searching for information

what are we searching for?
overview

history and information

information and the book

opening the library

google books

reconsiderations

cycling around
history and information

**economic historians**
"the technology and culture of access to information"
--Joel Mokyr, Riches of Athena, 2002

Alfred Chandler & James Cortada,
A Nation Transformed by Information, 2002
history and information

cultural historians

"every age was an age of information, each in its own way ... hearsay did not satisfy Parisians with their powerful appetite for information"--Robert Darnton, "An Early Information Society," 2000

"coping with information overload, ca 1550-1700" --Ann Blair, 2003
"The search for information... the central experience of life in the bazaar"
--Clifford Geertz,
"The Bazaar Economy Information and Search in Peasant Marketing," 1978

dissenting voice
modus operandi vs opus operatum
--Pierre Bourdieu,
Outline of a Theory of Practice, 1977

(anthropologists, too)
fighting presentism

examining "what early modern people--rather
than the present author and his readers--
considered to be knowledge. ... A history of
concepts ... is an indispensable part of
this enterprise ... changes in the meaning
of older terms ... social contexts ...
original associations."

--Peter Burke, *The Sociology of Knowledge*,
2000
hold 'em and fold 'em?

"we will use the term 'information' ... relatively 'raw,' specific and practical, while 'knowledge' denotes what has been 'cooked,' processed, or systematized by thought ..."

"Librarians ... brought information to the notice of their colleagues...."

"Oldenburg...[noted] information coming into London."

--Burke, *The Sociology of Knowledge*
what Oldenberg noted

"Relations ... Collections ... Reports ... Instructions ... Essays ... Extracts ... Entries ... Monthly Advices ... Enlargements of our Philosophical Correspondencies .... many particulars ... ingenuities ... Observations, Experiments and Inventions."

--Oldenburg, *Philosophical Transactions*, 1666–7
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presentism to determinism

"The need for readily available information, which had been steadily rising, was accelerated by the advent of Christianity. ..."

"The need to find information more rapidly than is possible in a papyrus-roll-form book initiated the development of the Greco-Roman codex in the second century ..."

history of information: punctuated evolution

futurism?

a new kind of library

"the Internet ... is a library"
--Frances Cairncross, 
The Death of Distance, 1997

"the web is a global library produced by millions of people"
--Yochai Benkler, 
The Wealth of Networks, 2006
what kind of library?

"The Internet is a library with all the books on the floor."

*Librarian's Guide to Cyber Space*
new libraries, new tools

the birth of grep

The next morning I [Doug McIlroy] found a note in my mail announcing a program named grep. It worked like charm. When asked what that funny name meant, Ken [Thompson] said it was obvious. It stood for the editor command that it simulated, g/re/p (global regular expression print). ... The date given for the creation of grep is March 3, 1973, following the creation of pipes -- Netizens: An anthology: 1996
new libraries, old tools?

1988, WAIS
1990, Archie
1992, Veronica (Gopher)
1994, Lycos
1995, Alta Vista, Yahoo
1996, Inktomi
1997, Ask Jeeves
1998, Google
a long tradition
yet another hierarchical officious oracle
real change?

"To organize the world's information"
London Gazette
1666 June 18
An Advertisement.
Being daily prest to the Publication of Books, Medicines, and other things, not properly the business of a paper of Intelligence. This is to notifie once and for all, that we will not charge the Gazette with Advertisements, unless they be matter of State.
old claims

"In 1993, 1.5% of web servers were on .com domains. This number grew to over 60% in 1997. At the same time, search engines have migrated from the academic domain to the commercial. Up until now most search engine development has gone on at companies with little publication of technical details. This causes search engine technology to remain largely a black art and to be advertising oriented. ... we have a strong goal to push more development and understanding into the academic realm."
old claims

"In 1993, 1.5% of web servers were on .com domains. This number grew to over 60% in 1997. At the same time, search engines have migrated from the academic domain to the commercial. Up until now most search engine development has gone on at companies with little publication of technical details. This causes search engine technology to remain largely a black art and to be advertising oriented. ... we have a strong goal to push more development and understanding into the academic realm."
[Page & Brin]"dreamed of making the incredible breadth of information that librarians so lovingly organize searchable online."
Photography applied to Catalogues of Books.—May not photography be usefully applied to the making of catalogues of large libraries? It would seem no difficult matter to obtain any number of photographs, of any required size, of the title-page of any book. Suppose the plan adopted, that five photographs of each were taken; they may be arranged in five catalogues, as follows: —Era, subject, country, author, title. These being arranged alphabetically, would form five catalogues of a library probably sufficient to meet the wants of all. Any number of additional divisions may be added. By adopting a fixed breadth—say three inches—for the photographs, to be pasted in double columns in folio, interchanges may take place of those unerring slips, and thus librarians aid each other. I throw out this crude idea, in the hope that photographers and librarians may combine to carry it out. Albert Blor, LL.D.

Dublin.

Photographic Copies of Ancient Manuscripts.— Might not photography be well employed in making fac-similes of valuable, rare, and especially of unique ancient manuscripts? If copies of such manuscripts could be multiplied at a moderate price, there are many proprietors of libraries would be glad to enrich them by what, for all purposes of reference, would answer equally well with the originals.

A.

[This subject, which has already been touched upon in our columns, has not yet received the attention it deserves. We have now before us a photographic copy of a folio page of a M.S. of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, on which are inscribed a number of charters; and, although the copy is reduced so as to be but about 2 inches high and 1 1/2 broad, it is perfectly

Notes & Queries, 1854, 1855

Cofl-Search 22
"The external make-up of a book, its format and the personality of its author are unimportant provided that its substance, its sources of information and its conclusion are preserved and can be made an integral part of the organization of knowledge, an impersonal work, created by the efforts of all ... to strip each article or each chapter in a book of whatever is a matter of fine language or repetition or padding and to collect separately on cards whatever is new and adds to knowledge."

Paul Otlet, "Something about bibliography," 1893
immaterial

"A book—or, for clarity's sake, let's say a work of literature—is impervious to the constraints of its physical medium. ... every instance of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" is identical. Whether you read it in a cheap paperback or a first edition, on a computer monitor, an e-reader, or in Yeats' own handwriting, it's the same poem."

--Jim Lewis, *Slate* Oct 2010
Bezos calls the Kindle a response to “the failings of a physical book.” He told attendees of a technology conference in New York: “I’m grumpy when I’m forced to read a physical book because it’s not as convenient. Turning the pages . . . the book is always flopping itself shut at the wrong moment.” His conclusion? “It’s had a great five-hundred-year run . . . but it’s time to change.”

<http://bostonreview.net/BR35.6/roychoudhuri.php>
more frustration

On Newsstands Now
Issue 11.02 | February 2003

VIEW

Any Text. Anytime. Anywhere. (Any Volunteers?)

The mechanics of a universal library are simple. The tricky part: harnessing the free labor.

By J. Bradford DeLong

It's a bad day in the stacks.

I go three for seven: three books found, one that should be there but isn't, one recorded lost, and one checked out that will have to be recalled. The seventh is the one I really want: QB54.C661. There's no copy in UC Berkeley's main Doe Library stacks - it's shelved in the Math Library. The Math copy is not where it's supposed to be, but the catalog claims there are two copies on the shelves in Moffitt. Then time's up. It will be 64 hours before I get another crack at tracking down Appendix D of Carl Sagan, ed., Communication With Extraterrestrial Intelligence.

And that's after two hours doing very low grade work: looking up call numbers, wandering down corridors, waiting for the crowds to clear out between the compact movable stacks so I can get at the shelves without crushing grad students in the next aisle. Knowledge revolution, indeed.

So why can't I just call up the text on my computer screen? Where is my universal online library?

In 1971, Michael Hart asked himself the same question, and started Project Gutenberg with the goal of making every single text ever written freely accessible. From a worldwide cost-benefit standpoint, Project Gutenberg is a no-brainer. Sure, it'll cost $750 million in volunteer time (if the typists are in the United States - just $50 million if they're in India), but some 1 million book titles could be called up anytime anywhere from anything with an Internet connection. We're talking 10 cents per person, or less, to create the universal
benkler's dozen

open source cultural projects

- clickworks
- SETI
- gutenberg
- eureka
- openlaw
- academic
  enterprise
- google
- open
- directory
- ginsparg
- wikipedia
- slashdot
- mozilla
- OED (Lessig)
benefits of openness

"Peer production may outperform market-based production in some information production activities" ... the rise of effective, large-scale cooperative efforts .. beyond [core software platforms] ... encyclopedias, to news and commentary, to immersive entertainment".

"the point here is qualitative. It is not ... that more people can participate in production .... [but] that the widely distributed model of information production will better identify who is the best person to produce a specific modular component."

--Benkler, "Coase's Penguin"
benefits of openness

graham's law

“The method of ensuring quality” in peer production is “Darwinian ... People just produce whatever they want; the good stuff spreads, and the bad gets ignored.”

--Paul Graham
Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length **truth will out**.

Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*

And though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play on the earth, so **Truth be in the field**, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; **who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?**

Milton, *Areopagitica*
Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

Shakespeare, Merchant of Venice

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Milton, Areopagitica
open source as metaphor?

the wisdom of crowds

a liquidity trap?

material matters

"Don't break the build" --FreeBSD
crowd-sourcing
crowd-sourcing

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY, GENTLEMAN.

By Laurence Sterne

(two lines in Greek)
crowd-sourcing

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY, GENTLEMAN.

By Laurence Sterne

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY, GENT.—VOLUME THE FIRST

(two lines in Greek)
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cycling around
What's the goal of this project?
The Library Project's aim is simple: make it easier for people to find relevant books
[http://books.google.com/googlebooks/library.html]

"we'll scan them all"

"we went to the libraries because that's where the information is"

"artificial impediments"

"what's metadata; we've got algorithms"

"we read books too"
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"what's metadata; we've got algorithms"

"we read books too"
Google's Book Search: A Disaster for Scholars

By Geoffrey Nunberg

Whether the Google books settlement passes muster with the U.S. District Court and the Justice Department, Google's book search is clearly on track to becoming the world's largest digital library. No less important, it is also almost certain to be the last one. Google's five-year head start and its relationships with libraries and publishers give it an effective monopoly. No competitor will be able to come after it on the same scale. Nor is technology going to lower the cost of entry. Scanning will always be an expensive, labor-intensive project. Of course, 50 or 100 years from now control of the collection may pass from Google to somebody else—Elsevier, Unesco, Wal-Mart. But it's safe to assume that the digitized books that scholars will be working with then will be the very same ones that are sitting on Google's servers today, augmented by the millions of titles published in the interim.
trainwreck
Cofl-Search

trainwreck

The Chronicle Review

Google's Book Search: A Disaster for Scholars

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Hydriotaphia: urne-buriall, or a discourse of the sepulchral urnes lately ...

by Sir Thomas Browne, Bruce Rogers - Gardening - 1907 - 54 pages

Full view - About this book - Add to my library - More editions

The merchant of Venice

by Christopher Rice, William Shakespeare - Foreign Language Study - 2007 - 72 pages

No preview available - About this book - Add to my library - More editions
Google's Book Search: A Disaster for Scholars

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Madame Bovary By Henry James

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by Bruce Rogers, Houghton Mifflin Company - Dummies (Bookselling) - 1937 - 13 pages
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trainwreck
before my time
assuming structure
complaints

"bibliographical fastidiousness"

"snowfall in Mammoth"

"that's the libraries' fault"

"ranting"

"it will improve"
looking for improvement
looking for improvement
looking for improvement

1. vol 1; 1792; how many? where's #2?
2. all vols $0.99
3. all vols $2.51
4. vol 2, 1762, how many? where?
6. 1893 edition - defective
7. 1760 edition. book 2
8. 1895. vol 2
9. 1804 vols 1 & 2 of 4 vol
10. 1893 defective
looking for improvement

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2. all vols $0.99

The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman

by Laurence Sterne

Electronically Developed by MobileReference

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF TRISTRAM SHANDY
GENT.--VOLUME THE FIRST

(two lines in Greek)

To the Right Honourable Mr. Pitt.

Sir,

10. 1893 defective
looking for improvement

1. vol 1; 1792; how many? where's #2?

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6. 1893 edition - defective

7. 1760 edition. book 2

8. 1895. vol 2

9. 1804 vols 1 & 2 of 4 vol

10. 1893 defective
And the huntsman is myself, and she will give me a glance of her eyes that I may understand. And when she comes, my heart knows all, and no longer beats like a heart, but rings as a bell. I lay my hand on her.

“Tie my shoe-string,” she says, with flushed cheeks. . . .”

The sun dips down into the sea and rises again, red and refreshed, as if it had been to drink. And the air is full of whisperings.
And the huntsman is myself, and she will give me a glance of her eyes that I may understand. And when she comes, my heart knows all, and no longer beats like a heart, but rings as a bell. I lay my hand on her.

“Tie my shoe-string,” she says, with flushed cheeks.

The sun dips down into the sea and rises again, red and refreshed, as if it had been to drink. And the air is full of whisperings.
The hunter, that’s me, and she will give me a sign with her eyes to make me understand. And when she comes my heart understands all, and it no longer beats, it peals. And she is naked under her dress from head to foot, and I lay my hand upon her.

Tie my shoelace! she says with flaming cheeks. And a little later she whispers directly against my mouth, against my lips, Oh, you’re not tying my shoelace, sweetheart, you’re not tying . . . not tying my . . .

But the sun dips its disk into the sea and then rises again, red, renewed, as if it has been down to drink. And the air is full of whisperings.

An hour later she says against my mouth, Now I must leave you.
forward to the past

the majority of errors in Tristram Shandy "originate in some popular nineteenth-century edition"

--R.C. Bald

Pan:
Translated from the Norwegian of Knut Hamsun
by W. W. Worster
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927
   Buy: $0.00
   Auto-delivered wirelessly
   ★★★★★ (2)

2. The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman by Laurence Sterne (mobi) by Laurence Sterne (Kindle Edition - May 6, 2009) - Kindle eBook
   Buy: $0.99
   Auto-delivered wirelessly
   ★★★★★ (72)

   Buy: $0.99
   Auto-delivered wirelessly
   ★★★★☆ (1)

   Buy: $10.99
   Auto-delivered wirelessly

5. Works of Laurence Sterne. The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman, A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy, A Political Romance, ... and various letters (Mobi Collected Works) by Laurence Sterne (Kindle Edition - May 6, 2009) - Kindle eBook
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"walled gardens" TBL
wikimedia
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liberation

"information wants to be free"
freedom through technology

constraint

information needs to be constrained?

books contain information

vs books produce information
contrasting narratives?

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constraint
a cyclical account
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conduit metaphors

embedding & disembedding
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"Institutions develop social impulses ... the drive to innovate and the opposite drive to resist innovation ... sooner or later congeal and become obstacles."

Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge*, 2000

"time binding" and "space binding"
Harold Innis, *Empire and Communications*, 1950

"The oscillation of information industries between open and closed"

Tim Wu, *The Master Switch: The Rise and Fall of Information Empires*, 2010
If the wise man or any other man wants to distinguish the true physician from the false, how will he proceed? .... He will consider whether what [the physician] says is true, and whether what he does is right, in relation to health and disease?

... But can any one attain the knowledge of either unless he have a knowledge of medicine? ... No one at all, it would seem, except the physician can have this knowledge; and therefore not the wise man; he would have to be a physician as well as a wise man.

--Plato, *Charmides*
what are we searching for?

... authority?

Christianity
monastic copying, Carolingian minuscule

Islam
"the golden chain"

Byzantium
the university

China
the National Academy

general government control
copyright; stationers ...
nullus in verba

"Men did generally think, that no man was fit to meddle in matters of this consequence, but he that had bred himself up in a long course of Discipline for that purpose; that had the habit, the gesture, the look of a Philosopher. Whereas experience on the contrary tells us, that greater things are produc'd, by the free way, than the formal."

-Thomas Sprat, History of the Royal Society, 1667
going closed?

(1) Numb. 1.

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going closed?

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For the Months of January, Feb. March and April, 1720.

The Contents.


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III. De Pestis Constantinopolii gradante. Authore suprerno V. Cl. Emanuele Timone, M. D. Hoc scriptum ab Authore Clarissimo, qui Constantinopoli per multos annos Medicinam fecerat, Excellentissimo Aegregato Britannico, Roberto Sutton, Eq. Aurate, traditum, ejusdem Equitis permisi, cum Societate Regia communicavit idem R. Hale, M. D.

IV. An Account of a Luminous Appearance in the Air, seen at Dublin on January the 12th, 1720. By Philip Percival, Esq; Brother to the Right Honourable the Lord Percival, F. R. S. and communicated by his Lordship to the Royal Society.

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A Relation of a very odd Monstrous Calf. Of a peculiar Lead-Ore in Germany, very useful for Essays. Of an Hungarian Bolus, of the same effect with the Bolus Armenus. Of the New American Whale, fishing about the Bermudas. A Narrative concerning the Success of the Pendulum-watches at Sea for the Longitudes; and the Grant of a Patent thereupon. A Catalogue of the Philosophical Books published by Monsieur de Fermat, Counsellour de Tholouse. Intersmall.
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V. Of the Infinity of the Sphere of Fix'd Stars. By Edmund Halley, L. L. D. R. S. S.

VI. Of the Number, Order, and Light of the Fix'd Stars. By the same.

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IX. A Discourse concerning a Method of discovering the Virtues of Plants by their External Structure. By the same.

X. An Account of a Book, Entituled, Geometria Organica, five Decriptio Linearum Curvarum Universalis. Autore Colino Mac Laurin, Mathematicos in Collegio Novo Abredonensi Professor, & R. S. S.
circling libraries

- Smirke, British Museum Reading Room, 1851
- Pelz/Casey Reading Room, LOC, ca 1898
- Labrouste, Bibliothèque Nationale 1868
- Asplund, Stockholm City Library, 1928
institutions of the enlightenment

collection to selection

evercyclopaedias
dictionaries
trésors

scholarly editions
fourth estate
university reborn
going open again
open again

French Revolution's new science
"plea for liberty in science and equity for the unrecognized genius" --Gachet

"popular medicine infinitely preferable to, and more certain than, all the often erroneous practices of our physicians"

Nouveau Plan ... pour la Médecine en France,
1790
Thomsonian revolution

"medicine, like every useful science should be thrown open to the observation and study of all ... We should at once explode the whole machinery of mystification and concealment--wigs, gold canes, and the gibberish of prescriptions--which serve but as a cloak to ignorance and legalized murder!"

New York Evening Star 1833
“It has long been considered a practicable scheme for any barrister and bookseller who unite together with a view to notoriety or profit, to add to the existing list of law reports ... indiscriminately reporting cases ... the enormous mass of constantly accumulating materials ... these evils ... attributable to .. the multiplication of contemporaneous Reports ... has arisen from applying the principle of competition to correct the evils of prolixity, delay, and expense incident to the system of authorized reporting. ... new evils created ... confusion and uncertainty in the law producing perplexity in the administration of justice.

-- W.T.S. Daniel, History and Origin of Law Reports, 1884
what are we searching for?

information
authority
context
institutions?
vital
sclerotic
going open