

Picturing Literate Activity: Tab, You're It

Janine Blue

Through images, Janine Blue demonstrates the presence of her diverse identities in digital spaces via browser tabs and Google profiles and interprets how organizing her digital life affects her mindset.

When I launch the web browser on my laptop, I'm greeted by the familiar sight of a desktop full of strategically placed tabs slowing down the processing power (Figure 1 is what my browser top currently looks like). It's a testament to the multitasking madness that has become an integral part of my digital life (as is my computer politely nudging me with random, terrifying technological glitches to signal that I should probably close some tabs), with each browser tab representing various tasks or projects I'm currently working on or are right around the corner. It's not uncommon for me to have one tab dedicated to research for something related to my student-ing, a tab regarding teacher-ing, a tab for ISU-ing, a tab for emails, multiple Google docs, and YouTube, of course, for humanity breaks. Keeping the various parts of myself organized and readily accessible in this way is an excellent practice for my life as a human who wears many hats. It can be a dizzying array for those who unfortunately take a glance at my screen, but I easily

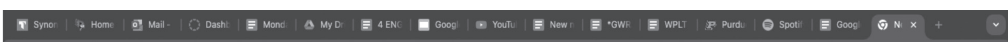


Figure 1: My current lineup of tabs.

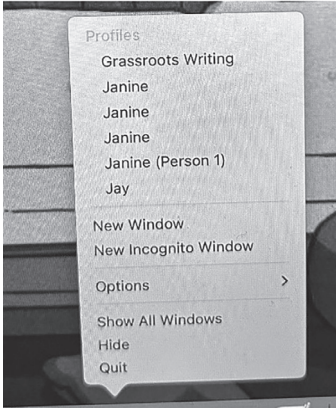


Figure 2: What pops up when I right click my web browser.

navigate through them because each tab is a portal to a different aspect of my virtual existence.

I have also accumulated a collection of Google profiles over the years that enable tailored experiences for me (Figures 2 and 3). Each Google profile serves a distinct purpose, whether for “Jay, the published creative writer,” “Janine, the graduate student,” “Janine, the graduate teacher,” “Janine, the editor,” “Janine’s Premium YouTube binge profile,” and my favorite, “Janine, (Person 1).” Her profile only contains what makes her happy—purple, streaming, and stuff she likes to read, look at, and shop from (Figure 4). It’s also where her family and friends exist for her in digital space. This compartmentalization streamlines

my virtual life, like having different rooms in a house (my computer) that are interconnected by me as the foundation.

The organization of distinct profiles and the aligned chaos of tabs definitely symbolize the way my mind works and how I navigate the world. It’s a bit stubborn, a little excessive, somewhat bizarre, highly visual, and meticulously organized. What makes me sigh contently breaks other people out in a cold sweat.

Tab people get it. Not-tab people *get the urge* to rescue our computers. There are only two reactions: “How does your computer ever run? Why are you like this?!?” or “Same here. I’ve got twelve tabs open right now and nine

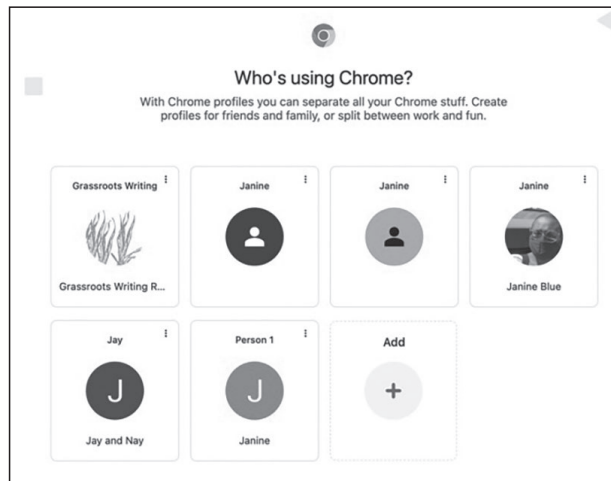


Figure 3: My Google profiles.

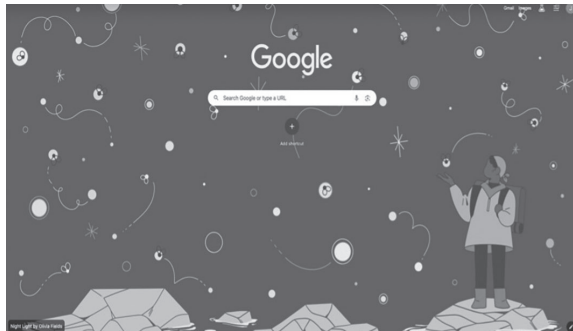
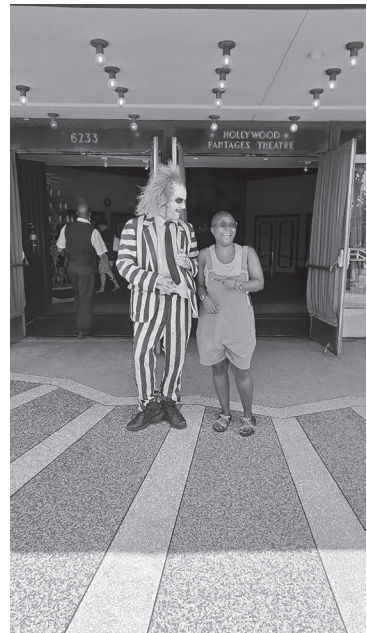


Figure 4: Janine (Person 1).

profiles.” It is a sight to behold. Even more so for me, it positively impacts my mental health—a chaotic yet strangely comforting reminder that I do have a lot to do, but once it’s finished, I can close the tab and exit the profile, relieving my laptop’s aching muscles and allowing Janine (Person 1) to be the only identity in the room.

Since writing “Making Sense of All the Writing: My Embodied Literate Activity” for the 14.2 GWRJ issue, there still has not been much change for **Janine Blue**. She’s still learning, teaching, and writing. She still uses her weighted blanket and enjoys simulation games. She did recently receive an extremely cool purple fidget spinner and caught up on some reading.



Notes