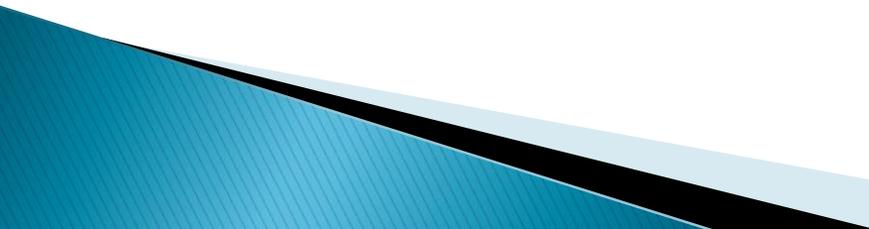


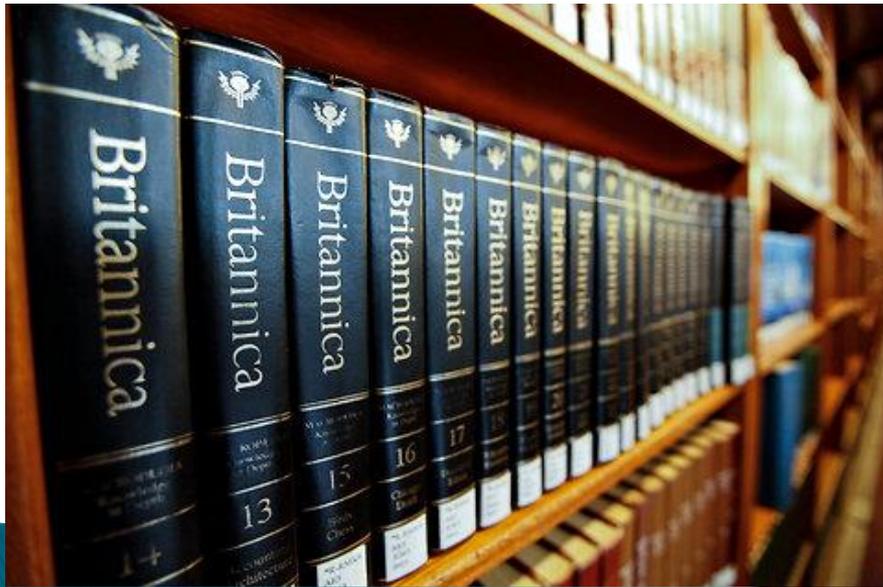
The Future of Reading and Academic Libraries

David Durant and Tony Horava
Charleston Conference
Nov. 7, 2014

Reading Trends Today

- ▶ 28% of American adults read an e-book in the last year (Pew)
 - ▶ 32% of Americans own an e-reading device (42% own a tablet)
 - ▶ Amazon announced in 2011 that its e-book sales had surpassed print sales
 - ▶ Academic library print circulation rates have substantially declined in last 20 years
 - ▶ In FY 2012, academic libraries added over 52 million e-books (27 million print items)
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Reading Trends Today



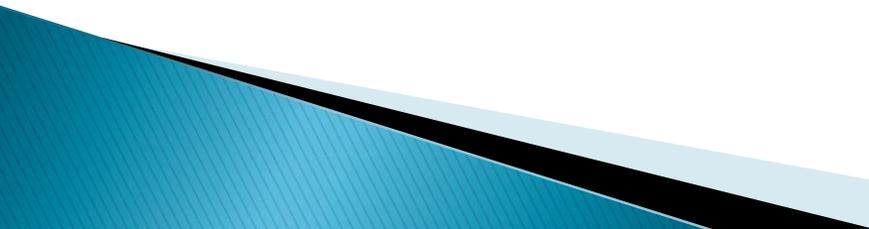
Do We Still Need Books?

- ▶ Growing belief that e-reading can replace print reading
 - ▶ Concept of digital/”bookless” libraries
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The Reading Experience: An Overview

- ▶ Reading experience has been profoundly affected by the shift in media. Until a generation ago, reading and print culture were virtually synonymous; and intimately linked with the existential purpose of the library.
- ▶ The PDF file provided reassurance to the reader looking for familiarity and stability, and harkened back to the fixity of the print environment (and created its own problems)
- ▶ Many types of information literacy co-existing today – data literacy, video literacy, media literacy, etc
- ▶ Meaning is shaped and blended across different media, so that the impact of text, images, sounds, and video complement each other, creates multiple perspectives and a multimedia, multisensory experience of information

The Materiality of Reading

- ▶ Reading doesn't occur in a physical vacuum: regardless of format or type of work, there is an interaction with a medium or form
 - ▶ There is no container-neutral experience; every container influences the reading experience; the possibilities, expectations, limitations, and sensory impact
 - ▶ Words on a screen are detachable, malleable, and not inherently associated with any container. Our experience is affected by the plastic ways we absorb information today
 - ▶ Swiping, tapping, scrolling, and similar navigational actions (think of progress bars) have become inherent to the reading process. This is so ubiquitous that we rarely stop nowadays to think of the implications for the reading experience.
 - ▶ The hands now play a very active role; reading has become physically different activity – the medium is part of the message!
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The Science of Reading

- ▶ Reading is learned, not innate
 - ▶ Humans developed the ability to read due to neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to adapt and rewire itself
 - ▶ The brain “rewires” itself as it engages in various activities or uses technologies
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The Science of Reading (cont.)

- ▶ The more one reads, the more deeply the neural pathways that facilitate reading take hold
 - ▶ The opposite is also true
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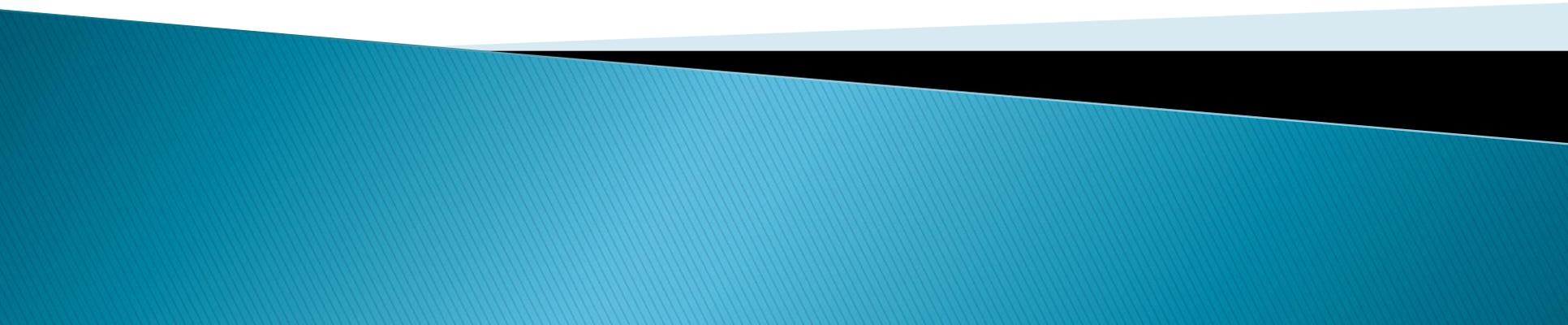
The Science of Reading (cont.)

- Two main (contrasting, complementary) forms of reading (C. Rowe):
 - Linear (sustained, focused)
 - Tabular (ad hoc info seeking)

Linear Reading is . . .

- Fixed
- Solitary
- Focused, sustained attention/reflection
- Facilitates memorization and knowledge formation

Tabular Reading is . . .

- Nonlinear
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 - Short passages/skimming/browsing
 - Fosters rapid decision making/filtering
 - Visual ability/pattern recognition
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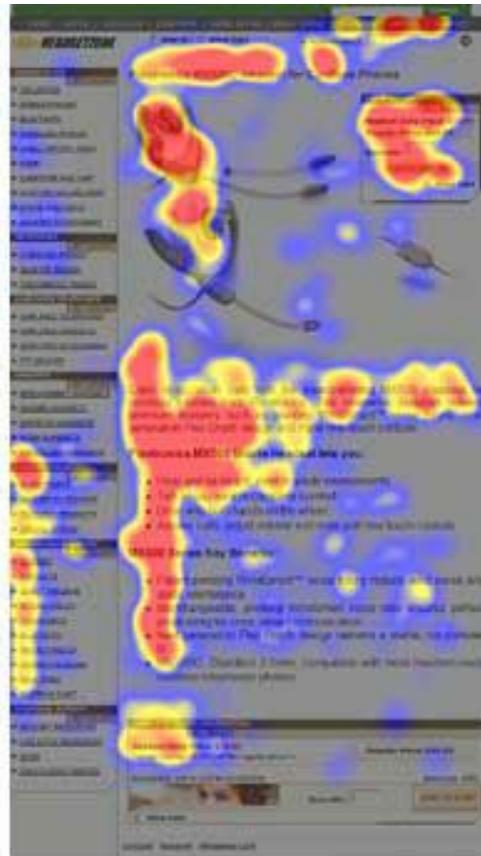
The Science of Reading (cont.)

- Growing evidence that screen reading is NOT the same as reading off a printed page (Nicholas Carr)
- The human brain responds differently to screen-based reading than to print reading

E-Reading Characteristics

- Impatience/desire for immediate gratification/stimulation
 - Distractions/multitasking
 - Absorbing information in small bits
 - Browsing or skimming (F-shaped pattern – Nielsen)
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F-Shaped Reading Pattern



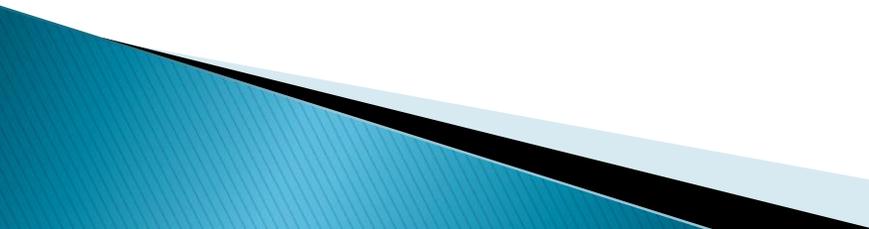
www.useit.com

Source: "F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content", Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox, April 17, 2006. http://www.useit.com/alertbox/reading_pattern.html.

Print Reading vs. E-Reading

- ▶ Screen reading fosters tabular reading at the expense of linear
 - ▶ The more your brain rewires itself to accommodate screen reading, the harder it becomes to read off a printed page
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What About E-Readers?

- ▶ Unlikely that e-readers are a long-term solution
 - Dedicated e-readers (Kindle, Nook) vs. multipurpose devices (iPad, Laptop)
 - Multipurpose devices bring a variety of distractions
 - Multipurpose devices tend to supplant dedicated devices (iPhone/digital camera)
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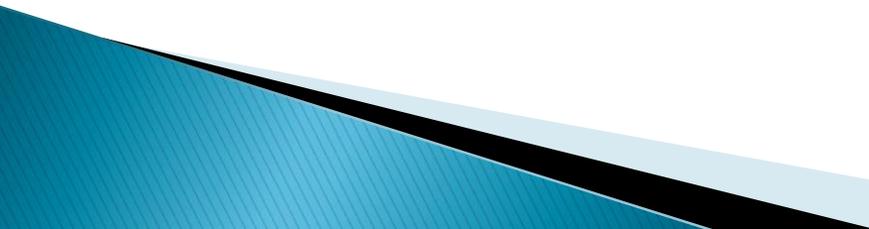
Implications of the Shift from Print to Electronic Reading

- ▶ If we become overly reliant on screen reading, we risk gaining vastly greater access to information while sacrificing the ability to turn that information into knowledge
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What will happen to Deep Reading

- ▶ Unlikely to disappear, but...
 - ▶ Greatly reduced in cultural resonance
 - ▶ Likely to become the exclusive property of an elite “reading class” (W. Griswold).
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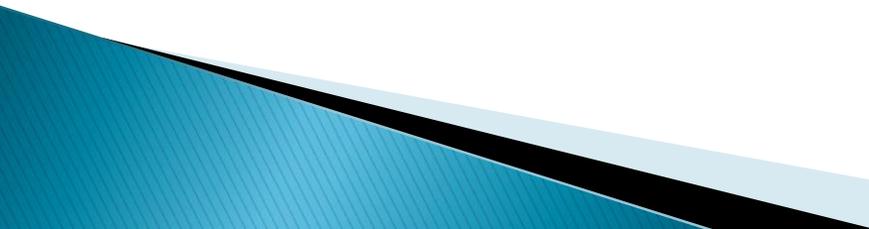
Academic Libraries: The Need for Hybrid Collections

- ▶ Libraries have responded to the massive shift from print to digital reading: in fiscal year 2010, American academic libraries added more e-books (over 32,000,000) than print items (27,000,000) to their collections
 - ▶ As academic librarians we need to find ways to preserve access to deep reading even as we adapt to the values and needs of the digital age. Complementary formats for different purposes and interests
 - ▶ The precise balance between electronic and physical holdings should be a reflection of each library's unique mission and the needs of the institution it supports
 - ▶ Some level of open-stack access to print monographs, depending on circumstance and strategy, is an important goal. This is especially relevant for humanities and social sciences libraries.
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Hybrid Collections

- A commitment to literacy and learning is a core value of librarianship. We play a key role in partnering with faculty in understanding the impact of new forms of reading on scholarship, learning, and communication of ideas
 - Various studies indicate that students still prefer print books to digital.
 - By preserving print collections in concert with providing access to digital materials, libraries are preserving a way of thinking and interacting with research that is complementary to other uses of scholarly information.
 - Local and regional initiatives (WEST, GWLA, UCL) can be complementary strategies in preserving print.
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Broader issues

- ▶ Librarians can incorporate questions around the reading experience and best practices in our conversations with publishers and vendors. Often we focus on pricing, content, licensing models, and discoverability.
 - ▶ Reading research is a rapidly evolving area of interdisciplinary study, involving sociology, psychology, communication studies, neurobiology, education, and linguistics.
 - ▶ Democratic mission of libraries is predicated on a reading culture. We need to offer the broadest possible access to the corpus of scholarship in an array of reading forms
 - ▶ Reading and writing are intimately connected and develop together. Democratization of reading in new forms should be a balanced, thoughtful approach
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Conclusion

- ▶ Written culture is still vital for our intellectual development; our personal well-being; our sense of shared culture (Naomi Baron)
 - ▶ Print and digital are complementary formats, not interchangeable
 - ▶ Academic libraries must understand that different formats fulfill different needs, and different styles of research
 - ▶ Avoid self-fulfilling prophecies about the ‘digital library’
 - ▶ Commitment to serving the full spectrum of user needs
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Readings

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- ▶ Naomi S. Baron, “How E-Reading Threatens Learning in the Humanities,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education* July 14, 2014, accessed October 24, 2014, <http://chronicle.com/article/How-E-Reading-Threatens/147661/>
- ▶ Anne Burke and Jennifer Rowsell, “Screen Pedagogy: Challenging Perceptions of Digital Reading Practice,” *Changing English* 15, 4 (December 2008): 445–456.
- ▶ Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).
- ▶ Barry W. Cull, “Reading Revolutions: Online Digital Text and Implications for Reading in Academe,” *First Monday* 16, 6 (June 6, 2011), accessed October 24, 2014, <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3340/2985>
- ▶ Mohsin Hamid and Anna Holmes, “How Do E-Books Change the Reading Experience?” *New York Times*, December 31, 2013, accessed October 24, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/05/books/review/how-do-e-books-change-the-reading-experience.html>

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- ▶ Ferris Jabr, "The Reading Brain in the Digital Age: The Science of Paper Versus Screens," *Scientific American* 11 (April 11, 2013), accessed July 29, 2013, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reading-paper-screens/>.
- ▶ Anne Mangen, "Hypertext Fiction Reading: Haptics and Immersion," *Journal of Research in Reading* 31, 4 (2008): 404–19.
- ▶ Jakob Nielsen, "F-Shaped Pattern For Reading Web Content," *Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox*, April 17, 2006, accessed October 24, 2014, <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/f-shaped-pattern-reading-web-content/>
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- ▶ Maryanne Wolf and Mirit Barzillai, "The Importance of Deep Reading," *Educational Leadership* 66, 6 (March 2009), accessed October 24, 2014, <http://ase.tufts.edu/crlr/documents/2009EL-ImportanceDeepReading.pdf>

Thanks very much. Any questions?

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