EXPLORING PERSONAL CONNECTIONS IN AN INCREASINGLY DIGITAL READING ENVIRONMENT

Amy Trimble – November 16th, 2018
2018 HLA Annual Conference
IT’S ALL ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP

• Identifying how a patron connects with resources is an essential aspect of academic librarianship, especially with the onslaught of digital technologies.
• Are there ways in which patrons connect with digital reading materials?
• How are these connections manifested?
• Does the corporeal aspect still play an important role in the discussion of connection in a digital environment?
OVERVIEW

• Problem Statement
• Research Questions & Objectives
• Literature Review
• Interview Process
• Results
  • Comprehension
  • Lost (in the reading)
  • Willingness to Adapt
  • Sentimentality
  • Social Interaction
  • Space Matters
• Conclusion
Less of this  

More of this
GRAPPLING WITH CHANGING LEARNING STYLES

ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education

“Libraries are the intellectual commons where users interact with ideas in both physical and virtual environments to expand learning and facilitate the creation of new knowledge.”

http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standards

ALA Trends for Transforming the Library

http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends
"[THE] INSTITUTIONAL AIMS OF THE MODERN LIBRARY HAVE BEEN TO EXCLUDE THE BODY FROM THE SITE OF READING, TO MAKE A...PURELY MENTAL EXPERIENCE, A PROCESS THAT WILL ONLY ACCELERATE IN THE FUTURE WITH THE INCREASING IN-CORPOREALITY OF THE ELECTRONIC WORD."

Michael Camille, 1997, p.40

What is the importance of the body in relation to reading and the differences experienced when reading becomes less of a physical experience through the use of digital technologies?
**Questions**

1. How do readers express feelings of connection with their texts in print and digital environments?
2. How can library spaces be designed to elicit and support these feelings of connection?

**Objectives**

- Search for examples of connection manifested in participant responses (e.g. nostalgia or sentimentality, anthropomorphism/personification, the building of collections, fan participations, etc.)
- Discover whether tangible, corporeal aspects, such as touch, still play a role in a digital reading environment.
LITERATURE REVIEW – BACKGROUND & THEORY

- Libraries and Book/Body Connection
- Bibliophiles
- Anthropomorphism
- Convergence Theory
- Transactional Theory
METHOD

• Qualitative, phenomenological approach
  • Studying lived experiences
  • No correct answer when dealing with feelings or attachments

• Examples of connection to watch for:
  • Sentimentality / Nostalgia
  • Participation
  • Item Collecting
  • Anthropomorphism
INTERVIEW PROCESS

• 11 interviews
  • Personal one-on-one setting
  • 45 – 60 minute session
  • Open ended questions:
    • Do you enjoy reading? Why or why not?
    • What type of reading do you take part in on a daily basis?
    • Tell me about your favorite book; would you consider reading it as an e-book? Why or why not?
    • Are there other particular books, pdfs or e-books you refer back to time after time? Why
  • How do print books figure into your academic life?
  • Tell me about the time you read your first e-book?
  • What are some pros and cons of reading on-screen?
  • When do you find yourself choosing a print book over a digital resource?
  • Do you have a preference of devices?
  • How would you describe your ideal reading environment?
  • Do you identify with reading material?
  • Do e-books engage or distract you? Why or why not?
  • etc...
INTERVIEW PROCESS
STUDY SAMPLE

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Department Affiliation</th>
<th>University Status</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(18-30) - [VALUE]</td>
<td>Public Admin. - [VALUE]</td>
<td>Faculty - [VALUE]</td>
<td>Female - [VALUE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(31-45) - [VALUE]</td>
<td>English - 1</td>
<td>Undergraduate - [VALUE]</td>
<td>Male - [VALUE]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nursing - [VALUE]</td>
<td>Graduate - [VALUE]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anthropology - [VALUE]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Computer-Sci - [VALUE]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Engineering - [VALUE]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LIS - [VALUE]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Themes:
- Comprehension
- Lost (in the reading)
- Willingness to Adapt
- Sentimentality
- Social Interaction
- Space Matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familiarity</th>
<th>Distractions</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Nostalgia</th>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Accessibility</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spatial awareness</td>
<td>Hyperlinks</td>
<td>Motivation: forced/free</td>
<td>Collecting Physical</td>
<td>Sentimentality</td>
<td>Cost of device</td>
<td>Note-taking</td>
<td>Efferent</td>
<td>Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linearity</td>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>Convergence theory</td>
<td>Collecting pdfs</td>
<td>Family or other times of life</td>
<td>Cost of book</td>
<td>Ease of access</td>
<td>Aesthetic</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabs</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Most people only buy physical</td>
<td>environment</td>
<td>Value of physical outweighing cost to buy</td>
<td>Size (of screen)</td>
<td>Using a visual tactic To read</td>
<td>Separation / individual space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progression / progress</td>
<td>Ability to access other programs</td>
<td>participation</td>
<td>Don’t want to give it away if they find it helpful or valuable</td>
<td>fragility</td>
<td>Time?</td>
<td>portability</td>
<td>Memory, Retention</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convention</td>
<td>Eye strain</td>
<td>Empathy / understanding</td>
<td>identity</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Skimming or in-depth reading “lost” in the reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort /discomfort</td>
<td>Comfort /discomfort</td>
<td>exposure</td>
<td>exposure</td>
<td>interactive</td>
<td>learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Concentration</td>
<td>Interests</td>
<td>“lost” in reading</td>
<td>currency</td>
<td>Type of reading: academic vs pleasure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anthropomorphism</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>currency</td>
<td>Emotion</td>
<td>length</td>
<td>convergence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exposure</td>
<td>Visual aspect</td>
<td>Multi-tasking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual aspect</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Convergence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify with</td>
<td>Multi-tasking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS
Without understanding it is just information

- Approach (digital – skim, print – deeper reading)
- Time
- Ownership
  “To comprehend something fully is to ‘take ownership’ of it, and in order to own a text, I must hold it in my hands, scribble notes in the margins, underline, highlight and star important bits” (Rose, 2011, p.519)
- Visual

https://openclipart.org/detail/268086/brain-organic
RESULTS – LOST (IN THE READING)

• Ideal reading experience and ideal reading environment

• Distractions
  • Eye strain, size of screen, glare, links, other apps, email, social media

• Format doesn’t always matter once there is a connection
  • “If I can get my mind focused and not get distracted, I can get lost in reading something electronically and just read it. And in that sense, if you’re getting lost in your reading, you’re connecting with it because it’s engaging you.”
RESULTS – WILLINGNESS TO ADAPT

- Overcoming issues of unfamiliarity
- Spatial Issues: the feel, flipping pages
- Examples:
  - Tabbed reading – creates a new type of linearity
  - Choose your own adventure
  - Using linked table of contents
  - Dictionary features
  - Change font size
  - Focus on positive benefits (environment, copy/paste, special features like CTRL-F, portability etc.)
  - Kindle love

https://www.classiceventsinc.com/single-post/2015/08/06/Embracing-Plan-B
RESULTS – SENTIMENTALITY

• Nostalgia: It’s in the experience
• Family and upbringing
• Collecting Items: books and pdfs
  • “special space”
  • Worries about her books
  • Not wanting to give them up
• Flipping the pages – familiarity

https://kourtneymiller.wikispaces.com/Sentimental
RESULTS – SOCIAL INTERACTION

• Gain perspective
• Suggestions on sites and also by word of mouth
• Book sharing and exchanging
• Academic pursuits – citations
• Reading together
• “it’s so much more interesting when you can talk about it or you know that they shared the joke or they had the same experience.”

• Builds relationships
• connect with friends and the world
• Broadens your community
• Affects identity
AFFECTING IDENTITY

“I think identity is constructed through the way that we interpret...the way we interpolate text.”

“text and things that we digest, and things that inform our practices do construct our representation...it constructs the mutual space...It constructs this representation; reading constructs the space of mutual intelligibility.”

“It constructs community.”
Other Factors:
- Posture
- Division of Space
- Functional
- Aesthetics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Factors</th>
<th>Preferred Seating</th>
<th>Library Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Lighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Like in my dream house I would have floor-to-ceiling bookshelves, but I like reading on my bed because it’s soft and comfortable and I can sit or I can lie down."

"Now, my ideal reading environment would be at night so that I can read e-books, and sometimes on the beach, but the light from the waves, but the sun is not so bright that you can’t see your page, and nobody’s bothering you and you’re laying down and you can just lose yourself in a good book."

"I have this image of this reading environment, but I’ve never actually had it. You know those little, library-type chairs, the leather chair with the reading lamp and a little blanket. That’s how I want to read, but I’ve never done it like that. More practically I end up at my desk in a very comfortable chair, I like to have places where I can put things."

SPACE MATTERS - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LIBRARY

• Functional but beautiful when possible
  • Accommodate laptops
  • Good chairs and tables (think posture)
  • Printing concerns

• Communal but personal
  • Division of space
  • Areas for social interactions

• Temperature good for books and people

• Stay aware
CONCLUSIONS

• Disillusionment and the Phenomenological Process
  • It’s about the experience
• Results support other similar studies
• Touch Matters
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

• Have you seen examples of these six themes in your libraries or organizations?

• Is there a theme that you would argue against, that it does

• How have you been using your library space to engage and encourage readers?

• Is the tangible still important?

• How do you balance the needs of the physical with the needs of the digital when it comes to reading?

• What other manifestations of connection have you witnessed?


BIBLIOGRAPHY (CONT’D)


