RESEARCHER INNOVATION

IN AN INCREASINGLY DIGITAL WORLD_

This exploratory study focused on how students approach information handling, specifically mark-up, storage and retrieval. A litereature scan was undertaken, followed by two case studies. We interviewed two students who both studied at university in the print-heavy 1990s and then returned to study in the last two years, in an evolved information landscape.

PURPOSE_

The research aimed to discover any innovative processes students employ to successfully interact with resources in a digital environment. The concepts we sought to investigate were:

- How do students deal with the lack of uniformity of information formats, saving and mark-up options?
- Are the approaches to digital storage, mark-up and retrieval informed by print based practices?
- What are some of the implications for the quality of understanding of a topic when engaging with print or digital?

LITERATURE SCAN_

Much of the literature deals with the concepts of information seeking behaviours and using technology in an academic environment. We didn't find very much written on mark-up, storage and retrieval.

MARK-UP AND USE OF DIFFERENT FORMATS_

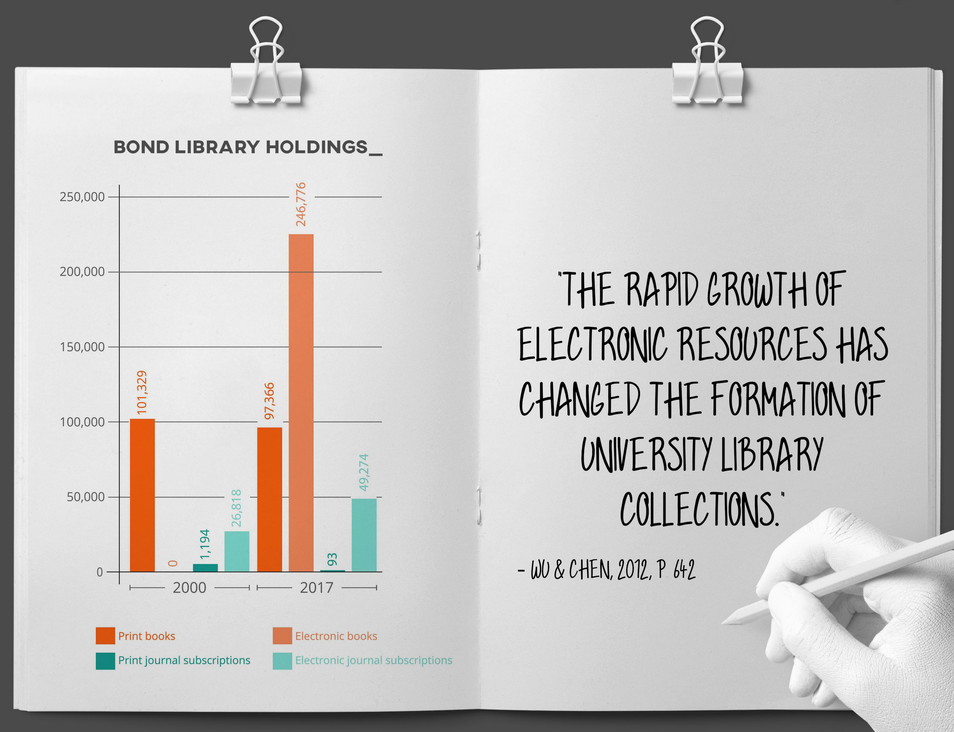
Methods respondents used to assemble and mark-up resources:

PRINT *"I'd carry the books around with me, full of 3M sticky notes and my printouts would be shoved in a spiral notepad. I'd have this scattered big pile of mess and I'd forget which thought connected with the thoughts on another document."*

DIGITAL *"When I see something I like I'll scrapbook and copy/paste and start assembling it in this montage of ideas and thoughts with the references of all the ideas as I go. It makes more sense if I put it in the context of other thoughts."*

DIGITAL *"I'm strongly preferring getting the textbook electronically now because all my other resources are electronic and I'm trying to do everything on the screen. It helps with the cutting and pasting, scrap-booking idea too for laying out my assignment."*

DIGITAL *"[OneNote on a Microsoft Surface has] that nice infinite canvas, undo-able, erasable, zoom-in-able — change you pen colour, width, so you can do finer drawing, thicker drawing and highlighting. It becomes a virtual desktop thing with all the tools, all the other classmates saying 'I'm going to get one of those'."*



'THE RAPID GROWTH OF ELECTRONIC RESOURCES HAS CHANGED THE FORMATION OF UNIVERSITY LIBRARY COLLECTIONS.'

- WU & CHEN, 2012, P 642

SAVING AND STORING RESOURCES_

PRINT *"I have an A4 display book for each course with all my content and all my material in there. So they are all colour coded, and once I've finished with them they go in a physical filing cabinet.*

Same with my organisation system on my computer, it kind of matches. It's very strategic. I make sure I've got the folder saved and my EndNote library group organised. The physical and digital systems align."

DIGITAL *"[I use a] Dropbox folder and I literally start dropping journals in there, I'll download the PDFs if I can. And if that doesn't work I'll make a folder for that assignment or subject and I'll just bookmark them in Chrome. So I carry bookmarks with me if it's web references."*

QUALITY OF UNDERSTANDING_

How deeply respondents engaged with information, by format:

PRINT *"I do think you consolidate your understanding more of a topic, by going over the few materials because you did go into them quite deeply, as opposed to looking at a vast amount of material, but perhaps only skimming it and touching on it lightly."*

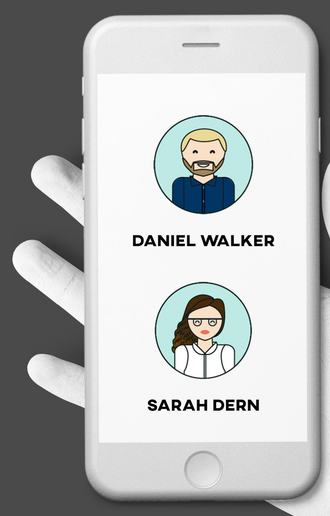
DIGITAL *"I can have multiple tabs open and skim - it's not a linear type of reading, you can cross-reference more easily. You can have screens open and have journal articles and go to their reference list and if they're online they often have hyperlinks. So you can go deeper, it's easier to get closer to the original source."*

TAKEAWAYS_

This qualitative study uncovered some innovative techniques being used by students. Both case study respondents indicated that interacting with information in print-based format, informed their use of the equivalent information in the digital landscape.

> *"With digital you can just hold down the shutter button all day if you want. But I've been aware of that and bring some more deliberate thoughts to the digital side of things. Stop getting scattered with all of the millions of tabs."*

FULL INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY_ bit.ly/researcherinnovation



BOND UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY SERVICES