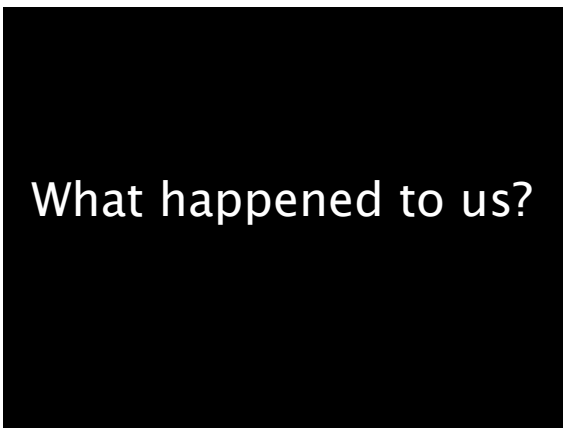
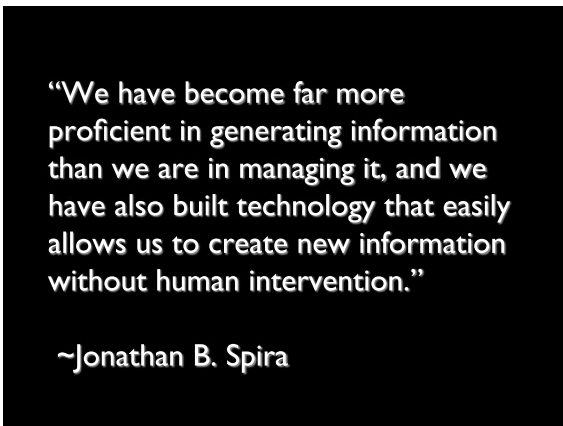


Coping with Information Overload







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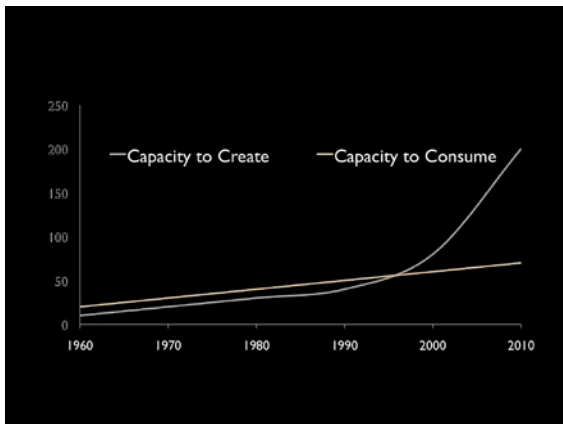
Coping with Information Overload

“In an online world of small pieces loosely joined, librarians are among the most well qualified and highly motivated joiners of those pieces.”

~ John Udell – “Remixing the Library”

where does information overload come from?

the desire to know and to be a part of things.



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Coping with Information Overload

effects of info overload

28% (2.1 hours) of a knowledge worker's day is consumed by interruptions.

--2005 Basex survey

IQ scores when interrupted by emails/ phone calls = 10 points lower (smoking marijuana = 4 points lower).

--2005 University of London study


Attention Deficit Trait: a sustained negative neurological effect of information overload.

"The brain and body get locked into a reverberating circuit while the brain's frontal lobes lose their sophistication...People with ADT have difficulty staying organised, setting priorities, and managing time, and they feel a constant low level of panic and guilt."

--"Overloaded Circuits: Why Smart People Underperform." E.M. Hallowell.

control the influx

Coping with Information Overload




inventory your inputs

Inventory all of your devices (work and home), and what you view on each.



weed, weed, weed...
mercilessly!



Coping with Information Overload



teach others
communication etiquette

organizational skills

Coping with Information Overload

work toward your goals
through daily and weekly tasks



"To think too long about
doing a thing often
becomes its undoing."
-- Eva Young

file things immediately
- *automate if possible*

Coping with Information Overload

organize like with like

take a class on file management

file new things away

- choose a method for tracking ideas & files (del.icio.us, Word, Evernote)
- might be multiple methods
- think about what you're saving
- name the file topically & specifically
- add dates (YYMMDD) for periodic stuff

Coping with Information Overload

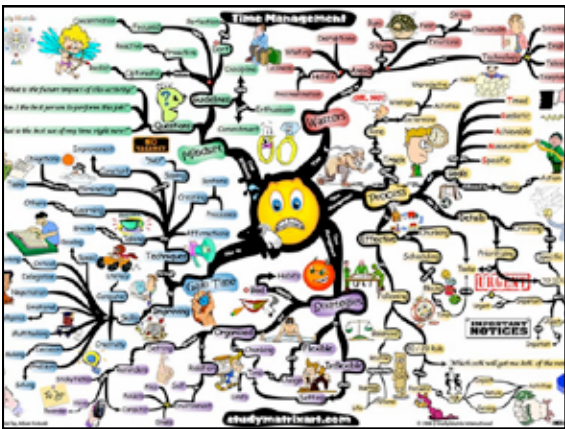
keep a master waiting list
of what's owed to you

stay neat
(virtually & physically)

try new things and see if
tech works for you, even
if you fall away in the end

Coping with Information Overload

time management skills



Keep a detailed time diary (10 min increments) for 1 week.
~~~  
Write down what you do and why (no lying).  
~~~  
Review the results for efficiencies, distractability, time of day patterns, etc.

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Coping with Information Overload

use your calendar to its fullest capabilities

schedule yourself to organize and do unscheduled work



take breaks.
no, for real.

Coping with Information Overload

use downtime

stress management skills

schedule unplugged time

Coping with Information Overload

unplug at will

eliminate stressful interruptions

you choose when you interact with technology or information

Coping with Information Overload

cut down your to-do list
to what really matters

learn how to say NO

at home, set up a quick
consistent way to note to
yourself urgent work issues

Coping with Information Overload

balance your life to your own standards

think of information as a stream, not a lake.

tips for dealing with specific types of information

Coping with Information Overload

print information

Decide: do you prefer print to digital?

If it's unread 3 issues in a row, unsubscribe

Get rid of "the pile"

Unsubscribe from catalogs: CatalogChoice.org

online newsletters

How is it being pushed to you? Best way?

If it's unread 3 issues in a row, unsubscribe

If via email, create filters to put all new issues into one folder

Get rid of "the digital pile"

online learning

Schedule yourself for live sessions

No multi-tasking during sessions

Keep a wish list of archived sessions

Build these into your yearly training goals

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Coping with Information Overload

email overload

Start scheduling email scan time

Use email only when appropriate

Deal with email by subject

Use folders and filters

& more email overload tips

Flag and file items for follow-up

INBOX ZERO

Follow good email etiquette

Delete and archive

email listservs

Filter into folders

Weed your listservs heavily

If you ignore a listserv for 2 weeks,
unsubscribe

Coping with Information Overload

blogs

If 5+ blogs, use RSS (Google Reader)

Review daily, or at least weekly (if few)

Flag and file items for follow-up

Periodically weed feeds

RSS

Use RSS when appropriate

Organize feeds into folders

If an avid RSS user, use it to send you reminders during the day

interruptive tech overload

Phones, text messaging, IM

Check when you want to

Use your status message well

Turn it OFF

Coping with Information Overload

social networks

Pick a primary network

Sort contacts into groups

Schedule time to interact, read updates

Choose one alert type (email, SMS, pop-up)

Twitter

Think of it as a stream, not a lake

Use a Twitter client: Tweetdeck or Hootsuite

Flag items for follow-up (Evernote, email)

Regularly weed the people you follow

netcasts

Replace radio with podcasts

Use a client like Google Listen or iTunes

Regularly weed your subscriptions

If nothing useful for 3 shows, unsubscribe

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Coping with Information Overload

serendipitous surfing

Have a method for tracking useful finds
(Evernote, wiki, blog, bookmarks)

Weed mercilessly

Surfing = time suck

“[I]f you want to use current information technologies fully to address the problems and opportunities that your library faces, then you must quit complaining and lock and load.”

--Roy Tennant, *Library Journal* 2003

pick what works for you.

only do what you realistically will follow up on.

Coping with Information Overload

above all else, breathe.

Further Resources

"Being Wired or Being Tired: 10 Ways to Cope with Information Overload" by Sarah Houghton-Jan (from *Ariadne*)

"How to Stop Your Inbox Exploding" by Cory Doctorow

Information Overload: We Have Met the Enemy and He Is Us by Jonathan B. Spira

Questions?



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