

Analysis of john humphry's article "i h8 txt msgs: how texting is wrecking our la...

[Science](#)



It is no secret that the innovation of technology in the past decade has been on a rapid incline. It allows people to express thoughts and information within an instant. This all seems like a step in the right direction towards a more educated and modernized society. However, in 2007, John Humphries wrote a convincing article: How Texting is wrecking our language discussing his passion for the English language and how these innovations are harming students and employees everywhere. Humphry fears for the next generation of writers. He uses the rhetorical persuasion in his article to convince his audience. Humphry enlightens us with his view of living in the technology boom of the 21st century and how it is rapidly changing the English language negatively. Humphry predominantly uses techniques demonstrated from logos and while he still establishes examples of persuasion through ethos and pathos his use of logos is most convincing. Humphry's objective to the reader is that texting is shattering the world of formal writing and is fearful that it is going extinct. Humphry shows examples of logos as his strongest method of persuasion.

Throughout his article he provides strong evidence that texting is taking over the formal writing world. In Humphry's article he states, " But it has developed its users have sought out increasingly obscure ways of expressing themselves, which, when you think about it, entirely defeats the purpose". This direct quote from Humphry is an example of logos. It can be seen that he is using logos because Humphry is trying to prove that even though we are trying to abbreviate to make communication faster, trying to decode these said abbreviations makes it more difficult and takes more time for readers to understand what is being said and this quote makes that evident.

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Humphry is presenting evidence of the inefficiency of abbreviations in texting. He stays consistent to his argument and as Humphry explains, "It is interesting, in a masochistic sort of way, to look at how text language has changed over the years". This quote from Humphry reiterates his examples of logos. He continues to explain how technology is now changing language and the changes that are happening are not satisfactory.

According to the definition by the writing commons article, "It is the consistency and clarity of an argument as well as the logic of evidence and reasons". Using this definition of logos it can be seen that he is proficient in this form of persuasion. He is able to confidently present to the reader that he is consistent to his argument. These examples continue to prove that he is continuing consistency and clarity in his evidence. Humphry also shows examples of pathos throughout his article. However, his use of pathos is weak and not relatable. In Humphry's words, "The eye falls on a word you've never seen before or one whose meaning you have always wanted to check, and you close the dictionary just a little bit richer for the experience". In this example Humphry is looking for an emotional reaction to using the dictionary and finding meaning in words. Conversely this is not causing any kind of emotional reaction to the reader simply because it is not relatable.

According to this definition, "'Pathos' is a rhetorical device that can be used in an argument to draw the audience in and to help it connect with the argument". This definition of pathos shows us that Humphry is efficient in showing the reader his passion for words and writing but fails to make it

relatable to the reader. He was proficient in making his use of pathos relate to his topic but fails to get a reaction from his audience.

Humphry's passion for writing is certainly admirable and clearly shown in the article, nonetheless, he still fails to get an emotional reaction from his reader which is the objective of pathos. To Humphry's dismay, his least convincing method of persuasion used is ethos. According to the writing commons article, "Ethos is a method of persuasion in which the speaker or writer (the 'rhetor') attempts to persuade the audience by demonstrating his own credibility or authority". Humphry rarely demonstrates his own credibility in his article, never stating how he is so educated on the topic making this a negative point in his rhetorical article. "But when it came to her exams, she'd forgotten how to write". This was the best example of ethos because he does not directly state his credentials, but indirectly tells the reader that he is an education professional. Ethos is meant to show the reader that the author has credibility to defend his or her argument and the author fails to prove any form of reliability to the topic. As said in the article, "They are as close to my heart as they are to my desk". In this example Humphry is describing his dictionary being in close proximity to his desk which may indicate he is of some educational importance but it is not a strong example of Ethos. His lack of ethos negatively affects his arguments because one of the main goals in persuasion is reliability. If an author wants to make a strong, opinionated argument, they must back it up with a credible background and if Humphry wants to make these allegations, he would have been much more successful if he had offered some insight into why the reader should believe him by showing some credentials.

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Additionally, in his final paragraphs, he begins to lose the reader due to his pompousness. If Humphry's goal was to grasp the reader and persuade them to see his perspective, he makes his perspective seem arrogant. Humphry admits, " Now I find myself slipping into sloppy habits, abandoning capital letters and using rows of dots". Humphry turns his counter argument into making him a hypocrite. If his main goal was to persuade his reader against the use technology and becoming sloppy using it, he shouldn't admit to doing it himself. Humphry truly begins to make the reader think that if he has fallen victim to sloppy abbreviations due to technology, why should they believe his claim that technology is negative. Humphry also states, " E-mail has seen to that and I must confess that I would find it difficult to live without it". This statement taken from Humphry's article really hurt him persuasion wise. However one might object that he is just proving a counter argument, it just simply shows that he has fallen victim to the same technology dilemma as everyone else. Humphry surely could have made a better counterargument rather admitting to acting on the faults he accuses the readers of. Though Humphry did not show strong examples of ethos and pathos, however his logos was able to carry him throughout his article and prove a valid point that texting is hurting student writers.

As can be seen through the examples given before John Humphry gives an effective argument to his readers that texting is causing a negative effect on current and future writers using strong methods of persuasion using primarily Logos. Regardless of the rhetorical mistakes Humphry may have made in his efforts to persuade his audience, his use of logos revived his

argument. Humphry's objective to the reader was texting is shattering the world of formal writing and he was efficient in proving his argument.