The orders of linkages that stabilise evolving media worlds are far from obvious. Often undertaken in media ‘laboratories’, the collaborative processes which combine a range of disciplines to develop media worlds are also far from straightforward. Enablers and constraints are as likely to be non-human as they are the people associated with the project. Plugs, wires, switches, protocols and standards - things whose detail can be mind numbingly boring - all have to be worked into effective and stable sets of associations. This thesis describes two knowledge pathways that track through such a project. The first describes the development of a prototype for a website, imagined as a portal for a range of interests around children and media in New Zealand/Aotearoa. As media worlds are continually being reconfigured and as data circulates across increasingly linked access technologies, many non-government organisations are migrating their work to ‘the web’. ‘The Media Clearinghouse’ project was one of these. Latour’s analytical concept of immutable mobiles provides a way to make sense of some of the work observed whilst his direction to ‘simply follow’ worlds of interest provided the methodological challenge. The second pathway, traces the bibliographic threads of literatures that come from the descriptive genres of Science Technology Studies (STS). Significant amongst these are Leigh Star and Geoffrey Bowker who have elaborated the concept of boundary objects and infrastructures. Star and Griesemer’s seminal description of the Museum of Invertebrate Zoology is compared with a description of an early laboratory by Bruno Latour. These and other writers elaborate on methods that offer ways to render visible the messy, chaotic performances of design and invention. They follow inscriptions - tables, lists, maps, sketches and so on. These things work between the micro and the macro and enable very huge terrains to be assembled in small, ordered spaces. The thesis assembles a list of methods that have some utility for following and describing web design work and perhaps, other information worlds. Having followed and described this writer’s work through the invention of the prototype it is argued that a combinative method has successfully enabled a description that moves in and out of a new information ‘laboratory’.

Subjects
web design
boundary object
actor network
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