

University of Windsor  
**Scholarship at UWindsor**

---

UWill Discover Undergraduate Conference

UWill Discover 2016

---

Mar 31st, 9:00 AM - 10:20 AM

## Mapping The Toronto Theatre Blogosphere

Emma-Nicole Robert Ms.  
robert1u@uwindsor.ca

Avery Lane MacDonald Ms.  
macdo12o@uwindsor.ca

Bry-Anne Edwards Ms.  
edwar11l@uwindsor.ca

Flora Janos Ms.  
janos@uwindsor.ca

Julia Belton Ms.  
beltonj@uwindsor.ca

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/uwilldiscover>

---

Robert, Emma-Nicole Ms.; MacDonald, Avery Lane Ms.; Edwards, Bry-Anne Ms.; Janos, Flora Ms.; Belton, Julia Ms.; Mansoori, Sahahan Mr.; and Monminie, James Mr., "Mapping The Toronto Theatre Blogosphere" (2017). *UWill Discover Undergraduate Conference*. 6.  
<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/uwilldiscover/2016/session2/6>

This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Conferences and Conference Proceedings at Scholarship at UWindsor. It has been accepted for inclusion in UWill Discover Undergraduate Conference by an authorized administrator of Scholarship at UWindsor. For more information, please contact [scholarship@uwindsor.ca](mailto:scholarship@uwindsor.ca).

---

**Submitter and Co-author information**

Emma-Nicole Robert Ms., Avery Lane MacDonald Ms., Bry-Anne Edwards Ms., Flora Janos Ms., Julia Belton Ms., Sahahan Mansoori Mr., and James Monminie Mr.

## Mapping the Toronto Blogosphere UWill Discover Abstract

Team Members: Julia Belton, Bry-Anne Edwards, Flora Janos, Avery Macdonald, Shahan Mansoori, James Monminie, Emma Robert

From online reviews, to live tweeting during a performance, to “liking” a production on Facebook, the blogosphere is transforming how we talk about theatre. Theatre criticism in the digital world is now a “team sport,” where audience members and artists play alongside professional critics (Fricker 49). This shift holds much potential: online critical discourse can help us develop a more diverse and inclusive picture of theatre reception and theatre-going cultures than print reviews, and expand the historical documentation of performance, which, as a vanishing art form, leaves very few traces of itself. However, the limited research in this area has yet to fully understand the role of the blogosphere in theatre ecology or how to archive the criticism found there (Collins ; Poll ; Radosavljevic). “Mapping the Toronto Theatre Blogosphere” is a new research project bringing together Dramatic Art and Computer Science students. It attempts to answer two key questions: how is the blogosphere changing how we talk about theatre, and how can we preserve the critical discourse occurring there? To answer the first question, we tracked and archived the online critical response (blog reviews, online publications, tweets, and Facebook posts) to a representative sample from the fall 2016 Toronto theatre season. Our resulting dataset was examined using a content analysis approach in order to identify which productions generated the most critical response (posts) online, the demographics of the posters (including age, gender, occupation, and ethnicity), and the purpose of the posts (including commentary on the production, socio-political commentary, endorsements, and check-ins). To answer the second question, our CS team member is developing an open-access website to archive the materials collected, which the public will be invited to use and contribute to once it is launched. Our preliminary findings suggest that the blogosphere is changing how we talk about theatre in three key ways: it is providing more coverage to new plays and plays about political or controversial subject matter; it is increasing and diversifying the participants in critical discourse, allowing women and people of colour more access into the conversations; and it is connecting discussions about theatre to other topics such as political issues and identity. Our UWill Discover presentation will summarize our findings about the Toronto theatre blogosphere and include an interactive demonstration of our database.

## Works Cited

- Collins, Elanore. "Theatre Reviewing in Post-consensus Society: Performance, Print and the Blogosphere." *Shakespeare* 6.3 (2010): 330-36. *Taylor & Francis Online*. Web. 18 Jan. 2017.
- Fricker, Karen. "The Futures of Theatre Criticism." *Canadian Theatre Review* 163 (2015): 49-53. *University of Toronto Press*. Web. 18 Jan. 2017.
- Hatton, Oona. "'Hey, Asshole: You Had Your Say': The Performance of Theatre Criticism." *Theatre Topics* 24.2 (2014): 103-24. *Johns Hopkins University Press*. Web. 18 Jan. 2017.
- Holland, Peter. "It's All about Me. Deal with It." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 25.3 (2007): 27-39. *Johns Hopkins University Press*. Web. 18 Jan. 2017.
- Poll, Melissa. "Mapping the New Critical Terrain: Rules, Ethics, Hierarchies." *Canadian Theatre Review* 168 (2016): 9-18. Print.
- Radosavljevic, Duška. *Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes*. N.p.: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016. Print.