designed, and constructed—shaped—in ways that often exclude and stigmatize people with disabilities. On another level, the team was concerned with texts, spaces shaped by writers’ interpretations of ideas and embodied in choices about content, organization, illustration, document design, and language. These textual considerations, as well as concern for the audiences and activities that the team’s text was meant to serve, ultimately determined the shape of the text the team developed.

As a means for bridging the perspectives of multiple writers and the needs of multiple audiences, the final shape of the text was an overarching concern throughout the project as the team and the text evolved over time. In discussing my research into the activities of this
long-term, cross-community\(^1\) team writing project, I focus particularly on the role of genre in the team’s negotiation of the final shape of its text because, as Bazerman (1994) suggests, genre is “an important concept in our ordering of the world and an important resource in text making and text interpretation. We use genre to read and write” (p.129). Genres, as flexible “typifications” of recurrent discursive actions, allow us to recognize and act on the social purposes of texts (e.g., Miller 1984). The uses to which we put genre include the interpretation, management, construction, and negotiation of knowledge and information directed toward particular activities—including the interdependent and recursive activities of reading and writing that allow us to participate in discourse. According to Russell (1997), “participants’ shared recognition of the typified actions that a genre operationalizes is the key to distinguishing one genre from another” (p. 518). In other words, we become accustomed to differentiating among genres and using particular genres to help us engage in specific types of activities.

However, as my research seeks to demonstrate, when people from different disciplinary communities act together to create texts, intersecting and competing understandings of genres come to bear on the activity. The team members participating in the project I describe, individuals with various disciplinary perspectives, didn’t order the world in quite the same way, didn’t usually make and interpret the same types of texts, and didn’t interpret the same texts in the same ways. Each brought to the project different expertise and technical skills, familiarity with different types of texts, and different approaches to

\(^1\) I use the term cross-disciplinary—rather than inter-disciplinary or multi-disciplinary—to acknowledge that “communities” more broadly suggests disciplines, professions, and other groups and that, in working with people with a variety of backgrounds, people often cross the boundaries of the communities in which they pursue their primary work.
interpreting and constructing texts, some of which were ingrained and tacit. In creating text, the team's work was mediated the discursive practices that individual participants associated with their professional communities and by the practices that the team established jointly. But throughout the project, on which I participated as a writer as well as a researcher, the team sought to convey knowledge and perspectives beyond the boundaries of our respective professional communities to each other and to the audiences we envisioned for our text. The genre of the text was contested as team members from different disciplines negotiated and developed the text from their own perspectives. At the same time, the team recognized the necessity of ensuring that, in the end, the text would be recognized by audiences as facilitating activities in which they engaged.

My roles as both a writer and researcher on the project led me to consider the ways in which the interplay among the team members' different disciplinary perspectives and our various understandings of genre led to both conflict and creation over the course of the four years the team worked together. In describing the role of genre use on the project, I seek to contribute to on-going discussions of genre in the fields of rhetoric and professional communication by addressing the uses of genre when texts are created across communities in collaborations that occur outside the activities, communities, and/or contexts in which people routinely participate professionally. Discursive activities that take place outside or on the margins of communities, for example in projects such as ours, call into question the reasons that texts are classified as generic and the ways that the structures and conventions of genres are determined and applied.

In addition to contributing to our understanding of genre use in complex cross-community collaborations, my research provides a qualitative study of the uses of genres in
an important area of public policy. Though numerous studies in professional and technical communication look at the connections between various genres and activities in engineering, medical, environmental, and scientific writing, we have fewer examples of the ways these relationships work in other public policy areas. \(^2\) In the guest editor’s column of a recent special edition of *Technical Communication Quarterly* devoted to public policy writing, Rude (2000) points out that though technical communication has made “contributions in various arenas, such as the environment, gender, disaster analysis, and intellectual property, the engagement of technical communication with public policy seems fragmented and incidental and more on the level of analysis and critique than on influence” (p. 5).

Genres of public policy deserve attention precisely because of their overt and covert influence on many sectors of society as well as the often cross-community nature of their development. As Russell (1997) has commented, “To understand power in modern social practices, one must follow the genres, written and otherwise” (p. 524). Individuals and groups are affected by public policies established, enacted, and critiqued through the exchange of various texts. However, the purposes and political agendas embedded in these texts are often opaque, in part because of the genres in which they are cast. My study works to see through this opacity in one public policy area by examining one team’s use of the genres in which these policies are cast and by considering our text as a response to the broader context shaping the discourse.

\(^2\) Though these authors indirectly discuss genre, they are useful. See Smith (1996) on government discourse; see Stotsky (1996) on writing for civic purpose and commentary on the lack of related studies (p. 228); see Suchan (1998) on reports in a federal agency and, briefly, related genre theory; also see TCQ 9.1, 2000, a special addition on public policy. Bhatia (1993) discusses legal discourse, genre, and professional contexts, which has some relevance to my discussion.
Because the team that is the focus of this study dealt with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the team’s work provides a particularly rich and bounded site for investigation in that it addresses a significant public policy issue that involves people with differing stakes, interests, and agendas. The project responds to the broader social discourse about and public policy concerning disability and accessibility in which the differences among professions and other groups are played out in various texts and genres negotiated by groups with both complementary and divergent perspectives, obligations, and power.

The texts I discuss here, like other texts related to public policy, are constituted by and situated within what Bazerman calls “systems of genre,” which “are interrelated genre that interact with each other in specific settings” (1994 p. 97). For example, the team’s text, which provides detailed information about ensuring that buildings and sites are accessible, is also heavily influenced by a genre that might be labeled “regulatory guidelines,” embodied in this case by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), as well as by other texts in other genres that deal with accessibility issues from various perspectives.

My goal is to add to technical communication research an instance in which professional/technical communicators had an opportunity to influence, at least potentially, the ways that information about an area of public policy—in this case the accessibility of built environments open to the public—is interpreted and presented to various audiences. Thus I see my study as potentially useful to other professional/technical communicators who enact or teach public policy writing or who write about accessibility issues in that I use concepts from genre theory to thread together the larger—and more powerful—social and
political systems in which public policies are developed and the local level textual practices of one cross-community team.

In the remainder of this chapter, I provide foregrounding for the chapters to follow. In doing so, I first describe the particular context in which the project under study is situated. This is a complex context that involves a number of communities and genres and several significant social issues related to the social discourse about disability and accessibility issues. I then describe the project background, giving a brief account of the government requirements and institutional responses that formed the exigencies from which the project developed, and I describe the nature of the team’s text, and the goals of the project.

Following the project description, I connect the project work to genre studies by discussing some of the influences that came to shape the team’s decisions about the text we were creating that led to my interest in the way the team dealt with problems related to genre. I then present the research questions that developed from my observation of the team’s involvement with genre over the course of the project. I close this chapter by forecasting the ways that I build on these descriptions in subsequent chapters.

**Project Context**

In developing a guide to accessibility, the project team specifically responded to ongoing discourse and activities focused on ensuring that built environments are accessible to all people. Therefore, I situate the project as part of the social context and discourse involving disability and accessibility issues. This context includes the physical, social, and economic barriers that people with disabilities face and the recent history of attempts to address those conditions through legislating accessibility, primarily through the Americans
with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). In this section, I discuss this broader social context in which the team was situated, including evolving interpretations of the terms “disability” and “accessibility,” focusing particularly on the impact of the ADA and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). In describing this context, I discuss texts in various genres that have contributed to shaping social perceptions—as well as social, cultural, and political realities—of disability and accessibility.

These issues are important because the team’s work responds directly to aspects of the social context I describe here, in particular to the ADA, the ADAAG, and the needs of people for additional, clear information about the requirements conveyed in these government documents. In addition, awareness of the social issues shaped the team’s work, particularly the rhetorical approach the team took to the issues in its text. The contextualizing I provide in this section lays the groundwork for examining the specific strategies that the team adopted to interpret and respond to the broader context through its textual practices, which I describe in later chapters.

**Constructing Disability in Discourse**

The ways that disability has been constructed by various segments of society has a direct bearing on the problems that disabled people face as well as on social responses to both the problems and to disabled people. Disabled people have experienced stigmatization by, discrimination in, and exclusion from the larger society in part because of attitudes toward disability and disabled people that have been expressed through not only popular media, but also through the “legitimate” discourses of medicine, law, charity, and social sciences among others. For example, Barr (2000) notes that
Traits that have contributed to a policy of exclusion date back to Dorothea Dix's work with incarcerated disabled people in the mid-19th century and to the eugenics movement and the forced institutionalization of millions and sterilization of tens of thousands during the first half of the 20th century. The disabled are dependent. They cannot compete. Portraying them as maladjusted individuals, conservative religious traditions have equated disability with sin and seen a squalid economic fate as a sign of God's disfavor. The film industry has cast them as hunchbacks and evil villains. (p. 15)

More recently, according to Barr, the disabled face a "kinder, gentler, subtler discrimination" that characterizes the disabled as "the person who is to be pitied" or the "'supercrip' meant to inspire. It is never the individual, but the disability that is used to elicit sympathy or serve as a yardstick for measuring personal achievement" (p. 15; see also Schriner 2000). Even charitable organizations and activities, for example Jerry Lewis' telethon for MDA, have been criticized by the disabled community for "perpetuating outdated images of disabled persons as leading tragic lives, as homebound victims waiting for cures" or death (Russell 1998 p. 85; Shakespeare 1996).

The discourse surrounding disability issues is determined in large part by those who have the power to control interpretations. For instance, the identities of people with disabilities and their access to social institutions have in the past largely been articulated by and to others—employers, courts, and medical professionals—not by the disabled themselves (Parr & Butler 1999; Russell 1998; Barton 1996). The social legitimacy of the discourse of various institutions and fields—for instance, medicine and education—used to articulate disability normalizes perspectives are, in turn, widely adopted into society and culture.

In no small measure, legitimization and normalization occur through the types of discourse that fields routinely use to construct and convey knowledge. In the medical model of disability, for example, genres of diagnoses and treatment interpret and represent disability
similarly to illness and disease, thus pathologizing individuals. In terms of the built environment, genres that legitimate the building professions—building codes, and architectural plans and specifications to name a few—have normalized social and cultural representations of built environments that are inaccessible for many people. Thus the relatively recent legislative efforts to ensure that buildings and sites are more inclusive are often interpreted as calling for special accommodations for disabled people rather than as calling into question the norms of design and construction practices.

People with disabilities have been increasingly vocal in challenging these and other assumptions, in particular that disability is a “personal problem.” In response to historical deficiency and medical models of disability, the emerging social model of disability suggests that the significant factor in disability is not the failure or deficiency of the individual but the failure of social structures (Parr & Butler 1999; Drake 1996). Schriner and Scotch (2001) note that

The social environment determines the extent to which an impairment results in incapacity or exclusion from mainstream social processes, rather than merely the impairment itself. Assumptions about normality of human functioning become built into technology, architecture, spatial organization, and institutional processes. These physical and social structures become reinforced by social belief and cultural expression. (p 100)

Schriner and Scotch’s critique suggests that assumptions result from a conjunction of activity and discourse through which those who control knowledge making in various fields also control the material conditions that result from that knowledge. However, disabled people and their advocates have been instrumental in interrogating the social, economic, and cultural structures of American life, as well as the discourses that normalize them and consistently
place the burden of achieving access primarily on disabled individuals (Krieger 2000; Hahn 2000).

(re)Constructing Disability through Civil Rights Legislation

One result of the increasing social and political activism of disabled people was the 1990 passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a civil rights law that is ostensibly meant to ensure access by people with disabilities to employment; housing; state and federal funds, programs, and facilities; voting rights; and public buildings and services—in other words, aspects of life in the United States that allow participation in the community. The ADA builds on previous legislation,\(^3\) expanding protections to redress discrimination in the private sector and expanding access to public transportation, accommodations, and services to disabled people.

In drafting the ADA, Congress recognized, among other things, that individuals with disabilities continually encounter various forms of discrimination, including outright intentional exclusion, the discriminatory effects of architectural, transportation, and communication barriers, overprotective rules and policies, failure to make modifications to existing facilities and practices, exclusionary qualification standards and criteria, segregation, and relegation to lesser services, programs, activities, benefits, jobs, or other opportunities;

\(^3\) The first laws protecting disabled people were federal rehabilitation laws that resulted from concern over disabled veterans returning from World War I. These laws applied only to veterans but were later expanded by the 1954 Vocational Rehabilitation Law to cover workers injured on the job. While the 1964 Civil Rights Act, 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act (FHA) did not specifically address the problems of the disabled, they did provide the civil rights foundation that subsequently led to recognition of the disabled as a class of people who faced discrimination. Subsequently, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act required access for persons with disabilities to any programs, buildings, housing, employment, and education that involved federal funding. However, Congress did not pass this legislation until 1977, following a well-organized series of protests including the occupation of federal buildings by disabled activists and supporters. Later attempts to limit Section 504 through court rulings were somewhat thwarted by passage of the 1988 Civil Rights Restoration Act, despite a veto by President Regan. Finally, the ADA in 1990 extended rights beyond federally funded entities in an attempt to redress discrimination in many areas. The FHA laws were expanded in 1991 to include people with disabilities, though not without continuing controversy (Ostroff, 2001). Court challenges to the ADA are ongoing.
people with disabilities, as a group, occupy an inferior status in our society, and are severely disadvantaged socially, vocationally, economically, and educationally;

individuals with disabilities are a discrete and insular minority who have been faced with restrictions and limitations, subjected to a history of purposeful unequal treatment, and relegated to a position of political powerlessness in our society, based on characteristics that are beyond the control of such individuals and resulting from stereotypic assumptions not truly indicative of the individual ability of such individuals to participate in, and contribute to, society.4

Establishing that social attitudes and structures have caused the exclusion of the disabled as a class from society, Congress enacted the ADA as a civil rights law in an attempt to rectify these conditions. In some important ways, ADA legislation acknowledges that many of the structures of American commerce and culture are designed to accommodate a “norm” that is embodied as male, white, and “able” (Krieger 2000; Scotch & Schriner 1997; Russell 1998). The norm doesn’t fit an estimated 54 million Americans (as of 1998) who have physical or mental disabilities that interfere with one or more significant life functions—the standard under the ADA for determining whether a person is disabled (Feldblum 2000).

But while the basis for previous civil rights legislation has been “equal treatment” under the law (Diller 2000), the ADA “requires broadly defined affirmative accommodations to be taken for persons with disabilities and specifies basic operating principles that allow flexibility in attaining compliance while attempting to balance the needs of people with disabilities with the costs incurred by regulated parties” (Percy 2000 p. 413). Because considerable variation exists in disability, not all remedies can be the same for all people—equal treatment cannot be the standard. In addition, under the ADA limits exist on the

---

4 Americans with Disabilities Act, Public Law 336 of the 101st Congress (42 U.S.C. 12181), enacted July 26, 1990; Section 2: Purposes and Findings, subsection (a), items (5), (6), and (7).
accommodations mandated for people with disabilities. Further, the ADA is not accompanied by any affirmative action policies similar to those that, in the past, have accompanied other civil rights legislation pertaining to gender and race (for instance, government hiring policies that promote the participation of previously excluded minorities, Title IX, and other actions).

Even so, at its passage, many disabled people and advocates saw the ADA as a significant advance for civil rights. Supporters of the ADA looked forward to gains in employment and expanded access to the public facilities that would allow fuller participation in aspects of social, cultural, and economic life from which disabled people have been routinely excluded. Opponents of the ADA, on the other hand, viewed the legislation as a vague, overly broad, and extremely expensive imposition on the non-disabled, employers, and service providers. Detractors also believed that the ADA would invite a barrage of costly legal cases (Diller 2000).

In fact, the hope that the ADA would open up employment for people with disabilities has met with disappointing results. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities, which has traditionally stood at around 50%, was higher in 2000 than it was prior to the 1990 passage of the ADA (Schwochau & Blanck 2000). For people with serious disabilities, the rate of unemployment now stands at about 70%. Some researchers suggest that this situation is a result of the very legislation that was designed to alleviate it because employers are unsure about their responsibilities or unwilling to provide accommodations for disabled workers who are otherwise qualified for the positions they seek (Schwochau & Blanck 2000; Mudrick 1997). Moreover, people who would be able to work or to achieve further advancement at work with accommodations from employers are reticent to request
the accommodations that ADA is supposed to help ensure (Hahn 2000; Baldridge & Veiga 2001).

Nonetheless, in the twelve years since the passage of the ADA, a number of legal actions related to discrimination and accessibility have been brought against employers, providers of services and accommodations, schools, and municipalities, several of which have been heard by the Supreme Court. The considerable attention paid to a few controversial cases that might have serious implications for employers and businesses (LaCheen 2000) masks the fact that more than 90% of the cases brought under the ADA have been won by defendants, not by the disabled plaintiffs (Porter 1998; Diller 2000).

One of the significant problems with the legal decisions, regardless of the winner, has been unexpected interpretations of the law, in particular constructions of “disability,” that have resulted from litigation. Most of the interpretations at issue relate to what conditions are classified as disabilities, who is considered disabled, and what types of restitution or accommodation the disabled can expect or receive under the ADA (Percy 2000, Parmet 2000). The trend in court decisions has been one of narrowing, rather than expanding, protections for people ostensibly covered under the ADA. In addition, what was intended in the ADA legislation to provide flexibility in making determinations about individual cases has caused not only conflicting court rulings but also confusion about implementation (Diller 2000; Parmet 2000).

Despite problematic interpretations of the law and difficulties with implementation, a few positive advancements have taken place. For example, access to public buildings, services, and accommodations is improving, due in part to the passage of the ADA. However, the interrelated laws, regulations and administrative guidelines present a complex
set of texts in various genres that must be interpreted and implemented by virtually everyone who deals with the public. In the next section, I briefly discuss some of the elements of the law that are pertinent to the project that I worked on and studied.

**Constructing Accessibility through Legislation**

The focus of the project team’s work—the accessibility of buildings and facilities—is one aspect of the ongoing public debate embodied in a number of different texts in various genres, particularly in the genre of “regulation” that shapes the ADA and the ADAAG. Specifically, the purpose of the project was to provide a text that would help people better understand the ADAAG and the importance of accessibility in built environments. In this section, I discuss the ways that the ADA—in particular the ADAAG—and the various responses to the legislation have constructed accessibility.

The ADA includes five titles covering employment and the accessibility of programs, services, transportation, buildings and sites, and telecommunications. The project I worked on specifically focused on building and site accessibility requirements that may pertain to entities covered under Title II and Title III, which have different responsibilities. Title II covers services, programs, activities, and buildings provided by state and local governments. Title III covers private entities that operate public accommodations in twelve categories that include most types of businesses and facilities, such as stores, restaurants, hotels, stadiums, medical facilities, schools, and recreation areas.

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5 Employment is covered under Title I, and Telecommunications are covered under Title IV. Title V covers miscellaneous provisions of the law.

6 Federal sites and programs and entities receiving federal funding remain covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

7 Title III does not cover private clubs or churches.
However, not all the technical details for compliance and enforcement of the provisions are contained in the ADA itself. The ADA indicates that “the Attorney General shall issue regulations in an accessible format to carry out the provisions” of the ADA pertaining to Title II and Title III that are not addressed directly in the legislation. In other words, the Department of Justice (DOJ)\(^8\) became responsible for hammering out and enforcing the details of implementation through administrative regulations. In 1991 the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) created the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), which were then published as an appendix to Department of Justice (DOJ) regulations covering Title III.\(^9\) The ADAAG establishes the minimum standards for making buildings and sites accessible and pertains to buildings and sites that are covered under Titles II and III of the ADA and the DOJ regulations. Several amendments and changes have been made to the ADAAG since 1991 and it was substantially revised in 1999.\(^10\)

One of the difficulties in dealing with these laws, regulations, and guidelines is that each text carries part of the message, and each genre is constructed slightly differently. For example, the ADAAG—as a set of guidelines in an appendix to a set of regulations that implements a law—does not strongly reiterate the idea that inaccessible built environments amount to a form of discrimination, a concept that is clearly established in the ADA. Further, the genres of law and regulation that shape these documents employ conventions that make

\(^8\) Many other agencies and departments of government have on-going responsibilities under the ADA for creating and enforcing regulations including Labor (DOL), Housing (HUD), Education, Agriculture (USDA), Parks and Recreation (DOI), the EEOC, the DOT, and the FCC.

\(^9\) The DOJ published the ADAAG as Appendix B to 28 CFR Part 36; Federal Register 56 FR 35544.

\(^10\) The revision was first published with a request for comments in the Federal Register on November 16, 1999, 36 CFR Parts 1190 and 1191.
finding, reading, and interpreting information a complex task for audiences outside the legislature, government agencies, the courts, and law offices.

However, because the ADA, DOJ regulations, and the ADAAG are complex and their applications broad—they touch virtually all segments of society in one way or another—the government provides a considerable amount of technical assistance. To assist with building and site accessibility issues alone, for instance, the Access Board has established 10 regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, as well as several research institutes. They have also funded over 500 assistance publications produced by various government agencies and professional organizations that are meant to provide "easy-to-use and industry-specific information that clarifies some of the more confusing aspects of the ADA" (Ostroff 2001 p.43.8). The strategy for tailoring the information in these 500-plus documents is to provide information from the laws and regulations in forms that are more amenable to the activities of various communities with ADA responsibilities.

(re)Constructing Attitudes through Discourse

The public sector has, to some extent, responded to the ADA through compliance with the ADAAG by removing barriers to access and by improving accessibility in new buildings and facilities. However, the reactions to the ADA and the ADAAG by entities with responsibilities under the ADA have been mixed, as have been the interpretations of accessibility in the literatures of various professions involved in designing, constructing, and managing built environments.

The problem is that while the government, through legislation and regulation, has the power to levy remedies that address the needs of people with disabilities, such government action can only regulate specific behaviors. In the long run, legislation may spark a reshaping
of perceptions, but it cannot directly or quickly change attitudes, practices, and structures that reflect deeply embedded—normalized and legitimized—beliefs and practices. As Schriner and Scotch (2001) point out

...the social environment has enforced the social isolation and dependency of people with disabilities, substantially limiting participation. Until recently, building construction standards did not allow for wheelchair access, and public programs contained assumptions about minimum mobility needed for participation. Communication technologies still require certain levels of visual and hearing acuity. Almost invariably, these arrangements are not inextricably linked to the nature of the activity involved, but rather represent choices that are often arbitrary, and once made, become institutionalized and difficult to challenge without a commitment to change. (p. 100, italics mine)

The attitudes of some design and construction professionals toward the ADA are a case in point. Numerous articles\(^{11}\) aimed at educating professional constituencies about accessibility and disability issues, and obligations under the ADA, indicate that the responses to accessibility requirements range from resistant to confused to supportive. Ostroff points out, for instance,

published articles on buildings by high-profile architects in the professional magazines rarely identify the thoughtful ADA-inspired solutions that make prestige buildings work well for everyone. The silence on these aspects of well-designed facilities leaves uncontested the criticisms of the ADA and how it stifles good design. (p. 43.8)

Ostroff also notes her curiosity about why “some buildings by name architects ignore some basic accessibility concerns” (p. 43.8). To provide an example a little closer to home, Dr. Arnold,\(^{12}\) who heads the project on which I worked, participates in plan reviews of buildings designed for the major university where the project took place. He finds that though the

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\(^{11}\) While the articles I use as examples here do not represent a thorough, systematic review of literature, they do illustrate a range of reactions evident in approximately 20 articles that I consulted from professional periodicals and journals in architecture, landscape architecture, property management, construction management, planning, disability policy, and business management in general. I discuss only a few of these specifically here.

\(^{12}\) “Dr. Arnold” is a pseudonym.
ADAAG has been available for over ten years, architects continue to submit plans that fail to meet minimum accessibility standards. In such situations, accessibility seems to be reduced to an afterthought and a question of “what exactly do we have to do to comply and no more?” This type of approach leads to poorly designed buildings because accessibility has not been part of the plan from the beginning.

While some design professionals seem reluctant to change underlying ways of thinking about design, others have been reluctant to take responsibility for accessibility in the design phase of projects. These attitudes are sometimes expressed in responses to the ADAAG requirements and the court actions that have resulted from them. For instance, in a 1999 article in *Architecture* that discusses the implications of several lawsuits involving the design and construction of theatres and stadiums, Cannell comments:

> This spring’s legal dustup was the latest salvo in a longstanding wheelchair war. Ever since George Bush signed the ADA into law nine years ago, architects and government lawyers have wrangled their way through a muddled marriage of building codes and civil rights. Their feud centers on the exact definition of accessibility, and who is responsible for it. Architects would naturally prefer the certainty of a fixed set of regulations, but they won’t get it anytime soon. The ADA was enacted as a civil rights law, which means anyone can, in theory, invoke it when they feel they’ve been discriminated against. “A building code deals with inches and concrete,” says John Wodatch, chief of the DOJ’s disability rights section, “but civil rights is a broad, sweeping concept.” (p. 116)

Despite the animosity and frustration evident in Cannell’s language, his discussion raises issues about the form of the ADA and the ADAAG.

One problem is that these documents are uniquely intertextual. As Anderson and his colleagues (1995) describe the ADA and the ADAAG, the “ADA is the first civil-rights law to directly impact the building and construction industry. This legislation is a unique

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13 This was the unfortunate official position of the AIA leadership at one point.
combination of design requirements and civil rights. ADA treats accessibility as a civil right, and ADAAG as a guideline to provide accessibility for buildings" (43). But the ADAAG is not a building code and "does not illustrate in black and white what is to be done and when" (Anderson et al 1995). Architects like Cannell complain that the language is not clear and that the guidelines can in fact conflict with local building codes. Some suggest that even determining what facilities are required to meet ADAAG guidelines under Title III of the ADA is difficult (see Stowe, 2000). Unfortunately, because little oversight and no inspections exist for ADAAG compliance on plans and buildings, as generally exist for state and local building code compliance,14 architects and others involved in the design/build process may only become aware of a problem when an ADA lawsuit is filed against them (Anderson et al 1995; Cannell 1999).

To more effectively address accessibility issues, some architects and design/build professionals are moving beyond a minimum compliance mentality to adopt "universal" approaches to design (Anderson et al 1995; Ostroff 2001; Szold 2002). Anderson and his colleagues (1995), while acknowledging that the "ADA is a reasonable law with a good intent...that lack[s] clarity in certain terminology," (48) see universal design—rather than compliance—as the outcome to be achieved:

Over time, awareness of ADA will increase and people will expect all buildings to be barrier free. Facility owners and design firms that incorporate accessibility in their design philosophy are more likely to compete. Universal design is a concept that is a global, all-encompassing effort to remove any and all barriers from the environment and to create accessible, comfortable, responsive spaces for the most extensive populations (Carter and Patry 1992).

14 Accessibility is addressed through various state and local codes, but not yet in a consistent manner. The Access board and the DOJ only conduct inspections if a complaint is lodged.
Universal design is an acknowledgement that we are imperfect being living in an imperfect world. (47)\textsuperscript{15}

This perspective not only suggests a different approach to design, but acknowledges that the ADA is beginning to play a role in changing social expectations. Furthermore change is multi-directional and the discourse surrounding the problems with the ADAAG has also led to changes in its form. The most recent changes, for example, constitute a substantial revision that coordinates the form and content of the ADAAG with other construction industry codes and standards, such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) guidelines for accessibility.

Whether groups in society attempt to side-step accessibility issues or move beyond them, deeply embedded attitudes about disability, accessibility, and built environments are clearly implicated in various interpretations of many aspects of the socio-cultural space. Interpretations become normalized and legitimated and, in turn, shape reality for millions of people, in part through the types of texts—the genres—that professions routinely use in the course of their work. These genres might be viewed as “arrangements” of knowledge and interests through the application of conventions that “become institutionalized and difficult to challenge without a commitment to change” (Schriner and Scotch 2001). Genres are important because they articulate identities, relationships, rights, responsibilities, and power in crucial ways. For example, laws and government guidelines such as the ADA and ADAAG are powerful because they embody the symbolic and real power of the state.

\textsuperscript{15} Some theorists in rhetoric and professional communication may rightly question the use of the term “universal”; however, it has become an established term in design. Rather than suggesting a “one size fits all” approach to design, universal has come to mean something along the lines of user-centered, concerned with a wide range of users, or oriented toward inclusion.
On the other hand, the challenges of understanding the ADA and ADAAG draw attention to practical and rhetorical problems of implementing laws and requirements when the genres in which they are provided make it difficult for those outside legal and bureaucratic professions to interpret them. At the same time, the rhetoric of people with disabilities critiques the cultural and social constructions of "ability" and "normalcy" embedded in these genres and addresses the implications of the responses to the issues, including the "backlash" against legislated efforts to ensure accessibility (Krieger 2000; Parmet 2000; Diller 2000). Schriner & Scotch (2001) argue that

As with many good and proper ends, constructing the conditions in which human rights are ensured for all has proven difficult. This is just as true for people with disabilities as other historically oppressed groups. The disadvantages imposed by modern public-sector bureaucracies and economic arrangements in the private sector are entrenched and stubborn. In any scenario, these disadvantages will not be removed without fundamental social change of the sort that threatens powerful interests. (p. 103)

One example is that the ADAAG is structured to articulate the will of the government and to elicit compliance to the guidelines. The regulatory genre focuses on what designers and builders are required to do to meet code and not on the more deeply embedded social issues related to architecture, construction, and social attitudes that create barriers for many people. In this sense, though the ADAAG is helpful and the regulatory genre is expedient, the socially constructed position of people with disabilities in society that has led to the development of the ADAAG can be hidden within the system of government regulating and architects and builders responding to regulation. Genres better suited for advocacy and social critique—the narratives and testimony of disabled people for example—don't fit neatly into this loop; rather, they are subsumed within the loop and displaced by the genres that are used to build buildings and regulate that building.
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), and related texts are important because they address problems that directly affect millions of people and because the genres in which they are cast tend to overwrite that personal relevance, the uncertainty on the part of people who must comply with the requirements, and the contention over the requirements themselves.

**Project Description**

The team I worked with recognized these problems and made attempts in its text to address them. Whether we were successful is up to our readers and time to tell. But, more important for this study is tracing the effort, which plays out in the team’s negotiation of various genres. The team’s decisions about the genre of its text respond to a number of situational factors including the background of the project, the purposes and audiences for the team’s text, and the influence of previous texts that the team used as sources. In what follows in this section, I describe these aspects of the project.

**Project Background**

Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 and by 1992 organizations and businesses with responsibilities to provide access under the ADA were required to develop transition plans outlining methods for assessing current conditions and procedures for implementing changes to meet ADA requirements.

The large mid-western research university where my research took place, which I call Midwestern University, began such a transition plan in the early 1990s. One crucial aspect of the plan was to assess the physical environment of the campus, university buildings, and student housing to identify accessibility issues and to determine how to make appropriate
changes. The primary source of the information that guided this evaluation was the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). The ADAAG, initially published by the Department of Justice and the Access Board in 1991 as part of the ADA, sets standards for ensuring that new buildings for public use are constructed to be accessible to people with disabilities and that existing buildings comply with requirements for the removal of barriers to access by people with disabilities.

However, the textual forms in which information in the ADA and ADAAG are presented—genres of law and regulation—are difficult to use for practical purposes such as inspecting buildings to ensure that accessibility requirements are met. One particular difficulty is that the guidelines are heavily cross-referenced—many individual guidelines refer back to other guidelines, meaning that to understand the requirements of one guideline, readers must look up several others and then determine the combined effect. Therefore, a component of Midwestern’s assessment process was the development of a “pocket-sized” (5” by 6”), 85-page text that reorganized the ADAAG information in a way that would facilitate the on-site inspections of the campus buildings. Titled *ADA Survey Standards for Midwestern University’s Americans with Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation Study*, the text was used as a tool for identifying and recording building and site deficiencies. An outside architectural firm and a professor in Midwestern’s Architecture Department collaboratively developed the *ADA Survey Standards* text that was then used during the preliminary assessments of the campus, which were completed with the assistance of students in architecture and mechanical engineering.
But that’s only the beginning of the story. The Access Board periodically makes changes, clarifications, and additions to the ADAAG that must be reflected in the university’s construction practices and, hence, in the texts that the university uses for ensuring compliance. Midwestern University’s *ADA Survey Standards* text subsequently underwent several revisions and expansions because the university, like other entities covered under the ADA, has a continuing responsibility to ensure that existing buildings, alterations, and all new construction meet accessibility requirements. Figure 1.1 summarizes the chronology of revisions of the Federal guidelines and Midwestern’s local text.

The most current version of the ADAAG (1998, 2002) undertaken by the Access Board constitutes a broad revision of the form and structure of the ADAAG that includes a number of substantive changes to content as well as an attempt to align the ADAAG in form and convention with guidelines for accessibility contained in other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>(Federal) Architectural Barriers Act enacted</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>(Federal) Americans with Disabilities Act enacted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>(Federal) Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>(Federal) Covered entities must develop transition plans, (Local) Midwestern University begins transition plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>(Local) ADA Survey Standards for Midwestern University’s Americans with Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation developed for use in transition plan inspections at Midwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>(Local) Midwestern text revised; <em>ADA Survey Manual: Site and Facilities Assessment for ADA Compliance</em>, developed for university’s Department of Residence ADA project, (Federal) Access Board revises parts of the ADAAG and adds additional guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>(Local) Midwestern <em>ADA Survey Manual</em> revised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>(Local) Team assembled to expand and revise Midwestern’s <em>ADA Survey Manual</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>(Federal) Proposed new ADAAG published in <em>Federal Register</em>; notice of rulemaking published and public comment period begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>(Local) Team reviews proposed guidelines and extensively revises the text under development at Midwestern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>(Federal) Public comment period for new ADAAG ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>(Local) Team completes penultimate draft of survey manual, now called <em>Access for Everyone: A Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>(Federal) Notice of rulemaking published in <em>Federal Register</em> for proposed new ADAAG with revisions; no additional comments sought. (Currently awaiting final OMB approval.)</td>
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significant building codes, such as the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) guidelines and the International Building Code (IBC). The most recent version of the university’s text, which was re-titled *Access for Everyone: A Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines* (referred to from this point as *Access for Everyone*), not only attempts to account for these changes to the ADAAG, but entails broader objectives, including promoting the concept of universal design and disseminating information to audiences outside the university.

**Project Texts**

*Access for Everyone*\(^{16}\) represents the work of the project that I studied, a substantial, long-term writing project that involved a team of graduate students and other professionals, including myself, all of whom had both academic and professional experience in their respective fields but little experience with accessibility issues. The development of this latest 500-plus-page version of the university’s text was supervised by the same professor of architecture who had been involved in the initial campus inspections and in the development of the university’s original *ADA Survey Manual* text. *Access for Everyone* incorporates both text and graphics to explain and illustrate accessibility guidelines.

**Intended Audiences and Purposes**

The initial audience for the university’s original survey text was limited to university personnel responsible for providing student services and faculty and staff support. This audience required information about accessibility issues that affect community members’ abilities to negotiate the university’s built environment, academic programs, and other

\(^{16}\) The *Access for Everyone* project was funded and supported by the university. The text is currently available for sale and distribution nationally from the Iowa State University Bookstore and Amazon.com.
facilities. Thus, the primary purposes of each previous iteration of the university's text had been to assist people at the university involved in the transition plan and continuing construction to

- identify features of buildings and sites that must be analyzed for accessibility,
- determine which provisions of ADAAG apply to features of buildings and sites, and
- decide what actions need to be taken to ensure accessibility.

The Access for Everyone team retained the previous text's purposes and expanded the new text with the goal of gaining a wider audience outside the university including architects, planners, designers, drafters, and human resource professionals in various workplace environments. Thus, addressing the purposes of multiple audiences both inside and outside the university became an important aspect of the Access for Everyone project. We projected that most audiences for the text would be involved in building design and construction, in physical plant maintenance, or in administrating accessibility issues through human resources or human services activities. At the university, for example, accessibility concerns must be addressed by outside architects designing for the university, by those participating in internal reviews of plans and projects, and by facilities planning and management.

With a broader concept of audience in mind, the team wanted to revise the text so that its users would also be able to

- access background information on the ADA and the ADAAG
- develop a basic understanding of the ways that built environments may limit people's involvement in the basic activities of daily life

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17 All versions of the survey manual discussed here pertain primarily to buildings and sites. Other accessibility issues related to participation in academics programs and other activities—for instance policies related to testing, or additional services for blind or deaf students and staff—are out of the scope of this project except to the extent that people's access to programs and activities is limited because of aspects of the built environment.
• understand the requirements of ADAAG and the reasons for them
• implement design and construction practices that enhance accessibility for all people

The development team assumed that architects, drafters, planners, and others who are familiar with architectural concepts and terms would probably be most interested in quickly locating information about specific requirements to verify information on plans and sites. Other professionals and students, who are less familiar with construction and architecture, might read to learn about accessibility concepts and the ADAAG.

**Content and Organization**

Because locating and understanding information in the ADAAG can be difficult, those with responsibilities under ADAAG often rely on additional materials, such as manuals and guides, to implement accessibility requirements. The *Access for Everyone* team attempted to make accessibility information easier to find, read, and understand by

• reorganizing the information in ADAAG and grouping related information
• recasting the language from descriptive to imperative to ease the reader's task in determining the specific actions they need to take
• including rationales for the guidelines to help readers understand the requirements in the context of the needs of people with various types of disabilities
• providing multiple ways for readers to find and retrieve information

The *Access for Everyone* team also recognized that members of its diverse, potential audiences are, in general, less familiar with accessibility issues than with other areas related to their particular jobs or functions (e.g., architects, though versed in design and construction, often lack expertise in accessibility issues) and that meeting different needs required making significant adjustments to the form of the text the team was charged with revising.
Project Goals

Because the purpose of university’s initial ADA Survey Manual text—the precursor of Access for Everyone—was primarily aimed at simplifying the task of finding ADAAG information during campus inspections at Midwestern University, the creators of the ADA Survey Manual text used the language of the government’s ADAAG text verbatim, changing only the format and organization of the information. Illustrations and information contained in the regulatory source documents that seemed extraneous for the purpose of conducting inspections were eliminated.

Further, the university’s early text suggested no social, political, or organizational position with respect to accessibility apart from reiterating the government regulations. In other words, the text was rhetorically passive on accessibility and disability issues beyond the construction requirements it reported. This is not to suggest that the university fails to articulate a position or take action with respect to accessibility issues on campus; it does so in a number of ways. However, the rhetorical passivity of the university’s initial ADA survey text, which is established in part through the use of genre, reflects a view of built environments as neutral spaces that need to be adjusted, rather than as socially contested spaces. In a similar way, when viewed apart from all the complexities of the ADA itself, the ADAAG might be seen as representing a set of accommodations for people who are identified as not fitting the environment rather than as critiquing environments that have been constructed for, and that construct, people who do fit.

The Access for Everyone team had a somewhat different agenda. An explicit goal of the Access for Everyone team was to establish the importance of accessibility and to promote the idea that “designing-in” accessibility is not only compatible with other architectural
design goals but that it is an ethical responsibility. We wanted to focus as much on promoting accessibility as on following regulation by calling attention to the nature of disability as constructed through the interaction of people and environments.

In making specific choices about the text’s content, overall organization, structure (at sentence, paragraph, and larger discourse unit levels), and rhetorical strategies, the team attempted both to create a practical guide and to make a social/political statement about accessibility. The effort to connect the social and practical goals for the text required that the team negotiate various aspects of the text such as determining what information should be included, how the text should be structured, what conventions would be appropriate, and how the text would be used. In this effort, we learned how ephemeral the connection between form and content could be—in many instances, shifting information from the ADAAG regulations to another type of text meant risking subtle changes and variations in meaning that could have consequences for people who used our text if we “got it wrong.”

The team’s articulations of the rationale for the project, the audiences, and the purposes, as well as the team’s decisions about the appropriate form and content, all influenced the team’s choices in enacting a genre. In addition to the rhetorical stance that we collectively constructed for the project over time, our formulation of genre was also shaped by and in response to other genres that we encountered during the project and in the various communities and contexts in which each team member worked. But the team had not initially considered the ways that the task of imagining and then accommodating broader purposes and audiences would alter our views of the writing task, change our understanding of accessibility issues, and challenge our respective disciplinary understandings of genre. While we agreed that our text would be valuable to a variety of audiences, we were not always in
agreement about how to address the audiences simultaneously. How much, for instance, did
we need to explain about concepts and terms? What conventions would be appropriate? For
example, architects would understand immediately certain conventions if we used them in
our illustrations, but other audience might not. Should we use other conventions? If so,
which? If not, how should we accommodate other audiences?

In a number of ways, we were also constrained by other texts in a variety of genres.
For instance, the primary source for our work was the ADAAG itself and, as much as we
wanted to escape the constraints of the regulatory genres, we were nonetheless tied to the
ADAAG because it is regulatory and the audiences for our text are in a very real sense bound
by it. Initially, I didn’t have the content knowledge or the genre knowledge to work
effectively with the ADAAG. Other team members, the architects, had the content
knowledge about architecture but not the genre knowledge of regulatory documents. In
attempting to “translate” the ADAAG from one genre to another—regulation to guide—we
had many conversations that included questions such as, “What do you think this is supposed
to mean?” “Why did they do it this way?” “How should our text look/sound/read?” “Will
architects accept this text? Will people outside architecture who have responsibilities under
ADA be able to use and understand our text?” Our attempts at managing genre to address
these questions ultimately led us to others including “Does our text represent the interests of
people with disabilities appropriately?” “Whose interests are being served by presenting
information in this particular way?” and “What attitudes and views about disability and
accessibility do our source texts promote? Does our text promote?”

The issues raised by the team’s questions were indicative of the team members’
awareness of the relationship between meaning and form, the importance of the conventions
used in our own and other texts, and the need to find ways to connect to audiences with whom we were not in direct contact—audiences with whom we would interact only at the level of text. Genre became an important consideration in that genres—including their form, their relationships to other discourse, and their functions—convey communicative purposes and recognize intended audiences. Thus the team’s negotiation of genre—for instance, our different perspectives that led to misunderstandings as well as new understandings and our struggles to both align our text with yet distance it from other texts—are at the heart of my investigation and suggested the research questions that I outline below.

**Research Questions**

The team members’ judgments about the final form of the text were based in part on the different textual practices each of us had developed through our disciplinary and professional affiliations. Discursive activities that include people from different communities (disciplines, professions, organizations, work environments), such as the *Access for Everyone* project, are sites of collaboration and negotiation as well as ideological, intellectual, and practical struggle because the various communities with which people align themselves shape their interests and ways of creating and interpreting knowledge.

Bourdieu (1990, 1991; see also Schryer 2000) theorizes that people operate in “fields” and are subject to the fields’ habitus, or practices and perspectives that influence the ways their members participate in and understand activities, including the ways that language is used to support communal goals and motives. In a sense, habitus is a predisposition to certain viewpoints and actions that community members don’t necessarily interrogate
routinely—I translate this as “the-way-things-are-done-here” that becomes part of the tacit knowledge of community members.

Since adopting the practices, including textual practices, associated with fields is one of the ways that people signify their association with a particular community, they have a stake in subscribing to and perpetuating those practices. As Abbott (1988) argues, control of tasks is one of the primary goals of disciplines and professions. This view of professional practice—including language use—within and across fields is compatible with the literature on genre and points to the regularizing function of genres within communities (reviewed in Chapter 2). Understanding genres as serving regularizing function suggests that people coming together from different communities may each work to advance the goals and perspectives of their “home” communities by attempting to control tasks as well as the tools used in tasks—for instance the use of genre as a tool for creating and understanding texts.

But communities and genres do not function in vacuums, sealed off by their own borders. When people from different communities come together in an activity, the differences in habitus may necessitate that the tacit be made explicit and that competition for control be surrendered to negotiation. While such collaborations may result in lifting the borders between communities, so to speak, and provide insight into the discursive practices of different communities, issues of ideology, interest, and power are likely to persist as a result of disparities in the perceived value of various types of “capital” represented by affiliation with particular communities. Bourdieu (1991) describes several types of capital including economic capital, the value of the potential for accumulation of wealth; cultural capital, the value of disciplinary knowledge or technical skills; and symbolic capital, the value of more intangible qualities such as prestige and political power. For example, with
respect to access to public life, people with disabilities have historically controlled far less
capital—cultural, economic, and symbolic—than other groups whose assistance, or
compliance, is required for that access to be achieved. The result has been a civil rights
struggle for disabled people that has been enacted to a large degree in trenches of discourse
and on fields of text.

The relationship between marginalization; social, political, and cultural struggle; and
genre may not seem readily apparent. However, as the social context of the debates over
accessibility and disability illustrate, the use of genre, as a function of discourse and as part
of the habitus or capital of a community, is never neutral or, to use Bourdieu’s term,
“disinterested.” The regulatory genre of the Americans with Disabilities Act, for instance, is a
form of public policy instrument that can only be generated by the government but that is
shaped by a number of groups and must be interpreted and used by still others. The decision-
making processes involved in the production of texts that establish, advance, or support
public policies such as the ADA must necessarily be negotiated across communities that may
not share political or cultural perspectives, genre knowledge, or equal control of various
forms of capital.

In terms of the Access for Everyone project, team members acted, in a sense, as
representatives of various disciplines, each bringing to the work a different disciplinary
habitus, familiarity with different genres or with different conventions for what might seem
to be similar genres, and the status acquired by affiliation with a particular community. For
instance, in considering building design and construction practices, architects have more
symbolic capital than non-architects by virtue of their specific area of expertise, a reality that
allows architects significant power in shaping spaces used by all people. These factors
combined in different ways during the project to shape the text and tasks related to the work. But, as we discovered over the course of the project, many disagreements about content, expression, and conventions resulted not only from “surface level” differences in the ways we had been trained—for instance commitment to the generic conventions of various disciplines such as architecture and graphic design—but from deep-seated ways of conceptualizing and articulating concepts such as space, authority, and persuasion, all important aspects of the team’s text specifically and of genre in general.

Consequently, in participating in the work of the team, and later studying that work using qualitative methods, I considered the following two questions about the ways in which the concept of genre functions in a context that involves writers and readers from multiple communities:

- In what ways do people use genre when they participate in discursive activity that includes and/or addresses people from other communities?
- What strategies do people participating in cross-community work use to negotiate genres?

If knowing the ways in which the uses of genre facilitate activities and advance interests in specific communities is important—as has been suggested by existing theory and research—then, for similar reasons understanding the strategies that people adopt to both advance agendas and achieve consensus on the use of genres across communities is also important. Thus, my research questions reflect concern for the relationship between genre, as a concept for describing social action in discourse, and genres, as actual texts used in activities, and the ways these aspects of genre interact in a context that involves various communities, interests, and texts and genres.
Overview of Chapters

In this section, I briefly outline the contents of this study. My approach in the following chapters is to establish a theoretical framework appropriate for interpreting the Access for Everyone team's use of genre, to identify the methodological approach I took in studying the project, and then to employ the framework and methodology in examining the ways the team used genre to manage its work and respond to the broader social context.

In Chapter 2, I review relevant literature about genre to establish a framework for interpreting the role of genre in the work of the project team. Rather than attempting to offer a new definition of genre, I discuss descriptions of genre use in the literature that elaborate the complex relationships among genre and form, genre and community, and genre and context (for example, Bazerman, 1994; Russell, 1997; Wenger 1998; Dias, Freedman, Medway, Paré 1999). The complexities inherent in these relationships explain not only how genres become associated with typical actions and establish expectations, but also how genres prompt unexpected reactions—such as the negative reception of the ADAAG by many architects—and foster atypical improvisations of texts. I offer a fourth pairing—genre and function—to describe specific ways that genre operationalizes literate activities and to help explain how people from different communities, who are familiar with different types of genre, can operate in the same context.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the qualitative approach that informs my research, the methods of data collection and analysis, and my rationale for the selection of data for analysis. I also discuss my role as both a project participant on the project and researcher including how that dual role challenges and benefits this research.
In Chapter 4, using examples from texts the team created and used, I describe the role of genre in the evolution of the *Access for Everyone* text. Here I focus on the team's uses of genre to accomplish metacommunicative functions, social/political functions, and practical functions. In considering some of the team's choices in content, form, and convention, I describe how the team used genre knowledge to participate in discursive activity that includes and addresses people from various communities.

In Chapter 5, I draw on data from the team's texts and interactions on the project to specifically address strategies the team members used to participate in cross-community work and to negotiate genre use both from their own disciplinary perspectives from the shared perspective that the team developed over the course of the project. My focus in this chapter is on investigating the role genre played as the team developed processes to generate text. I contend that people work from their expectations of genre—some of which are acquired as part of their disciplinary affiliations and training while others develop through the various activities in which they participate—to develop shared understandings from which to improvise, adapt, and combine genres to meet the needs of various audiences.

I also discuss implications of the case study and draw conclusions about how understanding the nature of genre negotiated in cross-community contexts might call into question some of our current beliefs about genre. I conclude by suggesting further research that may enhance our understanding of workplace practices that are increasingly—and paradoxically—specialized and cross-community at the same time.
Chapter 2
Theorizing Genre Use in a Cross-Community Practice

To understand the meaning of disability "is to describe its location in a field of discursive relations and thereby to locate those persons or groups of persons who control the responsibility prescriptions that attend and constitute the disabled role."

Michael J. Shapiro, Disability and the Politics of Constitutive Rules

Shapiro’s comment above about the issues surrounding disability and the role of disabled people in society underscores the power of discourse to constitute relationships and responsibilities among people and groups. As I suggested in Chapter 1, “field of discursive relations,” or context, from which the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), and the Access for Everyone project emerged includes interests from architecture, construction, government, and disabled people and their advocates, among others. The various communities come to this particular context with established discursive practices that shape and are shaped by the activities in which each is principally engaged. These discursive practices are carried out in many types of texts, some of which advance the different communities’ primary activities while others facilitate relationships among communities. Thus, the quality of “discursive relations” carried out primarily through the exchange of texts depends in part on the ability of individuals and communities to interpret, manage, construct, and negotiate knowledge and information presented in various types of text—on other words, to use genres.

Because genre use is central to the establishment of discursive relationships as well as to participation in activity, in this chapter I review research and theory about the ways that genre use facilitates and inhibits activities in and across communities and contexts. In doing so, I first trace in broad strokes the recent history of genre theory and research that has
moved us from a widely held view of genres as stable forms for addressing specific
discursive purposes to a more recently embraced view of genres as “stabilized-for-now”
(Schryer 1993) amalgamations of rhetorical strategies, content, and form that mediate local
activities, social relationships, and systems of activities and genres (see, for instance,
Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995; Dias et. al. 1999; Journet 1999; Schryer 2000). I then
describe, as specific functions of genre, three typified actions of literate activity that genres
operationalize for texts to be exchanged and understood.

Throughout this review, I focus on research that demonstrates the ways in which three
aspects of texts and situated activities mediate the use of genre, at least as we are theorizing it
in what Russell (1997) calls the “North American” school\(^1\) of genre theory. The first is form,
particularly as it relates to the formal features and conventions of texts. Theorists and
researchers have been working for the last several decades to illustrate that genre are routine
yet dynamic responses to communicative situations, driven by communal discursive practices
and shaped by communities’ accepted conventions (e.g. Miller 1984; Bazerman 1988, 1994
Constructing; Schryer 1993; Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995). To draw these conclusions,
theorists discuss genre two ways simultaneously: (1) plurally, as actual “types” of discourse
in use and (2) singularly, as a concept for categorizing and strategically applying knowledge
about interpreting, managing, constructing, and negotiating discourse. This double sense of

\(^1\) Russell suggests that the “North American” school, “deriving from Miller” (p. 547), focuses on “genre as
operationalized social action” that “mediates activity systems to produce stability” (p. 512). This school’s focus
contrasts in some respects with European Critical Discourse Analysis and with Australian Systemic Functional
Linguistics (SFL), which, though concerned with the “political and ideological implications of genre,” supports
a pedagogy that continues to focus on form (according to Dias, et. al. 1999, p. 22). Dias and his colleagues
suggest that the SFL approach to identifying the hegemonic nature of forms of genre and then teaching
students—particularly “disadvantaged” ones—to use those same forms is a “step backwards” (p. 22). I am more
sympathetic to the SFL approach because, as Russell suggests, people have few opportunities to change what
they can’t use in the first place. See also Schryer (2000) for a brief review of differences.
the term genre allows scholars to use a term such as “report,” for instance, to label existing
documents as a type based on formal features while at the same time calling into question the
stability of that label by looking at how the genre is used differently by various communities
to achieve a range of outcomes. So, while many theorists, teachers, and practitioners now
accept that genres are more than simply the forms of texts, form remains an inescapable and
useful aspect for recognizing genres.

The second aspect is community, particularly with regard to the ways that genres
assist communities in constituting themselves, their members, and their relationships to other
communities. Theorists and researchers have noted that genres come into being to meet needs
within communities—for instance, disciplines, professions, and organizations (Bazerman
1988, 1994; Myers 1990; Smart 1993; Orlowski & Yates 1994; Berkenkotter and Huckin
1995). The uses of genres in specific domains become part of the tacit knowledge of
community members, often transparent to participants in situated activities and difficult for
outsiders to understand. Yet for people to use genres so they can become functioning
members of communities, somehow the tacit knowledge of genres must be made explicitly
available. In addition, while specialized genres facilitate the work of particular communities,
they may inhibit communication when different communities come into contact or when a
community’s work affects people who do not share its knowledge or ways of expressing
knowledge. Such disjunctions can result in practical and ethical dilemmas. On the other

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2 The work of professional communication and rhetorical theorists that explores or comments on
communications problems that preceded the Challenger space shuttle disaster are highly illustrative of practical
and ethical problems related to genre, knowledge, communities, conflict (Winsor 1988; Driskill 1989; Herndl,
Fennell, Miller 1991; Couture, 1992). Each of these discussions, in one way or another, illustrates the problems
caused by different interpretations of information or different evaluations of information based on the way it
was presented.
hand, we all belong to multiple communities in which we encounter various genres—some of which are at odds—and we are constantly learning new genres, adapting old ones, and interacting with people from different communities.

The third aspect is context, particularly with respect to determining exactly what constitutes context and accounting for the ways that dissimilarity in contexts affects the exchange of texts. The relationship of genre to context is complicated in two respects. First, the uses of genres developed and understood in different contexts are not necessarily commensurable. Studies suggest, for example, that people have difficulty transferring genre knowledge from the context of school to the context of the workplace (Freedman, Adam & Smart 1994; Freedman & Adam 1996; Spinuzzi, 1996; Dias, Freedman, Medway & Paré 1999). But participants in unfamiliar situations must learn new genre or bring their genre knowledge to new contexts in novel ways.

Second, contexts are multi-dimensional and genres function at various levels including in local contexts and in complex systems of activity and networks of genre (Russell 1997; Winsor 1999, 2000; Bazerman “Systems” 1994). While these levels are interrelated, the functions of genre at local and broader levels are not necessarily complementary. In fact, they may be at odds, a disparity that can generate problems in accounting for the purposes and effects of genres. For example, genres can function in complex contexts to suppress and advance interests or reproduce cultures in ways that are not readily apparent or fully explicable at local levels (Blyler & Thralls; Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999; Winsor 2000). As a research problem, considering simultaneously how genres work at a local level and beyond it is a challenging yet essential task in understanding the role of genre in situations that involve disparate interests.
To elaborate more fully the three issues described above, throughout the following sections of this chapter I focus on scholarship about genre primarily from rhetoric and professional and technical communication, and to a lesser extent from sociology of the workplace. I first discuss the issue of genre and form, including the value of conventions as strategies for providing writers and audiences with useful expectations and opportunities for improvisation. I next discuss the relationship of genre and community, including the functions that genre use serves in both promoting and controlling discourse. I then turn to the relationship of genre and context, and in so doing, show that scholarship on genre has provided us with an ever-widening lens through which we can zoom in on localized uses of genre or pan out to examine “constellations” (Schryer 2000) of interacting genres. Finally, I describe three functions of genre that I refer to throughout the remainder of this study in examining the use of genre as literate activity by the participants in the Access for Everyone project.

My purpose in this chapter is two-fold. The first is to establish a theoretical framework suitable for investigating the role of genre use in activities that happen at the boundaries of communities, contexts, and genres. The second part of my purpose is to establish the relevance of the study of genre to the broader context surrounding accessibility efforts and, more locally, to the Access for Everyone project. Therefore, throughout this chapter, I relate the discussion of genre to the broader context and to the Access for Everyone project.
Genre and Form

In everyday practice people encounter and deal with genre as types, or forms, of discourse that they recognize through repeated exposure to them as appropriate for fulfilling certain purposes—for instance, reports, memos, letters, and tax forms. Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré (1999) describe this orientation:

Most readers will recall the more familiar meaning of genre, as referring to generally unchanging regularities in conventions of form and content, usually with reference to literary works, allowing readers to identify, for example classes of work such as poetry, fiction, and drama....Such classification of text has extended as well to prescriptive classification in school writing and thus the familiar categories of exposition, description, argumentation, and narration.... In the workplace we have such familiar genres as the memo, the progress report, minutes of meetings, and the annual report. The definite article that designates these genres is telling in that it seems to prescribe an unchanging, fixed, and authorized rubric, with the strong implication that adherence to form is tied in with effective writing. (19)

For professional communication teachers and students, this situation is most clearly illustrated in handbooks and textbooks that contain at least a few chapters covering various types of discourse by genres that people might anticipate using in the workplace; in other words, descriptions of and guidelines for applying what might easily be perceived by students as "the authorized rubric." Though a number of good textbooks follow scholarship in noting that form is both functional and constraining and that genres must be adapted to communities and contexts, students often rely heavily on form as they learn to manage various types of communication.3

For workplace participants, the legacy of genre as forms for specific purposes continues via boilerplates, templates, and stock documents. For the Access for Everyone team—a group of people from different disciplines brought together for a specific project—a

3 See also Bushnell (1999) for a critique of the "new prescriptive paradigm" he finds in textbooks.
general understanding of various "authorized" forms for oral and written academic, social, workplace, and project-related genres, such as meetings, meeting minutes, style sheets, and schedules, provided a starting point for the project work. What the team understood about these genre were the common purposes for them; the language and formatting conventions generally used to differentiate one genre from another; and the strategies, or "sequential moves" (Bazerman 1999), used to accomplish them—aspects of genre that are generally associated with form.

**Encountering Genres as Forms**

Genres certainly are, on an important level, composed of linguistic forms and strategic moves—that is, genres encompass, rather than being encompassed by—general features of language including grammar, syntax, register, and semantics and organization, the use of which are often elaborated in descriptions of particular genres (e.g. Swales 1990; Martin 1993; Anthony 1999). Bakhtin has suggested that this "encompassing" position in the hierarchy of discourse allows genre to exist in a relationship to language use that is more "changeable, flexible, and plastic" (80) than the linguistic features that are used to construct them. In other words, where structures of language limit, for instance, the ways morphemes can be combined to create words or the ways grammatical elements can be combined to create coherent sentences, genres exhibit greater variability. Bazerman (1988) has noted the difficulty in attempting to talk about genres in terms of specific textual features, since within a given genre each instantiation demonstrates considerable variation. "Genre, then, is not simply a linguistic category defined by a structured arrangement of textual features," according to Bazerman. "Genre is a sociopsychological category which we use to recognize and construct typified actions within typified situations" (319).
Consequently, though identification and categorization of genres and their conventions contribute to peoples' understandings of the relationship between the purposes and formal features of various types of discourse, they have sometimes led to a view of genre as decontextualized and static, and to a focus on writers' abilities to learn and reproduce them (e.g., Conners 1982; Bushnell 1999). With regard to studies of genre, Bhatia (1993) warns that research focused on surface level considerations of genre such as formal features “yields only limited information” and “often leads to misleading generalizations” (p. 7) about the purposes and meanings of various generic conventions and structures. The problem is not that these ideas about acceptable form exist—they are often useful and expedient—the problem is that the features of a genre are often treated as “the genre” in and of themselves leaving students and workers, especially inexperienced ones, with little understanding of the discursive significance and social power of a genre, which can only be fully articulated when a genre is situated as a part of an activity or context.

The same can be said when professionals with training and experience in one area of expertise encounter texts created by professional with training and experience in a different area of expertise. For instance, the form of some government texts that delineate rights, roles, and responsibilities with respect to building accessibility pose problems for people engaging in certain related activities. The ADAAG, which spells out the accessibility requirements for buildings, is difficult to use for planning construction projects in part because of its organization and the legalistic syntax of the wording of the requirements. Architects have noted the problematic dissimilarities from other types of standards documents that are used in construction. The form of the ADAAG (and of the ADA) is, however, consistent with other
text used by the government system that created and uses the ADA and ADAAG to establish and enforce legislation.

**Meeting Expectations through Form**

Despite the problems resulting from form, classifying texts as members of genres serves the needs of both audiences for texts and the creators of texts. Recognizing texts as belonging to genres is one way that audiences for/users of texts determine whether and how texts meet particular needs. For writers, associating a text with a particular genre suggests a range of options for constructing texts that are recognizable to readers/users as part of a particular genre, or more important, as texts that serve particular purposes. The features that creators of texts use to associate texts with genres involve all the decisions that affect the final textual product, including aspects as broad as document design and rhetorical strategy, and aspects as specific as linguistic features (such as markers of cohesion) and choosing a title. Thus, texts and the genres with which they are associated are the total of the accumulated decisions made by their creators and, in turn, recognized by their audiences.

Am I equating genre as form with types of schema, or set patterns, an idea that would be roundly denounced by scholars of the “paralogic” persuasion, who believe that such descriptions and uses of language are not possible? Blyler (1999) summarizes this position as the theory that people communicate by enacting a type of “hermeneutic guessing” (p.66) that can never be codified. I adopt a middle-ground position by suggesting that we do enact a guessing game but one that is guided significantly by the existing genre that are available to (or forced upon) us—maybe it’s a matching game. In a more practical sense, the fit between the creators’ and audiences’ interpretations of genre determine how well the text is perceived as matching particular needs.
In this sense, generic interpretations depend on expectations (Russell 1997) and improvisations (Schryer 2000) on the part of both writers and audiences. Simply put, writers and readers use genre as “primers” that both capitalize on and create shared expectations from which we can improvise new texts and meanings by building on existing ones. This is not to suggest that form can be understood as genre—discussion of form disconnected from the purposes it serves or out of context is useless—but rather that form is suggestive. So what we’re really talking about when we talk about form is a type of categorical, sociolinguistic knowledge that comes partly from our experiences with language, which, of course, varies tremendously from individual to individual and group to group. As Martin (1993) has pointed out, literacy involves the ability to take cues from generic forms.

Critiques of considering genres primarily as conjunctions of form and purpose (e.g. Bhatia 1993) suggest that such a view neglects the linkages that fully account for the ways people use genre as part of complex social, cultural, and organizational relationships, and the historical and political contexts involved in the development and social significance of any particular genre. Research and theory have problematized the idea that genres can be thought of as categorical forms based on linguistics alone by demonstrating that genre and knowledge are inseparable, that genres regularize discursive practices in communities, and that genre use often involves participants in complex systems of discourse and activity (e.g. Miller 1984; Bazerman 1988; Blyler and Thralls 1993).

Consequently, scholars in rhetoric and professional communication have been particularly concerned with the social nature of writing and the problem of genres in various communities and contexts. In a significant re-inscribing of the concept of genre, Miller (1984) shifts the view of genre as a conjunction of form and purpose to a view of genre as a
synthesis of context, social knowledge, rhetorical action, and linguistic form. Miller identifies two salient problems in attempting to define genre: “clarifying the relationship between rhetoric and its context of situation” and “understanding the way in which a genre ‘fuses’...situational with formal and substantive features” (28). Further, Miller defines rhetorical genres as “typifications” of rhetorical responses to a situational “exigence,” which “is a form of social knowledge—a mutual construing of objects, events, interests and purposes that not only links them but makes them what they are: an objectified social need,” or more precisely, “a social motive”(30).

Following Miller’s lead, theorists and researchers began exploring the complex reasons that specific genres have particular forms to explain the social functions of those forms and their relationships to communal purposes and contexts (e.g. Bazerman 1988, 1994; Myers 1990; Martin, 1993; Smart 1993; Berkenkotter and Huckin 1995; Schryer 1993, 2000; Russell 1997, 1999; Winsor 1996, 1999, 2000; Dias et. al. 1999). These types of investigations, while valuable for what they tell us in a limited way about the specifics of any given genre, point to larger questions about the socio-cultural, political, and institutional functions of genres, including how and why genres are enacted and changed by communities, and how people learn and participate in the discourse of communities.

**Genre and Community**

In terms of accessibility issues, the perspectives, interests, knowledge, activities and even power of various communities are articulated in different genres. Architects and builders use plans, specifications, bids, and contracts; the government uses laws, regulations, permits, codes, and other genre to which the architects’ genres are answerable (in other
words, must take into account). Advocacy groups use policy statements, white papers, narratives, and other genres to advocate for their positions. The differences in the genres are important because through them, various communities accommodate (privilege) some knowledge and interests and exclude others. In addition, a number of the genres that apply to the social context of accessibility articulate specialized knowledge in disciplines that require lengthy periods of training to master, for example architecture, structural engineering, law, and advocacy.

In this section I discuss research that suggests genre is an important tool communities use to facilitate their work and stake claims on particular areas of knowledge and activity. (e.g., Bazerman 1988, 1994; Myers 1990; Swales 1990; Martin, 1993; Berkenkotter & Huckin 1995). Genre serves to codify and regularize discourse, in part controlling the production and interpretation of knowledge, thus becoming an important aspect of community identity as well.

**Learning the Rules of the Game: Genre, Community, and Enculturation**

A number of theorists and researchers have looked closely at genre use within disciplines, professions, and organizations—viewed loosely as discourse communities—to consider how genre are established, acquired, and changed within communities as their members determine the value of communicative events and forms in articulating their activities (e.g., Orlikowski & Yates, 1992, 1994; Schryer, 1993; Berkenkotter & Ravotas 1997; Dias, et al 1999). As Winsor (1996) puts it, “Genres develop when members of a discourse community repeatedly need to achieve some purpose. They embody the content, organization, and style that the discourse community believes will fulfill this purpose” (27). In addition, Orlikowski and Yates (1994) posit that organizations develop a “genre
repertoire" of "socially recognized types of communicative actions...that are enacted by members of a community to realize particular social purposes" (542). Genres and the conventions associated with them assist communities’ members with such activities as streamlining and aligning their discourse and ensuring accountability within communities so their members can "get on with what they are doing" (Bazerman, 1994 Constructing, 87).

Focusing particularly on disciplinary genre use, Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) suggest that "genres are intimately linked to a discipline’s methodology, and they package information in ways that conform to a discipline’s norms, values, and ideology. Understanding the genres of written communication in one’s field is, therefore, essential to professional success" (1). Using genre effectively is a demonstration of the ability to participate in critical activities associated knowledge building in a field—it is one litmus test of recognizable achievement necessary for participation.

For example, Bazerman (1988, 1994) and Myers (1990) have demonstrated that genre serves both knowledge-making and gate-keeping functions in disciplines of science. Myers (1990) follows several biologists through the process of writing in different authorized genres of their discipline, including proposals and scientific articles. Difficulties in expressing disciplinary knowledge, Myers finds, include not only constructing genre effectively, but also integrating genre and the appropriate rhetorical stance. Significantly, the knowledge claims the biologists make are perceived and understood partly on the basis of genre. If a writer’s use of genre is not sufficient for expressing that knowledge, the content of communication—in these cases scientific findings—is not enough to guarantee that others within a community will accept a contributor’s work as knowledge.
Myers's study of the biologists' writing is one example of how people's participation in their communities is bound up in their ability to learn and translate into practice “the rules of the game,” including the conventions of discourse instantiated in the communities' genre—genre in which communities' knowledge is embodied. Of course, for people to adopt the genre knowledge of a community, they must first gain membership and learn the intricacies of the genres required for participation. The question of how it is that people develop the ability to use genre has provided additional insights into the ways genre functions because learning genres involves more than acquiring a set of guidelines. It involves people’s enculturation into communities’ social perspectives and patterns of making and interpreting knowledge.

For example, Berkenkotter and Huckin’s (1995) analysis of the pre-professional writing of Nate, a Ph.D. student in a rhetoric program, documents his struggle to integrate the genre and discourse conventions of the discipline into his repertoire. Berkenkotter and Huckin correlate the changes in Nate’s texts over time with learning “the central concerns and disciplinary issues with which the Rhetoric Program faculty were concerned” and describe his more disciplinarily mature writing in the professional community as an “instance of legitimate peripheral participation” (134). Berkenkotter and Huckin suggest that the “advanced literacy” required to become a full participant in a field rests in the “ability to integrate subject matter knowledge with a knowledge of situationally appropriate linguistic and rhetorical conventions” (141).

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4 In legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger 1991; Dias et. al. 1999 p. 185-188) newcomers and novices learn by doing actual workplace tasks with the assistance of more experienced professionals. The important distinction between LPP and other learning is that the objective is not learning per se but accomplishing a workplace objective. The learning is a by-product of immersion in the task.
This contention is supported by studies of the learning of experienced and inexperienced people in the workplace, including their abilities to learn, adopt, and use specific genre (e.g. Smart 1993; Katz, 1998; Dias et al. 1999). These studies illustrate the complexity of workplace discourse and the tension between communities’ authorized strategies and individuals’ improvisations. Experienced people understand, tacitly and explicitly, the circumstances in which they are involved—the material aspects of the work, the community’s perspectives and culture, the accepted practices, the needs of audiences both up and down the proverbial food chain, the reasons for implementing particular genre in particular instances, and the conventions associated with genres that address the rhetorical aspects of those instances (Dias, et al 1999). Because experienced people have an intimate knowledge of the communities in which they are immersed, they also know when the rules can be bent or broken, which conventions adjusted and changed.

Scholarship that looks closely at people’s genre use in communities tends to focus for practical reasons on how people operate in one community at a time. But because individuals are often members of multiple communities simultaneously, assuming that people can be quite familiar with the genres of a number of communities (Russell 1997) is reasonable. In contexts that include multiple communities and multiple genres, people rely on their existing genre knowledge that comes from a variety of contexts. For example, each team member of the Access for Everyone project team understood the genre use of a variety of different communities and contexts, including academic disciplines, professional affiliations, and various workplaces. Since the team included several graduate students and a professor of architecture who all were or had been workplace professionals, the team had sophisticated understandings of genre from which to draw and improvise.
On the other hand, the professional expertise of each person was tied to certain bodies of knowledge and the genres used to enact that knowledge. Such diversity is helpful in pooling knowledge and expertise, but it can also be a challenge in situations where different perspectives conflict because of deeply ingrained professional and disciplinary perspectives and habits.

**Reproducing Culture: Genre in Black Boxes**

The regulative and codifying functions of genre that assist communities to facilitate their activities and share knowledge also raise questions about the role that generic regulation plays in privileging particular knowledge, promoting ideologies, and determining inclusion and exclusion from discourse and, in turn, communities. Clearly participants in communities use genre to “not only signal and reaffirm their status as community members, but they also reproduce important aspects of that community’s identity and its organizing process” (Orlikowski & Yates, 1994). In these respects, though genres help communities maintain the cohesion necessary to function, they are not neutral discursive forms for taking care of business; they are ideologically loaded and motive-laden (Dias et al 1999) tools for reproducing the beliefs and achieving the objectives of particular communities and cultures.

While people learn and use the genre of the communities in which they participate, the broad implications of genre are not always apparent even to community insiders and researchers. In the editor’s preface to *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, Allan Luke warns of the tendency [of investigations of genre] to ‘write over’ culture as given, as conflict-free, to assume that ‘speech communities’, ‘contexts of situation’, ‘socio-rhetorical networks’ or particular clinical, laboratory and workplace sites are benign, consensual social bodies, where (mostly monocultural and patriarchal) discourse norms, ‘common goals’, ‘motive strategies’, and private intentions’ occur naturally and unproblematically. The danger here is that failure to acknowledge the material sources of ‘difference’ and power,
marginality and exclusion naturalizes these as 'context' variables outside the scope of genre and rhetorical studies.... (1994, p. ix)

This criticism of scholarship underscores the tension in the fields of rhetoric and professional communication between the need for people to understand and acquire strategies that will allow them to participate in various communities and the need to ensure that genres do not become "black boxes" that obscure the very real ways that discourse constructs the material world and peoples’ experiences.

Luke’s concerns might be justified if researchers were simply identifying the forms and conventions of genres and developing pedagogies to help people match genres to appropriate purposes. But researchers and theorists have begun prying the lids off black boxes of genres to address the complex variables associated with disciplinary, professional, and organizational genre (e.g. Schryer 1993; Munger 1999; Paré 1993, see also Dias et. al. 1999; Berkenkotter 2001, see also and Berkenkotter and Ravotas 1997; Winsor 1999, 2000).

Paré (1993), Berkenkotter (2001), and Winsor (2000), for instance, demonstrate that the regularizing nature of genre can obscure practices and relationships that are part of the fabric of communities. In his study of social workers’ case reports in the Canadian juvenile justice system, Paré looks at the regulatory aspects of community discourse that are imposed partly through the use of the case report genre. He observes that though “many conventional or generic features of texts and contexts are designed to produce a fair and effective exchange of ideas or opinions” and “almost always make writing and reading easier,” the case report genre is also used to control discourse and knowledge among participants “by replicating, as closely as possible, the processes of composition and interpretation” (112-

5 A term initially used by Latour and heavily borrowed.
While Paré's study deals with the regulation of professional discourse that is effected through particular genres, which he acknowledges "are not inherently harmful" (122), he also shows that regulations on discourse imposed through genres can shape versions of reality and regulate the thinking of community members in ways that are not apparent in the official, completed reports. What is black-boxed here is how the conventions of the report genre the social workers use construct and enforce official versions of social workers interpretations.

The subject of Berkenkotter's study of genre use, a mental health professional, is similarly situated within a complex network of genre, disciplines, professions and organizations. Using samples of notes taken by a therapist during the initial interview of a patient, Berkenkotter demonstrates that the therapist's clinical notes "recontextualize" patients' experiences as they move from the patient's genre of narrative to the medical practitioner's genre of diagnosis. The diagnosis is transformed via the application of a third text in yet another genre, the DSM-IV. Further, the diagnosis becomes part of "the systems of reimbursement, health care, research, and medical reasoning" (341). In the process, the patient's own "text," as well as the text of the patient-therapist relationship, is black-boxed in other genres such as insurance forms, spreadsheets, and various reports.

Winsor's (2000) study focuses more on the ways genres organize relationships among participants in community activity. Investigating the politics of genre use in one manufacturing company, Agricorp, Winsor found that the genre of "work order" served to structure work processes and also to maintain the statuses of professionals (engineers) and blue-collar workers (technicians) by reinforcing organizational agendas and power structures. In demonstrating that genres can be used to enforce divisions among different classes of workers within the same organization, Winsor notes that "the uneven distribution of power is
not due to heroic accomplishments that result in merited differences. Rather it is accomplished in the systemic use of sociotechnical means, including generic texts such as work orders that ordinarily slip unnoticed beneath the surface of everyday life” (180). In this sense, the routine nature of the work order black-boxes the role of the genre in establishing and maintaining relationships that reproduce the organization’s hierarchical structure.

In the three examples provided by Paré, Berkenkotter, and Winsor, people using genre to participate in discourse are involved in highly complex discursive exchanges that include multiple communities and/or genres. In each case, genres function to regulate, regularize, and even recontextualize participants’ activities, and to control the management of information as well as the knowledge created from that information.

This is not to suggest that people have no ability to resist, improvise, or change genre use or that genres themselves never change. Schryer (1993), Winsor (1999), and Munger (1999) each discuss situations in which participants in communities attempted to change genres or improvise the use of genre. In Schryer’s (1993) study of “competing” genre needs for clinical and research record keeping at a veterinary school, when a new genre for taking histories was introduced at the school clinic some people adopted it while others did not. Winsor (1999) describes how the engineers she studied used the genre of “documentation” (in the sense of documenting events and actions in genre such as meeting minutes and memos) in both anticipated and unanticipated ways, including in situations that involved different groups “where participants’ goals overlap…but do not completely coincide” (p. 217). Winsor suggests that the documentation was used not only to record events but also to subtly guarantee that people were held accountable for future actions. In his study of the run reports of emergency medical technicians (EMTs), Munger discusses the ways the genre
changed over time in response to the needs of multiple communities with responsibilities for patient care and data gathering. When the technicians who used the run reports criticized a substantive change in the form, the change was reversed.

**Genre and Context**

To this point, I have referred to communities without much regard for any categorical distinctions among them, which poses some problems. The communities discussed in the examples from the literature that I mention above include professions, disciplines, organizations, businesses, and ad-hoc groups such as the *Access for Everyone* team. While a full delineation of the distinctions among them is out of the scope of my discussion, I want to recognize that though knowledge making and shaping activities occur in all communities and contexts, the structures in which activities occur, the knowledge that is (re)produced, the purposes and commitments related to knowledge and activity, and the power each controls vary significantly.

The various configurations of communities and situations in which genre are used suggest that we need to look beyond communities to adequately explain the various ways people understand and use genre. In this section, I propose that the notion of context more adequately accounts for genre when multiple communities, activities, interests, and genre converge to form complex systems.

**Accounting for Difference: Context and Control**

The workplace studies that I mention in the previous sections demonstrate that genres serve to regulate both discursive practices and social relationships within communities in ways that are relatively transparent to participants in communities' activities and virtually
invisible to people outside them. But these studies also complicate our notions of genre by
demonstrating that professions and organizations are not homogenous groups but complex
systems that can be composed of different groups of participants with different tasks in
relationship to larger objectives. In terms of professions, Berkenkotter (2001) sums up,
suggesting that

*the professions are organized by genre systems and their work is carried out through genre systems.* The notion of genre system enables us to characterize actors’ specific discursive practices in the context of chains of interrelated genres (what Fairclough, 1992, and Linell, 1998, p. 149, called “intertextual chains”) that both constitute and are constituted by institutional practices. (p. 327 italics hers)

Discursive practices can involve people in the same organization using genres differently, or
the same genre can be used to meet a variety of needs of different groups both inside and
outside communities in “multiple institutional genre systems” (Berkenkotter 2001 p. 338). In
practice, communities and their participants also routinely interact with and are influenced by
other communities, adapting genres and creating new ones over time. Forces both internal
and external to communities, other communities’ activities and expectations for instance,
shape genre use, particularly when communities overlap.

In terms of the larger systems of activity and genre involved in the ADA and other
accessibility initiatives, the issues related to communities, or fields, point to fundamental
discursive and social problems such as representation—for instance of what is considered
“normal,” “able,” and “disabled”—and inclusion. Within the context, those who can exercise
significant control across a context over key knowledge and terms, and over the genres that
determine how knowledge is “packaged” and disseminated, control more than texts. In the
case of accessibility and disability, power over discourse amounts to power over the built environment and power over people.

Two points are important here. First, community and context are not synonymous. Rather communities contribute to and sometimes create contexts, which precede and follow from the activities of communities and may include multiple communities. For example, a business, as a community engaged in a particular kind of work, is part of the context created by the need that the business fills, the business’s activities and interests, as well as those of its suppliers, customers, shareholders, and other entities that impact the conditions of the company’s work. On the other hand, as Winsor’s (2000) discussion of the engineers and technicians at Agricorp suggests, various communities may form within a business or organization when different groups have responsibilities for different aspects of the organization’s activity. The workers Winsor discusses might also be said to belong to different communities by virtue of their professional affiliations.

Second, individuals and communities participate in multiple contexts and are therefore shaped by various and multiple interactions from which genre knowledge must be appropriated, used, and even transferred among contexts and communities. Genre enters the equation when communities create and use genres in response to contexts—to manage the activities and relationships that constitute contexts.

Schryer (2000), following Bourdieu, adopts the terms field, as “‘a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of resources or capital,’” in which “agents...are in the constant process of attempting to distinguish their field from other markets and thus acquire more recognition, or

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6 See also Wenger’s (1999) discussion of insurance claims processors as a “community of practice.”
symbolic power, and a better position vis-à-vis other fields” (p. 457). Abbott (1988) refers to this positioning in the professions as jurisdiction, or making jurisdictional claims on knowledge, activity, and capital. The more value a field (or profession, discipline, organization) can acquire and return, the more power it marshals. Accordingly, Schryer contends, “as instruments of production, some genres, especially those enacted by well-positioned fields such as education and medicine, can reproduce forms of symbolic power that can literally shape their receivers’ views of the world” (458).

**Conceptualizing Context: Genre in Systems**

In complex interconnected networks or systems of communities and contexts, genres operate as significant mediums of exchange between participants—including individuals and entire communities—that co-construct both genre and activity. Bazerman (1994 *Systems*), for instance, uses the example of the patent system and the various genres of documents involved in creating and defending patents to make the case for “systems of genre,” which, within transactions involving genres that respond to other genres, “instantiate the participation of all the parties” (p. 99).

Russell (1997) explores the relationship of school and professional genres by illustrating how complex systems of activity and genre are related to one specialization, cell biology. The genres used and created by students—textbooks, lab reports, exams—exist in relationship to other genres within the broader educational system—such as syllabi, grade reports, and transcripts—that are used for various purposes beyond student learning including evaluation and selection of students (by institutional means or by student self-selection) into disciplines. Russell shows that these school genres have relationships to genres in the professional realm of cell biology; for instance, research genres create knowledge, which in
turn becomes part of the students' system via textbooks. The professional and school genres are also shaped in part by the genres of other groups in different contexts, including the government, advocacy groups, and pharmaceutical companies to name a few.

The context of the *Access for Everyone* team, as diagrammed in Figures 2.1, below, is also illustrative. The multiple over-lapping circles suggest various spheres of knowledge.

**Figure 3.1: Access for Everyone Project as Part of a System**

*Access for Everyone Project:*
Create a text that accommodates multiple audiences and represents perspectives of people and groups with responsibilities to government, individuals

A. Government:
- Laws
- Regulations
- Guidelines
- Codes

B. Architects, Builders:
- Bids
- Plans
- Specifications
- Building codes

C. Organizations, Businesses w/ADA Responsibilities
- Policy Statements
- Reports

D. Advocacy Groups, SIGs:
- Transition Plans
- Transition Plans
- Records

E. Disabled People:
- Narratives
- Arguments
- Testimony
activity, and influence that are in contact at their borders (and to a greater or lesser degree, in reality). The diagram also suggests some of the genres that are used to convey the rhetorical stances and exigencies of different communities involved in the context.

The communities include (counterclockwise from left) the government, architects and builders, other organizations and businesses that have responsibilities for building accessibility under the ADA, advocacy and special interest groups, and people with disabilities. In some cases, the purposes and discourses of the communities involved are at cross-purposes. For instance, the interests of builders and architects (B) who design and construct buildings are not always in alignment with the concerns of disabled people (E) who might use buildings. This difference in interests would first be instantiated in the genres of construction, such as plans and specifications, which determine among other things the usability of buildings. The government (A) uses genres including laws and regulations, such as the ADA and the ADAAG, in attempting to mediate the differences among groups. The rectangle that overlaps the center represents the Access for Everyone project—the perspective from which I view the context of the project. Each of the spheres that feed into the larger system, as well as the combined effect of the multiple communities, informed the Access for Everyone team’s understanding of the issues and genres involved.

Understanding the influences of various communities and genres in complex contexts allows us to trace the influences created by the give-and-take among communities in their individual and collective attempts to articulate knowledge and negotiate interests. In explicating connections and links, we account for the social motives and purposes and the power relationships that shape texts and genres.
The complex relationships between genre and form, community, and context are particularly relevant when groups that interact use different strategies and conventions for constructing genres, when different communities have unequal power in discourse, and when contexts or the rhetorical stances that people bring to them are not shared. In these types of situations, the structure afforded by the genres people routinely use within their “home” communities—disciplines, professions, organizations—and in contexts with which they are familiar, only partially assist them in making sense of discourse. To more fully understand the ways genre use facilitates participation in discursive activities, as well as the ways genre use often inhibits participation, we need to continue to study how genres function in contexts that involve discursive activity among people from different communities with different interests, including the effects on audiences toward whom discourse is directed, and on people who are affected by—but have little influence over—discourse.

Genre and Function

I chose the examples of research described above to suggest a sort of continuum of genre that moves from mundane to highly specialized forms, and from uses of genre in relatively well-defined communities and localized contexts to uses of genre among multiple groups in complex systems. In studying various aspects of genres in situations across this spectrum, researchers and theorists analyze the relationship between the forms of genres and the ways that people learn and use genres, and suggest the roles that genres play in shaping the knowledge that people create and exchange about the world—or at least some little corner of it. We have also come to recognize that boundaries of communities, contexts, activities, and genres are far from stable, a reality that creates considerable intertextuality in
discourse and hybridity in genres (cf. Bakhtin; Bazerman; Fariclough; Schryer). Thus, the concept of genre continues to receive attention not because the forms of genres are stable but rather because genres, in the plural, various, mutable reality of everyday use, are complex and evolving sets of choices about discourse that participants in activities must effectively manage.

But to say that we use genre to read and write—to interpret, manage, construct, and negotiate various types of text—and that our use of genre is mediated by our understanding of form, our affiliations with communities, and our involvement in contexts doesn't explain the specific ways that genres “operationalize” typified activities, to use Russell’s (1997) term, particularly when the activities under consideration are reading and writing. Therefore, in this section, I outline three functions of genre that derive from the research and theory discussed above—practical, metacommunicative, and social/political—that help focus attention on the relationship between local-level literate activity as acts of genre use that respond to the broader social context.

**Practical Functions**

Practical functions concern providing knowledge and information that people need to participate in activities—information about what people need to do and how they need to do it. Practical functions include the ways that genres assist the activities of others and the ways that genres assist in the realization of objectives. For example, families make grocery lists to guide their shopping decisions (Russell 1997). Computer companies create user manuals that many of us struggle with at home to get our computers to do our bidding. Technicians and engineers use work orders that to negotiate tasks to be performed at a manufacturing company (Winsor 2000). Psychiatrists write diagnoses in clinics, which insurance claims
processors recontextualize into statements that are then routed through complex systems involving medicine, business, and individual patients (Berkenkotter 2001). Indeed, much of the research pertaining to genre and community described in this chapter centers on the idea that communities develop genres primarily to get their work done.

In terms of practical functions, a goal of the *Access for Everyone* team was to provide information about accessibility through text and graphics to assist people in a variety of communities understand accessibility issues and create built environments that are accessible to all people. To function practically, our text needed to describe accessible conditions and to explain actions that must be taken to ensure that accessibility is achieved. Another practical aspect addressed in the team's text is government regulation. Many potential readers would want information on the specific requirements for which they are responsible under the ADA and ADAAG.

However, for a genre to function practically, knowledge and information must be exchanged in a usable form, which involves an additional function—metacommunication.

**Metacommunicative Functions**

Metacommunicative functions include the ways that genres assist in the exchange of information and the ways that genres scaffold practical and social messages. Metacommunication involves the ways that writers structure information so that audiences can read and interpret texts effectively. Brandt (1990), though not specifically discussing genre, suggests that "to use and understand language requires knowing how to accomplish language and its setting simultaneously, knowing how to use language not merely to share meaning with others but also to constitute the conditions necessary for meaning to be shared" (30, italics hers). To exchange knowledge in a meaningful way, writers and readers rely on
properties of texts, such as “cohesion, labeling and lexical variety” to “sustain much of the metacommunicative undertalk by which writing and reading are managed” (9). Brandt uses the term “undertalk” to signify that metacommunicative exchanges between writers and readers “function as part of the involvement-focus of written discourse” (9) that exists not only within the text but outside the text in the context that includes both the writer and the reader.

I interpret metacommunication as the scaffolding that gives meaning to information and that connects writers, readers, and the contexts in which the text is created and used. For example, in responding to the ways that the audiences for our text might locate and use information, the Access for Everyone team considered a number of possible sequences for organizing the information in the text and various options for arranging and labeling information on the page. Repeated over time for similar purposes, metacommunicative strategies become associated with practical functions of genre but also with social and political functions, which I next discuss.

**Social/Political Functions**

Social/political functions include the ways that genres mediate relationships and represent social contexts. For example, the ADA and the ADAAG, as laws and regulations, have the power to prescribe the rights and responsibilities concerning building accessibility. The power of these genres to impose obligations and establish relationships is clear, whether or not they are practically effective in facilitating exchanges of knowledge and information. Architectural genres—such as plans and specifications—also establish relationships between architects and people who use buildings (as well as among architects and other participants in design/build process, for instance contractors). The decision to incorporate or exclude the
perspectives and needs of disabled people in a building plan is a social/political as well as a practical function. A text about accessibility requirements may discuss the built environment without discussing the ways that built environments affect people, thus creating the perceptions that accessibility is a special accommodation for a particular group.

Writers make social/political choices in deciding which perspectives to incorporate, which information to stress, which words to use, and even how to organization information. Consequently, genres involve power dynamics in that participants who control genres also control representations and interpretations of participants and relationships in contexts, and thus the ways in which relationships are constructed and managed.

**Relationship of Functions**

The three functions of genre I focus on here, practical, metacommunicative, and contextual, are interrelated and writers and readers manage these functions through the content, form, and design of texts. For example, Larry, the *Access for Everyone* team’s technical advisor, commented in an interview on the scale used in the illustrations from source texts and those in development for the team’s text:

> They were not to any scale known to humanity. It showed up [most] when you show a person in a wheelchair going through a doorway. Theoretically the doorway’s 32” wide; well if the doorway was 32” wide, that meant the person was about 12” wide in some of [the drawings]. Didn’t work. And I think that’s one of the advantages this book’s going to have is that it shows people how tight these spaces really are. I know a lot of architects who have commented on this ADA issue—they’re always saying how much space this is taking, about having to increase sizes and things—just hope for their sake they just never have to get in a wheelchair. They’re gonna be hurtin’.

Larry’s comment reflects concern for the practical, metacommunicative, and rhetorical functions of the illustrations. In practical terms, illustrations provide visual information about conditions that exist or are required to exit and must therefore be accurate.
Including illustrations to emphasize or clarify information is also a form of metacommunication that assists readers in interpreting information and reflects the context shared by the reader and writer. Further, illustrations function socially and politically by calling attention to specific issues and by reflecting and/or reinforcing attitudes about relationship and contexts. If, for example, the people and the built environment in the illustrations are not properly scaled and, thus, suggest that a person in a wheelchair seems to have plenty of room to get through the door, the requirements for wider doorways may appear needless. (In this case, improperly scaled illustrations may also raise ethical questions about accurately representing information.)

Separating these interrelated functions of genre for discussion presents some problems. I don’t suggest that we can easily compartmentalize aspects of texts or genres because all aspects function together in determining the full sense of what writers represent and what readers interpret. However, recognizing the functions of genre as typified actions that operationalize text-making activities may provide one tool for investigating genre use in contexts that include members of different communities and multiple audiences.

These functions were reflected in the goals of the Access for Everyone project, outlined in Chapter 1, as we sought to enact a genre that would respond to the needs and perspectives of various communities. In subsequent chapters, I analyze the texts and genres that the team used and created in terms of these three functions.
Chapter 3
Studying the Situated Use of Genre

In order to be studied, genres must be able to be replicated over time and place. This condition requires stable work environments, uniform practices, and a lack of change. Alternatively, more strategic studies, those studies that examine the temporal and ad hoc writing in the context of change, bring a richer, more dynamic, and more controversial political focus with them. 
*Brent Faber (2002 p. 172-173)*

Faber’s comments about studying genres reflect the focus of research that characterizes genres as typified and replicable textual responses, the study of which requires, or at least reflects, a certain stability of situation and uniformity of practice. I take a slightly different approach by studying genre use in a situation that is not typical for the participants; one in which some of the contextual clues that participants rely in their primary disciplines, professions, or work environments are unavailable or challenged. I contend that people who create and use texts in any work environment—both the relatively stable situations they’re used to and the atypical situations they find themselves in—rely on aspects of genre to make texts intelligible. Thus, situations that Faber describes as “ad hoc writing in the context of change” provide excellent opportunities for investigating the dynamics of genre use. In this chapter, I discuss the methodology I used to study the use of genre in one such situation.

As the literature review in Chapter 2 suggests, researchers study genre in a number of ways. One option is textual analysis, which centers on texts and their conventions (e.g. Swales 1990). Texts are the material accomplishments of people applying genre knowledge in various contexts and as such deserve attention. But a purely textual approach is limited in what it can convey about the contexts and activities in which texts and genres are created and used and the genre knowledge that people develop and deploy (Bhatia 1993). To fully
understand the nature of the choices that writers make, as well as the reasons that writers conform to some conventions and exploit or flout others, researchers also investigate the activities in which texts are created and the realities that writers construct along with their texts (for instance, the research by Winsor, Smart, and Munger that I discuss in Chapter 2, and Faber’s research that I quote above).

Such research explores the relationship between situated activity and genre use as people confront and respond to each other and to texts within the messiness of processes that may be obscured by polished, final products. To understand the processes by which texts come into being, why conventions are used or abandoned, and the ways genres influence activity, researchers investigate what people do with texts and what they say about what they’re doing as they engage in activities. Russell (1997) suggests that understanding the ways participants use genre in an activity “is an empirical question” (p. 518) that involves asking participants how and why they use genres and observing the actual activities in which the participants and genres interact. I would add that empirical research is also productive for understanding the ways that people apply genre knowledge as a set of strategies for managing situations where the actions are not typified.

Qualitative methodology in particular offers perspectives and tools, such as the interviews and observations that Russell mentions, useful for researching situated textual practices. In what follows in this chapter, I discuss qualitative research methodology and the ways I apply it in my own study. In doing so, I rely on literature about methodology and methods that incorporates a variety of perspectives from several disciplines—including
sociology, communication, organizational psychology, and anthropology—from which rhetoric and professional communication researchers have long borrowed.⁷

I begin by providing my rationale for choosing a qualitative approach and by describing the benefits and challenges inherent in the choice of qualitative research. Within that discussion, I address in particular my role as an insider on the Access for Everyone project that I describe in Chapter 1 and the implications of that role in terms of the research. I follow with an explication of the methods I used for collecting and analyzing data.

**Qualitative Research Methodology**

Professional communication researchers often use qualitative methods to study the real, everyday discourse practices that go on in organizational and institutional settings. They write thick descriptions and gather examples of text and talk as data from which to draw conclusions for building theories, enhancing pedagogy, and/or improving awareness about professional communication practices. Their goal is to provide descriptions and interpretations of activities that lead to a fuller understanding of the ways in which people make sense of the texts and contexts with which they interact. Indeed, much of the literature

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⁷ Several of the resources that I particularly rely on throughout this chapter synthesize many of these diverse perspectives. For example, Silverman (2001), whose primary area is sociology, provides assistance on both practice and theory, combining qualitative approaches including ethnography, textual analysis, and conversational analysis; and incorporating perspectives of research scholars from various disciplines including Goffman, Wolcott, Hammersly, Sacks, Schegloff, Denzin, Atkinson, Miles, Huberman, ten Have, Gubrium, Guba, and Lincoln. Miles and Huberman (1994; Huberman and Miles 1998), who have both written extensively about qualitative research, bring perspectives from social and educational psychology. Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) anthology is also multi-perspectival, integrating a range of issues in qualitative research theory and practice from sociology, educational research, justice studies, and qualitative research. Lindlof's (1995) particular focus is qualitative research in communication; Kvale's (1996) discussion concentrates more narrowly on qualitative interviewing. Qualitative research has a long tradition in the areas represented by these researchers, particularly ethnography, which has its roots in anthropology; and participant-observer research, closely associated with sociology (Shaffir 1999; Gans 1999; Stoller 1999; Silverman 2001).
Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is an umbrella term for a variety of approaches including "case study, action research, collaborative research, phenomenological research, field study, and interpretive interaction, among many others" (Lindlof 1995, p. 21; see also Silverman 2001; Denzin & Lincoln 1998; Creswell 1994, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (1998) describe qualitative research as "multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter" that takes place in a "natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" including the "routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives" (p. 3).

Lindlof (1995) similarly suggests that "qualitative researchers seek to preserve the form and content of human behavior and to analyze its qualities" (p. 21). The tools offered by qualitative research are appropriate for observing, recording, analyzing, and explaining both the routine and problematic moments and meanings to which Denzin and Lincoln refer. While the sub-categories vary in the way research is constructed, various approaches share several characteristics that make qualitative research unique. They focus on "interpretational processes," consider in particular "socially situated human action and artifacts," and "rely primarily on narrative forms for coding data and writing the texts to be presented to audiences" (Lindlof 1995, p. 21-22).

To explore the nature of genre knowledge as well as the routine and problematic moments of its use in cross-disciplinary activity, I follow previous researchers in professional communication research (for instance, Myers 1990) in taking a qualitative, case study
approach to elucidating the role of genre as part of the activity in one situated context.

Qualitative case studies, according to Rossman and Rallis (1998), “seek to understand a larger phenomenon through intensive study of one specific instance” of activity (p. 68). In terms of my inquiry into one team’s work, I am interested in furthering our understanding of the “larger phenomenon” of genre use—which has been identified through a significant amount of existing literature in our field—by studying the genre use of the “specific instance” of the *Access for Everyone* team’s project.

Because qualitative research is situated in the lived world, it resists neat, narrow procedures and interpretations. While the benefits of enacting this type of research include invoking a rich sense of context and providing multi-faceted and nuanced interpretations of activity, the challenges presented are equally textured. In the next part of my discussion, before moving on to describe the specific methods I used in my study, I examine several challenges and benefits that shaped my research.

**Challenges and Benefits of Qualitative Research**

A number of concerns have been raised in the literatures of professional communication, ethnography, and sociology about the relationships among methodology, methods, and the conclusions we draw about and generalize from the environments and practices we study qualitatively. The issues that are particularly germane to my project center on the impact of the researcher as a *participant* and the efficacy of the methods for collecting and interpreting data that eventually become the details of any stories that the researcher tells about the site (Faber 2002; Van Maanen 1988). These issues arise not only within our own discipline (Herndl 1996; Herndl & Nahrwold 2000; Tucker, Powell, & Meyer 1995) but also within the disciplines from which we have appropriated methodological theories, tools, and
processes, particularly those most closely associated with naturalistic approaches to research, such as anthropology and sociology (cf. Mintz 2000; Creswell 2003).

Three issues that I consider most critical for my research include my role as both participant and researcher, the adequacy of my representation of the activities under study, and research design and data management. I address each of these concerns in turn, presenting both challenges and benefits.

**Participant as Researcher**

To begin, I must talk about how I decided to research this project. My research did not start with a question for which I went in search of an answer. Nor did it begin with scoping out a research site where I could observe participants in their unique environment and from which observations and suitable questions would invariably arise. Rather, I found myself wondering about the communication on a project in which I had already been immersed as a participant for two years. I was interested in how we—as people from different disciplines—were together crafting a text, how our different viewpoints were contributing to the overall project, how we were influencing each other along the way, and how we were being influenced by other perspectives outside the team. Even though I was participating in the day-to-day work, to answer the questions, I needed to take another look at what we were doing, ask the others what they thought, and review the decisions that we had made along the way.\(^8\)

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\(^8\) I prepared and submitted the required human subjects paperwork to the University and they have approved this study. Several people who were involved in the first two years of the project left prior to the start of this research. While their involvement in the early stages of the project may be addressed peripherally, they have not been interviewed or taped. All names except mine are pseudonyms.
Lindlof (1995) discusses the various ways that participation in situations leads to ideas for research. My "fortuitous opening" (Lindlof, p. 79) presented itself as I began to understand that the social implications of the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines and other public policy texts had relevance for technical communication and that the team's interactions and uses of genre presented some variations on the genre use described in the scholarly literature I had been reading. Specifically I began to consider how the genre knowledge of the people on the project team—both disciplinary and general—impacted our activity and the text we were developing. My experiences with the team eventually crystallized into my research questions, which were as compelling to me as the opportunity to explore them in the context in which they occurred.

I suspect that the way my research opportunity came about is not so different from the ways many others come about in professional communication research, though Lindlof has noted that "explicit acknowledgement of the personal origins of research ideas" are not generally included in published scholarship (p. 80). However, research about teaching and learning professional communication logically stems from the every day classroom endeavors in which students and teachers are both immersed (for instance, Brady 1993; Freedman, Adam & Smart 1994). Opportunities in professional settings may reveal themselves in much the same way (cf. Sullivan & Porter 1997) and the reverse is often also the case—that a researcher begins a research project and becomes a participant in the professional work (cf. Faber 2002). But, however researchers search out, create, or find themselves already immersed in research sites, concerns about researcher participation and the effects on interpreting and reporting the experience are bound to be at issue.
As Creswell (1994) points out, “researchers interact with those they study, whether this interaction assumes the form of living with or observing informants over a prolonged period of time, or actual collaboration. In short, the researcher tries to minimize the distance between him- or herself and those being researched” (5-6). Because the team’s story is also my own story as a worker as well as a researcher, I’ve begun to think of my work as researching and writing through the direct, joint involvement of self with others, the type of research that is enacted particularly in the traditions of ethnography and participant-observer research.

Consequently, an important aspect of my qualitative work is recognizing my role as a completely immersed researcher\(^9\) in the work of the project team, a role that would seem to exacerbate what Herndl and Nahrwold (2000) have described as two seemingly intractable problems for qualitative researchers: “(a) the difficulty of including the voices of the social agents [researchers] study without usurping their autonomy and ... (b) theoretical imperialism, in which the researcher’s theoretical commitment dominates both the scene under study and the social actors in it” (p. 289). The direct involvement of researchers in the work they study has the potential to magnify both these concerns since an immersed

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\(^9\) The literature discusses a variety of categorizations of researcher-participant. For example, Adler and Adler (1998) review Gold’s 1958 “typology,” which includes “the complete participant, the participant –as-observer, the observer-as-participant, and the complete observer” based on the level of involvement of the researcher in the activity (p. 83-86). Acker (2000) uses slightly different terms and criteria, including “Indigenous-Insider, External- Outsider, Indigenous-Outsider, and External-Insider. Her typology is based on criteria such as the community of “socialization,” the level of “assimilation” of a researcher into a community other than her “home” community, the level of acceptance given that person by the community she studies, and the commitment and sympathy the researcher has for the community she studies. See also Gans (1999) for a discussion of trends in participant-observer research and the tension between PO (his term) and ethnography. My term for my own participation, “completely immersed researcher,” recognizes a level of involvement similar to Gold’s “complete participant.”
researcher's own perspective and investment in the work must certainly shape any
description of the character, purpose, and dimensions of the work.

Another important aspect of my approach, in addition to incorporating traditional
qualitative methods, is to acknowledge the difficulties of separating project work from
research work, of explicitly recognizing one's own perspective, and of including multiple
perspectives in the analysis of the communication activity. To effectively convey a sense of
the lived experience of the participants, incorporating the views of other participants gleaned
from research data is not enough. Other participants should be encouraged to co-construct the
experience, and conflicts in interpretation of experience should be part of the discussion for
what those differences suggest about the activity. This reflexivity (Hymes 1996) also allows
me to verify my sense of what's going on.

I was open about my research with the study participants. They were fully informed
about the project and have discussed the research side of the project with me on occasion.
Researchers who are also participants should not be surprised when other participants suggest
aspects of the activity that they think should be included in the research. For instance, the
exchange I report below occurred toward the end of my interview with Larry, the landscape
architect and technical advisor on the project. As the interview wound down, we were talking
about the division of labor earlier in the project in which each team member had been
working on separate aspects of the project.

Donna: I wonder if it would've helped from the very beginning if we had been looking at a lot of things more together than we did, like we do now...or maybe...I don't know.
Larry: I don't know. We'll never know.
Donna: We'll never know. That's right.
Larry: But it is something to put in there as one of those things to be discovered that should always be included in a dissertation or thesis. (Interview Excerpt April 2, 2001)

Larry's freedom to make suggestions is indicative of his awareness of my research and our equal status in the context of the project. Though research participants are rarely involved in the systematic analysis of the data from which researchers derive their interpretations, one benefit of participant input is certainly the opportunity for enriching the research through multiple perspectives. While researchers have most of the power in writing about the research, participants' comments and suggestions about what to include should be carefully weighed not only for what they suggest about content but for what they suggest about how participants see the work under study.

Researcher participation raises questions adequate representation of the perspectives and actions of research participants, which is the topic that I now briefly take up.

Adequacy of Representation

Creswell (1994) points out that the qualitative researcher "admits the value-laden nature of the study and actively reports his or her values and biases, as well as the value nature of information gathered from the field" (6). The task of the researcher is to "report faithfully these realities and to rely on voices in interpretations of the informants" (6). From this perspective, researchers are always a factor in a study even if their roles are limited to observer and interpreter of the events, and such roles are never value free. In fact, Van Maanen (1988) warns of the difficulty that researchers face in trying to "adequately display the culture (or, more commonly, parts of the culture) in a way that is meaningful to readers without great distortion" (p. 13).
I respond by acknowledging that researchers can never be totally unbiased and by maintaining reflexivity as much as possible. Paradoxically, my immersion in the project—the viewpoint through which all the information and conclusions that I present are filtered—is a unique position that provides me a more and detailed knowledge of the meanings of the context under study. Faber (2002), for instance, has posited that “outsiders,” researchers who come to a site primarily to observe, are able to identify and report on the consistent, typified, and generic responses in communication. However, they “will not witness or recognize more fleeting, nongeneric communication patterns” (p. 173).

Researchers who are fully involved in the context and learn the practices, on the other hand, may be in a unique position to understand subterranean aspects of the work—for example subtle changes in activities and communication strategies. However, as Silverman (2001) has noted, knowledge of, experience with, or participation in the context under study is not a panacea. In his words, “immediacy and authenticity may be a good basis for certain kinds of journalism, but qualitative researchers must make different claims if we are to take their work seriously” (p. 221). The claims that Silverman suggests are based on criteria for evaluating research that are equally useful in planning and executing research. These include using research methods appropriate for and sensitive to the research question, making a clear “connection to an existing body of knowledge or theory,” as I do in Chapter 3; accounting for criteria and methods for collecting and analyzing data, as I do in the remainder of this chapter; and adequately discussing the data in drawing interpretations (Silverman p. 222), as I do in subsequent chapters. In addition, Creswell (2003), Silverman (2001), and Lindlof (1995) discuss gathering data by multiple methods. As the methods I discuss below indicate,
I use several methods of data gathering and look to other project participants for their views of the project.

Altheide and Johnson (1998) further suggest not only "accounting for ourselves" as researchers—our position in relation to the activity under study (p. 301)—but also accounting for "what contributes to the definition of situation, its nature, character, origin, and consequences" (p. 296). As I described in Chapter 2, the activity of the Access for Everyone project is a kind of nexus of cultures and contexts. The immediate context of the project is bordered by, or overlapped by, other contexts—for instance the disciplines and professions of architecture and professional communication are present through the affiliations of project participants; the institutions of university and government are present through structures of governance and the powerful discourses that shape them; and other audiences and publics are present through the team’s attempts to envision and meet their needs. Though I cannot hope to thoroughly know or fully represent these bordering contexts, my discussion of the social issues in Chapter 2 suggests that they influenced the project and the team’s textual practices.

Many of the suggestions for adequately representing the research are related to methods of collection and analysis of data, which I discuss shortly. The suggestions also have implications for research design and data management, which I discuss next.

**Data Management and Research Design**

One challenging aspect of qualitative research is the potential for the researcher to become awash in a sea of data, particularly when implementing multiple methods of data collection as I did for my study. Kvale (1996), in his thorough discussion of collecting and using data from interviews, suggests that if a researcher is looking for a method to analyze
her “1,000 pages” (or in my case, many more thousands) of already collected data then the search for a method has started too late. Kvale urges devising methods for analysis in designing studies and managing data in such a way that analysis can begin even during data collection.

Kvale cautions researchers to decide the reasons (the why) for choosing particular data (the what) to collect before collection begins. In the case of interviews, this approach allows researchers to know why interviews will be useful and what the researcher seeks from an interview before talking to the interviewee. Kvale also suggests choosing a method of data analysis before collecting data. These strategies can help researchers pare down data even as they collect it.

Huberman and Miles (1998; see also Miles & Huberman 1984, 1994) similarly point out that developing a framework, research questions, and instruments prior to collecting and coding data provides for preliminary data reduction by focusing the research on themes and categories for data analysis as part of the research design. Researchers use “data summaries, coding, finding themes, clustering, and writing stories” during the research process (Huberman & Miles 1998, p. 180) to refine categories and focus collection. In addition, Huberman and Miles (1998) advocate defining a “reasonably coherent system” for collecting, storing, and retrieving data (p. 181).

Because I had devised provisional research questions before collecting data and was focused on the team’s understanding and use of genre, I was able to use the research questions as a guide for determining the methods I used for data collection. I was able to anticipate some data categories in advance, which was helpful not only in organizing data but in recognizing changes I needed to make in the categories as I began looking at data. Further,
genre theory and activity theory were useful in providing a framework for choosing the methods that I used to collect and analyze data, which I describe below.

**Research Methods**

Aspects of communication, such as identifying and understanding the ways that people use genres and genre knowledge as tools in activity, are difficult to understand apart from the activities they mediate. For this reason, qualitative research methods are particularly well suited to exploring the relationship between texts and activities in context.

To investigate communication practices in the context of the team’s project, I took a multi-method approach to collecting and analyzing data for two reasons. First, using various methods for collecting data is consistent with the objectives of qualitative research and reflects a concern for triangulation and reliability (Miles & Huberman 1984; Hymes 1996; Silverman 2001). Silverman suggests “comparing different kinds of data (e.g., quantitative and qualitative) and different methods (e.g., observation and interviews) to see whether they corroborate one another” and then “taking one’s findings back to the subjects being studied” (p. 233). Second, when the human behavior under study is discourse, and writing in particular, the meanings of the form and content of behavior referred to by Denzin and Lincoln take on a particular multiplicity. The form and content of the activity of constructing texts are directed toward realizing form and content in the text.

Because my research focuses on the team’s knowledge and use of genres, collecting and analyzing documents created and used by the team was an essential research method for my study. But to identify and explain the ways the team members understood, negotiated, and used genres and genre knowledge, I also rely on data collected from the team’s meetings
and participant interviews to verify my impressions of the project context and to incorporate various perspectives into the research. In the next section, I describe the methods I used for collecting and analyzing data.

**Data Collection**

Whether the activity under study is typical or not, whether the communication situation is on-going or ad-hoc, studying the interpretation and use of genres as part of practice calls attention to the relationship between activity and text. Theorizing this relationship requires considering both the ways that genres mediate activity and the features of the texts themselves.

In the discussion that follows, I describe each of three data collection methods I used, including collecting and cataloging documents, interviewing key project participants, and recording and transcribing a series of team meetings.

**Collecting and Cataloging Documents**

Orlikowski and Yates (1994) identify a group of “different, interacting genres” (p. 542) that people “enact...by drawing on their knowledge, tacit or explicit, of a set of genre rules” as a “genre repertoire” (p. 545). Since my research questions focus on the team’s use of genre, my first step was to document the team’s genre repertoire. I collected all the documents generated by the team from the beginning of the project. The documents I collected were of two types: texts the team generated or used to do its work and drafts of the text that was the object of the team’s work.

The first type of documents included e-mails, notes, memos, style guides, tracking documents, document test plans and materials, and articles and promotional materials that I sorted by genre and organized chronologically. I listed all the genres of the documents the
team generated and used, wrote descriptions of each genre, and—based on the description—assigned each genre to one of three categories that I devised to equate genres with various types of tasks the team needed to accomplish as part of its activity. I devised three generic categories into which I sorted the teams’ texts:

- **Team-focused genres** used to organize relationships and facilitate communication within the team (including, for example, project-tracking documents, meeting minutes, notes, and e-mails)
- **Text-focused genres** used to inform and shape the target text (including, for example, source texts and style guides)
- **Community-focused genres** used to organize relationships and facilitate communication between the team and other communities (including, for example, reports about the project to stakeholders, payroll timesheets submitted to the university, and information collected from surveys completed by outside reviewers)

The categorized list of genres with their descriptions is included in Appendix A. These documents and genres constitute tools that the team used to facilitate its work. In addition, the documents serve as a record of the team’s activity by providing specific information about the division of labor on the team and the decisions that the team made about the text it was creating. Throughout my discussion of the team’s activities and texts, I use information gathered from these documents to reconstruct the team’s activities and decisions. In this sense, I use these documents—particularly project-tracking documents, and notes and e-mails shared among team members—as my field notes.

The second type of documents included drafts of the team’s primary text and illustrations that the team generated and revised over the course of the project. These were the drafts of the object of the team’s activity—the text and illustrations for what became
Access for Everyone. The sequence of drafts that the team created constitutes another kind of record of the team’s work. In this case, the sequence of drafts records changes that the team made to the text over time as well as substantive and editorial comments that the team members made to each other via the drafts. Changes and comments on drafts provide indications of the team’s evolving views of both the generic considerations that shaped the text and the practical and social issues informing it.

I organized these drafts of Access for Everyone by chapter and chronologically from the start of the project. By the end of the project, the full text of Access for Everyone contained 50 chapters and over 500 pages. The accumulated, multiple drafts of all the text and illustrations amounted to thousands of pages. However, as I organized and reviewed the drafts, I found that the types of changes and comments on drafts of each chapter and by each team member were similar across the drafts of all chapters. Because all categorical choices about the text made by the team became the basis for the ongoing revisions of each chapter and the construction of new chapters, decisions reflected in the successive drafts of one chapter were consistent with changes in the others. Some chapters had been developed more recently than others, meaning that some chapters were started after a number of changes in format and style had been implemented and thus did not reflect all the decisions the team made from the beginning of the project. In addition, the length and complexity of the chapters varied depending on the complexity of the accessibility issue. For instance, some chapters required more explanatory information and illustrations than others. Further, the drafts of chapters that covered more complex accessibility issues required more revisions and contained more comments and changes representative of the team’s efforts to understand the issues and develop ways to communicate that complexity to its audiences.
Therefore, I reduced the data by selecting one chapter for closer analysis that represented the project from the beginning and reflected the full range of the teams' concerns and choices. Drafts of the chapter on accessible doors were available from the start of the project and represented all the types of features that were included in each of the other chapters of the text.

Subsequently, I more closely examined all the draft documents related to the chapter explaining accessible doors (657 documents total). The types of documents I reviewed included:

- 601 drafts of illustrations only that were created in Adobe Illustrator
- 30 drafts of text only created using Microsoft Word
- 14 drafts including illustrations and text formatted in Quark
- 3 tracking sheets used to manage drafts later in the project
- 8 drafts of a list of figure numbers and captions (for illustrations)
- 1 draft of only the table of contents for the chapter

I labeled each of the documents from the chapter and then created a table to display data about each document, including the creation date, the name of the person who generated it, the review data, the name of the person(s) providing review or comment, and the type of document. (A sample of the data display for the first 50 documents of the chapter on which I focused is provided in Appendix B, Table B.2).

In the data display table, I also included notes on the nature of any comments or other significant aspect of the drafts. For instance, I noted the types of comments that were present in the drafts and significant changes to the document, such as the first time a draft of the chapter included introductory text. The notes provide a condensed view of the changes made
across the drafts over time and an index for deciding which drafts of the sample to focus on in discussion. I focus on the changes in the drafts of this text in Chapter 5.

My purpose for reviewing and cataloging the various the comments and revisions across one chapter was to understand what considerations went into the final draft of the text—to identify the team’s attempts to align the text with existing concepts of genre that team members brought to the work and to improvise on those concepts. However, I also refer to drafts of text and illustrations from other chapters that the team discussed during a series of working meeting that I taped as the team completed its penultimate draft (discussed below).

**Interviewing Key Participants**

Kvale (1996) describes the purpose of “qualitative research interviews” as “to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (p. 5-6, italics his). According to Kvale, a qualitative research interview is a conversation, but “not a conversation between equal partners because the researcher defines and controls the situation. The topic of the interview is introduced by the researcher, who also critically follows up on the subject’s answers” (p. 6). In addressing the problem of different perspectives from various interviewees, Kvale suggests that a strength of the interview conversation is to capture the “multitude of subjects’ views of a theme and to picture a manifold and controversial human world (p. 7).”

To gather information about what the project participants thought about the work, I interviewed three key project participants.¹⁰ The purpose of the interviews was to collect

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¹⁰ I did not conduct a formal, semi-structured interview with the project manager, though he provided information, clarification, and feedback continuously throughout the research. Another member of the team who
information about the participants’ professional and academic backgrounds and their perspectives on the work the group was doing. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed in their entirety (resulting in 33 pages of transcribed interviews). The interviews were semi-structured in that I developed a list of questions that I asked each person in the same order and I also asked follow-up questions to elicit clarifications of interviewee’s statements. During taped interviews, I asked each person I interviewed the following questions:

1. What is your professional/disciplinary background?
2. Have you work on a document of this type before?
3. How do you understand the goals of this project? Have these goals changed over the course of the project? If so, in what ways and why?
4. In what ways do you think the document meets goals of the project?
5. In what ways is the document different from the initial plan?
6. Were there differences of opinions among the team members about the text and graphics? What do you perceive the nature of those differences, if any, to be?
7. How did the team negotiate differences in perspectives about the text and graphics?
8. What kinds of expertise do you feel each member of the team brought to the project (including yourself)?

The interviews were conducted during the period that I collected most of my data, which was well into the team’s project and after several people who had worked on it had come and gone. The three people I interviewed were significantly involved in the project at the point the interviews took place and had a range of experience with the team. Larry, the technical advisor and one of the illustrators, had been involved with the project from the

agreed to participate in my research left the project before I conducted interviews and was not available for the interview. A third participant agreed to participate in the taped meetings. He had just started work on the project as I completed my research, so I did not conduct an interview with him.
beginning; Eden, the editor, had joined the team during the second year of the project; and Pat, the project assistant, was relatively new at the time, having joined the team at the start of the third year.

The participants I interviewed had different disciplinary backgrounds and varying levels of experience on the project. Their differences allowed me to consider several different perspectives of the project. For instance, when Eden, a technical writer, joined the team as editor, the team had already produced a significant portion of the text it was creating. Eden was able to identify issues related to the text and to the team’s work practices (such as document cycling) that had become transparent to people who had been on the team from the beginning. As she put it during the interview, “I’m having to start almost literally from a blank page and build the templates in the software, you know, to make [the text] do what we want it to do.” Pat, a project assistant with a background in social services, was an even more recent addition to the project and just beginning to sort out some of the complexities of the ADAAG, or what she referred to as the “technical jumble,” while participants with a longer association with the project had become relatively knowledgeable about the accessibility issues.

I use data from the interviews throughout this study. Though the interviews were useful for gathering information about the participants’ backgrounds and views of the work based on the specific questions I posed to each person, I also collected additional information about the participants’ understanding and use of genre by reviewing conversations that occurred during the team’s meetings as we worked on the text.
Recording and Transcribing Team Meetings

My purpose for collecting data from team meetings was to understand whether and how the team's discussions would illuminate the use of genre on the project. I collected data from twelve meetings over five months from January and May 2001 as the team prepared its penultimate draft. Each meeting lasted between 45 minutes to 2 hours. I audiotaped the meetings primarily because, as a project participant, making detailed field notes of conversations would have been impossible. Rather than try to remember and recount what people said after the fact, I wanted an accurate record to which I could refer in developing themes across the collected data (Silverman 2001; Miles & Huberman 1984).

Before going on to discuss what I transcribed of these conversations and why, I want to mention several of the methodological and practical problems inherent in transcription that have been noted by a number of researchers (cf. Sacks et al 1974; Edelsky 1993; Ochs 1979, 1997; Silverman, 2001). Methodologically, a significant issue in transcribing conversations and displaying them as data pertains to representation. No matter how accurate a researcher attempts to be in rendering a conversation, the transcript represents a set of choices made by the researcher that never fully captures the full sense of actual talk. As researchers, we choose, to a degree, how to represent the focus and the sequencing of the talk as well as other features of people's expression and voice. Practically, transcription presents additional challenges. At many of the team meetings I taped, people's talk overlapped, several people spoke at once; at times, more than one conversation (called "side sequences") took place at a time. Just deciphering who's saying what can become a challenge.11

11 Edelsky's (1993) discussion of her painstaking efforts to transcribe conversations among five committee members illustrates the difficulties in adequately representing what goes on in a conversation, especially with more than two people. Recording side-sequences, accurately representing overlaps and turns, and differentiating
With these considerations in mind, I reviewed all taped meetings a number of times. I transcribed at least a portion of each and in many cases the entire meeting (resulting in 109 pages of transcription) into data display tables by conversational “turns” as opposed to a speaker’s full utterance. This practice attempts to capture the conversational flow, including interruptions and overlaps in the discussion. The data display tables identify the turn number and the speaker, and include columns for recording notes and codes related to themes that emerged during analysis. For those sessions not fully transcribed, I noted topics of conversation and themes so that I could return if necessary to portions of the tapes I had not transcribed.

My goal in collecting this data was not specifically to describe the team’s conversational strategies, for instance, turn-taking, or interruptions—though such features sometimes had a bearing on discerning someone’s role in a conversation that led to a decision (see Schegloff 2000)—but rather to connect the team’s talk with changes in the developing text. However, in selecting, presenting, and interpreting data, after sample data were identified, I reviewed the tapes again and further refined the transcription, incorporating a range of transcription conventions, shown in Figure 3.1, to represent the conversations as accurately as possible.

what Edelsky refers to as “free for all” conversation from more “orderly collaborations” present unique challenges for transcribing. Edelsky also points out how easily the number of “turns” an individual takes in a conversation can be skewed by the method of transcription.

12 Conventions developed from Hatch (1992, p.7); Ochs (1997, in Van Dijk; p. 203)
Figure 3.1: Transcription Conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Latches—people picking up immediately on the other person’s words with no break but no significant overlap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(.)</td>
<td>Pauses—one dot for each two-tenths of a second; one or more seconds is indicated by numeric value (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>:</td>
<td>Elongated verbalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bold</strong></td>
<td>Emphasis—on a word or phrase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS</td>
<td>Loud volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>°degree°</td>
<td>Low volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Rising intonation (as in question)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.</td>
<td>Lowering intonation (as in end of sentence—speaker ends speaking completely)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Violative interruptions—speaker is cut off abruptly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(note)</strong></td>
<td>Descriptions of sounds other than talk, nonverbal communication, or activity pertinent to the talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>Missed or garbled talk [not transcribed]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since my research interest is in discovering how people work with genre, the themes I developed as I analyzed the conversations focus on aspects of discourse that, to paraphrase Miller, “fused” the team’s understanding of content, conventions, and the rhetorical situation. Because I couldn’t know during the initial stages of data collection and analysis what aspects of the conversations would surface as important, I focused on several themes in two categories that reflected the team’s process of negotiating and shaping the text and the team members’ understanding and use of genre:

- **topics of conversation**—what the speakers were discussing, including content and organization, textual features, graphics and formatting, rhetorical stance, and representation of others (audiences for the texts as well as people who are impacted by accessibility issues)
• **speaker strategies**—how the speakers discussed the topics, including explaining, arguing, narrating, instructing, indicating preferences, and appealing to authority.

A full description of the themes and an example of transcription that I analyzed based on these themes is presented in Appendix C. A sample of data from the transcription appears in Figure 3.3 in the next section, which discusses how I combined the data from the transcribed meetings and collected documents in analyzing the data.

**Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data derived from interviews, transcripts, and documents related to the team’s work, I follow principles of discourse analysis, studying language use in context, and in particular critical discourse analysis (CDA). Qualitative methods of observing activity and collecting data are complemented by the analytic tools of discourse analysis broadly defined as the study of “language in use” (Brown & Yule, 1982, p. 1) and the contextual nature of communication as it happens in the environments that shape it and are shaped by it (Brown & Yule, 1982; Gumperz, 1982; Schiffrin 1987; Schlegloff 1992).

According to Catherine Smith, the focus of discourse analysis as a method “is to understand how our subjects’ interactions relate to their settings and situations” (p. 205). Explicit in CDA’s theoretical stance is the idea that language is “a mode of action” that is “always socially and historically situated” and “in a dialectical relationship with other facets of ‘the social’” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 131), an approach to investigating discourse that is consistent with theories of situated genre use that I discussed in Chapter 3.

I examined the collected data to determine in what ways the team’s immediate activity was mediated by the activities of other contexts. To fully capture a sense of the ways
in which the team worked together with texts, the conversations about texts are best understood in the context of the specific text under discussion. I therefore use samples of data from conversation in conjunction with the text they describe, particularly in Chapter 6. The brief example below is taken from a work session in which the team is discussing a title for the penultimate draft of its text.

**An Example of the Talk-Text Connection**

The title of the text was debated periodically over the course of the project. Prior to April of 2001, various provisional titles had been used for the text including:

- Field Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Guidelines
- Quick Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Guidelines
- Easy Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Guidelines

We dispensed with *Field Guide* early in 1999, as it seemed to connect the text more to building and site inspections than to the range of uses we hoped it would serve, for example plan reviews that take place in offices rather than in the field. We adopted instead *Quick Guide* and then briefly *Easy Guide* a year later. (I discuss these changes more in Chapter 5).

As the text grew in length and complexity, however, we began to think that “quick” and “easy” did not best describe the text or our perspective on accessibility. Dr. Arnold expresses this idea in a working draft of a preface for the text (5/1/2001) presented in Figure 3.2, below. The parenthetical “(current title)” indicates that we had not yet come up with a new working title for the text.
Our original idea for the title of this book was *Quick Guide to Accessibility, with References to ADAAG*. Eventually that title evolved into *Easy Guide to Accessibility, with references to ADAAG*. These titles reflected our intention to make the array of complex and confusing accessibility standards “quick and easy” to retrieve and understand. As the months (an ultimately years) of work on the project continued, it became apparent that no matter how hard we tried, and no matter how many different versions we came up with, the handbook we were writing would be neither quick nor easy to use.

We believe (current title) represents a dramatic improvement over most of the existing available reference materials in presenting accessibility standards and recommendations that are understandable. We have incorporated straightforward language, clear directives and recommendations, and realistic illustrations. The (current title) should be used as a companion document to existing standards and technical requirements.

Dr. Arnold has left open the issue of the title until we develop one that meets our practical and rhetorical purposes. In April and May of 2001, as we worked on the penultimate draft of the text, the team sought to choose a title that suggested the types of information and assistance about accessibility issues and the ADAAG requirements that the text provided but that also foregrounded the team’s position on accessibility issues. At a meeting in May of 2001, Eden handed out a draft of several pages of the introduction to the text that contained a potential new title:

*Access for Everyone: A guide for complying with the Americans Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines*

In the excerpts from the ensuing conversation about title, presented in Figure 3.3, below, the team discusses and refines the new title. Several aspects of the team’s organization and relationship are discernable here. Though Dr. Arnold was the team lead, all the team members’ statuses were relatively equal in their freedom to advance and argue ideas.
Figure 3.3: Title Change Discussion

<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Arnold: We have the Quick Guide team all in place here=</td>
<td>2. Eden: well except that I've changed the name of the book .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pat: Oh .</td>
<td>4. Arnold: Everybody has a smile even Eden who recently broke an ankle=</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the opening exchange, above, Eden has announced the title change obliquely by responding to Dr. Arnold’s recognition that the Quick Guide team is present. The team’s name is about to change along with the title of the text. As people read the introduction pages, each person says the new title aloud, though few comments are offered initially. For several minutes the conversation turns to various team management issues.

Eden, clearly looking for a response to the new title, returns the conversation to the title at the beginning of the next exchange (line 8). Pat notes her approval. To provide a sense of how the new title sounds in the text, Eden reads aloud from the draft of the introduction (line 10), focusing on a section that discusses the uses of the text, to connect the title to the idea that the text is useful in “all phases of” design, construction, and site inspection—a relationship between the text and the activities it supports that has been an important aspect of the team’s work.

<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Eden: (reading) =“the second section provides information about Access for Everyone such as the purposes and” blah blah blah “suggestions for using Access for Everyone in all phases of” blah blah blah=</td>
<td>11. Pat: =I think it’s excellent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the next section of the exchange, I interrupt by overlapping Eden’s reading to raise a concern (line 14). The issue is whether the part of the title after the colon represents the perspective on providing accessibility that we want to convey. Dr. Arnold is considering alternatives as well and suggests “designer’s guide;” however, he retracts his own suggestion, recognizing that it may limit the audiences for the text (line 19). I then make an alternative suggestion for the part of the title after the colon (line 20).

14. **Donna:** //OK. I have a // problem with the after the colon part and I’ll tell you //why//

15. **Eden:** //well// then //that’s//

16. **Donna:** //I //I think it should be A Guide with References to the Americans with Disabilities Act cause we don’t want it we don’t want people to think we’re simply complying=

17. **Eden:** =no=

18. **Donna:** =you know because it’s it’s really getting we’re trying to bring more things in and a different perspective=

19. **Arnold:** =what about a designers guide? No we don’t want designer right? (.)

20. **Donna:** I think A Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines. You know what I’m saying? I don’t want them to think (.)

In the next exchange (below) Edith responds to me by noting that using both “access” and “accessibility” in the title is a redundancy (line 21). I in turn suggest a new phrase for the section of the title before the colon (line 22). Edith replies that she has been researching the title, an aspect of the process of titling the text that only she has considered and a comment that may also foreclose discussion on the first part of the title (line 23). Here, Eden uses her expertise to manage the exchange.

21. **Eden:** well is it is it redundant to go Access for Everyone A Guide to Accessibility (.) with=

22. **Donna:** =Space for Everyone?

23. **Eden:** well I’ve done a search at the Library of Congress=

24. **Donna:** =um-hm=

25. **Eden:** =and of a search they had a a reference librarian I said see if you can find this used in anything and uh you know and he said the only thing he found was a speech by Barbara Bush
At this point, we engage in a bit of off-topic conversation about the Bush administration and the ADA. As the conversation returns to the title in the next exchange, Dr. Arnold again takes up the topic of the title with another suggestion. He returns to the use of the word “complying,” and again, I raise an objection. We return to trying various phrases after the colon.

26. Arnold: Well how about if we say Access for Everyone a Guide to Complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act period?

27. Donna: What’s that complying with? A Guide to complying with. We’re trying to do more than that.

28. Eden: all right

29. Donna: it’s the it’s=


31. Donna: //creating// accessible spaces a guide to I don’t know (. ) you know what I’m saying?

32. Eden: Yeah right

33. Donna: It’s we we don’t want it to be so narrowly //construed//

34. Eden: //right//

35. Arnold: Creating accessible environments?

The conversation continued on and off throughout the meeting as we experimented with various versions of the title. The team was satisfied with Access for Everyone in that it is unique and met our rhetorical objectives in conveying the stance that the team has taken to accessibility—that buildings should accommodate all people. We had more trouble with the second part of the title as we tried to choose a phrase that would convey practical information about the scope, purpose, and audiences for the text. We also needed to indicate specifically that the text includes information about the ADAAG. By the end of the meeting, we had negotiated a new, and final, title for the text—Access for Everyone: A Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).

In terms of genre and the types of topical themes I observed in our conversations, I categorize the exchange as “labeling,” in that it is a discussion of the label for the text and represents on strategy—labeling—that we used in attempting to connect out text to a genre.
The acts of naming and renaming the text suggest the ongoing reconceptualizing of the text and its salient features that occurred throughout the project. The example above also demonstrates the ways in which the team’s concerns are instantiated in both text and talk about text. Dr. Arnold’s invention draft of the preface not only mentions the various titles of the text but also articulates the reasons for the changes and the nature of the changes in our text over time. The text created by the various titles and the conversation from the meeting further illustrate the team’s continuing concern for aligning the text with a genre to meet the needs of audiences.

**Applications in this Study**

My purpose in providing the example above is to demonstrate triangulation among types of data. The dialectic relationship between the discussion and the texts illustrates an instance of strategic application of genre knowledge. The data from both the text and the talk help explain the changes in the title as an indication of the team’s understanding of genre as strategy as well as form.

In the next two chapters, I use the data I collected to tell the story of how the Access for Everyone team members negotiated their use of genre and crafted a text that we believed would address the needs and perspectives of a variety of audiences. In Chapter 5, I focus on textual analysis of several source documents that the team used and a series of drafts of the team’s text. In Chapter 6, I analyze examples of several genres the team used during development of the text as well as conversations from meetings to consider the strategies team members used to negotiated genre related issues.
Chapter 4
(re)Writing Texts: Genre and Transformation

It's about equality and making everything accessible to all people. It's just lack of education and we need to do more educating and I think people would agree that it's a good idea. But I see [accessibility] as a human service as opposed to just rules and regulations, faceless people, just a code you have...I see it as enabling people, a service.
Pat, Project Assistant

In Chapter 1, I detailed the complex context in which the Access for Everyone project is situated and to which it responds. In describing the background of the issues, I sought to locate the various players in the discursive field of disability and accessibility and to account for the roles of genres in mediating that field. I suggested that genres function to distinguish different communities' boundaries, interests, and discourses, and to mediate activities as well as interactions among groups. Though genres can advance or inhibit relationships and activities in dynamic and dialectical ways, they can also provide common spaces for change through which communities negotiate perspectives and responsibilities.

As the literature I reviewed in Chapter 2 suggests, genres serve a number of functions within communities and across complex contexts. Within communities, genres are part of communities' habitus (Bourdieu), and as such function to represent and manage knowledge, facilitate community-specific activities, and define community identity. The forms of genres, though constantly evolving, become temporarily stabilized (Schryer 1993) sets of conventions that allow community members to enact these functions with a modicum of regularity. Thus, learning to use genres is one way that people demonstrate their affiliation with communities. Beyond communities, genres also serve as outward symbols of
communities' capital and jurisdiction (Bourdieu; Abbott) thereby normalizing and legitimating communities' knowledge and activities to others.

Alternatively, in contexts that involve a number of different communities and activities, genres develop in response to complex relationships and interdependent activities in which knowledge must be negotiated and shared by participants who hold various perspectives and engage in different disciplinary practices (Bazerman; Russell). These types of genre either originate within one participating community involved in the context and must be adopted or adapted by others—for instance Congress enacted the ADA as a law that other participants must incorporate into their activities—or they result from ad hoc interactions of members of various communities—for example, over time the Access Board has altered the genre of the ADAAG in response to interactions with other communities and influences of other genres, such as the ANSI standards.

In either case, diversity of perspectives, as I have been arguing, presents both challenges and opportunities in terms of understanding and using genre. The genres that facilitate activities and relationships within particular communities must be adjusted or replaced to facilitate activities and relationships with other communities. In these situations writers must consider a number of aspects of genre to construct texts that will work effectively in complex, multi-community contexts.

In this chapter, I focus specifically on the complexities of genre that the Access for Everyone team managed as it developed its text over time—and as the team developed and changed over time. In considering the team's texts and activities, I focus on the research question: in what ways do people use genre when they participate in discursive activity that
includes and/or addresses people from other communities? The analyses that I present in this chapter suggest the following generalizations about the team’s use of genre:

- The team considered the activities of the larger context and the genres that mediate those activities in developing a text to accommodate the needs of various audiences and represent a range of perspectives and experiences.
- The team adapted the conventions of existing genres and improvised generic solutions that would function (a) practically to meet the needs of the broader community involved in accessibility efforts, (b) meta-communicatively to provide scaffolding for readers from a variety of communities, and (c) rhetorically to represent the larger social context from the perspective of the team.
- The team deployed genre knowledge strategically as it enacted a series of transformations of information and rhetorical perspectives to achieve its final draft.

I begin my discussion by describing the composition of the team, the various perspectives that team members brought to the project, and the activities in which the team members engaged to accomplish the project-related tasks. In the remainder of the chapter, I analyze samples of source texts and the team’s texts to explain a series of generic transformations that the team worked through to arrive at a final version of its text.

Throughout my discussion, I describe changes within and outside the team that led to changes in the team’s approach to the writing task. I also note the ways in which the team’s text was constrained by the genres of other participants in the discursive field, demonstrating that the genres enacted by powerful participants in discourse are influential and pervasive in shaping the genre use of others.
Participants and Roles

As I described in Chapter 1, my research follows a team of graduate students and professionals, including myself, who worked on a project at Midwestern University developing a text to help people understand accessibility issues related to built environments. In this section, I describe the project participants and the various roles and tasks involved in the project.

Project Participants

Ten people worked on the Access for Everyone team over the four years of the project, including two from rhetoric and professional communication, four from graphic design, three from architecture/landscape architecture, and one outside consultant. The length of time that each person worked on the project varied in part because of the length of project. Some people left the project as they left the university for other positions; others joined the team to replace them.

Three of the team members, Dr. Arnold, Larry, and I participated in the project from beginning to end; the other seven people participated for varying amounts of time, ranging from six months to three years. As the initial writer on the team, I was one of four people who started the project. Dr. Arnold asked me to help with the development of the text because I had worked for him successfully as an editor on a previous project. The five team members introduced below were on the project when my research began and agreed to participate in the interviews and taped meetings for this study.¹

¹ Information about the backgrounds of individual team members was gathered during interviews. Information about participants' length of engagement was collected from notes about team meetings, e-mails, and project-tracking materials used by the team.
• **Dr. Arnold**, a Professor of Architecture at Midwestern University, had 20 years of workplace, teaching, and consulting experience in architecture, historic preservation, and disability/accessibility issues; has numerous publications and presentations in areas of historic preservation and accessibility issues; has assisted in various ISU accessibility reviews; and worked on previous versions of the texts that preceded *Access for Everyone*. Dr. Arnold initiated the project and served as project manager. He also revised much of the text, wrote several sections, and worked with the illustrators. Further, Dr. Arnold has personal experience of disability issues.

• **Larry**, a Masters student with a dual major in Landscape Architecture and Community and Regional Planning, holds a BA in architecture and had 16 years experience in commercial construction and design and mechanical design. According to him, “anytime they needed ten pounds in a five pound bag I got the job because they knew I could figure out how much space you need to put this stuff in there.” Larry also has five years of teaching experience in landscape architecture. Larry served initially as a technical advisor on content and the ADAAG and later worked on a number of the illustrations that are included in the text. Larry also supervised several graphic design students who created many of the illustrations.

• **Eden**, a PhD student in Rhetoric and Professional Communication, had seven years experience in researching and teaching writing at Midwestern University and workplace experience as a writer and editor. Eden has several professional publications in RPC and has worked on other project teams at Midwestern as a writer/editor. Eden, who joined the team in the second year of the project as editor and later revised the design of the document, also became the team’s “software expert.” As she describes herself, “I’ve written professionally for probably 20 years, one variety or another of, you know, I’ve always been involved with language, so, professionally, I’d say I’m a writer or editor.” Eden has personal experience with disability and accessibility as well. She mentioned during our interview that “having two family members in wheelchairs, you know, I’ve done
some remodeling work and have had to use the information, so it’s not like I’ve written about it before, but I’ve used it before.”

- **Pat**, a Masters Student in Architectural Studies, an interdisciplinary program at Midwestern, holds a BA in Family Services and has work experience in children’s services and assisted living facilities. She notes that her undergrad degree in family services is “kind of the human side” and “what I’m hoping to do is mesh the two fields [architecture and family services] together.” Pat served as a project assistant, managing files and other resources, assisting with copy-editing and source verification. Pat joined the team in the third year of the project.

- **Greg** joined the team in the last year of the project, after I began the study. A Masters Student in Architecture who holds a BA in Graphic Design, Greg served as a project assistant, primarily working with Larry to revise illustrations, and with Eden on document formatting.

For this project, we—individuals “fully loaded” with disciplinary and professional equipment—came together to mutually engage in a unique activity, unique to us in that we had not worked together before; some of us had never worked on a writing project of this nature, and some of us had never worked on a writing project in the particular content area that our text addressed.

**Roles and Tasks**

The diversity of the team members’ disciplinary and professional backgrounds in some ways reflects the diversity of the communities that contribute to the larger context that informs the team’s work. Table 4-A, below, summarizes the composition of the team over time and indicates the discipline and/or profession with which each person was affiliated, the role each joined the project to fill, and the period of time that each person participated on the project. The team members are listed in the order that each joined the project.
Table 4-A: Team Member Participation

Professions/Disciplines: Indicates the team member’s primary area of study and/or work:
A (Architecture); RPC (Rhetoric and Professional Communication) LA (Landscape Architecture)
GD (Graphic Design); SS (Social Services); IT (Information Technology)

Initial/Primary Task Area: Indicates the role that the team member joined the team to fill.
The roles of several people changed over time.

Duration of Participation: The gray shaded areas indicate the period of time that each team member participated in the project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Duration of Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Profession/Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Arnold</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donna**</td>
<td>RPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry</td>
<td>A/LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer*</td>
<td>GD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrator 1*</td>
<td>GD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>RPC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrator 2*</td>
<td>GD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>SS/IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>SS/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg</td>
<td>GD/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These participants had left the project prior to the beginning of my research. I only discuss their participation in terms of the role that they filled on the project.

**Researcher
The team members were each familiar with various genres and generic conventions from previous experiences and disciplinary and professional affiliations. These experiences and affiliations informed the practices that each team member brought to the project as well as the understandings each team member had about the functions of genre. In the next section, I discuss several functions of genre that the team members enacted individually and collectively.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the functions and constructions of genre in texts that the *Access for Everyone* team used and created during the project. I first consider the primary source texts for the project—the ADAAG and the University’s previous *ADA Survey Manual*—that the team used in developing its new text. I then focus on a series of drafts of texts that the team developed.

To make comparisons among the source texts and drafts of the team’s text, I focus my analyses specifically on the purpose statements of each text; the organization of each text as illustrated by the tables of contents, which summarize the text’s overall content and organization; and sample content pages from each text. The sample pages I discuss all concern the same topic area, accessible doors. I chose to focus my analyses on the text about doors for several reasons. First, in reviewing the drafts generated by the *Access for Everyone* team, I found that the material covering doors is representative of all aspects of the drafting process in which the team engaged. Second, while the topic of doors might seem at first glance relatively straightforward, the *Access for Everyone* team found the topic of accessible doors to be, in fact, technically and rhetorically complex, which in part explains the attention the topic received. Another reason that doors received particular attention from the team and
in this research is that doors—both symbolically and literally—represent access to buildings, facilities and the services and activities beyond them.2

Evaluating Sources and Precursors3

When the team began its work at Midwestern University in January of 1998, the plan was to revise an existing text, Midwestern University’s ADA Survey Manual. The first tasks that the team undertook were reviewing the latest version of the ADAAG to locate recent changes that needed to be incorporated into the new text, evaluating the previous version of the University’s text to determine what aspects of the format we might retain, and assessing other sources for additional information on accessibility that we might include in the new text. Minutes from a team meeting early in the project mention the variety of texts that the team evaluated and used throughout the project:

Dr. Arnold provided information on the latest update of the federal ADAAG manual that can be used in conjunction with the ADA guidelines. Most of the changes in the new version have to do with ease of use and readability. We all will look at the new information and compare it to the current version of our ADAAG manual and see what changes we need to make. Dr. Arnold will put other manuals and information in the lab for our review. We need to go through and determine what is useful and what is outdated. In addition, Larry and [the graphic designer] will check to see if there are any graphics we can use as models. Larry suggested that we begin an annotated bib of ADAAG materials. We might want to develop guidelines or a plan for checking our manual against others. (Meeting minutes 1/15/1998)

2 The Access Board prioritizes accessibility issues and the ability of the environment to allow people to enter a building or facility is the highest priority. The priorities for accessibility are as follows. Priority 1: Ensure that approaches and entrances to buildings are accessible. Priority 2: Ensure that all people have access to goods and services. Priority 3: Ensure that restrooms are accessible for all people. Priority 4: Ensure that any other measures necessary are taken to ensure accessibility for all people (Access for Everyone 2001).

3 Unless otherwise indicated, information about the team’s actions and decisions are derived from notes I and other team members recorded during meetings, e-mail among the team, and project-tracking documents that indicate the types of work and specific documents with which the team was engaged.
The specific materials the team reviewed as it began its revision included

- the January 13, 1998 *Federal Register* that included the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG);
- drafts of the two previous Midwestern University texts: the earlier titled ADA Survey Standards for Midwestern University's Americans with Disabilities Act Self-Evaluation and the more recent titled ADA Survey Manual: Site and Facilities Assessment for ADA Compliance;
- a reference source created by the Access Board to accompany the ADAAG, titled ADAAG Manual: A Guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines; and
- assorted “tech sheets” and books published by the federal government and others on different aspects of accessibility and the ADAAG.

These texts proved quite powerful in establishing the team’s expectations for its revision project. In addition to mentioning a range of texts in various genres, the meeting minutes indicate several concerns about the content and form of the text. First, our purpose in considering other resources about accessibility was in part to incorporate universal design ideas into the new text and to encourage people to go beyond the minimum accessibility requirements of the ADAAG. This objective was difficult in that the ADA and ADAAG, as government regulations that must be followed, in many ways drive how concepts of disability and accessibility are determined, described, understood, and addressed in the built environment. Our university audience, as well as our potential outside audiences, would need and expect clear information on the ADAAG to ensure that their plans and specifications met legally mandated requirements.

Second, the minutes mention checking our materials against others, looking for models, and looking at new version of the regulations to evaluate the changes not just in content, but also in organization. In effect, we were shopping for ideas about how best to
construct our text. The content, forms, and conventions of the resources and references were suggestive of options that the team might choose for its new text. As the excerpt from the minutes also indicates, the team examined various genres—particularly manuals and guidelines—including the purposes and qualities (for instance, ease of use, readability) of each. However, the content and conventions of resources and references, for instance, the content of the ADAAG, also limit choices depending on the degree to which writers must conform to them and readers rely on them.

In the two sections that follow, I focus on two source documents in particular—the ADAAG and the previous version of the University’s text—because these texts most directly influenced the team’s work in the beginning of the project.

The ADA, the ADAAG, and the Genre of Regulation

Throughout the project the ADAAG served as a primary source of information for the manual team. The ADAAG, as part of a government regulation—the ADA in this case—requires people to meet standards and take specific actions. The regulatory genre provides information but also conveys the government’s authority in regulating the activities of a variety of participants.

Purpose Statements and Generic Functions

Table 4-B below displays the purpose statements verbatim from the ADA, DOJ regulations pertaining to Title III of the ADA, and the ADAAG. The practical function of each purpose statement is to delineate the responsibilities and activities that are covered by the various pieces of legislation and regulation. In each purpose statement, the authority of the government to control activities is also made clear.
Table 4-B: Purposes of Legislation and Regulation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress, ADA</th>
<th>DOJ, Sec.36.101</th>
<th>Access Board, ADAAG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is the purpose of this Act</td>
<td>The purpose of this part is to implement title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12181), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public accommodations and requires places of public accommodation and commercial facilities to be designed, constructed, and altered in compliance with the accessibility standards established by this part.</td>
<td>This document contains scoping and technical requirements for accessibility to buildings and facilities by individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. These scoping and technical requirements are to be applied during the design, construction, and alteration of buildings and facilities covered by titles II and III of the ADA to the extent required by regulations issued by Federal agencies, including the Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation, under the ADA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities; (2) to provide clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities; (3) to ensure that the Federal Government plays a central role in enforcing the standards established in this Act on behalf of individuals with disabilities; and (4) to invoke the sweep of congressional authority, including the power to enforce the fourteenth amendment and to regulate commerce, in order to address the major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose statement of the ADA focuses on the broad power of the Congress to enact and enforce legislation while the purpose statements of the DOJ regulations and the ADAAG focus on the authority of agencies to implement legislation and to create the specific requirements for that implementation. The reasons for the regulations—to eliminate discrimination and to improve the access of disabled people to buildings, facilities, and services—are clearly elaborated in the purposes of the ADA. The much more brief DOJ purpose statement mentions the prohibition on “discrimination on the basis of disability” and
the purpose statement of the ADAAG refers to the “accessibility to buildings and facilities by individuals with disabilities.”

The relationship of the readers to the writers is established lexically through terms (bolded in the examples) including “mandate,” “enforce,” and “require,” all prerogatives of the government that establish its power. However, the statement that contains the most powerful rhetoric in terms of representing the social context and the social situation of disabled people is that of the ADA. The DOJ and ADAAG statements are much shorter and more circumscribed in addressing those issues.

Beyond the purpose statement, the focus throughout the ADAAG is on the technical requirements for accessibility, not on reiterating the government’s position about the broader social issues. Therefore, many people who require information on accessibility and only consult the ADAAG will not read about the conditions and circumstances that provide rationales for the accessibility requirements. Pat, a project assistant on the Access for Everyone team, observed in an interview that

there’s nothing to support statements [in the ADAAG] or back it up or say this is important “because.” I mean obviously I can tell a wheelchair can only fit through a certain amount of space, but, but [there’s] nothing on the human side. Seems like architecture is all about the non-human side.

However, the issues that Pat raises may be more a function of the genre of regulation than of architecture. The conventions and language used to construct the genres of legislation and regulation have been established primarily by and for the legislative and judicial communities (Sullivan 2001). Regulatory genres can be difficult for people to read and navigate in part because the structure of information and the specialized language seem more appropriate for legal purposes than for the other activities they mediate. As Larry, the
technical advisor on the Access for Everyone team, describes the ADA and the ADAAG, "part of the [problem with the] ADA too is that it was written as a civil liberties document, and it's not really intended to be something that anybody but lawyers can understand.... it's not written for the people who need to use it." Larry's comment reflects the concerns that other design/build professionals have raised about the genre—that it does not effectively serve the purposes of people who need to understand and apply the ADAAG in the context of design and construction activities.

Part of the problem is that the organization of information requires readers to scour many sections and pages to locate applicable requirements. Pat describes the difficulty of reading the ADAAG:

Just reading through ADAAG, and [I think] what are these numbers? What does it mean, "go here"? What's preamble? What, what is this? That's what my stress has mostly come from, trying to ferret everything out. And I feel like I'm doing this backwards, I'm walking backwards and jumping around from here to there and getting all this information and I'm just trying to make sense of it .... I guess it's the codes that I need to just figure out, the hierarchy and how this works, because that is what totally is confusing me.

In mentioning the "hierarchy" here, Pat is referring to the alphanumeric system used to organize the content of the ADAAG and to identify parts and subparts of the document and individual guidelines. Sullivan (2001) discusses several problems with the scaffolding of legislative genres including cues for accessing the appropriate information. People often find it difficult to "locate the parts of the legislation that are relevant" within the various documents, and then read and "appreciate the import of what they have read in terms of their personal circumstances and interests." In terms of the ADA, the DOJ regulations covering Title III, and the ADAAG, users may be frustrated when they try to determine exactly what
applies to them—for instance, what they need to do to address a particular design or construction problem.

**Organization and Generic Functions**

The sample table of contents from the 1994 ADAAG⁴ presented in Figures 4.1 and 4.1.1, below, illustrates metacommunicative strategies in the genre that may create difficulty for readers. The table of contents lists the topics covered in the ADAAG including purpose of the ADAAG (section 1), which I discussed in full above in Table 4-B; the provisions (section 2), which elaborate the coverage and authority of the ADAAG; and the terms and conventions used in the document (section 3). The content (sections 4-10) is divided into three main categories of information—scoping, basic technical requirements that affect elements in all types of buildings, and finally special types of buildings for which some of the requirements are different. “Scoping” is a term that refers to information about the number, type, and location of elements of buildings and facilities that are required to be accessible.

Item 1 in Figure 4.1, below, points out the numbering system used in the ADAAG table of contents and throughout the document to structure and itemize the information. The structure includes up to six levels (not all shown in the table of contents), making Individual guidelines difficult to find. Item 2 in Figure 4.1 points out that the scoping requirements for elements of buildings are separated from the technical requirements for those elements. This

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⁴ When the team began the project, the 1994 version of the ADAAG was available from the Federal Register. It was also available online with updates to 1998. I must mention that because of hypertext links, the online requirements are much easier to use than the print version, even though the basic structure of the information is the same.
arrangement requires reader to check at least two different sections of the document for information.

Figure 4.1: ADAAG Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. PURPOSE</th>
<th>2. GENERAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Provisions for Adults</td>
<td>2.2 Equivalent Facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MISCELLANEOUS INSTRUCTIONS AND DEFINITIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Graphic Conventions</td>
<td>3.2 Dimensional Tolerances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Notes</td>
<td>3.4 General Terminology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Definitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ACCESSIBLE ELEMENTS AND SPACES: SCOPE AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS</td>
<td>1.5. Accessible Buildings: Additions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Minimum Requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3. Accessible Buildings: New Construction</td>
<td>4.1.4. (Reserved)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.7. Accessible Buildings: Historic Preservation</td>
<td>4.2 Space Allowance and Reach Ranges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Accessible Route</td>
<td>4.4 Protruding Objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Ground and Floor Surfaces</td>
<td>4.6 Parking and Passenger Loading Zones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Curb Ramps</td>
<td>4.8 Ramps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 Stairs</td>
<td>4.10 Elevators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table of Contents indicates, "Scoping" requirements are included in the first sections of the ADAAG. Specific technical requirements are provided in subsequent chapters.

Scaffolding is provided in part by the numeric system used to identify parts of the text used throughout the text. However, the information is highly nested within the text.
Items 3 and 4 in Figure 4.1.1, below, note the overall organization of the ADAAG content, which conforms to some degree to the order of information in other codes.

Figure 4.1.1: ADAAG Table of Contents, con't

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Justice</th>
<th>Pt. 36, App. A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.11 Platform Lifts (Wheelchair Lifts)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12 Windows</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13 Doors</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14 Entrances</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15 Drinking Fountains and Water Coolers</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16 Water Closets</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17 Toilet Stalls</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.18 Urinals</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.19 Lavatories and Mirrors</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20 Bathtubs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.21 Shower Stalls</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.22 Toilet Rooms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.23 Bathrooms, Bathing Facilities, and Shower Rooms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.24 Sinks</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.25 Storage</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.26 Handrails, Grab Bars, and Tub and Shower Seats</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.27 Controls and Operating Mechanisms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.28 Alarms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.29 Detectable Warnings</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.30 Signage</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.31 Telephones</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.32 Fixed or Built-in Seating and Tables</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.33 Assembly Areas</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.34 Automated Teller Machines</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.35 Dressing and Fitting Rooms</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. RESTAURANTS AND CAFETERIAS</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. MEDICAL CARE FACILITIES</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. BUSINESS AND MERCANTILE</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. LIBRARIES</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ACCESSIBLE TRANSIENT LODGING</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX</td>
<td>A1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 The order of the content in the ADAAG for the general accessibility requirements follows the ANSI standards for building accessibility, which may be helpful for people already familiar with the ANSI.

4 The ADAAG includes sections that address accessibility issues specific to various types of buildings and facilities.
Content and Generic Functions

The next example, Figure 4.2 below, is a content page from the ADAAG that includes information about doors. Items 5 and 6 again point out metacommunicative devices used in the document. Item 5 indicates an example of the cross-referencing used throughout the ADAAG that requires readers to locate and consider the information in several guidelines before making a judgment about an accessible condition. As Item 5 notes, in the version of the ADAAG shown here, some information is contained only in illustrations. The Access for Everyone team concluded that to prevent confusion, any information pertaining to a requirement should also be included in the text. The Access Board drew the same conclusion and in subsequent revisions—the first published almost two years after the Access for Everyone project began—all information contained in illustrations is also included in the text of the guidelines.

Item 7 in Figure 4.2, below, focuses on the “language of regulation” used in the ADAAG. The guidelines convey content information about accessible conditions as well as metacommunication that foregrounds the conditions rather than actions. Lexical items, for instance use of the word “shall,” as well as the grammatical constructions of the individual guidelines, describe conditions rather than action. In this way, the conditions described in the guidelines represent the built environment as a legal model. Bhatia (1993) has pointed out that “legal writing is highly impersonal and decontextualized, in the sense that its illocutionary force holds independently of whoever is the ‘speaker (originator) or the ‘hearer’ (reader),” that the “general function of this writing is directive, to impose obligations and to confer rights,” and that it attempts “clarity, precision and unambiguity on one hand, and all-inclusiveness on the other” (102-103).
While the ADAAG—as a set of guidelines—is less difficult to read than other types of legislative writing (the ADA for instance), the language characteristics that Bhatia mentions are present the ADAAG. The language can make some guidelines difficult to interpret.
Summary: Functions and Constructions

The regulatory genre embodied by the ADAAG is difficult for people to use in various settings related to the design, construction, and maintenance of built environments. Practically, the ADAAG provides information on the minimum conditions for accessibility required by the government. However, in terms of metacommunication, the organization of the information, the scaffolding provided for finding information, and the language used to convey information may hamper readers’ efforts to find and understand the guidelines they need.

Socially and politically, the power of the document—and of the genre—rests with the legal authority of the government. The government can force people to improve accessibility. However, the document and the genre do little to explain the discrimination, exclusion, and isolation behind the regulations. On the other hand, the genre serves to mediate a number of relationships and sometimes competing interests both inside and outside the legal system. It may be that the seeming “neutrality” of the document and genre is in fact a careful rhetorical balancing act.

In the next section, I turn to an evaluation of the precursor to the Access for Everyone text, the University’s ADA Survey Manual that it was the team’s task initially to revise.

The ADA Survey Manual and the Genre of Manual

Another document that the Access for Everyone team reviewed in preparing its text was the 130-page precursor to the team’s text—Midwestern University’s ADA Survey Manual. The purpose of this text was to make finding and reading ADAAG information easier during inspections of the built environment of the Midwestern Campus. Because the purpose of the text was primarily to restructure ADAAG information, the focus of the
development of this text was on metacommunication. The content (information) provided in the manual is, for the most part, taken directly from the text of the ADAAG.

**Purpose Statement and Generic Functions**

The purpose of the *ADA Survey Manual* is described in the text’s brief introduction, shown in Figure 4.3, below.

**Figure 4.3: Introduction to the ADA Survey Manual**

The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) provides architectural standards for evaluating the physical environment for accessibility. Information provided in the ADAAG is extensive and precise, but it is often confusing to the reader. This manual provides a simplified system for evaluating buildings and sites for compliance with ADAAG. The information has been presented as simply as possible. The user friendly manual is organized alphabetically into thirty-four different subject areas, each with a two letter identifier. ADAAG references are cited throughout.

The authors have made every effort to accurately represent the ADAAG requirements and amendments. However, the most current ADAAG publication should be consulted and used in conjunction with this publication to ensure accurate interpretations of ADAAG.

The introduction focuses on the metacommunicative functions of the survey manual compared to the ADAAG, describing the ADAAG as “precise” but “confusing” in contrast to the “simplified system” of this “user-friendly” manual.

**Organization and Generic Functions**

The table of contents, presented in Figures 4.4 below, illustrates several of the metacommunicative strategies that the authors of the survey manual used to “simplify” the ADAAG.
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<td>248 - 253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rather than follow the organization and numeric labeling of the ADAAG, the creators of the Survey Manual labeled information using a system of letters and numbers. Topics were arranged alphabetically to facilitate locating information.
As noted in Figure 4.4, Item 1, the topics listed here reflect the content of the ADAAG, but the information has been relabeled and reorganized alphabetically. The letter codes loosely correspond to the topics. The letter codes for each section, together with alphanumeric labels for subsections, are used throughout the manual to identify topics and specific requirements. A brief description of the labeling at the beginning of the text explains how the letters and numbers may be used as a “coding system” for recording building and site deficiencies during inspections.

**Content and Generic Functions**

The sample content page shown in Figure 4.5, below, also demonstrates practical and metacommunicative functions of genre. The technical requirements included here (see item 2), at the beginning of the doors section, are scoping requirements. In the ADAAG, scoping requirements are separated from the technical requirements, requiring people to move back and forth in the text between the scoping and technical information. Note that the language of the requirements here is the same as that of the ADAAG.

Item 3 points out the coding system. Alphabetical codes are provided throughout the content pages to indicate chapters and individual requirements. When requirements have sub-components, numbers are also provided. Item 4 indicates that illustrations here, as in the ADAAG, include information necessary for meeting the ADAAG requirements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>At each accessible entrance to a building or facility, at least one door shall comply with this section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>Within a building or facility, at least one door shall comply with this section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Alphabetical codes are provided throughout the content pages to indicate chapters and individual requirements. When requirements have sub-components, numbers are also provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Each door that is an element of an accessible route shall comply with this section.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Illustrations pertaining to requirements include important information.

Technical requirements reflect ADAAG requirements. Each item includes the reference to the ADAAG as well as a brief description of the type of requirement (i.e. "Scope").
Summary: Functions and Constructions

To summarize the features of the University's ADA Survey Manual, the text reorganized and reformatted the information in the ADAAG so that people inspecting buildings, sites, and plans could easily locate information as they needed it. The scoping requirements and the technical requirements were brought together so that all information pertaining to a specific type of element or area was in the same location in the text. The guidelines, which in the ADAAG are compound constructions that may contain several requirements for one element of a building, are sub-divided into discrete items in the Survey Manual. The purpose for further chunking each guideline was that during inspections and plan reviews, inspectors could use the alphanumeric identification of an item as a code, jotting it down on a plan or list for future reference. For example, if a door that was required to be accessible met every guideline except one subpart of one guideline, the inspector could easily identify the one aspect of the door that required further attention.

However, the Survey Manual required revision because some sections were out of date or incomplete; most of the sections were not illustrated; and the language retained the legal lexicon and syntax that made some of the content difficult to read and understand. Some information also needed further explanation. In addition, the Survey Manual included only ADAAG information and did not address any other options for accessibility. Though the text seems devoid of an overt social position on accessibility, the focus on the ADAAG only suggests by default that meeting the guidelines is an adequate method for ensuring accessibility. The Access for Everyone team, on the other hand, was concerned with developing a text that covered the ADAAG, presented
necessary information in a form usable for multiple audiences, and that also adopted a more proactive stance in promoting a concept of accessibility that is broader than simply meeting the ADAAG requirements. In the next section, I focus on the decisions that the team made in planning the new text.

Planning the Revision

After spending several weeks gathering sources and reviewing the ADAAG and University’s ADA Survey Manual, the team’s initial plans were to update the information and continue with similar formatting. However, the team also planned to expand the coverage of accessibility by adding recommendations based on universal design. In addition, the team wanted to

- add illustrations
- provide textual coverage of all guidelines and text as well as illustrations
- add methods for information retrieval, for instance an index
- improve readability (the font in the Survey Manual was nine point type for instance)
- user-test the manual for possible distribution to multiple audiences beyond the University

For the team, “the human side” that Pat mentioned as missing in the ADAAG also became an important part of the team’s approach to the text it began developing.

As part of the “human side,” in planning the new draft, we considered potential readers as well as existing texts. We discussed the following types of issues, which various theorists have previously categorized:
- Cognitive issues (how readers might read and navigate the document)
- Perceptual issues (how readers might envision results of using the document)
- Affective issues (what readers' attitudes might be to using the document as well as to accessibility in general and the ADAAG in particular)
- Performance and behavior issues (what readers might actually do with the document, how they might try to solve problems, and what they might do when faced with a problem). (Neilsen 1993; Sullivan 1989)

The primary purpose of the text, according to Dr. Arnold, was to guide people through the process of assessing buildings, facilities, and plans so that deficiencies in existing buildings could be corrected and so that new construction would be designed to meet accessibility standards. Moreover, because the ADAAG in many instances requires minimal standards for accessibility, Dr. Arnold wanted our text to assist people in understanding and making better decisions about building accessibility. Thus, while the team's text would provide extensive coverage of the ADAAG, it would also include accessibility recommendations that would go beyond the basic government requirements.

**Functions of Genre and Revision Strategies**

To address these issues, the team decided on the following strategies for drafting the new text. In Table 4-C, below, I have grouped the strategies according to the three functions of genre that I described earlier, though I realize that the strategies are certainly interrelated and several might just as easily fit into more than one category.
Table 4-C: Revisions strategies for the new text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practical</strong></td>
<td>• Find and provide current, accurate information on accessibility requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Find and provide information on accessible solutions that reflect universal design principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain ADAAG requirements as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Find or create and include rationales, example, and graphics to illustrate requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Meta-communicative</strong></td>
<td>• Provide multiple ways for readers to find and retrieve information (including page layout, tabs, table of contents, index).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recast the language from descriptive to imperative to ease the reader’s task in determining the specific actions they need to take (clarifying content through word choices, syntax).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reorganize the information and group related information (reducing information load through scaffolding).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social/Political</strong></td>
<td>• Promote the concepts of accessibility and universal design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish the need for action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify with or advocating for particular communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Account for the needs of multiple audiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course, the list of strategies says little about the actual *genre* of the text. However, as the team began to generate text, all of the team’s specific decisions about implementing the strategies are instantiated in the form of the text.

Many of the features that became part of the new text developed from our previous experiences with genres as well as from the genres we were becoming familiar with through the project. As we considered the ADAAG and the University’s previous *ADA Survey Manual*, we decided to differentiate our text from the regulatory genre—though we were somewhat bound to the content of the ADAAG—by adapting the practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions of other genres. For
example, the *ADA Survey Manual*—the existing text we were to revise—was labeled
“manual,” as were several of the other sources texts we had at hand. These texts already
contained some generic characteristics that the team associated with manuals and seemed
to suggest, or invoke particular choices. We associated manuals, for instance, with
actions, thus the decision to replace legal language with imperative language as opposed
to something else. For example, while the language in the ADAAG provision for doors
closers focuses on conditions, as in the excerpt below,

4.13.10. If a door has a closer, then the sweep period of the closer
shall be adjusted so that from an open position of 70 degrees, the door will
take at least 3 seconds to move to a point 3 in (75 mm) from the latch,
measured to the leading edge of the door. (ADAAG, 1994)

the language in the team’s text focuses on the action to be taken to arrive at a condition,
as in the following example:

**DR T1** Adjust the sweep period of door closers so that doors will take at
least 3 seconds to move from an open position of 70° to a point 3in
(75mm) from the latch (measured to the leading edge of the door).
[Required 4.13.10] (Draft 8/1999)

In this simple example, the content of the two passages is very similar but the syntax is
different. Replacing the syntax associated with regulatory genres to a more familiar
construction is meant to make the requirement easier for readers to manage cognitively.
The choice of the imperative is also meant to reinforce—metacommunicatively and
rhetorically—that the action must be taken.

Before moving on to a discussion of changes in the team’s text over time, I
address the initial division of labor on the team, which effectively separated writing tasks,
document design tasks, and illustration tasks at the start of the project.
Roles and Tasks

At the start of the project, as we were reviewing sources and beginning to draft new material, the team members' relationships to the project and to each other were divided along disciplinary lines. I worked on writing text, which primarily involved revising the text of the previous Survey Manual and checking the text against the ADAAG. The designer worked on the page format and overall design of the document and began considering how to create illustrations. He generated several design options based on the format of the Survey Manual. Larry, the technical consultant, reviewed and cataloged illustrations for the text and provided technical review of text. Dr. Arnold supervised and assisted with all activities. The team met weekly and team members met individually with Dr. Arnold to work on various aspects of the text.

One of the biggest problems we had in developing our first draft was that there was little coordination between the page design, text, and graphics that were being prepared for the text. Over time, we came to understand that for the text we were producing to effectively meet the needs of various audiences, the elements constituting it needed to be well coordinated. Thus, the nature of the process, as well as the design and content of the manual, would change significantly as project team members began to coordinate tasks over the course of the project.

In the next section, I discuss several iterations of the team's text, including the ways the team's process and text changed over the three iterations. I suggest that as the team's work was more effectively coordinated in later stages of the project, the team's focus shifted from the practical aspects of text and genre, to a focus on the metacommunicative functions, and finally to a focus on the social/political functions.
Enacting a Responsive Genre

The Access for Everyone project started as a four-month long effort to revise and update Midwestern University’s 130-page ADA Survey Manual. The project became a four-year long endeavor that produced a 540-page text considerably different than its predecessor.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the team’s work over time, particularly focusing on three milestone iterations of the team’s text. Each of these iterations—or transformations as I have come to perceive them—reflects changes in the team’s approach to the text and to genre, the team’s process in creating the text, and the team’s understanding of accessibility issues.

Transformation 1: The Field Guide and the Practical Orientation

In the first transformation I discuss, the team used sources and precursors to craft the initial iteration of its text. The milestones I use to mark this iteration are the beginning of the project in January of 1998 and a regional conference on accessibility that was held at Midwestern University in February of 1999, at which we provided preliminary drafts of several sections of the text to conference attendees. The conference marked the first public outing for the text. As the dates indicate, the project—which by this time surpassed the original four-month plan by almost a year—was extended because the text was becoming much more detailed and development of a significant number of accurately scaled illustrations was a more complex and exacting task than we had originally anticipated.

5 We provided surveys with the drafts requesting brief evaluations of the text, the results of which were encouraging. We received and feedback and suggestions from people who represented our potential audiences as well as from people representing the Access Board.
To illustrate the stance that the team took to the initial iteration of the text, I begin by discussing the first decision the team made in our ongoing search for an appropriate title. The full range of concerns that the team negotiated throughout the project—particularly the practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions of the text—seemed to coalesce in the periodic negotiations of what the team would call the text.

The first iteration of the team’s text was not called Access for Everyone but rather the Field Guide to Accessibility. As we grappled with the form and content of the text, Dr. Arnold had mentioned a number of times that our text should “guide” the reader through information on accessibility. We considered various titles that might suggest the types of information and assistance we expected the text to provide to readers and the stance toward accessibility we meant the text to convey—the practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions of the text. Thus, in our developing text, the generic label manual—which we had been using to refer to the text—was replaced with the label guide, which seemed to invoke guidance, the idea of being led, or assisted, through the information and through the physical environment.

After several weeks of discussions about audiences, purposes, language, formatting, and potential titles, Larry—the landscape architect and project technical advisor—suggested the title Field Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), which we adopted as a provisional title. The new title was meant to promote the concept of accessibility (as a social good) by subordinating to references the role of the ADAAG (as imposed regulations) in our text. However, the team recognized the importance of retaining
“ADAAG” in the title because our intended audiences would want to ensure that they were, in fact, meeting requirements imposed by law.

Further, the choice of Field Guide in our title differentiated our text from another document, the ADAAG Manual: A Guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines, a publication of the Access Board that included both the words “manual” and “guide” in its title. Field Guide was also meant to suggest to readers that our text would be easy to use during onsite inspections, which had been one of the primary purposes of the previous text. The new sense of our text as a guide played out in a number of ways in the text, as I discuss below.

Purpose Statement and Generic Functions

The purpose statement of the Field Guide was included in an introduction to the text that significantly expanded the introduction of its predecessor (shown in Figure 4.3 above). The expanded introduction included several sections that contained basic information on the ADA, the ADAAG, and accessibility. The sections were organized in a “question-answer” format covering the following topics:

- What is the ADA?
- What is the ADAAG?
- Who needs to comply with the ADAAG?
- What is the purpose of the Field-Guide to Accessibility?
- How do I use this Guide?

The predecessor to our text—the University’s ADA Survey Manual—while providing information about ADAAG requirements in language taken directly from the ADAAG, did not include a discussion of the ADA, the ADAAG, or accessibility issues in general. As indicated by the topics covered in the introduction to the new text, listed
above, and the text of its purpose statement, shown in Figure 4.6 below, the Field Guide sought to contextualize the ADAAG requirements by establishing the importance of accessibility and the reasons for the ADAAG.

**Figure 4.6: Field Guide Purpose Statement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the purpose of the Field-Guide to Accessibility?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The intent of this Field-Guide and of the ADAAG is to ensure that no person is denied access to any building or facility because of a disability. Additionally, the quality of access for all people must be similar. Access to features of buildings or facilities should be the same for all people, but when circumstances are such that different types of access is needed to accommodate persons with disabilities, then ADAAG requires that such access provide the same “quality of experience” for all people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Field-Guide will help you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• make buildings and sites accessible to all people,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• identify features of buildings and sites that need to be analyzed for accessibility,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• decide what actions need to be taken to ensure accessibility,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• determine which provisions of ADAAG apply to your project, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understand the basic requirements of ADAAG.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Field-Guide is also designed to be used for reviewing plans of buildings and sites before construction begins. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires compliance with specific accessibility standards for new construction. In addition, it is both efficient and cost effective to consider accessibility issues in the project planning stages.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the previous manual had been to help people follow the ADAAG. The purposes of the Field Guide included that objective, but in contrast, stressed the purposes of ensuring “that no person is denied access to any building or facility because of a disability” and of providing assistance for meeting that objective. The focus on accessibility for all people noted in the purpose statement of the new text represents an important shift in the text’s social/political stance to accessibility, a stance that was not realized to the team’s satisfaction in the Field Guide, but one to which we would draw ever closer in subsequent iterations of the text. In the next section, I discuss the
reorganization of the information in the Field Guide and the practical and metacommunicative considerations underlying the new organization.

Organization and Generic Functions

In the precursor to the team's text, topics corresponding to ADAAG requirements were arranged alphabetically throughout the text (illustrated in Figure 4.3, and Figure 4.4, discussed above). Two-letter codes that roughly corresponded to topic keywords were assigned to each topic covered in the text, for example, DR for Doors and RP for Ramps. The codes and corresponding keywords were listed in the table of contents and included on the leading edges of content pages so that readers could locate topics alphabetically.

In the new text, the alphabetical arrangement was discarded in part because some of the terms and codes for topics did not correspond well to those for which a reader might search, nor did the text include an index that might offer alternative word choices for locating information. For example, if a reader wanted information about corridors, they would find it in the section AI Accessible Interior Routes. The reader was not able to look up the word "corridor" and determine the location of that information in the text.

In keeping with the team's focus on guiding people through accessibility issues, particularly during building inspections, the team reorganized the information by grouping related topics into five major divisions. The topics were arranged within those divisions in the order one might encounter the corresponding elements of a building during an inspection. The team also planned to add an index to the text so that readers would be able to find and retrieve information about specific elements and features.

The new arrangement of information was represented in the Field Guide's table of contents, presented in Figure 4.7, below. As Item 1 indicates, to scaffold information, we
re-organizing the content into 5 major divisions. The first division covers information about specific types of buildings. The next four divisions include information about accessibility requirements that apply to all types of buildings, beginning with information on Access to Buildings, Facilities, and Accessible Spaces. Within the text, a brief introduction was added to each major division that discussed the important aspects of the information in that part of the text as well important accessibility issues covered in the individual sections included in that part of the text.

Item 2 in Figure 4.7, below, points out that the alphabetic arrangement of content was replaced with an arrangement that focused on space and movement into and through buildings. For example, the part of the text covering “Access to Buildings, Facilities, and Accessible Spaces” begins with exterior elements of sites, including parking, curb ramps, and exterior routes; moves to elements of sites and buildings related to entering buildings, including entrances and doors; and then moves to the interior elements of the building, such as interior routes, elevators, and stairs.

The next three major divisions of the text further discuss elements of buildings, including safety elements, such as alarms and signs; restrooms and bathrooms, including all the fixtures; and other types of utilities and amenities included in buildings, such as drinking fountains, seating, and telephones. The team also retained the two-letter codes used in the University’s previous text to identify accessibility topics because the University architects and facilities managers—who were two of our primary audiences as well as our funding source—found the abbreviations effective for quickly noting deficiencies on building plans and inspection sheets.
The scaffolding of information included organizing the content into 5 major parts. Each part begins with a brief introduction that discusses the important aspects of the information in the section and the important accessibility issues covered in each section. The two-letter identifier for accessibility topics was retained.

The alphabetical order of content is replaced with an organization that focuses on space and movement into and through buildings.
Content and Generic Functions

During the revision process, the team reformatted the content pages and rewrote the text. As illustrated in the example pages presented in Figures 4.8 and Figure 4.8.1, below, the team created a page format very similar to the University's previous text. The pages of both the previous manual and the Field Guide contain three sections: a column on the right that identifies topic areas covered in the page; a column on the left for illustrations, and a column in the center for the text about topics identified in the left column.

The headings at the top of each page identify areas of the page that contain information about the topics addressed on each page, the requirements and recommendations related to the topics, and the illustrations and tables associated with the page content (Item 3 in Figure 4.8, below). Content about each topic—the requirements and recommendations—is identified with an alphanumeric code and includes references to specific sections of the ADAAG (Item 4 in Figure 4.8, below). In the team's text, more space was also provided on each page for illustrations and tables than was provided in the previous text (Figure 4.8.1 Item 5, below). The text on this particular page contains primarily scoping requirements that don't require illustration, which means that a significant amount of the page space is simply left blank.

The text was rewritten in imperative language (Figure 4.8.1 Item 6, below) to facilitate reading and interpreting the requirements and recommendations. In addition, a brief introductory statement precedes the requirements and recommendations for each topic (Item 3 in Figure 4.8, below). These statements specify the scoping or application of requirements.
**Figure 4.8: Field Guide DR Doors Section**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Requirements &amp; Recommendations</th>
<th>Illustrations &amp; Tables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible Doors Number and Location</td>
<td>Provide accessible doors that comply with the requirements of this section as follows:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at least one door at each accessible entrance to a building or facility. 4.1.3 (7) (a)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at least one door within a building or facility. 4.1.3 (7)(b)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>each door that is an element of an accessible route. 4.1.3 (7) (c)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>each door serving as part of an accessible means of egress or connecting to an area of rescue assistance 4.1.3 (7) (d); 4.1.6 (1) (g)**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide alternatives to revolving doors and turnstiles at accessible entrances and along accessible routes.***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Headings identify sections of the page including the topic, requirements and recommendations, and illustrations and tables.

Each topic area begins with an introductory statement.
### Figure 4.8.1: Field Guide DR Doors Section

#### DR Doors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Requirements &amp; Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gates 4.13.3</td>
<td>B2 Provide an accessible gate or door adjacent to turnstiles or revolving doors to facilitate the same use pattern.<em><strong>&lt;br&gt;Ensure that gates, including ticket gates, comply with all applicable portions of this section.</strong></em>&lt;br&gt;If doorways have two independently operated door leaves, ensure that at least one active leaf complies with this section.***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double leaf Doorways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Doors in Series</td>
<td>E1 Provide a minimum space of 48&quot; (1220 mm), plus the width of any door swinging into the space, between two hinged or pivoted doors in series&lt;br&gt;E2 Install doors in series so that they swing either in the same direction of away from the space between the doors.***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Illustrations & Tables

- 5. More space is provided for illustrations and tables.
- 6. Requirements are written in imperative language.
Summary: Functions and Constructions

Over the course of the project, we had been working to make the language and organization of the *Field Guide* easier to use than that of the ADAAG itself. One of our goals was to create a text that would help readers quickly identify accessibility issues and locate pertinent information.

The decisions about the organization of the content reflect both practical and metacommunicative functions enacted in the new text. The organization of the *Field Guide* was intended not only to assist readers in finding necessary information, but also to suggest aspects of buildings that readers should consider during an inspection of a facility or a construction plan. We described the organization to readers in a section of the *Field Guide* that explained how to use the book:

The information [in the *Field Guide*] is presented from the “outside in.” It will be easiest to follow if you begin your site inspection or plan review with the grounds, parking lots, and exterior routes; proceed to entrance areas and doors; then consider interior routes including corridors, elevators, stairs, doors, and adjoining areas.

In an interview, Larry explained this orientation to the content and metacommunicative functions:

One thing we discussed and decided early on was that [the text] should be something that could be read by people who are used to designing the environment, and that showed we understood the way that they think...We’re combining areas into the way you think about designing a facility, approaching it from the site, or approaching the site, entering the building, and then moving through the building and that’s kind of how a building gets designed by designers.

The practical and metacommunicative aspects of the text reflected in the revised organization were continued throughout the content pages of the text with changes to the page formatting and to the language of the text. The number and scale of extra-textual
features (such as numbering, dividing lines, fonts, and other visual organizers) were reduced so that the font size of the text could be increased. Ironically, the small font size of the previous text posed an accessibility problem for some readers. Our decision to increase the font size was not only a practical choice, but also a social/political one.

But during development of the first iteration of the text, many practical aspects of the project took precedence. Ensuring that the information and illustrations we provided were accurate took much more time than we had planned. We began the project thinking that rewriting the text would be a relatively straightforward matter. But, as we engaged with the regulatory genre of the ADAAG and began rearranging the information and “translating” the regulatory language into something more usable, we found not only that some of the requirements were indeed hard to interpret, but some were in fact contradictory and a few were just wrong—as in physically improbable. We also found that we had to create our own illustrations to achieve a scale that represented reality accurately. Another problem, which I take up briefly in the next section, was the division of tasks among the team members.

**Roles and Tasks**

As we developed the first iteration of the text, the graphic designer created templates for the text pages in Quark (the software we used to build the text) and a style guide that contained information about the page layout, including margins, white space, headings; elements of the text, including spacing, font styles and sizes; graphics, including line weights, shadings, and placement. I revised content from the previous version, drafting new content in MS Word that the designer then moved into the Quark
templates and formatted. Larry collected and catalogued illustrations for the text. These were "cleaned-up," or redrawn, in Illustrator and the designer placed them into the template with the text. Larry also reviewed text for technical accuracy—which included ensuring that we were referring to the correct sections of the ADAAG in our text—and Dr. Arnold edited for both accuracy and style.

Though our work overlapped and we met once a week as a group, we pursued our tasks individually, which caused some problems. For example, though I was writing text, I didn’t know what illustrations were under development. At the time, I wasn’t concerned as I focused on my task of explaining all the requirements in words. Larry developed the illustrations, working from the previous manual and the ADAAG to determine what illustrations would be used. Because he was the technical editor, Larry received text and knew what I was writing, but we didn’t discuss together where illustrations might be most helpful to readers or what labeling and captioning should be included to coordinate the graphics with the text.

Our designer was not involved in reviewing text or choosing illustrations, and he was putting the document together without actually questioning the sequencing of the information. He did some copyediting as he placed text, but the documents needed to be reviewed and edited again after they were created in Quark. Late in the first iteration of the text, the designer left the project. I took over some of his duties to put together the draft of the text that we presented at the February 1999 conference, but I had to learn the Quark program in the process. Another graphic designer—who had no experience in

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6 In terms of copyright, illustrations in the ADAAG are in the public domain, but a consulting firm prepared them. We looked into whether we could use the illustrations—many we could—however the scale on many graphics Larry considered was incorrect.
architecture, accessibility issues, or the project—joined the team to work only on the
illustrations and Larry began to supervise her work. Given the complexities of
accessibility issues, the ADAAG, and our project, learning new tasks within the team was
challenging. Though new people joining the team often had considerable knowledge in
their fields and valuable technical skill—for instance working with our software—
understanding and rendering the accessibility issues required learning about the use of
space and the limitations that the built environment can create for people. In addition, we
had noted the problems of scale in the illustrations available from other sources and
wanted to ensure that our illustrations accurately portrayed space (or the lack of it). Thus
Larry spent a good deal of project time at from this point reviewing and assisting with the
revision of draft after draft of illustrations. For example, I have catalogued 601 printed
drafts of the illustrations for the chapter on accessible doors alone.

In terms of genre, the team’s work—however fragmented—had produced a text in
which we adapted and incorporated features of various genres in an attempt to anticipate
readers’ needs and activities. Rhetorically, our actions included expanding the
introduction to address accessibility issues, adding introductory material to each main
division of the text, and adjusting the tone and style of the language. However, in
focusing on accurately depicting the ADAAG requirements, we had not emphasized
accessibility sufficiently throughout all the text content. If readers skipped our
introductory material, our text did little else to provide rationales for following minimum
accessibility requirements, let alone exceeding them. I remember making the comment
several times that we were “losing the people again,” meaning that for all our efforts, we
were not making the social and political statement we wanted to make about the relationship between people and the built environment.

In the next section, I discuss the ways in which the team worked toward addressing this gap in a second transformation of the team’s text.

Transformation 2: The Quick Guide and the Metacommunication Orientation

During the next transformation of the team’s text, the team substantially revised the Field Guide. The milestones I use to mark the development of this iteration of the text are immediately after the February 1999 conference and the end of December of 1999, just after the Access Board had issued a substantial revision of the ADAAG for public comment, the effects of which to our project I explain in more detail shortly.

After the February conference, energized by the encouraging feedback about the text, the team returned to work. At the time, the team consisted of Dr. Arnold, Larry, a graphic designer who was helping with the illustrations, and me. However, I left the team in May to take a position out of state and Eden—another PhD student in RPC—joined the team as editor. Though much of the writing had been completed by that time, several sections were incomplete, others needed to be revised for accuracy and consistency, and we needed to develop strategies for more effectively conveying the importance of accessibility throughout the text. In addition, a number of illustrations were still in the draft stage. Overall, the text required Eden’s editorial attention. Shortly after Eden joined the team, a second graphic designer skilled in Quark was also added to the team to resume compiling the text and graphics.

Once again, I begin the description of this iteration of the text with a discussion of the title. In considering the audiences for the text—both at the University and beyond—
we realized that *Field Guide* suggested a text primarily designed for onsite inspections. But we wanted to convey the idea that our new text would be as useful in the office during plan reviews as it would be in the field during building inspections. On a number of drafts of introductory materials, Dr. Arnold continued to note that we needed stress that “the manual is also designed to be used for reviewing plans of buildings and sites before construction begins...” (comment on draft 10/1998). Since the best time to address accessibility issues in a new building is during the planning stages, this use of the guide was particularly important to Dr. Arnold, who reviewed plans for the University.

We also wanted to suggest that the text would help readers quickly identify accessibility issues and locate pertinent information. After considering a number of variations on the *Field Guide* title, we decided on *Quick Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)*, which we felt emphasized the text’s ease of use and readability. Changing *Field Guide* to *Quick Guide* also minimized the emphasis on inspections of existing buildings. In drafts of the text from the end of 1998, many have *Field Guide* lined out and *Quick Guide* written in, though it took a few weeks to get all the team members on the same page.

Thus, our intended purposes for the text remained the same, but the ways that we sought to convey them to various audiences underwent a process of refinement. In this draft, the refinements primarily took the form of attention to the metacommunicative functions of the text, as I discuss further below.

**Purpose Statements and Generic Functions**

In the *Quick Guide*, we retained the purpose statement from the *Field Guide*—as well as the rest of the introduction (presented in Figure 4.6 above)—virtually unchanged.
The purpose statement already stressed meeting peoples' needs by providing accessible environments, which, of course, continued to be our objective for the *Quick Guide*. The problem was not that the purpose statement was inadequate but rather that the purpose wasn't consistently represented in other parts of the text.

**Organization and Generic Functions**

As the table of contents (presented in Figures 4.9 and 4.9.1) suggests, the content of the *Quick Guide* was basically the same as the content of the *Field Guide*; however, we added new elements including a Forward, a Preface, Acknowledgements, Resources, and a section on Reach Ranges (Figure 4.9, Item 1). In addition, the order of the text's major divisions was changed. Here, the text begins with information on the basic elements of all buildings and facilities—which we believed would be of interest to more readers—and concludes with information about special types of buildings (Figure 4.9, Item 2).

The most significant changes to the text that are apparent in the table of contents are the revised page formatting (illustrated in Figure 4.9.1, Item 3, below) and the increased font size. Additional metacommunicative changes are evident throughout the content of this draft, which I next discuss.
### Table of Contents

**Forward**

**Preface**

**Acknowledgements**

### Accessible Routes and Spaces

- **RR Reach Ranges**
  - Page 21
- **PA Parking**
  - Page 25
- **CR Curb Ramps**
  - Page 35
- **RT Routes**
- **RP Ramps**
- **EN Entrances**
- **DR Doors**
- **EL Elevators**
- **PL Platform Lifts**
- **ST Stairs**
  - Page 193

**New elements are added to the text including a forward, preface, and acknowledgements.**

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**Order of sections has been changed to first address the basic issues that apply to all buildings issues of primary concern to most readers. Information about special types of buildings is moved to the end of the text.**

### Safety Areas, Signs, and Alarms

- **AL Alarms**
  - Page 211
- **AR Areas of Refuge**
  - Page 221
- **EG Egress**
  - Page 229
- **SN Signs**
  - Page 235

### Restrooms and Bathrooms

- **Restrooms and Bathrooms**
  - Page 256
- **TB Toilet Rooms and Bathrooms**
  - Page 257
- **TF Toilet Stalls and Fixtures**
  - Page 273
- **JR Urinals**
  - Page 293
- **FX Fixtures**
  - Page 297
- **SS Shower Stalls**
  - Page 311
- **SE Bathtub/Shower Stall Seats**
  - Page 323
- **BT Bathtubs**
  - Page 329
- **GB Grab Bars**
  - Page 339
Figure 4.9.1: Quick Guide Table of Contents, con't.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment, Tables, and Seating</th>
<th>345</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equipment, Tables and Seating</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DF Drinking Fountains</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PT Public Telephones</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA Tables and Seating</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS Vending and Self-service Machines</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specific Use Areas</th>
<th>395</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Use Areas</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP Historic Preservation</td>
<td>397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EW Employee Work Areas</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AA Assembly Areas</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG Storage</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DS Dressing Rooms</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BU Businesses and Stores</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC Medical Care Facilities</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TL Transient Lodging</th>
<th>435</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LB Libraries</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE References and Resources</td>
<td>439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ADAAG Reach Ranges** | 441

3 Page formatting has been changed substantially in moving from three columns to two. The change allows for more effective coordination of text and graphics. In the previous iteration, the right side of the page was always reserved for graphics, which meant that some pages had blank space.

Font sizes are increased.
Content and Generic Functions

The team made a number of changes to the content and page format of the Quick Guide, which is illustrated in Figures 4.10, 4.10.1, and 4.10.2. As noted in Figure 4.10, Item 4, the page formatting was substantially changed to better manage the relationship between text and graphics. In previous versions of the text, each page contained three columns, with the right side column of every page set aside for illustrations and tables. However, not all content required illustrations and some content, such as the section on doors, required a considerable number of illustrations. The change to a two-column format allowed us to more effectively incorporate illustrations with the text (as in Figure 4.10.2) and manage page space.

As Figure 4.10, Item 5 indicates, in addition to the introductions for each of the five major divisions of the text, brief introductions that provide important accessibility information were added to each section within each division. The introductions focused not only on building accessibility but also on the needs of people, as illustrated by the emphasized text in the excerpt below from the section about doors:

Proper design and installation of doors is essential for independent access to buildings and spaces within buildings. For doors to be usable, people need to be able to position themselves to open the door and to pass through the doorway.

Additionally, general statements that refer to important accessibility issues were added to each topic within each section (see, for example, Figure 4.10, Item 6). The alphanumeric codes for each topic were retained, but bold headings were added to differentiate each topic (Figure 4.10.1, Item 8). Specific ADAAG references are included for each requirement related to an accessibility topic, and ADAAG required actions are
differentiated from our recommended actions (Figure 4.10.1, Items 9 and 10). Indention is also used to differentiate items related to topics (Figure 4.10.1, Item 11).

A number of illustrations were completed and added throughout the text. Illustrations are captioned and referenced in the text (Figure 4.10.2, Item 14). Additional information that some readers might require was added to the text. For instance, instructions for measuring spaces, slopes, and clear width at doorways are included and described in plain language (Figure 4.10.2, Item 15).

Taken together, the changes described above focus on assisting readers in managing the text and information on accessibility issues. The changes to the formatting, which are substantial in the *Quick Guide*, reflect the team’s concern at this stage for the metacommunicative functions of the text. The metacommunicative functions enhance the practical functions by providing navigation in the text and by establishing the writers’ concern for the readers’ participation in not only the text, but also the context to which the text refers.
Proper design and installation of doors is essential for independent access to buildings and spaces. For doors to be usable, people need to be able to position themselves to open the door and to pass through the doorway. Accessibility issues include doorway width, threshold transition, maneuvering space in front of and to the sides of doors, type and placement of door hardware, force required to open doors, and door safety features such as view panels. For more information about doors and surrounding areas, see EN Entrances.

A. Number and Location:
New Construction and Additions
Ideally all doors in new construction and additions would be accessible.

A1 Ensure that at least one door at each accessible entrance to a building or facility is accessible. [Required 4.1.3(7)(a)]

A2 Ensure that at least one door to each accessible space within a building or facility is accessible.

B. Number and Location:
Existing Buildings

Although ADAAG provisions for accessible areas of rescue and egress do not apply to existing doors, install accessible egress doors wherever possible. Check local building and fire codes for egress requirements.
Special technical exceptions for alterations to existing conditions are included in the rest of this section. For more information, see EN Entrances.

**B1** Follow the guidelines for new construction to the maximum amount feasible for alterations. [Required 4.1.6; 4.1.5; A4.1.6(1)(h)].

**C. Revolving Doors and Turnstiles**

Conventional revolving doors and turnstiles are not accessible to all people and require accessible alternatives.

**C1** Provide accessible gates or doors as alternatives to revolving doors or turnstiles at accessible entrances and/or along accessible routes. [Required 4.13.2]

**C2** Ensure that the accessible alternatives to revolving doors and turnstiles accommodate the same patterns of use as the revolving doors or turnstiles. [Required 4.13.2]

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Code</th>
<th>Topic Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DR Doors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Headings across the top of pages are omitted. Alphanumeric codes are retained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Topics are differentiated by bold headings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Specific ADAAG references are included for each item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Items are marked &quot;required&quot; or &quot;recommended&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Indentation is used to identify items related to topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>All topics include a brief introductory statement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. Two Doors in Series
Two doors in a series should be designed to allow space for wheelchair maneuvering and to allow for safe, comfortable passage of all people.

F1 Provide a minimum space of 48 in (1220 mm), plus the width of any door swinging into the space, between two hinged or pivoted doors in series. [Required 4.13.7] Figure DR-F1 (fig 26 left)

F2 Install doors in series so that they swing either in the same direction or away from the space between the doors. [Required 4.13.7] Figure DR-F2 (fig 25 right)

G. Clear Width: New Construction
To measure the clear space in a doorway, open the door to 90°. Measure the clear space from the face of the open door to the opposite door stop. No part of the door or door stop can be within the required clear space. Door hardware, including lever-type handles and panic bars, are per-

Illustrations are now provided throughout the text. New formatting provides additional space for illustrations.

Illustrations are referenced in the text and all illustrations are captioned.

Instructions for measuring spaces, slopes and other aspects of buildings are included in plain language.
Summary: Functions and Constructions

As the team added more coverage of accessibility issues and numerous illustrations to the text and as we developed a better understanding of accessibility issues, we came to believe that part of guiding people to an understanding of accessibility—as opposed to finding and minimally following the ADAAG requirements—meant incorporating explanations of accessible solutions and reasons for implementing them throughout the text. This decision—or, more accurately, evolution—led to a text that was over 400 pages. For the text to remain “quick” and easy to use, we focused on metacommunicative aspects of the text, in particular providing design features to facilitate information retrieval—the readers’ ability to find the information they need (Rude, 1988; Schriver, 1997; Rubens & Rubens, 1988).

However, the Quick Guide never saw the light of day because as we were nearing completion of our draft, the Access Board released for public comment a new version of the ADAAG. The format of the new ADAAG was significantly altered, the content was substantially changed, and the organization and numbering system were completely revised. Many of the changes that the Access Board proposed were meant to align their accessibility requirements with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accessibility standards, to which many design/build professionals refer. The changes to the ADAAG reflected the Access Board’s continuing interactions with both people in the design/build community and with disabled people and advocacy groups.

The revisions to the ADAAG meant that our text was already becoming obsolete, in part because we had been very conscientious about including references to specific ADAAG requirements with each accessibility topic and sub-topic. Consequently, we
decided to review the changes in the proposed ADAAG and determine how best to proceed with the project. One option was to scrap all the references to the ADAAG. Ultimately, however, we decided to be the first kids on the block to provide information in our text on the changes to the ADAAG. Dr. Arnold contacted the Access Board to determine when the proposed guidelines might be adopted and was informed that the comment and revision period would continue for at least a year. In addition, the Access Board urged us to continue with our draft. The changes to the ADAAG meant that the project needed to again be extended. The text had already become much longer and more complex and the task of coordinating all the elements required more collaboration, which I discuss in the next section.

**Roles and Tasks**

Over the course of the *Quick Guide* revision, Eden’s impact on the text was substantial. She was instrumental in establishing the new page design, in refining the organization, and in creating consistency of style across the text. Though Eden initially did not plan to delve into the ADAAG or other source materials to develop new content, her task required her to become involved with that aspect of the work. In addition, she and Larry coordinated the text and graphics. Though I was physically absent from the project for six months, I maintained e-mail contact and continued to generate text.

Larry continued to work with the designers on creating accurate illustrations. This task was particularly time consuming, as the illustrators were not familiar with the ADAAG or with accessibility issues. The designers created computer-generated graphics from Larry’s specifications and made changes as they were instructed. The designer who worked on Eden’s new page design left the project at the end of 1999 and Eden took
responsibility for learning Quark and combining text and graphics into the page templates. The advantage of this arrangement was that Eden had the editing background to effectively coordinate the text and graphics on the page as well as to perform substantive edits in addition to copy edits as she prepared the draft.

As participants learned different aspects of the work, and required their tasks to be coordinated with those of others, the team members' tasks and responsibilities began to overlap by necessity. However, in response to the changes in the ADAAG, the focus of the project shifted once again to review as, at the beginning of 2000, we began the process of working through the new ADAAG to determine what changes we needed to make to our text.

Transformation 3: Access for Everyone and the Social/Political Orientation

In the final transformation that I discuss in this chapter, the team revised the Quick Guide in response to the release of the proposed new ADAAG. Thus, the milestones I use to mark this draft are January of 2000—when the team began to review and incorporated changes based on the new ADAAG—and May of 2001—when my research on the project concluded. 7

The changes to the numbering system, organization, and content of the ADAAG created considerable work for the team. We re-evaluated every accessibility topic and subtopic in our text against both the new and old versions of the ADAAG to determine the differences and to decide what changes we would make to our text. We also wanted

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7 The project did not conclude at this time. In fact, the penultimate version of the team’s text was distributed for outside review in October 2001. In January 2002, the Access Board issued the final draft of the proposed ADAAG, which contains a number of additional new changes and which is awaiting approval of the OMB. The final approval is not expected until 2004.
to include the new ADAAG references in our text. Technically, until the Office of Management and Budget approves the proposed ADAAG, the previous version of the ADAAG is still in effect. However, we discovered that the Access Board and the regional assistance centers were using the new guidelines in advising people about accessibility issues. We also found out that when the proposed ADAAG is finally approved, though some requirements might change, the new numbering system will not change. For these reasons, we decided to retain reference to the old ADAAG in our text as well as to add reference to the proposed new ADAAG. Dr. Arnold wrote to our project sponsors on March 2, 2000, "...we do not want to finish our book based solely on the existing ADAAG only to have it be out of date in a few months when ADAAG 2000 is approved. Our book would not only be out of date, it would also have incorrect reference number throughout, and be missing important additions that are included in ADAAG 2000."

The close work required to review all the ADAAG material was time consuming, but our University sponsors supported our decision to return to the text and incorporate the most recent ADAAG information available. As the work progressed, and we negotiated versions of the information among the various texts, we also began to question some aspects of the text that we had previously taken for granted. For example, in the doors section, the ADAAG refers to various sides of doors using terms such as "push-side," "pull-side," and "latch-side," (see Figure 4.12.1, below), which can become quite confusing. Therefore, in the new iteration of our text, as well as incorporating changes to the ADAAG and new references, we provided more explanations about terms and about the conditions that they are used to describe. Throughout this review process, the team
developed a more refined sense of the accessibility issues and the complexities of understanding the ADAAG requirements.

And once again the texts' title, Quick Guide, didn't seem to fit our mission. The team negotiated a new title that retained the notion of a guide, from which readers might expect assistance with understanding accessibility issues and help in meeting ADAAG requirements, but one that also expressed the position we had come to adopt in relation to accessibility issues and our discourse about those issues. Over several months of the project, we went back and forth between Quick Guide and Easy Guide. But neither title seemed to portray the text accurately or adequately. On a draft of the introduction in March of 2001, Dr. Arnold noted, "I go back and forth. Which is better? I'm not sure it's really "easy" even if we want it to be easy. So I guess I prefer Quick. How about a new title? Accessibility Guide with references to..." (Draft of introduction, 3/7/2001).

As we revised the penultimate draft of the text, we negotiated a new—and final—title for the text—Access for Everyone: A Guide to Accessibility with References to the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). This change in the title, which occurred in May of 2001, reflects the team's focus on the social/political functions in this iteration of the text, which I describe further below.\(^8\)

**Purpose Statements and Generic Functions**

The purpose of Access for Everyone, presented in Figure 4.11, below, was similar to the purposes of the two previous drafts of the team's text. As in the previous drafts, the purpose statement stresses accessibility the design needs of all people.

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\(^8\) Meeting minutes include a lengthy conversation about this change. The example discussion in Chapter is an excerpt from that meeting.

Access for Everyone will help you:

- understand the design needs of all people, including people with disabilities
- identify features of buildings and sites that need to be analyzed for accessibility using a special notation system
- understand the basic requirements of ADAAG
- determine which ADAAG provisions apply
- decide what actions need to be taken to ensure accessibility
- make new and existing sites accessible to all people

Access for Everyone provides a system for evaluating plans, buildings, and sites to determine whether they comply with ADAAG and incorporate Universal Design principles.

The chapter following this introduction, How to Use this Book, provides information about the usage and conventions in Access for Everyone, including suggestions for using Access for Everyone in all phases of planning, designing, and assessing new and existing buildings and sites.

In this text, again the purpose statement of Access for Everyone is folded into an introduction, though the introduction to this iteration is considerably longer. The introduction covers information about the ADA, expanded coverage of Titles II and III, and new sections about “the Concept of Disability,” and “Universal Design.” In particular, the discussion of accessibility suggests that disability is in part a function of the environment:

We recognize that, in a real sense, environments, services, and products can be disabling when they are unable to accommodate many different people who have a wider range of abilities and needs.
Additions to the text such as the passage above illustrate the social/political stance that the team had been working to build into the text throughout the project. Again, we wanted to ensure that our perspective was conveyed throughout the text.

**Organization and Generic Functions**

The overall structure and organization of *Access for Everyone* did not change from the previous iteration of the text (the *Quick Guide*). But, because the content of many sections of the text had become longer and more complex, we looked for ways to assist readers in understanding the structure of the document and navigating the text. As before, the text included a table of contents for the book, and for each of the five main divisions; however, in this iteration, we also added a table of contents to each section within the divisions (illustrated in Figure 4.12, Item 1, below). We also added bold, black tabs (5th cut) to the leading edges of the pages (Item 2), which included the names of the sections and the two-letter codes identifying the accessibility topics—these codes had been retained throughout all versions of the text—which people could use to quickly locate information.

**Content and Generic Functions**

The page formatting, structure, and organization of *Access for Everyone* were also substantially retained from the *Quick Guide* iteration. But as I describe below, we more frequently addressed the relationship of people to the built environment throughout the text content. In addition, we addressed the relationship of the reader to the text—demonstrating concern for metacommunicative as well as social/political functions.
The sample pages from the Doors chapter presented in Figures 4.12.1, 4.12.2, and 4.12.3, below, exemplify the decisions we made about the content throughout the book. The changes included the following:

- The introductions to the sections were expanded to address important accessibility issues, particularly in sections that contained complex requirements, such as those for doors. (Figure 4.12.1, Item 3)
- Terms used to describe elements of the built environments are more fully explained (Figure 4.12.1, Item 4) and illustrated as necessary (Figure 4.12.2, Item 5).
- Properly scaled illustrations are included throughout the text. Though the figures in the example appear to be white males who use wheelchairs, throughout the text representations of people are varied and include men, women, and children; people of color; older people; and people who use various assistive devices. (Figure 4.12.3, Item 6)
- Discussions of the benefits of accessibility for a variety of users are discussed and rationales for accessible solutions are expanded. For example, in the previous iteration of the doors section, the discussion of clear opening width at doors began with the discussion of measuring the door. (Figure 4.12.4, Item 7). In the new version, we introduced the topic with a discussion of the importance of wider doorways, tying the rationale for providing wider doors to both users' needs and to other code requirements. (Figure 4.12.4, Item 8).
- Requirements are supplemented by “preferred” solutions that include rationales for the suggestions (Figure 4.12.5 Item 9).
- Detailed, illustrated suggestions for implementing accessible solutions are proved where possible (Figure 4.12.6, Item 10).
DR Doors

A Number and Location: New Construction and Additions ............... 120
B Number and Location: Alterations and Existing Conditions ........... 121
C Revolving Doors and Turnstiles ............... 121
D Gates ............... 122
E Double-Leaf Doors ......... 122
F Doors in a Series ......... 122

Clear Opening Width at a Door ....... 124
G Measuring Clear Opening Width .......... 124

Maneuvering space at a door ....... 127
H Maneuvering Spaces at Hinged Doors: Front Approach ............... 129
I Maneuvering Spaces at Hinged Doors: Hinge Side Approach .......... 133
J Maneuvering Spaces at Hinged Doors: Handle Side Approach .......... 137

K Maneuvering Spaces at Folding and Sliding Sections have become long and complex. A list of contents is added to each section of the text.  
1 Bold, black tabs are added to the text (5 cut). ............... 148

R Door Surfaces and Kickplates .......... 149
S Vision Lites and Side Lites .......... 151
T Automatic and Power-Assisted Doors and Gates .......... 152
Proper design and installation of doors is essential for independent access to buildings and within buildings. A doorway includes the doorframe, hardware, doorstop, and closer. A door is the movable leaf that closes an opening in a wall. In some cases, a doorway will not include a door leaf. A doorway with no door leaf is referred to here as a passageway. For simplicity, in this chapter, door may refer to either a door leaf or a doorway.

The distinction between door and doorway is important because the clear opening width required in a doorway is not necessarily the same as the door size. This section includes information on accurately measuring the clear opening width.

For a door to be usable, people need to be able to position themselves to open the door and to pass through the doorway. Accessibility issues include clear width; threshold profile; maneuvering space in front of and to the sides of doors; type and placement of door hardware; force required to open doors; and door safety features such as the height and position of view panels.

This chapter uses the following terms (adapted from ADAAG) to describe the orientation of a person to a door, including the direction from which a person approaches the door (handle side or hinge side), and a person's position relative to the direction of the door swing on approach to the door (pull face or push face).

The various combinations of the hinge or handle side approach, the direction of the door swing, and the presence of latches and closers influence the minimum required maneuvering space at a doorway.

**Handle side.** The handle side refers to the side of the door where the moving edge of the door leaf meets the doorway. This is the side where the handle (or knob) is located. Latches may also be installed on the handle side. However, not all doors have handles, knobs, or latches.
A closer regulates the speed of the closing door. Some closers are adjustable and must be set to meet fire, life-safety, and accessibility requirements.

Figure DR.1 shows an example of a door and doorway that is labeled according to the terms used in this chapter.

A **Number and Location: New Construction and Additions**

Doors and doorways that are part of an accessible route must meet accessibility guidelines.

**Exception:** Manual and automatic doors and gates that are operated only by security personnel do not have to meet accessibility requirements if security personnel have sole control of these doors at all times. ADAAG: 1999 404
Between two hinged or pivoted doors in a series, provide a minimum space of 48 in. (1220 mm), plus the width of any door swinging into the space. ADAAG: 1998 4.13; 1999 404

Figure DR.2 shows the space between two hinged doors in a series that swing in the same direction.

Install doors in series so that they swing either in the same direction or away from the space between the doors. ADAAG: 1998 4.13; 1999 404

Figure DR.3 shows the space between two hinged doors in a series that swing in opposite directions.

Properly scaled illustrations are included throughout the text. Though the figures here appear to be white, male wheelchair users, throughout the text, representations of people are varied and include men, women, and children; people of color, older people and people who use various assistive devices.
Clear Opening Width at a Door

Wider doorways are easier for most people to use. Doors that are 36in. (915mm) wide minimum are generally required by building and life-safety codes for egress and are preferred for accessibility because they provide a wider clear opening width. The additional width at doors is helpful in areas of heavy traffic, for people who use crutches or other walking aids, and when people using wheelchairs need to maneuver to turn into a doorway.

G Measuring Clear Opening Width

To measure the clear opening in a doorway of a hinged door, open the door to 90°. Measure the clear opening from the face or leading edge of the open door to the opposite door stop.

Figure DR.4 shows how to measure the clear opening in a doorway with a hinged door.

In the previous version of the text, the discussion of clear opening width at doors began with the discussion of measuring the door.

In the new version, we introduce the topic with a discussion of the importance of wider doorways, tying the rationale for providing wider doors to both users' needs and to other code requirements. Benefits of accessibility for a variety of users are discussed and rationales for accessible solutions are expanded.
Figure 4.12.5: Access for Everyone, Sample Pages, DR Doors Section, con't.

Figure DR.5 shows how to measure the clear opening at a pocket door or sliding door.

Figure DR.6 shows how to measure the clear opening at a folding door.

Door hardware (including lever-type handles and panic bars) is permitted within the door clear opening space above 34in. (865mm). ADAAG: 1998 4.4; 1999 404

G1 Provide a minimum clear opening of 32in. (815mm) at doorways that have no recess or that are recessed 24in. (610mm) or less. ADAAG: 1998 4.13; 1999 404 Doors that are 36in. (915mm) wide are preferred because they provide a wider clear opening at doorways.

Exception: In existing buildings where it is technically infeasible to comply with clear opening requirements, a maximum projection of 0.625in. (16mm) is permitted for the doorstop. This reduces the minimum clear space to 31.375in. (797mm). ADAAG: 1998 4.1.6; 1999 404

Requirements are supplemented by "preferred" solutions including the rationales for the suggestions.
Figure 4.12.6: Access for Everyone, Sample Pages, DR Doors Section, con't.

G2 Increase clear opening width in existing doorways by installing offset hinges. Offset hinges are designed to allow the door leaf to open past the 90° position in such a way that the door leaf is moved completely out of the clear opening (width) of the doorway.

Figure DR.7 shows how offset hinges work to create more clear opening width at a hinged door. The figure shows a three dimensional view of a door with offset hinges opened to 90° and a plan view of the door in several positions, including fully closed and fully open.

G3 Provide a minimum clear opening of 36in. (915mm) at doorways that are recessed more than 24in. (609mm) deep. Although such doors do not affect egress or accessibility of a route, people should be

G4 Detailed suggestions for accessible solutions are added where possible.

DR.7 A door with offset hinges
Summary: Functions and Constructions

The changes to the ADAAG forced the team to re-examine the ADAAG, our understandings of accessibility issues, and our ideas about what texts should do. Our generic improvisations led us not only to a very different text than the one with which we had begun, but also to a different perspective about using generic features to address accessibility issues, represent people who benefit from accessible solutions, and recognize our readers. In addressing practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions, we had been working to create a text that went beyond helping people comply with the guidelines; we hoped to provide a text that would assist people in understanding the issues—of course, we had to understand them first. To arrive at this synthesized approach to the text, the team also synthesized its activities.

Roles and Tasks

As the team began work in 1998, the initial division of tasks reflected the various disciplines that were represented by the team, which seemed practical and efficient at the time. But the disciplinary divisions focused team members on discrete tasks, rather than on the activity and the text as fully collaborative. For instance, I, as the writer, was not benefiting as much as possible from Larry’s knowledge of architecture.

But as we worked through the final iteration of the text—through understanding the revisions to the ADAAG and then revising our own text—the team members met together to discuss text, debate requirements, argue over illustrations, and coordinate the various aspects of the text. For example, in the summer of 2000, Larry, Dr. Arnold, and I met several days a week with pencils in hand to go over the evolving text. Larry began to work on the illustrations as opposed to supervising the designers; and Dr. Arnold, Eden, Larry, and I
debated captions, call-outs, and ways to reference the illustrations in the text. This collaboration represented a marked change in the process of the team over time.

In the later stages of the project, much more cross-disciplinary collaboration occurred as well as more contention. Reflecting on the team member’s changing relationships over time, Pat and Eden both mentioned periods of interpersonal conflict as well as conflict that stemmed from team members’ different disciplinary perspectives. In discussing the team’s conflict in terms of scholarship on collaboration, Eden noted during an interview:

Going back to [Burnett’s (1993)] conflict model again, I think there has been lots and lots of very useful substantive conflict where people are talking about how to manage the information, how to make it accessible to the most people, how to make sure that it’s as clear as it can be, and in terms of making the illustrations and the text fit together.

When I asked Larry in an interview to comment on the nature of the difference of opinion among team members about text and graphics, he responded

Well, they were wrong. (Laughs). No, um, no. I don’t think there have been differences once we really each understood what we were trying to say. And that had been a process. I think we’ve been together long enough we can start to understand when a person says something that they’re joking, or that they’re seeing it through their eyes and then you can kind of come from they’re perspective and say oh, ok, I see what you mean, but here’s what it’s supposed to mean. I think it’s been an advantage having you and Eden looking at [the issues] because, being from outside the design field, it’s allowed me to think through other people and see through other people’s eyes on how [the text] is going to work or not work. But I think we’ve worked a lot of things out because of the multitude of disciplines we’ve had in here.

As people’s expertise with the issues, tasks, and texts grew over time, more challenges were posed for control of tasks. On the other hand, the results of the activity improved and the text became more sophisticated. While the writers learned to see architectural spaces, the architects learned more about how to address audiences outside their discipline. Eden
described the relationship between disciplinary knowledge and the knowledge gained through the activity:

This is one of those projects that, when you ask what experience people brought to the project, I think that’s one question. But I think the expertise that people have gained on the project...we not only brought expertise but we gained expertise; it’s kind of a cross-fertilization.

The project changed over time as the divisions of labor began to blur, providing opportunities for team members to develop expertise outside their individual fields. The team members negotiated practices and learned enough about each other’s perspectives to move into what Wenger (1998) calls a boundary practice. That is, an on-going activity that “becomes established and provides an on-going forum for mutual engagement” in which participants “deal with boundaries and sustain a connection between a number of other practices by addressing conflicts, reconciling perspectives, and finding solutions” (114).

**Implications**

The interpretations and uses of genres that involve multiple communities call attention to the relationships among texts, contexts, activities, writers, and audiences. Understanding genre use requires attention to the ways these relationships are instantiated in texts. Understanding genre use also requires attention to the strategies that writers (and readers) employ to represent (and interpret) relationships, contexts, and knowledge via texts. These strategies, according to Bhatia, “are concerned with the exploitation of the conventional rules of genre for the purpose of greater effectiveness in a very specific socio-cultural context” and “tend to vary the nature of genre, often introducing new or additional considerations in the communicative purpose of the text” (p. 20-21). These strategies arise from the expectations and experiences that writers have of various genres from which writers
improvise solutions to textual problems that are appropriate for particular situations and texts.

Indeed, for the Access for Everyone team combining writing, architecture, building, regulation, and advocacy required a strategic approach to the text and to genres as well as to the various disciplinary skills, experiences, and perspectives that team members brought to the table. During interviews of key participants, I asked participants how they saw the goals of the project and the text. In the interview excerpts in Table 4-D, below, each participant identified various practical and social/political goals for the text.

Table 4-D: Key Participants' perceptions of project goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pat: Project Assistant</th>
<th>Larry: Technical advisor, illustrator</th>
<th>Eden: Editor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do I understand the goals to be? I understand that we're trying to make a booklet, a book, that's easy to understand compared to ADAAG because ADAAG is more of a technical jumble. And we're making it for professionals and lay people, architects and contractors, that sort of thing, and it will have the guidelines for accessibility issues. I'm hoping that it will come in handy in my work. If I'm going to be a consultant for accessibility, I think it's going to directly benefit me.</td>
<td>My understanding is that this will provide one reference book, source of information, for designers of the human environment to provide more accessible spaces for everyone. And then, as an aside, it also applies to the ADA. But I think it does entail more of the Universal design principles rather than strictly the ADA, the civil rights law.</td>
<td>When I came on the project, my orientation to the project had to do with the goal of meeting the needs of the possible communities of users all the way from the sort of funding body, the facilities and research management people, to all of their sub-contractors and anybody who works for the university, to people who work for the university. And then I have always felt like Dr. Arnold had sort of a larger goal in terms of making this information available and widely disseminated to anybody who might need to make a facility or site accessible and meet the requirements of the ADA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants' descriptions included similar articulations of the audiences and purposes of the text. Each participant identified multiple audiences, mentioned accessibility issues, and noted the audiences' need for information about accessibility guidelines and
accessible spaces. In developing a text that would be accepted and used by various communities and in various contexts, the team’s decisions about the text were mediated by its perception of the practical and metacommunicative needs of communities, our own and others’ experiences with and expectations of various genres, and the contexts in which the text would be used.

Additionally, the team’s consideration of the social/political functions of genres brought together aspects of various genres of regulation, advocacy, and architecture to “unblack-box” some of the issues related to the position of people with disabilities. For example, in the interview excerpts above, each team member mentioned, but somewhat subordinated, the role of the ADA and ADAAG—our primary source text—that is cast in the powerful genre of regulation. Though the ADAAG was central throughout the development of Access for Everyone and it was a significant factor in the team’s work, the subordination of the ADAAG and the genre of regulation in the team members’ comments reflect the team’s concern for promoting accessibility over following the rules. In fact, an early “invention” draft of the preface to the Access for Everyone, text jointly developed by Eden and Dr. Arnold, notes the following:

One of the mantras of the team that designed, wrote, illustrated, and edited this book is “We’re not re-writing ADAAG.”9 By this we mean that we did our very best to be true to the letter and spirit of the ADAAG and the ADA, but we went beyond ADAAG in some important ways for some reasons that we think are compelling. (Preface draft, 5/18/01)

In this chapter, I described the transformations that the team enacted—transforming sources into a first draft and then transforming subsequent drafts into a final product. I argued

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9 The team used this phrase often and over a long period, as an excerpt from an e-mail to the team from Eden attests: ...Also, in my continuing efforts to support your notion that we are not rewriting ADAAG, I’d like to suggest that we refer to the project by the book name...” (Eden, e-mail, 5/21/2000).
that the process illustrates that the team strategically engaged the practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions of various genres to develop its own approach to the *Access for Everyone* text. I further suggested that in strategically enacting these functions, the team members evaluated and incorporated the features of various texts and genres in developing its text.

In the next chapter, I focus specifically on the ways in which the team members used genres and genre knowledge to negotiate various disciplinary and professional experiences and perspectives over the course of the project.
Chapter 5
Negotiating Spaces: Genre, Expectation, and Improvisation

The fascinating thing to me is where we would have all the text and we'd have the illustrations and someone would pick up a pencil and paper and say, "No, now look at this..." and they would draw a whole other illustration to explain why either the text was the way it was or the illustration. And those kinds of little extra-textual acts—this is what I want to see.

Eden, Project Editor, Rhetoric and Professional Communication

In Chapter 4, I discussed several examples of the ways that the Access for Everyone team enacted practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions of genre to develop its text. I also demonstrated that in doing so the team adopted, adapted, and rejected features of various genres in strategically choosing the features that shaped its text. The team's decisions about the forms and conventions appropriate for enacting the functions of genre were mediated by the team members' individual and collective experiences, our expectations about various genres, and our interpretations of the contexts and the needs of various communities and audiences for our text. I also suggested that, over the course of project, the team became more effective in managing the functions of genre to develop its text, particularly when we collaborated.

In this chapter, I consider my second research question: what strategies do people participating in cross-community work use to negotiate genres and genre use? To address this question, I examine more closely several of the team's processes and practices and suggest specific ways in which the team members used genres and genre knowledge to accomplish activities directed toward creating text. The analyses that I present in this chapter suggest several generalizations about the team's uses of genre.
- The team members began project-related tasks by applying previous knowledge and expectations about various genres that they developed through affiliations with disciplines and/or professional experiences.
- The team members' use of various genres to manage and control the team's work and the developing text created different "versions" of the reality of the team's work.
- The team improvised solutions to textual problems by negotiating their expectations of genre, different versions of the project reality, and their understandings of the context to which the project responds.

In what follows in this chapter, I begin by briefly discussing the roles of what I'm referring to here as expectations and improvisations in terms of specific practices related to the functions of genre that I elaborated in Chapter 4. I then categorize the work and communication practices in which team members used various genres and align these work and communication practices with the functions of genre to consider the effects that the practices had on the team's interpretations of genre and on the development of the team's text during the project.

Throughout the chapter, I provide examples to illustrate the ways in which team members' previous experiences and expectations and the team's negotiation and improvisations worked dialectically to shape the team's activity and text. I conclude by suggesting linkages among the specific strategies the team members enacted for managing expectations and improvisations and the practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions of genre. I also discuss several implications of this study for further research.
Expectations, Improvisations, and the Functions of Genre

The Access for Everyone team members and the potential audiences for its text included people from various communities who have different professional and disciplinary affiliations, experiences, and expectations and thus use different skills, processes, and knowledge to participate in the discourse and activities of particular fields. Collaborative activity is always a negotiation, even when participants share similar disciplinary and/or professional backgrounds and experiences. But when participants represent different fields, the collaboration may involve balancing different dynamics.

On one hand, people are invested in the knowledge and practices of the disciplines and professions with which they are affiliated—thus they have expectations about the ways in which knowledge is "packaged." The experience that people acquire through their disciplinary and professional work provides them with domain-specific knowledge and specialized skills. In addition, the affiliations people establish within their disciplinary and professional communities allow them to participate not only in the activities of a field but also in the field's cultural capital and professional jurisdiction (Bourdieu; Abbott). Consequently, people from different disciplinary and professional backgrounds have different expectations about the ways in which workplace genres should be structured and used. On the other hand, the participation of people from different fields and professional communities means that different knowledge, perspectives, and sometimes very different discourse practices must be negotiated. Participants negotiate their various perspectives to improvise genres and uses of genres that facilitate their tasks.

The categories of experience/expectation and negotiation/improvisation are not binaries, but interrelated positions that people take in relationship to other participants and
activity as they work with participants from other communities. Expectations and improvisations emerge through specific types of contributions that people make and practices in which they engage.

On projects that involve participants from various fields, participants contribute their specialized knowledge and skills, including their genre knowledge, to accomplish the practical ends of the activity. For example, Larry had the specialized knowledge in architecture to work with the graphic designers in creating illustrations for the *Access for Everyone* text. The designers had knowledge of graphic design and the technical skills in the appropriate computer software to create the illustrations.

To accomplish metacommunicative functions, people use genres with which they have experience to scaffold activity, and they use genre knowledge to scaffold the documents they develop. To accomplish social/political functions of genre, people may also represent or adopt the positions and rhetorical strategies that are privileged in their fields.

In what follows in this chapter, I provide several examples of the team’s uses and negotiations of genre in which team members contributed their experience, acted on their expectations, and negotiated improvisations in developing the *Access for Everyone* text. I discuss the team’s practices into two categories: (1) genres the team used to manage and shape the text and (2) interactions among the team members that shaped the genre of the text.

**Genres that Shape the Text**

Following Orlikowski and Yates (1994), I noted that the *Access for Everyone* team used texts in various genres—including documents that team members devised—to achieve particular goals. (A complete list of the types of documents is available in Appendix A.)
According to Orlikowski and Yates (1994), when people find themselves participating in new discursive situations, they "invoke the familiar" by drawing on their existing knowledge of genre. They "simply start enacting genres they have used previously as members of other communities" (547). For example the team conducted meetings, generated minutes, used timesheets, created style guides, and sent e-mails as we plunged into our writing and designing tasks.

These genres assisted the team in carrying out its objectives while at the same time shaping the team's activities and its text. In addition, because the work of our project was to create a text, several of these genres, such as project-tracking documents and style guides, were used in service of creating another text. Thus, the ways in which we used a variety of genres on the project had an impact on the genre of the document we developed.

Two particular examples of genre use illustrate the ways in which the team negotiated experiences, expectations, and improvisations to facilitate its activities and to construct its text. In the first example, I discuss project-tracking documents that the team used to monitor and share information about the progress of the text we were creating. In the second example, I discuss several style sheets that the team used to establish conventions and create consistency in the text.

**Project-Tracking Documents**

The genre of project-tracking documents provides a useful example of the ways in which genres can be used to manage, control, and negotiate activities. Though the purposes of the project-tracking genre—to monitor progress and to coordinate tasks—are essential, the forms vary significantly from profession to profession, workgroup to workgroup, and activity to activity. Tracking documents—whether explicitly or implicitly—also create accountability.
and structure the activity of work (e.g., the work orders that Winsor studied). Consequently, project-tracking documents establish and record particular versions of reality for project participants (Schryer 1993).

The team went through several iterations of project-tracking documents that were created by various members of the team, eventually adopting one version that functioned to periodically summarize the status of the project. I provide examples of two of these documents below and discuss the ways in which each version of the genre established different practices and different records of the reality of the team's work. Though other documents were used periodically, these two documents—Larry's and Eden's project-tracking documents—had the most significant impacts on the project work.

**Larry's Version**

When we began the project, we didn't develop or use a project-tracking document in the first few months of work. In fact, our document management was not well coordinated. Looking over the drafts of documents from the beginning of the project, many documents do not even contain dates. We depended primarily on the file structure on a computer we used for the project to determine which sections of the text and illustrations were complete, which were in process, and which needed to be started.

Larry—who had the dual responsibility of locating illustrations and providing technical review for the text that I was writing and Eden was editing—implemented the first project-tracking document to coordinate tasks and manage the documents we were creating for the team's text. Larry used the document to track the many graphics that he collected and to indicate to the graphic designers compiling our text where the graphics needed to be
placed in the text. As new graphic designers joined the team, we also needed a record of the status of the development of each section of our text and each illustration.

Examples of the Excel spreadsheets that Larry used for project tracking are presented in Figures 5.1 and 5.1.1, below. Figure 5.1 is an example of a document that tracked the progress of the team's developing text. Within the two-part horizontal organization, the first part lists tasks to be accomplished for each section of the text—from the generation of text and illustrations for each section to the compilation of text and graphics in page templates and sections (Figure 5.1, Item 1). The second part of the horizontal organization tracks the stages in creating and completing groups of illustrations for each section. Review is incorporated at each stage. The sequence of tasks for creating text and illustrations necessarily shapes the activity directed toward the final document. For example, the document assumes two revisions for each section of text and three for each graphic when, in fact, the text and illustrations were revised and reviewed many times.

The vertical organization of the document lists the main divisions of the text and the sections in each division. (Figure 5.1, Item 2). Table cells were filled in as each task for each section was completed. The presumption of text organization in the tracking document is a plan—a version of a reality that does not yet exist but that necessarily influences the structure of the actual document in development.
**Figure 5.1: Larry's Tracking Sheet, Text and Illustrations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Member Responsibilities</th>
<th>Larry</th>
<th>Arnold</th>
<th>Larry</th>
<th>Larry</th>
<th>Larry</th>
<th>Larry</th>
<th>Larry</th>
<th>Larry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Selection</td>
<td>Final Selection from Site</td>
<td>Site Evaluation</td>
<td>Site Evaluation</td>
<td>Site Evaluation</td>
<td>Site Evaluation</td>
<td>Site Evaluation</td>
<td>Site Evaluation</td>
<td>Site Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Draft Completed</td>
<td>Second Draft Completed</td>
<td>Third Draft Completed</td>
<td>Final Draft Completed</td>
<td>Final Draft Approved</td>
<td>Final Draft Approved</td>
<td>Final Draft Approved</td>
<td>Final Draft Approved</td>
<td>Final Draft Approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed 30/11/1998 6:45 AM Page 181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within the two-part horizontal organization, the first part lists tasks to be accomplished for each section of the text—from the generation of text and illustrations to the compilation of text and graphics in page templates and sections. The second part lists the stages in creating and completing illustrations for each section. Review is incorporated at each stage.

Vertical organization lists main divisions of the text and the sections in each division. Table cells are filled in as each task in each section is completed.
While the document in Figure 5.1, above, describes the content, organization, and development process for the whole document, Figure 5.1.1, below, is an example of a project-tracking document that organizes the development of each individual illustration (the final text contains 126 individual illustrations). The document lists each illustration in development for each section (Figure 5.1.1, Item 3). The horizontal organization lists tasks to be accomplished for each illustration including selection, drafting, adding annotations, measurements, dimensions, and labels. Review is again incorporated at each stage (Item 4). The vertical organization of the document lists the individual illustrations in each section (Item 5) and the dates indicate the actual completion of each task (Item 5).

As Larry and the various graphic designers worked on the illustrations, Larry labeled and saved versions of each in 3 ring binders together with the tracking documents. Information about each illustration was recorded in the tracking document so the illustrations could later be located and placed in the document template with the appropriate text. Unfortunately, the numbering system for the many illustrations was never effectively coordinated between Larry and the people who worked to combine the text and graphics into the page templates, making it difficult over the course of the project for anyone other than Larry to determine which illustrations were complete, and which ones were to accompany which text.
### Figure 5.1.1: Larry's Tracking Sheet, Illustrations Only

Scheduling Sheet for the 1998 edition of the *Quick Guide to ADAAG*—Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Larry Arnold</td>
<td>Reviewing Design</td>
<td>10/10/98</td>
<td>11/10/98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5b</td>
<td>Larry Arnold</td>
<td>Reviewing Design</td>
<td>11/20/98</td>
<td>12/20/98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5b</td>
<td>Larry Arnold</td>
<td>Reviewing Design</td>
<td>1/1/99</td>
<td>2/1/99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A15a</td>
<td>Larry Arnold</td>
<td>Reviewing Design</td>
<td>1/24/99</td>
<td>1/31/99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Illustrated Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A21a</td>
<td>Larry Arnold</td>
<td>Reviewing Design</td>
<td>11/5/98</td>
<td>11/15/98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A21b</td>
<td>Larry Arnold</td>
<td>Reviewing Design</td>
<td>11/20/98</td>
<td>12/20/98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A21c</td>
<td>Larry Arnold</td>
<td>Reviewing Design</td>
<td>1/1/99</td>
<td>2/1/99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A21d</td>
<td>Larry Arnold</td>
<td>Reviewing Design</td>
<td>1/24/99</td>
<td>1/31/99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Horizontal organization lists tasks to be accomplished for each illustration, including selection, drafting, adding annotations, measurements, dimensions, and labels. Review is incorporated at each stage.

5. Vertical organization lists the individual illustrations in each section.

6. Dates indicate completion of each task.
As the categories of information contained in Larry's project tracking documents illustrate, the genre of the tracking document can serve the essential practical function of document and task management. Each piece of text and each illustration slated for eventual incorporation in the final text are listed and the progress of each piece is recorded.

The genre is also highly metacommunicative, structured to scaffold activity. When the activity is creating a text, the project tracking genre influences the metacommunication of the developing text by containing or suggesting elements of the structure of the document—for example, main parts and subparts of the text—by listing them in a particular order and focusing activities on each in specific proportions. Larry's project-tracking documents might thus be interpreted as detailed plans for how the team's text will eventually be structured.

In addition, the genre is also social/political in that it mediates the activities and relationships among tasks and among people. For instance, the sequence of development and review that Larry established through his document indicates his concern that all work completed by non-architect team members be reviewed at each stage in the process by an architect team member. According to the tracking documents, once pieces of text and individual illustrations were complete, each was routed to Larry for technical review and then back to the illustrator or writer for revision. Larry's tracking document establishes Dr. Arnold as the final authority at each stage of the development of the document.

Larry's decisions about the necessity of technical review at each stage were in part warranted—the ADAAG contains technical information and that is sometimes difficult to understand and interpret accurately. In fact, the difficulty of the ADAAG material was one of the reasons for our project in the first place. As a version of reality that depicts relationships
and the value of various activities, technical review is privileged in the reality constructed by Larry’s documents.

Larry saw tracking the work on the project as important, expected that other people did as well, and began enacting the genre based on his previous experience. But he had a different understanding than other team members about how to accomplish the project tracking goals through the genre of the tracking document. For one thing, the elaborate tracking system required meticulous maintenance—for which Larry took responsibility—and was difficult to manage and read. Other team members had little input into the form and use of the document and those who had not agreed to use it simply resisted participating in this activity, in most cases developing their own, private ways of keeping track of the work for which they were individually responsible.

During a working session in 2001, Larry noted that he discontinued maintaining the document because “no one else could understand it.” For example, Eden commented in an interview that Larry’s tracking system for the illustrations was incredibly elaborate, and it was so unwieldy as to be almost useless. And part of the problem, the problem that caused me from even wanting to learn it or to use it, was that it had absolutely no relationship to what was going to be in the book. Mine was really simple. It’s like one page, here are the chapters, who’s got them, who’s supposed to be doing what on it, and you know, I updated it and I brought copies to everybody at every meeting instead of having it in a book.

Eden’s comment indicates several responses to the practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions of Larry’s documents. In a practical sense, the documents were just too difficult for her to use. More important from Eden’s perspective as editor, she saw the documents as having “absolutely no relationship to what was going to be in the book,” an indication that her vision of the metacommunication for the team’s text was not aligned with
Larry’s vision of the metacommunication. Further, Eden saw it as her responsibility as editor, not Larry’s, to determine “who’s supposed to be doing what,” a quite different version of the social/political reality in that it casts Eden—rather than the technical reviewers—as the gatekeeper of the project. When Eden joined the team as editor, she saw ensuring that the team was monitoring its progress as one of her roles:

And when I came on the project, I don’t know whether it’s my personality or what, but I pretty much started calling it like I saw it, and standing up and saying look, this has to be, this is what we’re going to do to get this document done. And in some ways I took over, or I felt like I was taking over in ways that were sort of a surprise to other people on the team. I brought in recording documents, I brought in a calendar...sort of a task progress sheet in which I tried to show who had what chapter and what stage it was in terms of being worked on

As did Larry, Eden invoked her previous experience and her expectations about the project to enact the genre of the project-tracking document, but from the perspective of her role on the team.

**Eden’s Version**

Eden’s project-tracking document is presented Figure 5.2, below. The horizontal organization indicates several types of information about each section of the book. “Holder” indicates the person who is currently working on the document. When “team” is the holder of the document, the text has been written and reviewed. Where a team member is named, that person is working on the text—writing, reviewing or editing (Item 2). The document lists the total number of figures anticipated for each section of the text and includes a column indicating the illustrations for each section as a group, but does not—as Larry’s document did—track the progress of each individual illustration (Item 1). The “In Quark” column indicates that a section of the book (at least the text) has been placed and formatted in a
Figure 5.2: Eden’s Tracking Sheet (10/30/2000)

1. Lists the number of figures for each section and includes a column for the status of illustrations, but does not track progress of each one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter number</th>
<th>Parts and Chapters</th>
<th>Holder</th>
<th>Figures</th>
<th>In Quark</th>
<th>Illustration status</th>
<th>Chapter number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Traveling</td>
<td>team</td>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>4-Sep</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>CR Curb Ramps</td>
<td>team</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>RP Ramps</td>
<td>team</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21-Sep</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>EN Entrances</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td>4-Sep</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>EL Elevators</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>PL Platform Lifts</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ST Stairs</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>AL Alarms</td>
<td>team</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>AR Areas of Refuge</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>EG Egress</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>SN Signs</td>
<td>team</td>
<td>3/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>TB Toilet Rooms and Bathrooms</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>TS Toilet Stalls</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>UFR Unifs</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>FX Fixtures</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>SS Shower Stalls</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>SE Seats in Tubs/Showers</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>BT Bathtubs</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>GB Grab Bars</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>DF Drinking Fountains</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>PT Public Telephones</td>
<td>team</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>TA Tables and Seating</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>VM Vending Machines</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>EW Employee Work Areas</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>SG Storage</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>DS Dressing Rooms</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>AA Assembly Areas</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>HP Historic Preservation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>BU Business and Mercantile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>LB Libraries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>MC Medical Care Facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>TL Transient Lodging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>DU Dwelling Units</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>GL Glossary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>RE References</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>AP Appendix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>IN Index</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>RR Reach Ranges</td>
<td>donna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Horizontal organization indicates several types of information about each section of the book. “Holder” indicates the person who is currently working on the document. “Team” means that the text has been written and reviewed. Where a team member is named, that person is working on the text—writing, reviewing or editing. “In Quark” indicates that the section (at least the text) has been placed in a Quark template.

3. Vertical organization lists the major divisions of the book and each section in each division.

Dr. Arnold, Eden, Donna, Pat, Larry, Designer
Quark template. The vertical organization here, as in Larry's document, lists the major divisions of the book and each section in each division (Item 3). In Eden's document all review of texts and illustrations as part of the project work is assumed—the version of reality in this document is concerned less with process and more with the status of the team's text at any given point.

Eden's project-tracking document also serves practical, metacommunicative, and rhetorical functions for the activity and for the developing text. In a practical sense, Eden's one page document was more easily maintained and distributed among the team members. In a metacommunicative sense, Eden's document—as did Larry's—also serves the metacommunicative function of establishing the scaffolding for the team's text. The interdependency of the practical and metacommunicative functions is exemplified by discussions of the project's progress in relation to the project tracking documents. For example, in the conversation presented in Figure 5.3, below, Eden, Pat, and I are discussing progress on the project as we look at one of Eden's project-tracking documents.

**Figure 5.3: Team Discussion of Document Development**

In the exchange below, Eden is asking about a particular part of the text that I am working on—information about areas of buildings used for special purposes. I have mentioned a "chapter" on special purpose areas. We're trying to figure out what I'm working on and where it belongs, however, I am not using the correct terminology to refer to the parts text under discussion.

1 Eden: OK, now, the chapter covering special purpose areas, what chapter would that be?
2 Donna: Well actually it's it's down there (looking at list of contents) it starts employee work areas special use areas.
3 Eden: OK.
4 Donna: Employee work areas assembly=
5 Pat: =//yeah//=
6 Donna: //that //kind of stuff.
Eden: Right. But there is no chapter covering special use areas.

In the exchange above, Eden can’t find a “chapter” on special use areas and believes I’m working on text that isn’t on the list—and therefore not included in the document.

The problem is that I’m referring to the major divisions of the text as “chapters” and the subsections as “sections.” In the reality created by Eden’s tracking document, the major divisions are “sections,” and the sub-divisions are “chapters.”

Donna: No it’s that whole chunk.

Eden: Right but when you’re referring (quoting from draft) “Additional information about making features in specific types of facilities…” (. ) I’ll just do it editorially.

Donna: Yeah. Exactly. What are you calling those? (. ) Sections?

Eden: Well specific use areas is a section—

Donna: =section //ok//

Eden: //with// you know all these chapters in it=

Donna: =with chapters in it. I’m sorry that’s my fault.

The discussion above reflects a relatively minor misunderstanding. But it indicates that through the genre of the project-tracking document—its purposes and generic functions—Eden has established certain practical guidelines for enacting metacommunicative aspects of the team’s text, for example, the names of the parts that we should refer to in our discussions of the text as well as use in the text itself. In the text, when writers identify and refer readers to various parts of the text, the terms must be consistent to scaffold the readers’ experience.

**Expectations and Improvisation**

Eden’s comment that Larry’s document had “absolutely no relationship to what was going to be in the book” responded in part to the problems of coordinating the illustrations with the text in the document templates. Larry’s document, though no longer in use, in fact represented, or created, an important reality that Eden’s document did not—the development of the text and the coordination of the graphics with the text was a very complex and
recursive process. Eden’s document treated the illustrations for each section as a group, while Larry and the designers were creating them one at a time, focusing on the illustrations themselves, and not on sections of the book that needed to be completed. The team ultimately used Eden’s document to track the progress of the project, though Larry supplemented that document by adding a review protocol to the individual drafts of the illustrations.

Eden’s tracking sheet became the “public” version of the team’s progress in which Larry’s reality of technical review was replaced with Eden’s reality of editorial control, as suggested by the exchange in Figure 5.4.

**Figure 5.4: Excerpts from a Discussion of Preparing a Review Draft**

In the conversation below, several team members are discussing a draft of the book that is slated for outside review, including the parts of the text that are ready for inclusion. Eden has told me that a part of the text I’m working on may not be included in the review draft.

1. **Donna:** Are you suggesting it might not go in the book at all?
2. **Eden:** No no.
3. **Donna:** OK. It won’t go in this draft.
4. **Eden:** I’m suggesting it **might** not go in this draft=
5. **Donna:** =OK=
6. **Eden:** =because I mean ok last week we talked about a //time//
7. **Donna:** //right// right and I’m trying to //meet that//
8. **Eden:** //and I said// I can have this chunk of stuff
9. **Donna:** ok
10. **Eden:** which I’ve indicated with the shaded box done by the end of spring break.
In response to my query about the text, Eden indicates that we had deadlines established for certain parts of the text. The reality of the deadline—and thus the content of the draft—is determined by “shaded boxes” in the tracking document.

In the next exchange, I note that “I owe” Eden a particular portion of text. Socially and politically, Eden’s control of the project-tracking genre suggests her editorial control and her “ownership” of the process of putting the draft together.

11 Donna: And all I owe you is bathtubs (...) (paging through) (...) and reach ranges (.). right? Larry has elevators. I told him to send it straight to you.

12 Eden: OK so (writing notes) (...)

13 Donna: (laughs)

14 Larry: So where do you want it sent?

15 Eden: School.

In the next several lines, Dr. Arnold wants to ensure that Larry will be able to provide Eden with the necessary illustrations. The status of the illustrations is not transparent in Eden’s tracking documents and must be negotiated through alternative means—such as asking for them.

17 Arnold: And then Larry needs to get //all the //

18 Eden: //OK, you// //have///

19 Arnold: //updated// illustrations in there.

29 Arnold: We gonna get her the illustrations?

30 Eden: We talked //about//

31 Arnold: //then // when she prints the draft we’ll have the right ones in there.

32 Larry: Sure.

In the next part of the discussion, the topic turns to the broader issues of the timeline and the scope of the document that will be released for review. Here, the realities of the project-tracking document and the team’s text are interdependent.

33 Eden: We talked about doing ok we need to revisit the um scope=

34 Donna: =um-hm=

35 Eden: =and

36 Arnold: All right.
Because the *Access for Everyone* team's activity was developing a document, the project-tracking genre created and reflected the shape of the team's text as it developed. The tracking documents I described here, as well as other tools that the team used for keeping track of work, are not necessarily discipline specific; but, as I illustrate here, the project-tracking genre functions to scaffold the activity and the developing document. The genre also serves to mediate activities and relationships in part based on using the functions of the genre to privilege practices, processes, and roles—the experience of which people bring in part from their various professional and disciplinary experiences and in part negotiate from their positions on the team.

**Style Sheets**

In this section, I discuss the ways in which the team used another genre—the style sheet—to enact functions of genre in the text. Several style sheets that were established to address different aspects of the document articulate the collection of decisions that the team made about the features of its developing text, including the document design, the illustrations, and the writing style. In a similar way as the project-tracking documents, the style sheets “pre-”created the team’s text and recreated the features of genres that the team chose to meet the perceived needs of the audiences for the text as well as the team’s expectations for the text. Again, the team members worked from their previous experiences and expectations with similar documents to make decisions about the form and conventions of genres that were instantiated in the style sheets and then in the text itself. As I discussed in Chapter 4, the forms and conventions of the genres that were the sources for and precursors of the text also established some of our expectations for the text we were developing.
The style sheets were used to construct templates so that the features of the text would be consistent across each section. In addition to the document features outlined in the style sheet, the team made decisions about the cover, paper, binding, and tabs between the sections of the text. The three types of style sheets that I discuss below each had implications for the practical, metacommunicative, and rhetorical functions of genre for the text the team was developing.

**Document Design Style Sheet**

One of the earliest tasks that the first graphic designer on the team undertook was developing a style sheet. The designer who completed the style sheet was a graduate student in graphic design who had worked in the field for several years. His role on the project was to design a template for the document and then to incorporate the text I was writing and Larry's illustrations into the templates. Through training and practice, the designer saw his first task as planning the overall design of the pages and establishing the features of the team's text.

Shown in Figure 5.5, the first style sheet the team used describes the basic formatting to be used for individual pages of the text. This original style sheet included an example of a formatted page illustrating the page layout and placement of text and graphics (Item 1). Beneath the example, the style sheet summarizes all of the specific decisions that had been made about the formatting of the document (Item 2). These included aspects of the features of the document, such as font styles, sizes, and leading; headings, white space, and rules (lines used to separate areas of the page).
Figure 5.5: Document Design Style Guide

**AE Accessible Exterior Routes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Requirements &amp; Recommendations</th>
<th>Illustrations &amp; Tables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Historic Sites</strong></td>
<td>Refer to the definition of a qualifying structure (page ) to determine if the area under consideration meets the requirements of Historic Preservation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide at least one accessible route from a site access point to an accessible entrance. ADAAG 14.1.7 (2)(a) [See also Accessible Entrances]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Areas Location</strong></td>
<td><strong>C1</strong> Locate accessible routes as close as feasible to other routes. ADAAG 4.3.2 (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>C2</strong> Recommended: Follow accessibility guidelines when constructing new primary routes or renovating existing primary routes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Route Width</strong></td>
<td><strong>E1</strong> Provide a minimum clear width of 36&quot; (915 mm) for routes. ADAAG 4.3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>E2</strong> Allow additional width at entrances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>See sections EN-K and DR-H.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphic Standards for ADAAG Field Guide

**Topic column:**
- Univers 65 Bold 9 pt. type, 2 pts lead (9/11)

**Requirements & Recommendations column:**
- Alphanumeric characters: (eg. C1, C2, etc.)
- Univers 65 Bold 10 pt.
- **Main Text:**
  - Times 10 pt. type, 1 pt lead (10'11)
  - Hard Returns are set at 1 pica (1p)
- **Acronyms such as ADAAG:**
  - Times 9 pt.
- **Measurements:**
  - Times Bold 10 pt.
  - DO NOT use the "B" for bold in Quark’s type style pallet.

**Inches symbol:**
- uses " NOT " (not quote marks) Font called Symbol is on lab’s computer.

**Horizontal line:**
- 1 pt rule

**Illustrations and Tables column:**
- **Measurements:**
  - English numerals: Univers 65 Bold 9 pt.
  - Min/Max and Metric numerals: Univers 65 Bold 7 pt.
  - Measurement text: use auto leading
  - Vertical measurements align: bottom to top (see above example)
The initial style sheet did not address several significant aspects of the text. It did not establish practical conventions for the illustrations, such as scale, shading, or line weights. Nor did it deal with ways in which to address the social/political stance of the text as it might be presented in illustrations. For example, it did not suggest presenting the concept of inclusion visually by ensuring that the figures represented a diverse population—a consideration that came about over the course of the project. Information about the style and conventions of the written text were also not included in the first style sheet. For example, it did not address labeling or captioning, metacommunicative elements that help connect text and graphics for readers. In addition, the team made a number of substantial changes to the text in response to internal decisions and external factors, such as the revision of the ADAAG. Thus, over time, the original style sheet and other design decisions were either no longer practical or no longer matched the reality of the developing text and the team improvised new solutions to meet the changing goals of the project. The result was that several style sheets emerged over the course of the project.

**Illustration Style Sheet**

Larry and the graphic designers developed a separate style sheet, presented in Figure 5.6, which elaborated the specific decisions shaping the illustrations. The illustration style sheet was separate from the document style sheet in part because different people using two different software packages were completing the work on these aspects of the document. The style sheet for the illustrations included the formatting—for example, line sizes and fill percentages for gray areas of the text—the conventions used in the illustrations, and sample illustrations depicting the conventions. Larry and the graphic designers added an area to the document for recording information about the review process and status of each illustration.
Figure 5.6: Illustration Style Sheet

The Style Sheet includes all the conventions that are to be used in the illustrations.

Sample illustrations employing the conventions are provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Line / dash / gap</th>
<th>Shade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dimensions</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>xx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dot</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.5pts/black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inches</td>
<td>Univ. bold 9pt</td>
<td>10pt leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mm</td>
<td>Univ.reg 9pt</td>
<td>14 pt leading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other text</td>
<td>Univ.reg 9pt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

following are standards for the 1"=2.0pts scale drawings:

- Walls 5.5in
  - 0.5 black
  - 60% fill
- Toilet partitions 1.5"
  - 0.8 (0.5 plan)
  - 40% fill
- Floors 6"
  - 0.5
  - 60% fill
- Doors 1.75in
  - 0.5 black
  - 40% fill
- Door handles
  - 0.5 white over gray
  - 15% over white
- Door ghost
  - 0.5 / 3.2 / 1.6
  - null
- Door swing
  - 0.5 / 1.8 / 0.8
  - null

Grab bars 34" eff cl

Max Image sizes

Qtr: 250 x 104 pts
Half: 250 x 246 pts
Whole: 540 x 250 pts

Revised/Printed date: 01.22.2001

Used as image: XX.#

 sjW checked w/ OQ text. date:
 sjW checked w/ 1998 ADAAG text. date:
 sjW checked w/ 1999 ADAAG text. date:
 sjW checked proportions. date: 1" = X.X
 sjW checked line weight/shading. date:
 sjW verified title. date:
 AEO approval. date:

The Style Sheet indicates that space has been provided on the bottom portion of illustrations pages for recording information about review and approval.
Much of the work involved in creating the illustrations served practical functions of genre, for example ensuring that the scale was appropriate and that the graphics were clear in their depictions of the conditions of the built environment. The illustrations are also highly metacommunicative in that they reinforce the information provided in the text and provide scaffolding for readers moving through the text. Callouts, captions, notes, dimensions, and other conventions provide cues to assist readers in interpreting the illustrations.

Writing Style sheet

Early in the project, the team also established several basic conventions for the language and writing style that we used throughout the text. The writing style sheet articulates the tone and style of the writing that the team decided was appropriate for presenting practical information and for adopting a rhetorical stance to the issues of accessibility in the text.

To enact practical functions of genre, we were concerned with providing accessibility requirements and recommendations clearly and concisely. As noted in the sample style sheet in Figure 5.7, below, we chose to present the requirements as “directions” in answer to the readers’ potential question “What do I have to do to make X accessible?” The style guide also addresses consistency issues, such as the appropriate presentation of the title in the text, the use of terms such as “required” and “recommended” to differentiate types of accessibility information, and the chunking of information in the statements. Labeling and information chunking also serves metacommunicative functions of genre by reducing cognitive load for readers.
The writing style sheet also addresses the social/political functions of genre indicating, for example, that “one of our purposes is to help people make facilities accessible; we are not rewriting ADAAG.” The team sought—as much as possible—to define accessibility as a design concept, rather than as simply a process for meeting the minimum accessibility requirements of the ADAAG, a move that is reinforced in the writing style sheet.

Again, the writing style sheet shown here represents a particular view of the writing task that changed over time. The style guide doesn’t mention, for instance, the introductions to the sections of the text, which grew increasingly longer and more complex as the team worked to provide reasons for accessibility requirements and additional information about the relationship between people, disability, accessibility, and the built environment.
**Expectations and Improvisation**

The styles guides for the text developed from the team members’ individual and collective experiences and expectations. However, in preparing and using the guides to develop the text, professional and disciplinary experiences, expectations, and affiliations sometimes mediated our interactions regarding the text.

For example, in the excerpt of a conversation presented in Figure 5.9, below, Dr. Arnold, Larry, and I are considering feedback about illustrations that we received from an outside reviewer. The images (not reproduced here) depict a ramp with handrails on both sides. The specific requirement that the illustration addresses is not at issue, but rather the conventions used in the illustration. As the conversation begins, we are discussing a convention used in many of the drawings that the outside reviewer found confusing.

**Figure 5.8: Excerpt from Conversation about Graphic Conventions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. Arnold, the project manager and an architect, understands the convention in question as appropriate for architecture and invokes his knowledge of “the industry” as support for his perspective. I, as the writer, express concern that the conventions will not meet the needs of the audiences who are not architects.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Arnold:</strong> See like here. That indicates a centerline. And that’s the standard convention in the industry to indicate a centerline.(.) Now we’ll have that explained in the front but we can’t explain that on every drawing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Donna:</strong> I understand that. Right. The question becomes what are you trying to do and who are you trying to //serve//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Arnold:</strong> //Yeah//=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Donna:</strong> //and are you going to serve them best by sticking with conventions they don’t understand (.) And we’re going to find how much you know I mean that’s not a problem to me. I have no idea why it looks like that. I also know that this is 96 inches so if I’m supposed to understand that that is the centerline of these little (.) am I supposed to under//stand //</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 Arnold:</strong> //Well// also you’d know enough to go to that drawing in the front of the book that would tell you oh yeah that’s the centerline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6 Donna:</strong> Yeah, I might. You don’t know what people are going to do when they get that book.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Arnold: The thing is, we’re never going make it totally (.)

Donna: No I know that I understand that. And that’s why I’m saying we have to I think we have to ride a line here

Arnold: Yeah we do.

Donna: OK. You’ve said from the beginning that you think this has a wider audience than architects and professionals=

Arnold: Correct/

I talk about “getting feedback from people, people who are experienced in document design” and from users, but do not claim for myself any disciplinary expertise to counter the disciplinary expertise that the architect uses to assert his point of view. Rather my “writer’s” rhetorical move is to “stand in” for audiences not represented within the field of architecture, which reflects my own orientation as “outside” architecture.

Donna: //in that area so all/ I’m saying is I’m trying to start getting feedback from people, people who are experienced in document design, and people we’ll hopefully we’ll run user tests //and see//

Arnold: //that’s good///=and see what other

Donna: problems people run into. I’m just giving you the feedback.

Arnold: Yeah that’s //good//

Donna: //I: // know your rationale.

The exchange illustrates two aspects of the negotiation between expectation and improvisation that shaped genre use among the team members from different disciplines. First, however partial the use of conventions is in explaining the broader project of constructing genre, many aspects of documents might be claimed as conventional—structure, register, format, even word choice. Invoking standard conventions of a field is one strategy available for asserting the influence of a particular community in a cross-community negotiation of genre construction. Invoking the potential readers of the text is another. Each strategy entails audience, purpose, context, and form—genre—aspects of texts that are essential considerations for genre construction and use.
As contextual factors both within and outside the team's activity necessitated changes in the team's text, we improvised on the styles we had in place to adjust the form and conventions of the text. In terms of the functions of genre, form establishes expectations for both writers and readers about the nature of the genre and the contexts and purposes of texts. In this sense, the style sheets and our choices in form and conventions were crucial in our attempts to align our text with or differentiate it from various genres.

In the next section, I discuss two additional examples that illustrate the ways in which the team's face-to-face interactions shaped the genre of the text and genre we were creating.

**Interactions that Shape the Genre**

In addition to the various genres of work documents that shaped generic features of the *Access for Everyone* text, over the course of the project the team's discussions and work sessions also shaped the text. In this section, I present two examples in which team members improvised solutions to textual problems together. In both examples, the team members developed the practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions of genre in the text. In both cases, the team members contributed specialized knowledge, attempted to develop common ground with audiences for the text, and used various strategies during conversations to interact with each other.

**Managing Text and Space**

The first example I present describes parts of several meetings in which the team discussed the ADAAG requirements for "knee clearance" and "toe clearance" and how we might best present the information in our text. In the ADAAG, "knee clearance" and "toe clearance" is the vertical space under furniture and fixtures that people need to pull up to and
under tables, desks, and equipment, such as ATM machines and pay phones. People who use wheelchairs also need toe clearance in areas such as restroom toilet stalls where a small amount of the space under stall partitions is permitted to be included in the space people need to maneuver wheelchairs.

Figure 5.9 includes excerpts from sections of the 1999 proposed ADAAG that provide the requirements for knee clearance and toe clearance under objects. As is the case for most of the ADAAG, the excerpts below describe the minimum conditions required for the space to be accessible under the ADAAG. The requirements describe the space under objects as divided vertically into two areas—toe clearance and knee clearance.

Figure 5.9: Excerpt from Knee and Toe Clearance Requirements, Proposed ADAAG, 1999

306.1 General. Where space beneath an object is included as part of clear floor or ground space or wheelchair turning space, the space shall comply with 306. Additional space shall not be prohibited beneath an object; however, such additional space shall not be considered as part of the clear floor or ground space or wheelchair turning space.

306.2 Toe Clearance
   306.2.1 General. Space under an object between the floor or ground and 9 inches (230 mm) above the floor or ground shall be considered toe clearance and shall comply with 306.2.3. Maximum Depth. Toe clearance shall extend 25 inches (635 mm) maximum under an object.

306.3 Knee Clearance
   306.3.1 General. Space under an object between 9 inches (230 mm) and 27 inches (685 mm) above the floor or ground shall be considered knee clearance and shall comply with 306.3.

306.3.2 Maximum Depth. Knee clearance shall extend 25 inches (635 mm) maximum under an object at 9 inches (230 mm) above the floor or ground.

The description of and requirements for the divided space are attempts to meet the needs of people who use wheelchairs, but the team found the ADAAG explanation complicated and ambiguous for people who need to follow the requirements. Based on the 1999 ADAAG, I drafted an initial version of the information for our text and sent it to Larry
via e-mail for comments. After incorporating Larry's comments, I brought drafts of our text, excerpted in Figure 5.10, to a meeting to review with the team.

**Figure 5.10: Knee and Toe Clearance, Access for Everyone, Draft 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th><strong>Knee and Toe Clearance</strong>People who use wheelchairs need both horizontal and vertical clearances when pulling up to use fixtures along accessible routes or in accessible spaces. Knee and toe clearance is the part of the clear floor space that extends under objects and fixtures. The space under an object that is between the traveling surface and 9 in. (230mm) above it is considered toe clearance. The space under an object between 9 in. (230mm) and 27 in. (685mm) above the traveling surface is considered knee clearance. The maximum horizontal dimension that knee and toe space may extend under an object is the maximum amount of the total clear floor space that can be used for knee and toe clearance. You can provide additional space, but the knee and toe space cannot overlap the clear floor space more than the maximum listed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>P1</strong></td>
<td>Ensure that the space provided for legroom is completely unobstructed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P2</strong></td>
<td>Provide legroom under a [surface/object] that measures at least 30in. (760mm) wide from side to side. <strong>ADAAG: 1998 4.2.4.1; 1999 306.2.5, 306.3.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **P3** | Provide leg room under a [surface/object] that meets all of the following requirements:  
  a. measures at least 27 in. (685mm) high from the ground to the underside of the [surface/object].  
  b. extends under the surface horizontally from the front edge of the [surface/object] for at least 17in. (430mm) at the floor and at all points between the floor and up to 9in. (230mm) above the floor. **ADAAG: 1999 306.2.2, 306.3.2.**... |
The first draft included the introduction as well as the basic requirements of knee and toe clearance (not presented in full in the excerpt). The most significant difference between the draft of the ADAAG and the draft of the team's text is the focus in the introduction of the team's text on providing a rationale for the requirements.

However, we were having difficulty presenting the requirements clearly. In the conversation excerpted in Figure 5.11, Eden, Larry, and I are reviewing the text excerpted in Figure 5.10, above.

Figure 5.11: Excerpt 1 from Team Meeting Discussion of Knee and Toe Clearance

Throughout the discussion, we are trying to ensure that we are accurately representing the ADAAG information in our text. We refer to the fact that the knee and toe clearance text is "everywhere," meaning it is an important consideration not only at tables and ATM machines, but also at restroom sinks and vanities and in toilet stalls. While the proposed ADAAG consolidates the information in one section, we include information about knee and toe clearance in each section of the text to which it applies. Therefore, we are attempting to develop a clear version of the information that can be adjusted for different sections of the text. As this part of the conversation begins, we are all reading from the draft of our text.

(reading) "maximum horizontal dimensions //that th//"
(reading) "that knee// and toe space may extend under" in this case the work um space (reading) "is the maximum amount of the total clear floor space that can be used for knee and toe clearance" and I know we’ve we’ve been around over and over the wording because this chunk of knee and toe clearance=

= is everywhere.
I keep just importing it.
Yeah.
[mumbling reading it half aloud] Oi
I know.
That’s a tough one.
Well if I said there’s I don’t know another way to say it you know?
(taking a stab at it) Extends from under the object, at 27” in to 8 inches?
(Laughing) I’m sorry what were you saying?
In to 8 inches and then down to 9” off the floor at (....)
205

13 [everyone laughing]

14 **Larry:** To 17 inches?

We’re all laughing at the difficulty of describing the space in a clear, coherent manner. However, after a few exchanges among the team members, Larry tries again. As he describes the space, he points to an illustration that will be included with the text to help us understand the dimensions.

15 **Larry:** Well if we start describing from that point right there and say 8” in horizontally at 27” off the floor then down to 9” off the floor and 11” from the front edge of the object and then the toe room them it needs to go 17 to 25”(..) I’d still call it toe room...

Eden realizes that Larry is attempting to capture the idea of a three dimensional space in one sentence. She takes one of the wheelchairs that we kept in the workspace and wheels it under the table to get a better idea of the space requirements. Larry’s explanation and Eden’s action provide the team with a conceptual understanding of the space that we might not have developed working on the text alone.

Larry’s descriptions and Eden’s action not only helped clarify the content of the text, but they each scaffolded the information in different ways. During a second meeting at which the text and the issue were discussed again, Eden also reminded us that we might take a more “universal” approach to the space under objects (Figure 5.12).

**Figure 5.12: Excerpt 2 from Team Meeting Discussion of Knee and Toe Clearance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eden:</th>
<th>OK right. Well two things. One is I have been annoyed repeatedly when I’ve gone to talk to somebody who’s you know they say sit across from the desk and the desk protrudes what 8-10 inches out? And then you run into one of those //things//</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pat:</td>
<td>//um-hm//=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eden:</td>
<td>know there’s no way you can scoot up. So. I mean knee and toe clearance is important for people who are in regular chairs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
that we then explain the concepts of toe clearance and knee clearance. In addition, Eden’s reminder about the needs of many people for adequate legroom suggested an additional change in the introduction. The new version of the introduction to the section focuses on the needs of all people for sufficient legroom, and in particular people who use wheelchairs, to reflect the social/political approach that we had been developing throughout the drafting.

Figure 5.13: Knee and Toe Clearance, Access for Everyone, Draft 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>X</th>
<th>Legroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People need adequate legroom under counters, desks, tables, vanities,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sinks, and other surfaces and fixtures to sit at and use them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>comfortably. Legroom is particularly important for people who use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>wheelchairs and need additional clearance under surfaces. **When</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>determining the appropriate space for legroom, consider the space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>three dimensionally. Legroom includes requirements for the width,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>height, and depth of the space under [surfaces/objects].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To ensure that adequate space under surfaces and fixtures is provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to accommodate the height and angle of wheelchair foot and leg rests,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ADAAG divides the legroom under surfaces vertically into “toe clearance”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and “knee clearance.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The team had a number of conversations about knee and toe clearance before we arrived at a final version of the text and graphics for the text, (presented in Figure 5.14 below). Over the several drafts we created to arrive at our final version, the specialized field knowledge that Larry contributed was essential. As we discussed during an interview:

**Larry:** [Knee and toe clearance] is one of the things that’s not quite quite covered in the text. It’s very ambiguous. Since I’ve worked in the field I think I understand what they’re trying to get at there, so I can correct that.

**Donna:** Yeah, that’s interesting, ambiguity for somebody who’s not in the field, you know. **You’re** saying, “well this is what they’re saying it should be…”

**Larry:** Yeah I can understand it because I’ve got training in the area but…that’s one thing I think our book’s trying to do too is to get rid of the ambiguity and just damn it say it. (Laughing)

However, it took the contributions from several people to arrive at a version that presented the information with reasonable clarity, scaffolded in a way that might better assist readers in
making sense of the information, and that achieved the rhetorical tone that the team sought for our text.

**Figure 5.14: Draft of Legroom, Access for Everyone**

**Q. Legroom**

Legroom is space under surfaces, fixtures, and other objects. Legroom serves two important functions. First, people need legroom to sit at and comfortably use counters, fixtures, desks, tables, and other surfaces. Second, where the clear space in a route or other accessible area is limited and/or where surfaces and fixtures overlap clear floor space, people who use wheelchairs need space under obstructions for maneuvering.

Adequate legroom is a safety factor for wheelchair users who may not detect potentially dangerous conditions where they might be bruised, burned, cut, or scraped by an obstruction.

To ensure that adequate space is provided under surfaces, fixtures, and other obstructions to accommodate the height and angle of wheelchair foot and leg rests, ADAAG divides the legroom under surfaces into toe clearance and knee clearance.

When you are determining the appropriate space for legroom, consider the space three dimensionally. ADAAG includes requirements for the width, height, and depth of toe clearance and knee clearance. Legroom coincides with required clear floor space where ADAAG allows knee and toe clearance to be included as part of that space.

**Q1** Ensure that the space provided for leg room is unobstructed.

**Q2** Ensure that legroom under a surface or object is between the required height of 27 in. (685 mm) and a preferred height of 30 in. (760 mm). ADAAG: 1999 306

**Figure RT.18** shows unobstructed leg room.

**Q3** Ensure that the leg room measures at least 30 in. (760 mm) from side to side.
The team's discussions of the text at meetings as we worked on the penultimate draft of *Access for Everyone* were particularly helpful in managing some of the more difficult technical topics. The second example I present in this section focuses on a revision of the preface of the text in which we sought to convey not only that *Access for Everyone* provides usable information on accessibility and the ADAAG, but to represent accessibility as a corrective to environments that created barriers for people and not as a "special" accommodation to disabled people.

Managing Purpose and Audience

Previously, the team had discussed that the preface would create a "first impression" of *Access for Everyone* and, as such, should convey a sense of our "mission" in creating it. The team wanted to indicate that the text provided accurate information to assist readers in complying with ADAAG, and that in some cases *Access for Everyone* goes beyond the ADAAG. We wanted to explain why, even though accessibility requirements are available in the ADAAG, *Access for Everyone* is needed.

One of the rhetorical challenges the team faced was both aligning *Access for Everyone* with and distancing it from the ADAAG, a recurrent issue the team dealt with throughout the project. The beginning of the preface shown in Figure 5.15 illustrates the initial attempt at adopting a rhetorical stance toward the ADAAG and accessibility. In this first version, the focus on the ADAAG reflects that the team knew many readers would be primarily concerned about compliance issues—what do they have to do, at a minimum, to comply with the ADAAG. In introducing the idea of "additional recommendations based on universal design principles that go beyond ADAAG minimum requirements," the team sought to promote its own, broader view of accessibility. Further, the team describes the
ADAAG—a document in a regulatory genre that serves specific legal purposes—as difficult and complex to use for practical purposes.

**Figure 5.15: Preface, Original Version**

Our primary goals in writing *Access for Everyone* were two-fold. First we wanted to simplify, and thereby make more user-friendly, *The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines* (ADAAG), which is a comprehensive set of standards for making buildings and sites accessible for people with disabilities under the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA). Second, we wanted to provide additional recommendations based on universal design principles that go beyond ADAAG minimum requirements.

Even a cursory glance at ADAAG reveals the difficulty and complexity of the guidelines. In *Access for Everyone* we made every attempt to present the requirements for making a building or site accessible so that they are easy to understand, quick to grasp and accurate. We tried to be true to the letter and spirit of the ADA and ADAAG.

However, the team was not satisfied that this version of the preface was the best approach to establishing our rhetorical goals for the text. The sample transcript of conversation in Figure 5.16 below is from a meeting in which we rewrote the preface.

When I analyzed the transcript, the topical themes prevalent in this exchange included our rhetorical approach—the stance that we wanted to convey—and representation—our acknowledgment of the audiences for the text and the people we believe benefit from adequate accessible environments. The speaker strategy themes I noted in this section included primarily explanation, description, and backchanneling, which is basically providing acknowledgement that a listener is engaged in the conversation.

In the sample, Dr. Arnold is explaining the position on accessibility that the preface should convey and describing who should be addressed. I am typing changes and responding to Dr. Arnold primarily through backchanneling.
Figure 5.16: Excerpt from "Preface Meeting" Transcript

1. Arnold: We're trying to construct the first couple //a sentences//
2. Donna: //Now what// did you just say about magic language?
3. Arnold: =in the the first couple of sentences in the preface. And we’re trying to get across this idea of providing access for everyone you know presents complex challenges. (..) Uh but (.). And I know this is gonna be hard to get this in a couple of sentences but the idea is that you know so often it's done incorrectly it's done improperly and ends up with you know special contrived environments that other people don’t like=
4. Donna: =yeah=
5. Arnold: =and don’t want and are even cumbersome or unsafe or whatever.
6. Donna: umhm
7. Arnold: So part of the idea of it being a complex challenge (little laugh) is to make a design that works equally well equally well for everybody
9. Arnold: that doesn’t result in problems for other users (2.0)
10. Donna: (typing) (big exhale) °yeah°
11. Arnold: And then ah you know who do we address it to. We talk about you know design constructing construction and maintenance (short laugh) I mean there’s so many players involved you //know//
12. Donna: //Umhm//
14. Donna: Yeah
15. Arnold: Then we have all you know the lay people and then we have all the users and we have the managers and the owners and=
16. Donna: =and the follow up //people//
17. Arnold: //and so// we can't get all of that in here but (1.0)
18. Donna: I know.
19. Arnold: Then you know then we lead into that it presents accessibility standards and recommendations in straightforward language, clear directives, and realistic illustrations. That’s good, //but//
20. Donna: //Right//=
22. Donna: //why//
23. Arnold: we need that.
24. Donna: Yeah
25. Arnold: Without repeating everything we’ve already said (laughs)

In the beginning of the exchange between Dr. Arnold and me, the focus is on the social/political stance the team was attempting to develop (Figure 5.16, lines 1-9). In
particular, Dr. Arnold mentions that accessible design has been “done incorrectly… improperly” (line 3) in the past partly because accessibility is often an after-thought and seen as a compliance issue rather than as a design consideration. Specifically, Dr. Arnold mentions that accessible design doesn’t have to be “contrived” (line 3) design, meaning institutional, unattractive or “even cumbersome or unsafe” (line 5)—deficiencies that have been identified with accessible design in the past and that mark users as different, as requiring accommodations that “other people don’t like” (line 3).

The alternative, in the team’s view, is to stress design “that works equally well for everybody” (line 7). Dr. Arnold also mentions that designing appropriately for accessibility—for a variety of different user needs—poses “complex challenges” (line 3). Because one of our goals was to suggest that providing accessible environments is not a burden, articulating the idea that creating accessible environments presents some problems poses a bit of an ideological contradiction. As we worked through the draft by talking out the changes, we arrived at version 2 of the preface, the first two paragraphs of which are shown in Figure 5.17.

Figure 5.17: Preface, Revised Version

Understanding people’s needs is an important first step in meeting the complex challenges in designing, constructing, and maintaining accessible buildings and sites. Built environments should be both inviting and inclusive and should accommodate the needs of all people to the maximum extent possible.

We created Access for Everyone to help people better understand the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). In Access for Everyone we have attempted to present the accessibility requirements for buildings and sites in a format that is easy to understand, quick to grasp, and accurate. Access for Everyone presents accessibility standards in straightforward language, with clear directives and realistic illustrations.
In the revised paragraphs, our approach to presenting accessibility issues is introduced in the first paragraph using positive terms including “inviting and inclusive.” Additionally, the focus on the ADAAG is shifted to the second paragraph, which describes the advantages of Access for Everyone that Dr. Arnold mentions—“easy to understand, quick to grasp, and accurate” (Figure 5.16, line 19). The overt critique of the ADAAG as difficult and complex is eliminated in favor of a restatement of the team’s goal as “to help people better understand the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).”

Another theme that emerges in the discussion, “representation” (lines 3, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, Figure 5.16), overlaps the theme of rhetorical stance. The team is concerned with the needs of all people who use spaces, and in particular the needs of people with disabilities, but the text must balance these interests with the interests of audiences for the text who have varying interests in design, construction, and accessibility issues. In attempting to provide that balance, the team continually adjusts the focus of its message and the language used to craft it. Such adjustments are evident in the team’s conversations even before they appear in the text. For instance, Dr. Arnold refers to people who do not need accessible design as “other people” (line 3), a distinction that the team wants to eliminate as much as possible in the text. An adjustment occurs (line 7) when Dr. Arnold stresses that the message should be “to make a design that works equally well equally well for everybody.”

Another adjustment in representation relates to audiences for the text (lines 13-15). The audiences we envision include not only the “professional designers, architects, landscape architects,” and “interior designers” (line 13), but a broader audience including “lay people,” “users,” “managers,” “owners,” and “the follow up people” (lines 15 and 16). The theme of representation as it emerges in the conversation, then, suggests that the preface should
address the needs of people served by accessible environments as well as other audiences for the text, expressed by the concern over “who do we address [the text] to” (line 11).

The approach to the theme of “representation” is also revised in the second version of the preface text (Figure 5.17). Though the discussion of representation during the meeting mentions both people who benefit from accessibility and audiences for the text, in the first paragraphs of version 1 of the preface (Figure 5.15), the people primarily represented are the team, as indicated by the focus on “our goals…,” “we wanted to simplify…,” “we wanted to provide…,” and “we tried to be true…”. The conversation about the text leads to a refocusing of representation in the text, with the first sentence stressing the importance of “understanding people’s needs,” people who benefit from accessible design, rather than privileging the team’s primary goals in writing Access for Everyone.

Figure 5.18, below, summarizes the changes between the two versions of the preface that shift the emphasis from the project goals and problems with the ADAAG to peoples’ needs and the features of the text.
Figure 5.18: Preface Versions Compared

Original Version

[1] Our primary goals in writing Access for Everyone were two-fold. [2] First we wanted to simplify, and thereby make more user-friendly, The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), which is a comprehensive set of standards for making buildings and sites accessible for people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Second, we wanted to provide additional recommendations based on universal design principles that go beyond ADAAG minimum requirements.

[3] Even a cursory glance at ADAAG reveals the difficulty and complexity of the guidelines. In Access for Everyone we made every attempt to present the requirements for making a building or site accessible so that they are easy to understand, quick to grasp and accurate. We tried to be true to the letter and spirit of the ADA and ADAAG.

Revised Version

[1] Understanding people's needs is an important first step in meeting the complex challenges in designing, constructing, and maintaining accessible buildings and sites. [2] Built environments should be both inviting and inclusive and should accommodate the needs of all people to the maximum extent possible.

[3] We created Access for Everyone to help people better understand the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Access for Everyone we have attempted to present the accessibility requirements for buildings and sites in a format that is easy to understand, quick to grasp, and accurate. Access for Everyone presents accessibility standards in straightforward language, with clear directives and realistic illustrations.

Issues related to genre surface at various points during the conversation as we discuss our perceptions of the purpose and form of a preface. The preface is the first text in Access for Everyone, the first opportunity to make an impression, and as such conveys a sense of our goals for writing the text. However, we want to present those goals without prioritizing them over the goals of readers or people benefited by accessible environments. Our negotiations and the changes in the text taken together represent our attempts to align the text with our
sense of "preface" as a genre, and as part of Access for Everyone. In addition, during the
discussion of the preface, we considered content, arrangement, sources, and graphics and
explicitly directed readers' attention to features of the text such as "straightforward language,
clear directives, and realistic illustrations" (Figure 5.16, lines 19-25).

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

The dialectic relationship between the discussions and the texts presented above
illustrates instances of strategic applications of genre knowledge. Form is always discussed
as a consideration, though what drives the choices that are realized in the text is the
differentiation of contexts—including the conventions that can be applied, the activities in
which texts are used and for which they must be structured, and the ideological perspectives
that can be supported. The Access for Everyone team members' improvisations resulted from
creating new text, resolving problems related to genres, negotiating disciplinary knowledge
and professional experiences, and developing as a team over time. While some of the
strategies that the team members used in dealing with genre were shared, regardless of the
disciplinary background of the participants, we did encounter situations over the course of
the project in which the differences between people's disciplinary experiences and
understandings of genre created difficulties and, sometimes, great insight.

For example, as Orlikowski and Yates (1994) might have predicted, the team
members often jumped in and began enacting genres with which they had experience. This
practice was demonstrated when people on the team created project tracking documents and
style guides based on their needs, experiences, and expectations and not on a consensus of
the needs of the team that might have lead to a negotiated, improvised version of the
documents that would better meet the collective goals of the team. As we discovered, in working with people from other communities, practices related to creating and using genres must be adjusted to accommodate various perspectives.

However, because the project work was initially divided along disciplinary lines—for instance, I wrote, the first designer designed the document, and Larry worked on choosing illustrations and providing tech review—it might be anticipated that people would adopt a proprietary stance toward their task areas and to the documents that they used to accomplish tasks. Certainly a division of labor is often necessary to accomplish goals when people bring specialized skills and knowledge to a situation. For instance, the architects’ disciplinary knowledge was absolutely essential to the project. On the other hand, at least for our team, the project benefited most—and the document we created benefited most—when we collaborated.

In terms of the genre of the text the team created, we’ve called it a “guide” for quite some time, which loosely suggests a purpose but is difficult to classify as a genre in terms of its form or characteristics. However, the form of the document throughout the project was a high priority for the team and we relied on form to enact the function of genre as summarize below:

- We enacted practical functions of genre in choosing and providing information to assist readers in activities related to ensuring that built environments are accessible to all people.
- We enacted metacommunicative functions in scaffolding information and by using forms and conventions to assist readers in understanding the purposes of the text, and in finding and interpreting information in the text.
- We enacted social/political functions in representing the social context to which the team responded through its text.
I also suggested that the relationship between people's experiences and expectations of genre use and their ability to negotiate and improvise genres have a dialectical relationship. In table 5-A, I summarize several practices that correlate with expectations and improvisations related to working with genres that the team members enacted over the course of the project.

### Table 5-A: Expectations, Improvisations, and Functions of Genre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions of Genre</th>
<th>Expectations: Team member practices based on experiences gained from disciplinary/professional affiliations</th>
<th>Improvisations: Team member practices based on experiences negotiated with team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practical Functions</strong></td>
<td>Providing domain knowledge and specialized skills.</td>
<td>Establishing and achieving shared goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Representing and explaining professional/disciplinary interests and perspectives</td>
<td>Structuring project work to coordinate activities and negotiate tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metacommunicative Functions</strong></td>
<td>Advancing professional/disciplinary conventions as appropriate generic solutions</td>
<td>Improvising conventions based on audience considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employing professional cultural capital and jurisdiction to control tasks and/or representations</td>
<td>Employing various “common” strategies to interact with other team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhetorical Functions</strong></td>
<td>Articulating professional/disciplinary positions and discourse practices</td>
<td>Enacting common denominator of genre to establish common ground with audiences and other stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, the data I presented suggests that, over the course of the project, the team focused on these functions of genre unevenly at times, for instance, attending more to the metacommunicative aspects of the text than to the social/political. In addition, various members of the team had responsibility for different aspects of the project and tended to focus on specific aspects of the text. Dividing the tasks provided some benefits, but at times the divisions also impeded the development of the text.
In situations where the participants on the project are from different communities, all of these practices can be beneficial. However, the neat list I created above brings me back to the complex aspects of genre that I mentioned in Chapter 2. For example, the people on the Access for Everyone team—and I'm sure this can be said for many other ad hoc or cross-community teams—each brought experiences from a number of communities and contexts to the work of the team. Each team member had experience with a variety of genres encountered in a number of contexts and certainly each of us came away from the project with new experiences and expectations that we'll bring to other communities and contexts. But the significance of genres seems to be the agency with which the people who use them invest them.

This sense of agency—the ability for genre to shape reality—may be most clearly demonstrated by powerful genres, such as laws and regulations that dictate the social, economic, and political structures and peoples' relationships to them. On the other hand, as my examples of the team's interactions described here and previous research suggest, even "mundane genres"—such as style sheets, calendars, memos, and tracking documents—create versions of reality through the practical, metacommunicative, and social/political functions they serve. The team, in making its choices about these functions, attempted to construct with our readers a particular version of accessibility.

While research has tended to focus on the specialized genres and genre knowledge that fields and disciplines create and use, we may be missing important opportunities to study strategic ways in which people use and manage genres in unfamiliar situations. In public policy contexts, such as accessibility, many communities must come together to share expertise, knowledge and texts. We need to ask how genres function at the boundaries of
communities and contexts. What, for example, becomes of genre when people from different disciplines, professions, or organizations “discourse” together in situations that are not typical for a particular group of professionals? Who controls the genre? Who controls the power to shape knowledge? What is at stake and for whom? These are some of the complex questions that have important implications for how people communicate on issues that require input and consensus from various groups with different sets of practices and areas of expertise.

As professional and technical communications researchers, we should research more of these types of contexts, unwieldy as they may be, for what they tell us about the ways in which people communicate in and with other communities. Understanding the dynamics of genre, for example, in such situations may allow us to assist directly in facilitating the communication practices of ad hoc communities that write texts that affect so many of us.
Appendix A

This document catalogues all the types of texts used and created by the team. In considering the genres that the team enacted, I included both those that the team wrote and read (sources) because of the influence that both writing and reading had on the text we created.

Table A.1: Team Genre Repertoire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Genres</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team-Focused:</td>
<td>used to organize relationships and facilitate communicate within the team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes, Memos, Notes,</td>
<td>The team used minutes and memos for internal communication with little consistency. Occasionally, minutes or memos were produced from meetings primarily to clarify tasks and responsibilities. In this sense, the minutes were more than accounts of what happened at meetings, but rather served to create accountability (e.g., Winsor’s engineers, 1999). Minutes and memos were generally circulated via e-mail. Handwritten notes left in the lab to request an action or to provide information or updates were common as were handwritten comments on drafts of the developing text. Electronic—word-processed—notes on drafts that were exchanged electronically were also common. Various people had preferences for providing or receiving notes either electronically or in hand-written form. Notes on drafts of illustrations were generally a combination. The illustrators generally produced electronic notes about the status of the illustrations, such as whether the illustration was reviewed or complete, and the dates of those actions, electronically. Handwritten notes and drawings were often added to printed copies of illustrations to indicate changes suggested by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mails</td>
<td>The team used e-mail sporadically during the project to coordinate activities and to exchange drafts. More frequent use of e-mail occurred when meetings and work sessions were also more frequent (cf. the group Orlikowski and Yates studied.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity logs</td>
<td>Initially, team members were to account for the time spent on various types of tasks associated with the project, for instance, research, writing, and creating graphics. The team members dispensed with this practice early in the project because we were also recording hours by day and week on timesheets. In practice, making clear distinctions between some types of project activities was difficult. Further, over time the team’s practices moved from individual to more collaborative, which made accounting for specific, individual activities more difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracking sheets</td>
<td>As the project developed and the number of drafts of various sections of text and illustrations grew, the team needed to implement a tracking system to manage documents. Very early drafts of the text and illustrations contain few (sometimes no) indications of the date or status of the draft. While the use of the document-tracking genre initially started as a way of managing and circulating review drafts, it also became associated with control of tasks as various team members used document tracking to add certain types of actions, such as authorizing or locking documents, to the circulation process. At later stages of the process, tracking documents were essential for coordinating various parts of the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>Meetings were important to the team’s work. Because most of the team members worked at or near the university, meetings were convenient opportunities to exchange information and receive feedback. In addition, for this team, regular meetings created a sense of accountability for accomplishing tasks that we were not able to create through other means (such as e-mail). Meetings of the whole team were held weekly through various periods of the project. In addition, various members met at other times in pairs or trios to accomplish specific tasks. During meetings, team members used various conversational strategies including argument, narrative, description, and appeals to authority to discuss the project work and the text. These practices are certainly usual in most project meetings in most settings, but in reviewing data I was interested in the ways the team members conversational strategies shaped the text in direct and specific ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text-focused:</td>
<td>used to inform and shape the target text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous version</td>
<td>The team began its work by reviewing iterations of the ADA Survey Manual that had previously been developed at the university. These texts provided a starting point and also served as part of the team’s initial expectations about the text we were creating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the university’s ADA Survey Manual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources:</strong> Manual Regulations Articles Websites</td>
<td>The team used a number of sources as we developed our text. These resources provided information, explanations, and examples related to accessibility issues. In addition, the social positions and attitudes reflected in various texts, as well as the genres in which they were cast, provided us with points of comparison and ideas that we could use for the development of our texts. The government, in particular the Access Board, produced many of the resources; communities in other contexts, for instance disability advocacy and the building industry, produced others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Style Guides</strong></td>
<td>The team created style guides to manage consistency issues. Initially, style sheets focused primarily on formatting concerns, such as font, line size, margins, and conventions for headings, references, and notations. Style guides came to also include information on prose style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Software &amp; software manuals</strong></td>
<td>The team used a variety of software—including Word, Quark, Netscape, Excel, and Illustrator—to accomplish research, writing, designing, and illustrating tasks. Software and accompanying information are important in the system because the team’s choice and use of software have a critical effect on the final textual product. Different software packages are compatible with particular genres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community- Focused:</strong> used to organize relationships and facilitate communicate outside the team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time sheets</strong></td>
<td>Team members completed time sheet to receive payment for activities within the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Memos</strong></td>
<td>The team was funded by the university, to which we were accountable. At various points throughout the project, Dr. Arnold wrote report memos to update university stakeholders. The memo genre was used because, though the university department was outside the team’s direct activity, both the team and the university department were part of the larger community of the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Telephone calls</strong></td>
<td>The team communicated with the Access Board and other agencies by phone. Phone communication was generally used when we needed to clarify a regulation or check the status of information in development at the Access Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles/ Promotional/ Prospectus for publishers</strong></td>
<td>At various points in the project, the team, primarily Dr. Arnold and I, authored brief articles for university newsletters about the Access for Everyone project. We were also asked to write a brief description for the university. In developing descriptions of the project for these articles, we also re-articulated our perceptions of the text, its audiences, and its purposes. These articulations were in part incorporated into our developing text. Similar information was later provided with samples to publishers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Document test survey materials</strong></td>
<td>The team’s test plan included survey instruments and letters of explanation for the people who read and tested the document and provided feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations, meetings, workshops</td>
<td>Team members participated in several workshops and conferences, either presenting material or attending the presentations of others. In each case, we brought back additional ideas, advice, and perspectives that influenced our thinking and the text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Table B1 is an explanation of the codes and information that I included in the document data tables. Table B.2 is an example of part of the data record for the Doors chapter of *Access for Everyone*. It includes the first 50 of 657 items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cntr#</td>
<td>Control number I assigned to the document during data collection. Indicates the chapter to which the document is related and the place of the draft in the sequence of drafts. For example the first document created for the Doors chapter is DR01.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Code for drafts type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>drafts of illustrations only that were created in Adobe Illustrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>drafts of text only created using Microsoft Word (formatted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TXT</td>
<td>drafts of text only saved as text only (formatting removed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>drafts of full chapters including illustrations and text formatted in templates created in Quark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TS</td>
<td>tracking sheets used to manage drafts (later in the project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cap</td>
<td>drafts of lists of captions (for illustrations) only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOC</td>
<td>drafts of the table of contents for the chapter only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen'd</td>
<td>Initials of the person who initially generated the draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date G</td>
<td>Date the draft was generated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev’d</td>
<td>Initials of the person(s) who reviewed and/or commented on the draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date R</td>
<td>Date(s) the draft was reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Summary of comments to, changes on, and other information about individual documents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table B.2: Sample Document Data Table of DR Doors Documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cnt#</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Gen'd</th>
<th>Date G</th>
<th>Rev'd</th>
<th>Date R</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>00/00/1998</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>00/00/1998</td>
<td>Pencil alteration on copy of existing drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>DR01</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>00/00/1998</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>00/00/1998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>DR02</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>00/00/1998</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>00/00/1998</td>
<td>First Q draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>DR03</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2/02/1999</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>DR04</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2/08/1999</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>DR05</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>3/11/1999</td>
<td>A, D</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>The word “Overview” appears for the first time. No text with it. (note: “doors are a big problem”) Suggestion to make items under A into whole statements. Comments/questions about correct information Questions to clarify which items are required/recommended Language for clarification Drawing in margins that indicate/clarify conditions Suggestion to drop “in.” And use [n&quot;] for inches Corrections to imperative language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>DR06</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>5/04/1999</td>
<td>A, D</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>First draft with discussion under “Overview.” Suggestion “Put in the importance of doors—how poor design effects that... independent access” Items under A are whole statements Clarification requested on types of doors Required/recommended differentiated. First signs of any significant introductory information at item level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>DR07</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>5/13/1999</td>
<td>A, D</td>
<td>05/15/1999</td>
<td>Overview statement changed Clarifications Word choices marked Grammatical/punctuation notes Clarifications Need new recommendations Changes/additions suggested to several sections that focus on people’s needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>DR08</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>5/24/1999</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>Minor word choices, additions Notes where illustrations are needed Some explanation/rationale Mention of ANSI standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>DR09</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>5/24/1999</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>2-3 punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>DR10</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>5/13/1999</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>(Older version of the text—no intro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Cntr#</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Gen'd</td>
<td>Date G</td>
<td>Rev'd</td>
<td>Date R</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>DR11</td>
<td>W D</td>
<td>5/24/1999</td>
<td>L D</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>Lots of interesting comments from Larry. Factual corrections. Suggestions for wording changes (rhetorical). Suggestions that show high level of concern for coordination with ADAAG, other codes. Indications of where specific illustrations should go. Responding comments from D.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>DR12</td>
<td>W D</td>
<td>5/24/1999</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>Same as DR11 but with a few additions to comments (expansions). Added “key” to indicate types of changes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>DR13</td>
<td>W D</td>
<td>6/20/1999</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>Notes to Edith. Notes to inform Edith about info “ok’s” for some word choice, identification changes. Several additions to requirements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>DR13.1</td>
<td>W D</td>
<td>6/20/1999</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>DR13.2</td>
<td>W D</td>
<td>6/20/1999</td>
<td>L A E</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>Suggested change to overview. Suggested changes to statements under section A. “See me” notes, request for revision of statements. Addition of spaces for figure references added as per L. “Notes” added. New items. Expansion of some existing item introductions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>DR15</td>
<td>W E</td>
<td>8/10/1999</td>
<td>A E</td>
<td>08/10/1999</td>
<td>Comments and notes on illustrations. Notes added on status of draft. L comments primarily about drawing, a couple about text. E comments on text and responding comments to E. Sketch on the back.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>DR16</td>
<td>W E</td>
<td>8/26/1999</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>00/00/1999</td>
<td>Notes on illustrations. Notes added on status of draft. L comments primarily about drawing, a couple about text. E comments on text and responding comments to E. Sketch on the back.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Cntr#</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Gen’d</td>
<td>Date G</td>
<td>Rev’d</td>
<td>Date R</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>25b</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6/04/1999</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>12/02/1999</td>
<td>Dimensioning (handwritten) Line changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>25f</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>12/02/1999</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>12/02/1999</td>
<td>Dimensioning (handwritten) Caption (handwritten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>25b</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>12/02/1999</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>12/02/1999</td>
<td>Dimensioning (handwritten) Caption (handwritten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>25f</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6/14/1999</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>12/02/1999</td>
<td>Dimensioning (handwritten) Caption (handwritten) Line changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>25c</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>6/04/1999</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>Dimensioning (handwritten) Line changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>25d</td>
<td>half</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>25A</td>
<td>right</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten) Note for inclusion in drawing Note for addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>25D</td>
<td>HALF</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>6/04/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten) Note about source of changes (FHA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>25C</td>
<td>left</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>25A</td>
<td>RIGHT</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>25D</td>
<td>HALF</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.</td>
<td>25C</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.</td>
<td>25D</td>
<td>HALF</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/12/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>25E</td>
<td>HALF</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/18/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/18/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten) Notes on proportions Key for dimensioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.</td>
<td>25E</td>
<td>HALF</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>1/18/2000</td>
<td>L, A</td>
<td>1/18/2000</td>
<td>OKS, Dimensioning (handwritten) Notes on proportions Key for dimensioning/scaling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Cntr#</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Gen'd</td>
<td>Date G</td>
<td>Rev'd</td>
<td>Date R</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|      |       |      |       |        |       |        | | Key for dimensioning/scaling  
|      |       |      |       |        |       |        | | NOTES FOR CHANGES TO DRAWING |
|      | 44.   | 25E  | LEFT  | I      | X     | 1/18/2000 | L, A | 6/04/2000 | OKS. Dimensioning (handwritten)  
|      |       |      |       |        |       |        | | Notes on proportions  
|      |       |      |       |        |       |        | | Key for dimensioning  
|      |       |      |       |        |       |        | | HAND REDRAW |
|      | 46.   | DR18 | Q     | V      | 2/02/2000 | NO        | 2/02/2000 | Incorporates most current text w/changes  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | incorporates illustrations w/o dimensioning  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Captions |
|      | 47.   | DR18 | Q     | V      | 2/02/2000 | L, A      | 2/02/2000 | Comments on illustrations (some in the wrong place)  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Comments on captions—revisions  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Notes to check scale on drawings  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Comments to delete text  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Corrections on adag numbers  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Suggested additional items  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | (most comments from L to A directly) |
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Substantial text changes:  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Word choice  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Content (specific content)  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Corrections  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Notes about inserting figures—places they should go |
|      | 49.   | DR20 | W     | D      | 5/10/2000 | D (notes from meeting) | 5/10/2000 | Word choices  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Insertion of figures  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Captions  
|      |       |      |       |        |        |          | | Suggestions for additional items |
|      | 50.   | DR20 | W     | D      | 5/10/2000 | L (notes from meeting) | 5/10/2000 | |

**STATS**

- Drafts Q: 14
- Drafts W: 27
- Drafts I: 601
- Drafts Cap: 8
- Drafts TOC: 1
- Drafts TXT: 3
- Drafts TS: 3 (2 TS attached to W docs)
Appendix C

This document catalogues of themes that I developed as I worked with the taped team discussions. I focused on two types of themes: (a) topics of conversation—what the speakers were discussing—and (b) speaker strategies—how the speakers discussed content.

Table C.1: Topics: What the speakers are talking about—the main idea under discussion in a conversational turn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Arrangement</th>
<th>Arrangement of information, organization of chapters, sections, whole book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “I moved that up there.” “That needs to come next.” “We need to move that graphic.” “Put that in the introduction” “Maybe for another section?” “This doesn’t go here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Content (Including Explanation &amp; Descriptions included in)</td>
<td>Subject matter, or content in general; including discussions of content correctness [not editing issues]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “But how wide is that supposed to be?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adding or deleting content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “Should we add something to the intro about that?” “Take out that part about the maintenance.” “What did we say in doors about that?” “That should be 60.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explanations or descriptions in the text, need for explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “We need to explain this better.” “How can we describe this?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Definitions and examples in the text sources, or the need for definitions or examples in the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “Do we define that anywhere?” “We need to define this.” “Put in an example.” “Well, this would be an example...” “But they [ADAAG] define it this way....”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Editing, Conventions, Text quality, Formatting</td>
<td>Editing, including copy-editing due to error: spelling, grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “But what if we say it this way...” “That’s not our directive style...” “Reword this...” “I rewrote this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Word choices, wording</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “Is that the right word there?” “Should this be ‘may’ or ‘can’?” “Can’t we find another word?” “Don’t use ‘element’ here.” “This needs to be reworded.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conventions used in text or graphics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “that’s a mark for a centerline”; “should that be hyphenated?” “Yes, that should be capitalized”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “This is the best I can do with this section.” “Is this good...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>G</strong></td>
<td><strong>Graphics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Graphics, tables, illustrations</strong> [other than specific reference to conventions, see E] EXAMPLES: “Do we have that in a table?” “Move the wheelchair in front of the door there.” “I will remove reach ranges from that drawing.” “Put a table in there.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
<td><strong>Labeling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Titles, headings</strong> for sections of text, book; <strong>captions</strong> related to graphics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M</strong></td>
<td><strong>Management</strong></td>
<td><strong>Team issues:</strong> how things should be done on the project; <strong>what</strong> needs to be done; <strong>who’s</strong> done what; who has what; <strong>what we have/have done</strong>; anything we need to check or find out EXAMPLES: “ok, so what’s everyone working on this week?” “I sent this to everyone via e-mail yesterday.” “We need to have this done by Friday.” “Read what we have already.” “We need to ask about it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>O</strong></td>
<td><strong>Off-topic/ Unclear topic</strong></td>
<td>Off topic discussion of anything other than project EXAMPLES: “I have a broken ankle.” “I’m going to Chicago.” “Did you see Moulin Rouge?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rhetorical Stance, Political positioning, Philosophy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rhetorical approach, persuasion, position taking,</strong> references to universal design, “philosophy” EXAMPLES: “But we need to get people to understand…” “We don’t want people thinking they can do the minimum.” “Yeah, but we want to promote the idea of universal design.” “Yeah, it’s the philosophy we’re trying to promote.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rp</strong></td>
<td><strong>Representation of people, groups</strong></td>
<td><strong>Representations of people,</strong> what they need, how they are depicted EXAMPLES: “People need to be able to reach that;” “But not everyone is in a wheelchair;” “All of the people in our graphics are white.” “They [people with disabilities] won’t be able to turn in that space.” <strong>Audience, readers,</strong> readers needs, <strong>users</strong> of the book EXAMPLES: “Will readers know what this means?” “Yeah, but people aren’t going to get it.” “I just wonder if the reader’s gonna you know understand what the objects means…” “They [users] will need to know this.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>S</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sources &amp; standards</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sources or standards,</strong> using sources, including sources in the text EXAMPLES: “Is that what ADAAG says?” “That’s right from ADAAG.” “I was looking at this other book…” “This is the word ADAAG uses;” “The Access Board says…” “They have to use the same standards for existing buildings; <strong>References</strong> to standards including IBC, ANSI, ADAAG, Access Board, Regional help centers, DOJ, HUD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T</strong></td>
<td><strong>Technology</strong></td>
<td>Issues or problems related to <strong>software, hardware, printers</strong> etc. EXAMPLES: “Quark sucks;” “The printer isn’t working,” “But I can’t do that in Quark,” “It’s because our version of illustrator is so old,” “I can’t do that in Quark,” “I’ll send you an e-mail”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table C.2: Speaker Strategy/Expression: the primary strategy the speaker uses in a conversational turn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Appealing to/Questioning Authority</th>
<th>Using appeals to authority, particularly disciplinary, sources, or references, or invoking standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “But architects will understand this.” “Those are some of the standards that apply.” “Use those standards.” “This is an industry standard.” “One book I was looking at said…” “ADAAG says you have to put that in.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Appeals to expertise of other team members or outside consultants</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “Let’s ask Arvid.” “You’re the expert!” “That’s your area of expertise.” “I showed it to him—he’s an engineer—and he said…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Questioning authority</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “ADAAG says this, but I don’t think it’s right.” “Maybe architects think so, but it’s not going to work for readers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Back-channeling</td>
<td>Giving brief feedback during conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: like “uh-huh”; “uh-uh”; “right,” “alright,” “well…”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Commands/Instructions</td>
<td>Commands or instructions for someone to do something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “Move that to the introduction.” “Make sure that says 30 inches” “Read it, mark it up, do whatever.” “No, I mean put it up there up there.” “Could you have that by tomorrow?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Describing/Itemizing</td>
<td>Using description specifically to make a point about or clarify content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “OK, so this is 19” and this is 27”, and the space in front is 48.” “It would have a line here up to the top and then it would come over this way.” “See this points over there and there’s no room for the dimension.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Listing items; going over items in a list</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “And then we have switches and controls.” “We could add dispensers.” “We say this and this, but we need to add that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Using Evidence</td>
<td>Using evidence, data, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “But 30% of people in wheelchairs won’t have that reach range.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Providing physical evidence</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “Let me show you why that won’t work” [C pulls wheelchair up to table.] “Here…measure that and see.” “I was going to have M try it and see if she could do it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>Explaining, including making</td>
<td>Explaining actions or conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statements, providing/</td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “I did this yesterday and now I’m gong to work on Parking.” “It may already be in there.” “Last time I called them, I wasn’t able to get any information.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>requesting feedback &amp; Clarifications</td>
<td>(can be in the form of a question)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Statements about the text, an action, or condition</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “well, yeah, I didn’t put that in.” “We added that.” “We keep referring we keep saying controls and objects controls and objects, controls and objects”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Seeking feedback</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “So I sent these to you to look over.” “I was wondering what everyone thought of this…” “I don’t think I can word it any better.” “This is what we’re thinking for here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Seeking/providing clarification</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “But what does this mean?” Well, do you mean here…”</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“What I mean is…” “What this means is…” “Put it up there?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L</strong></td>
<td><strong>Using Logic-Argument</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using argument or logical relationships to make a point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “But if this is 19” here, then this can’t be 6” here; “That doesn’t make any sense to me.” “I would argue that…” “Let me explain why that won’t work.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td><strong>Narrating Story-telling</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using narrative explicitly to make a point, telling a story to clarify something covered in the text or that needs to be covered in the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “I went to a hotel and none of the rooms were accessible.” “My mother can’t get into the bathtub…”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>P</strong></td>
<td><strong>Indicating Preferences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing a preference</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EXAMPLES: “I like that word,” “I don’t like that word.” “You hate that word”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table C.3: Sample Table display of Coded Meeting Transcript Data (first pass)

Meeting 3/19/2001: (A) Dr. Arnold, (D) Donna

Situation: Discussion of revision of preface for penultimate draft. We’re working at the computer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Ex</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D: //now what// did you just say about magic language?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>A: we’re trying to construct the first couple //a sentences//</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>D: //now what// did you just say about magic language?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C, R</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>A: in the the first couple of sentences in the preface. And we’re trying to get across this idea of providing access for everyone you know presents complex challenges. (. ) Uh, but, and I know this is gonna be hard to get this in a couple of sentences, but the idea is that you know so often it’s done incorrectly it’s done improperly and ends up with you know special contrived environments that other people don’t like=</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>D: =yeah=</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>A: =and don’t want and are even cumbersome or unsafe or whatever.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>D: umhm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>A: so part of the idea of it being a complex challenge (little laugh) is to make a design that works equally well <strong>equally well</strong> for everybody</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>D: yeah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rp</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>A: that doesn’t result in problems for other users (2.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>D: (typing) (big exhale) yeah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Rp</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A: and then, ah, you know, who do we address it to, we talk about you know, design constructing, construction and maintenance (little laugh) I mean there’s so many players involved //you know//</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D: //umhm//</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rp</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A: professional designers, architects, landscape architects, interior designers, da da da da da=</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D: =yeah=</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rp</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A: =then we have all you know the lay people and then we have all the users and we have the managers and the owners and=</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Rp</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D: =and the follow-up //people//</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>A: //and so// we can’t get all of that in here but (1.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D: I know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>C, A, G, S</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>A: then you know then we lead into that it presents accessibility standards and recommendations in straight forward language, clear directives, and realistic illustrations. That’s good, //but//</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D: //right//</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>A: But we want to lay the context for what for //why//</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>D: //why//</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Ex</td>
<td>A: We need that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Note on Outside Assistance in the Development of Categories

In developing the categories and coding scheme presented here, I received assistance from two people not involved in the project: Jennifer Maher, PhD candidate in Rhetoric and Professional Communication at Iowa State University, and Dr. Darren Trott, Professor of veterinary medicine at Queensland University, Brisbane Australia. Jennifer is a friend and colleague with whom I have discussed my work on numerous occasions. Darren is also a friend with whom I have had many discussions about my work. Though he works in a very different field, he has an interest in rhetoric and professional communication and is active in writing not only research articles, but also grant proposals and other types of texts for a variety of audiences. As part of my concern in this dissertation is how people from different backgrounds understand and negotiate genre, I asked Darren to discuss my coding scheme with me specifically because he participates in a different field and could bring a different perspective to my work.

I asked Jennifer and Darren to code samples of transcripts and we discussed the coding and the coding scheme. Their assistance was valuable in helping me refine my categories and in helping me see how interconnected activity, topics of conversation and speaker strategies are. However, one interesting point that emerged from my discussions with Jennifer and Darren was that they were able to discern speaker strategies even when they were unsure of the topics under discussion. I account for this by suggesting that genres of conversation (or speech acts) are, as Bakhtin, Grice, and Austin for instance posit, general pragmatic conventions available to speakers of a language.


Barr, G. W. 2000. “Out of Sight, Out of Mind: There is a kinder, gentler, subtler discrimination these days.” America 183.19:15.


