

This is a transcript of the video clip "Directions of the DALN" from the interview with Dr. Cynthia Selfe in Samuel Head, "A Scholarly Legacy: Professor Cynthia Selfe and the Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives" published in *Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy*, 22(1), available at <http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/22.1/interviews/head>.

Sam:

So what are some of the directions the DALN has gone? Did it go into directions you thought it would go? Has there been any surprises? And where do you feel like it will be headed?

Dr. Selfe:

Well one of the surprises with the DALN, and I thought when we started it, when Louis and I were working on it's logical structure, I thought that the best way would be to make a structure that asked the same questions of everybody and gave them a controlled vocabulary for responding. So I would ask things like "What state do you live in?" and then I'd give 50 or so opportunities, and they'd have to choose, you know, Alaska, Nebraska, Ohio, whatever. Louis, however, in all his brilliance talked us, talked me into thinking about this is a folksonomy, that is, you might ask the question but there was no controlled vocabulary for responding. So if I would were to ask something like "what is your sexual orientation?" or "would you like to self-identify with regard to your sexual orientation?" If I had forced choice it would have been days straight, you know, maybe I'd have two or three different choices. But with a folksonomy individuals put in their own identifying term, and because they use their own identifying term, and because they are located in time and space, the terms that they choose also become data for anybody thinking about how to look at the narratives and the literacies that happen. For example, if we'd had a controlled vocabulary, we might have chosen to a question like "what is your race?" we might have had "African-American," "Caucasian," you know, four or five different selections. But because we opened it up to people's own description we find out that some generations preferred to talk -- to use the term "African-Americans," some generations and some people "blacks," some generations and people "African oriented," you know, there are, there might be 20 terms for race in the DALN. It might be 20 terms for sexual orientation in the DALN, and all of those terms, all of those choices provide us data about how people self-identify and then carry that self-identification into some connection with literacy.