

History of Information

early history of the word
restricted uses
opening up & counting
too much information



your information

"not of an age, but for all time"



"On an average weekday, the New York Times contains more information than any contemporary of Shakespeare's would have acquired in a lifetime"

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how much information?

how much information?

King James Bible, c 1611: 0



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King James Bible, c 1611: 0

Shakespeare, 1564-1616: 2

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"this is one Lucio's information against me"

Measure for Measure

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Measure for Measure

"But reason with the fellow Before you punish him, where he heard this, Lest you shall chance to whip your information And beat the messenger who bids beware."

Coriolanus

how much information?

King James Bible, c 1611:0

Shakespeare, 1564-1616: 2

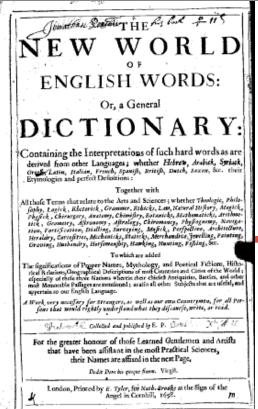
"this is one Lucio's information against me"

Measure for Measure

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Coriolanus





into the language

hard words

Information, (lat.) an informing, telling, or making known.

Information, (lat.) an informing, to ling, nor making known.

Information non fam, a formal answer made by an Atturny, that is command by the Court to say what he thinks go in defence of his Client, whereby he deemed to leave his Client undefende and so judgement passets for the advergance.

Informatus non sum, a formal answer, made by an Atturny, that is commanded by the Court to say what he thinks good in defence of his Client

Edward Philips, The New World of English
Words, 1658





"go to the poets"

17th to 18th century

John Milton (1608-1674) 0

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) 1

John Dryden (1631-1700) 2

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) 6

Daniel Defoe (1660?-1731) 20

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) 28



whose information?

"Dacier observes that this is added by Homer not for our information, for we already know it"

Alexander Pope, Odyssey, 1725-26



whose information?

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"a difference that makes a difference" **Gregory Bateson**, 1979



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"a difference that makes a difference" **Gregory Bateson**, 1979

"Who wants yesterday's papers" Rolling Stones, 1967



new word, new world

a few years later ...

he received information information was given to having received information he procured good information he gave information information he had received Clinton then received information a letter, giving information Jedidiah Morse, The History of America, HPhiladelphia, 1795



how much information?



"how much information"

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How Much Information?

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"how much information?"



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Advanced Coarch

"how much information"

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"How much information would we not be deprived of if there was no night?"
--Sturm, 1791
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"These early extracts ... show how much information he derived from this excellent writer."

--Biographical Dictionary, 1798
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"How much ingenuity might be displayed, and how much information communicated by a professor." Clarke, 1796

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GREELEY'S TRAVELS IN EUROPE.—GLANCE OAT EUROPE: In a series of Letters from GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, ITALY, &c. By HORACE GREE LEY. Octavo, cloth; price, one dollar. This volume comprises the observations made during Mr. Greeley's recent European tour, on Society, Manners and Customs, Art, Literature, Agriculture, Foreign Politics, and a great variety of other attractive and exciting topics.

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counting





old fears

who said and when?

"It will soon be the employment of a lifetime merely to learn [books'] names. Many a man of passable information at the present day reads scarcely anything but reviews, and before long, a man of erudition will be little better than a mere walking catalogue."



old fears

who said and when?

"Even for studies, where expenditure is most honorable, [developing large libraries] is justifiable only so long as it is kept within bounds. What is the use of having countless books, and libraries whose mere titles their owners can scarcely read through in a whole life time?"



what did it?

printing books libraries

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to begin at the beginning

Thamus replied: O most ingenious Theuth, the parent or inventor of an art is not always the best judge of the utility or inutility of his own inventions ... this discovery of yours will create forgetfulness in the learners' souls, because they will not use their memories; they will trust to the external written characters and not remember of themselves. The specific which you have discovered is an aid not to memory, but to reminiscence, and you give your disciples not truth, but only the semblance of truth; they will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing; they will be tiresome company, having the show of wisdom without the reality."

(Plato, Phaedrus)

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