Joining conceptual approaches to foster Media and Information Literacy

Putting principles to work for online information access

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MIL and search engines

• Information literacy *versus* Media literacy concepts
• The technological turn *vs* the practice turn
• A specific case: web search engines
Concepts: Information

Information as an intermediate state between data and knowledge

- **Data**
  - Observations, measurements
  - facts

- **Information**
  - Organized set of data
  - Data + relations

- **Knowledge**
  - Understanding
  - links
  - appropriation

Information as a social process

- **Environment**
  - Social settings
  - Mediating institutions

- **(Non-)Access**
  - Technological infrastructures
  - Information horizons

- **(Non-)Use**
  - Cultural discourses
  - Informed citizens

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Concepts

Information literacy
• Information need
• Information sources
• Relevance
  – Information quality
  – Content matching with need

Media education
• role and functioning of media
• editorial policy
• audience
• attention
• transparency
Technological turn vs practice turn

• Information and communication technologies (ICT)
  – Not new: books are ICT
    • Organize readable texts for action (Anderson, 1988)
  – Mediated communication, computerized media

• Practice turn in social sciences
  – User instructions embedded in ICT vs actual users practices
  – Appropriation by users in their activities
Information access

• Settings ("dispositifs", Michel Foucault)
  – Spaces of relations and power playground
• Actor-network theory
  – Actors, actants, enrolment, spokesperson (Bruno Latour)
Information access

– Web search engines success
  • Easy to use
  • Quick
  • Give results to any query

– Training to search engine use
  • How to formulate a query : obsolete
  • How to « read » results ?
MIL for web search engines training

• Search engines as media:
  – An editorial policy
    • Selection, information processing, results presentation (snippets)
    • Suggesting queries
  – Economic interests for users’ tracking
    • not answering to user needs but satisfying their audience
  – Transparency vs « black boxes »
    • Clear interfaces vs opaque functioning (trade secrets)
  – Spaces for interaction
    • Search engine marketing
    • Google bombing
MIL for web search engines training

• Search engines are not neutral “tools”
  – For users
    • Thinking by keywords is not natural
      – Language barriers
    • Reading search engine results pages (SERP)
      – Understanding why such results
      – Less and less user power to specify their needs
    – Not simply giving answers, creating attachment (audience loyalty)

• Mediated access to information
  • Efficiency : easy and quick
  • Performance : what is produced in mediated relations
Media and Information Literacy

• Joigning concepts of both fields can enhance education
  • asking questions is the first step to knowledge
  • Access to information is not (only) about “information needs”

• MIL :
  – giving the flavour to know
  – giving the concepts to think
Thank you for your attention and for your questions

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