

Beyond the Word: the future of documents

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- History of the future of documents
- Documentation
- Neo-documentation
- Post-neodocumentation

History of the Future of Documents

- Pennavaria, 2002
- Cutter, 1883
- Uzanne, 1894
- HG Wells, 1938
- Vannevar Bush, 1945
- Arthur C Clark, 1960s

Bibliography

- Early bibliographical works were referred to as *literary histories* - early 17th century
- The use of the term *bibliography* to embrace selection, organisation, classification and dissemination processes was first coined in 18th century France
- Woledge, 1983

Documentation

- End of 19th century through first half of 20th century, the term *documentation* became popular
- Henri La Fontaine and Paul Otlet, followed by Suzanne Briet
- Response to concerns about the increasing number of documents, especially within science and technical field

- La Fontaine and Otlet regarded *bibliography* as only part of *documentation*, the latter encompassing:
 - Bibliography
 - Authorship
 - Printing technology
 - Publication
 - Book production
 - Library services

- The attempt to establish a unified approach to the handling of documents raised the question of boundaries
 - What was a document?
 - What was not a document?
- First *documentation* movement

What is a document?

- Otlet, 1934
 - Images, maps, diagrams, models, educational games, works of art, sculptures, natural objects, artefacts and archaeological finds
 - objects became documents if they were *informing*
- Briet, 1951
 - documents are concerned with access to *evidence*

Information Science

- The exact meaning of *documentation* fluctuated throughout the first half of the 20th century, across Europe and the US
- Difficult relationship between librarianship and documentation
- Emergence of special librarianship and *information science* in the second half of the 20th century

- By the 1970s *information science* had largely replace *documentation* as the name given to the processes of collecting, indexing and making available materials on a given subject
- This change was based on developments in technology, and the focus on user centred retrieval
- Whilst relevance and recall echoed Otlet's 'aboutness', much of the scope of *documentation* was lost

information communication chain

creation > dissemination > management > organization/retrieval > use

Robinson, 2009

Neo-documentation

- Norway; changes to legal deposit in 1989 led to the establishment in 1996 of the Institute for Documentation Studies, University of Tromsø by Niels Lund
- Buckland 1997 – dead birds in museum, led him wonder if they too, were documents

- United by the work of Briet - Buckland, Rayward and Lund met in 1996, and subsequently established the Document Academy Conferences in 2003, to promote a *neo-documentalist* agenda

Document Theory

- Lund and Skare
 - Professional document theory (physicality and aboutness)
 - General document theory (mental interpretation of content)
 - Social document theory (only a document if someone decides it is)

- Buckland (2014)
 - Information as thing
 - Information as process
 - Information as knowledge

- Both authors concede a need for an holistic approach to document theory, blending:
 - Physical interpretation of documents
 - Socio-cultural aspects
- Relationship with information philosophy, book history?

Post-Neodocumentation

Three contemporary developments suggest the need for LIS to look beyond even *neo-documentation*:

Galleries, Libraries, Archives Museums

- Original documents (in the broadest sense)
- Surrogate digital renderings
- Born digital documents
- Metadata files accompanying both physical and digital documents

Digital Scholarly Communication

- Datasets
- Research data management
- Data literacy
- Tools
- User behaviour
- Social media
- Scholarly outputs/altmetrics

Immersive Documents

- Where the reader experiences a scripted unreality as reality
 - Convergence of pervasive computing, multisensory computing and participatory interaction
 - Spearheaded by developments in virtual reality
 - Interactive narratives, journalism, documentaries, training, education,
 - games, theatre, films

Implications for LIS?

- Need for a post-neodocumentalist agenda
 - *Documentation*
- What is a document in the age of unreality?
- Convergence of physical, aboutness of a document, with personal, social and cultural impact
- Impact on human information behaviour
- Ethics
- Immersive literacy

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