

2022

Review of On the End of Privacy: Dissolving Boundaries in a Screen- Centric World by Richard E. Miller

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Recommended Citation

Knudson, Kandace (2022) "Review of On the End of Privacy: Dissolving Boundaries in a Screen- Centric World by Richard E. Miller," *The Journal of the Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning*: Vol. 27 , Article 19.

Available at: <https://trace.tennessee.edu/jaepl/vol27/iss1/19>

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ing the book, I had already started to follow some of the advice and suggestions in my hybrid first-year composition course, with even more ideas for designing my course next semester. I realized how to enact my teaching philosophy in practice, transforming my commitment to equitable assessment into implementing grading contracts, and aligning my empathetic approach to online instruction through a focus on the student-user experience. *PARS in Practice* promises to meet you where you are in your OWI journey and help you grow and learn, for the benefit of yourself and your students. The only thing this book needs is you.



Miller, Richard E. *On the End of Privacy: Dissolving Boundaries in a Screen-Centric World*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019. 256 pp.

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Although I no longer grade student papers, I work closely with students and my faculty colleagues in support of the online learning environment. Need some advice about how to design your online course to increase student engagement? Need to know what the institution's rules are as they relate to online teaching? Yes, I'm that person: accessibility laws, copyright laws, college policy, how to get this photocopied article into the learning management system, where to click to do this or that. As faculty coordinator of distance education, I aim to make the online learning experience not only legal for the institution but an actual learning experience that's worthy of our students. I work with students to understand and improve their digital experience and with faculty to help them understand and employ 21st-century tools in the online environment. My job is as much strategic as it is practical, counselor as much as it is coach.

Colleagues lately have flooded me with complaints about students not "engaging" with the learning materials that have been placed so painstakingly and thoroughly in the learning management system (in our case, Canvas). Students, on the other hand, vent their frustration at how hard it is to find their assignments and relevant information. And sitting squarely in the middle, I see both sides: the faculty compulsion to add more and more content and expectations to their online courses, yet the student overload with the layered, confusing, and multiplicitous digital learning environment. Even best practices in online education, however, may not be enough for students who are overwhelmed with life or only one broken screen or one lost wifi service away from dropping out...or worse. And although Miller's *End of Privacy* seemed at first glance to be about something else entirely, I found it to be a helpful prism through which this challenge of student engagement in the online learning environment can be examined.

In 2010, Miller launched himself into a 7-year journey down the rabbit hole and into an exclusively digitally mediated world, a paper celibacy, in order to "take a break from academic writing" (xi). But what begins as a seemingly innocuous pattern interrupt—like a refreshing afternoon walk in a day of committee work drudgery—ends up as an exercise in human curiosity and academic work resulting in this book. It is an insight-

ful meditation on the galaxy-sized gap between print culture oriented college professors and their digitally inclined students, between those of us seeing and living life through the lens of a paper-centric world and those young people who are living lives mediated through a screen-centric one.

Miller asserts that the cornerstone of the paper-centric world has been and remains the provision of narratives that interpret raw data, practically meaningless on its own merit and dependent on the storytelling of the paper-centric era to provide meaning to audiences. That's successfully contrasted by what happens to raw data in today's Internet-centric and screen-centric world where snippets of private moments are thrust into the public sphere of social media without the benefit of such interpretation, context, and meaning-making. This is our new world where privacy is practically nonexistent, thanks to ever-on video cameras and digital breadcrumbs that live on beyond their moments of relevance when we least expect it.

In so many ways, this book is also about failure: the failure of a top-notch institution such as Rutgers to be able to save one of its students—symbolic of all our students—from himself. Tyler Clementi, a freshman at Rutgers in 2010, jumped off the George Washington Bridge to his death following what was an insensitive and illegal invasion of his privacy by his roommate who blasted to social media that his gay roommate was having a date night in their shared dorm room, using technology to open a web cam channel into the private affairs of an adolescent who was expecting to keep his affairs private.

This book is also about the failure of us as keepers of *The Institution* to be able to see and understand the lives of our charges and how their lives—and ours—have been transformed by what Miller refers to as a “screen-centric world,” juxtaposed dramatically with what we know and are grounded in as a “paper-centric world.”

And in smaller ways, this book is about the failure of the military, the failure of our justice system, and the failure of our political system to understand and deliver justice in a new world where what was once mediated by carefully crafted narrative is now raw and often graphic data transmitted directly to the eyeballs of the world via the ubiquitous internet and the devices and platforms that tantalize and titillate. It's the medium as sensational tabloid. And we are—as humans drawn to the supercharged intimacy of nakedness and spectacle—practically helpless against it and escorted through Miller's own presentation of these sensational, sex-charged examples.

Miller's imperative, of course, is for us to be able to see the world our students inhabit. The imperative, of course, is to replace any of our blame about students' lack of [follow-up, reading, attentiveness, or whatever] with compassion, with empathy, and with understanding. The imperative we arrive at in the end—somewhat surprisingly—is to pull our students back and away from the quantification of education, away from the “bean country” and “testocracy” of the neoliberal educational enterprise of the last couple decades. Replace it, he asserts, with efforts at meaning-making, reflection, and explorations into the ethics of this modern life.

In many ways, Miller's leap to this message about the vacuousness and impact of the No Child Left Behind era is less jarring than his narrative trajectory—the non-linear mosaic of interesting and often titillating vignettes and anecdotes such as Weinergate, Bill Clinton's Cigargate, and rape accusations leveled against Julian Assange and other powerful men. Much like a momentary internet search for a quick bit of data morphs

into an afternoon spent inside the Oz of an internet browser, ping-ponging between the click-bait distractions of endless relevant tidbits, Miller's narrative bounces from Clementi to Hillary's email to Bill's cigar to Anthony Weiner's sexting to Chris Christie's Bridgegate and back and forth and all around between seemingly endless examples of private-messages-gone-public. It's jarring, and I believe that is one of the most important messages we take from Miller: the screen-centric world our students live in is as jarring as it is abusive to our sense of personal boundaries.

Perhaps Miller's message is that *because* of the shift to screen-centric universe where privacy has dissolved, we are compelled via the compassion we have for our students to see and understand their world and what compels them to act in the ways they act. Because they live in a world where they never had a paper-centric sense of privacy the way we had, they cannot be expected to behave in the ways we expect. Why, for instance, do young people seem so indifferent to ethical and moral lapses in exposing others' private lives? In a world where sex tapes and hard-core porn are easily visible on any internet browser via an ever-increasing number of virtually uncountable websites and platforms, we begin to see how indifference replaces a paper-centric sense of privacy and thus how it replaces outrage when that privacy is transgressed.

If we are to help them—truly help them and not just provide pieces of info that is interesting just to us—we must see from their perspective. Miller helps us do that by showing us how the internet-mediated world has disabused us of our paper-centric and old-fashioned expectation of privacy. Ultimately, Miller's exhortation on the perils of screen-centric indifference upends the notion that our students are to blame for not being able to thrive in the paper-centric worlds we may have created for them in those layered and multiplicitous Canvas course shells. We must meet them there in Internet Oz, understanding the landscape between us and the dissolution of boundaries between indifference and compassion.



Nelson, Steven T. *Teaching the Way: Using the Principles of The Art of War to Teach Composition*, Ten 16 Press, 2022. 198 pp.

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First, an admission, or perhaps a confession: my enthusiasm for teaching composition has been waning in the last year or two. I don't know if it was the pandemic coupled with the resulting year on Zoom or the cumulative effect of teaching writing for the last decade and a half, but somewhere along the way it became a different experience. All too often after grading or having a lesson plan fall flat, I would repeat the first two lines from Geoffrey Sirc's underappreciated review article, "Resisting Entropy," when he says "Teaching writing is impossible. You have ten to fifteen weeks to do ... what?" Despite countless hours prepping, grading, investing in student progress, I am too often left wondering what was accomplished and what the students will take away from the course. Indeed, as Sirc observes a little later in the same essay, "one's faith in the enterprise is always