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A Document (Re)turn

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UiT The Arctic University of Norway
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

- 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.)
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object</th>
<th>Document?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Star in sky</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo of star</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone in river</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone in museum</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal in wild</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal in zoo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 document 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”
“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.”
This diagram summarizes theoretical turns that have occurred within LIS. It is based upon a paper of the same title presented at the 2010 ColS conference.
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)
“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)
References


