

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill  
School of Information and Library Science

**Human Information Interaction  
INLS 500 (Virtual section)  
II Summer, 2013**

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Course website: <http://sakai.unc.edu> (Sakai)  
E-Journals: <http://www.lib.unc.edu>  
E-Reserves: <http://www.lib.unc.edu> (Use instructor's name)

Human information behavior is a complex phenomenon. It involves the interactions between people, various forms of data and knowledge that fall under the notion of “information,” and also the various situations (contexts) in which these elements interact. In this course, you will read mostly original research, discuss and write about the practice, study and theory of human information behavior as the interaction of these components. The course is intended to introduce students to some of the enduring theoretical thinking about the human aspects of information seeking and then apply that thinking to the library and information science services you are expected to provide as a professional. As you can imagine, this is a tall order in a five week semester. Hopefully, you will also become more aware of your own information behaviors and also the behavior of others’ that you can observe in a variety of everyday settings.

The course will consist of readings available electronically. Access to these readings will be possible primarily through the e-journals and e-reserves found through [www.lib.unc.edu](http://www.lib.unc.edu) via the web. Generally, the readings will be discussed in a web-based Discussion session through the Sakai courseware. Your participation in these discussions is essential and your frequency in posting questions and comments will be an essential performance aspect of the course. This student-centered learning approach will rely heavily upon the students’ role in preparing for the discussion sessions with questions and comments on the readings. The instructor’s role is to guide the student through the literature and provide feedback on the various writing requirements you are asked to perform in addition to the discussions. (more on that shortly...) The instructor will provide some general notes on the readings for each week and the discussions will occur on a stated schedule. This schedule will be shown in the course calendar at the end of this syllabus. The discussions will usually be kept for future reference, particularly the first Discussion where you introduce yourselves, but at the close of the scheduled Discussion period the discussions will be “locked” and later on in the course they may be removed so that the Discussion space does not become too cluttered. Spirited discussions are encouraged, but always with appropriate respect for differing opinions. Some students have reported that a major benefit to this sort of virtual course format is that they have had to learn to express, somewhat “on the fly,” their opinions about professional issues that they might never have had to articulate before. For some, this sort of commitment to a stated position has been difficult at first, so recognize that all of us who participate in the discussions recognize and are sympathetic to that concern.

### Goals for the Course:

- To introduce the student to literature related to information seeking, including the recognition of information needs, actions toward resolving needs, the roles of intermediaries, and the evaluation of retrieved information.
- To explore the ways in which information behavior occurs in a variety of contexts (or situations) and how the use of information can be affected by those contexts.
- To improve the student's critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to examining information seeking as a part of the general communication process.
- To explore the role of technology in information behavior.
- To provide a strong theoretical foundation for further work in developing research about information behavior and about general practical applications needed to serve the user.

### Course Requirements/Assignments:

The instructor assesses student performance through assignments that enable students to engage with the course materials in a scholarly way, to demonstrate understanding of key ideas and interrelationships, and to actively participate in the learning process. In order for this virtual approach to be successful, all students must complete the readings before they are to be discussed:

- A **discussion session** will occur nearly every week (**weight is 20%**). A minimum effort should include *at least one question* for others and **one comment** responding to the posted question from another student *on each reading*. Apologies for the contrivance of this numeric approach, but someone usually asks if there isn't at least a minimum expectation. Substance as well as frequency is important. Do your insights and discussion contributions/questions *move the discussion along*? Do they encourage responses from others? Cheerleading responses like "great idea" or "way to go" are not considered substantive and should be avoided...without some type of additional comment.
- An **Interaction/Process Journal (weight 30%)** consists of a **1 page essay, single-spaced, responding to an idea found within one of the readings**. The readings are grouped by topic and you will be told how many responses are expected per group. Groupings will be shown in the Syllabus Course Calendar. You may adopt an informal or an academic style of writing, but you should use the journal entry to demonstrate your engagement with some aspect of the article's content and to demonstrate an evolving understanding of some aspect of human information behavior. *Don't just report on what the journal article said*. Similarly, *do not try to critique the article*. Instead, your essay should contain some *observation(s) that was inspired by the reading—some idea from the reading that has helped you think more seriously about some aspect of your own or others information behavior*. You should illustrate your essay with either some self-reflecting or some effort to observe the information behavior of others around you in the various "information landscapes" (workplace, coffee shop, bus stop, study space, home, etc.) that you inhabit during the week. Be sure to label each essay clearly by providing the citation for the article to which you are responding. In other words, provide a citation so that I know which reading has triggered your observation(s). The journal will be collected in two parts, roughly equal, so that you receive some feedback as we proceed. Put each of your one-

page essays into a single file before emailing your journal to me. Due dates are given in the course calendar.

In my notes, I try to suggest some simple information-based (somewhat unscientific, I know) experiments you might try and then record in your journal. When you choose some aspect of an article, keep in mind that you do not need to react to the whole article, just some particular idea in the article that has peaked your interest. I often refer to such ideas as providing you with an a-ha moment. Here are a few ideas for involving observations of others, but remember that you can also use self-reflection:

- Discuss with someone who works with some type of formal information in order to perform his or her job. Observe the types of information they use routinely. Do they use/rely on informal, sometimes called *tacit*, approaches to this information resource that they may have learned from a more experienced co-worker? Does the process used by your “subject” seem to fit any of the models we have read about?
- As we move through the readings, we will talk more about information seeking contexts. If you frequent someplace like the Daily Grind, or a study corner in a library or waiting to see someone at the health clinic (grimace) notice information sharing behaviors, if any. A great deal of information sharing seems informal, and we are beginning to understand that such environments are rich with information sharing activities.... Some studies have already been done in beauty shops, clinic waiting areas, even beauty shops, etc.
- If you work with people who regularly use the web to search for information, you might observe any emotional (called *affective*) responses evident in their behavior—are these emotional responses explained by the way the information or navigation functions are arranged on the web page. See if you can get the user to “talk aloud” as they navigate a site...as we look at browsing behaviors, see if you can identify any affective responses in your own behavior or in someone you can observe.
- Please feel free to create your own small observational opportunities to test out ideas you have picked up from a reading. Some readings may inspire you to look for other articles on a similar/related topic. For example, we will have a reading about why people blog; you might ask friends about why they blog or why they read blogs. Always try to tie your observations back to some aspect of one of our readings.
- Reporting your journaling interest during our discussions can also inspire others in the class to try something similar. So feel free to mention any journaling ideas you are trying during one of the discussions.

Any written products produced for grading should include:

- Your Name
- Your email address
- Date of submission

As I mentioned, the journal will be collected in two parts during the semester, It is my preference that you email assignments to [rpalmquist@cox.net](mailto:rpalmquist@cox.net) rather than to the UNC outlook email. Sadly, unless things have changed, the UNC outlook email does not forward items:

- **Friday, July 5th, and**

- **Thursday, July 18th**
- **A term paper (weight 30%) of a user group or a particular technology/context that has been studied in terms of user interactions.**  
 Select an identifiable group/technology, review any published research on the information behavior of this group/technology. You are looking for studies that others have done on your chosen user group/technology rather than trying to test them yourself. Ideally, this group could form the population you choose to study for your Masters' Paper. Hopefully, the group you choose will have been studied using some of the models we have read about, but don't worry if that isn't the case. You are basically summarizing the published characteristics you have found about the information behaviors for this group. Some groups chosen in the past have been the Gen X or Yers, doctors, lawyers, gamers, nurses, senior citizens, artists, genealogists, undergrads, scholars in a particular discipline ... there are more, but you get the idea! Technologies explored have been video interfaces and their affordances, augmented virtual reality in museums, sales management software for pharmaceutical companies, ... there are probably more available studies now on environments like Facebook... and someone took a look at Second Life some time ago. Length should be roughly 6-8 pages.

If possible, can you draw any useful conclusions about how professional practice might respond or anticipate the information behaviors of this group? This is something I like for you to think about, but if the group is a relative newcomer to information services (like gamers) it may not be possible to have a lot to say. Just think about it as you gather your articles.

If more than one of you chooses the same group, I will try to guide you toward looking at slightly different aspects of the group, if I can. As the semester proceeds, the "user group" or "user technology" choices to be identified so all class members will know who is looking at which group. I am quite hopeful that you might share any discovered information that might help another student, but we must be mindful of the UNC Honor Code and behave in such a way that each class member will provide a final product that is achieved independently. Since we will cover work styles and communication habits in a variety of work settings through our readings and discussions, you can also use any collaborative efforts as fodder for your journaling...no opportunity goes unused!

The following milestone submissions dates leading toward your final product will help you stay focused. Each milestone (June 28<sup>th</sup> and July 9<sup>th</sup>) should be submitted to me by email for a quick read and response:

- **June 28<sup>th</sup> - Submit a brief paragraph in an email message and 1-3 references you have found that address the characteristics of this group/technology.**
- **July 9<sup>th</sup> – Submit another email with more detail. Possibly provide a tentative Title, include a few more (total of 4-6) references, and a little more detailed description of your user group/technology context.**
- **July 19<sup>th</sup> to July 23<sup>rd</sup> - Provide a short Power Point Slide Set (I will provide suggestions about how to organize these, but say 6-8 slides**

**roughly) to post on Sakai and then be prepared to field responses from your classmates.**

- **Power Point Slide Set (weight 20%)** posted during the last few days of the class (**July 19<sup>th</sup> to July 23<sup>rd</sup>**) to be **“viewed by the class” on Sakai (much like the discussions we will have had throughout the course)**. **Each of you will be given a dedicated area in which to post your slides.** These slides should identify your group or context and cover your major findings about the information behaviors of your chosen “user group,” a selection and short summary of characteristics examined in some of the key references you found, perhaps a list of the journals most likely to carry information on this group, any sub-topics of interest that might have emerged from your examination of the literature, and where possible, any conclusions about the response that professional practice might have for this group. This set of slides provides members of the class with some shared resources/content on the groups examined. I will provide additional suggestions for organizing your slide content and provide grading rubrics for each of the expected products---the journal, the term paper and the slides, and email these rubrics to you as well as posting them in the Assignments area.

In summary, the course assignments are:

|                                    |            |  |
|------------------------------------|------------|--|
| <b>Readings/Reaction Journal</b>   | <b>30%</b> | <b>submitted on July 5<sup>th</sup> &amp; July 18<sup>th</sup></b> |
| <b>User Group/Technology Paper</b> |            | <b>mileposts – June 26<sup>th</sup> and July 9<sup>th</sup></b>    |
| <b>User Group/Technology Paper</b> | <b>30%</b> | <b>due July 24<sup>th</sup></b>                                    |
| <b>Power Point Slides</b>          | <b>20%</b> | <b>posted July 19<sup>th</sup> through 23<sup>rd</sup></b>         |
| <b>Participation/Discussions</b>   | <b>20%</b> | <b>as specified in course calendar</b>                             |

The final letter grade will be assigned based on the following accumulated score:

|                         |                                      |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 95-100%                 | = H (standard of “clear excellence”) |
| 90-94%                  | = P+                                 |
| 80-89%                  | = P                                  |
| 75-79%                  | = P-                                 |
| 70-74%                  | = L (low passing)                    |
| less than 70% of points | = F                                  |

#### **Format for written assignments:**

- Text should be submitted as Word documents or created in a PDF format.
- Readings journal should be single spaced. Final paper can be double spaced.
- Font type/size: 12 pt.
- Margins: left and right 1.5 inch; top and bottom 1.5 inch

- All pages should be numbered
- First Page should include student's name, email, and the submission date for the assignment.
- Citation style should adhere to some standard guide. The American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual or (if you prefer) to the *Chicago Manual of Style*. These are the style guides required by most of the professional publications in the LIS field.

### **Academic dishonesty:**

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor.

### **How to get the most from your e-learning experience in this course:**

1. The syllabus provides you with a list of the readings. I reserve the right to provide a possible substitution, if I see something that does a better job regarding the topic for the week. I will send you my notes and also post them to Sakai before the discussion time. Participate early in the class discussion to provide maximum opportunity for others to respond to your comment or question. (The earlier you post, the greater the likelihood that someone will respond to your post... and recall that generating responses boosts your participation grade. If you have a time conflict with the discussion dates, email me and I can always extend the discussion. But posting at the midnight hour on the last night will usually not give your classmates an opportunity to respond.)
2. The instructor has a single price for all of her long distance calls, so she is happy to call you for a "real time" chat. Just let her know a number and a time best to call you. You can do this through email.

## Course Calendar (Tentative)

### Week 1 (short) Discussion: June 20-June 24 (midnight)

Use this first week's discussion list to **Introduce** yourself to the instructor and to other members of the class. Sakai provides a special area for that. Choose some little known detail about your past to spice up your introduction! Passion for reality TV? Have 4 cats? Have 3 kids? Once appeared on a talk show? Fear of theoretical articles? Email me with any concerns: rpalmquist@cox.net

- Bush, Vannevar. "As we may think." *Atlantic Monthly* (1945) Available on the Web at <http://web.mit.edu/STS.035/www/PDFs/think.pdf>  
<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1945/07/as-we-may-think/303881/2/>
- Shedroff, Nathan (2000) Information interaction design: A unified field theory of design. (1994) <http://www.nathan.com/thoughts/unified/unified.pdf>
- Wilson, T.D. (2010) Fifty years of information behavior research. *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science & Technology*. 36(3): 27-34. For some reason, JASIS can be a pain to find.... So go to <http://www.lib.unc.edu/> and use the e-journal option, and I entered **society information science** . You will see several entries... JASIST has a Bulletin as well as its journal... we want the Bulletin, this time.

### **Discussion: from midday Friday, June 21<sup>st</sup> to midnight Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

If you have a scheduling conflict for the discussion, let me know and we can leave the discussions open longer. But I find that the discussion feels more like a conversation among you all if it is not stretched out over too long a period of time. You do not need to be "on" for the entire discussion time.... Post a question or respond to a post and then return later on to see if others have responded.

**Journal:** Choose one of the above articles, find some particular point made in the article and respond to it in your journal. Again, please do not tell me what the article said and do not critique the article. Find something that caused you to reflect on an information behavior—either your own or someone available to you. For example, Shedroff lists several approaches to organizing information... you might tell me your approach to organizing a collection of yours—does it fit one of his suggested approaches. You could check with others you know about how they organize something... files stored on an iPod, CDs, DVDs, files relating to school work, naming conventions for stored digital files on a laptop, etc. Just pick one type, don't try to cover many. The point is to show me that you derived something useful from the Shedroff reading and show me how you might examine that usefulness in your own or some else's information behavior.

## **Week 2 June 24<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> : Several Seminal Models**

- Taylor, R.S. (1968). Question negotiation and information seeking in libraries. *College & Research Libraries*, 29(3):178-194, 1968. (on e-reserve for Palmquist)
- Chang, Yu-Wei. (2013). The influence of Taylor's paper, *Question-Negotiation and Information Seeking in Libraries*. *Information Processing and Management*. 49: 983-994.
- Belkin, Nicholas (1980) Anomalous states of knowledge as a basis for information retrieval. *Canadian Journal of Information Science*, 5:133-143. (On e-reserves for Palmquist)
- Wilson, T.D. (1997) Information behavior: An interdisciplinary perspective. *Information Processing & Management* 33(4): 551-572. To locate the PDF file of the article, search the E-journals section of the [www.lib.unc.edu](http://www.lib.unc.edu) page for the journal title. Once you have found the journal, use the volume number, issue number and pages to find the article.
- Kuhlthau, Carol Collier. (1988) Developing a model of the library search process: Cognitive and affective aspects. *RQ (Winter, 1988)* 28(2): p.232 ... This article is also to be found using using the E-journals and entering the journal title on [www.lib.unc.edu](http://www.lib.unc.edu) (you must also search on “Words contained in the title” but this title isn’t so problematic.)

This last article is an award winner and we will meet the author again later on, but I found it very instructive and it is offered here for those who have heard the following from your friends and relatives ... “you need a Masters’ degree for that?!”

- Bates, Marcia J. (1999) The invisible substrate of information science. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*. 50(12):1043-1050.

**Discussion: online from midday Friday, June 28<sup>th</sup> to Sunday midnight, June 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Journal: Choose three of the above articles to react to in your journal.**

**Milestone 1: (June 28<sup>th</sup>) Send an email about the user group or technology you are considering. This should include a brief paragraph and 1-2 articles you have located about your group/technology.**

## **Week 3 July 1<sup>st</sup> - July 7<sup>th</sup>: Information Behavior in Various Settings**

- Chatman, E. (1996). The impoverished life-world of outsiders. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 47(3):193-206, 1996.
- Solomon, Paul. (1997) Discovering information behavior in sense making. III. The Person *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 48(12):1127-1138.



- Fisher, K.E., Durrance, J.C. and Hinton, M.B. (2004) Information grounds and the use of need-based services by immigrants in Queens, New York: A context-based, outcome evaluation approach. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 55(8): 754-766.
- Gossen and Nurnberger. (2013) Specifics of information retrieval for young users: A survey. *Information Processing and Management*. 49: 739-756.
- Tannen, Deborah. (1995) The Power of Talk, *Harvard Business Review* September-October, 1995: 138-148. Available through Palmquist's e-reserves.

**Discussion: Midday Friday, July 5<sup>th</sup> to midnight Sunday, July 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Choose two of the above to include in your journal.**

**First Half Journal due on July 5<sup>th</sup>. Reread the syllabus section on what you are asked to do through the journal. Single-spaced, 1 page (nothing bad happens if you are slightly over, but try to keep it to one-page). There should be roughly 6 entries... for Weeks 1-3.**

**Week 4 July 8<sup>th</sup> - July 14<sup>th</sup> : Information Habits and the Role of an Intermediary**

Marchionini, G. (1995). Browsing strategies. *Information Seeking in Electronic Environments*. NY: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 6, pages 100-138).  
[http://ils.unc.edu/~march/isee\\_book/Chapter\\_6.pdf](http://ils.unc.edu/~march/isee_book/Chapter_6.pdf)

Bates, Marcia J. (1989) The design of browsing and berrypicking techniques for the online search interface. Available from her faculty web site at UCLA  
<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/bates/berrypicking.html>

Reenstjerna, Frederick. (2001) Thinking about reference service paradigms and metaphors. *The Reference Librarian*. 72:97-111. (I will send you a copy. Remind me if I forget.)

Dewdney, Patricia and Catherine S. Ross. (1994) Flying a light aircraft: reference service evaluation from a user's viewpoint. *RQ* 34(2):: 217-231.

Tracy, Sarah J. (2002) When questioning turns to face threat: An interactional sensitivity in 911 call-taking. *Western Journal of Communication*, 66(2): 129-157. (Spring, 2002)

**Milestone #2: A longer description of your user group/technology along with a total of 4-6 citations you have found. If possible, suggest a possible title for your slides.**

**Discussion: Friday (July 12<sup>th</sup> ) through Sunday, midnight, (July 14<sup>th</sup> )**

**Journal: Choose three of the above for your journal.**

## **Week 5 July 15<sup>th</sup> - July 21<sup>st</sup>: Collaborative Information Behavior**

- Nardi, Bonnie, et.al. (2004) "Why We Blog" *Communications of the ACM* 47(12) 41-46 (December, 2004) This is a Special Issue on the Blogosphere. Find it through e-journals, ACM Digital Library,
- Nardi, Bonnie, et.al. (2006) "Strangers and Friends: Collaborative Play in World of Warcraft." CSCW'06 Nov. 4-6, 2006. Banff, Alberta, Canada. Back to ACM's Digital Library and search for the acronym which stands for Computer Supported Collaborative Work, but the acronym should work as well.
- Pink, Daniel. (2005) "The Book Stops Here." *Wired Magazine*. March, 2005. Available as of 6/12/11 at the following URL <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.03/wiki.html> (Please note that the story seems to have 4 independent parts, each a couple of pages long.)
- Thelwall, Mike. (2008) Bibliometrics to webometrics. *Journal of Information Science*. 34(4): 605-621.

We will have an abbreviated discussion over only a couple of these readings. You will also be posting your slides this weekend. Additionally, chose two of the above for your journal.

**Journal: Choose two from the above - 2<sup>nd</sup> half is due on July 18<sup>th</sup> (There should be 5 entries in 2<sup>nd</sup> half)**

**Power Point Slides: July 19<sup>th</sup> to July 23<sup>rd</sup> (the sooner you post your slides, the more comments and questions you will receive.)**

**User Group/Technology paper: Due July 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Last class (if we were meeting in real life) on July 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Grades are due on CarolinaConnect: July 30<sup>th</sup> by 5 p.m. (I think)**