

Buckland review



Abstract Information is a broad term that encompasses a wide variety of sources. In "Information as Thing", Backhand attempts to define Information by breaking it down into information-as-process, information-as-knowledge, and information-as-thing. As he went on into tangibility versus intangibility, I saw a mere glimpse of the complexity behind it all but what really got me thinking was the discussion of what is usually thought of to be informative.

The field of information sciences restricts information to consist strictly of data, documents and text, when in reality, like Backhand said, objects and events quite possibly could provide more Information. Luckily, there are changes being made in order to see that artifacts and objects can be seen as documents. Another viewpoint introduced was the fact that anything could have the capacity to be informational, as long as someone wanted it to be. Furthermore, not all things seen as informative are going to be utilized.

Backhand has opened my eyes to a new world where information is not just a term that is uncomplicated but is elaborate. An uncommon Approach Information is a broad but loaded term. With that said, it is awfully hard to pinpoint its exact meaning. Many uncommon but noteworthy viewpoints were discussed in Michael Backhand's "Information as Thing". This enlightening article presents a refreshing new twist on the way the word "information" is defined. For me, personally, Information has always been a term that has been incredibly simple and straightforward.

It was something self explanatory? no further explanation required. Because Backhand's perspective is so drastically different to what I'm familiar with, I had to read this piece several times before I could even begin to empowered

it. Before I could even grasp all the material covered in this article, I knew I was in for a bumpy ride. It quickly became clear to me that information was exceedingly more complicated than I perceived it to be. As I was skimming through the article for the first time, I wondered what approach Backhand would take to define this term. Lamenting the word "Information" to be ambiguous, Backhand decided to break it down into three distinguishable parts: information-as-process, information-as-knowledge, and information-as-thing. Moreover, he then separated them into tangible versus intangible, where information-as-process and information-as-knowledge are categorized as intangible, as opposed to information-as-thing, which falls under the category of tangible. Since this was all still very foreign to me, my brain was feeling a little overwhelmed.

I would have never have expected there to be so much gray area within information and information sciences. When I think of sources of information, the typical few immediately come to mind ? TV, books, and websites. As Backhand begins to introduce the various types of information, data, texts, and documents are among the first elements to be touched upon. While reading this, I was completely satisfied with those three resources. Topic. To my utter surprise, this was certainly not the case. Instead, my eyes settled on another italicized word that appeared at the break of the paragraph. "Objects", the paper stated. I was puzzled by this label and questioned Backhand's ideas but soon came to the realization that he was spot on. Objects are definitely a great source of information? some may even argue that they are more informative than ATA, texts, or documents? but are frequently overlooked in the world of information studies. As I mulled over

the thought some more, a certain object made its way into my mind. My charm bracelet, something I wear everyday, undeniably allows others to peer into the life of Chelsea Chin. Each charm is highly symbolic and reveals a little snippet about me.

In my opinion, if a poll was taken about types of information, I'm sure the majority of people would have responded with at least one, if not all, of the big three, but if they were given the time to actually think about it and then given a follow-up assignment, I am confident that most people would have a list with the word "object" nested somewhere in there. With regards to the way the field of information science has fixated their time on data, text, and documents while ignoring objects, it is definitely difficult to hear but pleasant to see Outlet and the documentation movement giving it more attention.

As I think the section is starting to wrap up, I am shocked yet again as I come across another italicized word: Events. Backhand brings up an excellent point when he refers to events as "informative henchmen". There is no doubt that events are informative? they are just harder to represent because they are fleeting. Backhand has come to the conclusion that "we are unable to say confidently of anything that it could not be information" (Backhand, 1991). The statement is valid but something Vive never really thought about. As we dive deeper into the article, it becomes apparent that there is really no solution to this problem.

Take a desk for example. It is something that is often seen simply just as a piece of furniture? nothing more, nothing less. If one really wanted to though, this desk could provide all sorts of information. It has the ability to

imply that one was a student or held a job. Furthermore, the quality of the desk could also be something to look out for when examining the item if one is writing a review for the company that made it. From this example, it is easy to see that anything can be qualified as informational if placed into the correct situation, which is exactly the point Backhand is trying to get at.

Sometimes people believe things are informational even when it is not assured that people will utilize that thing. Just like the telephone book mentioned by Backhand, the terms of agreement is plenty informational, but no one really takes the time to read through that novel. Information has always been very black and white to me. Reading this article, however, has allowed me to see information in a different light. Backhand made an exceptional attempt to define the word "information" by dividing it further into three separate sections.

Comparing his definition to mine, it is easy to see that my view was elementary and extremely transparent while his was well thought out and intricate. His arguments have really provoked a considerable amount of thought in me: documents, data, and text are not the only resources that provide information. Objects and events are equally as informational, if not more so. Everything that Backhand made some really great points that have given me a newfound appreciation for the field of information studies.

References Backhand, M. (1991). Information as Thing. *Journal of the American Society for Information science*, 42(5), 351-360.