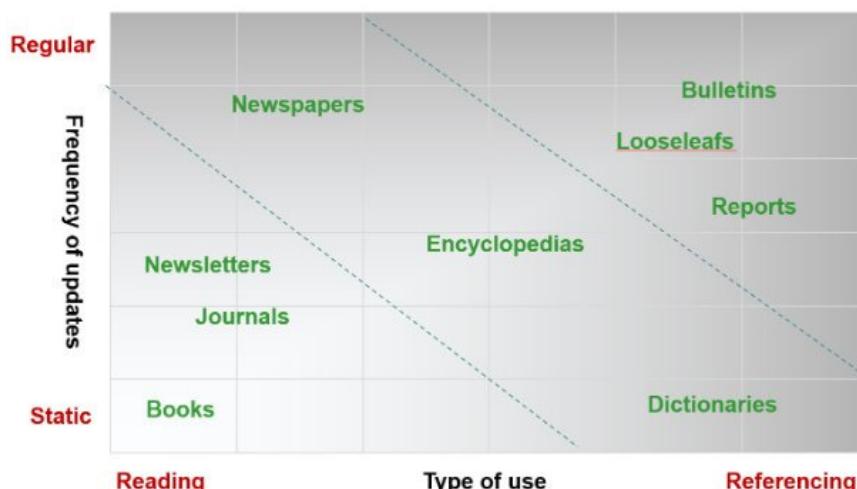# Driving hardcopy to online content | online to digital. The battle for information technology companies...

Published on May 31, 2016

Tyson Wienker | Follow
Managing Director Greater China at LexisNexis

👍 21   💬 0   ↪ 6

Embarking on a 'proper' digital strategy is not easy. By this I mean a strategy more sophisticated than "let's migrate our customers using print and other hardcopy products to online information resources / databases by making the price attractive". Changing ingrained information consumption behaviours such as the use of books, paper and other non digital information tools requires persuasion, encouragement, training, training and more training. How often do you print documents out that you could easily read your screen? Why do you do it?

There are a number of interesting facts that I've observed on this journey:

- **Static vs dynamic content | Hardcopy.** What do I mean by this? Probably best explained in a diagram (like most things), see below. The x-axis shows the '*type of use*' in which '*reading*' means taking time to focus deeply on the content and spend time consuming it in a linear fashion (think cover to cover for a book). '*Referencing*' means a shorter, to-the-point consumption of content. On the y-axis is 'Frequency of updates' , showing how often the content changes or becomes out of date. More dynamic content types are in top half of the graph and more static content in the bottom half.

There is a much higher concentration of content types that are dynamic and reference based. I will leave the psychology discussion regarding the impacts of prevalent dynamic content on attention spans (especially for our kids) for another time. However, what's interesting to note from a business perspective is that even though consuming content in online or digital format is more effective because you can search it more easily, it's easier to keep up to date and it can be pushed out to you more rapidly - there remains an overwhelming desire for print content. Interestingly, it seems to me that our addiction to printing things out isn't reducing!

Is online content is cheaper to create than hardcopy - No! A common misconception is that information companies want to push customers online because it's better for their margins. It's not. The editorial effort required to update content is the same for print content as it is for online content. If anything, the cost of printing books, looseleafs, journals and bulletins is lower than maintaining databases, online platforms and constantly upgrading user interfaces to keep up to speed with the latest technology.

So why do we still insist on printing? I think the fact remains that humans find change hard, even when the benefits are obvious. Added to this is that the online experience often does not live up to expectations and technology is not at a point where we are 100% comfortable that our notes won't be lost and that we won't lose our content by having is stored online. Even the most diehard tech-heads out there worry about losing digital information (even if they won't admit it!).

Whatever the case, the battle for information tech companies will continue in winning over what I think is the vast majority of professional information consumers who's preference is still hardcopy content. Perhaps books really will be here to stay...

*Note: the two diagrams above are based on an original concept that Frank McKenna and Matt Lawrence way back in 2008, thanks to them for brainstorming and thoughtleadership on those massive whiteboards in Chatswood :).

Tagged in: technological innovation, newspaper design, digital strategy   Report this

Tyson Wienker
Managing Director Greater China at LexisNexis
4 posts

Follow

0 comments

Leave your thoughts here…