

Google it!

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Abstract

In this paper I describe the possibilities and impossibilities on finding and extracting information. I will also discuss the style of writing in subjective manner in comparison with academic dispassionate style of writing.

Author Keywords

Google, information retrieval, Wikipedia, academic writing, publications.

ACM Classification Keywords

H5.m. : Miscellaneous.

Introduction

In this paper I'm going to talk about the necessity of this paper and the difficulty of finding relevant information to back my conclusions. I will also touch on the delicate subject on finding information on the internet, which I find to be fast and effective way of finding reliable information and the paranoia that most scholars have on the reliability of that. Like for this paper I can find many academic white papers, but cannot access them. For example, this text, "Why is it difficult to find comprehensive information? Implications of information scatter for search and design: Research Articles", by S.K. Bhavnani, it took me almost 30 minutes to find this through all sorts of portals. For this particular paper, I found the abstract on many journal portals, but none of them had the full text. Finally, I tried "googling" it, and found it immediately, by just using three keywords. Very discouraging. The whole system of writing should be reviewed by the scholars of the modern times.

Even the text that I finally recovered from the depths of the internet, did not contain information I required. The text was entitled "Why is it difficult to find comprehensive information? Implications of information scatter for search and design: Research Articles." The title is misleading however, what Bhavnani mostly discusses in this paper is how Bhavnani and Bhavnani et.al. in 2001, 2003 and 2005 researched people who were searching the internet or "googling" for information about melanoma.[1] However, I did find several blog entries describing this exact problem that I will discuss. Which I will not use, since it is considered to not to have the same value of importance as a paper reviewed by an academic. I will however implement to this paper what these articles said, but not quote them. Most of this paper will be based in my own subjective opinions, in a style not conforming to the academic format.

Finding wrong information and coping archaic systems

The main reason for writing this particular piece is that I could be talking about my project. About how predictive text recognition and sentence completion would help people with cognitive disabilities to perhaps learn the language. But for this I can only find a single paper to prove it might work, and it's only theoretical and uses sources that are 15 years old, so technology in them is outdated. This I find one of the most dominant vulnerability of the academically proven text. When the technology and people's habits are developing so fast, the texts written about them, are seriously lagging behind. At least I am much more comfortable with reading hyper-linked documentations that give you instant feeling of craving for more information rather than old-fashioned method of browsing through the bibliography and then searching for books or text you cannot find. The internet was created as a research tool and that's what it's good for. Trusting old information is just as bad as trusting false information. If I would use something that was written 15 years ago, that would be something really out of date. How would that be any better than using a blog or a forum posting or any other kind of 'untrusted' source? Checking the sources and reviewing the data on these white papers, takes a lot of time and unless it is something truly revolutionary this data might get old even before it is published. For example searching the academic databases for "old information" you will find a paper entitled "Old and new information about electroshock", by a certain U. Cerletti and dated 1950. Now I can't read the paper for a reason which I don't understand, but even by looking at the title and the date, I just know that that information is very out-dated and irrelevant to anything. Shocking mental patients with electricity has been proven inefficient ages ago, so the whole paper just exists still, because someone wrote it and a bunch of academics read and reviewed it. Update: it is actually the most effective way to cure a patient with a severe depression, I found this information on Wikipedia, which led me to finding a paper about it.[2] That just proves that without checking your facts fast, you can not be trusted. And we all know that Wikipedia can't be trusted, because someone said that people can't be trusted. But, imagine a better, more understanding world, where the scientists check the information on Wikipedia and correct it. The digital layout can be updated, and you don't even have to write another paper to do it, just edit the text and you are good to go. The digital format, that is to say, the internet, usually is not reviewed by an academic person, but everyone even a scientist can leave a comment on the internet, thus validating the information. Well, those things actually beginning to emerge from the ground. This is indeed good news. Now that the newspapers are predicted to even die, this style of writing is definitely losing popularity and new methods to publish are required. Even

as I'm revising this text, MIT has announced that it will publish all its papers free and open.

INTUITION AND WRITING AS A DESIGNER

Loanne Snavely, in her badly scanned paper discusses the value scientific writing and the peoples capabilities on reading information literacy.[3] This type of literacy can only be learned and the on-going paranoia about the reliability of web resources can be avoided by looking at the text and thinking whether it is reliable or not. Would you trust that quote or not? I can't find any citations to prove whether that statement is correct or not, but even a child (can't prove that either) can understand it to be true. Information literature, or as one of Snavely's suggestions for a new term for it is "Info'R'Ús", is intuitive much like writing an article without citations. [3] Design is a field that heavily uses intuition and does not rely on strict rules, although there are some that think design should have strict limitations. [4] Therefore should the designers writing to be constricted to a format, where the designer feels uncomfortable? The academic formats restrict the writer's freedom of expression a lot, the layout is predefined, although images can be added, they might not get published. Also having images extracted from the flow of the text and put in an appendix is hurting the appeal of reading and writing. Also writing these to a strange formats, made me notice that without Microsoft Word or some kind real layout program, you are hopelessly lost trying to fit the text into this format and several layout problems have occurred due to that, especially this Springer format that is using a template created specifically for Microsoft Word, this particular program is rarely if ever a part of a designers program-arsenal. If a designer needs to write a text he or she usually uses InDesign or Quark or any other layout program. Or as is the case many designers just open-source NeoOffice or OpenOffice, which are better suited for occasional writing than the costly Microsoft Office. Then what is a good format for designers to write in? Well, I don't think that it is to be found in the academic world. As design already balances somewhere between science, engineering and art, the balance for writing can be found from those areas as well. Artists usually don't have to back up their work by research, so they only rely on the visual/experience/emotions. Engineers write papers, same with scientists. Now how to find a balance? Interaction designers need to build a use for something the engineers have built. Usually this is done with scenarios or stories to display how a product or a service is gradually changing over time. Many times it is agreed, that video is the best solution to portray this transformation. Scientists and engineers rely on statistics to show the progress of time, because academic rarely relies on the emotional aspects of a product or a service, this sort of numerical storytelling is alright, but for a designer something else is needed. Designers should be learning storytelling as a part of their curriculum. Starting form making small comic-book kind of short stories for a product use, then moving on to video as a sketching tool and finally using animation to polish the effect of the story.

PASSIONATE ABOUT WRITING

Forced referencing, silly quotes and finding statistics to prove your point are also key elements of academic text. This is doing for the sake of doing it. Statistics prove nothing. Most people equipped with intelligence know it, they might not have the statistics to prove it, but somewhere in their heart they just know it. And now to prove my point. As I am writing this paper, half

of the class is doing the same thing. This shows the lack of interest in writing dispassionate academic, boring text. Human being is constructed in such a way, that being passionate and enthusiastic keeps the motivation level high.

If something is reduced to a mere task, it will lead to poor performance. This paper being written the way it is written, because I feel passionate about the subject. I can't write dispassionate text about something that I feel strongly about.

What if you do get passionate about academic text? No premature closures of debates, please: A response to Ahrens, by Kakkuri-Knuuttila et.al. (2008), is a response paper to someone who wrote a response paper to their previous paper. And at the time of the writing of this paper none of this has been published, or is it? This sort of writing in the future is something that I accidentally discovered, and found it very confusing. Did these papers go through a time portal?

Kakkuri-Knuuttila et.al. give a snappy response to Ahrens, because he didn't fully understand what their previous paper was about and made hasty assumptions. [5,6] This whole scientific cockfight is portraying the exact thing that could be avoided with the digital layout of information. Ahrens missed some key elements that Kakkuri-Knuuttila et.al. were trying to convey. Obviously accounting is something that has a questionable amount of interest to the normal person, but Kakkuri-Knuuttila et.al. seem to have a keen interest in making their point clear to everyone within the scientific community of their particular interest. Kakkuri-Knuuttila et.al. change their tone to an angry one, simply because someone didn't understand their point. This debate also gives hints to whether this kind of language used in making these papers conveys the essence of the point of the author or authors to their audience. Perhaps using somewhat more informal style of writing, the core of the text could have been understood in the first place, and there would have been no need to write another, just to correct someones misunderstanding.

CONCLUSION

As a designer, I feel that it is important not to use a predefined format of writing. Much information or sub-information will get lost, if the designer is not able to write in a style that suits him. White papers are good have their place in the scientific world as something that gives us new information about the world, but the disregard of subjective and unverified information, will cripple the possibilities of revealing some areas that have not been explored yet. The language used in academic papers will also hurt the information given. Using difficult structures in sentences and including unfamiliar words make the text unreadable for some. This way the academic society does not seemingly want to share their knowledge with the ordinary people. It is as though the papers have been written for a few their friends who can decipher the meaning, and even then, some of it gets lost in translation. The internet however gives the power to the people, the academics can discuss matters in their own small circle, but once and a while someone can extract the information from them and make it legible to everyone. All the information can be edited right there and on the spot, there is no need for corrective writing that has to go through various reviews, the people review the information, and edit it if necessary. This kind of interactive information sharing, should improve the academic as well the public persons knowledge base to a better and more understandable level,

while providing easy access. In my experience, as a storyteller by motion graphic designer and now a storyteller by interaction designer it is my opinion that storytelling should be integrated into interaction design programmes. To envision a product or a service being used and then trying it out with people and then writing a paper about the experience makes the whole built up momentum that has gone in to the work flop. A recent conference I was in, featured some of these design-flops. A few very interesting projects were let down in the end by presenting an academic paper written about it. Not the experience or the service or the product, but the paper . This conference (TEI) is next year trying a new format, specifically made for designers, that do not rely on academic formats or references or anything else designers do not feel comfortable with. A lot of people in the conference opposed this change, but as a designer I actually feel less intimidated to submit something next year.

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This paper is the design argument of a submission to the SIDeR '09 Conference. The full submission, including an elaborate explanation can be found on www.sider09.com