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Abstract: A growing consensus within writing center literature regards the various modes of computer-mediated collaboration as discrete literate practices with literate aims different than those of face-to-face collaboration. My descriptive analysis of 29 online writing lab (OWL) sites for email tutoring-currently the most popular mode of computer-mediated collaboration-considers how email tutoring site interfaces represent the literate practice of email tutoring, shaping expectations and experiences consistent with its literate aims. The analysis suggests that email tutoring interfaces articulate what can be taxonomized as first- and second-level representations of their services. Within these levels of representation, interfaces gather information from collaborative participants through means that can be characterized as simple, intermediate, and extensive. In addition, how individual OWLs represent the tutors who participate in email tutoring can be placed along a continuum from functional to personal emphases. In conclusion, I assert that an important aspect of theorizing the future of technology and literacy in the writing center is current attention toward how the actual OWL interfaces allowing for online collaboration shape emergent computer-mediated literate practices such as email tutoring. Copyright (c) 2002 Elsevier Science Inc.

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