

IS1404 E-READ: Evolution of Reading in the Age of Digitization

Position paper, 13 January 2015

Name: Professor Sue Walker

WG(s): WG3 and/or WG4

1. **Potential research contribution** in light of, or linked to

A. WG interest and Scientific programme:

We are, respectively, a cognitive psychologist (Black) and information designer/researcher (Walker), researching the impact of the design of information design on its communicative effectiveness. Black is currently Director of University of Reading's Centre for Information Design, within its Department of Typography & Graphic Communication. Walker is a leading researcher on the design of children's (printed) books. We are co-editors of the forthcoming 'Gower Handbook of Information Design' (along with Dr Ole Lund).

We are deeply committed to understanding the reading needs of individuals, particularly for consultative reading, and are carrying out research in this area, looking at how the visual design of electronic text influences people's use of text content. We use a range of approaches from highly controlled lab-style methods to more naturalistic, qualitative approaches. Our current focus is the design and use of functional texts, such as government information regarding climate change, health advice etc. We have contributed research context for the development of style guidelines for gov.uk, in order to maximise information access and readability. Our research focus on consultative reading may both have some overlap with but also be distinctive from reading of continuous texts. Nevertheless, consultation is part of educational reading and consultation of generally available sources is part of education practice. The delivery of functional texts from organisations to individuals via electronic rather than printed media raises further, as yet relatively under-researched issues, relating to the social impact of these texts, which we believe merits research.

Black, A. and Stanbridge, K. (2012) Documents as 'critical incidents' in organization to consumer communication. *Visible Language*, 46 (3). pp. 246-281. ISSN 0022-2224

Walker, S. (2005) *The songs letters sing: typography and children's reading*, Reading: National Centre for Language and Literacy, 2005 [24pp] ISBN 07049 98467

B. Action objectives (pages 7-10 in the MoU):

We believe that any general theory of reading needs to take into account the visual design of text as well as the platform on which it appears, as addressed in section D.1 of the MoU. Our aim would be to build collaboration for studies that examine the interaction of platform and visual design.

2. Interest in

A. organizing and/or participating in a **short-term scientific mission (STSM)**.

Optional: pursuing what research questions/projects; where to/with whom; linked to what objective(s) of the Action:

We would be keen to explore applications from COST-funded junior researchers to examine agreed aspects of text design in cross-platform research.

B. organizing and/or participating in a **Training School** (please indicate what kind of training [theoretical; methodological; technical]).

Optional: linked to what objective(s) of the Action: