INFS 111
INFORMATION IN SOCIETY

Session 3 – Information and the Communication Process

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Session Overview

The relationship between information and communication is recognized as necessary in any information activity. The two concepts, i.e., information and communication are, therefore, interdependent but they are also different. The main difference between them is that communication is always interpersonal and interlined with emotions, values, expectations and perceptions, while information is impersonal purely format and devoid of perceptions and emotions.

Session Objectives

By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- distinguish between information and communication and the relationship between them

- explain the different methods of communicating information

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Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Topic One: Communication of Information

- Topic Two: Communication in Pre-Literate Societies

- Topic Three: Limitations of Oral Tradition

- Topic Four: Communication in Literate Societies

- Topic Five: Sources of Information

- Topic Six: Access to Information

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Reading List

- Aina, L.O. (2004). *Library and Information Science Text for Africa*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Third world information services Ltd.

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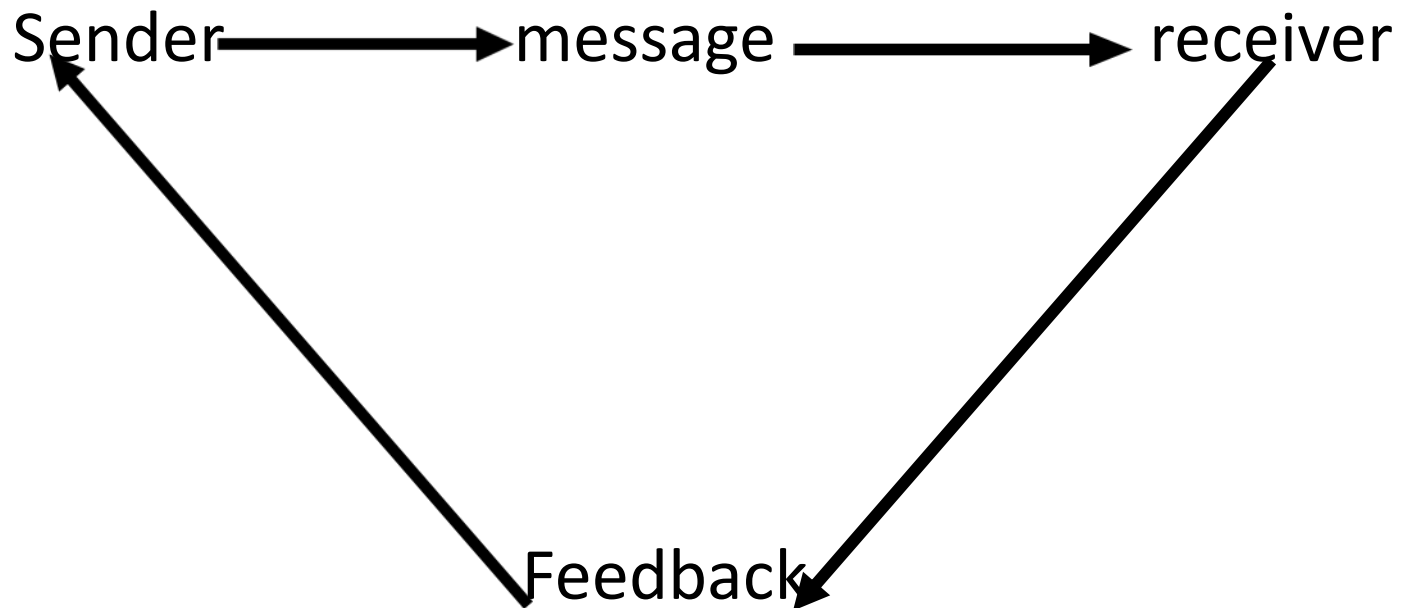
Topic One:

COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION

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Introduction

- Information is dormant, passive and motionless with little or no value if it is not communicated.

- Communication is basic to all human societies:

    - a process by which meanings are exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, language, signs and gestures.

    - Two very important aspects of communication are information and feedback.

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The Communication Process

Sender ⟶ message ⟶ receiver

Feedback

Source: Shannon and Weaver (2001)

Forms of Communication

- spoken communication

- written communication

- telephone communication

- electronic communication

- staff meetings

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Forms of Communication

- conferences, workshops and seminars

- exhibits and displays

- visual aids

- drama

- non-visual communication

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Topic Two:

COMMUNICATION IN PRE-LITERATE SOCIETIES

Introduction

- Pre-literate refers to the situation where there is absence of literacy.

- Pre-literate societies
    - societies in which members lack the ability to read and write.

    - used to refer to the period of time when systems of writing had not been developed for the purpose of recording, preserving, and disseminating (communicating) information.

Information Dissemination in Pre-literate Societies

- Language

- Observation

- Imitation

- Other forms;

  _gestures or sign language

  _scarification:

  _Shows a persons ethnic group

  _A persons status in society

  _Drumming or drum language

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The Discovery of Writing

When society realized the need to preserve more information for the benefit of generations, preliterate society resorted to the crudest form of writing -

- graphic representations of daily life
  - scratches in the form of drawings on the walls of caves.
- Pictorial representation of information
- tribal marks that were made on the face and other parts of the human body.

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Topic Three:

LIMITATIONS OF ORAL TRADITION

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Oral Tradition in Africa

- Oral Tradition:
  - Before writing began in Africa, the oral tradition was the commonest form of communication and education.

  - Even after the invention of writing, the oral tradition is still very popular in Africa, because:
    - literacy rate in Africa is still very low,
    - the local language is easier to communicate with than foreign languages.

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Limitations

- relies on human memory.

- depends too much on age.

- demands that boys do one thing e.g., hunting, and girls do another thing e.g., cooking

- develops mistakes as the years go by.

- the young can scarcely challenge the adult.

- the death of an old person is the loss of a whole tradition.

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Topic Four:

COMMUNICATION IN LITERATE SOCIETIES

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Literate Societies

– societies in which reading and writing are the basis of every form of activity.

– formal education is the main means of

- socializing

- passing on the human experience from generation to generation.

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Information in Literate Societies

- With the development of writing, it became possible for the human experience –e.g.; stories, knowledge, beliefs, customs, and poetry to be recorded and passed on in a more accurate manner to people.

- Literacy however began slowly because:
    - the medium for writing was expensive and tedious.

- Early writing media included:
    - clay tablets,
    - polished stones,
    - bones,
    - wood bark,
    - papyrus
    - parchment.

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Topic Five:

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Information Sources Defined

Primary Sources

- Gathered first hand

- Collected for the first time for a specific problem

- Examples: Observation, Experiment, Survey Subjective Estimation.

Secondary Sources

- Publications

- Internal Company Information

- Purchased-Outside Information

- Government Agencies.

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Problems with Information Sources

Likely problems include:

- Impartiality

- Validity

- reliability

- Consistency

- Age of the information.

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Topic Six:

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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Information Access

- How information users obtain what they require from the large and ever-increasing stock of information available today.

- It is a fundamental human right by the United Nations

- Information handlers/expects:
    - Responsible for making this huge store of information available and accessible to users

    - Perform this responsibility through careful selection, acquisition and organization of the available information in all types of format-

    - Have designed tools and procedures for organising and managing the various types of information

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Obstacles to Information Access

- Information explosion
    - The Internet

- Bad management of institutional information systems.

- Manual information systems

- Legal constraints such as copyright and intellectual property rights,

- Lack of viable cooperative resource sharing schemes

- Cost of information

- User background and information seeking habits

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Players in the Provision of Access to Information

- Information handlers

- Information users

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