

**Tablet PC Sponsorship Networks: A Study of  
Expectations, Uses, Practices, and Pushback**

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## ABSTRACT

Convertible tablet personal computers or *tablets* are being mandated for student and instructor use in a growing number of colleges in the United States. The tablet potentially becomes a dynamic construction zone for hand-, keyboard-, and web-generated symbol systems, which may open new writing opportunities. In order to take advantage of these opportunities, writing instructors must develop not only a vision of use and critical awareness of writing technologies but also an awareness of the sponsors, sponsor alliances, and sponsorship networks surrounding these mandates. Focusing on students and instructors at a bio-medical college with a tablet mandate, this dissertation identifies and evaluates the expectations, visions of use, writing practices, and pushback that sponsors of mandated technologies, knowingly or not, generate. This snapshot captures the research site at a time when an overarching vision of use has not taken root. As a result, it shows primordial fragments of use, practice, and, even, sponsorship caught in the act—circulating, merging, and evolving. This study also reveals that it is in the context of the tablet mandate's sponsorship network that tablet writing practices are realized. Both students and instructors assemble writing practices out of fragments of these influences. Charting some of these key movements, this work provides an awareness of the complexities surrounding mandated writing technologies. As a result, we start to see how technology mandates, engaging sponsorship networks, generate dynamic shifts in tablet writing practices.