

The Future Of Text



Frode Hegland

interactivity

Information is what connects us to the world and others.
It is what 'informs' us.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

...we seem to be worse off than ever before - for we can enormously extend the record, yet even in its present bulk we can hardly consult it.

Vannevar Bush, 1945

SOLUTION STATEMENT

We need to be able to interact with the information in more efficient ways, more liquid ways, to increase our understanding.

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~~It was written~~

We need to overcome our 'worship' of the written word and engage with it.

It is written

Writing is not a linear process.

Why should reading be?



Information

From the late 14 Century, “act of informing”

From Latin informationem “outline, concept, idea”

Inform

Early 14c., “to train or instruct in some specific subject”

From Latin informare “to shape, form,” from in- “into”

Data

1640s, plural of datum, from Latin. datum “(thing) given,” neuter pp. of dare “to give”.

Date

“time,” early 14c.,

Latin *datus* “given,” past participle of *dare* “to give, grant, offer,” from Proto-Indo-European root *do-* “to give”

The Roman convention of closing every article of correspondence by writing “given” and the day and month meaning perhaps “given to messenger” led to *data* becoming a term for “the time (and place) stated.”

Texture

from Middle French, from Classical Latin *textura* “web, texture, structure,” from stem of *texere* “to weave,”
*from Proto-Indo-European base *tek- "to make"*.

Textile

from stem of *texere* “to weave,”
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Text

from classical Latin *textus* “style or texture of a work,”
literally “thing woven,” from past participle stem of
texere “to weave,”
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Interaction

with **What?**

Interaction

with Symbols

primarily text, but not exclusively

Why symbols are important

Working Memory:

7 items +/-2

Input:

We can perceive about 12,000,000 bits/second:

10,000,000 - vision

1,000,000 - touch

1,000,000 - other senses

16 - consciousness

“Symbols are the Trojan horses by which we smuggle bits into our consciousness.”

Tor Norretranders

Why symbols are important

The written word is a
fundamental unit of
knowledge with huge
inherent interactivity
potential. *that's the big idea*

interaction

Immediacy & Speed of interaction

Not just a qualitative difference, a quantitative difference.

“The movie, by sheer speeding up of the mechanical, carried us from the world of sequence and connections into the world of creative configurations and structure.”

Marshall McLuhan

Digital interaction is something new,
not just a faster reference book lookup.

liquid interaction

From Latin *liquidus* “fluid,” figuratively “flowing, continuing,”

From Proto-Indo-European *wleik-* “to flow, run”

(not about being wet!)

state of the art

word processor Spell check is only major innovation in the last 20 years.

email Attachments is only major innovation in the last 40 years.

web browser The biggest barrier between the human brain and the largest collection of knowledge ever assembled.

eReaders Are you kidding? You can't even copy in most of them.

what I'm doing



Liquid OS X
INTERACTIVE TEXT

Command-C

what I'm doing



Liquid OS X
INTERACTIVE TEXT

Command-@

demo

British Library

مرحبا

\$500

Hello

future : input & output

Eye

Hand

Ear

Nose

in closing

Some say information wants to be free.

The reality is that power of information comes from the fact that information is interaction - information on its own is dead and useless and in a very real sense not information at all.

When information is freed, when information flows, it is we who become free.

in closing

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