Application for promotion to full professor

I hereby apply for promotion to full professor.

I received my dr. art. in Humanistic Informatics at the University of Bergen in 2003 for my thesis *Fiction and Interaction: How Clicking a Mouse Can Make You Part of a Fictional World*. Since January 2003 I have worked fulltime at UiB, first as a lecturer and after completing my PhD as an Associate Professor (*førsteamanuensis*) of Humanistic Informatics, with the exception of nine months maternity leave from March-December 2008. From July 2009 the Humanistic Informatics group at UiB was renamed Digital Culture, so I am now an Associate Professor of Digital Culture.

In this application letter I will briefly outline my career in research, teaching, popularisation and administration. For more detailed information about each area and samples of my work, please see the attachments.

Research

My main research focus is on narrativity in new media, as well as on social media, digital art, blogging and digital culture in general. My master's thesis (*hovedfag)* was in comparative literature, on hypertextual non-fiction. While working on this a paper I wrote on the seminal hypertext fiction *afternoon, a story* was accepted for the ACM Hypertext Conference and I was awarded the Ted Nelson Prize for Best Paper by a Newcomer, which greatly encouraged me to continue researching. My PhD thesis dealt with the ways in which readers and users of new media art and narrative take on a different and more active role than readers or viewers of traditional narratives. The thesis discusses a wide range of works of electronic literature and digital art from the point of view of the reader/user's role.

Blogging and the ways in which hypertext shape the web became my second area of expertise. While writing my thesis, I began blogging, and found research blogging to be extremely useful both for networking and developing ideas. In 2002 I co-wrote a paper on research blogging with Torill Mortensen, which was one of the very first academic papers on blogging. I continued with the paper "Links and Power", where I examined the ways in which links have come to have more meaning than simply connecting information, and how links have become valuable; a *de facto* currency of the web. In "Feral Hypertext" I discussed how hypertext on the web has broken away from our attempts at controlling it, connecting this both to literary forms of hypertext and to what is now generally called social media. The same year I wrote a brief definition of "Weblog" for the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, and the following year I wrote a personal essay about the ways in which research blogging changes as your position in academia shifts. Finally, in 2008 I published a monograph simply titled *Blogging* with Polity Press, which provides an overview of blogging seen from a range of perspectives, including historical and philosophical.

My main current research interest deals with narrativity and representation in social media. I have published several papers exploring these topics from different perspectives, and am currently working on consolidating this work and developing it into a book project.

In addition, I have done some research in on computer games, most importantly leading to the anthology *Digital Culture, Play, and Identity: A World of Warcraft Reader* (MIT Press 2008), which I co-edited with Hilde Corneliussen.

Research leadership: In 2009, I submitted a grant application to the Norwegian Research Council's KULVER program in collaboration with researchers at Infomedia here at the University of Bergen. I am the project leader for this grant, the outcome of which has not yet been decided. This autumn I am the project leader for a second grant application to the Norwegian Research Council, to be submitted to the VERDIKT program. This project will explore narrativity in social media. I have previously led the project ELINOR: Electronic Literature in the Nordic Countries, which was a collaboration with researchers at the University of Umeå, the IT University of Copenhagen and Høgskolen i Agder. We received funding from NORDBOK and Norsk kulturråd and developed a directory of Nordic electronic literature and organised two seminars.

Teaching

I began teaching in January 2003, as I was finishing up my dr. art. thesis. For the first four years I primarily taught the department's Web Design and Web Aesthetics course each spring and Digital Media Aesthetics each autumn. The first of these has 40-60 students and is split equally between teaching students to make websites and teaching them to analyse them, using techniques such as semiotics and close reading. I was in charge of designing the course, and created many opportunities for student activity. Blogging was a key part of my pedagogy. I wrote an article about the pros and cons of using blogs in teaching titled "Weblogs: Learning in Public", which I have included in the attachments. I have also included some sample blog posts from my teaching blog for the class, and an example of an assignment with a grading matrixes.

The other course I was responsible for in these four years was a combined bachelor /masters level course: HUIN204: Digital kultur og digitale medier and HUIN303: Digital medieestetikk. This is a seminar-style class with 15-20 students where we looked at various aspects of digital art, culture, literature and media. I prioritised student activity highly in these classes, and found that having students do small but frequent assignments was successful in encouraging learning. I include a sample syllabus and assignments from the 2004 iteration of the course. Another year I experimented with peer grading, and I include an article I wrote about this titled "Å lære å gi og motta konstruktiv kritikk gjennom medstudentvurdering".

In the years since I have taught into most of the courses we offer at Digital Culture/Humanistic Informatics. In 2005 I coordinated HUIN102: Information and Communication Technology in the Humanities, where I taught the half of the course that was on ICT and learning. In 2006 and 2007 I taught half of HUIN206/307: Critical Approaches to Technology and Society I and II. In an effort to help students understand what kind of work I actually expected them to do outside of class I prepared worksheets designed after the worksheets (*arbeidsplan*) that my fifth-grade daughter was bringing home from school each week, complete with check boxes for students to check when they'd completed a task. Students loved this, although I decided in discussion with

colleagues that this is somewhat excessive and that students, unlike fifth-graders, should learn to organise their own learning rather than having their teacher detail-manage every moment of their time. I attach a worksheet and a blog post I wrote discussing it. For most of my teaching, I post summaries of what I'm planning to talk about to my own blog or to the course blog. I often use these blog posts as starting points in class: I put the post up on the projector, and the links allow me to easily show sites I want to talk about. A few such blog posts from the course I'm teaching this semester are included in my attachments.

I was on sabbatical from August 2007-March 2008, and on maternity leave from March-December 2008, so did not teach during this period.

In 2009 I coordinated and taught half of two courses: HUIN105, the web design course I initiated, and HUIN305, where a small group of masters students work on practical projects. I was on sabbatical in the second half of the semester and did not teach.

Most recently, I have proposed a new, intensive 5 ETCS course on Social Media, for possible inclusion in our department's teaching portfolio in 2010. I include the proposed study plan (this is in Norwegian). This semester I am teaching DIKULT204/303 again (our courses are now labelled DIKULT instead of HUIN due to our name change from humanistic informatics to digital culture) and have chosen to focus on the theme Remix Culture. This class is organised like a research group, and is going very well so far. I include the syllabus and some blog posts describing activities in class.

I gave a series of lectures for the students of Master in screenwriting at the Department of Media Studies at the University of Bergen in October 2000, and was also employed as an external grader for these students. I have been an external grader several times for the University of Oslo, most frequently for their course MEVI2500: Multimodal Web Design.

I have supervised five MA students who have successfully completed their theses, and am currently supervising one thesis. Our group has a relatively small number of MA students (3-6 a year), and my maternity leave also caused a break in supervision for me.

I have been an external examiner for masters theses at the University of Stavanger (Literacy Studies/*lesevitenskap*), the University of Oslo (Dept of Media and Communication) and the University of Bergen (Dept of Information Science and Media Studies). I was the external opponent for a PhD dissertation and defense at the University of Copenhagen in 2007.

I completed the University of Bergen's University Pedagogy course in 2003/2004.

Outreach (*formidling*)
I believe that as researchers it is vital to communicate our work to the world outside of academia. As a state employee this goes without saying, but in a more general sense, I deeply believe that knowledge should be free and generously shared. Research blogging

has been an important channel for me in sharing my research with a larger audience. I have blogged at *jill/txt* (http://jilltxt.net) since October 2000, and for the last few years have had around 1000 readers a day. I started using Twitter actively in 2009 (http://twitter.com/jilltxt) and am among the most-read Norwegian researchers on Twitter (according to http://tvitre.no/twitter). I use other social media platforms actively on a professional basis, such as LinkedIn and Slideshare. I also maintain a Twitter account and a Facebook page for the Digital Culture group at UiB.

Over the years I have found that blogs and other social media are excellent ways of connecting with a broad range of people, from other researchers to journalists, students, potential students and people working in the fields I study. I also receive very useful feedback from other scholars, as is evident in the discussion on student worksheets I included in my teaching portfolio (item 8 in that section).

I enjoy giving talks to general audiences, and am frequently invited to speak for groups of librarians, journalists, designers and business people. Usually I speak at industry conferences (for groups as diverse as businesses, graphic designers, librarians, art curators, but I have also spoken at in-house seminars for specific companies including PricewaterhouseCoopers, Microsoft Norway, Chess, NRK and Bergens Tidende. The topics of these talks range from discussions of electronic literature to the practical use of blogs and social media.

I am also frequently contacted by the media, and have been interviewed/cited by Dagbladet, VG, Dagens Næringsliv, Stavanger Aftenblad, Afterposten, Bergens Tidende, Henne, Mamma, Kvinner og klær, Computerworld Norway, VG, Digi.no, Adresseavisen, Klassekampen, Dag og Tid, Forskning.no, New York Times, Wired, New Scientist Online, The Age, NRK, TV2, and others.

Additionally I have written a number of popular articles, for local newspapers (*kronikker*) and for specialist journals.

I have served on the board of BEK (Bergen elektroniske kunstsenter) and was a member of the reference group for ABM-utviklings Kulturnett Norge and of the workgroup for electronic art when Bergen kommune developed their plan for the arts, "Kunstbyen Bergen 2008-2017".

In 2006 I won the Meltzer Foundation Prize for Excellence in Research Dissemination (NOK 100,000) in part for innovative research dissemination through blogging and other social media, but also for my more traditional forms of popularization of research.

In the attachments I include a few popular articles I have written, my LinkedIn profile which includes recommendations by some of the people who have hired me to give talks, and an overview of published slides from talks I have given to industry (the full slideshows are available on http://www.slideshare.net/jilltxt). Please visit my blog (http://jilltxt.net) if you wish to see current activities. My CV includes a more extensive list of media coverage.

Service and administrative experience

I was head of the Department of Humanistic Informatics from February 2005 until June 2007. This was a transitional period for the department. In the year leading up to 2005 we lost our professor and both associate professors, leaving only an *amanuensis* (assistant professor) and a part-time *universitetslektor* (lecturer). I was hired in place of one of the associate professors, but this still left us with 2 out of 4.5 positions open. These two positions were not filled until 2007 and 2008, due to extended discussions about the role of humanistic informatics in the university and due to budget constraints. A major part of my job was fighting for our department and for the jobs, and finding short term solutions to cover each semester's teaching. Although I often found this a challenging load for such a fresh academic, I learned a vast amount about university administration and how things get done in the university – and I successfully led the department to our current far more secure situation with three associate professors, two fulltime lecturers and an *amanuensis*. In 2007 the humanities faculty was completely reorganized, and the Department of Humanistic Informatics is now the Digital Culture group, which is part of the Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies.

I am currently a member of the Forsknings og formidlingsutvalg (FFU) in our department, where I participate in assessing and prioritizing PhD applications and applications for research funding.

I have also assessed PhD applications for Høgskolen i Vestfold (2009). I have reviewed book proposals for MIT Press and Polity Press, and have been asked to review grant applications by the National Science Foundation in the United States and by the Dutch Council for the Humanities.

In the larger academic community I have served as a reviewer for the journals *Games Studies*, *New Media & Society*, *Fibreculture* and on the conference committee for Digital Arts and Culture and ACM Hypertext 2005, where I co-chaired the hypertext literature theme. With Susana Tosca, I was co-editor of the Hypertext Criticism theme in the *Journal of Digital Information*.

I enclose copies of my books and binders containing copies of a selection of my published articles and documentation of my teaching and outreach activities.

Yours sincerely,

Jill Walker Rettberg

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