

WVU doctoral graduate wins electronic dissertation award

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West Virginia University's Hilary M. Attfield won the Most Innovative Electronic Dissertation Award presented by the Networked Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations (NDLTD).

"I represent WVU at the NDLTD and we were looking for electronic dissertations with new and unique multimedia innovations," said John Hagen, WVU Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) program coordinator and NDLTD board member.

Attfield is the journals manager of the West Virginia

University Press and also serves as the contributing editor of the WVU journal *Victorian Poetry* since 1987. *Victorian Poetry* is sponsored by the Department of English and the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences. She is a doctoral graduate of WVU's Department of Technology in the College of Human Resources and Education.

Hagen said that dissertations in the print form look very linear and flat, whereas ETDs give one exciting opportunities to add video clips, datasets, and other forms of media to augment their explanations and works.

"Electronic theses and dissertations submitted for this award represent student efforts to transform the genre of the print dissertation through the use of ETDs," Hagen said. "We are also very proud that a WVU alum has received this important recognition."

Attfield's dissertation, "The Future of Electronic Editing: Theory and Practice," investigates a lecture by David Hunter Strother, a West Virginia artist and journalist

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whose works reflect Civil War history, art and culture focused on John Brown.

"Attfield used several multimedia components that highlight manuscript illuminations while exploring the theory and practice of editing as it evolves into the electronic era," Hagen said. "Her work is presented in the form of a Web page and

contains extensive hyperlinks."

WVU is a charter member of the NDLTD consortium which consists of more than 200 universities globally. Members of the consortium aim to promote the implementation and development of electronic theses and dissertation collections.

"This award was presented at the Annual ETD symposium at the University of Kentucky, which was attended by more than 250 international

members from various countries including India and Australia," Hagen said. "The goal was to spread the message and potentials of ETDs across the world, particularly in developing countries."

He said that currently 95 percent of the students at WVU turn in their ETDs as PDF files and such awards will encourage other students also to use multimedia tools and Web design techniques while submitting their ETD.