

The Organization of Knowledge

History of Information i218

Geoff Nunberg

Feb. 27, 2014



Midterm exam

Midterm exam

(from bCourses): 80 minute, in-class exam **March 20**. It will include three essay questions, two chosen from a list of questions provided in advance. There will also be short-answer sections asking you to identify quotations, people, dates, images, and other aspects of the course. Exam questions will be based on material covered in readings, slides, and class discussion. We will provide a study guide around March 10.



Midterm paper

Midterm paper (optional)

2000-wd paper in response to one of a list of essay questions.

Details on bcourses.

Essay prompts posted: 5/1

Paper outline w/ sources due March 8; our reply returned by 8/10

Paper due by March 20 at 9:30 AM BEFORE beginning of exam. **No late** papers accepted; if you haven't finished by then, take the exam.

Guidelines on form, etc. posted on bcourses



Itinerary: 2/27

Defining "knowledge"

The shifting frame of knowledge; from Renaissance to Enlightenment

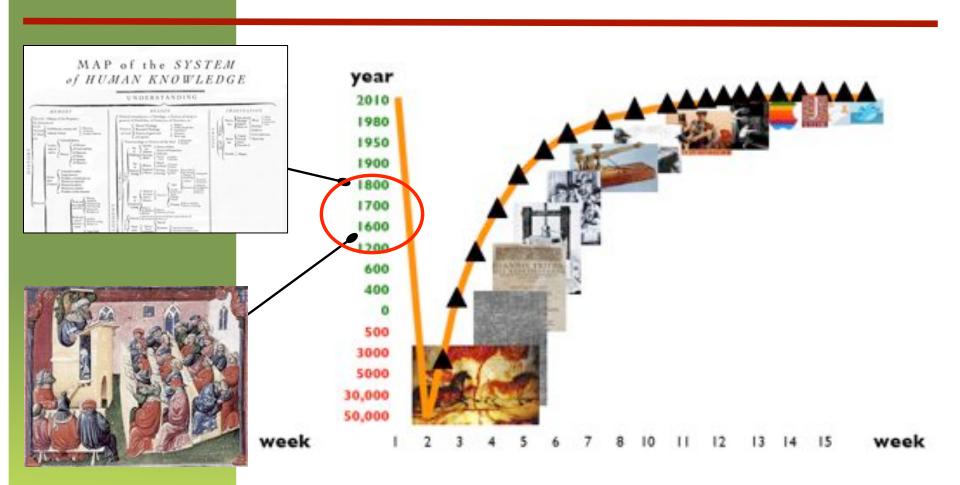
Early reactions to "information overload"

New conceptualizations of knowledge

The material representations of knowledge: encyclopedias, libraries, museums, dictionaries



Where We Are





The Emergence of the Modern "Informational System"

Many, if not most, of the cultural phenomena of the modern world derive from [the 18th century] -- the periodical, the newspaper, the novel, the journalist, the critic, the public library, the concert, **the public museum** [not to mention advertising, intellectual property, propaganda, the scientific society (and science itself), the modern dictionary and encyclopedia, etc.— GN]. Perhaps most important of all, it was then that 'public opinion' came to be recognized as the ultimate arbiter in matters of taste and politics.

--Tim Blanning, The Culture of Power



Defining "knowledge"



Defining "knowledge"

Individual senses

Oxford English Dictionary:

• Acquaintance with a branch of learning, a language, or the like

His knowledge of French is excellent.

• The fact or state of having a correct idea or understanding of something.

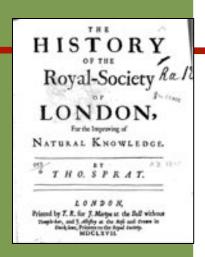
He has a considerable knowledge of alarm systems.

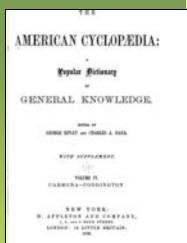


Collective sense

The sum of what is known. All knowledge may be commodiously distributed into science and erudition.







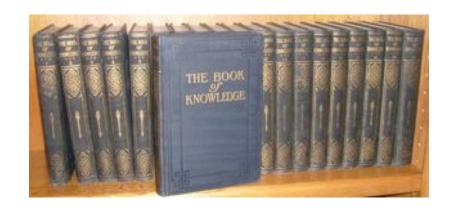
Collective knowledge: the missing roles

Collective sense: knowledge as a three-place relation

The sum of what is known [about X] [by Y]

The difference between "knowlege" and "what is known."

"Medical knowledge" vs "medical information"





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What makes for "knowledge"?

What qualifies something as (collective) knowledge?

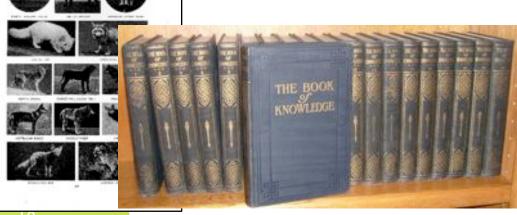
P is collectively significant

Nunberg's out of paper towels.

Kimberly-Clark closed at \$108 yesterday.

Paper towel consumption is 50% higher in America than in Europe.

Arthur Scott introduced the first paper towel in 1931.





Shifting Conceptions of Knowledge, 1500-1800



The archaeology of knowledge

How do we characterize conceptions of "knowledge" historically?

Explicit descriptions & theories

Models/images of knowledge in

Forms of institutions & practices (curriculum)

Material embodiments (library, museum)

Textual embodiments – encyclopedia, dictionary, compendium, bibliography

Metaphors & visualizations: field, tree, discipline, trésor, etc.



Shifting Conceptions of Knowledge, 1500-1800



Varieties of Renaissance knowledge:

scientiae/artes: "Ars sine scientia nihil est."

Higher vs lower

General/specialized

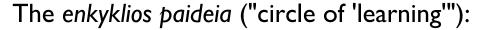
The "universal man" (polymathia, pansophia)

"A man is able to learn many things and make himself universal in many excellent arts." Matteo Palmieri, 1528

Book-learning vs knowledge of things



The 15th-Century Curriculum



Trivium: grammar, logic, rhetoric

Quadrivium: arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music

The three philosophies: ethics, metaphysics, "natural

philosophy"

Higher faculties: theology, medicine, law







The 15th-Century Curriculum

Curriculum roughly uniform throughout Europe, enabled peregrinatio academica

"town and gown"







The 15th-Century Curriculum



THE OF KNOWLEDGE, TITLE-PAGE OF R. LOLL, ASSOCIATION (1515; arg., 1635); copy by Cambridge University Library (P*3.52). System of knowledge is "closed"; built around classical sources and religious texts (courses organized around texts, not subjects)

Organization of knowledge is fixed and "natural"



Changing Frames of Knowledge

Within 200 years, something like the mod, system emerges.

Responses to influences that are:

Pragmatic/material

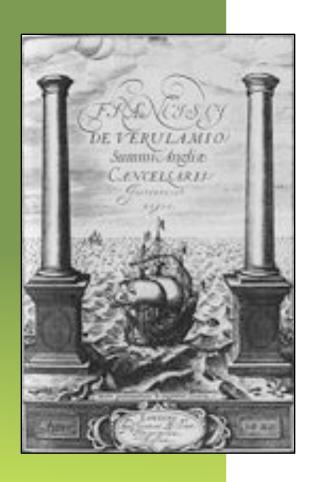
Philosophical/academic

Symbolic/political

(Not independent...)



Breaking with the past

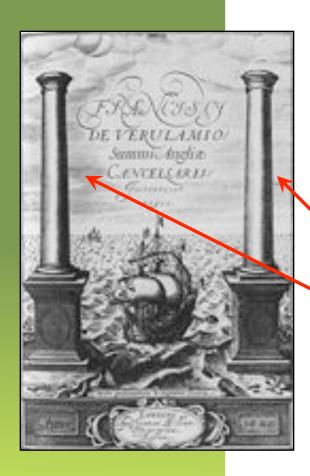


It would disgrace us, now that the wide spaces of the material globe, the lands and seas, have been broached and explored, if the limits of the intellectual globe should be should be set by the narrow discoveries of the ancients. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, 1605





Breaking with the past



It would disgrace us, now that the wide spaces of the material globe, the lands and seas, have been broached and explored, if the limits of the intellectual globe should be should be should be set by the narrow discoveries of the ancients. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, 1605

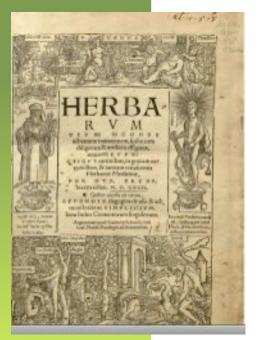
What are these?





Opening the World of Knowledge: Botany

Herbarum vivae eicones ("Living Pictures of Herbs") by Otto Brunfels, I 532. Matched Swiss & German plants to those known to Pliny and Discorides, ignoring differences, with residual herbae nudae ("naked plants")









Drawing annotated by Gestner

Opening the world of knowledge

Valerius Cordus, *Historia plantarum* 1561 (1544), published posthumously by Conrad Gesner.

Records numerous plants not described by the ancients; emphasizes differences among similar plants.







Opening the world of knowledge

John Ray, Historia generalis plantarum, 1686-

Classified 6100 plant species by seeds, seeds, fruit and leaves. Produced first modern defintion of the species.

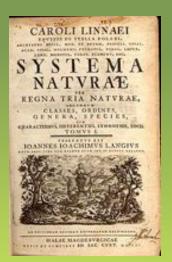
"... no surer criterion for determining species has occurred to me **than the distinguishing features that perpetuate themselves in propagation from seed**. Thus, no matter what variations occur in the individuals or the species, if they spring from the seed of one and the same plant, they are accidental variations and not such as to distinguish a species...

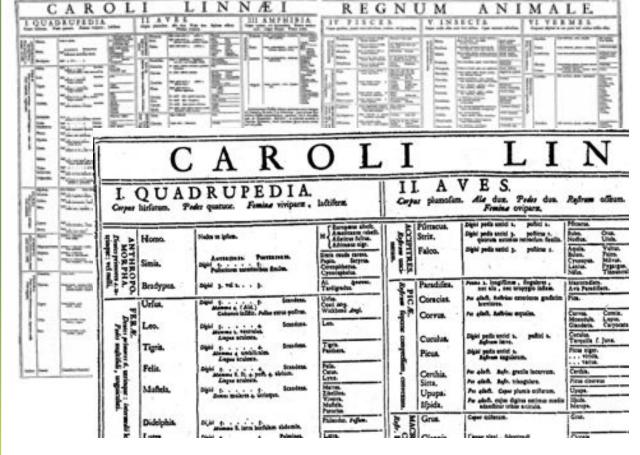
"I reckon all Dogs to be of one Species, they mingling together in Generation, and the Breed of such Mixtures being prolifick"



The birth of "modern" classification







Systema naturae 1735 23

"I know no greater man on earth." Jean-Jacques Rousseau





Frontispiece to Linnaeus, *Hortus* Cliffortianus 1737

The birth of "modern" classification

Plants classified into 24 classes according to length and number of stamens; further classified into orders etc. Established binary system of naming



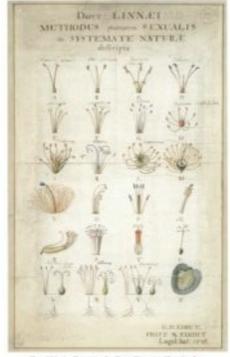


Plate 156: An illustration by Goog Discoping Eleve for the Horms Cilifornium (1725–48) in which the Sondish plantanum, Carl Zemann, fort begin to novel our low worknikes plantanum notaside, grouping plants according to the normbor and arrangement of that transmis-



Organizing Knowledge Responses to Early Modern "Information Overload"

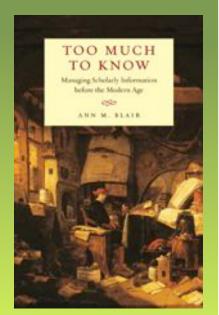


Linneaus, index card, ca 1760



Pragmatic Forces: Perceptions of "Information Overload"





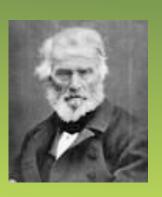
Antonfrancesco Doni, 1550: there are "so many books that we do not have time to read even the titles."

"That horrible mass of books... keeps on growing, [until] the disorder will become nearly insurmountable." Gottfried Leibniz, 1680





It will soon be the employment of a lifetime merely to learn [books'] names. Many a man of passable information at the present day reads scarcely anything but reviews, and before long, a man of erudition will be little better than a mere walking catalogue Washington Irving, 1822



Books are not only printed, but in a great measure written and sold by machinery.... Every little sect among us, Unitarians, Utilitarians, Anabaptists, Phrenologists, must have its periodical, its monthly or quarterly magazine, hanging out like its windmill ...to grind meal for society. Thomas Carlyle, 1840



Whether it is the records we have to keep in every business and profession or the ceaseless communicating at a distance which modern transport and industry require, the world's work is now unmanagenable, unthinkable, without literature. ... A committee won't sit if its drivelings are not destined for print. Even an interoffice memo goes out in sixteen copies. [There is a] huge number of activities which (it would seem) exist only to bombard us with paper...

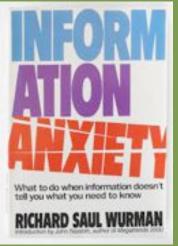
Jacques Barzun, 1954



And while Mr. Reagan prospered in schools without libraries, I believe that the "information explosion" of more recent years has made school libraries necessary.

This is the information age! There is an information explosion. Some students will need a longer period of time to master mathematics, science, economics, world history. 1983









DECEMBER 20, 2007, 5:52 PM

Is Information Overload a \$650 Billion Drag on the Economy?

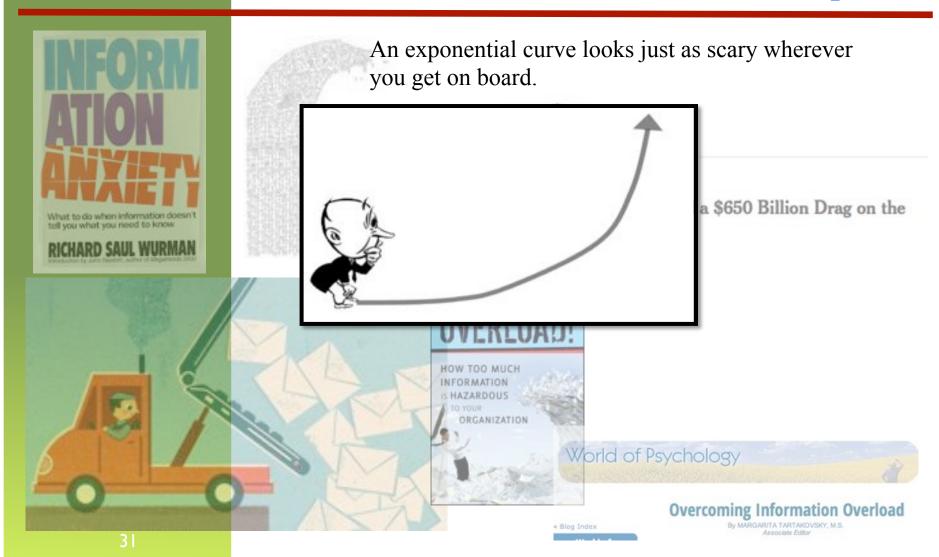


World of Psychology

Overcoming Information Overload

By MARGARITA TARTAKOVSKY, M.S.







Confronting the Explosion









Bibliothèque Mazarine (1643)

The Reorganization of Libraries

Gabriel Naudé proposes library organization scheme to "find books without labor, without trouble, and without confusion." (1627)



Creation of "reference" works

Compendia and reference books (répertoires or trésors) Répertoires divided into:

Dictionaries (& onomasticons); Florilegia (collections of sayings, etc).; commonplace books; miscellanies...

"I esteem these Collections extreamly profitable and necessary, considering, the brevity of our life, and the multitude of things which we are now obliged to know, e're one can be reckoned amongst the number of learned men, do not permit us to do all of ourselves." Gabriel Naudé, 1661

The Cyclopaedia will "answer all the Purposes of a Library, except Parade and Incumbrance." Ephraim Chambers, 1728

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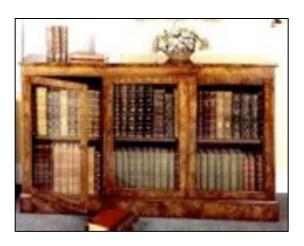
Distillations



E-L. Boulée, plan for the Bibliothèque du Roi, 1785

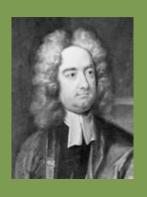
Men of good will have extracted the substance of a thousand volumes and passed it in its entirety into a single small duodecimo, a bit like skillful chemists who press out the essence of flowers to concentrate it in a phial while throwing the dregs away."

Louis-Sebastian Mercier, *L'An 2440*, 1771





Strategies for dealing with information overload



The most accomplished way of using books at present is twofold. Either, first, to serve them as men do Lords, learn their titles exactly and then brag of their acquaintance:—or, secondly, ..., to get a thorough insight into the Index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like fishes, by the tail... Thus men catch knowledge by throwing their wit on the posteriors of a book, as boys do sparrows by flinging salt upon the tail."

Jonathan Swift, "Tale of a Tub," 1704

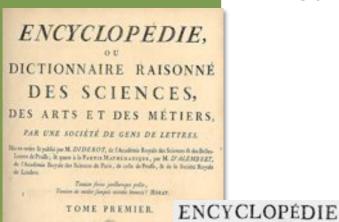


Strategies for dealing with information overload

Compendia and reference books (répertoires or trésors)

As long as the centuries continue to unfold, the number of books will grow continually, and one can predict that a time will come when it will be almost as difficult to learn anything from books as from the direct study of the whole universe. It will be almost as convenient to search for some bit of truth concealed in nature as it will be to find it hidden away in an immense multitude of bound volumes.

—Denis Diderot, Encyclopédie, 1755



MÉTHODIQUE.

ARTS ACADÉMIQUES. ÉQUITATION, ESCRIME.

DANSE.

ET ART DE NAGER.

Ches PANCEOUCKE, Library, No.: in Three, was do Principe.

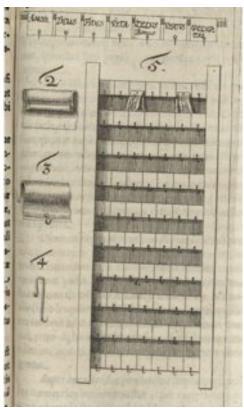
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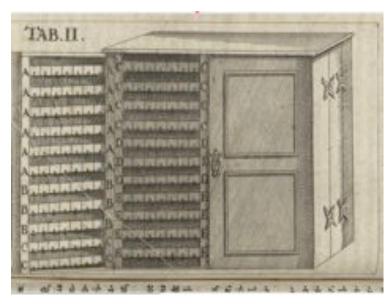


Strategies for Dealing with Information Overload

Note-taking system described by Vincent Placcius, from De arte excerpendi, 1689









Reconceptualizations of Knowledge



The Classificatory Urge: Thematic Organization



Speculum naturale: God, angels & devils, man, the creation, and natural history

Speculum doctrinale: Grammar, logic, ethics, medicine, crafts...

Speculum historiale: History of the world...





New Schemes of Organization: Philosophical Influences



Francis Bacon's scheme puts man at the center:

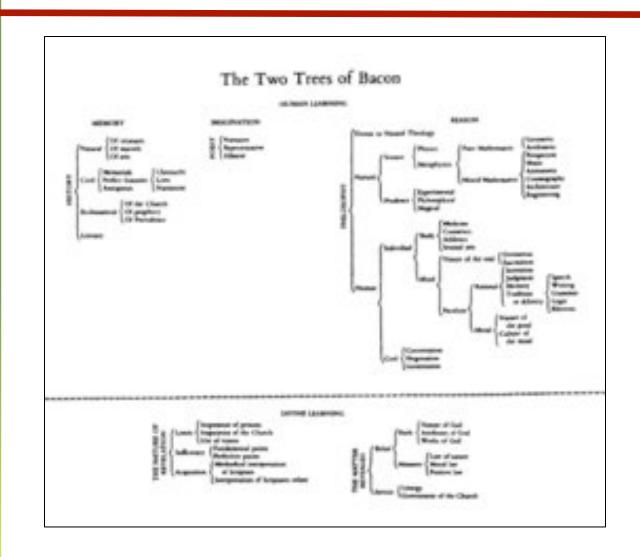
Nature (astronomy, meterology, etc.).

Man (anatomy, powers, actions),

Man acting on nature (medicine, visual arts, arithmetic),,,

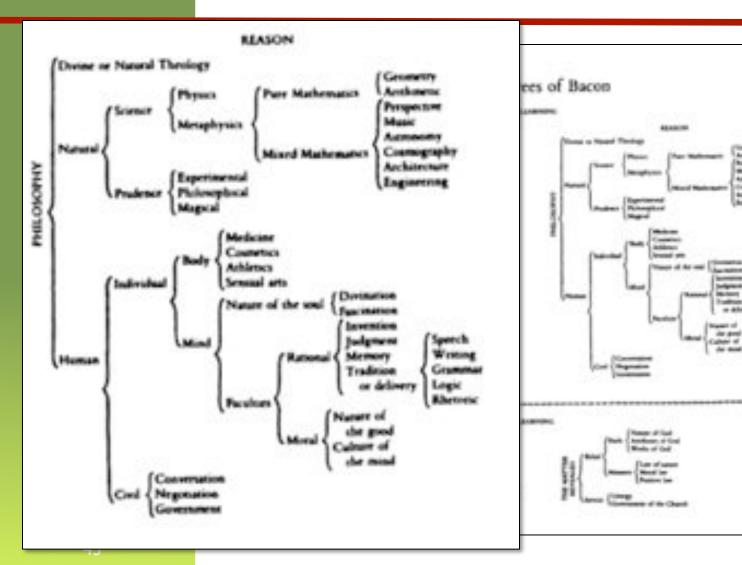


The Tree of Bacon





The Tree of Bacon



Chamber's Cyclopædia,

CTCLOP & DIA:

UNIVERSAL DICTIONARY

ARTS and SCIENCES:

entruining.

The DEPINITIONS of the TERMS,

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And the Board S.C.S.E.M.C.S.S.

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France de France

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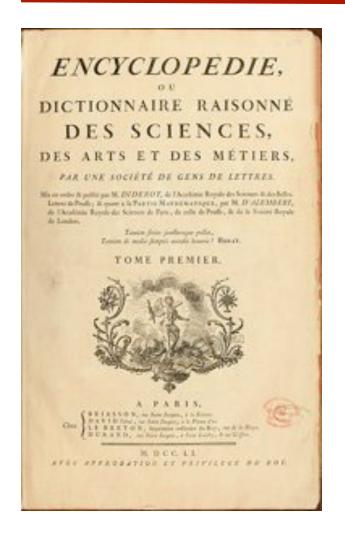
HERRITAN

The Tree of Chambers





The Encyclopédie

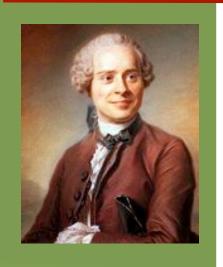




Denis Diderot



The modern condition: An infinity of orders



Jean d'Alembert

The tree of human knowledge could be formed in several ways, either by relating different knowledge to the diverse faculties of our mind or by relating it to the things that it has as its object. ...But how could there not be arbitrariness? Nature presents us only with particular things, infinite in number and without firmly established divisions. Everything shades off into everything else by imperceptible nuances.

D'Alembert, Preliminary Discourse to the *Encyclopédie*



The infinity of orders

... a certain Chinese encyclopaedia entitled 'Celestial Empire of benevolent Knowledge'. In its remote pages it is written that the animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies. There is no classification of the Universe not being arbitrary and full of conjectures

Jorge Luis Borges

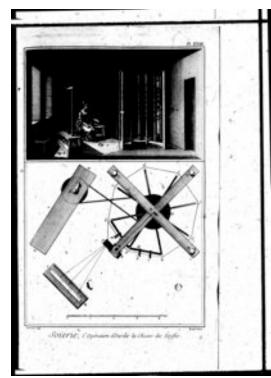


"Sciences, Arts Libéraux, Arts Méchaniques"



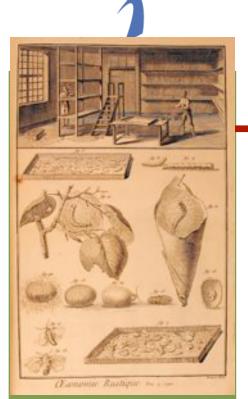
Formier







Economie Rustique (silk-making)





"Sciences, Arts Libéraux, Arts Méchaniques"

...the advantage that the *liberal* arts have over the *mechanical* arts, because of their demands upon the intellect... is sufficiently counter-balanced by the quite *superior* usefulness which the latter for the most part have for us....while justly respecting great geniuses for their enlightenment, society ought not to degrade the hands by which it is served"

d'Alembert, Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopédie

Economie Rustique (silk-making)



Organizing the Trésor



New Schemes of Organization: Didactic Objectives

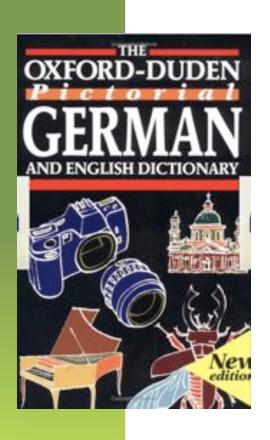


Comenius (Amos Komensky), Orbis sensualium pictus, 1658

- 1. Elements, firmament, fire, meteors
- 2. Waters, earths, stones, metals,
- 3. Trees, fruits, herbs, shrubs
- 4. Animals
- 5. Man and his body...
- 20. Providence, God and the angels,,,



Comenius's Descendants





Comenius's Descendants



P.M. Roger.

Peter Marc Roget: 1779-1869

THESAURUS

**

ENGLISH WORDS AND PHRA

CLASSIFIED AND ARRANGED

-

TO FACILITATE THE EXPRESSION OF IDEA

AND MADE IN

LITERARY COMPOSITION.

PETER MARK ROGET, M.D., F.R.S.

PROPERTY AND ADDRESS OF PERSONS,

SP THE STREET AND PROCESSION, SPICETS AND ADDRESS, AND SECTION, SPICET, THE THIRD, BALLETIN, THESE, AND STREET,

THE PERSONAL PROPERTY OF STREET AND RESIDENCE ASSESSMENT

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POCRTH ROTTON, ENLANGED AND PERSONNEL.

PLAN OF CLASSIFICATION.

	Sect.		Nos.
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	2. Relation		9-24
	3. QUANTITY		25-57
	4. ORDER -		58-83
	5. NUMBER		84-105
	6. TIME .		106-139
	7. CHANGE .		140-152
	8. CAUSATION		153-179
IL SPACE	(1. GENERALLY		180-191
	2. Deministrations		192-239
	3. FORM -		240 - 263
	4. Morion -		204-315
III. MATTER	(1. GENERALLY		316-320
	2. INORGANIO		521-556
	3. ORGANIC		357-449
IV. INTELLECT	[1. FORMATION OF	IDEAS	450-515
	2. COMMUNICATE		
	IDEAS -		516-599
v. volition	(1. INDIVIDUAL		600-736
	2. INTERSOCIAL		737-819
VI. AFFECTIONS	CL. GENERALLY		820-825
	2. PERSONAL		827-887
	3. STREATMETIC		888-921
	4. MORAL .		922-975
	5. Remotors		976-1000



To the Reader. Vch as by their place and calling (but especially Preachers) as have occasion to speake publiquely before obeignurant prople, are so be admonified, that they never affect any flrange inkhame our mes, but lahow to speake to as in community received, and to as the multiprovace may well vederflandshem repetur feeding to be our fine or carious nerverbale gover cardede, vling their (peach as most men-due, and ordering their with anthe fewell have doue. Some men feelor for for ourlandth English, thur they forgeralrogeshersheir mothervlanguage, fo that if frome of their methors were alrogately were notable to tell or visioniland what they fay, and yet chefe froe English Clearkes will faythey forake in their mother rougue, but enemight well charge them for constructayting the Kings English. Also, some far 100rmied genelemen, at their returns home, like

Advertisement to Cawdrey's Table Alpabeticall

The Emergence of Alphabetical Order

If thou be desirous (gentle Reader) rightly and readily to vnderstand, and to profit by this Table, and such like, then thou must learne the Alphabet, to wit, the order of the Letters as they stand, perfecty without booke, and where euery Letter standeth: as (b) neere the beginning, (n) about the middest, and (t) toward the end. Nowe if the word, which thou art desirous to finde, begin with (a) then looke in the beginning of this Table, but if with (v) looke towards the end. Againe, if thy word beginne with (ca) looke in the beginning of the letter (c) but if with (cu) then looke toward the end of that letter. And so of all the rest. &c.

Rob't Cawdrey, A table alphabeticall conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French, &c 1604



The Emergence of Alphabetical Order

Practical advantages of alphabetical order:

Facilitates access to particular entries (assuming a certain mode of reading)

Philosophically modest

"It might be more for the general interest of learning, to have the partitions thrown down, and the whole laid in common again, under one undistinguished name." Ephraim Chambers

Pop

- Adult contemporary music
 - Adult oriented pop music
 - Adult standards.
 - Alropop
 - · Arab pop
 - Austropop
 - · Baroque pop
 - Britoop
 - Bastard pop-
 - Brazilian pop.
 - Bubblegum pop
 - Chinese pop
 - Contemporary Christian
 - Country pop.
 - Dance-pop
 - m Disco
 - Disco pois
 - Dream pop
 - Electropop/Technopop
 - Eurobeat
 - Euro deco
 - Europop
 - Experimental pop municipal
 - French pop
 - Greek Laikö pop.
 - Hind pop.
 - Hong Kong and Carte
 - Hong Kong English po
 - Hot Adult Contempor

Wikipedia: The logical end of destructuring?

Ilma Julieta Urrutia Chang was Guatemala's national representative for the major beauty pageants in 1984.

The N battery is a type of battery. It has a battery. It has a diameter of 12 mm and a height of 30.2 mm. For a typical alkaline battery, the N size weighs 9 grams.

A System Requirements Specification (SRS) is a document where the requirements of a system that is planned to be developed are listed.

Protestants in Eritrea are about 91,232, which are 2% of the population.

Categories: 1926 births I 1991 deaths I African American musicians I American jazz bandleaders I American jazz composers I American jazz trumpeters I American songwriters I Avant-garde trumpeters I Bebop trumpeters I Cool jazz trumpeters I Deaths from stroke I Deaths from respiratory failure I People with sickle-cell disease I Grammy Award winners I Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award winners I Columbia Records artists I Capitol Records artists I Hard-bop trumpeters I Musicians from Illinois I Juilliard School of Music alumni I Miles Davis I Modal jazz trumpeters I People from Madison County, Illinois I People from St. Clair County, Illinois I Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees I St. Louis music I Third Stream trumpeters I Deaths from pneumonia I Burials at Woodlawn Cemetery (The Bronx) I Infectious disease deaths in California



Visualizing Knowledge



Visualizing knowledge



Jean d'Alembert

[T]he encyclopedic arrangement of our knowledge ... consists of collecting knowledge into the smallest area possible and of placing the philosopher at a vantage point, so to speak, high above this vast labyrinth, whence he can perceive the principle sciences and the arts simultaneously. From there he can see at a glance the objects of their speculations and the operations which can be made on these objects; he can discern the general branches of human knowledge, ...and sometimes he can even glimpse the secrets that relate them to one another. It is a kind of world map which is to show the principle countries, their position and their mutual dependence, the road that leads directly from one to the other.

CYCLOPEDIA:

OR, AR

UNIVERSAL DICTIONARY

ARTS AND SCIENCES.

CHETAINING

As EXPLANATION of the TERMS, and as ACCOUNT OF THE SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

19.59%

LIBERAL AND MECHANICAL ARTS,

AND THE

SCIENCES, HUMAN and DIVINE.

tound is a COURSE of ANCIENT and MODERN LEARNING.

By L CHAMBERS, F.R.S.

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WITE THE

SUPPLEMENT,

M D D E R N I M P R O V E M E N T S,

proposed in sec ALPHABET.

By ABRAHAM REES, D.D.

IN FOUR VOLUMER



Chamber's Cyclopædia, 1728

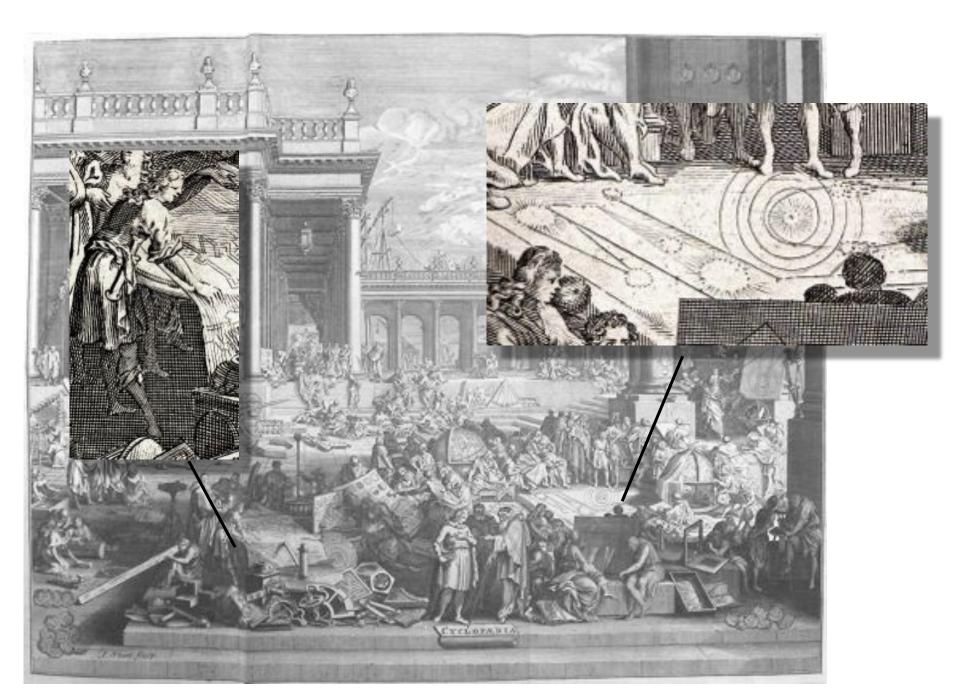
The Tree of Chambers





Picturing knowledge



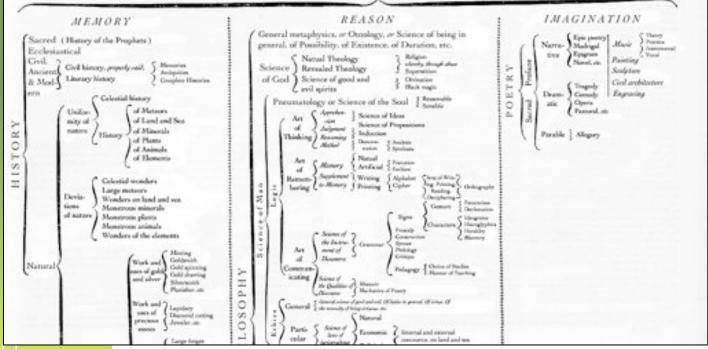




The Tree of Diderot & D'Alembert

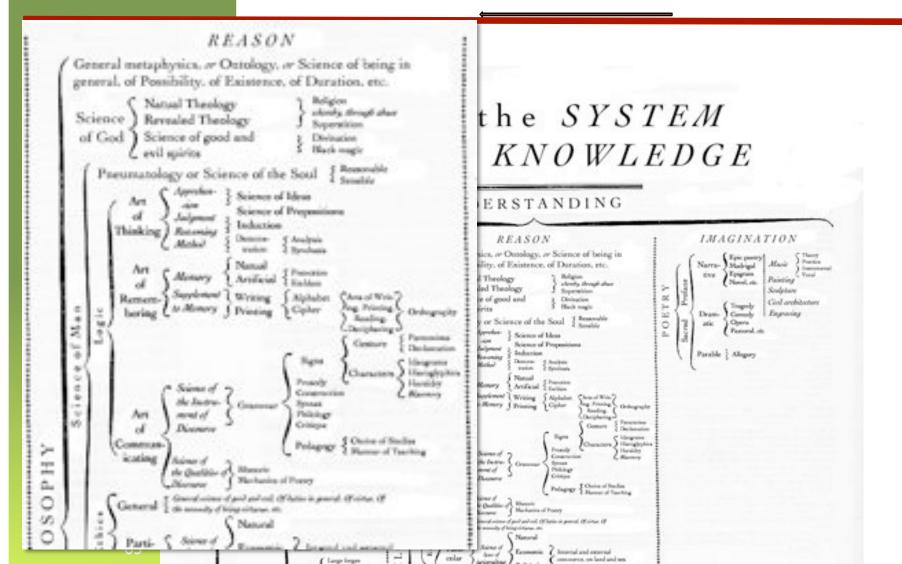
MAP of the SYSTEM of HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

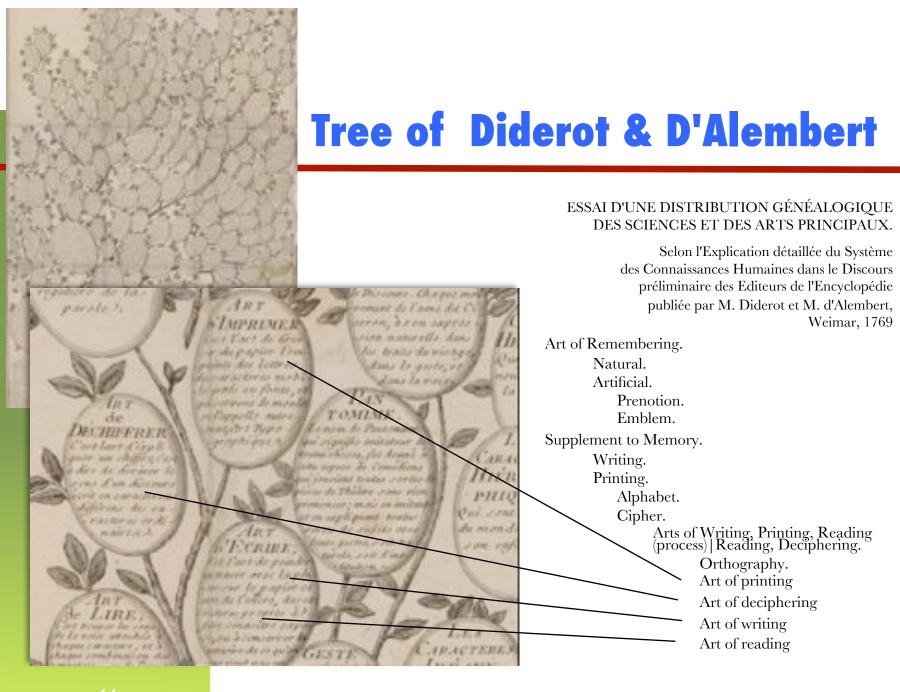
UNDERSTANDING

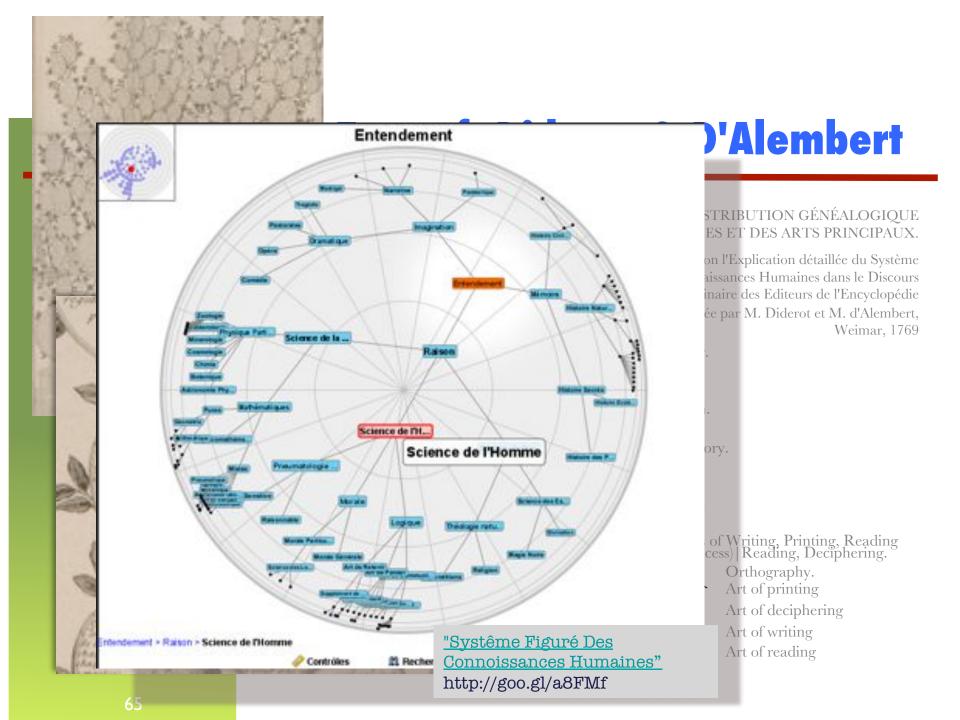




The Tree of Diderot & D'Alembert









Material Representations of Knowledge





Material Representations of Knowledge, 1

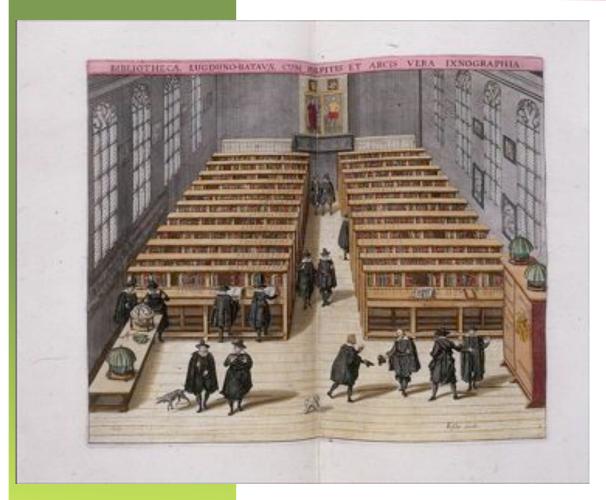
Knowledge and the role of the "trésor"

Libraries, anthologies, dictionaries, in a word "treasuries" [trésors], alongside of encyclopedic collections, delimit a vast territory on which are cast the signs required for knowledge, the expression of identities, and communication among the members of the group.

-Alain Rey, "Les trésors de la langue," 1986



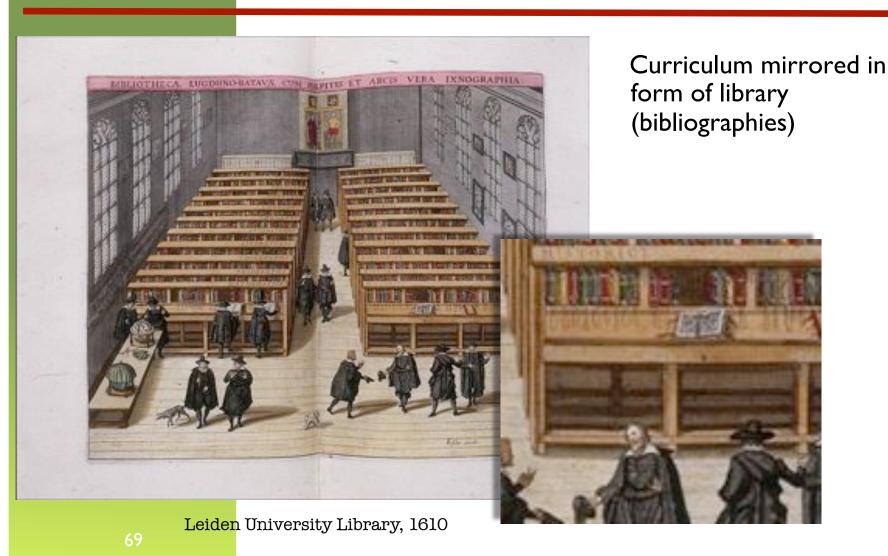
Material Representations of Knowledge



Curriculum mirrored in form of library (bibliographies)



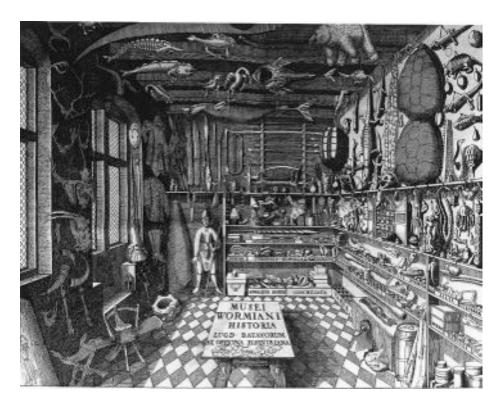
Material Representations of Knowledge





Representations of Knowledge: The Kunstkammer

Organization of knowledge mirrored in form of Kunstkammer, cabinets of curiosities, Wunderkammer, etc.

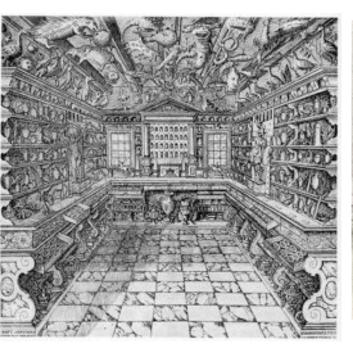


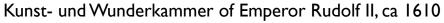


The Kunstkammer & Wunderkammer









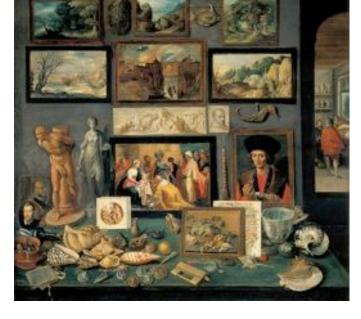


Natural History Kabinet, Naples, 1599



Representations of Knowledge: The Studiolo



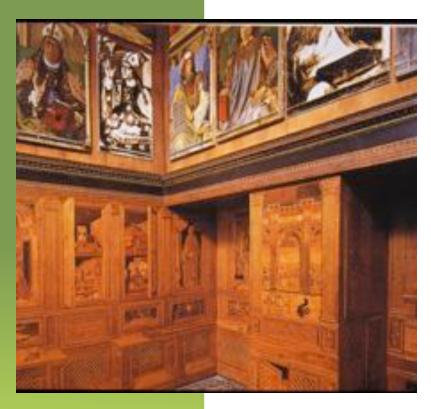


Kunstkammer, 1636

Studiolo of Francsco I Florence (1570)



Representations of Knowledge: The Studiolo







Studiolo of Federico da Montefeltro Urbino (ca. 1460) with wood intarsia (inlay)



Representations of Knowledge: The Kunstschrank

The Kunstschrank (art cabinet or art shrine)





Representations of Knowledge: The Kunstschrank



French Reliquary, 1330



Presentation of the Pomeranian Kunstschrank, Anton Mozart 1615



From Cabinets to Museums

Kunstkammers first made available for public viewing in mid-17th. C (Kunstmuseum Basel, 1661)

Public museums in 18th c:

British Museum, 1759, containing cabinet of curiosities assembled by Hans Sloan, ms collections, Royal Library. Later: collections of antiquities, etc.

Uffizi Gallery, Florence, 1765

Belvedere Palace, Vienna, 1781

Louvre Palace opened to public in 1793 with royal collections; augmented by Napoleon



Montague House, home of original British Museum in Bloomsbury



17th c. Galleries



21. The Imperial Gellery in Prague, by Johann Bretschneider, 1714. The paintings are arranged according to the visual and decorative effect.



17th c. Galleries



Gallery of Cornelis van der Geest, ₇₈ 1628



Modern Salon Style



Daumier, Salon de 1867

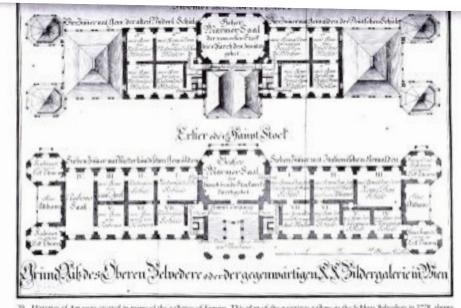
Walker Museum, Minneapolis





18th c. Galleries

Painting
Galleries,
Schloss
Belvedere,
Vienna, 1781



29 Histories of Art were created in many of the galleries of Farope. This plan of the paintings gallery in the Schlous Behooless in 1778, shows here the works were grouped by country, and within that, by date, by (geographical) school, or by individual artist. This is in marked contrast to the form of display shown in Plant 33.



Rationalizing the organization of the trésor



Readings for 2/4

"Electro-Magnetic Telegraphs," H. Rpt 753 (to Accompany Bill H.R. 713) 25th Congress, 2nd Session, April 6, 1838

Alexander Graham Bell, "To the Capitalists of the Bell Telephone Company," Kensington (UK), March 25, 1878

Samuel Colt & William Robinson, "To the Public," New York, May 20, 1846

Henry George, "The Western Union Telegraph Company and the California Press," San Francisco, April 21 1869.