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Documentary frames 1: Escaping the straitjacket: expanding our understanding of records and relationships (panel)

Genre systems in organizations: the role of genres on tasks coordination

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Pilot project – Objectives

• Examine the dimensions of genres as tools for coordinating work tasks
• Review information practices in the management and preservation of records within a genre system
• Discuss some impacts on recordkeeping
Conceptual framework

Genre

Genre systems and genre repertoires

Social role and co-construction of practices

Genres and coordination of work tasks

Genre model
Genres

• Genres
  • Types of communication actions or speeches invoked in response to a recurring situation, which are socially recognized and characterized by conventions (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992)
  • Elements of form, content and standard function

• Records as genres
  • Types of socially recognized communication actions recorded on a medium that are used by members of a community for a particular social purpose
  • Socially recognized in a community
  • Characterized by structural or linguistic conventions or rules (form), a theme (content), and a normative function (action)
Genre systems

- **Genre systems in organizations**
  - Set of records as genres that are organized around business systems ➔ business process tasks
  - Created and used in a community
  - Dimension of sequentiality or overlap in the order of the genres within a system
Genre systems and coordination of work tasks

• Complex networks records used in the realization of work processes and which support work coordination and regulation

• Role of structuring devices:
  • Articulation of “appropriate” behaviours
  • Prescriptions for action

• Evolution of records as genres according to the evolution of work processes (business processes)
  • And reciprocity?
Genres social role and and co-construction of practices

- **Collective approach of genres**
  - Sociocognitive dimension
  - Discursive skills developed on the basis of social practices specific to a community
  - Co-construction of records as genres by members of a community on the basis of shared work practices
  - Co-built by members of this community
  - Dual status in a community
    - Coordination of appropriate behaviours
    - Prescription for action

- **Social role and values of genres**
  - In connection with the context of creation and use – organizational culture
  - Impact on information practices – shared information culture
Genre model

6 facets

Why

What

To whom / By whom

When

Where

How

(Yoshioka et al., 2001; Yates & Orlikowski, 2002)
Preliminary results –
Analysis based on the genre model
Methodology

• Genre system under study:
  • Academic (universities) course file
  • Business or work process: teaching – planning, planification, preparation and delivery of university courses

• Main records in an average course file:
  • Syllabus
  • Lecture notes
  • Class presentations
  • Assignments and exams protocols
  • Correction grids and corrections of assignments and exams
  • Instructions for use in digital learning environments
Analysis of the genre model: syllabus

1. Why
   • To inform
   • To plan
   • To agree ("contract")
   • To witness, to act as evidence, to record

2. What
   • General information
   • Administrative information
   • Pedagogical information
   • Scientific information

3. To whom / by whom
   • Organizational actors: key actors, others
Analysis of the genre model: syllabus

4. Where
   • In the classroom (*to inform, to agree to*)
   • On the Internet (*to inform*) and/or Intranet (*to inform, to agree to, to plan, to witness*)
   • On the desk (or the computer desktop) (*to plan*)

5. When
   • In the classroom (*to inform, to agree to, to witness*)
   • On the Internet and/or Intranet (*to inform*)

6. How
   • Organizational culture: implicit, tradition
   • Academic freedom
   • Administrative formalism
Preliminary results –

Work methods and information practices
Example for the syllabus: work, writing, and information practices

**WORK AND WRITING PRACTICES**

Conforming to a request

Planning the syllabus / the course
- Collecting information, documents

Processing information
- Assessing information available and further information needed

Creating / updating / editing syllabus
- a) For 1st class: Opening previous syllabus and updating it
  Deliverable: official version of the syllabus
- b) For 1st class: Opening previous syllabus and updating it
  Deliverable: detailed version of the syllabus, for day-by-day pedagogical purposes
- c) Throughout the semester: Updating current syllabus
  Deliverable: updated version for the next year (WIP)

Disseminating the syllabus
- To students, speakers, department, ...

Making decision/Taking action based on information contained in the syllabus
- To inform, to plan, to agree to, to record

**PERSONAL INFORMATION PRACTICES**

Organizing information/documents collected
- On personal (computer) or on external information systems (DropBox)
- According to personal classification scheme

Creating / updating / editing syllabus
- According to existing models (structure and content)
- Managing versions of the syllabus (preliminary, final, detailed, WIP, etc.)

Disseminating the syllabus
- On organizational information systems: department and/or university

**ORGANIZATIONAL RECORDKEEPING PRACTICES**

(Records & Archives Division)

Organizing syllabus
- According to institutional classification scheme
  (1st hierarchical level) [rarely]
- According to personal classification scheme (computer, DropBox)
  or more or less personal classification scheme (Moodle platform)

Disseminating the syllabus
- According to the respondent's unit or the organization's procedures

Capture of the final version of the syllabus
- Records & Archives Division: according to record retention schedule
- Department: capture and preservation should be according to institutional classification scheme
- Archival classification and indexing, according to institutional classification scheme
- Archival description, according to national standards and institutional procedures
- Dissemination, according to institutional procedures
Work practices and information practices

• Work practices
  • Meet administrative, pedagogical, organizational requirements
  • Include a sequence of actions
    • Include writing methods (structure and content)
      • Complying to a request; planning the course and thus the course syllabus; processing information in order to plan the course and create/update the syllabus; disseminating the syllabus (sharing of information); creating and editing the syllabus; making decisions during the creation process; making decisions/taking action in class based on the syllabus; filing the syllabus in digital and/or paper format
  • Include information practices
    • Collecting information or records + organizing them + naming them
    • Creating / updating the syllabus + naming and managing multiple versions
    • Organizing versions of the syllabus: information systems, classification method
    • Disseminating the syllabus: to students, department, recordkeeping & archives division

Maurel & Mas, 2012
Discussion – Coordination of actions and practices

• Dimensions inherent to genres
  • Coordinate design (writing) practices of course materials (structure, form)
  • Coordinate teaching practices in the professor community of discourse
  • Coordinate information practices?
    • Institutionals practices (recordkeeping, archival): yes, although …
    • In the departments: not always
    • Individuals: not always
Discussion – Sequentiality or overlap of actions, and role of organizational actors

• To better understand functions and values attributed records within a system of genres
  • Necessity to take into account the creation of genres from the perspective of business (or work) processes
    • what records are created, received, used, shared
    • by what organizational actors
    • who intervene at what time and in what sequence
    • in the context of what business (work) processes
    • given that these processes can be transverse
    • Ex. syllabus: department, registrar (eg. course equivalence), finance (eg. reimbursement of parking fees for an invited lecturer in a course)

• A record trajectory analysis could be relevant at this point
Discussion – Support for information and recordkeeping professionals

• Understand the genesis of records (link with contemporary diplomatics) that are not fixed but evolving over time and depending on members of communities of discourse

• Better understand records creation context that is not only administrative or operational, but also related to individual or collective information practices, technological environment, work requirements, etc.

• Have a more comprehensive view of the records that belong to a genre system in the context of work processes
Bibliography


Bibliography


Thank you

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