The intersection of literacy and technology represents a vast expanse of study where many scholars address, and critique areas of concern in digital rhetoric and how these issues may or may not impact writing. Much like rhetoric, digital rhetoric has no clear and generally agreed upon definition. With many different definitions there are various similar and conflicting approaches to digital rhetoric studies. Current scholarship provides a large amount of attention to defining digital rhetoric, understanding what it means, and developing theories based on these definitions and understandings. The abundance of theories has led to a lack of scholarly work in application. There exist numerous appeals to scholars to critically address and think about the role of technology in the classroom, its social use and the implications of both in our daily lives and writing. Digital rhetoric can no longer to afford to primarily focus on theory, and/or build upon preexisting theories.

My understanding of digital rhetoric is based on several definitions that address different aspects of scholarship in the field digital rhetoric. In Carolyn Handa’s book *The Multimediated Rhetoric of the Internet: Digital Fusion* she defines digital rhetoric as “simply (or maybe not so simply) traditional rhetoric applied visually as well as textually. It is not another form of rhetoric. We do not switch from digital to traditional rhetoric. All of the components we are accustomed to discussing in traditional rhetoric, especially having to do with style and arrangement for the purposes of conducting logical, discursive, persuasive arguments, are elements that can occur visually” (p. 18). This definition attempts to link traditional rhetorical practices to those in digital spaces. It also accounts for the ways in which communicating and writing in these spaces impacts our writing. However, what this definition does not do is take into account the way these digital spaces change more than our writing. Everything is digital. As writers, we have been coding and engaging with digital spaces for longer than we typically think. These digital spaces that our literacies play out in one form or another have existed for decades. In this sense we are not only dealing with how our ability to actively use these digital spaces to compose and the effects they have on our writing. Our experiences with the technology that is in the digital space allows us the ability to change these spaces and the technologies change us.

Zappen (2005) distinguishes between traditional and digital rhetoric. He urges that the two be separated due to the constraints of permanently linking rhetoric with persuasion. He defines digital rhetoric as the ways in which “traditional rhetorical strategies function in digital spaces and suggest how these strategies are reconfigured within these spaces” (p. 319). Digital rhetoric thus represents not a move away from persuasion, but the ability to address communication as a collaborative effort between the composer/writer and the technology. The collaboration, I think, moves us beyond persuasion, and allows for digital rhetoric to account for the role and/or purpose of the technology used to communicate. This paper aims to demonstrate the benefits of various different definitions of digital rhetoric influencing scholarship. It will also include a brief overview of only a few areas of research and interest to work in digital rhetoric, and finally look toward the development of assignments that aim to bridge the gap between theory and application for scholars, instructors and students to use and further develop their writing skills. This paper will attempt to research and answer the following questions:

1. How do the various definitions of digital rhetoric affect composition pedagogy and approach to digital literacies in the field of rhetoric?
2. What theories in digital rhetoric need to be applied and incorporated in assignments?
3. What types of assignments, and platforms allow for an attempt to bridge the gap between theory and application?