

DOCAM '05

Proposed Ph.d. project presentation abstract. August 31, 2005.

DESCRIPTION

My presentation will describe the oral tradition as a historical form of document, explore how research on the oral tradition in various disciplines has revealed complex layers of meaning embedded in orality, and, consider how understanding oral tradition tales may advance our insight into modern documents recorded using technological innovations. To demonstrate how numerous societies relied solely on the oral tradition to sustain their historical, social, and power structures, I will describe the ambiguous, socially constructed, and verifiable nature of oral tradition tales. This presentation will begin to question whether a relationship exists between how 'oral documents' allowed information to be transferred prior to written literacy and how contemporary documents support the same activity today. Indeed, the description of the nature of oral tradition tales will serve as a guide for exploring a broader definition of information, one that incorporates orality. This presentation will begin to differently consider contemporary actions which have in effect validated the oral tradition as a legitimate source for information. United States Government officials, scientists and others now work to extract relevant information embedded in oral tradition tales. The tales are used to substantiate Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA, 1990) claims involving human remains and land claims, to determine the rate at which perma-frost thawed in Arctic Circle sea ice prior to the satellite era (before 1978), and more. Such efforts provide an opportunity to reexamine 'oral documents.' Could such documents propound insight into modern documents just as they are increasingly accepted as providing information to inform contemporary problems? Investigations into information science research, specifically into human information behavior, will help shed light on this exploration into social and cultural aspects of documents.

PRESENTATION STYLE

Verbal presentation with power point

CONTRIBUTOR

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KEYWORDS

oral tradition, human information behavior, orality