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Socio-econo-politico-techno-expialidociuos: Information literacy in the increasingly automated digital landscape

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Socio-econo-politico-techno-expialidocious: Information literacy in the increasingly-automated-digital- landscape

Bethany Wilkes & Dianne Cmor
39th IATUL Conference 2018



What can we possibly mean by “information literacy” given the way we live now?

Fister, B. (2017, November 13). The black box problem. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library-babel-fish/black-box-problem>





Though technology has altered libraries and publishing in those decades, until this year I thought the fundamentals students needed to know— how to frame a question, how to think critically about what you find, how to weigh divergent arguments and create your own with a sense of integrity— were basically unchanging. But the world we’ve found ourselves in now, one where we’re being given personalized bodies of knowledge created by propagandists and bots and artificial intelligence, all locked up in corporate black boxes – I don’t even know where to start.

Fister, B. (2017, November 13). The black box problem. *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved from <https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/library-babel-fish/black-box-problem>





Too much of what we teach as information literacy skills prepares students for an information landscape that has passed.

Today

- Digital information landscape - where we wander!
- Expanding our discourse and practice
- Examples of instructional activities

**What are we
dealing with
here?**



**Search
companies are
companies.
We repeat,
search
companies are
companies .**

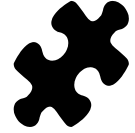


**Algorithms
don't write
themselves**

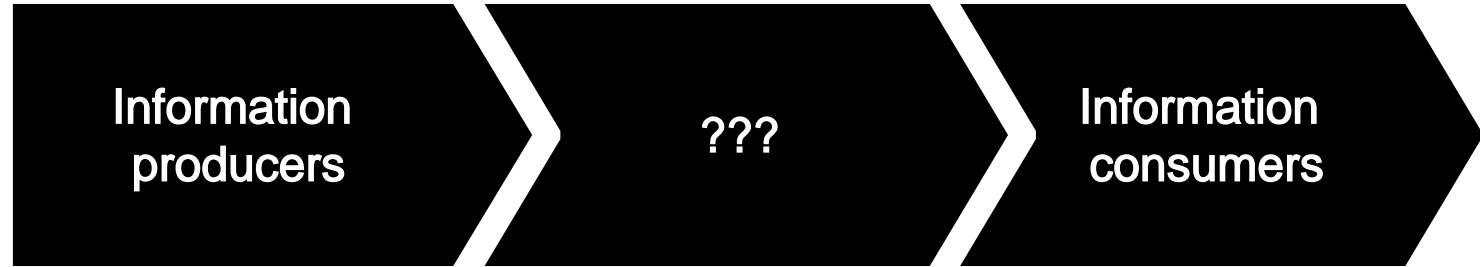


**Digital
footprints
produce
perpetual
trails**

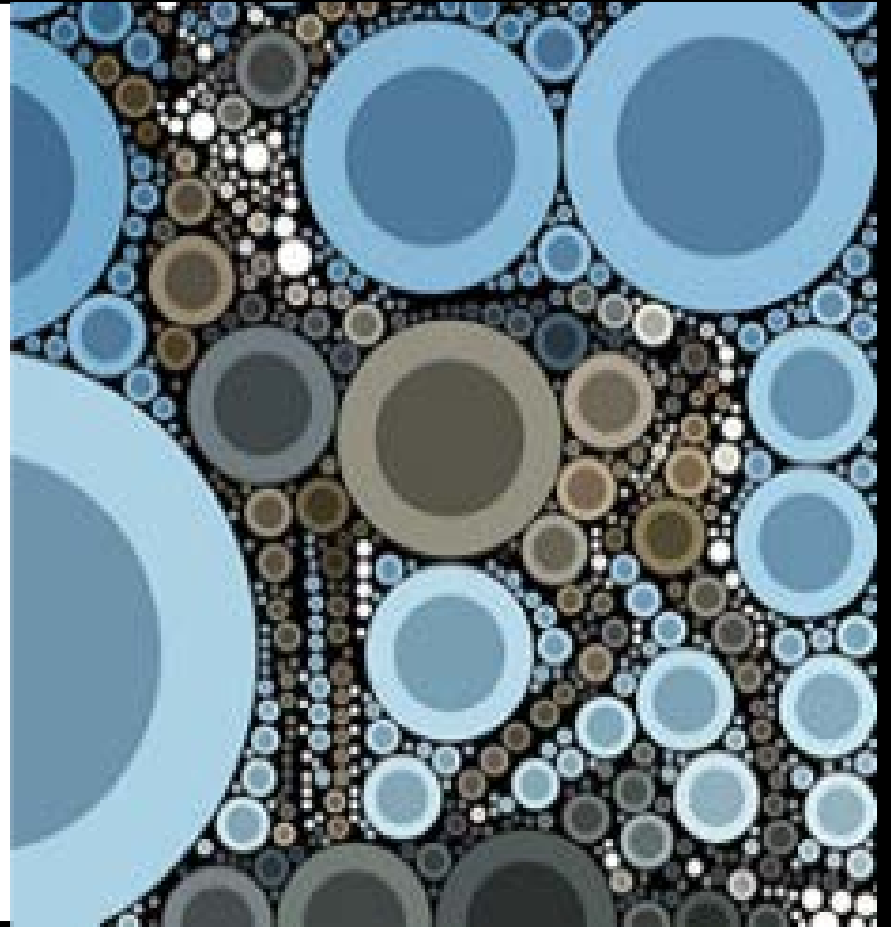




What lies between ...

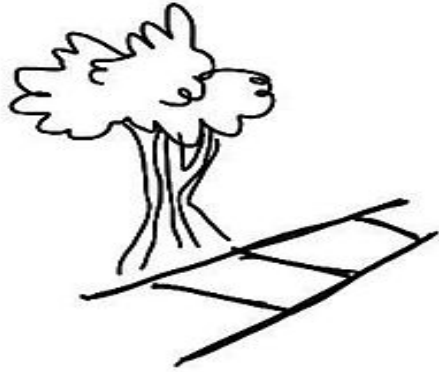


**Bots
'interacting'
with content,
with each other,
with us**



**Hello, what
information
can I decide
would be
most useful to
you today?**



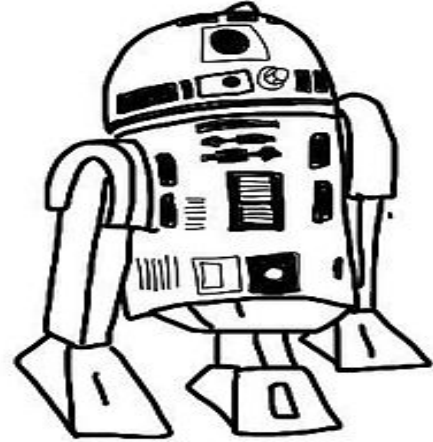


Environment

Perception



Agent



Action

Expanding our discourse & practice

**Starting
somewhere;
Ending
unknown ...**



Possible instructional activities

Tracing Footsteps



Who is Alexa?



Personal Data (Dis)Comfort



Tracing Footsteps



Have students describe their digital behaviour over the past week - what did they read, like, interact with, etc.

Ask them to discuss ways in which information may now be presented to them as a result of that activity

Note how this information will make its way to them both “passively”, and when actively searching for something

Who is Alexa?



Introduce students to the concept of “personas” - often used in developing products

Ask students to create “persona” descriptions of Alexa, Siri, etc. noting their backgrounds, what they offer, how they differ, and why.

Extend to imagine a “scholarly virtual assistant” - who might be interested in creating these? And why? Who do you wish would create one & why?

Personal Data (Dis)Comfort



Ask students how they feel about Amazon's personalized experience. Is it helpful? Do you like it? What do they know about you? Are you OK with that?

Have them discuss how they would feel if their university offered a similar experience? What would that look like? How would that compare? What data would be used? How would you feel about that?

Extend the conversation to include employment services, insurance companies, political parties, etc. Who else might be interested in all of that data?

**Technology does not
exist unto itself ...**



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/bistrosavage/3774175>

it IS a socio - econo - politico phenomenon



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