

Notes on the Net

Ron Willis

The computer has transformed the life of information handlers—academics no less than others. Networks have linked campuses and businesses both nationally and internationally.

Electronic mail has made communication between parties all over the globe faster and more economical than traditional surface mail systems. Bulletin board postings have allowed people with even casual curiosity to browse among messages and respond or grouse almost at will.

Among the many developments made possible by computer technology are list serve facilities. Situated midway between the one-to-one communication offered by e-mail and the scattershot approach to bulletin board posting, lies the subscription technique of list serves. By this means, people with announced common interests group together and subscribe to a group mailing service. Members are thus enabled to send messages to all other subscribers virtually instantaneously.

One of the obvious results of list serve participation is rapid interchange among like-minded people on issues of the moment. Of course long standing concerns such as those one finds treated at length in professional journals and meetings are not without representation, but, in the main, topics tend toward the immediate issues that come up in day-to-day professional life.

Communication carried on this way, spontaneously and without laborious preparation, is not always of landmark worth. It is, however, a reasonably fair indicator of current concerns—a pulse beat that reflects the ire and desires of people who share professional interests—at least those of the professions which access list serves.

In the belief that what interests list serve users probably interests others who are not yet electronically linked to their colleagues, this department will survey and summarize selected recent discussions of potential interest to the readers of *The Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*. Inevitably, much of the immediacy present in the original interchanges will be muted, but many of the issues are likely to focus anew the energies of readers who are drawn to them via traditional print publication.

It is hoped that this service provided by *JDTC* will encourage others to take the step toward electronic communication that computing now makes

available. In a sense, its success will become apparent when such a feature is no longer needed because most readers will have already surveyed the postings in their original form.

In keeping with the principles of ethical reporting, no electronic communications will be quoted directly without the approval of the original poster. Summarizing commentary will be geared toward contextualizing specific quotations and focusing attention on issues which emerge from electronic interchanges. Comments are welcome, either via electronic or surface mail. The e-mail address is rwillis at kuhub.cc.ukans.edu; the surface mail (often referred to as snailmail by computer users) address is Ronald A. Willis, University Theatre, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045

Lawrence, Kansas