Information practice

Panel "Conceptions of information literacy: Current theoretical trends"
CoLIS 8, Copenhagen 21.8. 2013
Sanna Talja
Universities of Tampere & Uppsala
information finding the central problem to focus on
the sources and channels approach
... what sources and channels are accessed or preferred
... use and non-use of already existing information sources and channels
... barriers and obstacles for obtaining and using information
... information activities triggered by lack of knowledge, problematic situations
information as external and out there
learning: the absorption of already existing knowledge
limited role for people as information "users"
information literacy in singular form (generic skills)
... awareness of needs for information needs — gaining skills in information seeking - searching sources and channels — informed source choice and evaluation
uncovering the nature of expertise within a specialized domain or activity setting
interest in the diversity of ways of knowing and learning
focus on competent reasoning and doing: the knowledgeable worker
information literacies in the plural
not independent of domain, develop over a lifetime in particular domains of interest involving particular document genres and technology applications
all genres require and create a specialized community with specialized skills of reading (encodification)
information is any meaningful content: there are no "informational genres" as distinct from non-informational genres
technologies and people’s (expert) activities: co-shaping and co-evolving
Information practices. Not only finding but all aspects of information work as focus.

Work domain

Knowledge practices

- Analyzing
- Interpreting
- Extracting
- Reviewing
- Synthesizing
- Applying
- Re-using
- Re-creating
- Organizing
- Indexing

Information objects*

- Filtering
- Seeking
- Finding
- Receiving
- Sharing
- Archiving
- Destroying

Community of practitioners

Sociotechnical infrastructure

* conversations, documents, document parts, document bundles, document repositories
we "understand" as part of practices, we do not understand as part of hierarchically organized knowledge (Säljö)
understanding stems from engagement, embeddedness and experience (being a fully active participant)
specialized ways of observing and being in the world
specialized ways in which objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described, and the world is understood
the appropriation of an activity system transforms the very architecture and functioning of the human mind
activity system is a network of human and non-human agents and resources; this network augments and expands intellectual resources
being knowledgeable is only possible within a specific activity setting
the knowledge that is important (expertise) is often a matter of being able to make judgments based on instincts, values, feelings and intuition – which stem from accumulated experiences