Quantity & quality

Brown & Duguid

Shannon & Weaver

autonomy & authenticity

next week's reading/assignment
a warning about the revolutionary fervor of many internet enthusiasts ... to view any claims about the internet (or really, anything) 'changing *everything* completely' with a great deal of skepticism ... Much about the world is the same now as it was before the 'information age' began.

—Ross
"The amount of information is defined, in the simplest cases, to be measured by the logarithm of the number of available choices."
— Warren Weaver, 1949
"The word *communication* will be used here in a very broad sense to include all of the procedures by which one mind may affect another ... not only written and oral speech, but also music, the pictorial arts, the theatre, the ballet .... a still broader definition ... the procedures by means of which one mechanism (say automated equipment to track an airplane and to compute its future positions) affects other mechanisms (say a guided missile chasing this airplane."

— Warren Weaver, 1949
"I do not, like a jure divino Tyrant, imagine that [readers] are my slaves."

—Henry Fielding, 1749

Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 1979

Beninger, *The Control Revolution*, 1986

Yates, *Control through Communication*, 1989

contra

"The word information, in this theory, is used in a very special sense that must not be confused with its ordinary usage. In particular, information must not be confused with meaning."

"Shannon has just written a paper on the design of a computer which would be capable of playing a skillful game of chess. And it is of further direct pertinence to the present contention that this paper closes with the remark that either one must say that such a computer "thinks," or one must substantially modify the conventional implication of the verb "to think" — Warren Weaver, 1949"
[the belief that] "content is a noble substance .. indifferent to the transformation of its vehicles."
- Geoff

autonomy

"information wants to be free"
"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 ... the ideal ... would be 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, 1934
"When we run over our libraries persuaded of these principles, what havoc must we make? If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."

David Hume, 1777
"It will be like a great cadastral of learning, in which all elements in knowledge will be reported and recorded day by day ... The old form of books will no longer be maintained; they must give way before the abundance and variety of matter"

— Paul Otlet, 1934

"tree flakes encased in dead cow ... all that's solid melts to air."

— Bill Mitchell, 1997
"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"
— T.S. Eliot, 1934
The social process is really one indivisible whole. Out of its great stream the classifying hand of the investigator artificially extracts economic facts.

—Schumpeter, 1951

"There are no isolated facts unless someone has created them"

— Ilkka Tuomi, 1999
"Newly created information is stored in four physical media – print, film, magnetic and optical"

– Varian & Lyman

"I gave twenty or thirty Copies of it about among the Neighbours, which made it as publick as if I had printed it"

– Daniel Defoe, 1722

"When people refer to the amount of information ... they are talking about ... published documents"

– Geoff
"a lot of the problems of bad information out there, things that you don't like, are problems with humanity.... What happened with blogs and with wikis, these editable web spaces, was that they became much more simple. ...[T]here's a certain ethos within the blogging community, you always point to your source, you point all the way back to the original article. If you're looking at something and you don't know where it comes from, if there's no pointer to the source, you can ignore it. —-TBL

The Deadly Bigotry of Low Expectations?
Did the rumor will help kill Katrina victims?

Matt Welch

All along Hurricane Katrina’s Evacuation Belt, in cities from Houston to Baton Rouge to Leesville, Louisiana, the exact same rumors are spreading faster than red ants at a picnic. The refugees from the United States’ worst-ever natural disaster, it is repeatedly said, are bringing with them the worst of New Orleans’ now-notorious lawlessness: looting, armed carjacking, and even the rape of children.

"By Thursday," the Chicago Tribune’s Howard Witt reported, "local TV and radio stations in Baton Rouge...were breezily passing along reports of cars being hijacked at gunpoint by New Orleans refugees, riots breaking out in the shelters set up in Baton Rouge to house the displaced, and guns and knives being seized."

The only problem—none of the reports were true. "The police, for example, confiscated a single knife from a refugee in one Baton Rouge shelter," Witt reported. "There were no riots in Baton Rouge. There were no armed hordes." Yet the panic was enough for Baton Rouge Mayor-President Kip Holden to impose a curfew on the city’s largest shelter, and to warn darkly about "New Orleans thugs."

Even before evacuees could get comfy in Houston’s Astrodome, rumors were flying that the refugees had already raped their first victim, just like that seven-year-old in the Superdome, or the babies in the Convention Center who got their throats slit. Not only was the Astrodome rape invented out of whole cloth, so, perhaps was the case reported ‘round the globe of at least one prepubescent being raped and murdered in New Orleans’ iconic sports arena.

"We don't have any substantiated rapes," New Orleans Police superintendent Edwin Compass said yesterday, according to the Guardian. "We will investigate if the individuals come forward." The British paper further pointed out that, "While rape claims have hormoned, no autopsy, remains, or convicted refugees..."
authentic, a. (and n.)

A. adj.

†1. a. Of authority, authoritative (properly as possessing original or inherent authority, but also as duly authorized); entitled to obedience or respect. Obs.

1340 HAMPOLE Pr. Consc. 7116 Saint Austyn. Whase wordes er auctentyke. 1382 WYCLIF Isa. Prol., No goostli vndurstondyng is autentik, no but it be groundid in the text opynli. a1420 HOCCLEVE De Reg. Princ. 125 The bible, Whiche is a booke autentyke and credible. 1595 CHAPMAN Banq. Sence (1639) 31 Let autentique Reason be our guide. 1630 NAUNTON Fragm. Reg. (Arb.) 62 We have an authentique Rule to decide the doubt. 1682 NORRIS Hierocles 20 To esteem their Sentences as authentick as Laws. 1724 SWIFT Drapier's Lett. Wks. 1755 V. ii. 105 Some short plain authentick tract might be published for the information both of petty and grand-juries. 1849 FITZGERALD tr. Whitaker's Disput. 332 That is called authentic, which is sufficient to itself, which commends, sustains, proves itself, and hath credit and authority from itself.
classical matters

Epimenides
Perfect Diurnall, True Relation, Faithfull Scout

Ovid
"ars celare artem"

the role & dilemma of institutions

authenticity
authenticity & quality

Memos on Bush Are Fake but Accurate, Typist Says

By THE NEW YORK TIMES
Published: September 15, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Bush, George W. 1st Lt. 3244714FG Suspension of flight status

1. On this date I ordered that 1st Lt. Bush be suspended from flight status due to failure to perform to USAF/TextANG standards and failure to meet annual physical examination (flight) as ordered.

2. I conveyed my verbal orders to commander, 147 th FTR Intreg Op with request for orders for suspension and convening of a flight review board IAW AFM. 35-13.

3. I recommended transfer of this officer to the 9921 st Air Reserve Squadron in May and forwarded his AF Form 1288 to 147 th FTR Intreg Op headquarters. The transfer was not allowed. Officer has made no attempt to meet his training certification or flight physical. Officer expresses desire to transfer out of state including assignment to non-flying billets.

4. On recommendation of Harris, I also suggested that we fill this critical billet with a more seasoned pilot from the list of qualified Vietnam pilots that have retired. Recommendations were received but not confirmed.

[Signature]

JERRY R. KELLIAN
Lt. Colonel
authentic but rotten

authenticity

'Game virus' bites mobile phones

A mobile phone "virus" inside a pirated copy of a game called Mosquitos is roaming file-sharing and software download sites, say security experts.

Confusion caused

But, confusingly, it has emerged that the Trojan was in fact not added by the group that pirated the game.

"When we first saw this we were confused ourselves," Mikko Hypponen head of anti-virus research at F-Secure told BBC News Online.

"We initially thought it was a game which had been hacked with a secret program that sent out text messages. But after analysing it, it seems to be an integral part of the game."

The company that made the original legitimate Mosquito game, Ojom, said it had installed the program itself in earlier versions of the title after concerns over piracy.