COMS W4170
Case Study: Piles

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Piles  *Mander, Salomon, & Wong 1992*

- Ethnographic study performed to determine how people deal with info
  - 13 Apple employees (marketing, support, HR)
  - Videotaped 30–60 min interviews in participants’ workspaces
    - Described info they handle, how it arrives, gave tour of their workspace
    - Asked to judge nature of a set of test docs
    - Explained how they worked (would work) with assistants
Piles Mander, Salomon, & Wong 1992

- Workspace artifacts
  - Folders
  - File cabinets
  - Binders
  - Piles

Inspired by work on piles in the office

T. Malone, “How Do People Organize Their Desks”, TOIS 83
http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/357423.357430

Steeland 2010

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Piles Mander, Salomon, & Wong 1992

- Results: Piles
  - Hierarchy not needed or required for many tasks
  - Self-revealing—browsable
    1. Edge browse
    - Look at outside edge, color, texture, thickness
    2. Restack
    - Lift each item from top in sequence, and place elsewhere
    3. Hinge
    - Hinge pile open at different points to inspect
    4. Spread out
    - Spread out pile contents to see all/many simultaneously
**Piles**  
*Mander, Salomon, & Wong 1992*

- Results: Assistants
  - People who didn’t have an assistant wanted one
  - Assistants
    - Filtered
    - Sorted
    - Created piles

**Piles**  
*Mander, Salomon, & Wong 1992*

- Created interactive design sketches using Macromedia [now Adobe] Director
- Used design sketches to guide group discussion
Piles  
*Mander, Salomon, & Wong 1992*

- Design sketches for group discussion
  - User-created pile → sloppy
  - System-created pile → neat

Adding to a user-created pile
Piles *Mander, Salomon, & Wong 1992*

- Design sketches for group discussion
  - User-created pile → sloppy
  - System-created pile → neat

Moving items from one system-created pile to another
**Piles**  
*Mander, Salomon, & Wong 1992*

- Design sketches for group discussion
  - Browsing
    - Edge browsing by virtue of design
    - Spread out
    - Hinge (kind of)

![Diagram of pile management](image)

- Design sketches for group discussion
  - Managing piles through visualization

![Comparison of order by and pile by](image)