

Potsdamer Informationswissenschaftliches Kolloquium (28. Oktober 2020)

A Document (Re)turn

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**A Document
(Re)turn**

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1980s and 1990s

- technological developments (WWW)
- new act of legal deposit in Norway in 1989:
 - «All material published in Norway must be legally deposited with the National Library of Norway. This applies regardless of the format of publication, as the law is media-neutral.»
 (<https://www.nb.no/en/legal-deposit/>)
- a general lack of librarians in Northern Norway
- the decision was made to establish an educational programme for librarians at the University of Tromsø, the programme was called Documentation Studies
- the first students started in January 1996

Niels W. Lund

“The choice of the name Documentation studies was not based on a paradigmatic critique of Library and Information Science, but on a much more pragmatic and general political interest in relation to the establishment of the National Library in Norway in 1989 and the closely related launching of a very broadly defined act of legal deposit in Norway [...]” (Lund 2007, 12).

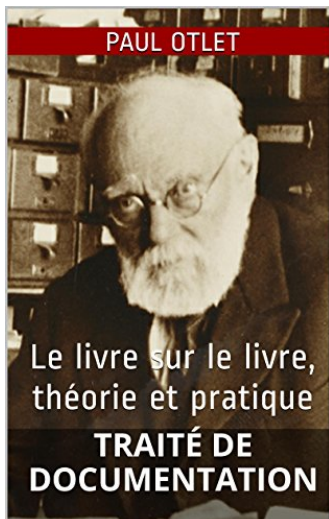
Neo-documentation

- Michael Buchland: “What is a ‘document’?” (1997)
- W. Boyd Rayward
- Ronald E. Day
- Niels W. Lund
- rediscovery of the first European Documentation movement
 - Paul Otlet
 - Suzanne Briet

The first documentation movement

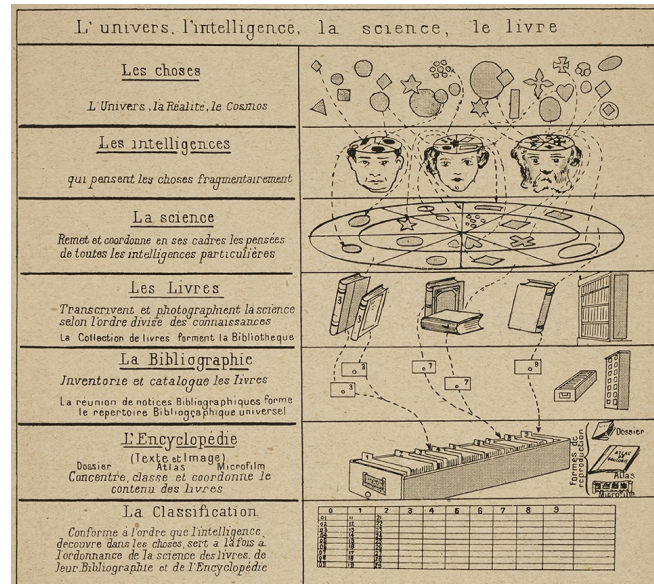
- Paul Otlet (1868-1944)
 - 1895 The International Institute of Bibliography

«The Science of Bibliography can be defined as that science whose object of study is all questions common to different kinds of documents: production, physical manufacture, distribution, inventory, statistics, preservation and use of bibliographic documents; that is to say, everything which deals with editing, printing, publishing, bookselling, bibliography, and library economy. **The scope of this science extends to all written or illustrated documents which are similar in nature to books: printed or manuscript literary works, books, brochures, journal articles, news reports, published or manuscript archives, maps, plans, charts, schemas, ideograms, diagrams, original or reproductions of drawings, and photographs of real objects.**»
(Rayward, 1990, 86)



Paul Otlet

- 1934 *Traité de documentation* (Le livre sur le livre, théorie et pratique)
 - the Universal Book
 - any object that can be observed and provides us with knowledge (printed books, images and sound recordings, natural objects, artifacts, objects bearing traces of human activity, educational games, works of art etc.

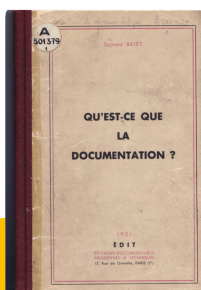


Otlet
1934, 41



Suzanne Briet (1894-1989)

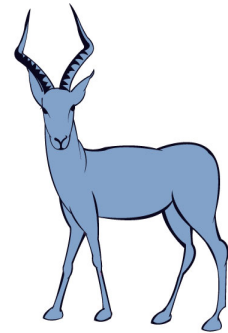
- «Madame Documentation»
- «A document is a proof in support of a fact.»
- «all bases of materially fixed knowledge, and capable of being used for consultation, study, and proof»
- «any concrete or symbolic indexical sign [*indice*], preserved or recorded toward the ends of representing, of reconstituting, or of proving a physical or intellectual phenomenon»



Suzanne Briet

- initial documents
- secondary documents

Object	Document?
Star in sky	No
Photo of star	Yes
Stone in river	No
Stone in museum	Yes
Animal in wild	No
Animal in zoo	Yes



antelopes are documents too

A new profession

“The proper job of documentation agencies is to produce secondary documents, derived from those initial documents that these agencies do not ordinarily create, but which they sometimes preserve. [...] We are now at the heart of the documentalist’s profession. These secondary documents are called: translations, analyses, documentary bulletins, files, catalogues, bibliographies, dossiers, photographs, microfilms, selections, documentary summaries, encyclopedias, and finding aids.” (Briet, 2006, 25-26)

Bibliography -> Documentation -> Information

- organizations and journals – all carrying the term ‘documentation’ in their titles – were founded during the first decades of the 20th century:
 - International Federation for Information and Documentation (FID)
 - Journal of Documentation (founded in 1945)
- Samuel Bradford: “fifty years documentation” (1948)
- After WWII, the concept of information gained importance and replaced step by step the notion of documentation.

Documentation Studies in Tromsø

- a reaction to the dominant concepts of information (content/message) in LIS and text in the Humanities
- broad definition of document by Otlet and Briet
- back to the Latin origin: document = doceo + mentum
 - Doceo:
 - to tell, inform (a person of a fact etc.)
 - to instruct (an advocate)
 - to demonstrate, show (by argument or other means)
 - to teach a person, to act as a teacher
 - to produce a play
 - Mentum:
 - suffix used in Latin to form nouns denoting acts, or means and results of acts

Niels W. Lund's main ideas

- the meaning and materiality of a document are considered equally important and the relationship between materiality and meaning becomes an interesting subject of study;
- the focus on complementarity is a consequence of this, considering that a document has both material, mental and social aspects;
- it is interesting to investigate not only the finished products of the documentation process, like published novels or released films, but also the process itself and the choices the creator of a documents has to make. This becomes especially obvious when the students are supposed to produce their own documents;
- students can study not only documents that can be stored and retrieved, but also oral and more fluid documents like lectures, concerts, performances or web pages that get updated frequently;
- Documentation Studies deal with both a media and an institutional perspective, considering institutions like archives, libraries and museums to be document institutions.

Complementarity

Buckland, 2016, 5:

- “any and every document has a physical angle *and* a mental angle *and* a social angle”
- “in considering documents none of these three angles can be completely understood without acknowledging the other two”

N. W. Lund: “Documentation in a Complementary Perspective”

„So, depending on the choice of concepts, a book can be a material as well as a social and a mental phenomenon. Instead of discussing whether a book is more a material phenomenon than a social or a mental phenomenon, one can talk like Bohr about three complementary, but exclusive features of the description of the book. One is not making a synthesis, but three complementary closures around the book, making a joint completion of the description. This means that the book does not partly carry one of these three features: **it is 100 percent a material phenomenon, 100 percent a social phenomenon, and 100 percent a mental phenomenon, making a complete asynthesis.** There is not one single overarching synthesis, but three ways of closing or bordering the phenomenon.“ (2004, 96f.)

Complementarity

- Lund, 2010, 744: it is impossible to find “the ultimate perfect concept capturing the very essence of everything, since all concepts will be biased in some way and in principle only be partial in relation to an assumed totality”
- Lund et.al., 2016, 7: “For me, there’s value in keeping them [all three complementary processes, R.S.] separate. Only by analyzing the processes individually can you do them justice and really expose the tensions between them. To study them well, they require different approaches. [...] **I insist on a-synthesis. I believe that trying to synthesize, you lose the details that matter.**”



Turn, Turn, Turn by Jenna Hartel, Faculty of Information, University of Toronto

This diagram summarizes theoretical *turns* that have occurred within LIS. It is based upon a paper of the same title presented at the 2019 CoLIS conference.

POINT OF DEPARTURE: THE PHYSICAL PARADIGM

As a point of departure, LIS was and is concerned with that body of knowledge relating to the origination, collection, organization, storage, retrieval, interpretation, transmission, transformation and utilization of information. In the 1960s, ground-breaking information retrieval research programs, such as the Cranfield and SMART (System for the Mechanical Analysis and Retrieval of Text) experiments, established a unifying physical paradigm. The physical paradigm featured an empirical method for testing the variables within an information retrieval system. For instance, in a laboratory-like setting, research would with a list collection of documents to determine the performance of index languages or search algorithms.



1. THE COGNITIVE TURN

Then, in the 1980s, at the crossroads of information retrieval and information behaviour research, a cognitive turn occurred. It upheld the idea that an information retrieval system should reflect the thought world of the user, which must therefore become the foremost object of inquiry. This turn was anchored and amplified by a watershed *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* chapter on "Information Needs and Users" by Brenda Dervin and Mike Nais, which contrasted the traditional physical paradigm with an alternative user-centred approach. One controversial, anthropomorphic concept of this turn was sense-making, a theory and methodology to examine what happens when an individual's internal sense is exhausted. A second, exemplar idea of this turn was Rick Bell's omniscient state-of-knowledge: in the long run, the cognitive / user-centred turn shifted LIS research from its technical stronghold of information retrieval and bibliometrics to the social scientific study of human information behaviour, where arguably the field remains centred today.

2. THE AFFECTIVE TURN

In the affective turn of the 1990s, the information seeker's emotional experience became a matter of keen interest. This new emphasis was sparked by Constance Mallon's perception of library anxiety, and Carol Kuhlthau's seminal investigations of the emotional roller coaster for high school students as they do a course writing assignment. Likewise, Elizabeth Chabon's holistic ethnographies of the information worlds of marginalized populations struck novel, poignant, compassionate chords. This turn heralded the ascent of concomitant qualitative methods, such as ethnography, for accessing the subjective realm. Furthermore, the affective turn instilled a sensitivity, intimacy, and humanity into the heart of library and information science.



3. THE NEO-DOCUMENTARY TURN

In the 1990s, the strong emphasis of the cognitive turn upon mental phenomena generated a neo-documentary turn. It brought library and information science back to its roots in the European Documentation movement and the work of its luminaries, Paul Otlet and Suzanne Briet. Participants in this turn rally around Michael Buckland's idea of information-as-thing, and are motivated by contemporary writings from sociologically-oriented intellectual outside LIS who write about documents, such as Foucault, Goffman, and Strauss. Neo-documentarists in LIS focus upon the properties and types of documents, their social and cultural construction within many different contexts, their changing nature in the digital age, and applied problems of documentation (e.g. retrieval, annotation, preservation, authorship, identity, intellectual property, among others).

4. THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE TURN

In the 1990s, a perspective emerged of seeing information phenomena as embedded in social, organizational, and professional contexts. This socio-cognitive turn shifts attention from individual and internal knowledge structures to the outward and social construction of knowledge within communities. A prolific crusader for this turn is Roger 'Rogaine' Hjørland, the architect of deontic analysis, which orients to information phenomena within social worlds. The socio-cognitive turn might be considered a re-turn. In actuality, social perspectives flourished in the original visions of LIS in the 1930s by Florence Butler and his celebrated student, Jesse Shera, whose social epistemology is a socio-cognitive idea. Today, the socio-cognitive turn has been absorbed into the accepted wisdom of LIS.



6. THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST TURN

In the early 2000s, the social constructionist turn in LIS shifted analytical attention to the way that language, in the form of discourses, constitutes the shared knowledge base of society. Radically, champions of this view argued that library and information science should define its subject matter as conversations, not information. A breakthrough paper of this turn was Bernd Frohmann's critique of the cognitive view point; a more extensive example is Sanna Taala's analysis of the discourses surrounding the music library. Methodologically, this turn brought a more sophisticated understanding of the nature of language and its crucial place in the LIS enterprise. The inherent critical bent of social constructionism also softened the ground for later turns of the 2020s, associated with cultural and gender studies.



5. THE EVERYDAY LIFE TURN

At the charger of the century, proponents of an everyday life turn argued that vast swaths of the human experience had been neglected in LIS research. They sought to understand and celebrate information phenomena associated with routine or pleasurable and profound life experiences, wherein information phenomena were hypothesized to be different. This turn was sparked by Reijo Savolainen and Anders Hektor, whose work performed these necessary conceptual maneuvers for LIS research: structuring time within everyday life, teasing apart life activities from information activities, and expanding information behavior beyond seeking to include creating, manipulating, and sharing information. Thanks to this turn, a plethora of familiar, entertaining, and meaningful experiences entered the boundaries of LIS research and practice. Significantly, this turn prepared our field to engage non-work, internet-based information phenomena that have moved to centre stage of the Information Age, such as gaming, YouTube, and social media.

7. THE EMBODIED TURN

The embodied turn of the mid-2000s can be associated with research into information behaviour and information literacy. One of the key ideas of this turn is: *How do we bring the body into focus, as the subject of research in the field?* This turn draws upon social theories of the body by Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, and Goffman. Within LIS, conversational papers include Annette Lloyd's studies of firefighters and ambulance drivers, as well as Michael Oltrop's studies of theatre professionals and archaeologists. The embodied turn is the next logical step in a progression from mind > heart > body within LIS research, aiming for a holistic understanding of the human information experience.



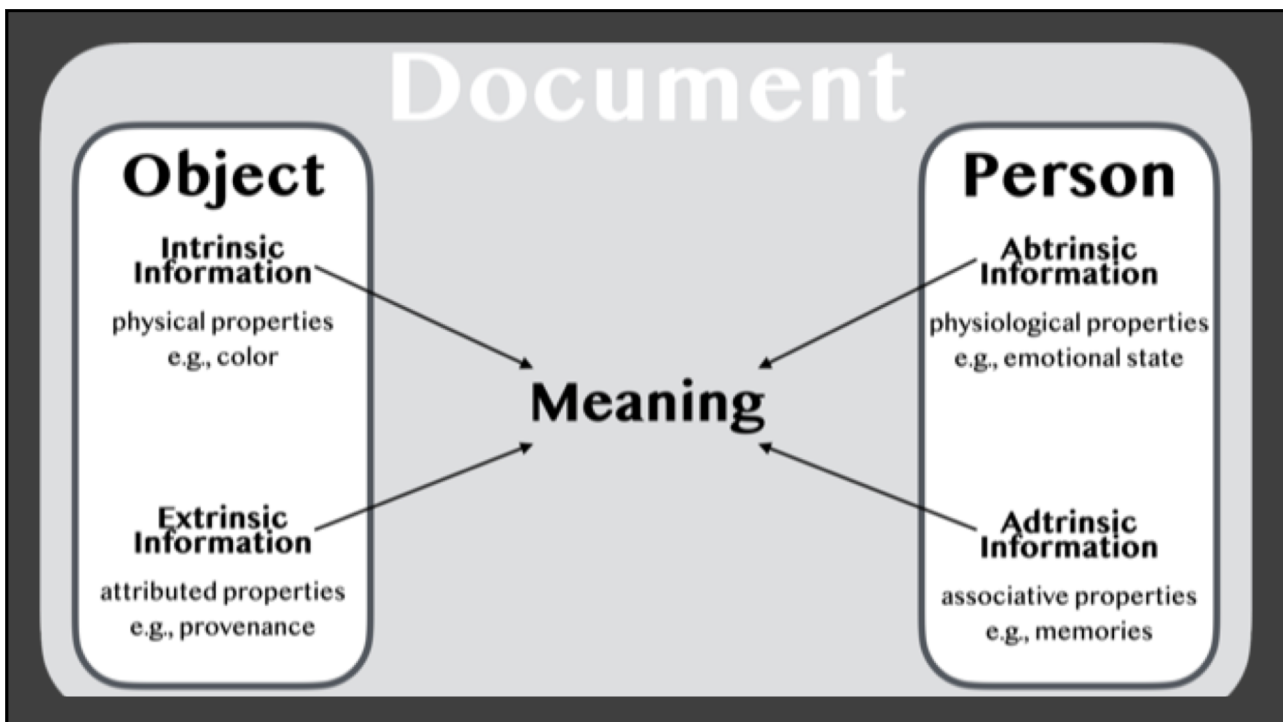
REFLECTIONS ON TURNS

Going forward, what turns might animate LIS next? Perhaps an animal turn, that explored information phenomena between humans and animals, as well as within animal species? Or maybe a family turn, which recognizes the family as the ultimate information resource and system? Rather than Turn, Turn, Turn, as the folk song goes, the Conceptions of Library and Information Science conference is the setting for LIS to **RETURN** (to our roots), **TURN** (to new ideas), and **DE-TURN** (replace fragmentation with unity).

Please see the full text paper in *Information Research* for additional information and references.

Gorichanaz and Latham (2016)

- “in order to understand documents, we must examine them from diverse perspectives. This has long been implicitly recognized; for instance, Lund’s (2004) framework of the document and the ensuing discourse has shown that considering a document from multiple perspectives (physical, mental and social) can lead to better understanding of that document. This points to the need for renewed consideration of these aspects (and possibly others) as a way to further documental understanding” (1117)



Analysis **AND** Synthesis

“we believe that analysis and synthesis should both be used in tandem. The four informations are analytical tools meant to ‘take apart’ a document experience. Once the whole is looked at in each of these four ways, we bring them back together to address the document experience” (Lund et.al., 2016, 7-8)

DOCAM

- The Document Academy
- annual conferences since 2003
- <http://documentacademy.org/>
- Proceedings als OA: <https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/docam/>

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