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Abstract Submission Form

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Submission Details

Title of Abstract	New formats, new information environments, new methodologies: The virtual unknown	
Type of Submission (please select ONE):	Full Paper	
	Short Paper	
	Round Table Discussion	X
Themes (please select all that apply):	Information Literacies	
	Information Behaviour	X
	Impact	
	Information as agent of change	X
	Methodological Paper	X
Abstract (Please check Call for Papers for requirements):	<p>This round table discussion will address the following conference themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are new information environments changing the way people seek and use information? • What are the methodological challenges of addressing such issues? 	

Background

The ubiquitous availability of virtual information has changed how people seek and use it. The increasing existence of smartphones, tablets, and wearable devices has made virtual information environments available almost everywhere. Initial Internet environments were largely textual. Increasingly, however, with the advent of social media and the increased ability of users to create and share information, the landscape changed (O'Reilly, 2005) as the virtual world experienced a dramatic increase in non-textual objects. These include photographs, videos, music, video games, maps, and data visualisations (Rasmussen Neal, 2012). Online environments incorporate a range of textual and non-textual elements that work together to create a complementary new form of "document" (Neal, 2010).

These artefacts present rich opportunities for studies of information seeking and use. Using a social science lens, information scientists can learn about people's information needs through the items they share and discuss (Banks and Zeitlyn, 2015). For example, analysing the hashtags used to describe non-textual cultural products in different forms could help information scientists understand the terms people naturally use when searching for them (Rasmussen Neal, 2012; Desrochers et al., 2016). Performing qualitative analysis on user-created videos can provide insight into the communities and the information practices that form around topics (Werner, 2012; Rasmussen Pennington, 2016). Social network analyses can help researchers understand how information sharing takes place around communities' photographs (Stvilia and Jørgensen, 2009; Thelwall and Buckley, 2013).

As noted in Rasmussen Pennington (2017), the potential for utilising non-textual data in virtual environments offers opportunities and challenges. Most information science research has been rooted in the assumption that a "document" is text-based (Buckland, 1997); therefore, the discipline is not entirely prepared methodologically for including non-textual data (Wyatt and O'Connor, 2004; Rasmussen Pennington, 2017). Additionally, the traditional conceptualisation of information is a strictly defined notion: it is text to be searched and retrieved. Alternatively, Bates (2006) advocated for a broader definition: "the pattern of organization of matter and energy" (Parker, 1974, p. 10). Today's virtual environments afford a plethora of information types, which calls for investigation into how people interact with non-textual documents as well as the text that accompanies them.

Goals

Methodological questions are abundant within how people interact with information in virtual environments containing non-textual documents. Informed by an initial overview of the issues at hand from the chair, participants will explore the following questions with an eye toward improving the state of methodologies for studying information behaviour within these domains. Questions may be adjusted based on delegates' interests and time available.

- How do we conceptualize "information" in non-textual virtual environments?

- What research questions can we answer through new formats and environments that apply to information seeking and use?
- What are the most effective and reliable ways of collecting non-textual virtual data samples?
- Do large quantitative samples of non-textual virtual data lead to useful results?
- Are focused qualitative samples of non-textual virtual data too small to be meaningful?
- Can existing analysis techniques effectively apply to new formats and information environments? If not, how do we develop new approaches?
- How should we approach ethical considerations surrounding the use of social media artefacts in research?

A broad group discussion about these issues is likely to bring forth many directions for future research. For this reason, ultimate outcomes for the roundtable may result in the start of tangible outputs for the delegates, such as co-authored methodological papers for publication or other research collaborations.

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	<p>Rasmussen Pennington, D. (2016), “‘The most passionate cover I’ve seen’: emotional information in fan-created U2 music videos”, <i>Journal of Documentation</i>, Vol. 72 No. 3, 569-590.</p> <p>Rasmussen Pennington, D. (2017), Coding of non-text data. In A. Quan-Haase and L. Sloan (eds.), <i>The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods</i>. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 232-250.</p> <p>Stvilia, B. and Jörgensen, C. (2009), “User-generated metadata in an online photo-sharing system”, <i>Library & Information Science Research</i>, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 54-65.</p> <p>Thelwall, M. and Buckley, K. (2013), “Topic-based sentiment analysis for the social web: the role of mood and issue-related words”, <i>Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology</i>, Vol. 64 No. 8, pp. 1608-1617.</p> <p>Wyatt, R.B. and O’Connor, B.C. (2004), <i>Photo Provocations: Thinking In, With, and About Photographs</i>. Scarecrow Press, Lanham, MD.</p>
Additional Information:	n/a

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