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Don't Become Roadkill on the Information Superhighway: Dealing with Information Overload

Antoinette Paris Powell

University of Kentucky, toni.greider@uky.edu

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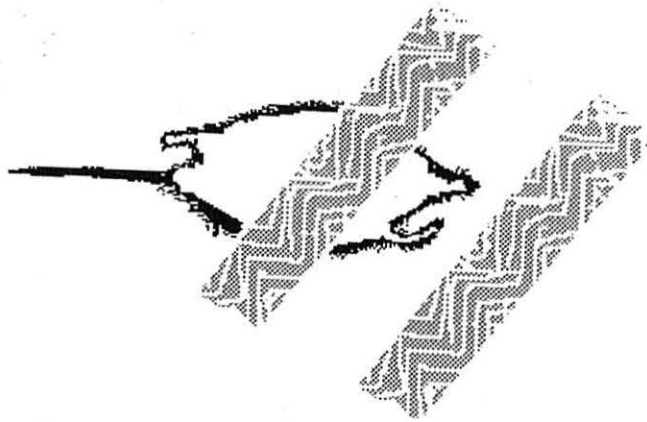
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DON'T BECOME ROADKILL ON THE INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY

DEALING WITH INFORMATION OVERLOAD



A Presentation to
The Kentucky Academy of Science
Tennessee Academy of Science

November 16, 1995

By

Antoinette Paris Powell

Director

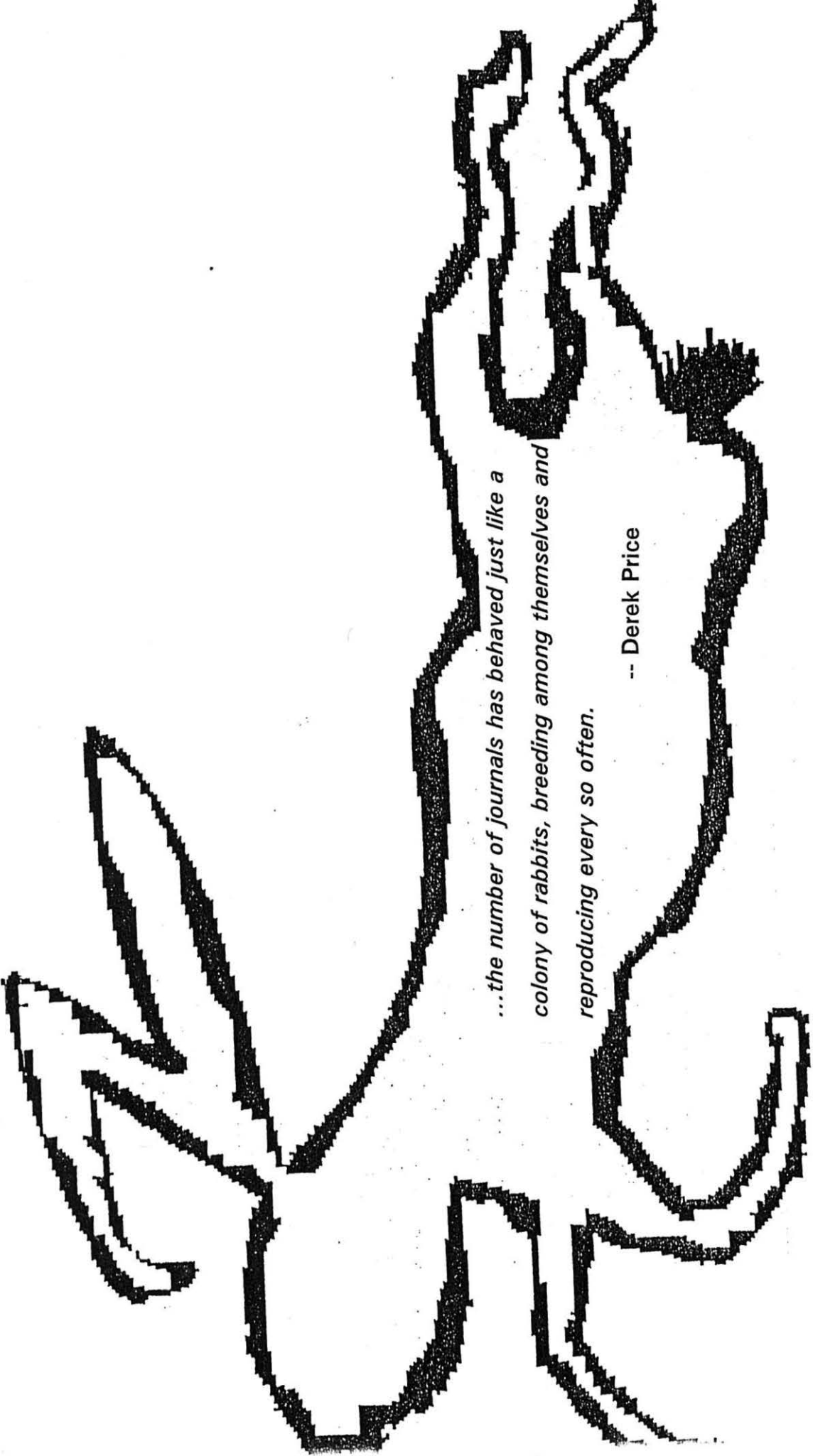
University of Kentucky Agricultural Library

E-Mail: apowell@ca.uky.edu

Don't Become Roadkill on the Information Superhighway Dealing with Information Overload

A Presentation to the Joint Kentucky/Tennessee Academies of Science Meeting
November 16, 1995

- I. Information Overload
 - A. Not a new problem
 - B. IS systems developed to deal with the problem
- II. Background
 - A. mid 1800's
 1. 300 scientific journals
 2. abstracting services began
 - B. Post World War II
 1. birth of *big science*
 - a. rise of commercial journals
 - b. increase in book publishing
 - c. Derek Price [quote] **overhead**
 1. number of journals doubles every 15 years
 2. Statistics **overhead**
 - C. Average scientist
 1. scans 3,000 articles per year
 2. reads 10% in detail
 - D. Age of Electronics
 1. added another dimension to the information problem
 2. Internet--a network of networks
 - a. listservs
 - b. gophers
 - c. almanacs
 - d. e-journals
 - e. Myriad of sources on the WWW
- III. Coping--Paper
 - A. Abstracts and Indexes
 1. Paper
 2. online
 3. cd-rom
 4. Do it yourself
 - B. Services
 1. Current awareness
 - a. tables of contents
 - b. paper
 1. *Current Contents*
 2. current issues of abstracts
 - c. electronic
 1. Current Contents -- diskette, online
 2. CAB Access
 3. Reference Manager
 4. Carl Uncover
 5. Contents First
 2. SDI services
 - a. Online services



...the number of journals has behaved just like a colony of rabbits, breeding among themselves and reproducing every so often.

-- Derek Price

INFORMATION EXPLOSION IN THE SCIENCES

For the year 1977

382,000 articles published

1.4 billion copies of science and technology
articles distributed through subscriptions

104 million issues of journals sent

15 million copies of books produced

From 1839 to 1977

12 million articles published in the U.S.



INFORMATION SOURCES ARE RAMPANT



30,000 - 50,000 estimated number of S/T journals worldwide



100,000 to 400,000 technical reports produced each year



60,000 U.S. Patents and 30,000 British Patents issued a year



9,000 science and technological conferences held each year



29,629 S/T journals launched between 1978 and 1988

- b. CD Products
 - c. *Current Contents*
 - d. Reference Manager
 - 3. Acquiring Documents
 - a. many of the services offer document delivery
 - 1. *Current Contents*
 - 2. Carl
 - 3. CAB Access
 - 4. Managing the references
 - a. Procite
 - b. Papyrus
 - c. Reference Manager
- C. What to do about article
 - 1. depend on a library
 - a. You don't have to provide space for the articles
 - b. library may not have the article
 - 2. keep your own reprint file
 - a. purchase through services
 - b. get from authors
 - c. have to find space, time, and system to manage reprints

IV. Coping--Electronic

- A. Cyberspace is large and overwhelming **overhead**
 - 1. Internet
 - a. network of millions of computers
 - b. many of them open for searching for information
 - 2. Information
 - a. Gopher servers
 - 1. layer of menus
 - 2. text base
 - b. World Wide Web aka WWW, W3
 - 1. A multimedia, multiprotocol internet database that uses a home page as its menu. Access requires a higher level pc and an ethernet or slip connection (serial line internet protocol)
 - 2. URL is the address that gets you to the web site
- B. Searching
 - 1. Gopher
 - a. uses search tools such as Veronica
 - 1. allows you to search on a term
 - 2. World Wide Web
 - 1. need a browser such as Netscape
 - 2. search tools -- **overhead**
 - 1. InfoSeek Search --can use plain English
 - 2. The Lycos Home Page: Searches document titles and content.
 - 3. Web Crawler--searches articles by document title and content
- C. Managing

Gopher: Is an Internet tool that provides text screens with menus and submenus to facilitate access to resources otherwise available only by telnet (remote logins) an anonymous ftp (file transfer protocol)

Veronica: A search tool for Gopher Menus.



World Wide Web: A multimedia, multiprotocol Internet database that uses a home page as its menu. Access requires a higher level pc and an ethernet or slip connection.

URL: Universal Record Locator and address that gets you to web sites.
Begins with `http://`

NOTE: URL is case specific, (upper and lower case must be followed when typing in an address).



Netscape: Provides a graphical interface facilitating access to similar Internet resources but has an added capability for accessing the World Wide Web and its hypertext links to graphics, audio, and video materials, including animation and video clips.

ListServ: Special interest groups where questions or issues are sent to the group via e-mail. Members of the group discuss the topic while all members observe the dialog.

Almanacs: An information server where requests are submitted and processed through electronic mail.

SEARCH TOOLS FOR THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Aliweb (UK)

CUI W3 (Switzerland)

EINet/Galaxy (US)

Harvest (US)

InfoSeek Search (US)

JumpStation (UK)



Lycos Home page (US)

Nikos (US)

W5 (The Netherlands)

WebCrawler (US)

WWW Worm (US)

Yahoo Search (US)

1. Bookmarks -- in front ends for gophers and web browsers
 - a. allows you to mark the site you like and creates a personal list that is a short cut to getting back to favorite files
2. Downloading favorite files
 - a. problem of file management
 1. can save electronic files
 2. printout and file in paper file
3. NetFirst
 - a. indexes all major Internet resource types
 1. Web pages
 2. discussion lists
 3. Usenet newsgroups
 4. FTP sites
 5. electronic journals
 6. newsletters
 7. gopher sites
 8. library catalogs
 9. Internet-accessible services
 - b. description of the source
 - c. "Hot Links" to be available to connect you directly with the source

V. Major Problems

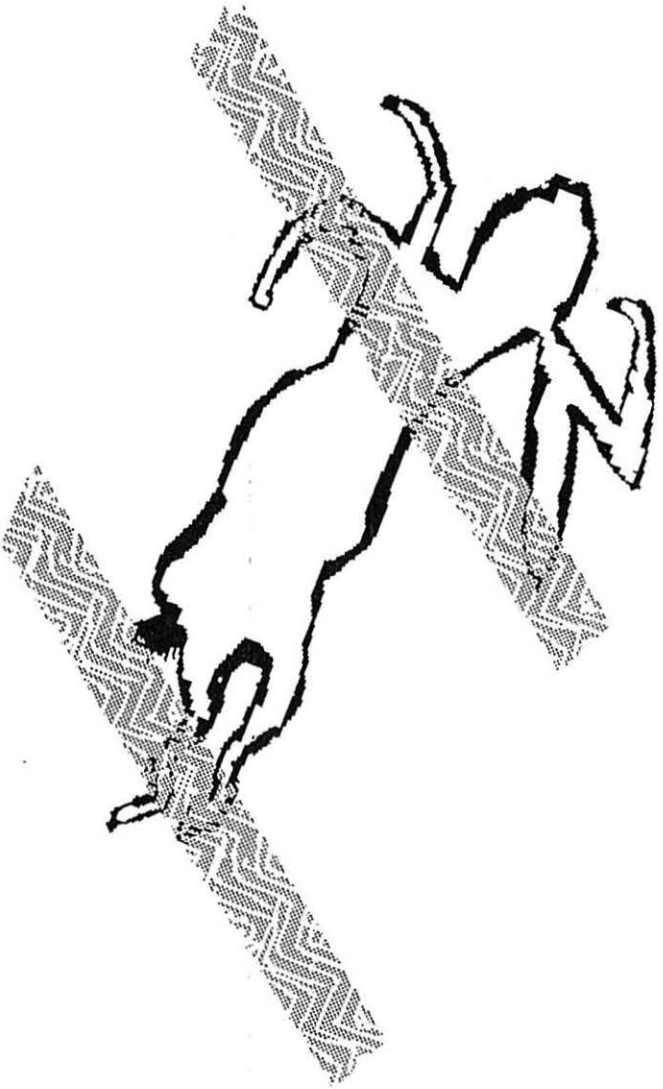
- A. Too much
 1. Costs money for products to manage
- B. Paper system pretty well defined
- C. Electronic system evolving
 1. Files not consistently updated
 2. Information sources disappear
 3. still in its infancy
- D. Commercial Information producers beginning to become key players
 1. Elsevier Tulip Project
 2. Internet means to deliver information as we know it
- E. Can't absorb everything

VI. Toni's Tips

- A. Learn how to use the information system
 1. will allow to find information at the time you need it
 2. you will avoid being buried in an information avalanche
- B. Focus your topic
 1. recognize that you cannot possibly find everything
 - a. even if you could, you could not read it all
 2. do your info. gathering at the point you need to know
- C. Use tools available to manage your information
 1. existing collections
 2. reference managers to manage your collections
 3. book marks to get back to internet sites

TONI'S TIPS FOR INFORMATION OVERLOAD

- ▶ Learn How to Use the Information System
- ▶ Focus Your Topic
- ▶ Use Tools Available to Manage Information



VII. Closing

A. Information isn't power, knowing where to find it is

B. With some knowledge of search tools and information management tools you won't be run over by the information convoy coming down the superhighway and you won't become roadkill in the information age.

Selected Searchable World Wide Web Indexes

Aliweb (Nexor)

URL: <http://web.nexor.co.uk/public/aliweb/doc/search.html>

CUI W3 (Centre Universitaire d'Informatique of the University of Geneva, Switzerland)

URL: <http://cuiwww.unige.ch/w3catalog>

EINet/Galaxy (EINet Corporation, USA)

URL: <http://galaxy.einet.net/search.html>

Harvest (University of Colorado, USA)

URL: <http://harvest.cs.colorado.edu/>

Infoseek (Infoseek Corporation, USA)

URL: <http://www.infoseek.com:80/Home>

JumpStation (Stirling University, UK)

URL: <http://www.stir.ac.uk/jsbin/js>

Lycos (Carnegie Mellon University, USA)

URL: <http://lycos.cs.cmu.edu>

Nikos (California Polytechnic, USA)

URL: <http://www.rns.com/cgi-bin/nikos>

W5 (University of Utrecht, the Netherlands)

URL: <http://pablo.ubu.ruu.nl:8000/>

WebCrawler (University of Washington, USA)

URL: <http://webcrawler.com/>

WWW Worm (University of Colorado, USA)

URL: <http://www.cs.colorado.edu/home/mcbryan/WWWW.html>

Yahoo Search (Stanford University)

URL: <http://www.yahoo.com/yahoo/search.html>

Note: Universal Record Locators change. This list is maintained at the Agricultural University in Wageningen, The Netherlands. To periodically check this list go to the URL:

<http://www.bib.wau.nl/agralin/finding.html>

Source: Besemer, H. and I. Veerman. 1995. "Agricultural Information on the Internet: What is Out There and How to Find It. *Quarterly Bulletin of the International Association of Agricultural Infomation Specialists*, 40(2/3):61-67.