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Abstract: *Standing at the End of a Road* works to explore the intersections of bereavement rituals with the technologies and tools of new digital media. The research includes rhetorical analyses of the remediation of funerary practices through relationships with digital media, and case studies of various types of memorial web sites, including individually created sites, various free and commercial sites for constructing and posting memorials, and sites created to commemorate the September 11th tragedy.

Although my work on these online sites of illness, death, and mourning has often been emotionally difficult, I believe these types of web spaces are particularly valuable because they encourage us to consider the real-world context of online interactions.

Studies of online communities have previously focused on how identity and sense of community are formed within online spaces. These studies have highlighted the disembodied nature of online communications, as well as the formation of communities which have little or no real-world interaction. Works by Turkle (1997), Markham (1998), and the edited volume by Kollack and Smith, *Communities in Cyberspace* (1999) are examples of this type of research. Although certainly valuable to our understanding of online communities and the development of online identity, these texts do not reflect the experience of many web space users, for whom online activity is directly related to real-world experiences and interactions. In other words, a sense of identity and/or community online is not necessarily separated from a person's offline experience. The spaces for online memorials, however, exist both as digital representations and as "real world" efforts to maintain relationships with loved ones who have died. These efforts may serve a variety of purposes, including both personal grief work and the preservation of community relationships. Through an exploration of the goals, processes, and products involved in these online bereavement practices, I attempt to highlight the reciprocity that exists between real-world and online spaces.

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