Qofl: quantity

quality@sims

either go to my.sims

or

Send an email message to
majordomo@sims.berkeley.edu with the phrase:

subscribe quality

aob
(1): Quantity
Estimate the amount of information in your house/apartment/dorm.

Be prepared to justify your system of measurement and to compare your result to the amount of information stored in other familiar sites.
Linguistic Cognition

Here I sit, with my half-completed review of Peter Lindert's *Growing Public*: on the right half of my screen, *Growing Public* itself--some $2^{21}$ bytes of frozen cognition about the twentieth-century welfare state, its rise and vicissitudes--at my right hand, my iPod with $2^{11}$ songs (almost all of which I *know* in the sense of *recognize*, but virtually none of which I could sing reliably--even if I could sing) plugged into my left ear, off further to the left the $2^{30}$ bytes of frozen cognition that are the family room library, and in front of me my laptop screen, processor, $2^{36}$ byte hard disk, and (on the left half of the screen) my connection to the miraculous Interwebs.

All of this extraordinary system exists to amplify my powers to cognate linguistically to produce things others will find informative and useful--in this case, my overdue review of the excellent *Growing Public*.
overview

"how much information?"

quantification

equivalence

liquidity
How much new information is created each year?

Newly created information is stored in four physical media -- print, film, magnetic and optical -- and seen or heard in four information flows through electronic channels -- telephone, radio and TV, and the Internet. This study of information storage and flows analyzes the year 2002 in order to estimate the annual size of the stock of new information recorded in storage media, and heard or seen each year in information flows. Where reliable data was available we have compared the 2002 findings to those of our 2000 study (which used 1999 data) in order to describe a few trends in the growth rate of information.
what kind of question?

"how much information?"

Google: 1,430,000

LexisNexis: 100+ in 6 months

Wired: 125 in all
Early English Books Online (EEBO) contains digital facsimile page images of virtually every work printed in England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and British North America and works in English printed elsewhere from 1473 to 1700. Approximately 150,000 books published during the 18th Century. With full-text searching of approximately 26 million pages, the product allows researchers new methods of access to critical information in the fields of history, literature, religion, law, fine arts, science, and more.
"How much information would we not be deprived of if there was no night?"
--Sturm, 1791

"These early extracts ... show how much information he derived from this excellent writer."
--Biographical Dictionary, 1798

"How much ingenuity might be displayed, and how much information communicated by a professor."
Clarke, 1796
"How much information, how much consolation, and how much fortitude do you afford me at the close of my life."
--Voltaire, 1779 [trans].

DE M. DE VOLTAIRE

A Ferney, 6 janvier 1778.

Sire, grand homme, que vous m'instruisez, que vous me consolez, que vous me fortifiez dans toutes mes idées au bout de ma carrière! Votre Majesté, ou plutôt votre humanité a bien raison; le fatras métaphysique, théologique, fanatique, est sans doute ce que nous avons de plus méprisable, et cependant on écrira sur ces chi-
"I do not aspire to be a political letter writer. I know how much information such people obtain second hand."

*New York Times, 1859*

The great popularity of the "Household" column of the Sunday edition of The Times, found useful in all. The recipes have come from all directions, some from the inmost recesses of our large cities, some from remote spots in the country, whence they could never have been hunted out for the benefit of the public at large, except through the medium of The Times. It proves, in fact, how much useful information lies hidden away in isolated places, but ready to be spread abroad directly the opportunity for utilizing it arises. And while the Household Column of our paper testifies further to the same fact by its continuous wealth of useful hints upon a wide variety of topics, we are assured that this reissue must prove a very acceptable aid to families, in many of which it will be not less appreciated in because offered to them at a moderate price.
NEW PUBLICATIONS.

READY THIS DAY.

GREELEY'S TRAVELS IN EUROPE.—GLANCE AT EUROPE: In a series of Letters from GREAT BRITAIN, FRANCE, ITALY, &c. By HORACE GREELEY. Octavo, cloth; price, one dollar. This volume comprises the observations made during Mr. Greeley's recent European tour, on Society, Manners and Customs, Art, Literature, Agriculture, Foreign Politics, and a great variety of other attractive and exciting topics.

It has copious notices of the Great Exhibition or World's Fair in London; complete descriptions of the cultivation of the soil in different countries; brilliant criticisms of the Works of Art in the great European Capitals; and graphic sketches of Public and Domestic Life in London, Paris, Rome, &c., written in the frank, straightforward, piquant style for which Mr. Greeley is widely celebrated.

A more authentic, instructive, and amusing Book of Travels has probably never been issued from the American press. The vast amount of information which it contains is presented in such a lively and off-hand manner that the perusal of the volume becomes as interesting as a novel.

Whoever would obtain a fresh, Daguerreotype view of the present state of England, should not fail to make himself acquainted with its contents. Even the discussion of the driest topics, which it sometimes takes up, is enlivened with such frequent flashes of humor, and pervaded with such genial and sparkling vivacity, that no one who commences the volume can lay it down without finishing its perusal.

We confidently anticipate a very extensive circulation for this work throughout the United States. The name of
NOTICES OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

The Overland Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin is, perhaps, as deeply interesting as any marine effort. Sir John Richardson set out from Quebec early in the Summer of 1818, and traversing all that wild region stretching between the Lakes and the Arctic Sea, explored the shores of those gelid waters in pursuit of the long lost voyager. While he was unsuccessful in his main object, yet the journey was exceedingly profitable in other ways; and those who read Sir John’s “Arctic Searching Expedition,” as issued by the Harpers, will be grateful for the immense amount of information respecting the nations, languages, climate and other peculiarities of those elevated latitudes. The appendix might serve separately for a geography of the British Possessions, so complete and methodical are the matter and arrangement.
quantifying
amount 1852

poses. So in other circles, Fitzroy Cunningham, Esquire, a shrewd and clear-headed merchant, who has acquired princely wealth without education, has made himself generally intelligent, and has acquired an immense amount of information regarding nearly everything in the world, has little respect for science or learning; unless, indeed, he may stand at the head of the Board of Trustees and contrive with his brethren to get out of the Faculty the maximum of work at the minimum of salary. [Laughter.] As a general
"Intellectual culture consists, not chiefly, as many are apt to think, in accumulating information, though that is important, but in building up a force of thought which may be turned at will on any subjects, on which we are called to pass judgment."

--William Channing, 1838

"It may well be questioned whether the invention of printing, while it democratized information, has not so levelled the ancient aristocracy of thought"

--James Lowell, 1893
"quality of information"

finally

that it is not the quantity but the quality of information which renders it valuable. Knowledge is a remedy for

Charles Taylor,  *Surveys of Nature*, vol 1, p. 3 1787
who's counting

"The amount of information is defined, in the simplest cases, to be measured by the logarithm of the number of available choices."

-- Warren Weaver, 1949
"The word *information*, in this theory, is used in a very special sense that must not be confused with its ordinary usage. In particular, *information* must not be confused with meaning."
"The word communication will be used here in a very broad sense to include all of the procedures by which one mind may affect another ... not only written and oral speech, but also music, the pictorial arts, the theatre, the ballet .... a still broader definition ... the procedures by means of which one mechanism (say automated equipment to track an airplane and to compute its future positions) affects other mechanisms (say a guided missile chasing this airplane."

-- Warren Weaver, 1949
"Shannon has just written a paper on the design of a computer which would be capable of playing a skillful game of chess. And it is of further direct pertinence to the present contention that this paper closes with the remark that either one must say that such a computer "thinks," or one must substantially modify the conventional implication of the verb "to think."

-- Warren Weaver, 1949
quantity or quality?

information in books

"If digitized with full formatting, the seventeen million books in the Library of Congress contain about 136 terabytes of information; five exabytes of information is equivalent in size to the information contained in 37,000 new libraries the size of the Library of Congress book collections." --HMI
Alvin Toffler

"The quantity of culture" *Fortune*

"The United States suffers from an inferiority complex about its culture consumption. ... I shall attempt to give a rough idea of the amount of culture consumption in this country."

-- *The Culture Consumers, 1961.*
"The United States produces about 40% of the world's new stored information, including 33% of the world's new printed information, 30% of the world's new film titles, 40% of the world's information stored on optical media, and about 50% of the information stored on magnetic media."
quality vs quantity?

information liquidity

"Larry Page and Sergey Brin, revolutionised the concept of searching. Its system relies on the wisdom of crowds – the belief that the more people link to a page, the more authoritative it becomes."

-- Guardian
quality vs quantity

the weight of evidence:

Microsoft v z4

"The defendants marked 3,449 exhibits, but only admitted 107 of them at trial. The Court concludes that Defendants attempted to bury the relevant 107 exhibits ... in a massive pile of decoys," [Judge] Davis wrote. He cited several examples in which the defendants failed to fully and promptly disclose evidence, calling one instance "an intentional attempt by Defendants to mislead z4 and this Court."

Seattle Times August 22d
liquidity & democracy

wikipedia

"There is this tight community that is actually doing the bulk of all the editing. ... It's a group of around a thousand to two thousand people."

--Jimmy Wales
Edit by edit, I watched the page evolve. The changes I saw largely fell into three groups. A tiny handful -- probably around 5 out of nearly 400 -- were "vandalism": confused or malicious people adding things that simply didn't fit, followed by someone undoing their change. The vast majority, by far, were small changes: people fixing typos, formatting, links, categories, and so on, making the article a little nicer but not adding much in the way of substance. Finally, a much smaller amount were genuine additions: a couple sentences or even paragraphs of new information added to the page.

http://www.aaronsw.com/weblog/whowriteswikipedia
marketplace of ideas

Oliver Wendell Holmes
information and goods

[People come to believe] "that the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas—that the best test of truth is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market, and that truth is the only ground upon which their wishes safely can be carried out. That at any rate is the theory of our Constitution. It is an experiment, as all life is an experiment. Every year if not every day we have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based upon imperfect knowledge."

Abrams vs United States, 1919
"[T]he majority vote of the nation that could lick all the others."

Oliver Wendell Holmes
new brahmins?

Steve Irwin's tragic accidental death caught on film
Monsters and Critics.com - 2 hours ago
By M&C News Sep 4, 2006, 18:34 GMT. Queensland police have been handed the taped footage that was the last record of Australian Crocodile Hunter Steve Irwin being fatally pierced through the heart by a stingray on the Great Barrier Reef. ...

Irwin death footage 'shocking' Melbourne Herald Sun
Steve Irwin Guardian Unlimited
Washington Post - WCPO - WNDU-TV - Townsville Bulletin
all 1,671 news articles »

Briton shot dead in Jordan as gunman fires at tourists
Guardian Unlimited - 46 minutes ago
A British holidaymaker was killed and five other tourists wounded when a gunman opened fire on a tour group in Amman, capital of Jordan, yesterday. A witness said the man pulled out a pistol and shouted "Allahu ...

Jordan gunman was from Zarqawi's hometown
Ireland Online
British tourist reported killed in Amman attack Irish Examiner
Voice of America - Independent - Arab News - Times Online
all 626 news articles »