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Flow vs. stock of digital information

Our physical (off-line) identity and property is, long since, perfectly defined and delimitated. You live in a concrete place (most of the times), go and take part in events, and your belongings can (most of the times too) be locked or kept into the place you live in. Everything we build or write (print) is stored in our garages or shelves. Hard and pen drives are good options too, and slightly more up-to-date.

But we keep on going on-line, doing more and more things digitally, from communicating to actually creating things: code (first thing that comes in mind) but also writings (ideas, thoughts, expressions of feelings, reflections, papers), photos, videos…

Where does this happen? Where this does should happen?

My opinion is that distinguishing among stock and flow makes the difference.

Stock is everything that lasts – or should last.
Flow is everything that is not intended to stay for long, just an exchange.

Digital Identity

Building one's digital identity will become – if it is not already – a must for every citizen living in the Information Society. One's digital identity will be created by adding up the "disclosures" of a digital *persona* ("I am…" "I do…" "I work…" "I live…") and his digital works, related to him explicitly or implicitly (i.e. through metadata).

Having full ownership of these works is crucial, thus, for two reasons:
1. control one's (implicit) digital identity
2. retain one's works (trivial, but true)

My point of view is students, but also scholars and other people with a high level of digital output, should consider:

- publish / self-archive all their data and files under their own domain
- use FLOSS tools, either for their cost, availability of external support and openness to standards and data sharing with other applications (other applications for self use, same applications of other people)
- use clear and explicit intellectual property licenses. CC, GNU FDL or others the like a choice to be considered.

Web 2.0 proprietary remote applications should only be used as temporary exchange places where conversations can take place, and even collaborative work with productive output. Nevertheless, once the knowledge becomes (more or less) static, it should be migrated to one's own site (meaning "one's site" a person's site or a collective, institutional, site. Sites such Wikipedia or Connexions are, under this definition, institutional sites. Writely or Blogger are not.).

How to

While now maintaining one's own site – even setting it up – might seem difficult for many, it is far more difficult to build one's house, and (almost) everyone got one. It's just a matter of
1. digital literacy
2. the existence of a competitive ICT sector
3. founding

Digital literacy should not be an issue for forthcoming cohorts of students, all of them digital natives.

The existence of a competitive ICT sector is about to be accomplished in the developed countries (where, actually, this debate makes sense) and will be in lesser developed countries in short.

Founding is quite related with the existence of a competitive ICT sector: the more competitive, the less crucial the issue of founding will be. Grants, public subsidies… or public virtual spaces could be steps to be taken into account to foster digital *personae*.