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 17\textsuperscript{th} century

• The use of the term *bibliography* to embrace selection, organisation, classification and dissemination processes was first coined in 18\textsuperscript{th} century France

• Woledge, 1983
Documentation

• End of 19\textsuperscript{th} century through first half of 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the term \textit{documentation} became popular

• Henri La Fountaine and Paul Otlet, followed by Suzanne Briet

• Response to concerns about the increasing number of documents, especially within science and technical field
La Fountaine 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*
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 Tromso 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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