# Managing Tradeoffs in the Electronic Age

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# The Three Waves

1) Traditional Interactive Online Services
  – Replaced A&I, not primary sources
  – Full-text typically plain ASCII
2) CDROM + GUI
  – True page image, limited capacity
  – Replaced individual primary sources

# The Three Waves

3) The Internet + Cheap PC's
- Cheap storage & scanning
- Very large pool of computer-literate users
- Potential to replace large segments of primary source material

- The Big Decision - Do we go virtual (electronic only)?

# The Electronic Age - Gains

- No time barrier (24x7 access)
- No distance barrier
- Flat-rate access - "Free" at last
- Currency & centralized updating
- Linking across vendor/organizational lines
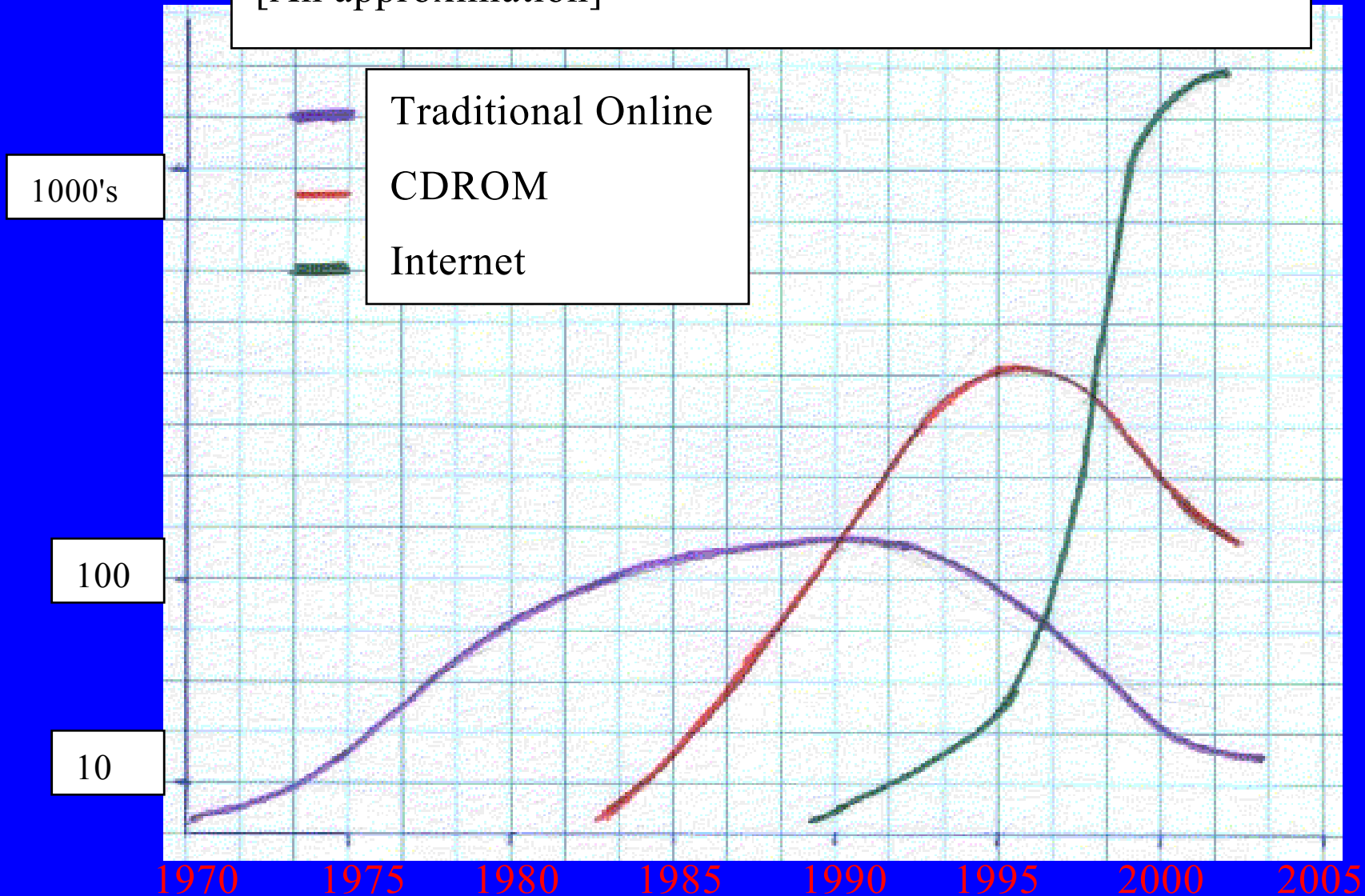- Enhanced features - interactive graphs & spreadsheets, AV material

# The Electronic Age - Losses

- **OWNERSHIP OF CONTENT**

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- Alternate access routes - Sole source

- Rapidly changing standards & formats

- Proliferation of interfaces

NUMBER OF INTERFACES IN ELECTRONIC AGE
[An approximation]

Traditional Online

CDROM

Internet

1000's

100

10

1970   1975   1980   1985   1990   1995   2000   2005

# The Internet Age - Search Gains

- Inconceivable breadth
- No barriers to publication (mixed blessing)
- Effective relevance ranking
- Computer based analysis tools
  - Related/cited record links
  - Sorting/Field analysis

# The Internet Age - Search Losses

- Multiple set creation

- Feature retreat (truncation, proximity)

- Precision of detailed field searching

- Generous system limits - sort, display, analyze, print

- Extensive synonym use not documented or encouraged

# Synonyms & Web Search Boxes

**Flame Retardant Example**

- Fire/flame/smoke retard?/resist?/proof? as 1 or 2 words.

- Intumesc? or low smoke

- Self extinguish? or self extinquish?

# Synonyms & Web Search Boxes

**SciFinder Research by Topic Example**

- Antibiotic residues on dairy products
  - 38 hits
- Penicillin residues on milk
  - 187 hits

# STN & the Web

| Native STN | SciFinder & SF Scholar |
|---|---|
| 200+ databases | 6 databases |
| Typically pay-as-you-go | Typically flat-rate |
| Precise fielded searching | Resources by Subject |
| | "black box" |
| Substructure against any L# set | Substructure limited in few set ways |
| Results analysis powerful, complicated | Results analysis very intuitive |

# Evaluating E-resources - Reality

- Electronic genie will not go back in the box
- Overwhelming popularity of e-resources
- Think long term
- Managing takes significant time

# Evaluating E-resources - Basics

- Examine your mission/value statements
- Prioritize your needs
  - Level & breadth of expected use
  - Currency, scope, etc.
  - Increased access points
  - Space savings
  - Alternative resources and formats

# Corporate World

- Immediate need

- Groundwork for future shifts

- Historical seldom of value

- In depth answers usually required

# Academic World

- Immediate need

- Future research (new centers, faculty, grants)

- Historical research significant

- Some good answers often sufficient

# Evaluating the License - Priorities

- Leverage consortia arrangements for all they are worth

- Ownership of content, esp. archives KEY

- Restrictions - ILL, Fair use, electronic reserve

- Obsolescence of format/upgrade path

- http://www.library.yale.edu/~llicense/index.shtml

# Evaluating Usage

- Before buying, examine actual usage report
- Frequency & reliability
- Level of detail
- Format (ideally custom spreadsheet report)
- Comparison with peer group/benchmarking

# Recommended Reading - Post-purchase Evaluation

- *Evaluating Networked Information Services - Techniques, Policy, and Issues*

- Edited by Charles R. McClure & John Carlo Bertot

- ASIST Monograph, Information Today, Inc. 2001

# Summary

- Electronic is inevitable, but not in all points better

- Ownership of content is the most important issue

- Do your homework - content, features, licensing/pricing, usage reports