Today’s Lecture

• Looking critically at sources
• Next week’s tute/lab exercises
• Unit objectives
• But first …

4c. Defining an information system

’a linked and related system of entities that acts as a mechanism through which individuals can inform other people or become informed’

(Allen 1996: 6)
4d. Defining an information system

‘entities/mechanism’:
– Holding information as things, such as books, computers, records, photographs, sounds

‘linked and related’:
– To allow coordinated storage and retrieval

‘can inform people’:
– Information as process, information as knowledge

4e. Defining an information system

Information systems can be:
> As simple as a shopping list
> As complex as a search engine

Use is a crucial factor in terms of definition

4e. Final thoughts on systems

• ‘delivering information is not in itself sufficient for becoming informed’
  (Buckland 1991: 200)

• information management involves much more than the handling of information-as-things
Looking critically at sources

Critical/critique/criticise:
’a careful and exact evaluation and judgement’

Evaluation/evaluate:
‘to examine and judge carefully’

Evaluating WWW sources

There is a wealth of material on the web.
‘within the morass of networked data are both valuable nuggets and an incredible amount of junk’ (Tillman 2003)

• Esther Grassian (2000) has provided some criteria for determining the usefulness of such material:
  – Content and evaluation
  – Source and data
  – Structure
  – Other
### Content and evaluation

- Audience
- Purpose
- Content
- Completeness and accuracy
- Relative value compared to other sources

### Source and date

- Author/producer
- Authority/expertise
- Bias
- Date of production, revisions
- Reliability of links

### Structure

- Graphic design
- Purpose of graphics/art
- Icons
- Grammar/spelling/literary composition
- Usability
Other

- ‘Appropriate interactivity’
- Data security
- Links to search engines
- Also see her thoughts on ‘discipline-based’ web resources

Exercises for Lab 2

Searching for information online is often a juggling act.

1. Searching for information online

- Use search terms that are too broad, and you may receive a large number of documents, many of which are not relevant to your purposes.
- Use terms that are too narrow, and you may receive a small number of relevant documents, but miss out on other vital sources.
1. Searching for information online

- In information management, this problem is commonly termed the relationship between
  
  Recall
  
  and
  
  Precision

2. Applying Grassian's criteria to a website

- Audience
- Purpose
- Content
- Completeness and accuracy
- Relative value compared to other sources

Exercises for Tute 2

- Understanding information in context
- Conveying information at a glance
1. Understanding information in context

How can we find out the meaning of the word in red?

‘Dan is very murped about the Grand Prix’

2. Conveying information at a glance

‘How much information can actually be conveyed in a glimpse that lasts only a few seconds?’

‘And how likely is it to result in the viewer purchasing or using the advertised product or concept?’

(Case 2000: 295)

Unit objectives

• At the completion of this unit the students will:
  – have knowledge of:
  – have an understanding of:
  – have the skills to:
  – have developed attitudes which enable them to:
have knowledge of:

- basic ICTs and IM tools developed to manage information and meet user needs
- the information-seeking behaviour of users
- the range of information sources
- human computer interfaces to information
- the forms that information can take

have knowledge of:

- the range of information sources by authority
  - Hearsay
  - Official report
  - Participants’ notes
  - Sworn testimony

have an understanding of:

- the fundamental concepts of information, and its use by individuals, organisations and societies
- information creation, representation, storage, access, retrieval, and use
- the impact of organisational and social contexts upon information needs and uses
have the skills to:

- evaluate information and its sources critically
- identify particular information needs
- evaluate ICTs and IM tools in terms of meeting user needs
- use basic ICT and IM tools to create, represent, store, access, retrieve and use information

have developed attitudes which enable them to:

- be aware of the role and responsibilities of information professionals
- be aware of the role of ICTs and IM in human activity

have developed attitudes which enable them to:

- be aware of the role and responsibilities of information professionals

Survey of IS managers in 96 US small and medium businesses:

- Ethically acceptable to copy commercial software for purpose other than backup or archive?
  - 29% said Yes
- IS ethics means a lot more than software piracy and data confidentiality?
  - 13.8% said Yes

(Phukan & Dhillon 2000: 242)
Further reading