Information behaviour research in dialogue with neighbouring fields

Isto Huvila and Ying-Hsang Liu

Abstract

Information behaviour research has affinities with many neighbouring fields of research and practise. At the same time, a steady line of criticism has been directed to its modest impact and lack of meaningful dialogue with adjacent disciplines and the impact of information behaviour research on how people deal with information in various settings, and develop information systems and services. The lack of exchange has become increasingly evident as the term 'information behaviour' has been adopted in disciplines far beyond the established information field. Besides impact of its results on research and practice in different domains, a livelier exchange can be expected to be enriching for information behaviour research itself.

The purpose of the panel is to invite the members of the ISIC community to a discussion on the interfaces of information behaviour research with neighbouring research disciplines and practical domains. The panellists represent information behaviour researchers with an extensive experience of working in and with adjacent domains and bring their expertise to discuss with the audience 1) the relevance of information behaviour research and its findings in other domains, 2) what information behaviour research can learn from neighbouring fields, and 3) how the interdisciplinary dialogue could be promoted and nurtured.

Panel members

Elke Greifeneder, Humboldt University

Greifeneder is professor at and deputy director of the Berlin School of Library and Information Science at Humboldt University in Germany. Her research focuses on information behaviour in digital information environments and she is a long-time advocate of strengthening the links between information behaviour and user-experience research and participatory design

Heidi Julien, University at Buffalo

Julien is professor of information science at the University at Buffalo Department of Information Science in the US. Her research focuses on digital literacy, information behaviour and information practises, in collaboration with scholars in education, business, and social work, and has throughout her career carried a strong emphasis on exploring and putting into practise its results and outcomes.

J. Tuomas Harviainen, Tampere University

Harviainen is associate professor of information practises at Tampere University in Finland. His research ranges from information studies to information systems science, management and game studies. Beyond his academic work, he has published for and engaged widely with non-academic audiences.

Ying-Hsang Liu, Oslo Metropolitan University

Liu is senior researcher at the Department of Archivistics, Library and Information Science, OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway. His research lies at the intersections of information retrieval, knowledge organisation, and human information behaviour, with particular emphasis on the design and evaluation of interactive information retrieval systems.

Christa Womser-Hacker, University of Hildesheim

Womser-Hacker is professor of information science at the University of Hildesheim and director of the Department of Information Science and Natural Language Processing. Her research spans across cross-lingual information retrieval, intercultural HCI, and information seeking behaviour.

Isto Huvila, Uppsala University (moderator)

Huvila is professor in information studies at the Department of ALM at Uppsala University in Sweden. His research interests focus on information behaviour and work and draws from a number of neighbouring disciplines and contexts of practise within and beyond the information field.

Proposed format

The panel will start with a brief introduction to the topic and key questions by the moderator. After the introduction, each of the panellists will describe briefly in a 5-minute talk their experiences of the complementarities and differences between information behaviour research and neighbouring fields, where are interesting points of convergence and what differences hinder cross-disciplinary dialogue. After the talks, the audience will be invited to a discussion with the panellists on the 1) the relevance of information behaviour research and its findings in other domains, 2) what information behaviour research can learn from neighbouring domains and disciplines, and 3) how the interdisciplinary dialogue could be promoted and nurtured. The moderator will use a set of precompiled questions to stimulate the discussion.

Purpose, goals, expected outcomes and contribution to the conference theme

Information behaviour research has affinities with a large number of neighbouring fields. At the same time, a steady line of criticism has been directed to its modest impact and lack of meaningful dialogue with adjacent disciplines (Huvila et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2021; Makri, 2020). The lack of exchange has become increasingly evident as the term 'information behaviour' has been adopted in use in disciplines far beyond the established information field (Wilson, 2018). Besides impact of its results on research and practice in different domains, a livelier exchange can be expected to be enriching for information behaviour research itself.

The purpose of the panel is to invite the members of the ISIC community to a discussion on the interfaces of information behaviour research with neighbouring research disciplines and practical domains. The panellists represent information behaviour researchers with extensive experience of working in and with adjacent disciplines and domains and bring their expertise to discuss with the audience 1) the relevance of information behaviour research and its findings in other domains, 2) what information behaviour research can learn from neighbouring domains and disciplines, and 3) how the interdisciplinary dialogue could be promoted and nurtured. The final discussion point of the panel is to have a dialogue on future work on the topic.

The goal of the panel is to advance cross-disciplinary and -contextual dialogue of the ISIC community with adjacent fields of research and practice, and to contribute to an improved self-understanding of information behaviour research, its relevance and position in the contemporary landscape of research and practice. The first outcome of the panel is a short, written report that will be published as a notice in a relevant journal or in the conference proceedings. The panel also invites all participants to a continuing dialogue on future work that is envisioned to consist of panels at future conferences and in publications.

Summary of content

A discussion with the audience and panellist on the relevance of information behaviour research and its findings in other domains, what information behaviour research can learn from neighbouring domains and disciplines, and how the interdisciplinary dialogue could be promoted and nurtured.

References

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Liu, C., Liu, Y.-H., Liu, J., & Bierig, R. (2021). *Search Interface Design and Evaluation*, vol. 15 of *Foundations and Trends in Information Retrieval*. Now Publishers.

Makri, S. (2020). Information informing design: Information science research with implications for the design of digital information environments. *JASIST*, *71*(11), 1402–1412.

Wilson, T. (2018). The diffusion of information behaviour research across disciplines. *Information Research*, *23*(4), isic1801. http://www.informationr.net/ir/23-4/isic2018/isic1801.html