Today’s lecture

• Are there new kinds of documents in a digital environment?
• ICT capabilities
• ‘Fluid’ documents and the need for ‘fixity’
  – Digital information products versus digital records
• Some examples

What’s new on the WWW?

• Plenty of new content

• Plenty of content that was once difficult to access

• But have these assumed new forms?
Documentary forms persist over time

- An application form is an application form
- A catalogue is a catalogue
- An encyclopedia is an encyclopedia
- A medical record is a medical record

Regardless of the medium it is re-presented in

Forms persist ...

if the necessary conditions are in place, such as
- an audience
- a medium
- a fast reproducing technology (particularly for information products)
- suitable economic/business/social motives
- an appropriate political/social climate

Forms persist ...

- from one technology and medium to another
- if there is a continuing demand or need for them
- with relatively little change
  - unless the new technology/medium is held to enhance functionality
So, what is new?

New documentary forms:
- Blogs?
- Personal homepages?
- What else?

New functionalities:
- Rapid, inexpensive distribution
- Multiple access points
- Absence of time/space constraints
- Compound and ‘hybrid’ documents
- Ease of editing

ICT and information distribution
- Info creators can now more easily be publishers
- Lessened dependence upon physical media can lead to savings
- Greatly reduced lead times in publication
- Rapid access to much broader audience
ICT and access to information

• Information can be accessed from almost anywhere

• More and more institutions and agencies have a virtual dimension
  – Shops, banks, government departments, offices, libraries and archives etc.

ICT and access to information

• May be easier to work from/at home

• Emergence of national or global ‘cyber communities’
  – that share information, arrange real time/real space events, co-ordinate actions etc.

ICT and time/space

• Geographic borders/distances often less relevant

• Real time (and other) collaborations across distances facilitated
### ICT and time/language

- Information can be more ‘current’ more quickly
- Information transfer between nations/agencies/communities etc. – easier, faster, less expensive
  - e.g. international banking and markets, international policing, diasporas, political activity

### ICT and compound/hybrid documents

- Easy to merge documents of different types into one
  - copy/paste, insert or hyperlinks
- A single document can be made up of any combination of text, graphics and animation, images (moving and still), sound

### ICT and ‘editability’

- Most current information can be easily incorporated by addition or substitution
- Creators and publishers can easily revise
- Key for information products and records where currency is a priority
- And mistakes are easily rectified

In sum, the capacity for considerable fluidity
Fluid documents

- Can be changed at any time
- May contain dynamic, constantly changing data
  - Stock market updates, real time images, hit counters etc.
- New material can be added as required

Fluid documents

- Interactions with users are possible
  - postings to email discussion/feedback etc
- Changes are usually ‘seamless’
  
  All very admirable, but …

Fixity can be essential

- Fixity gives confidence that data/information will be the same at repeated ‘viewings’
  - e.g. checking the ‘facts’, knowing that a web-based resource will still be available
- This is particularly important with information by-products ie records
Fixity can be essential

• If evidence is not fixed, how much use can it be?

• Providing appropriate guarantees of fixity for electronic records is a major IM challenge

Newspapers

Emerged in late 18th century thanks to:

– Suitable technologies (movable type press / steam or electric powered presses)
– Cheap medium (newsprint)
– Increasing literacy and a growing market
– Growing impetus for a new public sphere

Newspapers

Structural Elements Include -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COLUMNS</th>
<th>SECTIONS: (sports, food etc)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEWSPRINT</td>
<td>NEWS (international and local)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTICLES</td>
<td>COMICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHOTOGRAPHS</td>
<td>CARTOONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BYLINES</td>
<td>HEADLINES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'JOURNALESE'</td>
<td>MASTHEAD</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEATURES</td>
<td>DATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDITORIAL</td>
<td>ADVERTISEMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEATHER</td>
<td>FINANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASSIFIEDS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many were in place from the earliest days
Boom in the 19th and 20th centuries

- A business world and professional circles in need of information and news
- A rising working class with its own needs
- Compulsory education
- A state keen to regulate the media

Paper available in large rolls
Telephone, telegraph, transatlantic cable
News agencies (e.g. Reuters)

Challenge of new media

Competition from: radio (1930s) television (1950s)
Leveling off of circulation figures
Owners respond by using new technologies to cut production costs:
  - Photocomposition (no more typesetters and compositors)
  - Automation of processes
The contemporary newspaper

- Journalists with desktop terminals connected to a server
  - Online editing, research, story placement
- Online transmission to photo-compositors, then to hard copy
- **Web-based** versions of most major papers are now available

Web-based versions …

**retain many features of the paper-based newspaper**

- story content and style
- masthead
- weather
- sections
- cartoons
- editorial
- letters etc.

Web-based versions …

**can also add:**

- interactivity
- different ways of navigating
- audio and video content etc.
Advantages of online papers

- easily and frequently updated
- low costs of delivery
- sponsors/advertisers can link to their web sites

Disadvantages

- Links can be slow
- Finding yesterday’s paper?
  - emergence of online ‘archives’
- Physically inconvenient

McAdams (1994) – pre-WWW concerns

- ‘Think about footnotes.’
- ‘Think about length restrictions.’
- ‘How did I get here?’
- ‘Keep the good, throw out the rest.’
- ‘Blaze trails through the forest of information.’
McAdams (1994) – pre-WWW concerns

- ‘Bring along some design principles.’
- ‘Encourage skimming and scanning.’
- ‘Don’t make it difficult.’
- ‘Build a friendly interface.’

Online newspapers: Boczkowski (1999)

What has the WWW meant for:

- audience-generated content?
- how reporters collect information?
- the profile of newspaper readers?

Online newspapers: Deuze (2003)

The WWW has seen the emergence of:

- a ‘fourth’ kind of journalism (after print/radio/TV)
- mainstream sites that often replicate print editions
- new kinds of news sites (e.g. meta, alternative)
- widely varying levels of interaction
In China,
- PCs remain expensive
- the state has an ambivalent attitude to the WWW
- most WWW users are young professionals
- online papers are growing in number, but continue to run at a financial loss
- online papers are more commonly 'brochure-ware' than focal points for interactive communities

Exercises for Lab 6

Evaluating:
- online telephone directories
- online newspapers
- online CD catalogues

• Evaluating online telephone directories:
  - How long does it take to find the information you seek?
  - How does this compare with a hardcopy telephone directory?
  - How is using the online version the same as using a paper-based directory?
  - What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of each format?
  - How can information and services be accessed that cannot be conveniently found in the paper form?
Exercises for Lab 6

Assessing the nature of online newspapers using some of the criteria identified by Dibean (1999):

- Discussion Forums
- Chat Rooms
- Related Information for stories
- Video
- Audio
- Flash
- Other plug-in based technologies

Exercises for Lab 6

Assessing the nature of online newspapers using some of the criteria identified by Dibean (1999):

- Java Applets
- Electronic Mail
- Polls with Instantaneous Results
- Search Tool
- Consumer Services
- Sign-up for electronic delivery of a personalized newspaper
- Instantaneous Updates of Information

Exercises for Tute 6

- Read and summarise an article chosen from this web site:
  http://www.well.com/user/mmcadams/online_articles.html
- Discuss and compare the arguments made in these articles.
- How would you customise an online paper/phone directory/CD catalogue?
Further reading


P. Brooksbank (1999) 'Understanding the development of online newspapers', New Media & Society 1(1).

M. Deuze (2003) 'The web and its journalists: considering the consequences of different types of newsmedia online', New Media & Society 5(2).


R. Williams (1976) Keywords. Glasgow: Fontana.