



INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Understanding the Information Needs and Information seeking behavior is the basis for designing and developing information systems and services to adequately satisfy their needs. This paper discusses briefly the basic concept of Information, Information needs, Information seeking behavior, information models.



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INTRODUCTION

The learning and teaching processes in higher education system require the information that need to fulfill their activities. Both of them seek information for various activities. Most of them use print materials for information needs. Due to Internet and WWW there is a drastic change in use of E-Resources over print media.

INFORMATION: Information is described as processed or structured data. It is one of the essential commodities needed by the mankind in all walks of life. Information means the communication of knowledge about an event or a given condition or the spread of knowledge derived from observations, study or experience.

MEANING:

Buckland(1991) analyzed the dictionary meanings given in the Oxford English Dictionary and came up with three distinguished meanings as following

Information as process: When someone is informed, what they know is changed. In this change "Information is the act of information communication of the knowledge or new of some fact or occurrence; the act of telling fact or fact of being told of something.

Information as knowledge: Information is also used to denote that which is perceived in information as a process; the knowledge communicated concerning some particular fact, subject or event; that of which one is appraised or told, intelligence, news.

DEFINITION: Kent (1979) states that Information is the feed stock for knowledge.

According to Oxford English dictionary

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Information is communication of instructive knowledge, news of some fact or occurrence. Everybody needs information of increasing variety and diversity of level, frequency, volume and use. The use of information is a complex phenomenon that there cannot be a simple system to cope with the task of effective retrieval without assessing their specific needs. This situation has given rise to the growing concept of information searching and the manner of determining the pattern of searching is said to be Information Seeking behavior. The concept of Information behavior was coined in the late 1990s.

INFORMATION NEED

Information Need is an individual or a group's desire to locate and obtain information to satisfy a conscious or unconscious need.

According to Belkin et al, (1982) it is described as an anomalous state of Knowledge. Line (1974) defined that Information need is what an individual ought to have for his work, his edification and his creation.(Padma, Ramaswamy &Renugadevi 2013). Kuhlthau(1993) described information need as evolving from a vague awareness of something missing and culminating in locating information that contribute to understand and meaning”

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR

Information Seeking Behaviour is a process where people search information and utilize the same to complete their assigned task. Information is basically structured or processed data. People need information in all walks of life. It is a basic activity of an individual. It involves individual's personal reasons, the kind of information that is required by an individual and the sources that are consulted by an individual to fulfill Information needs.

According to Wilson (2000) Information seeking behavior as purposive seeking of Information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal.

MEANING:

DEFINITION: According to King Information Seeking Behavior is “a manner information in which a user conducts himself in relation to a given information environment”

According to Kritels “it refers to any activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need”.

According to Girija Kumar the information seeking behavior is mainly concerned with the need, what kind of information and for what reason and how information is found, evaluated and used and how the needs can be identified and satisfied.

TYPES: There are two types of Information seeking behavior:

- 1) **Compulsory Information seeking behavior:** Compelling statuses force a person to seek necessary information. Professional working in different field are forced to access the information in their respective field of expertization to become more informatics. For example Advocates, Engineers, Sociologists, psychologists etc.
- 2) **Discretionary Information Seeking:** this type is different from compulsory information seeking. It entails searching for information that may not be essential and/or whose source is not known with certainty.

MODELS DEVELOPED:

In order to study Information seeking behavior some models have been developed

- 1) Information Search behavior by Carol Kuhithau which includes 6 stages concentrates on process
- 2) Devid Ellis model focus on describing the activities than a process
- 3) Episodic model developed by Nicholas J Belkin is based on intuition and insight and concentrate on interactions with information
- 4) Anomalous state of Knowledge developed by Nicholas Belkin is based o the fact that researcher recognizes a gap in the state of knowledge.
- 5) Wilson's theory of Information Behaviour proposed by Thomas Wilson proposed that the Information behavior covers all aspects of human information behavior. In this model searcher interacts with information system.
- 6) Information foraging developed by Stuart Card, Ed H Chi and Peter Pirolli derived from anthropological theories. In this model information seeker uses links, summaries and images to estimate how close they are to target information.
- 7) Life in the Round developed by Elfreda Chatman focuses on the reality at its most routine, predictable enough that unless an intial problem arises there is no point in Information seeking process.
- 8) Sense Making Model developed by Brenda Dervin focuses on the fact that information seeker makes sense of uncertain situations. It describes how the information seeker interprete the information use for the information related decisions.

- 9) Principles of least effort is based on the principle the information seeker priorities the most convenient path to acceptable information.

There are different factors that influence information seeking behavior of an individual. They are time spent in search of information, knowledge about information sources, the way of expressing the information need.

LITERATURE SURVEY

There are many studies done to understand the Information seeking behavior of an individual or in a group. Mostly the studies are concentrated on Academicians like faculty, researchers, scientists, or professionals like engineers, doctors, sociologists, psychologists etc.

The studies that have been conducted on the Information Seeking behavior of Students are as following.

Fidzani (1998) conducted a study in University of Botswana, to establish the Information needs and Information seeking behavior of graduate students. Findings include that there was a heavy reliance on library books, textbooks and journals as source of information used for coursework. And the findings also included that students basically relied on scanning shelves or browsing through journals rather than using abstracting and indexing journals. Another study by Seamans, 2000 showed that the first year undergraduate students reported that all the respondents felt that they had little need to look for information outside what faculty provided for them in their course and where information was needed. Students preferred technology oriented information sources.

Kerins, Madden and Fulton (2004) reported that the majority of students indicated that Internet was the first source of information they used for a project.

As Saracevic cites the early inspiration for client contemplates was even minded, to find rules for the change of training (Saracevic 2010). Eskola (1998) focuses his enthusiasm for exploring students 'library utilizes and information behaviour on the library practice. Indeed, the enthusiasm for this field has expanded particularly in 1990's a result of the expansion in number of students and the libraries' ensuing endeavor to address their issues.

According to Case (2008), students are as a rule are a standout amongst the most generally contemplated parts of all and considered them as the non work part. There are numerous investigations of different aspects of students 'information behavior conducted over various gatherings of students, and as Rowley and Urquhart (2007) quote the students 'information

behavior is diffused and hard to draw into a reasonable learning base According to Gordon, I D and others(2018) studies by Catalano (2013), Liyana and Noorhidawati (2014) found that students were found to be less proficient in developing search strategies and doubted the trustworthiness of Information resources they retrieved and also found that graduate students may be adversely affected to environmental and cultural issues when negotiating information seeking choices.

CONCLUSION: From the study it is found that students mainly depend on the libraries for their day today information needs. The reliance on different sources of information shows that libraries should have the crucial information that students require. Additionally, the supervisors and tutors should offer constant support to the students as they develop a focus of their study.

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