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Information Activities, Resources, and Spaces in the Hobby of Gourmet Cooking

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Information Studies

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

All photographs are by the author.

LIST OF TABLES

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Information Activities, Resources, and Spaces
in the Hobby of Gourmet Cooking

by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Information Studies
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In this dissertation I describe information phenomena in the hobby of gourmet cooking. The investigation draws upon theories of domain analysis, serious leisure, and social worlds to establish the hobby as a setting with distinct informational patterns. Specifically, I focus on information activities and information resources of the hobby, seen from the cook's perspective and in the context of their home. Applying scientific ethnography, I interviewed 20 cooks; then, each guided me through their household and explained their culinary information resources, which were photographed and sketched. The data (transcripts, photographs, and diagrams) were analyzed using grounded theory and NVivo software. The results provide an overview of the hobby and a context to describe information phenomena in detail; there are five areas of findings.

First, this hobby entails food preparation using high quality or exotic ingredients and advanced culinary techniques. Gourmet cooks have an aesthetic sensibility, love to entertain, and customize their kitchens as workshops. Second, the hobby unfolds in time as three temporal arcs: a hobby career, subjects, and episodes. These long, medium, and short time horizons have distinct information dynamics and a quintessential information resource. Third, hands-on cooking involves a process of nine sequential steps: exploring, planning, provisioning, prepping, assembling, cooking, serving, eating, and evaluating. Information activities and resources vary per step. Fourth, cooks gain skill and knowledge though a variety of information activities, namely: living a gourmet lifestyle, expressing culinary expertise, staying informed and inspired, launching a cooking episode, and using information during a cooking episode. Fifth, to support the hobby most cooks maintain a personal culinary library (PCL): a constellation of culinary information resources based in the home. PCLs vary in size and the larger types are organized as a mother lode, zones, recipe collections, and binders that altogether facilitate the discovery of keepers – proven, cherished recipes.

As a case study of a domestic leisure realm this project extends everyday life information seeking research beyond its typical focus on public settings and problem situations and offers a theoretical framework and methodology to study information in the context of pleasurable and profound human experiences.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

A meaningful area of life is leisure. For many people, leisure is a source of joy, happiness, and physical health (Argyle, 1996, p. 6). In communities leisure creates a sense of fraternity and vitality, it is ". . . the space of friendship, of much parenting and nurture, of community interaction and of the family itself" (Kelly, 1983, p. 23). More so than any point in history, leisure is a significant component of everyday life. (Argyle, 1996, p. 1; Robinson and Godbey, 1997; Stebbins, 2001b, pp. 147-149).

To varying degrees all forms of leisure involve *information seeking and use* (ISU). Enthusiasts take steps to discover what leisure opportunities are available, and to know where, when, and how to participate. Information institutions such as the library and Internet are resources for leisure materials, information, and experiences. The library supplies fiction for pleasure reading and offers music, videos, lectures, and meeting places for entertainment purposes. Studies show that 87% of library uses are for entertainment (Vavrek, 2001); and one third pertain to hobbies or enjoyment (Collins & Chandler, 1997). The PEW/Internet in American Life research project reports that the Internet is used as a resource for hobbies (77%) or fun (66%) (2005a); and on a daily basis 20% of people seek information about hobbies online (2005b).

While leisure involves ISU through outlets like libraries and the Internet, the LIS field has not examined this matter. Little is known about the acquisition and use of information in leisure. Of 3,000 ISU studies since 1966, 95% have focused on scholarly or professional environments (Harris & Dewdney, 1994, p. 9). The emerging specialty of *everyday life information seeking* (ELIS) (Savolainen, 1995) has turned attention to non-work contexts, yet research under this banner largely considers problematical situations like illness.

As a result, theoretical insights about ISU are unduly narrow, and information provision to the leisure sector may fall short of potential. What explains the lack of inquiry into leisure ISU? It could be that leisure, at first glance, does not seem problematical or informational, especially compared to academe or work. Or, at a time when information is accepted as being inextricably bound to its context (Vakkari, 1997; Talja, Keso, & Pietiläinen, 1999) the relatively unfamiliar and seemingly unstructured leisure environs may discourage inquiry.

Sociologist Robert Stebbins' idea of *serious leisure* (1982) provides a mandate and staging to systematically study information phenomena in leisure (Hartel, 2003, 2005). Stebbins' long-running ethnographic research program illuminates how leisure is not homogenous in character, but is composed of three types: *casual*, *serious*, and *project-based*[1]. *Casual leisure* is "doing what comes naturally" and requires no learning or wherewithal, for example, watching TV, walking a dog, or chatting on the phone. Differently, serious leisure is, "the systematic pursuit of an … activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a leisure career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (1992, p. 3). Since serious leisure takes the form of a *career* that involves learning, engagement with information is at its heart. There are three types of serious leisure: amateurism, volunteering, and hobbies (2001b, p. 4-6).

According to Stebbins (2001b, p. 7), serious leisure pursuits form *social worlds* (Strauss, 1978; Unruh, 1979, 1980), distributed communities that coalesce around an interest and contain a constellation of activities, locations, tools, events, and other social structures. Social worlds are geographically diffuse and therefore rely upon mediated communication via publications, broadcasting, and networked technologies to share meanings and

[1] *Project-based leisure* is a short-term, moderately complicated, either one-shot or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time (Stebbins, 2005). Stebbins first coined the concept after the design of this study and so it is not addressed here.

disseminate knowledge (Unruh, 1980, p. 279-280). In short, serious leisure social worlds are information-rich domains within everyday life akin to academic disciplines or professions. Cast this way, an area of everyday life becomes more receptive to research that may bring greater diversity to ISU and ELIS scholarship.

My passion for one variety of serious leisure – the hobby of gourmet cooking – provides the motivation and site for this study. This hobby entails the specialized preparation of food using high quality ingredients and refined techniques. For instance, a gourmet hobby cook may aspire to make the delicious yet exacting chocolate dessert soufflé. To this end they seek out and compare numerous soufflé recipes, acquire the finest imported bittersweet chocolate, and master the difficult preparation technique. In the United States, several million people share this avocation and populate a dynamic social world. This domain includes among other things, a corpus of culinary practices and skills; locations like kitchens, markets, and restaurants; materials such as ingredients, utensils, and appliances; and events such as meals, holidays, or seasons.

Like all serious leisure social worlds, the steady desire of gourmet cooks to learn and the dependence on mediated communication creates a significant information dimension. My dissertation takes the information phenomena in the serious leisure social world of the hobby of gourmet cooking as its subject. To bring focus to this multidimensional realm, analytical intention is limited to three aspects of information which are held to be inextricably bound: *information activities*, *information resources*, and *information spaces*. The overarching research question is: *What are the information activities and information resources in the hobby of gourmet cooking and how are they situated in a home environment?* This line of inquiry extends ISU and ELIS scholarship into the new substantive area of serious leisure, and the geography of the home. Whereas traditional information research casts information activities somewhat narrowly as *seeking* and *searching*; and assumes information resources to

be scholarly *articles* or *monographs*, this study offers an enlarged view that is contextualized in the hobby and everyday life.

For instance, gourmet cooks take trips overseas, go food shopping, and eat out in order to engage food firsthand. They discuss and debate cooking matters in detail with their like-minded "foodie-friends." Hobbyists enjoy the role of culinary expert and serve as on-call troubleshooters for loved ones who have debacles in the kitchen. Some cooks keep artful diaries that chronicle their culinary experiences and daydreams. Whenever time permits, they launch a cooking project, which entails information intensive tasks such as designing menus, searching for recipes, and creating shopping lists and work plans.

To stay informed and inspired about their hobby, participants enjoy the abundant literature and media of the gourmet cooking social world, that includes various types of cookbooks and serial magazines like *Gourmet*, *Bon Appetit*, and *Fine Cooking*. Most newspapers feature a weekly food column or section, often focusing on the local culinary scene. Gourmet cooking websites serve as portals to databases with upwards of 25,000 recipes. The cable *Food Network* supplies 24-hour a day culinary programming to 85 million viewers (E.W. Scripps, 2004); and there are newsletters, newsgroups, and radio broadcasts on a wide range of culinary topics. The most intriguing, original, and undocumented information resources of this hobby are homemade compendiums of favorite recipes (Banker, 2003; Steligo, 1999).

While many serious leisure activities are group-based and occur at public venues, the hobby of gourmet cooking is uniquely personal and domestic (Bishop & Hoggett, 1986, p. 29), on account of the intimate and familial nature of eating and cooking, and its dependency on the kitchen. Therefore, information activities and resources come together in a home-based information space (Lee, 2003), here called a *personal culinary library*, or PCL. PCLs include content in various forms and structures for organizing the information; they vary in size and scale per cook, from a small set of cookbooks that are tucked away in a cabinet to

larger multimedia collections that dominate a household. Larger PCLs sprawl through the home and are organized by the cook into a *mother lode*, *zones*, *recipe collections*, and *binders* – an information system of sorts that helps to discover *keepers* – proven, cherished recipes. Some PCLs contain *culinary keepsakes*, documentary artifacts passed through generations that carry special memories and family traditions.

To discover and document the information dimension of the hobby of gourmet cooking, I conducted a *scientific ethnography* (Sandstrom & Sandstrom, 1995). I interviewed 20 gourmet cooks in their homes to elicit accounts of cooking and its information phenomena. After the interview, the cook took me on a tour of their households, and described culinary information resources in their natural setting. I recorded features of the spaces through a *photographic inventory* (Collier & Collier, 1986; Hartel, 2006), a systematic photography process employing a digital camera. I analyzed the transcripts of the interviews and the photographs using *grounded theory* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and NVivo software. Results have been written up as a fieldnote centered ethnography that begins with a general survey of the hobby and then focuses on its information activities, resources, and spaces.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The hobby of gourmet cooking entails a variety of information activities and specialized culinary information resources gathered, created, and used by the hobbyist within the home. Detailed accounts of these information phenomena and their interactions have not been documented from the point of view of the hobbyist or from an examination of actual domestic settings. My scientific ethnography of this area extends ISU and ELIS scholarship as the first context-sensitive case study of multiple information phenomena in a domestic, serious leisure, hobby realm.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study has three related objectives. The primary purpose is empirical: to document, through participant's accounts and firsthand observation, the information phenomena within the hobby of gourmet cooking, seen as: information activities, information resources, and information spaces. A secondary aim is theoretical: to build a theoretical framework for studying information phenomena in a serious leisure social world. A third goal is methodological: to introduce scientific ethnography as an approach for the study of information phenomena in a home context.

1.4 Research Questions (general)

The overarching research question is: *What are the information activities and information resources in the hobby of gourmet cooking and how are they situated in a home environment?* Five general questions guide the study:

1. What are the features of the hobby of gourmet cooking?
2. What are the information activities in the hobby of gourmet cooking?
3. What are the information resources in the hobby of gourmet cooking?
4. What are the information spaces in the hobby of gourmet cooking?
5. How do all of the elements above interact in the hobby of gourmet cooking?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This project and its outcomes:

- Establish the first detailed account of information phenomena in the context of one form of serious leisure: the Making and Tinkering hobby of gourmet cooking
- Supply an interdisciplinary, domain analytic (Hjørland & Albrechtsen, 1995) theoretical framework for the systematic study of information in serious leisure; replaces the traditional cognitive view of the information encounter with a more balanced approach attuned to context and its information artifacts
- Introduce scientific ethnography and visual research techniques for the study of information in context

- Generate results that challenge and expand conventional theories of ISU (Belkin, 1980; Dervin, 1983; Kuhlthau, 1988; Allen, 1996)
- Inspire ideas for information provision to a sizable hobby community

1.6 Definition of Terms

The major concepts of the study are briefly defined below and will be expanded and presented in the form of a theoretical framework in Chapter 3. To encompass all the interesting phenomena involved, the concepts will be viewed broadly. As an exploratory study it seems wiser to err on the side of diversity and breadth, and future research can further hone and explicate these meanings.

Serious leisure: A type of leisure that is systematically pursued, takes the form of a career, and centers on acquiring or expressing knowledge and skill. Scholarship about serious leisure provides social and psychological insights into the context of the hobby of gourmet cooking.

Social world: Serious leisure pursuits generate social worlds, ". . . a constellation of actors, organizations, events and practices which have coalesced into a perceived sphere of interest and involvement for participants" (Unruh, 1979, p. 115). Research into social worlds illuminates additional social and structural features within the hobby of gourmet cooking.

Hobby: The most prevalent of the three types of serious leisure, a hobby is the systematic and enduring pursuit of a reasonably evolved and specialized free-time activity that leads to the acquisition of knowledge, skill, or experience (Stebbins, 2003). Unlike amateur pursuits (another form of serious leisure) hobbies have no professional counterparts and minimal financial gain for participants.

Gourmet cooking: Technically, cooking is the application of heat to food. However, the term cooking is used more broadly to encompass food preparation not involving heat, such

as measuring, chopping, or mixing. My study focuses on a particular type of cooking called *gourmet*, which utilizes high quality or exotic ingredients and entails technical skill.

Gourmet hobby cook: A person who routinely engages in food preparation (involving high quality or exotic ingredients and skillful preparation) for pleasure and during free-time. The gourmet hobby cook's activity and engagement with information are the focus of this study. The terms *gourmets*, *hobbyists*, and *cooks* are used synonymously.

Information phenomena: This omnibus term is a banner for all the entities within the purview of library and information studies. It includes information behaviors, resources, structures, spaces, systems, and institutions. For expediency and lack of an alternative, the term will be used to refer to the three foci of the study: information activities, information resources, and information spaces.

Information activities: Information activities are those actions of acquiring and expressing the special skills and knowledge of gourmet cooking. The word "actions" focuses attention on that which the hobby cook can be observed to *do*.

Information resources: are the artifacts, people or experiences that contribute to skill and knowledge of gourmet cooking. To be sure, this broad definition enfolds a lot of entities not traditionally within the purview of LIS, like fellow cooks and farmer's markets. While the definition sanctions consideration of such things, the mainstay of the study is devoted to the documentary universe that supports the hobby.

Information spaces: Locations that contain a concentration of information resources, both text and digital, which are actively acquired, cultivated, organized, and used over time. This study focuses on the *immediate* (Lee, 2003) information spaces in the vicinity of the cook's home.

1.7 Results

The outcome of the research is an ethnography that describes information phenomena in the hobby of gourmet cooking from the vantage point of the cook in their home. It is presented in a lively, visual, and accessible style for a readership of students and researchers of library and information studies, leisure scientists, public librarians, and gourmet hobby cooks. The original research proposal is presented in Chapters 1-4; and results appear in Chapters 5-9 along with Appendices and References.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This review involves four literatures, three within the discipline of library and information studies (LIS): culinary scholarship, information seeking and use (ISU), and everyday life information seeking (ELIS). The fourth is the research specialty of hobbies within the field of leisure science.

First, in a study of information phenomena in the hobby of cooking, it is obligatory to survey all writings in the field of LIS that are *culinary*, meaning: of or relating to the kitchen or to cookery (dictionary.com, 2005). The remainder of the chapter aims to illustrate how a study of information phenomena in the hobby of cooking is a contribution to social scientific knowledge. The argument is made that research into ISU focuses too narrowly on academic and professional realms, producing theories with limited applicability and a lacuna in understanding. It is shown that a corrective is emerging in the specialty of ELIS. However, upon closer examination ELIS research is shown to favor problematical situations, and have other methodological limitations. Outside of LIS, the field of leisure science offers a wealth of insights into hobbies as activities and social realms, but fails to explicate or theorize information phenomena. My study of information activities, resources, and spaces within the hobby of gourmet cooking contributes in different ways to each of the four research areas.

2.2 Culinary Research in LIS

In the field of LIS, the first published statement about anything culinary was probably by Paul Otlet, who proposed that, "a taste of something" is a document (1934). Since then, this fanciful idea has not been further developed, and only a handful of studies

address culinary topics. These works approach the culinary context in general, unlike my study which focuses on the realm of gourmet hobby cooking. The writings I have found fall into three areas: *cookbook indexing*, *culinary bibliography*, and *information systems for culinary scenarios*. The precedents stimulate the imagination and suggest issues to explore in my project.

To survey culinary literature in LIS, I performed successive searches in *Library and Information Science Abstracts*, utilizing the descriptor *cookery* as well as title searches for *cookbook* or *cooking* or *gourmet*. A few other articles came to me through citation chaining and the hands of colleagues. The review is selective and includes only longer works with a rigorous research premise (short or breezy articles about culinary topics were not included).

2.2.1 Cookbook indexing

The most sustained research into culinary information phenomena is about the specialty of cookbook indexing. The textbook *Indexing from A to Z* (Wellisch, 1996) dedicates a chapter to this matter and notes, "…cookbook indexes are probably searched more often and by more people than many other [indexes]…" Cookbook indexing is challenging because of the variability of users (ranging from inexperienced home cooks to professional chefs), the multiplicity of possible index terms for any recipe, and the limited space for indexes allotted by publishers. The five facets that should be indexed for any recipe are: type of food, name, ingredients, region or place, and illustrations (pp. 94-97).

The American Society of Indexers hosts an international Culinary Indexing special interest group ("Culinary Indexing," 2004) that serves as an educational forum for this line of work, and boasts chef Julia Child as a former member. At the SIG's website are practical articles such as Bertelsen's (1999) "A Piece of Cake? Cookbook Indexing: Basic Guidelines and Resources," and Grant's (1990) "Cookbook Indexing: Not as Easy as ABC." Cookbook indexing has been analyzed historically in Sassen's (2001) study of the index of the classic *The*

Joy of Cooking, documenting an increase in depth, consistency, and cross-referencing, with greater access to illustrations and recipe titles.

Overall, this batch of publications points to the multiple facets of cooking's main genre (the recipe), its inherent challenges to access, and the evolving nature of the culinary index. A matter to further explore in my research is the apparently significant role of the index in the use of cookbooks and the cooking process.

2.2.2 Culinary bibliography

A variety of works in the LIS tradition of subject bibliography exists for the culinary literature. The Library of Congress catalogue lists 44 items in the class *Cookery Bibliography*. These differ in their audiences, whether for scholars, librarians, or the general public. The majority are academic, for they chronicle culinary texts from much earlier eras which likely have limited utility to a contemporary gourmet hobby cook; these will not be reviewed here.

An exemplar bibliography for librarians is "Tasty Selections: A Survey of Gourmet Cooking Magazines" (T. L. Wilson, 2003). In this article art librarian and self-proclaimed cooking enthusiast Terrie Wilson surveys ten gourmet cooking magazines, in order to facilitate culinary collection development. The analysis provides a description and history of each publication and shows how these serials are each distinct in their contributors, feature articles, recipe type and complexity, artwork, and price. Another noteworthy bibliographic effort is "A Selective Guide to Culinary Library Collections in the United States" (2002), by Griswold on behalf of the International Association of Culinary Professionals. This guide describes 61 major collections of culinary materials held in academic, independent, and public libraries.

My study is most concerned with culinary bibliography of popular sources, geared for hobbyists. The best of this lot is Coyle's (1985) *Cook's Books: An Affectionate Guide to the*

Literature of Food and Cooking. This fun and informative text is peppered with recipes and also lays out the history of cookbooks, classic books by great chefs, general cookbooks, cuisine cookbooks, cookbooks by type of food or ingredient, and a few other major categories. *Great Books for Cooks* (Wyler & Mclaughlin, 1999) is similar in nature and more current. These two works aside, there is a seeming dearth of bibliographic resources in the vast and varied popular culinary literature.

In considering this matter, it first helps to reflect upon the place of bibliography in the structure of literatures. Shera and Egan proposed that literatures form a *bibliographic pyramid* (1952, p. 126) which contains primary works as its broad base. In the increasingly narrow middle of the pyramid, works are subject to the process of bibliographic identification and reduction via abstracting and indexing. The capstone of the bibliographic pyramid is the annual review, the most refined bibliographic analysis and synthesis of a literature. Shera and Egan had scholarly, not popular, literatures in mind, though they present the model as a universal.

Based upon my familiarity with culinary literature and its use, the pyramid does not appear well-developed, nor altogether essential, in the gourmet hobby cooking domain. This is the case despite a volume of documents which numbers in the millions per year, when counted at the level of the recipe. If a gourmet hobby cooks wants to identify all chocolate cake recipes published in the last decade there are few aggregators, namely *Cook's Index* (1975-present), a triennial publication that aims, "to bring bibliographical control to the literature of cooking" and *Recipex* (Gilbar, 1990). These sources cover only a fraction of published recipes; and to my knowledge are untapped by hobbyists. Likewise, there is no way to search *across* the several major online recipe archives. And, culinary periodicals charge extra for subscribers to purchase an annual index. Analogs to Shera and Egan's capstone literature review do not seem to exist for the popular culinary world. Sometimes *best of*

collections (e.g. Gourmet Magazine Editors, n.d.) appear yet they do not play the significant role of the scholarly literature review.

This analysis of culinary bibliography highlights two issues to explore in my dissertation. First, that the popular culinary literature may be unusually primary in nature. Cast as Shera and Egan's pyramid, it would have a vast base and virtually no height. This should be kept in mind when interrogating hobby cooks about their navigation of this information space. How do they acquire the information they need in such a sprawling landscape that lacks basic bibliographic instruments? Second, my exploratory research (Hartel, 2003) suggests that the hobby cook enacts a form of bibliography in their home. Cookbook and recipes are gathered and organized by the cook as a routine part of the hobby. In a sense, a shelf of favorite cookbooks or common card file of recipes, obtained and sorted lovingly over the years, are domestic, dynamic, bibliographic entities. The status of popular culinary bibliography, and its role in information practices, will be explored in my project.

2.2.3 Culinary information systems

A third group of studies are centered on the design of information systems to facilitate the process of acquiring and/or cooking food. It appears that the familiar and information-rich context of cooking has captured the imagination of information systems designers. Some of these projects bring to mind Star Trek's culinary practices.

Svensson, Hook, Laaksolahti, and Waern (2001) built an online food shopping system in order to evaluate a host of social navigation mechanisms. Their system functions to sell food, but is organized around recipe groupings where users visit and interact via social navigation tools like recommending, chatting, and trailing. The study reported that most users successfully navigated the food shopping system using the recipe-based social

navigation tools. As an exploration of specific online navigation techniques in a sales context, this study bears minimally on my own. However, it reinforces the idea that culinary information has strong social properties.

Miura, Hamada, Ide, Sakai, and Tanaka (2003) describe a way to integrate two types of culinary information: cookbooks and cooking video. They lay out a process of structural analysis for each genre in which keywords are synchronized between the two mediums. The authors speculate that the combination of the two information resources is more effective for educational purposes than each medium alone. As applied research to solve a specific problem within instructional technology, this study has no direct impact on my own. Yet it validates my working assumption that stable culinary practices exist and are similarly expressed across genres; and that an understanding of such dynamics can be useful for information provision.

More fantastical projects are underway in the basement of MIT's media lab, by the *Counter Intelligence Research Group* (2005). They aim to produce the next generation *smart-kitchen* that facilitates the provision and cooking of food. Their prototype *counterActive* (Ju, Hurwitz, Judd, & Lee, 2001) is an interactive information system that projects recipes onto a countertop. The glowing recipes contain hyperlinks that lead to background details in an effort to, "enhance the experience of cooking." The inventors claim, "This is the first computerized recipe system we have seen that not only expands on the conventional cookbook by incorporating pictures, audio, and video, but also deals better with being covered with spilled milk" (Bell & Kaye, 2002, p. 55). In this same line, Langheinrich, Mattern, Romer, & Vogt (2000) propose a smart kitchen prototype called *RFID Chef*. Also at MIT, researchers are investigating the role of scent in conveying information, manifesting in a smart garden called *Robocrop* (Kaye & Thordarson, n.d.). They have even produced an

intelligent coffee machine, *Mr. Java*, that uses bar-coded personal coffee mugs to deliver the perfect brew and customized news (Hawley, Kaye, & Matsakis, n.d.).

I admire the innovative spirit of these projects, but find them gadgety and lacking a mandate based in practical, social, historical, and cultural understanding. None of the projects specify the type of cooking they facilitate, its typical course, and the nature of the information problems that the technologies solve. As gadfly, I would object that the glowing recipes of *counterActive* may not impress gourmet hobby cooks, who appear to enjoy material recipes and cookbooks. Overall, this work raises questions about the nature of and need for systems-based innovation in the kitchen. It also reveals a lack of holistic or contextual approaches to information system design for culinary purposes.

As this section illustrates, there is no program of culinary informatics in LIS, but three small and separate clusters of work about culinary indexing, bibliography, and systems. The projects offer solutions and tools for specific information access and use problems, suggesting questions to consider in my own study. My dissertation differs in its focus on one type of cooking and its effort to understand the broader context surrounding culinary information phenomena. Going forward, my research will supply background insights for work of this kind.

2.3 Information Seeking and Use

Next, moving outside studies of culinary information phenomena in LIS, I position my research as a contribution to LIS scholarship on ISU and ELIS, and also to leisure science research into hobbies.

Investigations of ISU have traditionally targeted academic or professional subjects, an orientation rooted in the historical emergence of the research area. In the middle of the 20th century, the social, political, and economic importance of the sciences motivated the

first investigations into ISU. The intent was to understand the information needs and practices of scientists as a means to then quicken the pace of scientific discovery. This original concern for academic populations was established in 1948 at the Scientific Information Conference of the Royal Society, and over the decades was reaffirmed in landmark papers on social scientists (Menzel, 1958), psychologists (American Psychological Association, 1965-1968), social service departments (Wilson, et. al, 1978), students (Kuhlthau, 1988), and humanities scholars (Bates, 1996).

The 1970s saw some attention to citizen ISU. Large-scale surveys by Warner, Murray, and Palmour (1973) and Dervin (1976) looked at the information needs of the general public and identified favored information sources and channels. These studies found that in everyday life people prefer informal sources and rarely use public libraries. This new research direction was not sustained beyond the 1970s.

Today, the mainstay of ISU studies focus on scholars or professionals. Harris and Dewdney (1994, p. 9) report that since 1966 more than 3,000 studies of ISU have been executed, and 95% deal with the information needs of scholars and professionals. A content analysis (McKechnie, Baker, Greenwood, & Julien, 2002) of 247 information behavior articles from 1993-2000 reports that 70% of studies examined professionals, workers, academics, students, or organizations.

Since academics and professionals are a small portion of the general public, it is a mistake to consider extant theories and insights about ISU to be representative of the population, or effective in guiding all types of information provision. It seems there is as significant area of human experience wherein ISU is unexamined. Studies of ISU in a wider variety of contexts could ameliorate this problem, and some scholars advocate greater attention to everyday life (Tuominen & Savolainen, 1997).

2.4 Everyday Life Information Seeking

In the past decade more ISU research has focused outside of academic and work contexts. A factor in this shift may be the rise of the Internet among the general public, drawing scholar's curiosity to information phenomena in everyday life scenarios. With increasing research to this area, the acronym *ELIS*, for everyday life information seeking, was coined by Savolainen (1995) and applied to a branch of user studies that, "examines information behavior in daily life activities" (Spink & Cole, 2001, p. 301). Evidence of ferment in ELIS research include a special issue of *Library and Information Science Research* (Spink & Cole, 2001) on ELIS; the biannual Information Seeking in Context conferences (ISIC, 2005) that place emphasis on everyday life matters; and the Information Behavior in Everyday Contexts (IBEC, n.d.) research program, sponsored by the National Science Foundation, underway jointly at Washington and Michigan information schools.

My original analytical strategy for understanding the status of ELIS research, and identifying the contribution of this dissertation, is to group it within three themes: *holistic*, *compromised situations*, and *leisure*. The themes emerge as self evident when surveying the literature. Each theme shares a substantive area, subject or population, research method, and typical result. This perspective brings to light that ELIS scholarship itself is not comprehensive in its coverage, and has strengths and limitations per area. It will be shown that my study is designed as a response to some of the limitations within each ELIS theme. To begin, the themes and their essential features are summarized in a table below:

Theme	Substantive area	Subject or population	Research method	Typical result
Holistic	ISU across the entirety of daily living	Broad population	Interviews Diaries	Model
Compromised situations	ISU within compromised situations or life challenges	Marginalized or at-risk populations	Ethnography Interviews	Description of situation that serves as a foundation for improved information provision
Leisure	ISU within leisure or recreation	An activity or interest group	Interviews	Counter-tenets to assumptions about information seeking

Table 1. Three themes within ELIS research and their characteristics.

2.4.1 Holistic

The first approach attempts to explain ISU across the entirety of daily living. No particular temporal segment, activity, or social grouping bounds these inquiries, hence the banner *holistic*. Such studies bear the greatest resemblance to the citizen surveys of the 1970s, though in-depth interviews or personal record-keeping (diaries or activity logs) are the typical data gathering method. These projects contain more than the typical amount of theoretical and methodological discussion in order to define what information is across everyday life, and how it can be measured. The product of the investigations are often grand scale models or tenets of ISU within everyday life.

The seminal work of this kind is by Savolainen (1995), who draws upon Bordieu's theory of *habitus* and interviews with 22 Finnish citizens to model ELIS as a part of the "mastery of life" and the maintenance of a daily status quo. Also notable is Hektor's monograph, *What's the Use? The Internet and Information Behavior in Everyday Life* (1999). In this study, 10 Swedish subjects kept detailed diaries of information use during the waking day. From these accounts Hektor produced a model of information activities in which four contexts: giving, seeking, communicating, and gathering form the backdrop for eight informational activities (publish, instruct, dress, exchange, unfold, monitor, brows, search

and retrieve). Julien and Michel's (2004) work is distinct for looking at intra-individual information seeking – the information behaviors that manifest across the various situations in one person's life. That inquiry illuminated the primary role of situational factors in shaping information behavior. Williamson (1997, 1998) interviewed 200 older Australian adults, producing an ecological model of ISU wherein family and friends are favored information resources, followed by community organizations, mass media, and professionals.

From holistic studies, general insights emerge about how people experience and use information in their daily lives. In an encyclopedia article on ELIS, Savolainen (2003) summarizes research of this kind into five conclusions:

1. Everyday life information needs and seeking are affected by a number of cognitive, emotional, cultural, and situational factors
2. In meeting ELIS needs, people favor a limited number of easily accessible sources, which have been found useful before
3. ELIS is largely oriented by the principle of least effort
4. Daily information seeking habits change quiet slowly
5. The Internet is changing ELIS, though not replacing traditional sources

As its strength, this tributary of ELIS research has produced the first models and descriptions of ISU in daily living. Yet it can also be criticized as an approach that is limited, for its results are so general. The conclusions seem applicable and true to non-ELIS contexts such as work or academe, challenging the value of ELIS as a distinct research area. Certain findings, especially the first, seem like common sense. Finally, a methodological conundrum is that the effort to find patterns and meanings across a sprawling temporal space and varied populations conflicts with the increasingly favored interpretation of ISU as situational and context bound. In order to elicit greater detail about ELIS, my research is designed as a case study of one sizable social world and its context, not the entirety of everyday life.

2.4.2 Compromised situations

A second area within ELIS research focuses upon scenarios in which ISU are perceived as compromised, or a life challenge is faced, as in cases of illness. This includes studies of populations seen as marginalized or disadvantaged, like the poor, blind, or imprisoned. In my own bibliography of ELIS research, about 80% of the studies are of compromised situations.

Elfreda Chatman was a pioneer in this area. She studied the daily life of elderly women in a retirement community (1992), female prisoners (1999), female janitors (2000). She generated broad social theories to account for information seeking in these situations. Her work presents an often dark picture in which people are deprived of information, avoid information, and behave secretively concerning information needs. Pettigrew conducted an ethnography (1999, 2000) of the information behavior in a foot clinic. Her work specifically explored Granovetter's theories of weak and strong ties, in terms of its relevance to ISU. From this study she established the original idea of *information grounds* – sites where vital information is exchanged through social contact. Researchers at the Breast *Cancer Knowledge Online* project (BCKOnline, 2002) at Monash University, Australia, investigate ISU by those whose lives are touched by the disease. This project illuminates the variability of information needs across the stages and manifestations of breast cancer. Other major studies of ISU in compromised situations are Tuominen's (2004) analysis of information seeking by heart surgery patients; Baker's (1994) of women coping with multiple sclerosis; and Carey's (2003) ethnography of a lupus support group.

Studies of compromised situations dominate ELIS research and are valuable. Findings are richly descriptive and may have important practical applications for palliating difficult situations through better information provision. These studies have also been

methodologically pioneering in placing the citizen at the center of ISU research, and introducing ethnographic approaches.

Yet this research tributary begs the question whether compromised situations should be the nexus of ELIS inquiry. Hardship is not necessarily the status quo in everyday life. For in its primitive sense, everyday life is more essentially mundane than traumatic. Also, it seems fair to argue that the opposite of duress – life's pleasures – is research worthy as well. ELIS may be central to enjoyable parts of life, and pursued with a sense of opportunity, challenge, and fun (Kari & Hartel, 2007). The preponderance of ELIS studies of compromised situations suggests a need for greater balance and variety in research subjects. In response, my research focuses on the upbeat realm of leisure.

2.4.3 Leisure

In ELIS scholarship, a handful of studies focus on ISU in the context of leisure or recreation. Projects in this area often have a maverick esprit and are presented as extensions to studies of academic or professional realms. Findings can take the form of surprising counter-tenets, meaning, leisure ISU runs nearly opposite to prior research or widely held assumptions about ISU.

Ross (1999) conducted 194 interviews with people who love to read. Among this population reading punctuates daily life, and heavy readers have highly developed skills for finding good books. A most important conclusion is the idea of "finding without seeking" – meaning, readers discover insights or resolve problems in the process of pleasure reading, though they had not formulated a question. This challenges the standard assumption that information seeking is couched in a mode of uncertainty and is preceded by a question.

Kari (2001) explored information encounters in the context of the paranormal, defined as any experience beyond the scope of current scientific knowledge (i.e. engaging

with spirits, sightings of unexplained phenomena, etc.). Through modified Sense-making interviews with 16 paranormal believers, the following was learned: some people consult information sources which they regard as paranormal; information is mostly sought to address normal not paranormal matters; paranormal information is felt to be helpful, and paranormal information experiences have no clear beginning or end. The most atypical conclusion from this body of work is that it is possible for otherworldly information to be useful.

Spink and Ozmutlu (2001) are spearheading research into online information seeking about sex. An analysis of a sample of 2,400 web queries across all subject areas showed that recreation and sex were the two most common search topic categories among the public. Spink, Ozmutlu, and Lorence (2004), analyzed more than 58,000 search engine queries concerning sex. It was found that search sessions for sexual topics lasted longer and viewed more pages. In contrast to the principle of least effort, seekers of sexual information exhibit atypical persistence in searching for and then using sexual information.

Yakel (2003) investigated information use in genealogy through 29 interviews with genealogists. Genealogy involves intensive and extensive use of libraries and archives over time. The genealogist's search for facts on ancestors is a profound experience that leads to finding coherence in one's life, and is an exercise that has no end. These conclusions present an alternative to the idea that information seeking is tied to problems, and has a resolution.

The four ELIS works within the leisure theme are a funky collection: pleasure reading, paranorme, sex, and genealogy. As case studies, they go further than the holistic approach to generate detailed pictures of ISU in an everyday context. They provide an upbeat counterbalance to studies of compromised situations. The projects deliver findings that in some ways unseat assumptions about ELIS and ISU.

Yet ELIS studies of leisure have limitations. A shortcoming is that each focuses exclusively on one avocation or experience, without asserting an affiliation to the broader category of leisure. They are under-theorized as examples of a popular area of life. In fact, I have taken liberty to group these four studies together under the leisure banner, though they do not cite each other, implying no relationship. The lack of a common rubric means it is difficult to synthesize insights of these case studies into a critical mass, or to generalize. Instead, the papers remain specialized or quirky. In response, my own research into ELIS within leisure introduces theories of serious leisure and social worlds (Hartel, 2003). This framework classifies types of leisure into comparable groups and illuminates leisure's fundamental social and psychological dimensions, creating staging for systematically studying information phenomena in such realms. The approach is extended in this dissertation, and will be presented as a theoretical framework in the next chapter.

The studies of leisure are also limited by their commitment to a cognitive perspective, which pays minimal attention to the material world. The studies by Ross and Kari employ Sense-making (Dervin, 1983) and chronicle the mind-based information encounter. Yakel, too, focuses on meaning-making, but as an exception briefly discusses information management and the distinct resources and genres of genealogy. The cognitive approach gives short shrift to the diverse and largely unexamined material information resources and information spaces within leisure realms. More so than in scholarly or professional scenarios, the material and physical milieu of leisure is highly varied and may influence ISU. To illustrate, the informational dimension of sky diving likely differs from that of needlepoint, largely on account of their dissimilar physical natures and environments. Studies of ELIS in leisure require significant attention to material resources and physical context. My own research design balances inquiry across information activities, resources, and spaces in the hobby of gourmet cooking.

This section has surveyed the literature of ISU regarding everyday life, with primary consideration of leisure and hobbies. While there is a long and rich tradition of studies of ISU, the majority focus on scholars and professionals, which limits the applicability of this scholarship other realms. Recently there has been more attention to non-work or ELIS. The emergent ELIS literature may be seen as having three themes – holistic, compromised situations, and leisure–each with strengths and limitations. My dissertation about information phenomena in the hobby of gourmet cooking responds to the limitations within each of the themes. As a case study it focuses on a significantly large but bounded realm that is not problematic in character. It proposes a theoretical framework that enables leisure to be studied more comparatively and systematically; and it devotes analytical attention to the important material and contextual features of leisure.

2.5 Hobby Research in Leisure Science

In an effort to determine what is known about ISU within leisure, and specifically hobbies, it makes sense to look outside of ELIS, ISU, and LIS, to scholarship in the field of leisure science. In a rich body of research into hobbies, what has been established about information phenomena? My valuable take-away from this literature is an understanding of how to approach a hobby as a research subject. A critical point is that within studies of hobbies, information phenomena are not addressed, minimally described, or under-theorized.

First, it should be noted that while leisure science and ELIS research share everyday life territory, the specialties have been disconnected. The four ELIS studies of leisure, reviewed earlier, do not draw upon the leisure literature–and vice-versa. In addition to my own dissertation, I have encountered only one major study, by Robert Snape, that makes the strategic point of bridging the two realms. Snape's *Leisure and the Rise of the Public Library*

(1995), reports a real ambivalence between libraries and leisure institutions at the levels of research and practice. Snape chronicles this uneasy dynamic in the history of "The Great Fiction Debate" that waged within public libraries through the 20th century. Snape's research looks at library policy, not hobbies, ELIS, or ISU. Any crossover or integration of ELIS and leisure science hobby scholarship would fill a gap in both literatures and may allow each community to better understand and enrich everyday life.

Papers about hobbies regularly appear in *Journal of Leisure Science*, *Leisure Studies*, or *World Leisure & Recreation*. This scholarship explores the practices, social psychology, sociality, or social construction of hobby realms. The dominant design to empirical research is a case study of one hobby using qualitative methods such as ethnography, participant observation, and/or in-depth interviews. Researchers may be actual enthusiasts of the hobby they investigate, producing a lively and readable literature.

Dozens of hobbies have been examined over the past three decades, including surfing (Irwin, 1977), running (Yair, 1990), stamp collecting (Gelber, 1992), barbershop singing (Stebbins, 1996), and genealogy (Lambert, 1996)–see my compilation of many in table form in Appendix A. There are no studies of the hobby of cooking which may form a starting point for my own research. Related research is on the hands-on crafts of gardening (Crouch, 1993) and quilting (King, 1997); and the quasi-culinary activity of mushrooming (Fine, 1998).

Next, my point is not to summarize hobby research per se, but to examine and assess investigations of information phenomena within hobby research. I will scrutinize reportage (or the lack thereof) of information activities, resources, systems, structures, spaces, and institutions. Due to space limitations, five papers serve as a sample, selected for their diversity as hobbies and varied approaches to information phenomena. The papers study,

respectively: shuffleboard, old car collecting, dog sports, mushrooming, and the Liberal Arts pursuits.

Snyder (1986) describes the social world of shuffleboard, a competitive game of *shuffling* disks down a long rectangular court using a stick. Popular among elders, it is usually adopted upon retirement, and often played within mobile home sites. Shuffleboard is learned through lessons or more informal social contact and sponsorship. Roles in the hobby can be watching, refereeing, scorekeeping, or playing; degrees of involvement range from casual to serious. For serious shufflers the hobby is a beloved and central part of life that entails a circle of shuffling friends, daily play, and tournament competition.

Based upon Snyder's report, the social world of shuffleboard appears to be low in the forms of information phenomena of interest to LIS. The article contains no mention of a literature on shuffleboard, whether instructions, handbooks, or serials. Aside from taking an introductory shuffleboard class, the article mentions no concentrated effort to *know* more within the hobby. Snyder centers the hobby on social engagement and playing the game itself.

Baldwin (1999) reports on the experience and meaning of dog sports, the competitive training and showing of dogs. Hobbyists often enter this world through dog obedience classes when they discover an affinity for working with their pet. A hub for this hobby is the American Kennel Club (AKC), which oversees breed registries, breed standards, and competitive show events.

Baldwin describes the learning career of the hobbyists, which is pursued proactively and methodically. It beings with joining a local club and includes practicing dog handling skills, studying the history and standards for different breeds, and understanding AKC rules. Shows and events serve as educational venues, where there are workshops and newcomers

can mingle with and query experts. Volunteering at AKC shows is both a means of learning and displaying expertise.

Compared to shuffleboard, dog sports appear to have more proactive engagement with information, which is described as embedded in social and animal encounters. The information nexus in this hobby is the AKC, which serves as producer and disseminator of knowledge, and the venue for much information exchange. The article contains no mention of a literature of dog sports, though it is likely that texts are the way to learn and maintain information about dog breeds and standards.

Dannefer (1980, 1981) describes the social world of old car collectors. Such enthusiasts, mostly men, have a great passion for vintage automobiles. The main activity of this hobby is the reverential experience of classic cars, through showing, touring, collecting, restoring and dealing. This social world has a greater informational dimension that the hobbies discussed thus far. Dannefer notes the circulation of car buff magazines to be 200,000, and refers to classic auto-phile books.

Two genres play a critical role in this social world. In the auto appreciation slide presentation images of cars are ogled, studied, and discussed by a group. Also, car lovers collect documentary automobilia, available at car shows and through special catalogs. One coveted type, factory literature, includes the original sales materials, shop and service manuals, bulletins, and factory stock certificates of cars. Dannefer details the hobbyists' determination to acquire these documents and the classificatory logic applied along the way. This involves understanding basic themes and categories of cars, which are melded with one's own creativity and special interests about certain makes, years, production sites, or genre (1980, p. 401-402).

Old car-collecting has a greater information dimension than one might think upon seeing a fleet of wonderful old cars touring through the countryside. A major element of the

realm is the reverential study of the vintage automobile, which resembles scholarship. This precludes a rich documentary universe in primary (i.e. factory literature), secondary (i.e. serials, slide shows, novels), and tertiary (i.e. ephemera sales catalogs) form. About one fifth of Dannefer's article (1980) addresses what I would call information phenomena. Terminology and concepts from LIS are not used and the matters are mostly approached from other social or experiential aspects of the hobby.

Fine (1989) has conducted extensive ethnographic research into the hobby social world of mycology, also known as mushrooming, which involves gathering wild fungi from the woods. The right knowledge and information are critical in this activity, for eating a poisonous mushroom can be deadly. Mushroomers learn in classes, often taught by experts with considerable field experience and offered through a mushroom society or pubic environmental agency. Courses can vary in form and duration, covering: identification skills and understanding of taxonomy, cultivation, chemistry, ecology, mushrooms in history and culture; mushroom photography and art, and medicinal applications.

Fine (1989) uses his fieldwork in the social world of mycology to write separately about resource provision within leisure social worlds. He develops Provisioning Theory to account for the relationship between leisure organizations, resources, and enthusiasts. In this context, Fine discusses at length the knowledge acquisition and resources within mushrooming. This is an uncommon example of significant and thoughtful theorizing about information phenomena; yet it is unrelated to writings in LIS and is buried within a theory of social organization.

Stebbins profiles the Liberal Arts hobby, "the systematic and fervent pursuit during free time of knowledge for its own sake" (1994, p. 175). These enthusiasts seek an understanding of, for example, arts, sports, foods, languages, cultures, histories, sciences, philosophies, literary traditions, or politics. Such hobbyists consider the learning process a

fascinating experience, not as background for further activity. These lay-scholars seek out knowledge about their chosen topic that is broad, deep, and humanizing, not narrow, practical, or technical. Stebbins reports that Liberal Arts hobbyists engage information in two main ways: acquisition and expression.

In Liberal Arts pursuits, acquisition is active rather than passive. Reading, chiefly books, magazines, and newspapers is the principle mode of this hobby, and requires a home study. Learning also occurs by watching films, listening to audio tapes, participating in non-credit courses, or traveling. Further, Liberal Arts hobbyists are motivated to express their knowledge to others in order to fortify their familiarity and to invite, via dialogue, new serendipitous discovery. Expression of their insight and passion may happen casually through small talk in social settings or more formally at a public slide show. The majority of Stebbins' article is about information phenomena. It lays out the humanistic nature of knowledge in the activity and sketches the main practices of knowledge acquisition and expression.

This short survey suggests basic trends in leisure science research into hobbies, and illuminates treatments of information phenomena. Overall, these papers excel at vividly conveying the main activity of each hobby and the culture of the social world.

It appears this research tradition has no consistent or rigorous approach to information phenomena in hobbies. The subject was tackled differently in each case above. Discussions of information phenomena are not demarked within papers, and appear without subheadings and sections (excepting Stebbins' report on the Liberal Arts hobbies and Fine's Provisioning Theory) Typically, information phenomena function as illustrative of other social or practical aspect of the hobby. When cast as such, they are noted or briefly described, but not rigorously theorized, analyzed, delineated, or classified. Leisure science papers were more likely to report information activities than information resources, systems,

structures, or spaces. Sometimes, material information forms were not considered at all, though bookstores, libraries and the Internet all contain extensive hobby materials.

On the flip side, this small sample illuminates basic features of information phenomena in hobbies; and offers a few surprises, too. ISU in hobbies can take the form of workshops, exhibitions, slide shows, reading, and collecting materials. Some hobbies generate distinct genres, such as the automobile slide show or factory literature. People are important information resources in some hobbies, as for shuffleboard and dog sports. A real discovery for LIS is Stebbins' report on the Liberal Arts hobbies reveals that hobbies can be entirely based upon the process of ISU. Also, Fine's proposal of Provisioning Theory asserts that organizations play a critical role within leisure by supplying information. There is still a lot more to be learned about information phenomena in hobbies, whether from the perspective of leisure science or LIS.

2.6 Conclusion

This review of four literatures relevant to my research began by reporting on culinary scholarship in LIS. To date, culinary information phenomena have only been considered around the practical areas of indexing, bibliography, and systems. My holistic research supplies background insights for these lines of inquiry.

Three research specialties would benefit from a study of information phenomena in the context of leisure, as in the case of the hobby of cooking. The longstanding tradition of ISU studies into academic and professional realms could be fortified and diversified with greater attention to everyday life, a research trend that is underway. Yet ELIS research itself is hardly reflective of everyday life, and channels attention to problematical situations. The study of leisure would enhance both ISU and ELIS research programs, through the addition of a ubiquitous and upbeat realm of human experience.

A critical inspection of the few ELIS studies of leisure leads me to favor a wider perspective on contextual features such as resources and spaces, since leisure is highly diverse in nature. Also, research into leisure would benefit from a common rubric to counter the impression of quirkiness and enable comparison.

Outside of LIS, ISU, and ELIS, leisure science research into hobbies could be enhanced by a demonstration of more careful explication of information phenomena, which are treated unevenly or lightly. The theoretical framework and research design presented in the next two chapters have developed in response to limitations and opportunities across these research areas.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Overview

Studies of information seeking and use (ISU) traditionally employ models to structure research (Jarvelin & Wilson, 2003; Wilson, 1999). Such constructs usually entail geometric shapes or process maps that represent the information seeking or searching process (e.g. Wilson, 1981; Krikelas, 1983; Kuhlthau, 1988; 1989; Bates, 1989; Ellis, 1989). What follows does not take the form of a model. Rather, it is a descriptive narrative sketch that fits in the qualitative sociological tradition. In a few places of the narrative, diagrams are used, but these are limited features of a larger system. Referred to as the *theoretical framework*, this chapter specifies the essential objects being studied, their relationships, and the research questions.

The framework is interdisciplinary and integrates three conceptual devices. The three–*domain analysis*, *social worlds*, and *serious leisure*–can be integrated harmoniously because they are all essentially socio-cognitive, which posits a reality in which human behavior and social forces exist in dynamic relationship.

From library and information studies (LIS), domain analysis (Hjørland and Albrechtsen, 1995) serves as the metatheory and establishes a focus on the dynamic between people, information phenomena, and milieu within a community. Upon this platform, more structure is revealed about leisure realms by the sociological theory of social worlds. Specifically, four features of social worlds–*people*, *a central activity*, *mediated communication*, and *locations*–are described. I propose that these elements serve, respectively, as springboards for considering *the information user*, *information activities*, *information resources*, and *information spaces*. In short, the framework enables the study of information phenomena in the context of a social world. These relationships are shown below:

Feature of social world	>>	Information phenomena
People	>>	Information user
A central activity	>>	Information activities
Mediated communication	>>	Information resources
Locations	>>	Information spaces

Table 2. Four features of social worlds and related information phenomena.

Additional insights into the nature of hobby activity and a system for classifying leisure comes from the leisure science concept of *serious leisure*. A description of this theoretical framework leads to the five main questions and sub-questions of the study.

3.2 Domain Analysis

Domain analysis, also called *collectivism* (Talja, Tuominen, & Savolainen, 2005) or *socio-cognitivism* (Jacob & Shaw, 1998), is the metatheory guiding this project. It is a sociological approach to the study of information phenomena and resembles *social epistemology* (Shera, 1961) and *information use environments* (Taylor, 1991). Domain analysis is influenced by Vygotsky's social constructivist theory of cognitive development which emphasized that both cognitive processes and social milieu are important in knowledge formation. An encapsulation of the epistemological underpinnings is as follows:

> From the Vygotskyan point of view, knowledge formation and the development of knowledge structures take place within a socio-cultural context. Individual development derives from social interactions within which cultural meanings are shared by a group and eventually internalized by the individual. It is assumed that individuals construct knowledge in interaction with the environment and that in the process both the individual and the environment are changed. (Talja, et al. 2005, p. 85)

Thus, the subject of study in domain analytic research is the dialectical relationship between the individual and the socio-cultural milieu, of which information phenomena are considered one part (Talja, et al., p. 85). As a point of departure for my own project, domain analysis sets up multifold lines of inquiry into the activities of the gourmet hobby cook, features of their social environment, its information phenomena, and the dynamic between these elements. Domain analytic research results in a narrative account of this dynamic.

A challenge to applying domain analysis is that it is a high level metatheory, not a turnkey system for research. Eleven general lines of inquiry have been named (Hjørland, 2002), but research designs are not specified. Another disparity is that domain analysis was conceptualized around academic disciplines and professions, not leisure. Therefore, the theoretical framework and research design that follows is a new adaptation and extension of domain analysis into everyday life and leisure.

Empirical research within domain analysis often employs unit theories from other disciplines to define concepts and explain contextual features of the settings in question. For example, Fry and Talja (2004) utilized Whitley's theory of the social organization of scholarly fields to interpret information practices within academic disciplines. In a similar manner, this project applies the unit theories of social worlds and serious leisure.

3.3 Social Worlds and their Information Phenomena

In domain analysis, a starting point is to qualify the subject as a collective, called a domain. Domain analysis has been criticized for its failure to define this essential concept (Palmer, 1999; Tennis, 2003). The theory of social worlds fills the lacuna. Methodologists Lofland and Lofland (1995) name social worlds as one of seven possible units of analysis in sociological research. Cressey (1932) was the first to use the term social world, which was

further developed by Shibutani (1955), Strauss (1978), and then Unruh (1979, 1980). A social world is:

> A unit of social organization which is diffuse and amorphous…Generally larger than groups or organizations, social worlds are not necessarily defined by formal boundaries, membership lists, or spatial territory…A social world must be seen as an internally recognizable constellation of actors, organizations, events, and practices which have coalesced into a perceived sphere of interest and involvement for participants. (Unruh, 1979, p. 115)

Social worlds exist in all realms of life. Strauss says, "Ostensively, there are countless discernible worlds: those of opera, baseball, surfing, stamp collecting, country music, homosexuality, politics, medicine, law…" (1978, p. 121) The consensus and working assumption in leisure science is that certain leisure realms, including hobbies, are social worlds. Hobbies contain the commitment to a primary activity, lack of formal organization, and voluntary participation that are hallmarks of social worlds.

Over three decades of research, the major elements that contribute to any social world's character have been outlined. These are useful propositions for domain analytic research. They become the features of a domain that can be analyzed for their interaction with information phenomena. Strauss makes the point that material or "palpable matters" are as essential to the nature of a social world as social constructions like culture or discourse (1978, p. 121). Not all the known characteristics of social worlds can be examined in any single study. My research framework aims to be holistic and concentrates attention on four elements: *people* (Unruh, 1979*), a central activity* (Strauss, 1978, p. 122), *mediated communication* (Strauss, 1978, p. 125-126; Unruh, 1979, p. 279-280), and *locations* (referred to as sites, Strauss, 1978, p. 122). In the framework I illuminate that each element has an information dimension not described by prior social world research. Respectively, these are: *the information*

users, information activities, *information resources*, *information spaces, and users.* Overall, this next section describes four elements of social worlds and locates information phenomena therein.

3.3.1 People: the information user

Naturally, people figure in social worlds. Unruh proposes that participants embody four types in terms of how they relate to social world knowledge: *regulars*, *strangers*, *tourists*, and *insiders* (Unruh, 1979); shown in Figure 3. *Regular*s are the habitual participants in the central activity of the social world, in other words, the hobby cook. They are familiar with all aspects of the world and committed to the continuation of its activities. *Strangers* participate in the social world superficially, often serving an intermediary function. In hobby cooking, food vendors and librarians are strangers who provide access to different types of cooking resources. *Tourists* enter social worlds out of curiosity or thrill-seeking and without long-standing commitment. In hobby cooking, a tourist may be a guest at a dinner party who relishes the meal, with no intention to become a hobby cook. *Insiders* are those responsible for generating the resources or experiences of the social world. In hobby cooking, these may be cookbook authors, culinary personalities, or restaurant critics. Rather than doing the primary activity of the social world, these types engage in recruitment and promotion.

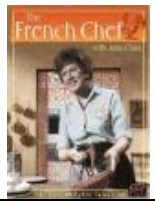
Regulars: the hobby cook 	**Strangers: visitors to the social world** 
Tourists: intermediaries to resources 	**Insiders: responsible for recruitment and promotion** 

Figure 3. Four roles in a social world (Unruh, 1979); illustrated for the hobby of cooking.

Unruh's schema of participants raises awareness of the multiple players in the domain, and allows for focusing of the inquiry. As the nucleus of the social world, my investigation is centered on the *regular*, who is the hobby cook (shaded above). In the traditions of ISU and ELIS research, the regular is the subject, referred to as the information *user* or *seeker*. Here, the regular's information activities, resources, and spaces are the subject of the study. An ethnographic approach will be employed as a strategy to capture the regular's experience of the hobby. Interview informants will be screened to fit this role and an interview process captures their story. Though an interesting matter, it is not a goal to examine the information-related roles of all the people in the social world of the hobby, as through social network analysis.

3.3.2 Central activity: information activities

In each social world, "…at least one primary activity (along with related clusters of activity) is strikingly evident; i.e., climbing mountains, researching, collecting" (Strauss, 1978, p. 122). To illustrate, the social world of old car collecting entails the reverential experience of vintage automobiles; and associated activities of showing, touring, collecting, restoring, and dealing old cars (Dannefer, 1980). Most studies of hobbies begin with a description of the central activity for it influences all the world's elements. Likewise, my investigation will determine the central activity and related tasks of the hobby of cooking; of which there are no prior scholarly accounts. It is likely the hobby of cooking is composed of a constellation of tasks, including but not limited to shopping, food preparation, eating, and cleaning up. Particular attention will be paid to a subset of these actions, not yet isolated within social world scholarship, that will be called *information activities*.

Here, information activities are actions that contribute to skill and knowledge of gourmet cooking. The word *actions* focuses attention on that which the hobby cook can be observed to *do*. This broad definition will envelop some behaviors not typically studied by LIS, such as eating out and taking vacations, both favorite learning experiences for gourmet cooks. The definition also encompasses more conventional actions like reading a cookbook and searching online for a recipe, which are central to the inquiry.

The term *information activities* is used instead of the more common phrases *information behaviors* or *information practices* which suggest a different nexus of study. *Information behavior* implies a cognitive orientation to the actor's thought processes and associated mental concepts such as information need and relevance (Talja, et. al 2005). Since this study explores what cook's *do* (not their thinking) within the domestic setting of the hobby, the term information behaviors was deemed off target. An alternative, *information practices*, implies a social constructionist perspective geared to the institutionalized habits of a collective or

community, and enablers such as discourses. Since this study is focused on the experiences of individual gourmet cooks, information practices seemed too macrosocial. *Information activities* is the ideal term and concept to examine an individual cook's actions in an everyday life, hobby context.

A precedent and helpful point of reference for this usage is Hektor's (2001) case study of information activities in the everyday lives of 10 Swedish citizens. His study named and described 8 information activities performed during everyday life projects: *search and retrieve*, *browse*, *monitor*, *unfold*, *exchange*, *dress*, *instruct*, and *publish*, shown in Table 3. Hektor's work is ground-breaking because it presents a wider range of information activities than the majority of prior studies that focus on seeking and searching. Further, Hektor locates these activities in a non-academic context, the projects of everyday life.

Information activity	Definition
search & retrieve	An active and directed effort of recovering information or making it newly available, involving some searchable information system.
browse	An act of moving in a limited environment, with some level of perceived probability to encounter a resource of some value.
monitor	Recurrent meetings with familiar sources and services, where the sources turned to are intentional, and the information gathered is incidental.
unfold	Continually directed attention towards information in order to take part in content.
exchange	Represents the bi-directional acts of dressing and unfolding in an ongoing reciprocal process.
dress	Activities where information is expressed by an individual
instruct	Imparting information and making one's wishes known to others or making statements.
publish	To announce or post formally or in public.

Table 3: Hektor's 8 information activities (abbreviated from his Glossary, pp. 309-315).

In this research, I will draw upon Hektor's definitions to sharpen the explanations of information activity in gourmet cooking. A limitation is that Hektor's categories do not account for *all* the information phenomena likely in the hobby of gourmet cooking (such as organizing a cookbook collection). Further, Hektor's distillation of behaviors is adapted

from earlier cognitive models and therefore renders a lot of the unique ethos of this hobby invisible. And so his schema has not been adopted wholesale as an analytical device.

A second point of reference is Talja and Hansen's (2005) model that presents information practices as a linked cycle of: *seeking, retrieving/receiving, filtering, analyzing/interpreting/extracting, synthesizing, archiving/indexing*. These actions engage *information objects* which may be people, documents, or document repositories and occur in a socio-technical and linguistic context. The strength of this model is its balanced representation of the archiving phase of information, which is typically overlooked. Based upon my experience of the hobby of cooking, collecting recipes is common. This model serves to sensitize my study to the full range of information activities, not just seeking and searching.

A prior study of non-hobby cooking shows that information activities, resembling those named in Hektor's and Talja and Hansen's work, can be discerned within narratives of culinary experience. DeVault's (1991) analysis of accounts of food preparation in 30 households reported that beyond the hands-on manipulation of food, feeding a family entails considerable caring, planning, provisioning, monitoring, and social staging (1991, pp. 35-76). DeVault also found much of cooking to be an, "intellectual problem" (p. 47) that involves viewing ads and displays (p. 68), reading labels (p. 69), and making lists (p. 71, 74). For some women, meal preparation relies heavily upon books and recipes (p. 204). One subject of this study states, "…I had the *New York Times Cookbook*, and I used to read it, and try to decide what to make, and follow the recipe" (p. 206). This account includes the information practices of *filtering* ("decide what to make") and *interpreting* ("follow the recipe"). DeVault's work illustrates that it is possible to isolate and describe information practices within accounts of cookery.

Using the hobby's central activity as a point of departure, and the sense of information activities conveyed in Hektor and Talja and Hansen, I will identify and describe the information activities in the hobby of gourmet cooking.

3.3.3 Mediated communication: information resources

Social worlds are geographically diffuse, lack a central bureaucracy, and do not rely upon face-to-face communication on account of the sheer numbers of participants. As a result, communication–the coordinated action that achieves understanding or shares meaning (Rogers & Kincaid, 1981)–is mediated by channels and resources. Unruh notes, "[The]…importance of radios, telephones, newspapers, and letter writing must not be overlooked…. [social worlds] rely almost exclusively on magazines, bulletins, journals, radio, television and the like…" (1980 p. 279-280). Today, network based versions like email, newsgroups, and mailing lists could be included.

Insights into the social process of mediated communication can be extended into a tentative definition of information that is geared to a social world. *Information* is a consequence or product of mediated communication and takes the form of artifacts or expressions like documents or conversations (adapted from Lievrouw, 2001, p. 13). This is a social and realist interpretation in which, "…information becomes more or less independent of its creators, having some of the qualities of a *resource* that can be moved, traded, accumulated, stored, retrieved and destroyed…[emphasis added]" (Lievrouw, 2001, p. 24).

Strauss describes the instrumental nature of information in social worlds; it lacks the breadth of mass circulation publications and as a resource works at, "…giving technological tips and instructions, teaching how to minimize danger while pursuing worldly activities; promotion or giving information about sites, upcoming events, advertising various items; reporting on past events; and disseminating information and opinions about topical issues"

(Strauss, 1978, p. 125-126). To a greater degree than the word information, the term *information resources* captures the instrumental nature of information in a social world context and is used in this study.

Information resources can exist in social worlds in many forms: text, audio, video, and digital. From all these possible variations of information resources, my study focuses on those that are language-bearing physical artifacts in the public space of the social world. Examples are the cookbooks, culinary serials, online recipe databases, and homemade compendiums that are prevalent in the hobby.

It may be that experiences, such as culinary travel, restaurant dining and marketing, and cooking itself inform the experience of the hobby. People, too, may serve as information resources. At this point, such forms of gaining knowledge will be noted in this study but are not the primary focus.

3.3.4 Locations: information spaces

Social worlds contain sites or locations where activity routinely occurs. Strauss contends that when studying social worlds, "…space and shaped landscape are relevant" (1978, p. 120). Markets, restaurants, cookware stores, bookstores, and libraries are some of the obvious public locations in the hobby of gourmet cooking. A definitive text about avocational social worlds notes that culinary pursuits are geographically centered, above all, on the home and kitchen. This is logical, for the hobby requires sustained access to a work area and preparatory surfaces, cooking appliances and utensils, and storage areas for perishable goods. This study is limited to investigating the domestic nexus of this hobby, not its public venues.

Though not yet explicated in social worlds scholarship, a sub-realm within any social world location (domestic or public) may be called an *information space* (Lee, 2003). As

illustrated in the introduction, the houses of hobby cooks usually have a constellation of information-filled areas with recipe files, shelves of cookbooks, and stacks or spreads of culinary magazines. The information spaces include content in various forms and structures for organizing this information. Also known as, *personal information environments* (Malone, 1983; Kwasnik, 1991) or *personal information collections* (Bruce, Jones, & Dumais, 2004), these assemblages of information sources and channels are acquired, cultivated, and organized over time. The practice of creating and managing such spaces has been called *personal documentation* (Stibic, 1980), *personal information management* (Bruce, 2005; Whittaker & Hirschberg, 2001), or *desk organization* (Malone, 1983). Bates (2002) uses a metaphor of *farming* to describe such collections of information resources that are tended. Information spaces are usually consulted first when an information need arises (Bruce, 2005, p. 3).

A helpful insight for this project, is provided by Lee (2003, p. 432) who divides information space based upon the vicinity of resources relative to a user, whether: *immediate* (i.e. the office), *adjacent* (a nearby department library), or *outside* (a distant bookstore). Adapting Lee's idea to a home setting, my inquiry is limited to the *immediate information space* of the gourmet hobby cook, which is the vicinity of the kitchen. Lee proposes that within this space, there are two types of information resources: *physical* collections (i.e. documents) and *computer/Internet* resources.

Relatively little research exists on information spaces. Neumann coins this holistic line of inquiry the, "folklore of information work environments" and argues, "Information is contained in tools, in spatial relationships of objects, and in hands that know where to reach for particular things" (1999, p. 442). She proposes the following questions of any information work environment: How is information stored and conveyed in this setting? What are the organizational practices at play? What work tasks are carried out here? How are the various materials working together? How is this space personalized and why?

Studies of information spaces to date pertain to workplace offices, not everyday life domestic settings (e.g. Soper, 1976; Malone, 1983; Case, 1986; Kwasnik, 1991; Lee, 2003). Surveying this research provides some indicators of the types of entities in information spaces. They include: tables, desks, shelves, file cabinets, bulletin boards, in basket-out basket, equipment, and personal belongings. A sample of reported information structures are shown in the table below:

Information structure	Definition (source)
file	a group of instances of the same type of form for which one or more ordered indices may be constructed (Malone, 1983, p. 105)
pile	an unordered pile of documents (Malone, 1983, p. 106)
heap	an unordered pile of documents of different types (Malone, 1983, p. 105)
dossier	a group of several different types of forms bearing some logical relation to one another (Malone, 1983, p. 105)
stack	any independent collection of at least two separate sheets of paper (Case, 1986, p. 101)
collection	a group of documents, regardless of format, medium, and ownership (Lee, 2003, p. 422)
sub-collection	a collection that exists within another collection (Lee, 2003, p. 422)
zone	a limited area within an information space that contains a related set of materials (Lee, 2003, p. 430)

Table 4. Structures observed in information environments.

The list and table above serve as starting points to explore what may exist in the domestic information spaces of the hobby of cooking. I will follow Lee and Neumann's direction and investigate the general features of the domestic, culinary, *immediate information space;* its role in the hobby; and its interaction with other information phenomena.

The essential points of the framework thus far are as follows. Hobbies are social worlds, collectives which contain people, a central activity, mediated communication, and locations, among other things. These elements harbor an information dimension not elsewhere documented:

Feature of social world	>>	Information phenomena
People	>>	Information user
A central activity	>>	Information activities
Mediated communication	>>	Information resources
Locations	>>	Information spaces

Table 5. Four features of social worlds and related information phenomena. (Reprint of Table 2).

Any effort to pin down social worlds for study confronts the reality that they are dynamic. The activities at the heart of social worlds are constantly unfolding. Cooking, in particular, is a frontier that is always advancing into the next culinary trend. Strauss describes social worlds as, "emerging, evolving, developing, splintering, disintegrating…" (1978, p. 121) At the same time, social worlds have stable features that are helpful in organizing research, such as people, primary activity, mediated communication, and locations, which serve as context for the study of information phenomena.

3.4 Serious Leisure

Serious leisure is a well elaborated grounded theory about the nature of leisure activity. Coined in 1982 by sociologist Robert A. Stebbins, it has since developed into an interdisciplinary research program and the predominant approach to the study of hobbies. As already mentioned, serious leisure activities generate social worlds, and the two theories are often used together in hobby-related research. In my project serious leisure explicates the central activity of a hobby social world; in short, these hobbyists are *doing* serious leisure. The theory will compliment and validate the accounts of hobby experience from the forthcoming data gathering process. Serious leisure fills a gap in domain analysis, which relates information phenomena to the practices in a domain yet does not supply further details about such activity, and assumes an academic context.

Also, serious leisure provides a classification system for leisure. When paired with social worlds, it can be applied to isolate a leisure subject amidst related activities, degrees of specialization, and geographic boundaries. ELIS research into leisure could be enhanced by employing serious leisure as an investigative rubric, enabling specification, comparison, and synthesis across leisure realms.

A point of departure for serious leisure is the notion that leisure is ubiquitous but not homogenous; some forms are particularly intense, enduring, and rewarding. Such experiences are serious leisure, defined as, "the systematic pursuit of an … activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a leisure career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (1992, p. 3). The term *serious* embodies positive qualities like sincerity and importance, rather than solemnity or distress.

The obverse of serious leisure is *casual leisure*, activity that is done passively and requires no expertise, as in daydreaming, chatting with friends, or being a couch potato. It is the more common type of leisure. Watching television is the most popular experience of casual leisure, but there are six varieties: *play*, *relaxation*, *passive entertainment*, *active entertainment*, *sociable conversation*, and *sensory stimulation* (Stebbins, 1997, p. 17). Casual leisure is not the subject of this study, but is mentioned to bring serious leisure into greater relief.

A central feature of serious leisure is its expression in a *career* (Stebbins, 2001b, p. 9-10). The idea of a career within leisure takes some getting used to, because of association with work realms. The essence of a career is continuity, accumulated experience, and advancement. Such a mode is possible in non-work settings, though not as familiar or celebrated. As a gourmet hobby cook, I can attest that feelings of passage and accomplishment mark my own culinary history.

The typical sequence of the serious leisure career is: *beginning*, *development*, *establishment*, *maintenance*, and *decline* (2001, p. 10). The first two stages are focused on learning, the middle is a heyday marked by mastery; decline involves a deterioration of interest or a loss of the physical ability to continue. As a key measure of the gourmet cooking experience, my study will sketch the main features of the gourmet cooking hobby career.

One of the benefits of serious leisure is its classificatory rubric which facilitates the identification and study of leisure realms, illustrated in Figure 4. There are three main types of serious leisure: *amateurism*, *volunteering*, and *hobbies*. Amateurs operate in the fields of art, science, sport, and entertainment. According to Stebbins, amateurism is best defined and understood macrosocially in its dynamic with professional counterparts (discussed in more detail in Stebbins, 1979; 1992, chap. 3). Volunteering is, "helping activity that is engaged in not primarily for financial gain and not by coercion or mandate" (Van Til, 1988, p. 6). The third form of serious leisure, hobbies, is the area of my study.

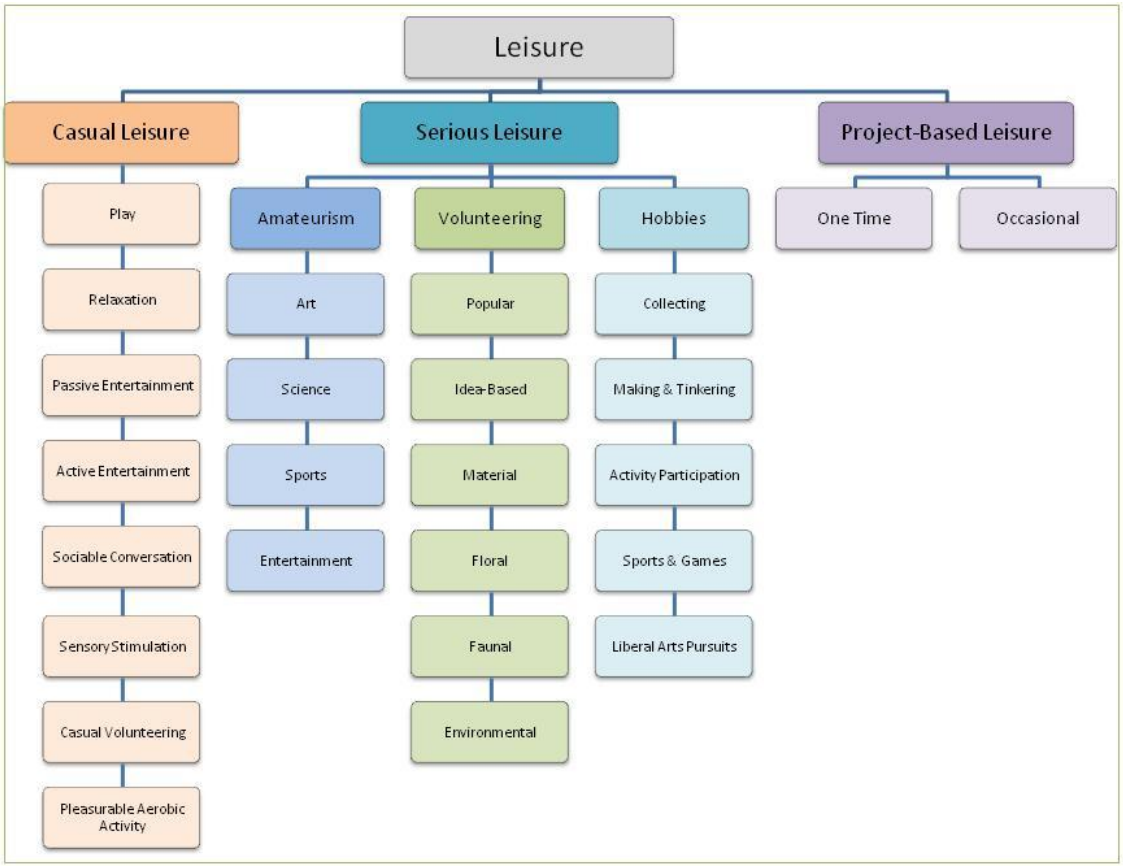


Figure 4. Serious leisure as a classification system for leisure realms (adapted from Hartel, 2003). This study looks at a hobby in the Making and Tinkering class: gourmet cooking.

3.4.1 Hobbies

The most prevalent of the three forms of serious leisure, a *hobby* is the systematic and enduring pursuit of a reasonably evolved and specialized free-time activity that leads to the acquisition of knowledge, skill, or experience (Stebbins, 2003). A conservative estimate of the adults in the population who practice hobbies is 10-15% (Gelber, 1999, p. 31). Social historian and authority on hobbies, Gelber points out while hobbies occupy only 3-5% of the average person's leisure time, they are "…like sex, the amount of time spent thinking about the activity is probably a better measure of its importance than the amount of time spent doing it…" (1999, p. 31). The term *hobby* comes from a type of Irish pony but into

the 20th century referred pejoratively to an obsessive concern for a topic, a fixation. Today, the term has taken on a neutral or even positive meaning.

Gelber's book on hobbies (1999) illuminates internal tensions and contradictions in their nature. He asserts that hobbies are leisure activities that share characteristics of work. Hobbies are leisurely because they are freely chosen and pleasurable; yet are work-like in their structure, challenge, repetition, and goal-orientation. Another leisure scholar concurs that hobbies are, ". . . similar to some kind of skilled work, except that they are not done in a group or under supervision and there is no pay, though there may be some kind of material benefit. . . " (Argyle, 1996, p. 214). Gelber locates hobbies in a borderland between leisure and work and concludes, ". . . more than any other form of recreational activity, hobbies challenge the easy bifurcation of life's activities into work and leisure" (1999, p. 23). That hobbies occupy a borderland challenges the separation ISU research assumes between work and everyday life contexts. These domains may not be so neatly divided. This matter will be considered further at the conclusion of the study, when the nature of information phenomena in a hobby is clearer.

3.4.2 Making and tinkering

Stebbins' research into hobbies has generated a taxonomy of five types: *Collecting*, *Making and Tinkering*, *Activity Participation*, *Sports and Games*, and *Liberal Arts Pursuits*. The hobby of cooking fits within the Making and Tinkering hobbies. Overs (described in Stebbins, 1998, p. 54-57) has further classified these as the craft activities of: cooking, baking and candy-making, beverage crafts; decorating activities; interlacing, interlocking and knot-making activities; toy model and kit assembly; paper crafts; leather and textile crafts; wood and metal working activities; do-it-yourself activities.

Overs sketches general qualities of the craft activities as practices and social worlds, which sheds some light on the hobby of cooking. Making and Tinkering hobbies depend on developing substantial specialized skill and/or considerable background knowledge, and can be highly artistic. Unlike many other hobbies, they lead to a durable end product. Participants must have a talent for following often complicated instructions and paying attention to detail. These activities are open to a vast range of people in many different societies, are not limited to one sex, and can appeal to a wide age range. The Making and Tinkering hobbies allow people to work alone; those seeking social engagement may hang out at supply shops or, in some cases, fairs and expositions. Overs speculates that an international survey would find more people engaging in these hobbies than any of the other four types.

3.4.3 The hobby of gourmet cooking, a subworld

Hobby social worlds, including the crafts listed above, can be broad and support such a variety of interests that they tend to splinter into, "a mosaic of subworlds" (Unruh, 1980, p. 289). Scholars of leisure call this natural division into narrower interests *recreation specialization* (Bryan, 1977). The process establishes a continuum within leisure pursuits that ranges from the general to the more particular. One hobby that has been studied for its specializations is bridge, which contains subworlds of *social bridge* and *serious bridge* (Scott and Godbey, 1994). Subworlds have a higher degree of homogeneity; they are less complicated and therefore preferable collectives for study.

Instead of the relatively large and diverse social world of hobby of cooking, I will examine a subworld: the hobby of *gourmet* cooking. In culinary approaches there is a bifurcation between *gourmet* and *down-home* cooking (T. L. Wilson, 2003, p. 50-51). *The Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* (2001) defines *gourmet* as, "of our characteristic of a

gourmet, esp. in involving or purporting to involve high-quality or exotic ingredients and skilled preparation." The discriminating feature of gourmet cooking is its use of high quality or exotic foodstuffs and the emphasis on skill. To contrast, down home cooking is equally an enchantment with cooking but utilizes readily available or cost-effective ingredients and simple or quick preparation. This form of cooking aspires to the practicality, ease, and lack of pretension with which a grandmother might cook.

Even narrower subworlds exist in the social world of hobby cooking as participants move into various loci of interests. Significant worlds exist around *cuisines* such as French, Asian, or Italian cookery. Attention also coalesces around *techniques*, as example barbecuing, baking, or crock-potting. Special *nutritional needs* generate subworlds, for instance low-fat or vegetarian cookery. These or any other narrower realms will not be investigated.

A proprietary report by market researchers Mintel Group (2005) calls the gourmet cooking hobbyist *the food enthusiast* or *foodie*. Such sorts, "really enjoy cooking" and will, "engage in more elaborate cooking from scratch on weekends or for special occasions." With an eye to sales opportunities, Mintel Group describes foodies as those who, "outfit kitchens with high-end cooking gear, are willing to spend on the freshest ingredients, and generally pursue cooking as lifestyle statement." I was not able to acquire the Mintel Group report and it is therefore a challenge to quantify or profile this population. Based upon subscriptions to gourmet cooking magazines such as *Gourmet* or *Bon Appetite*, several million participants (meaning *regulars* per Unruh) populate the social world of the hobby of gourmet cooking in the United States.

A history of the hobby of gourmet cooking in the United States has yet to be written. Such an account would weave together social, economic, and technological factors that contributed to the evolution of cookery from domestic work to leisure opportunity. Levenstein (2003) locates this change in the 1970s and traces the roots of gourmet cookery

to the culinary traditions of French haute cuisine as introduced by beloved American chef Julia Child.

3.4.4 Geographic reach

Social worlds such as gourmet hobby cooking can be viewed at different analytical levels based upon their density in geographical space. Strauss explains, "Some worlds are small, others huge; some are international, others are local" (1978, p. 121). Unruh names four possible analytical levels (1980, 287-290). A *local* social world exists at a single site. A *regional* social world occupies a larger realm such as a city, state, or cluster of states. A *dispersed* social world is even more diffuse and may incorporate several geographic regions or nations. A social world *system* is the broadest possible coalescence and is global. My dissertation focuses on the dispersed level, with a geographic reach across the United States. To maintain focus on a dispersed level, informants will be drawn from both coasts and information resources will have at least national distribution.

3.4.5 What's <u>not</u> the hobby of gourmet cooking

A final specification is that the hobby of gourmet cooking should not be confused with other realms which likewise manipulate food but occur outside of free time, per Stebbins' definition of a hobby. The hobby of gourmet cooking is not *feeding work* (DeVault, 1991), the preparation of food that is primarily performed by women in the United States and is necessary for self or family care. Feeding work occurs within self-care, not free time. The hobby of cooking is also different from employment in the food-service industry, in the professional of catering or the culinary arts, which occur in work time.

3.5 Research Questions (detailed)

Using the theoretical framework as a point of departure, this study follows five general lines of inquiry, each containing sub-questions:

1. The hobby of gourmet cooking.
   What are the features of the hobby of gourmet cooking?
   What to gourmet hobby cooks do?

2. The information activities in the hobby of gourmet cooking.
   What are information activities in the hobby?
   What is the objective of each practice? What does each entail?
   How are they related to each other?

3. Information resources in the hobby of gourmet cooking.
   What are the information resources of the hobby? [physical (material, documentary), digital (online, computer based), other?]
   What are their subjects, genres, and form?
   Do hobby cooks produce original resources, if so what are their features and uses?

4. Information spaces in the hobby of cooking.
   What are the general features and characteristics of information spaces in this hobby?
   What are the organizational activities at play?
   How are various materials working together?

5. Interactions between information phenomena in the hobby of cooking.
   Explore the dynamic between activities-resources-spaces.
   Explore the dynamic between features of the social world and serious leisure, and information phenomena.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Overview

In Chapter 3, a theoretical framework established a setting to study the hobby of gourmet cooking and its information activities, resources, and spaces. Next, an ethnographic research design is outlined in this chapter. Details are provided on three data gathering techniques (semi-structured interviews, guided-household tours with photographic inventory, and documentary research). This chapter also discusses data analysis; the writing process, and the matter of trustworthiness.

4.2 Ethnography

"Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture" (Fetterman, 1998). It is not regarded as a single method but a style of social scientific inquiry. A central tenet of ethnography is the idea of *naturalism*: social events and processes are examined and explained in terms of their relationship to the natural environment in which they occur. A second distinction of ethnography is *understanding*: the researcher aims to understand a phenomena as it is experienced by its participants. On account of these qualities, ethnography is an ideal strategy to understand the hobbyist's engagement with information phenomena in the natural context of their life and home.

As a research practice, ethnography generally involves the researcher's immersion in a field setting, careful recording of what happens there, and analytic reflection on the data obtained. Ethnography makes use of both qualitative and quantitative measures; primary and secondary materials; and a wide range of data gathering techniques (Pelto, 1979, Sandstrom & Sandstrom, 1995). The most common form of presentation of results is narrative description.

Ethnography supports a recent shift in information seeking and use (ISU) research away from cognitive approaches, to a person-in-a-context or situation. Arguments in favor of ethnography as a research method within library and information studies (LIS) have been presented in papers by Case (1988), Sandstrom and Sandstrom (1995), Crabtree, Nichols, O'Brien, Rouncefield, and Twidale (2000); Thomas and Nyce (2001). In neighboring disciplines to LIS, such as computer supported collaborative work and science and technology studies ethnography is standard research practice.

Everyday life information seeking (ELIS) scholarship has special ties to ethnography. A pioneer of ELIS research, Elfreda Chatman set a precedent for ethnography and championed it as a way to, "…make known contextual meanings, cultural norms, and social interactions that are not possible with other methods." Chatman argued, "Because there is a paucity of knowledge pertaining to everyday perspectives and ordinary uses of information, there is a need for a method that permits the most comprehensive view of this process" (1992, p. 3).

Three seminal ELIS ethnographies, all of compromised situations, illustrate the design and character of this type of research. Chatman (1992) studied the information needs and use of aging women in a retirement community. She was a participant observer for two years and interviewed 55 residents. She concluded that women in this insulated living situation were prey to social fears and deceptive behaviors that contributed to a dearth of information she coined "information poverty." Chatman (1999) next looked at the information behavior of women in a maximum-security prison, through interviews with 80 inmates. She concluded that in the highly routinized prison setting information was largely social in nature and related mostly to immediate personal needs. Pettigrew (1999, 2000) examined information provision by community nurses to the elderly. She gathered data through field visits, structured observation, in-depth interviews, and note-taking at health

clinics. Pettigrew illuminated the social dimension of information provision in a clinical setting.

4.2.1 Strengths and weaknesses of ELIS ethnographies

All research approaches have strengths and weaknesses, as they bring one dimension of a scene into focus at the necessary expense of another. The ELIS ethnographies just reviewed foreground the actor's experience, and in doing so were pioneering for bringing to light the personal and social nature of information. A shortcoming is that these studies may come across as overly focused on the participant's sensibility and social encounters, to the detriment of other interesting matters. Of note, these ELIS ethnographies provided thin accounts of information phenomena that have traditionally been central to the discipline of LIS, namely: information resources, information structures, and information systems. In her monograph on elderly women's information needs, Chatman (1992) devotes only four pages to summary data of media use, and four pages to discussion of the library. Pettigrew (1999) describes the physical environment as one important contextual element of health information behavior at foot clinics, but mainly refers to non-informational entities like weather and cookies. These ethnographies are valid because they accurately report the perspective of the participants, who may indeed pay little attention to certain forms of information. A weakness of these types of ethnography is that their orientation to the actor's perspective may place relevant information phenomena into the margins of study. In the project at hand, following Chatman and Pettigrew's approach exactly may vividly capture the essence of cooking as an experience and social event, but give short shrift to material information forms, such as cookbooks and recipes. Mindful of this problem, I have used a particular type of ethnography in my study.

4.2.2 Scientific ethnography

Sandstrom and Sandstrom (1995) argue that one flavor of ethnography- *scientific ethnography* – produces a more balanced view of the social *and* material dimensions of information within social contexts. They assert that in LIS ethnography has been unduly associated with subjective views of the actor and an antiscientific stance; which is a distortion of ethnography's decidedly positivist roots (1995, p.168). Scientific ethnography approaches a research subject with the naturalist sensibility apparent in Chatman and Pettigrew, but with equal emphasis on objective measurement of the material world. Scientific ethnography advocates unobtrusive measures, mapping, ratings and rankings, archival and documentary research, and surveys (p. 169). With even-handed sensitivity to human experience and quantifying or analyzing physical elements, scientific ethnography is well-matched to my study's multiple lines of inquiry into the hobbyists' information activities, and the material resources and spaces.

No ISU or ELIS research projects, to my knowledge, define themselves explicitly as scientific ethnography. However, Sandstrom and Sandstrom (1995, p. 178) claim affinity to Menzel's (1964) pioneering research on scholarly communication of scientists. They point favorably to the work of White (1981), Ingwersen (1982), and Lynch (1983), Olszak (1991), on various aspects of citizen's use of the library or reference services. These studies share dual lines of inquiry into human experience and material factors in the setting. In my study, scientific ethnography was followed to maintain symmetrical attention to the hobbyists' experience *and* the material milieu of the social world and home.

4.3 Data gathering

The major areas of the study – information activities, resources, and spaces – are varied in nature and therefore yield to different data gathering techniques. Three types were

used:

1. *Semi-structured ethnographic interviews* with gourmet hobby cooks; to gather descriptions of the hobby experience, information activities, and information resources.
2. *Guided household tours and photographic inventory* of the domestic spaces used in the hobby; to document material information resources and the features of information spaces.
3. *Documentary research* to analyze popular, academic, market, and bibliographic materials related to the hobby of gourmet cooking and its information phenomena.

Table 6 shows how the three data gathering methods varied in their anticipated ability to capture insights about the main concepts in the study. Four of the main concepts were thoroughly investigated (marked with an X). An exception is "interaction between information phenomena" (column far right); this is a diffuse, temporally complicated event. Insights into this area emerged mostly from my own conceptual handiwork.

	Social world of the hobby	**Information ac tivities**	**Information resources**	**Information spaces**	**Interaction between information phenomena**
Semi-structured ethnographic interviews	X	X	X	x	x
Guided household tours and photographic inventory	x	x	X	X	x
Documentary research	x	o	x	o	o

X = thorough coverage x = suggestive only o = no coverage
Table 6. Summary of the coverage of three data gathering techniques.

It is the mainstay of ethnography for the researcher to participate in the activity under study. Here, I might have participated with each informant in episodes of cooking. This idea was deemed slightly off target. The central activity of hands-on cooking is *only one*

part of the overall hobby, which is most efficiently captured through a sweeping interview. However, to bring some accounts of actual cooking into the data, a few interviews coincided with real cooking events in the hobbyist's life.

4.3.1 Semi-structured ethnographic interviews

Interviews are the principal data collection method in all ethnographic work (Bernard, et. al, 1986). They have also emerged as a favored data gathering technique among ISU researchers (Hewins, 1990; Mellon, 1990), occurring in 34.8% of projects between 1993-2000 (McKechnie, Baker, Greenwood, & Julien, 2002, p.118). In ethnography, interviews may be unstructured or semi-structured. *Unstructured interviews* are akin to a series of "friendly conversations" (Spradley, 1979, p. 58); topics are explored in depth, fluidly, and without an interview guide. While these get closest to an actor's natural perspective on a matter, a shortcoming is that they do not produce comparable accounts. In *semi-structured interviews*, the researcher's queries follow a predetermined pattern through the use of an interview guide, but the focus may shift according to the responses of the informant (Bernard, et. al. 1986, p, 384). A strength of the semi-structured interview is that they produce a volume of comparable accounts of a single question or topic. The set interview guide also contributes to the reliability of the study, meaning, questioning can be kept relatively stable throughout, excepting intentional adjustments. This technique is best when only a single encounter is planned with the informant, and coverage of topics can be ensured (Bernard, 2002, p. 205). The directed quality of semi-structured interviews is well suited to professional populations who are accustomed to the efficient use of time, which is likely the case with gourmet hobby cooks. I decided to use semi-structured interviews for this project because of these general affinities and because multiple comparable accounts of the practice of the hobby and its information phenomena would be a way to answer the research questions.

4.3.1.1 Ethical considerations

An *Application to Involve Human Subjects in Research* was submitted to the California Office for Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS), Human Subject Protection Committee at UCLA, and certified as exempt. (#05-369, see Appendix B). Throughout the project, all required OPRS protocols were followed, ensuring that human subjects were treated with respect, beneficence, and justice. Further, I was trained and tested in ethical research practices and received the *Certification for the Protection of Human Research Subjects* that is required to conduct research as an agent of the university.

4.3.1.2 The informant: the gourmet hobby cook

In an ethnographic interview, the interviewee is called an informant. In this study, the informant was the social world's regular, the *gourmet hobby cook*, defined as: a person who engages routinely in the practice of food preparation (involving high quality or exotic ingredients and skilled preparation) for pleasure and during free-time. I conducted 20 interviews[2], an acceptable amount for an exploratory study. To cover the geographic reach of a dispersed social world, informants were selected from both coasts: greater Los Angeles, California and greater Boston, Massachusetts. As already mentioned, other participants in the social world (strangers, tourists, or insiders), such as librarians, vendors, or cookbook writers, were not interviewed; these sorts were considered less direct routes to answer the research questions, and introduce a different perspective than that of the gourmet hobby cook.

[2] Originally, 30 interviews were planned but after 20 enough data existed to answer the research questions; my committee approved a reduction from 30 to 20 cases in March 2006.

4.3.1.3 The interview location: the home

It is a fundamental in ethnography to conduct research in a natural setting. In this case, interviews occurred at the homes and kitchens of gourmet hobby cooks. These are the primary sites of gourmet hobby cooking, where the main tools and resources of the hobby are located. During the interview, the setting benefited both informant and researcher. The informant could more easily recall details when surrounded by the milieu of the hobby. At the same time, as researcher I was better able to analyze the infrastructure of the hobby and check the interviewee accounts against the physical evidence. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, other private and public spaces may function peripherally in the hobby, it was not feasible to conduct the interview at these locations.

4.3.1.4 The sampling technique

Interview participants were selected via nonprobabilistic purposive sampling. In purposive sampling the researcher uses their knowledge about a specific group to select informants who represent the population (Berg, 2000). I used my familiarity with the hobby of cooking, and the criteria set within the definition of *gourmet hobby cook,* to hand-pick informants. It was not possible in this small-scale exploratory study to weigh ethnic, economic, educational, age, gender, or any other human variables. Therefore, no effort was made to represent these variables in informants.

Boston and Los Angeles are hotbeds of gourmet cooking; with thriving restaurant scenes, numerous specialty markets and cookware retailers, and amateur cooking schools. To meet informants I participated in the events of culinary social groups, and I placed recruiting notices into the newsletters of such organizations (see Appendix C). I also posted solicitations at public places such as libraries and doctor's offices (see Appendix D).

Given the popularity of gourmet cooking I thought it would not be difficult to recruit informants. This optimistic assessment turned out to be dead wrong. I learned quickly that there *are* many gourmet cooks around, but a minority will open their home to a curious researcher and stranger. I wrote in my methodological journal:

> It is easy to encounter gourmet hobby cooks in public settings who are enthusiastic to talk. The difficulty is that the interview entails going *into their home*, which is a personal space. I suspect a lot of my leads did not materialize into interviews because of this matter: having a stranger in the home, poking through cupboards.

Midway through fieldwork I adopted a recruiting strategy that leveraged the trust and goodwill within social networks. I spread the word to my family and friends that I was seeking gourmet cooks for my dissertation research. My acquaintances then proposed interviews to gourmet cooks in their lives, vouched for my integrity, and passed contact information to me. My journal continued:

> When my family and friends know of hobby cooks and serve as liaisons, I have a much better success rate in getting interviews. The mutually known and trusted acquaintance provides an additional and necessary degree of interest, willingness, and security.

Table 7 shows the results of my various recruiting techniques, ranked in order of their success in securing interviews. Family and friends proved the best vehicle; public efforts to get into the homes of strangers were futile. For future fieldwork in the home, I would advise researchers to recruit informants through family and friends. As an alternative, a cash incentive might help overcome resistance; Soo Young Rieh of the University of Michigan had no trouble studying information systems in the home on account of a $50.00 incentive.

Recruiting techniques	Interviews
Sought through family and friends	8
Met people at culinary social club, or posting to their mailing list	6
Posting on UCLA department mailing list	4
Advertisements at public doctors office	1
Other	1
Advertisement at public library	0
Snowball (from another informant)	0

Table 7. Recruiting techniques and their results.

Upon first contact with potential informants, I chatted with them to assess their activity in the hobby and possible willingness to participate in an interview. Then, I screened them to determine: (a) that cooking occurs in the context of a *hobby* and not feeding work or employment, (b) this is a *gourmet* type of cook (focused on high-quality ingredients and skill), and (c) that this person is currently *active* as a cook and has a significant history (in the maintenance stage of the career).

Those who met all three criteria, above, were invited for an interview in the near future. Upon scheduling the interview, I sent a confirmation letter (see Appendix E). Then, I created confidential paper and digital files for the interviewee, which would hold forthcoming data.

4.3.1.5 The interview schedule

Spradley (1979, pp. 58-68) states that the ethnographic interview can be thought of as having three essential elements: *explicit purpose*, *ethnographic explanations*, and *ethnographic questions*. The explicit purpose is the shared understanding between the informant and the researcher that the conversation will be directed into certain channels. In other words, the encounter is not typical small talk or socializing; this understanding permeates the session. The ethnographic explanations are the functional details that the researcher provides about the project, recording process, human subjects protocol, and interview instructions. The

ethnographic questions are the statements that generate a response from the informant. All three elements were operative in my interviews with gourmet hobby cooks.

After arrival to the informant's residence, the session had three parts: *set-up*, *interview*, and *tour* (the tour is addressed independently and in detail, in the next section); in total, this is lasted 2 to 3 hours. Set up consisted mostly of ethnographic explanation and practical matters with equipment. Good rapport is important in ethnographic interviewing and so I greeted the informant in a friendly manner and placed them at ease through small talk. We selected a comfortable site for the interview, preferably near to the kitchen and with a tabletop for note-taking. I gave the informant a written précis of the study to review and human subject paperwork to read and sign. I tested recording equipment and made ready a notebook, the interview guide, and a research instrument.

Three primary questioning strategies of ethnographic interviewing were employed (Spradley, 1979, pp. 83-91). *Descriptive* questions elicited the informant's general perceptions and experiences; they were usually introductory and easy to answer, and by design encouraged rambling. *Structural* question followed descriptive ones; they elicited specific elaborations of the features and organization of phenomena. *Contrast* questions revealed the dimensions of meaning to various objects and events in the informant's world. These three types of questions move from broad to specific in nature, following a funnel shape. While this traditional format was inherent to the interview schedule and applied in general, the informant was given the freedom and encouragement to pursue any particular line of thought within the bounds of the study.

One key to a successful interview is to *probe* effectively (Bernard, 2002). A probe is a short interrogatory or declarative remark from the researcher that stimulates informants to produce more information. Bernard names seven types of probes: silent, echo, un-huh, tell-

me-more, long question, leading, and baiting (pp. 210-214). These probes are suitable for different interview situations; I practiced and applied them judiciously.

In sum, the interview with gourmet hobby cooks took a funnel design, employed three types of questions, was an adaptable tool, and utilized probes to expand answers when necessary. The schedule contains four question areas, outlined below and listed together in Appendix F.

1. The career of the hobby cook. (*10 minutes). Please tell the story of your experience as a hobby cook, beginning with your earliest memories of interest in cooking, covering any turning points, and ending with your present participation.*

Question 1 was a descriptive question that aimed to generate a narrative account of the evolution of the hobby career. The turning points, influences, activities, materials, locations, and people in the hobby were usually mentioned. This broad question did not focus on information phenomena; but when noted revealed their natural occurrence in the hobby.

2. An episode of hobby cooking. (15 minutes.) *Please tell me about a recent hobby cooking episode, beginning with your decision to cook and then covering the every step taken until you eat the food. Your reflections on the experience afterwards are also welcomed.*

Question 2 was a descriptive question about an episode of the hobby. It elicited greater detail about activities and tasks, and their sequencing. This question did not lead with information, though information phenomena were often mentioned in their natural context. When appropriate, probes elicited elaboration on information phenomena.

3. Information activities (25 minutes)
   A. What do you do to stay informed about cooking?
   B. Please describe, in general or with specific examples, how you do the following:

*- acquire new cooking ideas or stay current with trends**
*- find the right recipe**
*- use a recipe during the cooking process**
*- maintain a recipe collection**
*- maintain a cookbook collection**
*- evaluate a cooking episode**
*- share your knowledge about cooking**
*- create your own information resources**
*- stay aware of cooking information resources**
* these phrases may change as more is learned about information activities

4. Information resources (25 minutes)
   A. *What are your main information resources for cooking?*
   B. Informant completes worksheet. When completed, the researcher asks the interviewee to comment upon the features of each resource.

Questions 3 and 4 focused on information activities and resources, respectively. These were structural questions that sought elaboration of finer points of distinction about each. In each case, an initial attempt was made to discuss information phenomena open-endedly. Later, examples served as points of departure to explicate information activities and resources.

In (4B) an instrument (see Appendix G) was used to audit the universe of culinary information resources more comprehensively. I gave the informant a worksheet in which they checked off information resources they use. While documentary resources were the focus of the study, other types were included in the discussion to gain greater perspective. This worksheet was a guide to discuss, in turn, the use and features of each of the resources. In Spradley's questioning schema, these were contrast questions. I probed to determine the functions, strengths, weaknesses, favorite examples, acquisition, of each information resource.

While in the field ethnographers are advised to bracket their existing knowledge and act like a newcomer or tourist; this purportedly encourages the informant to fully articulate

their experience, without the researcher's influence or assumptions. As a seasoned gourmet cook of more than a decade, I was hesitant to follow this advice, for it struck me as dishonest. Soon I discovered that when I presented myself as a fellow expert and enthusiast, my subjects went immediately into detailed technical discussions of cooking, which enriched the data. I coined this distinct mode of communicating between like-minded fellows *food talk* and wrote in my methodological journal:

> At times cooks switch to a more technical food-related discourse…I am calling this *food talk* and capturing it in a Node [an NVivo code] and memo for further consideration. …In food talk there seems to be a bit of showing off going on. I believe that food talk comes about when informants realize my own expertise in this hobby. I cannot imagine that they would get into this mode with someone who knew nothing of food or cooking. This is a type of private connection and shared understanding. I dished it right back.

It was during moments of food talk that I obtained some of the best remarks in the data. Going forward, I would recommend that researchers with genuine credentials in a leisure area present themselves honestly to enliven and enrich the fieldwork session.

When the discussion of information resources was complete, a short break was called. I labeled tapes, file notes and worksheet, and prepared equipment for the second part of the session, a guided household tour and photographic inventory.

4.3.2 Guided household tour and photographic inventory

After the interview attention turned to the immediate information space of the hobby. It is basic in ethnography to, "…map out the spatial relationships of…man-made features, and other elements of the socio-physical landscape" (Pelto, 1975, p. 231). Still photography is an effective means to capture the features of domestic settings. When occurring in households anthropologists Collier and Collier (1986, pp. 45-63) call this

research practice a *cultural inventory*; for the study of information in a setting I use the term *photographic inventory*. Within LIS, Malone (1983) pioneered the method in which a subject conducts a guided tour of their office, while pictures were taken. This generated some of the first insights into files and piles as office information structures. Kwasnik (1991), Case (1991), and more recently Lee (2003) have applied similar methods.

4.3.2.1 The subject: immediate information space

Though the hobby cook served as a guide, the immediate information space and information resources therein were the subjects of this part of the session. This switched the nature of data gathering from audio (informant's talk) to the visual examination of a field site. Visual research of this kind can be overwhelming because of the complexity of the physical world, which exists all around us and in many degrees of resolution. A goal was to achieve, "systematic selectivity through *a definition of how and in what order we will record environment, behavior, and other cultural phenomena*" (emphasis added, Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 162). My first definition and parameter was Lee's (2003) concept of the *immediate information space*. This was considered the vicinity of the kitchen and within the walls of the house. Next, within this space, my research process was organized upon three levels:

1. *Rooms*: The major rooms used in the hobby were identified. This typically included kitchens, dining rooms, home offices, living rooms, storage spaces, patios. The general features, contents, and purpose of such spaces were examined.

2. *Information resources, collections, and zones:* The material information resources of the hobby were investigated. This usually consisted of volumes of cookbooks and recipes in various forms. Following Lee, it included *collections*, "a group of documents, regardless of format, medium, and ownership" (Lee, 2003, p. 422); as well as *zones*, larger areas of material information marked as related by the user (p. 430). When present, computers were analyzed for the resources they contain. There was an effort to understand the general organization, if any, of all these

entities. The housing and surroundings (i.e. shelves, file cabinets, boxes, etc.) were considered relevant, too.

3. *Items:* Novel individual items were documented, such as hand-made assemblages of recipes, recipe kits, surfaces of information (i.e. bulletin boards, refrigerators with recipes), journals, and so on. These entities were examined at closer range for function, structure, and general characteristics.

4.3.2.2 The tour schedule

The tour was launched with this statement to the informant:

> *I'd like you to take me through your home, showing me the locations and resources used in the hobby. In particular, please show me the culinary information resources here in the house. Let's start in the kitchen.*

The hobby cook was given the hand-held tape recorder and asked to speak clearly into the microphone as they lead the tour. I carried a camera and took photographs of the rooms, information resources/collections, and items. When a particularly interesting entity was encountered, I used an *object probe* (DeLeon & Cohen, 2005) such as "What is this?" or "Tell me more about this…" or "How does this work?"

4.3.2.3 Capturing tour data

I took photographs throughout the tour utilizing a digital camera. I tried to capture all three levels (rooms, information resources/collections/zones, items) in a variety of long and close-up shots. The photos were taken in a consistent manner that preserved the opportunity for comparative analysis across households. I averaged 26 photographs per home. At the end of the tour, I sketched a floor diagram of the immediate information space, marking concentrations of information resources (samples appear in 8.3.1 and 8.3.2). This birds-eye sketch was helpful in recalling the space and its features during the analysis process.

In visual research, "[the] reality is that total documentation is almost always impossible" (Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 162). So it should be noted that this data was necessarily incomplete and varied. The hobby cook (not I) determined what elements of the house and hobby were presented. It was not possible to say that every relevant entity was surveyed, and that cooks conducted the tours similarly. As a baseline fact, there was variation in the types of residences – whether studio apartment or spacious home. Naturally, hobby elements that existed outside the home were not documented.

Despite these factors, the tour worked superbly and was a highlight of the research project. Many cooks came to life as they guided me through their home and belongings, which served as touchstones for memories, insights, and detailed descriptions. Throughout the fieldwork process I realized that people are more able to discuss information phenomena in terms of materials or objects at hand. I wrote in my methodological journal:

> The tour produced very rich data, more valuable than the interview in understanding how information works in the home. Gourmet cooks are more articulate when showing and handling materials, it makes it less abstract…they very naturally fall into the mode of tour guide (more readily than interviewee) and seemed comfortable holding the recorder, pointing, and talking.

The urge to handle and display information was so strong that some informants jumped up from the early moments of the interview to get artifacts to illustrate a point. When this happened repeatedly in one session, I was conservative and said, "Please wait, we'll get to that stuff in a moment." Going forward, with more experience, I probably would not constrain my subjects.

If I conducted a similar study again I would change the order of events during fieldwork. It would be better to make the tour *first* in the session, and begin with information artifacts. A potential alternative is a telephone interview about the general experience of the

hobby, followed by an entire on-site session in hands-on discussion of the information environment. All information researchers (even those not in the domains of home or leisure) should consider that people are better able to discuss information phenomena amidst material artifacts and their natural context.

4.3.2.4 Processing data: the ethnographic record

An *ethnographic record* consists of the notes, tape recordings, pictures, and anything else which documents the scene under study (Spradley, 1979, p. 69). Such collections were generated for each of the 20 encounters with hobbyists.

I transcribed the interview and tour recordings within 48 hours. Though time-consuming, this provided an opportunity to listen to the interview carefully, and to capture the natural language of the hobbyist. Notes taken throughout the session were expanded and integrated into the transcript. Digital photographs were downloaded from the camera and saved in both paper and digital form. All materials from the session were given alias names, per human subject protocols, and then placed in the master files of the project. To summarize, after processing all materials from the interview and tour session, each of the 20 hobbyist cooks had a file containing:

1. Notes from original screening and contact sheet
2. Transcript from the semi-structured interview, with additional fieldnotes
3. Completed worksheet on Information Resources
4. Photographs
5. Birds-eye sketch (floor plan) of the immediate information space
6. Transcript from the narrated household tour
7. Signed permissions paperwork

4.3.3 Documentary research

Ethnography also makes use of a wide range of documentary materials (Pelto, 1975, p. 134-135; Bernard et. al. 1986, p. 391-392). Here, additional insights were brought to bear

from various literatures and bibliographic information sources. The use of outside literatures also checks the validity of the original data, by providing another perspective on the phenomena being studied. The literatures that I consulted were primary, secondary, market, and meta in nature, as explained below.

4.3.3.1 Primary (popular literature)

In this study, the primary literature is composed of the materials used by hobby cooks. These are namely cookbooks, but also a wide range of the media of the social world such as gastronomy writings, culinary essays, serial cooking magazines, and culinary websites. Some of the analysis occurred during the household tour and photographic inventory, when informational items were presented and discussed; later on I often consulted these materials privately.

4.3.3.2 Secondary (academic literature)

The disciplines of leisure studies, food studies, critical studies, American studies, anthropology, women's studies, and history have conducted research on cooking, though with only minimal attention to leisure forms. Some of these materials provided additional contextual insights.

4.3.3.3 Market data of the domain

The information resources of cooking are a part of a significant, multi-billion dollar publishing market, which is carefully tracked and quantified. Sales of cookbooks may illuminate purchasing and use patterns among gourmet hobby cooks. Market data and industry analysis was tapped as another perspective.

4.3.3.4 Meta-information

The popular culinary literature is stored in bibliographic information systems, such as the online catalog of the Library of Congress (LOC). These systems were mined for insights into the content, structure, and evolution of this literature. For instance, it proved illuminating to know the most popular subject sub-headings in the *cookery* class of the LOC classification scheme (which mirrored the popular interests of the gourmet hobby cook). Bibliographic metadata of this kind was explored throughout the study.

4.4 Data Analysis

In a handbook on the ethnographic method, Pelto states, "A generally accepted modern view of scientific procedure holds that effective theory construction depends on both inductive and deductive procedures" (Pelto, p. 17; Sandstrom & Sandstrom, 1995). In keeping with ethnographic method, the general approach to data analysis in this project was an iterative process of deductive and inductive reasoning. Frameworks and ideas drawn from LIS, leisure studies, and other social sciences – as laid out in the theoretical framework–served as lenses to view and crystallize the original data gathered from the interview and household tour, and vice-versa.

The two main sets of original data differed in nature (text and visual) and required distinct analytical processes. The treatment of text data followed grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and of visual data applied Collier and Collier (1986). To code and organize the data, I used NVivo, a software product for qualitative analysis from QSR Research International.

4.4.1 Text

It was my original plan to apply the data analysis technique outlined by Spradley, called *theme analysis* (1979). When I began to process the interview transcripts following Spradley, I realized his approach was best geared to identify *meanings* and *knowledge domains*, whereas my research questions implicated many *processes* and *objects*. Further, the systematic sequence seemed to straight-jacket my imagination and the data. So I switched to a more flexible and simple grounded-theory style approach, following the chapter "Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing" by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995), and also drawing upon Strauss and Corbin (1998).

The analysis and coding process occurred during summer 2006. I coded across the transcripts, one interview question at a time, a funnel-shaped analytical path that took me from general features of the hobby to its information phenomena. For each interview question a period of creative open coding generated dozens of interesting but unassociated codes. After several days of restless reflection I was able to collapse the large set into a more elegant hierarchy that revealed conceptual relationships (shown in Tables 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, and 23 in the findings). This adjustment always felt like a breakthrough and birthed a new insight into the hobby.

Throughout this time I wrote 108 memos; Table 8 shows the titles of all the memos in alphabetical order. My memos ranged from a paragraph to two pages and Appendix H provides a sample memo for "aesthetics." The four chapters of findings came together easily by isolating a constellation of codes and concepts that spoke to the original research questions. Each chapter narrative wove together these constellations with existing literature, statements from informants, and elements from the memos.

aesthetics
alcohol
"always something new"
annotating recipes or cookbooks
audience size
binder
blogging
"branching out"
browsing
buying
career arc
chefs
childhood family influences
classic dishes
commercial touches
comparing (recipes)
consulting (for people)
consulting or checking (a recipe)
contemplating
contexts of the hobby
cooking episode
culinary lifestyle
culinary values
designing recipes or menus
desserts
dining with other cooks
displaying
"doing" culinary information
eating out
entertaining
environment
episode – eating
episode arc
equipment
experimenting
family dynamics today
flexibility and adaptability
fluctuating or cyclical involvement
focuses (subjects)
food talk
friends
from scratch versus convenience
"getting into it"
gourmet lifestyle and bibliography model
having an idea
healthfulness
heritage/keepsake materials
hobby-commercial continuum
hobby-feeding work continuum
holidays
independent or collective cooking
information activities
information resources
ingredients
journals or notebooks
"keepers"
kitchen
learning from people
listing
major social trends
market expeditions
microsocial world
nature of culinary knowledge
"over the top" and moderating
PCL - its ranges
PCL – its processes
phases
planning
public library
publishing
reading
receiving (cookbooks as gifts)
repeating and refining
restaurants
routines and traditions
satellite hobbies
satisfaction
scale or scope
science
searching for recipes
seasonality
secrets
serving others
sharing culinary knowledge
size of audience
snobbery
staging or holding files
staying informed
subject arc
sustaining knowledge
taking cooking classes
talking
teaching cooking
techniques
the culinary repertoire
the family context
time pressures
timing
tools (for the library)
translating
traveling
travels
using during episode
variations of interest
watching television
zones

Table 8. Titles of memos generated during analysis.

4.4.2 Photographs

Altogether, 468 photos were generated during the household tours. I began coding these when I finished the transcripts. As with the transcripts, I studied the data (photographs) for concepts and patterns, which were named as codes. Since my code

hierarchies were already well established, the process went quickly. Only in one area, the Personal Culinary Library (the focus of Chapter 8), did the photographs spurn some new codes and memos. An advantage of coding text and *then* photos is that it integrated the two data sets (text and photos); a disadvantage is that the photos might not tell *their own* story for they were fit into the conceptual schema laid by the interviews.

Because of the high volume of photographs, I decided not to study and code each one, which Collier and Collier call *microanalysis*. This seemed too time-consuming and in my methodological journal I noted, "After the fact many of the photos seem random; I snapped an image of whatever the cook showed me, in some cases one cookbook after another!" Instead, following a field session I reviewed the contact sheet of photographs and selected those that displayed the critical features of the setting. I cut and pasted these images into a narrative profile of each information environment, and elaborated them with captions. About half the images from every contact sheets made it into the narrative. I then coded these more selective illustrated case narratives of each setting, rather than the miscellany of individual photographs. The leftover images were saved for illustrative purposes only and some made their way into the findings.

The NVivo software program was *not* well suited to handling visual data, despite the positive claims in its marketing brochures. Picture files are not incorporated into the program in the same manner as text documents. Instead, a surrogate document is created within NVivo to capture observations and fieldnotes *about* the images; this document is then coded and linked within the program. I complained in my methodological journal, "This is time consuming since text and ideas must be transferred into this new NVivo surrogate document." Also, picture files must be stored separately and employ a different software program to open and manipulate. (Hence, my computer labored to jump back and forth

between large picture files and NVivo.) These hassles should not discourage anyone from using visual data, for its contribution to the study was redeeming.

4.4.3 Integration

A final analytical step of this project entailed seamlessly integrating the three data sets from the interview, household tour and photographic inventory, and documentary research. Since these differed in nature and perspective, and their distinct qualities and contributions to understanding were emergent, I applied no synthetic formula or process. A more appropriate, albeit mystic, statement for this moment came from Collier & Collier:

> The discovery necessary for the conclusion often lies beyond the last outpost of data, forming a gulf between the researcher and conclusions. The challenge is now to cross this gulf! We suggest the chasm can be spanned only by *creativity*; we need to *fly* over undocumented space in order to command scientific discovery. (1986, p. 198)

4.5 Writing an Ethnography

The discoveries of this project are delivered in the form of an ethnography. To this end, resources such as Spradley's chapter "Writing an Ethnography" and Wolcott's handbook, *Writing Up Qualitative Research* (2001) were used, along with ethnographic writing guides by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995, Chapter 7), Van Maanen (1988), Richardson (1990), and Becker (1986). Following a month of trepidation and writer's block, I found my own style, which blended conventions of ethnography with a more detached voice of the ISU research specialty. Throughout writing I was sensitive to two issues: audience and levels of writing.

4.5.1 Audience

Selecting an audience was an important step in writing up my study. Spradley recommends, "The writer needs to select an audience, identify it clearly, and then keep in mind throughout the writing what that audience is." I anticipated four readerships that span academic, professional, and everyday spheres: (a) students and researchers of ISU and ELIS, (b) public librarians serving hobbyists, (c) leisure scientists who study hobbies, and (d) gourmet hobby cooks with informational predilections. These groups are not technologists or specialists, and so I aimed for a writing style that was introductory and lively, with colorful line drawings and photographs.

4.5.2 Levels of ethnographic writing

Spradley proposes a range of six possible levels of abstraction in ethnographic writing. Level One entails universal statements of the greatest generality. Other levels convey increasing focus until Level Six, which captures the character of a particular moment. Ethnographic writing *across* these levels produces an account of a social scene that is vivid (with detail) *and* meaningful (with universal insights). Ethnographers adjust their writing to certain levels based upon the research design and the intended audience. Spradley urges students to, "…avoid the middle levels of generalizations, to use them, but sparingly. *Emphasize the most general and the most specific*…It is because generalities are best communicated through particulars" (Spradley, emphasis added).

Levels of Analysis	Scope
Level One	Universal statements
Level Two	Cross-cultural descriptive statements
Level Three	General statements about a society or cultural group
Level Four	General Statements about a specific cultural scene
Level Five	Specific statements about a cultural domain
Level Six	Specific incidence statements

Table 9. Spradley's levels of ethnographic writing. My ethnography targets Level Five, in light grey.

Following this counsel and matching my theoretical framework, my findings judiciously expressed universal statements about serious leisure and social worlds (Level 1). These are illustrated and elaborated by evidence about gourmet cooking information phenomena, as gained from fieldwork. While touching upon both poles, the mainstay of writing (by volume) qualifies as Level Five ("Specific statements about a cultural domain"), and Level Six ("Specific incidence statements").

4.6 Trustworthiness

Qualitative research conducted in a naturalistic paradigm evaluates *trustworthiness* as opposed to the conventional scientific criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness entails disciplined management of the distortions possible in any interpretive research process, namely the researcher's: impact on the subject or setting; selective perception and interpretation; and inability to witness all relevant aspects of the phenomena in question (McCall & Simmons, 1969, p. 78; discussed in Stebbins, 2001a, p. 48). There is no universal agreement on protocols to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research. I adopted a standard offered by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in which trustworthiness was determined through: *credibility*, *transferability*, *dependability*,

and *confirmability*. This schema was supplemented by Stebbins' idea of *concatenated* research (2001a, pp. 12-17, 49).

4.6.1 Credibility

Credibility concerns the confidence one can have that results accurately express reality as experienced by the subject (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). In positivistic paradigms, this concept is similar to internal validity. To ensure credibility, I designed the study to deliberately utilize *triangulation*, the application of different data points. Findings were deemed more credible when verified by more than one investigative technique or source. Specifically, I triangulated: (a) accounts from multiple hobbyists, (b) material evidence from numerous information spaces, and (c) secondary research from four literatures. The credibility of the findings was assured through the congruence of these differing perspectives.

4.6.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which results can be generalized. Transferability is enhanced when a researcher thoroughly describes a context so that later investigators may make informed decisions about applying the findings. I had already pointed out a lack of transferability in the ELIS research into leisure (see page 28, ¶ 2). In response, my project contained three mechanisms for increasing transferability: (a) a detailed theoretical framework with background on serious leisure social worlds and a classification system that suggests comparable leisure realms, (b) richly descriptive findings that help researchers understand the results and correctly evaluate significance and applicability, and (c) access to research instruments and elements of the raw data (to be available by request or posted on my website).

It is possible to look ahead to opportunities to translate the findings of my project to other realms. This project is likely to translate to studies of information phenomena in other Making and Tinkering hobbies. There is a chance my case study, cast as a quintessential Making and Tinkering hobby, can serve as a point of reference for studies of the other four major classes of hobbies. There are limits to my project's translatability, brought about by the diversity of leisure. I would urge caution in translating the work to other kinds of serious leisure (amateurism or volunteering) or to casual leisure settings and leisure projects.

4.6.3 Dependability and confirmability

Dependability refers to the stability or consistency of the inquiry processes over time. The more consistent the researcher has been in their work, the more dependable are the results. Since naturalistic research is emergent and always evolves somewhat from its original design, explicit description of any factors accounting for change also contributes to dependability. Confirmability is a measure of how well the findings are supported by the data collected, an assurance that the conclusions represent more than, "figments of the [researcher's] imagination" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p 243).

These two measures of trustworthiness were addressed together through the ongoing auditing by my advisor, Professor Greg Leazer. The audit required that I maintain an *audit trail*, meaning a systemic documentation of the research project. It included multiple phases of the data, namely: transcripts, photographs, memos, codes and code hierarchies, rough drafts of chapters/findings, and final drafts. As each of these materialized, I forwarded samples to Prof. Leazer, which he reviewed and we then discussed. Prof. Leazer offered an objective perspective at each stage. The entire audit trail has been archived and can be checked by other scholars as necessary.

4.6.4 Concatenation

Stebbins agrees that researchers must address trustworthiness to the satisfaction of critical readers and the cannon of the discipline (2001a, pp. 48-50). At the same time he asserts that trustworthiness is best assured *over time* through a series of linked, or *concatenated,* studies of the same phenomenon (2001a, pp. 12-17). *Concatenation* is, "a type of longitudinal research" often executed by a "lone" and "enthusiastic pioneer" that grows in proportion and importance as the chain of study lengthens (p. 13). He makes the point,

> Often overlooked in discussions about validity in exploratory research is the fact that the most effective way to ensure it. . . is to concatenate research projects in the area of studies. Separate studies by different scholars [or the same scholar] centered on the same or related groups, processes, or activities will, over time, result in the most solid and convincing validations possible of the concepts and generalizations emerging from this body of research. In other words, a scientific field, like the city of Rome, is (was) not built in a day. (p. 49)

While applying four controls for trustworthiness from Lincoln and Guba, I also conceived of this research as one part of my ongoing research program centered on information within gourmet cooking. It builds upon my early investigations as a doctoral student, and will be enhanced through later studies during an academic career. In short, the dissertation fits into a longer concatenated arc of inquiry wherein, "[efforts at validity] will be only partially successful . . . and [I] will have to wait for future explorations before the tale of validity is fully told."

CHAPTER 5: THE HOBBY OF GOURMET COOKING

5.1 Introduction: "A thing of great beauty and joy!"

A popular leisure activity in the United States is the hobby of gourmet cooking. The idea of cooking *as leisure* has only emerged in the last half century. Until then, cooking was entirely *feeding work* (DeVault, 1991), the required family care and housework performed by women and, if possible, relegated to domestic staff. Starting in the 1950s a confluence of technological, economic, and social changes shifted cooking from work to leisure for some populations.

Namely, advances in food processing took much of the hard labor out of at-home food preparation, freeing up time and effort for the more enjoyable finishing touches of assembling meals. Shipping and storage innovations brought fruit and vegetables at the peak of ripeness, and a wider variety of foodstuffs, to markets year round. Through both immigration and international travel Americans were exposed to foreign cuisines and ingredients, and eaters became more adventurous.

All the while, the amount of free time and disposable income steadily increased over the last half century. Between 1965 and 2003 men gained 6-8 hours per week of free time and women 4-8. (Aguiar & Hurst, 2006). Non-work creative pursuits, like hobbies, became components of identity and markers of a well-rounded life. As outlined in *The United States of Arugula: How We Became a Gourmet Nation* (Kamp, 2006), charismatic educators such as Julia Child, Craig Claiborne and James Beard, among others, championed sophisticated, artful ways to cook, eat, and socialize.

As a result of these forces, today several million Americans are avid gourmet hobby cooks. A proprietary report by market researchers Mintel Group (2005) calls the gourmet cooking hobbyist *the food enthusiast* or *foodie*. Such sorts, "really enjoy cooking" and

will, "engage in more elaborate cooking from scratch on weekends or for special occasions."

From the perspective of leisure science, cooking as a hobby is a form of *serious leisure*, an "…activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a leisure career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (Stebbins, 1992, p. 3). For most enthusiasts it is a cherished, life-long, free-time pursuit that engenders a deep sense of fulfillment and many personal and social benefits. It is not akin to throwing a couple of hamburgers on the grill when friends drop by, which is *casual leisure*, "the immediately intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it" (Stebbins, 1997, p. 18). The hobby of gourmet cooking demands acumen and instead of an immediate and effortless reward, takes perseverance.

For instance, one summer afternoon while on her weekly trip to the farmer's market in Providence, Rhode Island, gourmet cook Celeste purchased a variety of locally grown perfectly ripe vegetables. Upon returning home she was pleased to find the latest issue of her favorite serial, *Cook's Illustrated*, had arrived. She flipped through the magazine, lingering on an article about vegetable torta – an elaborate loaf of vegetables baked together with seasonings, eggs, and breadcrumbs. The article outlined the technical challenge of this dish: liquid had to be extracted from each vegetable to concentrate flavors and prevent the torta from being watery and bland. A domestic version of an Italian cheese, Asiago, added tang and texture. The recipe piqued her curiosity, was an ideal use of her stash of vegetables, and would be a perfect treat for her son who was arriving home from an overseas trip late the following night. She made up a grocery list and planned to spend the subsequent afternoon on this cooking project.

In her kitchen the next day, Celeste carefully read the article and recipe again, studying its 14 steps and multiple illustrations. She sliced, salted, pressed, and baked the eggplant. She roasted peppers until they were blistered and brown, then peeled off the skins. She sliced tomatoes, salted them and patted away seeds and juices. Because each vegetable required individualized treatment, she recounted, "This went on for hours!" As the vegetables cooked in the oven, Celeste whirled bread in the food processor to form fresh breadcrumbs, which were sautéed in butter, mixed with grated Asiago, and pressed into the spring form cake pan to create a thin crust. Next, she made a binder that would hold the torta together: a thin custard of egg, cream, cheese, garlic, and chopped fresh herbs, gathered from an herb garden in her back yard.

When all the elements were prepared, they were layered into the pan, one vegetable type at a time, interleaved with custard and more cheese. The torta was baked to an internal temperature of 175 degrees and the result of her effort was a dense golden loaf that when cut revealed colorful internal striations. Late the next evening Celeste warmed the torta in the oven, popped it out of the pan, proclaimed it "a thing of great beauty and joy!" and served it up to her hungry, delighted son.

Celeste's project is a snapshot of the *unique ethos* or body of knowledge, values, and practices native to the social world of the hobby of gourmet cooking. It is characterized by food preparation using *high quality* or *exotic ingredients* and *advanced technical skills* (T. L. Wilson, 2003, p. 50-51). The approach is marked by an *aesthetic* that showcases the intrinsic beauty of food and entails an elegant and orderly cooking process. Though usually executed independently by the gourmet cook, this hobby often takes the form of *entertaining* to please others. The experience is centered on the home, where the *kitchen* becomes a culinary workshop. As a platform to explore information phenomena, this chapter surveys these main features of the hobby of gourmet cooking.

5.2 High Quality or Exotic Ingredients: "I don't take the shortcuts"

Gourmets aim to use the finest foodstuffs in their cooking projects. They prefer ingredients that are fresh, ripe, pure, local, authentic and beautiful. In the perpetual quest for quality the gourmet cooks in this study frequent specialty food dealers such as bakeries and fish markets, visit food shops in ethnic neighborhoods, seek out premium meats from farms, or purchase rare items when traveling in foreign countries. For example, in an effort to make coq a vin (a traditional French stew) for a dinner party, Ken recounts an adventure:

> Coq a vin requires a rooster. That is an *old* bird. You don't just go to the grocery store and ask for a rooster! This became a challenge. I called around to poultry shops and approached the vendors at the farmer's market. They didn't have it and suggested ethnic stores: Chinatown actually, where there are live poultry dealers. They actually had roosters, but young ones, so this didn't help. I couldn't find a rooster. I was in a conundrum. Many cookbooks understand they are writing for Americans, and suggest alternatives. So, I decided to use a stewing hen.

The penchant for premium ingredients is especially acute concerning fruits and vegetables. Hanna, for instance, routinely shops at multiple farmer's markets per week, seeking the freshest specialty produce. She explains. "I go to three in the San Fernando Valley. They each have their own thing I go for. Calabasas has good tangelos, asparagus, and tomatoes…At Encino, it is lemons, tangerines, and strawberries. …" Camilla has organic produce from a local farm delivered; she reports,

> We have a subscription with a community supported agricultural service. This is a farm for bio-organic vegetables, a very pure way…they come once a week and drop it at work. You pay a certain price and you get whatever they produce that week. Everything is *very* fresh and delicious.

The passion for premium ingredients is matched by an aversion to what is perceived as lower-quality manufactured and convenience foodstuffs. The idea of using something artificial, such as can of Campbell's soup as a flavor agent, made one hobbyist in this study cringe. Gourmet cook Sara explains,

> I don't use cake mixes or brownie mixes. I either make it from scratch or it doesn't get made. Everything has to be fresh and as much as I can I try not to use anything processed. If I need bread crumbs, I make them from bread. I don't buy the processed or convenience stuff. *I don't take the shortcuts.*

5.3 Specialized Technical Skills

Gourmet cooking entails specialized technical skills. The diversity and extent of these abilities is displayed in Celeste's execution of the vegetable torta. She employs manual dexterity in handling, peeling, and cutting produce; and craftsmanship to assemble the delicate crust and vegetable layers. She exhibits sensory abilities when cooking the custard to the right consistency and adjusting the seasonings to taste. She employs equipment not common to daily food work such as the food processor, thermometer, and springform pan. Further, Celeste invokes broad contextual knowledge of when and how to serve a vegetable torta, which may not be a satisfying workaday dinner, but is the perfect late night snack. Table 10 shows a sample of culinary technical skills mentioned by cooks in this study.

"I *deep fried* (the scallops)"
"I *boiled* (the mushrooms) and *steamed* them with chicken broth, soy, and ginger."
"I *skinned* the duck and cut it into parts"
"I *pureed* the beans with olive oil and red pepper"
"I *dredged* (the fish filet) in flour and sautéed it"
"I *seared* (the tenderloin) on high heat…it gets a good brown crust."
"I *marinated* (the chicken) and flipped it over"
"I *brined* it for three days"
"I *rubbed down* the outside of the meat"
"I *roasted* a head of garlic in the oven"
"I *rolled* a garlic and herb stuffing (inside the roast pork)"
"I *cooked* the Swiss chard and *removed* the juice"

Table 10. A sample of technical skills mentioned by gourmet cooks in the study.

Hobbyists gain and refine technical skills through hands-on practice each time they cook. Several cooks in this study described special efforts at systematic learning, through two approaches, here called *deconstructing food* and *mastering through repetition.*

5.3.1 Deconstructing food

Gourmet cooks often approach a project as the *deconstruction* of modern food processing, in an effort to grasp a traditional or artisan culinary technique. For instance, gourmet cook Katey professed a strong interest in, "…old-fashioned methods, anything you can do by yourself that people assume the supermarket must do for you." One day she wanted to use up a beef brisket (a very tough cut of meat from the chest of a cow) recently purchased from a local organic farm. She set her sights on making corned beef, which is typically obtained ready-to-eat at a grocery store or restaurant.

To begin, Katey conducted a Google search on "home corning" and browsed the online archive of the discussion board *Chowhound*, studying and comparing different articles,

tips and recipes. As she read, she came to understand the principles of *corning*: meat is flavored and tenderized through a long immersion in a seasoned brine and then braised (cooked in liquid) at a low temperature to retain moisture. She liked the idea, presented in some recipes, of finishing the brisket in a hot oven, out of its broth, to generate a succulent crust. Katey set the meat to soak and went about her day job as a researcher at a Boston area university.

On the weekend her boyfriend came over for their traditional Saturday cooking project and dinner. She followed a corned beef recipe amalgamated from several discovered during her research. That evening, the corned beef was the center of a comforting meal, rounded out with beer, potatoes, and parsnips. In the end, she reflected that the home corning process was straight-forward and effective; though next time she would lengthen the brining phase to increase the tenderness.

Similarly, gourmet cook Nancy was interested in Chinese food and aspired to make an authentic lo mein. When she couldn't find the right noodles for the dish at the grocery store she said, "I decided to learn to make them from scratch." She purchased a hand-cranked pasta roller for the job. After mastering the making of lo mein noodles she reports, "Then I realized it would be cool to make my own pasta." This back-to-basics approach shows a desire to gain skills at any costs; after all, hand-made noodles or pasta require 2-3 hours to make, whereas the common packaged dried product takes around 10 minutes.

Other cooks in this study shared comparable accounts of deconstructing processed foods such as ravioli, tomato sauce, and Chinese dumplings. Culinary interrogations of this kind appear to be more common early in the hobby career, during the most intensive *development* phase (discussed further in 6.2). As hobbyists mature and gain experience some come to trust and appreciate conveniences of modern

manufacturing, and relegate the pursuit of technique to a lower priority. Tom, a gourmet cook of more than a decade, made a savory tart using a purchased pie crust which he claimed he would have made from scratch in his earlier days.

5.3.2 Mastering through repetition

Another habit of this hobby is to repeat a classic preparation multiple times in short order to perfect a fundamental technique. Gourmet cook Tom explained, "I'd heard on a cooking show that if you want to become a good cook, select a few favorite foods and get several recipes, compare them, and learn how to cook those things very well until you no longer need the recipe." He first tried this learning strategy with chicken picatta (boneless chicken breasts in a lemon-caper sauce). He began by cooking several basic versions and then tried creative variations with unconventional additions such as artichoke hearts. After ten or twelve consecutive efforts he could state with confidence "…now I make a pretty good chicken picatta."

Gourmet cook Sara aimed to master pecan pie and baked several in one week. Faced with a superabundance of pies, she brought them into her workplace where soon "everyone was sick of pecan pie!" Yet in this exercise she was determined to "…get the crust *just* right, the flavor *just* right…it takes practice." Similarly, Ken says, "I cook things over and over again and they get better each time."

The investment of learning to cook a single type of food can be strategically extended to similar food items. For example, Sara spent weeks honing the technique for crème brûlée (a dessert custard) and explained that, "Tackling crème brûlée gave me a sense of dealing with *all* custards. So now I approach ice cream (also a dessert custard) a bit differently." (In the same way, Nancy's knowledge of lo mein noodles was subsequently applied to Italian pasta, which is similar in composition.) This habit

produces a repertoire of tried and true techniques that grows dendritically throughout the hobby career.

5.4 The Gourmet Aesthetic: "A bit of Picasso on the plate"

One of the hallmarks of the gourmet approach is its aesthetic sensibility. Cooks aim for outcomes that are lovely to behold. This passion for visual effects is apparent when Celeste exclaimed the "great beauty" of her vegetable torta. Likewise, gourmet cook Tom served a cheesecake by cutting it into small circles and placing each one on a dish, garnished with a mound of bright red strawberries. He explained, "The presentation is a big thing, a bit of Picasso on the plate." Much could be written about the gourmet aesthetic, but here for brevity I'll point out two main principles.

First, gourmets celebrate food in its natural state. While hosting a birthday dinner party for a close friend, Vincent carefully planned the design and presentation of the first course. To each guest he served a sautéed filet of tilapia (a mild white fish) atop a bed of warm baby spinach that had been tossed in a fine olive oil and vinegar. The appetizer was a success in part because of its eye appeal; he recounted "It was an elegant presentation; very *very* pretty…it was a winner." Key to its success was that Vincent showcased the tilapia filet in a simple and unadulterated fashion. This approach can be contrasted with culinary styles that obscure the original features of food, such as casseroles and sandwiches, which are not mainstays of the gourmet repertoire.

Second, the natural beauty of food is enhanced through a strategic manipulation of contrasts. Cooks aim for striking juxtapositions of color, shapes, and textures and redundancy is taboo. It follows that Vincent placed the white fish filet against the vibrant green backdrop of spinach. From the gourmet perspective, it would have been a mistake to place the fish on a bed of white rice (same color) or alongside a whole sweet potato (same

shape). Casting a critical artistic eye on her corned beef dinner, Katey acknowledged that while delicious it was a problematical composition since the potato and parsnips together looked like "a big mushy plate." Most gourmets stay mindful of contrasts within a single dish or course. More advanced cooks control these variables across an entire multi-course meal, making sure, for instance, that a visual feature offered as an appetizer is not duplicated elsewhere, like in the dessert.

There are established techniques in gourmet cooking that increase the opportunity for artfulness. Most common among these is to serve food *plated*, portioned and pre-arranged on individual plates as occurs in restaurants. (Plated service differs from *family style*, wherein communal vessels are brought to the table for all to help themselves. Family style is typical in the hobby of down home cooking and in most workaday home cooked meals.) Plating food gives the cook artistic control of the presentation and sets up a dramatic "ooh-aah" moment when the plate is revealed at the table. Another common technique is *garnishing*, which provides a burst of color as well as a complimentary and refreshing flavor. Garnishes can be placed under, around, or on food, depending on the dish and vary from simple sprigs of parsley to sculpted sugar leaves on a dessert confection. As a rule, garnishes should not only be appealing to the eye, but should echo or complement the flavor of the dish.

The gourmet aesthetic is centered on the presentation of food yet extends through the culinary environment and shapes the practice of the hobby. Gourmet cooks use attractive plate ware, linens, and tabletop decorations. During a special event cooks may manipulate lighting and music to enhance the setting and mood. Often, the food or menu establishes a visual theme that is creatively expressed in all these associated elements.

Further, a sense of elegance and beauty underlies the hands-on cooking process from start to finish. Gourmet cooks favor *mis-en-place* (from the French "setting in place") a

cooking practice in which all ingredients and equipment are made ready prior to the point of cooking – as when Celeste prepared every vegetable for the torta before putting it together. Gourmet cook Rose provides another example in the remark, "My technique is always like this: I gather and measure ingredients. Everything is ready before I start. If it calls for lining the pan, I have it all ready to go, that is the way it is with me." And Katey asserts,

> I tend to be someone who gets the prep done first. Everything is chopped and prepped and sitting in little bowls and I don't care if that gives me so many little bowls to wash. It just feels more comfortable knowing everything is ready.

Mis-en-place leads to a neater cooking process since any mess from prep work is dealt with right away, and supports cooking with an elegant, controlled flow.

The aesthetic bent to gourmet cooking cascades into information phenomena in this hobby. Many cooks favor cookbooks and magazines that have vivid pictures, conveying visual ideas that can be copied. Unsurprisingly, sight-based mediums, such as television and cooking classes, are popular culinary communication channels, whereas non-visual mediums such as radio are nascent. Gourmet cooks even apply an aesthetic sensibility to their culinary home libraries; these information collections can be artfully arranged and decorated with cherished objects (discussed further in 8.2.1.5).

5.5 Entertaining

Gourmet cooking often happens in the context of *entertaining* in which food is prepared and served to family or friends in the spirit of hospitality and sociality. Gourmet cook Nancy says, "I love to entertain. I am always looking for things to delight people who would come to my house. I am always planning the next dinner party." Vincent enjoys the sense of goodwill that comes from service to loved ones and comments, "It gives me

pleasure. I feel good when I can present good food to friends." The fortunate people who serve as guests and eaters play the role of *tourists* – Unruh's term for the visitors who temporarily enjoy the offerings of a social world (see also 3.3.1).

Many instances of entertaining were mentioned in this study and examples are listed in Table 11; the most popular event is the dinner party. Gourmet cooks favor small scale gatherings that retain intimacy and creative control, which also puts a cap on expenses. A gourmet cook explains, "What I enjoy is preparing food for *a few* people."

- a 4th of July barbecue
- an afternoon tea and snacks with female friends
- an evening of Russian delights
- a barbecue after an afternoon of hiking with friends
- a Christmas party for friends
- a dessert party
- a French dinner party with neighbors upon returning from a trip to Paris
- a New Year's Eve dinner for a husband
- a birthday party for a wife and her friends
- a Spanish New Year's Eve dinner with close friends
- a Thai dinner party for friends

Table 11. A sample of entertaining mentioned by gourmet cooks in this study.

Entertaining is set off from regular gourmet cooking by a sense of specialness, and entails more elaborate foodstuffs, more courses, and greater attention to table setting and mood. Alcohol is a feature, which when paired with the food loosens inhibitions and leads to revelry. Holidays and personal celebrations (such as a New Year's Eve, a birthday, or a promotion) are some of the motivations for entertaining, though a simple love of food and people will suffice. Events often occur on weekends, which supply the necessary free time

for planning, shopping, and cooking as well as the freedom to stay up late and rest the next day.

Entertaining is a zenith in the hobby that leads to growth. A comparison can be drawn to the hobby of running which entails daily training and the occasional *race*, where ability is marshaled and publicly showcased. The guests at a dinner party raise the stakes to get timing and flavors just right and this challenge sharpens the cook's skills. One gourmet cook explains, "I try to expand (my ability) by having dinner parties, and go from a two course to a three course dinner." Another uses parties to "expand her culinary repertoire."

Some entertaining performed by gourmet cooks verges upon hedonistic. The next story illustrates just how complex and "over the top" an event can be. Nancy's passion is gourmet cooking and her husband collects fine wines – two complimentary hobbies. When a particularly fine bottle of Cotes du Rhone from their cellar matured, friends were invited to sample it and celebrate. Nancy's goal was to host an interactive event that was a cross between a wine tasting and a cooking school lesson. She came upon the idea of an appetizer course featuring five different crostini (grilled bread with a savory topping) to be assembled on the spot by the couples attending the party. A different wine would be paired with each crostini and sampled in turn, leading to a grand finale of the Cotes du Rhone.

On the evening of the event Nancy set up five cooking stations in her kitchen, each with a bottle of wine, crostini recipe, and its necessary ingredients and tools. Her surprised friends (who were not expecting a hands-on experience) enthusiastically set about their cooking tasks; wine and crostini pairings were assembled, sampled, and discussed. Each couple was also given a tasting journal and pen, to record their impressions of the wines and food combinations. The crostini functioned as the appetizer, and a four course French meal (complimenting the Cotes du Rhone) occupied the remainder of the evening. Nancy made

hand-crafted menus in French and English for guests to take home as souvenirs from the memorable night.

Big events of this kind sometimes have a down side. Gourmet cooks report being overwhelmed by the effort. Claire explains, "I made ravioli from scratch – it was a big fuss, making the dough and then serving it to my parents. It was fun but I was exhausted and could barely enjoy it. I worked on it all day long!" Likewise, Tom explains, "I hosted a birthday party for my wife Alice and her friends. I cooked for about 2.5 days. It was incredibly extensive and I was dead in the end." On account of such duress, some cooks scale back on major entertaining events as they enter the *maintenance* phase of their hobby career (discussed further in Chapter 6.2).

5.6 The Gourmet Kitchen

Many hobbies are centered on public venues, such as baseball at a town ball field, hiking in a national park, or sailing on the ocean. Differently, the class of Making and Tinkering hobbies are home-based and require a dedicated site for activity, equipment, and materials – for instance a model builder's workshop or gardener's potting shed. While public sites such as restaurants and markets are favorite destinations for gourmet cooks, they support the peripheral experiences of the hobby, not its *central activity* of hands-cooking (see 3.3.2). Aside from the occasional picnic or barbecue out-of-doors, gourmet cooking mainly happens at the home of the cook, in their kitchen.

The blueprint for the modern American kitchen emerged in the 1940s. The Building Research Council of the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign established that the three essential demands of food storage, preparation, and cooking are supported most efficiently through a *kitchen work triangle* with a refrigerator, sink, and stove at each vertex. A recent dissertation on American kitchens reports this shape has

remained stable across time, class, and regions of the United States (Lindquist, 2006). The kitchens observed during fieldwork (a sample shown below in Figure 5) retain the kitchen work triangle, vary in style, and reflect the high economic bracket of the gourmet population.

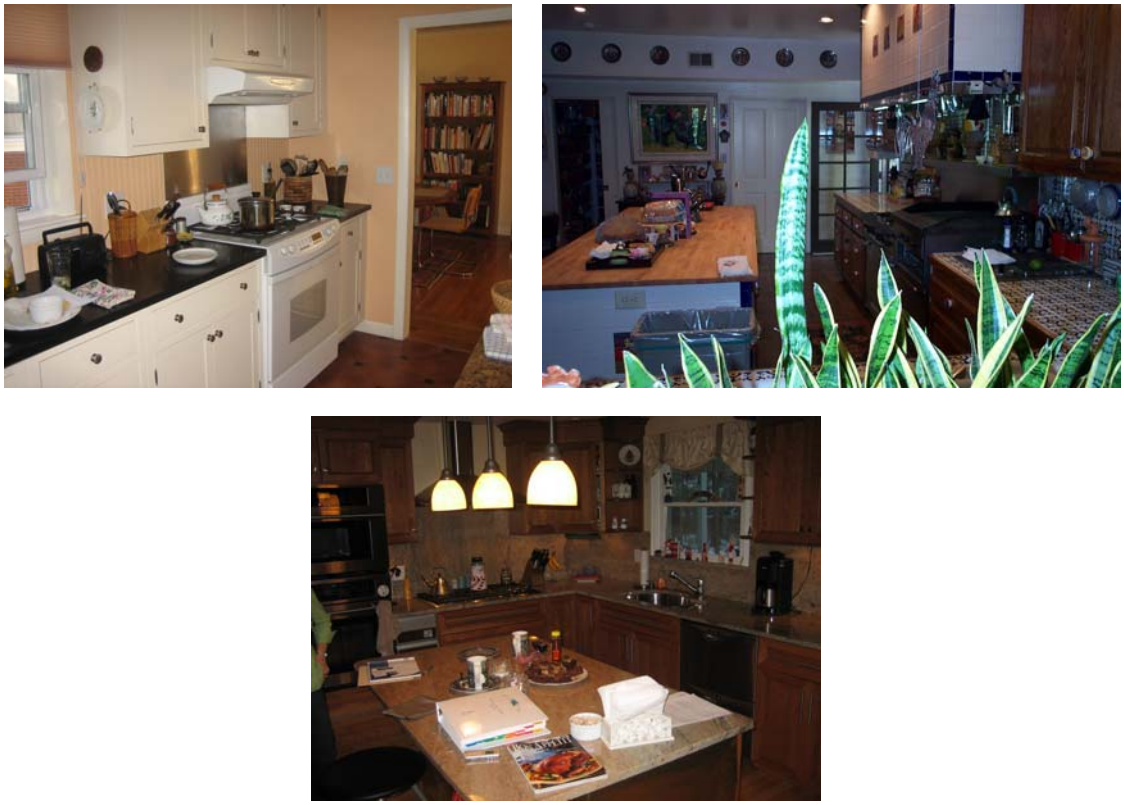


Figure 3. Three kitchens from the study. While styles vary, all contain ample workspace and commercial touches.

Notable features of the kitchens of hobbyists are surveyed next and pictured in Figure 4. First, gourmet cooks collect culinary equipment far above and beyond the typical citizen; for instance, Roland owned several vegetable peelers and Margaret had a dozen different woks. Often equipment or ingredients such as cooking oils are placed on countertops or overhead racks for ease of access and to display the passion for cooking.

Many tools owned by the gourmet are atypical in the workaday kitchen, such as a Nancy's wine refrigerator and Katey's deep freezer. The influence of the commercial realm is evident in large ranges as well as professional baker's racks. There is also ample workspace to practice the hobby, with most kitchens fairly large and open (not galley style) with an island or table to execute projects (Figure 3, above). One gourmet cook explains, "Cooks like to spread out and move around."

Figure 4. Features of kitchens from the study (clockwise from upper left): a collection of vegetable peelers; cooking oils on display; a wine cooler; baker's racks used for storage; a large professional-style range with griddle and double oven.

Several subjects of the study had initiated significant, expensive changes or complete overhauls to their kitchens, driven by their passion to cook. The goal was to gain more workspace and better appliances, as well as to customize the environment to personal style and needs. One gourmet says, "I wanted something that was more me. The kitchen belonged to the women who lived here before. Now, these cabinets and counters are my own. I wanted it to reflect my personality." This petite cook had her range placed at a height so that the knobs would not hook onto her belt buckle. She also made sure her oven would allow pizza to be baked on its floor, a strategy to yield a crispy crust, her preference. Her kitchen renovation was a significant move in her life that was celebrated with a party and gourmet offerings. Cooks who live in apartments are unable to make such upgrades, but on a more limited scale customized their kitchens to increase functionality and make them their own.

The kitchens of this study contained relatively small collections of culinary documents or texts, and no instances of computers. This contrasts with the Jenn Air advertisement that I've used through my research that shows a gourmet kitchen that doubles as a library. At most, some kitchens contained a small sample of cookbooks, references books, or a box of recipes, kept together on a dedicated shelf (Figure 5; discussed in detail in Chapter 8: Managing a Personal Culinary Library). This is likely because larger collections would compete with equipment and ingredients for precious space. Also, kitchens can be damp with variable temperatures and not a good environment for paper.

Figure 5. Cookbooks on display above a kitchen sink; larger collections are typically kept outside the kitchen.

While centered in the kitchen, the material elements of gourmet cooking spread throughout the entire household. Nearly every room can contain vestiges of the hobby. Naturally, the dining room is the site of much gourmet eating and entertaining; living rooms and dens contain culinary texts as well as access to food-related television programs; home offices store additional culinary documents on paper and via a computer. The hobby spills out into porches or patios with barbecue grills and pots of herbs, continuing often into vegetable gardens that supply ingredients. Cellars, attics, and garages store less used cookbooks and equipment.

5.7 Conclusion

Today, the hobby of gourmet cooking is a form of serious leisure that involves the preparation of food using high quality or exotic ingredients and advanced culinary techniques. Cooks go to great lengths to work with premium materials that they gather from specialty suppliers. They learn and master cooking skills through regular hands-on practice. Some hobbyists deepen ability by deconstructing modern, manufactured foodstuffs or zealously repeating dishes to achieve an ideal outcome. Such experiences are marked by an aesthetic sensibility that showcases the natural beauty of food and aims for an orderly,

elegant cooking process. Often, gourmet cooking takes the form of entertaining, which displays the cook's talent, hones skills, and extends hospitality and goodwill to family and friends. Almost all of these experiences are home-based and centered on the kitchen, a workshop that is typically personalized to style and needs. The next chapter sharpens the picture of what gourmet cooks *do* by illustrating how the hobby unfolds *in time*, which creates a context to consider information phenomena.

CHAPTER 6: THREE TEMPORAL ARCS

6.1 Introduction: Time as a Context for Information

The previous chapter characterized features of the social world of the hobby of gourmet cooking. This chapter switches to the hobbyist's experience and answers the research question: *What do hobby cooks do?* My goal here is to bring the hobby to life in the form of a coherent narrative that serves as a context to locate information phenomena. To this end, serious leisure and social worlds theory provide a few sensitizing concepts.

A defining quality of serious leisure is that participants engage in a *hobby career*, a path of experience that may last years, decades, or a lifetime (Stebbins, 2001, p. 9-10; see 3.4). Other types of free time activity such as casual or project-based leisure do not entail the same sustained commitment and sense of trajectory. Stebbins proposes that the hobby career has five stages, though the boundaries are imprecise: *beginning*, *development*, *establishment*, *maintenance*, and *decline* (2001, p. 10). To capture the career of the gourmet cook my interview began by asking, "Please tell the story of your experience as a hobby cook, beginning with your earliest memories of interest in cooking, covering any turning points, and ending with your present participation." Informants provided responses of varying detail that lasted from 5 to 25 minutes. After their accounts were transcribed, I utilized Stebbins' five stages as codes to organize a narrative about the hobby career, as shown in Table 12.

Hobby Career
1. beginning
2. development
3. establishment
4. maintenance
5. decline

Table 12. Codes used to represent elements of the hobby career.

Defining what hobby cooks *do* means documenting the *central activity* of their social world. Strauss proposes that in each social world, "…at least one primary activity (along with related clusters of activity) is strikingly evident; i.e., climbing mountains, researching, collecting" (Strauss, 1978, p. 122; see 3.3.2). In serious leisure scholarship, Stebbins calls this same phenomenon the *core activity* (Stebbins, 2006, p. 6). To capture the central or core activity of gourmet cooking I asked hobbyists, "Please tell me about a recent hobby cooking episode, beginning with your decision to cook and then covering every step taken until you eat the food." Gourmet cooks reported a variety of hands-on experiences, ranging from elaborate dinner parties to more routine comfort foods. After the accounts were transcribed, I analyzed them for commonalities and patterns. Following DeVault (who describes feeding work as a process with multiple steps), I coded different steps of the gourmet cooking episode, resulting in an original 9-step model based upon the codes in Table 13.

Cooking Episodes
1. exploring
2. planning
3. provisioning
4. prepping
5. assembling
6. cooking
7. serving
8. eating
9. evaluating the episodes

Table 13. Codes used to represent elements of a cooking episode.

While studying the stories told by hobbyists, I noticed many instances of experience that floated between a career and a cooking episode. Gourmet cooks tend to select a subject area on which to focus and organize their hobby for a period of time lasting from weeks to

months. These *subjects* marked stretches of the hobby career and motivated numerous episodes. I observed several types of subjects and created codes for each, shown in Table 14. The most common form of a subject is a *cuisine* such as French or Italian. Cooks engage a subject for a while and then move onto another, keeping the hobby dynamic.

Subjects
baking or bread
cuisines
economy
era
health
ingredient or wine
politics
technique

Table 14. Codes used to represent different subjects.

The concepts of *hobby career*, *subject*, and *episode* provided insight into what hobby cooks *do*, and resolved a puzzling feature of information phenomena in leisure. I had noticed that certain information activities, such as *collecting cookbooks*, sprawled over the duration of the hobby; whereas others such as *checking a recipe* were fleeting. Similarly, some information resources, like *culinary diaries* had a long lifespan; whereas *shopping lists* were short-lived. It was a breakthrough to realize that information phenomena have an affinity for long, medium, or short time spans. Further, the hobby career, subject, and episode supply three narratives across time, or *temporal arcs*, for locating information phenomena *in time*[3].

The outcome of analysis and creative thinking is as follows: there are three *temporal arcs* in the hobby of gourmet cooking. Here, *temporal arcs* are used in an original way to mean the concatenated activities of the hobbyist through different periods of time. The temporal

[3] This time-sensitive approach resembles an idea noted by Sonnenwald and Iivonen (1999) in their integrated framework of information behavior. For a review of the concept of time in information behavior research, see Savolainen (2006).

arcs can be seen as long, medium, and short time horizons and are illustrated in Figure 6. Cooks experience a *hobby career* that evolves over many years or an entire lifetime. For periods they focus attention on culinary *subjects* that organize hobby activity. Finally, they perform numerous hands-on cooking *episodes* that generate an edible outcome. Each arc serves as a context for information phenomena, exhibits distinct informational dynamics, and features a quintessential information resource.

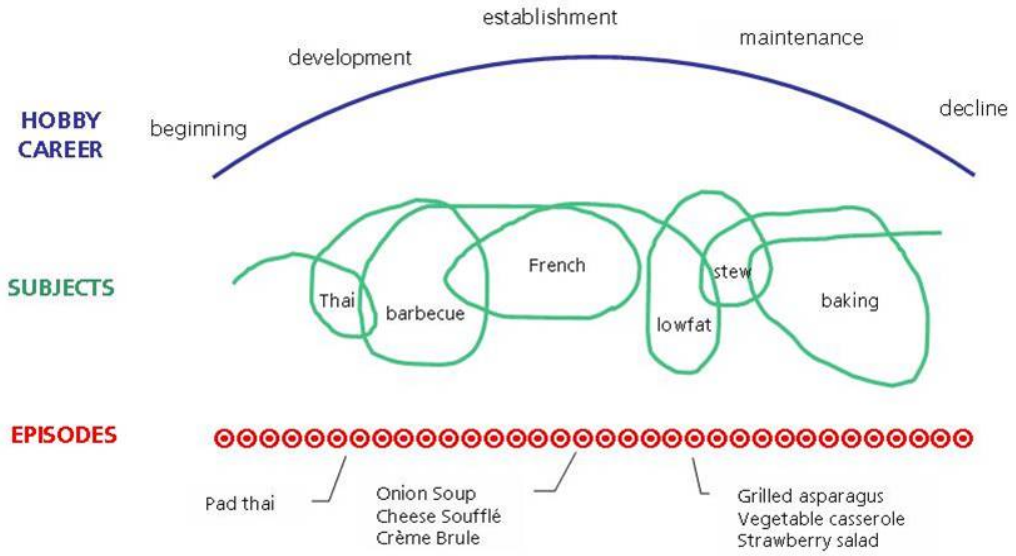


Figure 6. Three temporal arcs in the hobby of gourmet cooking: hobby career, subjects, and episodes. The five stages of the career are common across hobbyists; whereas subjects and episodes vary per cook.

In this chapter I integrate concepts from the leisure literature and original data from fieldwork with gourmet cooks to describe each temporal arc. Then, I identify a quintessential information resource per arc and discuss the arcs' dynamic with information phenomena.

6.2 The Hobby Career Arc

The cooks in this study were all in the heyday of their hobby careers, which is the *maintenance* stage of Figure 7. They had no difficulty describing the progressive path cooking had formed through their lives. While every chronicle differed, they were similarly embedded in major elements and turning points of life such as relationships, places, events, and work. Most often an ideal constellation of these circumstances created an opportunity to further the hobby.

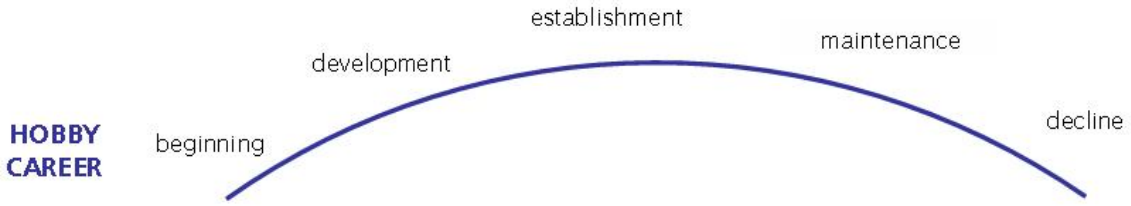


Figure 7. The hobby career arc (adapted from Stebbins, 2001, pp. 9-10).

Reminiscences from childhood or young adulthood revealed the *beginning* phase of the career, when interest takes root. This stage is not about active cooking but the early stirring of a culinary imagination. Hobbyists nostalgically described visits to an uncle's apple farm, the discovery of Italian produce markets or the thrill of "sniffing fresh picked strawberries." A hallmark of this stage appears to be curiosity. One cook recalls, "I would go to restaurants with interesting dishes and then wonder how they were prepared." Gourmet cook Ken explains how cookbooks created lasting impressions:

> I remember reading recipes and being fascinated by them. My mom had this old Southern cookbook with a crazy recipe that could feed a town. It included six squirrels, four rabbits, twenty onions–I used to read it and be fascinated!

For the budding gourmet, such experiences generate a desire to cook which is acted upon. A period of *development* follows, usually during young adulthood, in which simple preparations are attempted. Claire states, "You start off small, like with a good broth." The initiate aims to get adept at basic hands-on skills and to understand the nature of various ingredients. Hanna recounts:

> I started to learn the proper way to cut an onion, cut a carrot, cut celery. I would do this over and over again to see how it works. And I would experiment to determine: is butter better than oil? And then, is mashing your own garlic better than buying it in a jar?

Experimentation in the kitchen is supplemented by other forms of learning. Reading books about cooking is the mainstay, as Camilla reports, "My husband brought *Larousse-Gastronomique* (a culinary encyclopedia) into the marriage and I used to pour over that for hours and hours and hours." To keep up a flow of new information, cooks subscribed to serials such as *Gourmet*, *Fine Cooking*, *Cook's Illustrated*, or *Bon Appétit*, or watch culinary television programs. This stage is marked by a newcomer's passion and intensity. Tom states, "I got hooked on it. I guess I do things obsessively when I'm interested. I started to buy things, watch programs, and learn about techniques. I've grown into it from there."

Next, in *establishment*, knowledge and skills are refined beyond the basics. Interest may be ratcheted up around a narrower culinary specialty, as Eric chronicles, "I started experimenting more…I became really interested in organic and natural foods." This is when aspiring gourmets are inclined to study techniques by deconstructing food or mastering through repetition, as described in 4.2.1-4.2.2.

By this point, the hobby takes on a physical presence in the home, in tools of the trade like cookware, plateware, and knives. Now fully invested, cooks may upgrade their kitchens and install professional-grade appliances. With increasing ability and confidence

in their craft, they likely throw themselves into entertaining. A network of family and friends coalesces who routinely participate in food-related social events.

Home-based recipe and cookbook collections are another artifactual sign of the maturation of the career. By now, these materials have been allotted space in the dwelling. In this study, cooks owned significant culinary information resources in several cases consisting of more than 200 cookbooks (with two cooks having more than 1,000) and thousands of individual recipes. The production and maintenance of these personalized culinary home libraries may take on a life of its own within the hobby, and will be discussed further in Chapter 8: Managing a Personal Culinary Library.

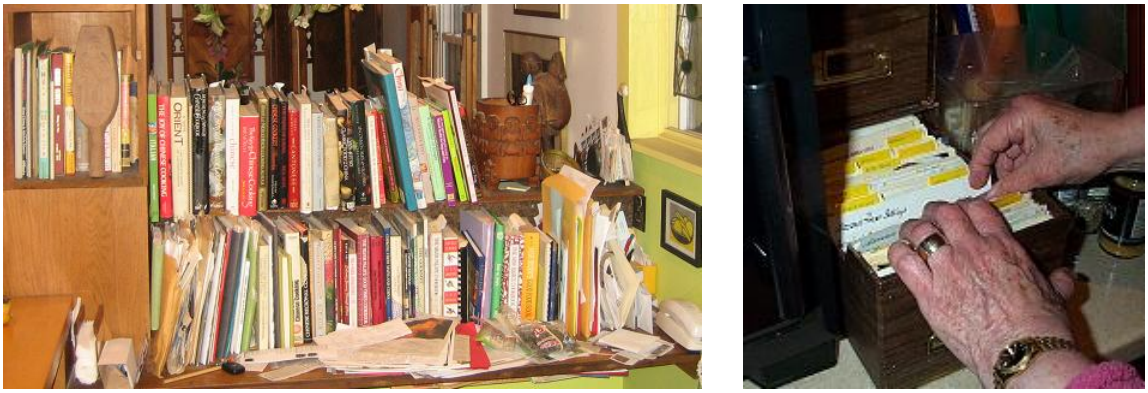


Figure 8. Artifactual evidence of an established culinary hobby. Over a career, cookbook and recipe collections accumulate in homes (left and right).

*Maintenanc*e is the heyday of the hobby. The cook is steadily active and highly competent. Now experts, family and friends turn to them for culinary counsel. Gourmet cook Nancy helps others to design menus for special events. She also serves as on-call problem-solver and explains, "I get calls from grocery stores and from stoves! From the store they will call and ask 'How much salmon do I need? And, what should be the appetizer?'" She reports a funny incident in which her son phoned while preparing a pesto-encrusted salmon for a dinner party. Listening carefully through the phone to the sizzling

salmon in the background Nancy knew something was burning and urged him, "Turn it, turn it!"

At this time, some gourmet cooks may shift their attention to teaching, in formal and informal settings. Margaret took a position at a community education program and explains, "I decided to teach Chinese cooking so that I wouldn't lose interest. It was a means to keep me going." One cook who is a father taught his daughter how to prepare healthy meals, and another reported, "I have a young neighbor, who is a tomboy. I am starting to teach her how to bake."

During maintenance some of the earlier zeal and decadence may subside and be replaced by sage moderation. Anne recounts, "When I was young I used to do elaborate things like soufflés, but not any more! I wouldn't feel the urge to make a buche de Noel (a complicated Christmas cake) whereas I would have done that years ago." By this time many cooking projects have been routinized and documented as in Anne's case:

> For Thanksgiving and Easter I literally have the recipes ready to go. The point of these holidays is not to be original, but to enjoy the same things. We do not have to reinvent this! I even have a shopping list ready for Thanksgiving. I know what to do.

Overall, this stage is marked by confidence and satisfaction, as embodied in this remark from Ken:

> Sometime I'll just wake up and say, '*I'm going to cook today.*' So I'll just start flipping through cookbooks and be like...mmmm...I think I'll do that…I'll spend the afternoon driving around to different stores, then come back and spend hours cooking.

In the zenith of the career, hobbyists can articulate what the hobby means to them. Cooking is valued for its sense of accomplishment, creative expression, and relaxation.

Above all, a culinary hobby reaches out to others; Dorene explains, "Cooking is a way of showing people you love them, you care for them. This is my philosophy. When you cook for somebody you are sharing love."

Ultimately, all hobby careers decline and participation ceases, often with advancing age. This was the case for only one hobbyist in this study, aged 73. She expressed a desire to pass family recipes onto her children and to gift her gigantic cookbook collection to a local library.

6.3 Implications of the Hobby Career Arc on Information Phenomena

Overall, the career arc is a metric for the hobbyists' state of knowledge and skill in cookery. Through cumulative hands-on practice and lay scholarship, devotees progress along this axis. At the beginning and early development stages, the gourmet's ability probably resembles the typical American in the kitchen. Recent studies by food manufacturers describe the current U.S. population as cooking illiterate, a "lost generation" that has not learned to cook alongside mothers or grandmothers. Three quarters of respondents in one survey flunked a quiz on culinary fundamentals; for instance, 45% did not know the number of teaspoons in a tablespoon (Ostmann & Baker, 2001, pp. 5-6). From this starting point, hobbyists reach expert states of knowledge and articulate a personal culinary philosophy akin to any professional or scholar. Progress along the career path should be seen as a formidable learning accomplishment.

With millions of active gourmet hobby cooks in the United States, the career is a social world reality that is mirrored within all culinary genres. The recipe is a prime example of a culinary genre that may be calibrated to a greater or lesser degree to any career point. *The Recipe Writer's Handbook* states that recipes for, "…beginning cooks require more explanation" (Ostmann & Baker, 2001, p. 3). The recipe style guide *Recipes into Type*, notes

critically how a recipe for baking macaroons can range from a minimalist 22 words in *Joy of Cooking* to four detailed paragraphs in *Maida Haetter's Book of Great Chocolate Desserts* (Whitman & Simon, 1993, pp. 29-30). Both handbooks urge recipe and cookbook writers to consider the needs of the inexperienced cook and to assess the culinary ability of a readership.

6.3.1 Information systems

Culinary information systems such as the online recipe databases foodtv.com and epicurious.com likewise vary in their sensitivity to career status. The recipes at foodtv.com are tagged as *easy*, *medium*, or *expert*. The terms cannot be searched upon, but a set of recipes can be subsequently sorted by these specifications, allowing gourmet cooks at different stages to roughly hone in on recipes to match their ability. Recipes at epicurious.com are not marked by any apparent degree of difficulty. However, the advanced search option allows users to isolate *quick*, *kid-friendly,* and *one-dish meals* which can serve as a crude workaround to select the simplest recipes. Neither website explains its criteria for these demarcations and overall do not appear responsive to the hobby career.

6.3.2 Classification systems

Classification systems, like the Library of Congress subject headings, locate works *topically* such that the career-related character of culinary resources is obscured. The mainstay of almost 40,000 popular gourmet cookbooks are located in TX – *Technology-Home Economics-Cookery* and further specified in terms of cuisine or geographic region (i.e. Asian, Southern, French) or foodstuff (i.e. appetizer, chocolate, ostrich)–a subject-based organizational structure that does not speak to career stages. A title search for "cooking" delivers several thousand works, and a handful suggest career stages, such as *Cooking for… …Dummies*, *…Beginners*, or *…Nitwits*. Gourmet hobby cooks in later points of the career may select titles

that suggest sophistication, such as *Cooking Like a Pro*, *Cooking the Professional Way* or *Cooking with Master Chefs*. In short, the subject structure of this classification system conceals the career-related variation in culinary resources, while title searches to that end are akin to finding a needle in a haystack.

6.3.3. Personal collections

The career arc is the proper context to explore the information activity of *collecting* and the nature of personal *collections*. Over the course of their careers, gourmet cooks accumulate recipes, serials, cookbooks and culinary ephemera in their homes. Their personal collections stand as evidence of territory that has been reconnoitered, and as springboards to future cooking opportunities. Leading LIS research into collections does not take this long, holistic, and upbeat view. Bruce (2005, p. 304) hypothesizes that collections serve as responses to *personal anticipated information need* (PAIN)—an idea and acronym that casts the collector in an anxious and defensive state and misses the longer, positive, symbolic value of a collection.

6.3.4 Quintessential information resource of the hobby career arc

The quintessential information resource of this arc is the culinary memoir, a narrative account of a cooking career. These texts are chronological and have chapters devoted to different life stages and important turning points. Often culinary memoirs convey the local flavors of a family, community, or culture and sometimes contain recipes. An example, *Pig Tails 'n Breadfruit: A Culinary Memoir* by Austin Clark, tells the author's colorful life story growing up amidst the food and culture of Barbados. The gourmet cooks in this study read memoirs and some kept their own versions in the form of food-themed diaries (discussed

further in 8.2.12).

6.3.5 Review of the hobby career arc

The career arc is what historians would call the *long durée*. Over many years, decades, and a lifetime, profound forces such as work, relationship, and family act to further or limit the pursuit of gourmet cooking. Through passionate interest and hands-on practice hobbyists advance from novices to experts. In their homes, culinary information collections are markers of this passage. Information phenomena underlie the path even though these entities are not optimally calibrated to the career arc. To synchronize the culinary information universe with the career of the gourmet cook more research is needed into the states of knowledge in the career; its manifestation in information resources, structures, and systems; and overall repercussions on information use and hobby activity. The next arc reveals more about the temporal geography of gourmet cooking.

6.4 The Subject Arc

Hobbyists concentrate attention on one substantive area of cooking and invest weeks, months, or years deepening knowledge and ability in that limited realm. Here, these focused efforts are called *subjects* and are topical in nature and also temporal because they are pursued for a duration. Against the longer arc of the hobby career, subjects are extended projects that temporarily occupy the foreground. This phenomenon fits with what leisure scientists call *recreation specialization,* the tendency enthusiasts have for increasingly narrow interests (Bryan, 1977).

Figure 9 shows a series of slightly overlapping orbs which are subjects. They vary in dimension to reflect that interest and investment in any subject varies as well. Several subjects have been named, such as *Thai* and *barbecue*, for illustrative purposes only. There are

thousands of possible subjects and each cook's path is unique. The point is not to predict subjects, but to understand their nature and impact on hobby activity and information phenomena.

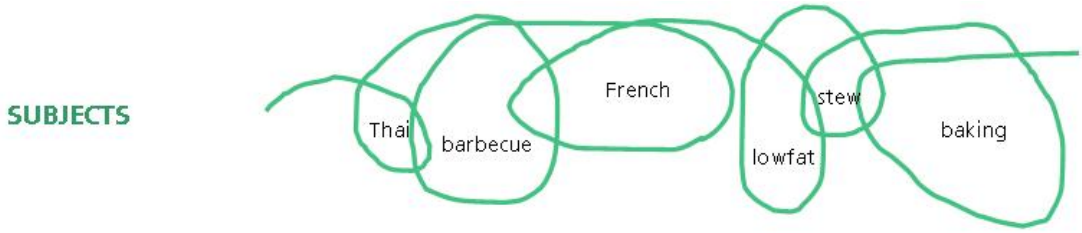


Figure 9. The subject arc. The cuisines and cooking styles (i.e. Thai, barbecue…) are examples only. Subjects vary per gourmet cook.

In the interviews, cooks were not asked directly about subjects yet they were mentioned throughout and examples are shown in Table 15. Subjects take the form of cuisines, ingredients, nutritional styles, or cooking techniques. Life circumstances and experiences such as travel, relationships, heritage, diet or culinary trends are springboards to pursue a specific subject. A vacation in a region with a distinct cuisine can inspire a subject pursuit. A hobbyist described how a friendship with a native of Thailand then concentrated her interests around Thai culture and cookery. Another pursued the Iranian cooking of her ancestors. One cook committed to a period of vegetarianism and macrobiotic eating in which, "…creativity came from trying to use simple items in healthy ways, with lots of efforts with vegetables and grains."

California-Italian	Indonesian	Thai
French	Italian	Indian
Greek	Iranian	organic
soul food	macrobiotics	baking
pasta	fusion	desserts

Table 15. A sample of subjects mentioned by gourmet cooks in the study.

The most common form a subject takes is a *cuisine*, a cooking tradition associated with a geographic region. Each cuisine entails distinct techniques, equipment, ingredients, and culinary practices that shape and organize the hobby experience for a time. For instance, gourmet cook Camilla vacationed in China with her husband and upon return took up Chinese cookery as a subject. Through this period she purchased an authentic wok, shopped at local Chinese markets, practiced stir-fry, and ate pot-sticker dumplings for breakfast. Gourmet cooks may approach cuisines systematically, with a curriculum in mind. Sara describes one such "program:"

> I recently started branching out to Japanese food. I have set a program for myself. What I want to learn first are noodles, rice, soups, and mushrooms. The Japanese do a lot with sauces and stocks. I am trying to learn the flavors first, before getting into the fish techniques which are usually very delicate or refined work.

In its narrowest expression, a subject can be a beloved or cult food item such as fried chicken or quiche. A typical exercise entails gathering numerous recipes of the chosen food to study and compare. Then, the recipes are consecutively executed to ascertain shades of difference in the outcome. The goal is to understand the mechanics and nature of the recipe and to achieve a quintessential result. As described in 4.2.2, Mastering through repetition, gourmet cook Tom pursued chicken picatta as a subject and Sara focused on pecan pie. Rose displays determination in tackling a fragile sugar cookie called *toile* as a subject:

> When I first saw toile I was instantly fascinated–it is like an artwork. I read the whole article and recipe. The author was enthusiastic and said it was very easy. …So I did it. I followed every single step. Believe it or not I have tried this five times now, from start to finish. I have even consulted other cookbooks and the Internet, in order to get the right toile. I have yet to master it!

A hobby cook who has pursued numerous subjects is in a position of broad and deep expertise. They might adopt one subject area as a default sensibility. Those with many subject experiences are capable of a meta-perspective in which culinary subjects can be juxtaposed. Celeste shows this type of supra-intelligence in the remark, "Iranian is quite difficult. Not so much technically difficult the way French or Japanese food can be."

Hobbyists advance from subject to subject, exploring new culinary territory that keeps their leisure career lively. One explains, "It is a never-ending process and there are so many different outlets and opportunities. Right now I am really into baking and I love it, but in a few months maybe I will be making my own pasta."

Yet immersion into a subject does not permanently restrict interests. Hanna was engaged in a cake phase but asserted, "I still love cooking, too." The research produced no conclusive data on the number or duration of subjects that coalesce over a hobby career. Interviewees were in the heyday of their hobbies and likely had many subjects still on the horizon.

6.5 Implications of the Subject on Information Phenomena

The cook's engagement with culinary subjects can be cast as a form of classification. Kwasnik states, "Classification is the meaningful clustering of experience" that enables the organization *or* acquisition of knowledge (1999, p. 24). Instead of cooking scattershot, gourmets group their culinary experiences to systematically acquire new skills and knowledge. It may at first seem odd to describe gourmet cooks as active classifiers. This requires a mid-range temporal perspective of the user that is uncommon to LIS, where the focus is typically on the user's real-time encounter with information or an information system. Seen from a mid-range temporal view of weeks or months, the hobbyist engages select areas of the culinary universe via its classification system. Over time they come to see

each area as a node in a system, hence their ability to make inter-subjective observations (i.e. "Iranian is quite difficult. Not so much technically difficult the way French or Japanese food can be.")

Another classificatory act occurs *within* each selected subject. Gourmet cooks perform faceted analysis, one of four possible classificatory techniques (Kwasnik, 1999, pp. 39-42). In their own words, hobbyists describe this as seeing cuisine subjects, "...from a number of angles, such as its traditional recipes, ingredients, techniques, seasonal uses...each cuisine has a spectrum." Figure 10 shows the favored conception of a subject, which with five sides invites comparison to the approach of Ranganathan (1967). These five facets are often sections or chapter titles within subject-themed cookbooks. The familiarity hobbyists gain with subject structure serves as a heuristic for engaging new subjects, what Beghtol calls "classification for knowledge discovery" (2003).

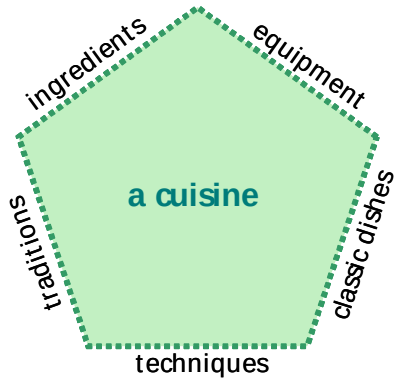


Figure 10. The gourmet cook's conception of the facets of a cuisine.

6.5.1 The subject landscape of gourmet cooking

In this arc, a context for the gourmet cook's information experience is the subject landscape of gourmet cooking. What are its major subjects? What are the relationships between subjects? Answers are suggested by the Library of Congress Subject Headings

within the *Cookery* class. The number of published texts in the subclasses reveals the major and minor culinary subjects. Based upon this source[4], popular cuisines subjects in the United States are: Italian, French, Chinese, English, Mexican, Jewish, Spanish, and German. Major subjects by food type are: Vegetables, Natural foods, Pasta, Herbs, Fish, Seafood, Fruit, and Chocolate. Information systems and services to gourmet cooks may be optimized by supporting movement across this subject landscape and into select subjects.

6.5.2 Subjects as distinct information environments

At a fine-grained level, the culinary subject universe is *not* homogenous. Each subject is an information environment with its own literature and distinct information forms and features. To illustrate this point, Table 16 compares the informational features of two subjects: *barbecue* and *French*. Barbecue is a relatively small and recent literature compared to French, a cuisine with a long and rich history and paper trail. The recipes for barbecue are often short and imprecise, with general statements such as "get the grill hot." Differently, French cookery employs precise specifications, such as "heat the oven to 425," and recipes may run to many pages. Barbecue is a seasonal cooking style associated with summertime; serial magazines, newspapers, and television programs limit coverage to summer months. French is not seasonal and hence "months" are a parameter that would not inform an information search. As gourmet cooks advance from subject to subject they learn to navigate varied information environments.

[4] This data came from a search of the Library of Congress catalog using Dialog, in 2005. A set of all works within "Cookery" was ranked to show the prevalence of books within sub-classes; this ranking was taken to be a measure of public interest in different culinary subjects.

Informational Features	Barbecue	French
Size of Literature	small	large
Recipes	imprecise and short	precise and long
Seasonality	summer	year round

Table 16. A comparison of the informational features of barbecue and French.

6.5.3 Quintessential information resource of the subject arc

The quintessential information resource at this arc is the subject-themed cookbook. These texts are narrower in breadth than seminal reference cookbooks such as *Joy of Cooking* or *How to Cook Everything: The Basics* and focus on a singular cuisine, ingredient, or culinary technique. One classic of this kind, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* introduces the equipment, terminology, ingredients, and measures used in French cookery, and then devotes a chapter to each of its major food categories such as soups, sauces, entrees and luncheon dishes, fish, poultry, and so on. Gourmet cooks would likely use a cookbook of this kind as a textbook for the study of French cooking as a subject.

6.5.4 Review of the subject arc

For the gourmet cook subjects are topical, temporal, mid-range phenomena that bring focus, structure, and dynamism to the hobby. This departs from the traditional sense of subjects as, "the thought contents of a document" (Satija, 2000, p. 223) to a more dynamic conception as organized activity within a topic. Information provision to gourmet cooks may be enhanced by an understanding of the culinary subject landscape, the faceting of culinary subjects, and the way information forms and features vary within individual subjects. This line of inquiry bridges studies of knowledge organization with information

seeking and use. The subject arc is a very conceptual space in the hobby and a backdrop for the hands-on cooking discussed next.

6.6 The Episode Arc

An *episode* is a cooking project that generates an edible outcome as an individual item, meal, or menu. It includes many sub-tasks but is conceived of by the cook as a whole. This is the real-time hands-on *central activity* (Strauss, 1978, p. 122) or *core activity* (Stebbins, 2006, p. 6) of the hobby that is repeated over and over again. Numerous episodes compose a subject constellation, and thousands of episodes fill a hobby cooking career. Episodes can last just a few minutes for a simple preparation such as a salad or may require significant advanced work lasting several days for a holiday feast. Figure 11 displays a string of episodes as red circles [⊙]; some are named for illustrative purposes only, since there is great diversity to the culinary universe, and episodes cannot be predicted.

Figure 13. The episode arc. Each red circle is an episode, some are named to display their variety.

The episode can be an expression of the subject interest of that moment, or reflect other aspects of life. It may be tied to a holiday, social gathering, or inspired by a season and its produce. An episode could fill a window of available time such as a weekend, vacation, or snowstorm; or be sparked by serendipitously encountering a recipe. Interviewees were asked

to describe a recent cooking project from conception to completion and example episodes are shown in Table 17.

hash	a frittata with kale
home-made Chinese dumplings	a lobster dinner
a Halloween party	a four course seafood dinner
rolled-stuffed flank steak	a Spanish-style New Year's meal
a Southern barbecue	traditional coq a vin

Table 17. A sample of episodes described by gourmet cooks in the study.

While many of the above episodes are festive, it is likely that the majority in everyday life are more mundane. In fact, cooks may prepare the same foodstuff many times with satisfaction. Hence, episodes can be either *new* or *repeaters*. A hobbyist in this study says, "There are certain things I cook over and over again. They are often simple things." Repeated episodes of the same food items become a hobbyist's signature repertoire. In some of these more routine episodes that come about to get dinner on the table, the line between *gourmet hobby cooking* and *feeding work* is blurred. More research into such border cases is required to determine the significance in the overall experience of the hobby, if any.

Figure 12. An episode [⊙] is made up of nine steps. It begins with exploring and proceeds clockwise.

An episode of hobby cooking can be seen as a nine-step cycle visible within the interview accounts and informed by DeVault's study of domestic food preparation; it is illustrated in Figure 12. Hobbyist Eric notes that cooking has a logical order, "There is a natural sequence of events in cooking, regardless of what you are preparing. It starts in a pan and then moves to a plate. When you get good at cooking you develop an instinct for this sequence…" Christopher Kimball, editor of *Cook's Illustrated* magazine, in an article, "Why I Cook," (1999, p. 1) expresses the same idea more poetically:

> I have found nothing clearer in objective or intent than the execution of a recipe, a lockstep of beginnings and endings…This imparts purpose and clarity, delivering blessed structure to the tumble of hours during a long Saturday afternoon.

The backdrop for an episode is the hobbyists' simmering desire to practice cooking. This leads to the first step of *exploring*, which is a quest for *inspiration*, not information

(appearing at 9:00 on Figure 12). It may take the form of culinary daydreaming, or browsing cookbooks, websites, magazines, or personal recipe files. A hobbyist reflects, "So, I flipped through my various magazines and cookbooks…. *what did I want to make?*" Other ways to explore are to visit markets, examine restaurant menus, or ask others what they want to eat. The active hobbyist's lifestyle is filled with culinary happenings (described in 7.2, Living a Gourmet Lifestyle), and so inspiration is never far away. The end result of this step is a vision for a cooking project, such as "lasagna" or "a tapas party."

Once the episode is defined as a concept, a variety of *planning* practices commence. A critical matter is to acquire the right recipe(s), usually from a personal collection of cookbooks or recipe cards, culinary magazines, or online recipe databases. At this point, information activity takes the form of directed seeking or searching wherein a recipe is matched to a food concept or term. Bibliographic devices such as the index, files, or online search engines are employed. It is common for cooks to seek multiple versions of the same recipe, which are analyzed, compared, and sometimes amalgamated. The chosen recipe(s) determines what ingredients and tools are needed; and a shopping list is made. For elaborate episodes, an action plan or timeline is written (Figure 13). Other kinds of background research or coordination can occur, such as pairing wines with the food or sending invitations to guests. (These information-intensive activities are discussed in greater detail in 7.5, Launching a Cooking Episode.)

Figure 13. A gourmet cook's planning documents. The foreground document organizes a menu for a family holiday. The "kids" meal is shown in the left column, and the "adults" meal at right.

In *provisioning* the necessary ingredients and tools are obtained, following a shopping list. Cooks may procure materials from grocery stores, specialty markets, print catalogs, or Internet retailers, keeping with the gourmet's penchant for premium or exotic goods. Gourmets are inclined to stock their freezers with homemade broths that serve as bases for sauces. Some cooks produce raw ingredients from scratch in satellite pastimes like gardening or home brewing.

Prepping or *prep work* refers to the tasks of making ingredients ready to cook. Activity shifts to the kitchen and the hands-on implementation of recipes. Prep work usually involves an act of measuring and then manipulating the ingredients. Some equipment, such as baking pans, must be prepped as well. As discussed in 5.4, The gourmet aesthetic, gourmets practice an orderly and elegant approach called *mis-en-place*. Prep work can be seen on a recipe next to the list of ingredients, as shown below in italics:

1 medium onion, *thinly sliced*
3/4 lb potatoes, *peeled, quartered lengthwise, and cut into 1/2-inch cubes*
1 lb fresh white beans in pods, *shelled*

Next, *assembling* is the process of combining ingredients prior to cooking. On a recipe, assembling is usually given in the imperative mood following the list of ingredients, for instance:

> *Spoon* 1 1/3 cups sauce over bottom of 13 x 9 x 2-inch glass baking dish. *Place* 3 noodles over sauce. Drop half of ricotta cheese mixture by tablespoonfuls evenly over. *Top* with half of basil leaves…

Cooking is a step that entails the addition of heat to food and improves its safety, texture, and flavor. (However, not all foodstuffs require cooking, namely cold preparations like salads and frozen desserts.) Cooking can be simple, as in simmering a stew, or require a more complicated series of actions, such as Eric's account:

> I browned the hens in olive oil. Then I heated the marinade and then simmered the hens in it. Finally, I finished it in the oven. This dried out the skin, but the inside was really juicy.

Serving is the act of placing food in front of someone. It often involves re-location of the project from the kitchen to a dining area. Sometimes the food changes containers, from a cooking to a serving vessel. Serving can vary depending on the foodstuff and type of episode, whether a formal dinner, buffet, or picnic. Serving protocols may be specified within recipes or by traditions of cuisines.

For hobbyists, serving is an aesthetic accomplishment. As discussed earlier, gourmets showcase the natural beauty of food and aim for striking contrasts. Tasks associated with serving are: *carving* (division by slicing, often with some fanfare), *garnishing* (to place a decorative accompaniment onto a finished dish) and *plating*. Serving is often seen as the culmination of the episode, as when Mandy proudly reports:

> The cheesecake was finished with glazed strawberries on top and brushed with strawberry jelly. I was worried that the top would probably crack...so I would need a topping. It was beautiful. It just sat gloriously on top of the table!

Surprisingly, hobby cooks had little to say about the step of *eating*, despite their passion for food. Greater import was placed on *other* people consuming their work, evident in Eric's remark, "….(after the meal) my friend had a massive amount of smiles. She loved it." Eating is required, though, to evaluate the success of the effort, a serious concern.

In *evaluating* the cook reflects on and assesses the results. Points of reference may be the description from the recipe or cookbook, prior implementations, or experiences at restaurants. Some cooks systematically record their impressions by marking notes onto a recipe or cookbook, or keeping a culinary journal. During evaluation, the cook may request feedback from others, as Sara notes:

> I am very interested whether people like something. I quiz them. I give them real permission to say how they would like something, would they do this or that, was this overcooked. This is valuable.

After evaluation, the hobbyist has come full circle; they are poised to imagine their next episode through exploration, which usually occurs after a brief rest from the hobby. The steps above may not apply exactly for *all* hobby cooking experiences, but map roughly to the vast majority.

6.7 Implications of the Episode on Information Phenomena

The quinssential information resource at the episode arc is the recipe, a set of instructions for preparing food (Tomlinson, 1986, p. 203). It functions foremost in all steps, except one (eating). Over the course of an episode, the cook moves from the top to the

bottom of the recipe. Though usually less than a page in length, the recipe is a very complex document. It is multipurpose (both steers and memorializes) and malleable (subject to editing and amalgamation). As an artifact, the recipe can be a free-standing document or be embedded within the other genres of cooking, namely: cookbooks, serials, web pages, or culinary databases.

An important insight is that information *varies* across cooking episodes. This departs from the notion that all projects are information-intensive and actors are perpetually in a state of information need. In gourmet cooking, two diametric features influence the information experience: whether the episode is *simple* or *complex,* and *repeated* or *new*. These factors, taken together, suggest that a cooking episode can induce any one of four information scenarios, shown in Table 18.

Qualities of the episode	Repeated	New
Simple	[A] *low info need* (a salad that has been prepared before)	[C] *med info need* (a salad that has never been prepared before)
Complex	[B] *med info need* (a Thai feast that has been prepared before)	[D] *high info need* (a Thai feast that has never been prepared before)

Table 18. The four information experiences possible per episode.

To illustrate, a *simple* preparation such as a salad that is being *repeated* (has been prepared before) may generate low information need [A]. The project would draw minimally on the cook's existing knowledge or culinary information resources and would be performed by rote. At the other extreme, a *complex* preparation like a Thai feast that is *new* (with many items never prepared before) may induce high need and would be a more information-intensive and challenging cooking experience [D]. The cook would probably conduct hours

of research, seeking, comparing, and studying recipes. Quadrants B and C are in-between states.

For the episodes with medium or high information need [B, C, D, above], two areas involve extensive information seeking and use, worthy of detailed description. Since this chapter aims for a general temporal narrative, such issues are deferred to Chapter 7: Information Activities and Information Resources, in sections 7.5, Launching a Cooking Episode and 7.6 Using Information During a Cooking Episode.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter has described what gourmet hobby cooks *do*. Their experience has been organized into narratives along three temporal arcs that have implications on information phenomena. To review, the *hobby career* can span a lifetime and is the broadest measure of learning. Gourmet cooks advance through five stages, from novices to experts. The culinary memoir, a story of a cooking career, is a genre that conveys the reality of this arc. This is also the context for the recipe and cookbook collections that accumulate over the years in the lives and homes of gourmet cooks. The *subject arc* entails temporary topical interests that focus and organize hobby activity; individual subject pursuits last for weeks or months. The subject-themed cookbook is a quintessential genre at this arc and can serve as a textbook. Cooks study the facets of subjects and learn to navigate subjects that have varying informational characteristics. Finally, the *episode arc* entails real-time, hands-on cooking projects that lead to an edible outcome. Each episode involves nine sequential tasks that track through a recipe. Information need within episodes varies from high to low. Some areas of the episode are exceedingly information rich and will be discussed, among other things, in the next chapter that is devoted to the activities and information resources that underlie the hobby.

CHAPTER 7: INFORMATION ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION RESOURCES

7.1 Introduction

This chapter shifts attention from the hobby experience to its *information activities* and *information resources*. To encompass all the interesting information phenomena appearing in the data I view these concepts broadly. As an exploratory study it seems wiser to err on the side of diversity and breadth, and future research can further hone and explicate these meanings. The two concepts will be discussed together since speaking of an information activity implicates an information resource and vice versa.

The working definitions I use for information activities and information resources build upon the concept of serious leisure. Serious leisure is, "the systematic pursuit of an … activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a leisure career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience" (1992, p. 3). Here, *information activities* are those *actions of acquiring and expressing the special skills and knowledge of gourmet cooking*. The word *actions* focuses attention on that which the hobby cook can be observed to *do*[5]. This definition includes some behaviors not typically studied by LIS, such as eating out and taking vacations, both favorite learning experiences for gourmet cooks; it also encompasses more conventional actions like reading a cookbook and searching online for a recipe. In fact, most of what follows addresses these behaviors more germane to LIS.

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[5] From section 3.3.2: The term *information activities* is used instead of the more common phrases *information behaviors* or *information practices* which suggest a different nexus of study. *Information behavior* implies a cognitive orientation to the actor's thought processes and associated mental concepts such as information need and relevance (Talja, et. al 2005). Since my study explores what cook's *do* (not their thinking) within the domestic setting of the hobby, the term information behaviors was deemed off target. An alternative, *information practices*, implies a social constructionist perspective geared to the institutionalized habits of a collective or community, and enablers such as discourses. Since my study is based upon fieldwork with 20 individual gourmet cooks, information practices seemed too macrosocial. (A suitable macrosocial approach would have been discourse analysis, social network analysis, or a large-scale survey.)

In June 2006 I began descriptively coding interview transcripts and photographs, naming (coding) any actions related to the acquisition or expression of culinary skill or knowledge. Twenty four unique codes were produced. In time, it was apparent that some actions could be grouped together based upon similar roles in the hobby; for instance, some pertained to "staying informed and inspired in the hobby" whereas others were relevant to "using information during a cooking episode." By applying these obvious associations the large set of 24 was collapsed into 6 clusters, each with exemplar information activities, shown in Table 19.

Living a Gourmet Lifestyle eating out market expeditions receiving (cookbooks as gifts) traveling	Launching a Cooking Episode comparing listing searching for recipes designing recipes or menus
Expressing Culinary Expertise consulting dining with other cooks publishing taking cooking classes talking teaching cooking	Using Information During a Cooking Episode consulting or checking displaying recording translating
Staying Informed and Inspired blogging browsing contemplating having an idea reading watching television	Managing a Personal Culinary Library [codes displayed in 8.1, The personal culinary library]

Table 19. Six codes and their sub-codes for information activities.

I made an effort to name these concepts in the form of a gerund (to express hobby cooks *doing* something informational) and included qualifiers associated with gourmet cooking; *in vivo* terms were used when possible. This chapter will describe the five clusters

and their exemplar information activities, as summarized in Table 19. The sixth cluster is a meta-activity discussed separately in Chapter 8: Managing a Personal Culinary Library.

Information resources are the artifacts, people or experiences that contribute to skill and knowledge of gourmet cooking. To be sure, this broad definition enfolds a lot of entities not traditionally within the purview of LIS, like fellow cooks and farmer's markets. While the definition sanctions consideration of such things, the mainstay of the chapter is devoted to the conventional documentary artifacts of LIS.

Twenty eight descriptive codes were generated for information resources. While coding I decided to group these into six types based upon ontological features, namely: events and places, human sources, multimedia sources, published documents, original documents, and recipes, shown in Table 20. This sorting strategy helped in surveying the breadth and type of information forms; unfortunately, it disassociated the artifacts from their role it in the hobby. Instead of analyzing these information resources as six genres or classes (following the coding), it seems more natural to discuss them in the context of the information activities they facilitate. Put another way, in this chapter the cook's information activities are the leading concepts, and information resources are associated phenomena located therein.

Events and Places	Original documents
fairs	display board
public library	journals
restaurants	lists
retail stores	planning
trips	documents/timelines/menus
cooking classes	
	Published documents
Human Sources	cookbook series
experience	cookbooks
people, family, friends	ephemera
vendors	fund-raising cookbooks
	gastronomy, history, essays
Multimedia Sources	magazines/serials
online/computer	newsletters
television	newspapers
	pictures
Recipes	ratings reference sources
	subscriptions

Table 20. Six codes and their sub-codes for information resources.

In Table 21 the 6 clusters of information activities are numbered and presented in an order that begins as broadly underlying everyday life (Living a Gourmet Lifestyle), and incrementally leads to the narrower core activity of hands-on cooking (Using Information During a Cooking Episode). (As mentioned, Managing a Personal Culinary Library is a special meta-activity and discussed separately in Chapter 8: Managing a Personal Culinary Library.) This descent resembles but is *not* matched to the three temporal arcs, though relationships to the arcs will be noted in places. In the following chapter each cluster will be introduced and discussed along with illustrations of the associated information activities and resources, drawn from the data.

Cluster	Description	Information activities
Living a Gourmet Lifestyle	Everyday life experiences in which the gourmet cook orients to the culinary dimensions and learns; *not* centered on documents or information systems.	• having 'foodie friends' • eating out • experiencing foreign cuisines • adopting regional food cultures • visiting ethnic neighborhoods/ markets
Expressing Culinary Expertise	The expression of culinary knowledge, mostly to family and friends (in person) but sometimes an online community or public.	• consulting • teaching • commenting online
Staying Informed and Inspired	Any effort to learn about culinary topics and to stay stimulated; centered on published multimedia culinary information and not motivated by an episode at hand.	• reading cookbooks • reading gastronomy • reading culinary serials • watching television • surfing the Internet • taking cooking classes
Launching a Cooking Episode	The actions taken to select and organize a cooking episode.	• exploring for ideas • searching a personal culinary library for recipes • searching recipe databases • Googling for recipes • tapping a 'grapevine' • comparing recipes • amalgamating/modifying/extending recipes • creating menus/steering documents
Using Information During a Cooking Episode	Consulting an information resource during hands-on cooking to determine the next proper action.	• displaying recipes • following recipes: rational or sensual • staying on track • serving picture perfect results
Managing a Personal Culinary Library [a meta-activity]	The ongoing acquisition and organization of culinary information resources (mostly recipes, magazines, and cookbooks) to document knowledge and experience, and enable future cooking episodes.	Discussed in Chapter 8: Managing a Personal Culinary Library

Table 21. Six clusters of information activities in the hobby of gourmet cooking.

7.2 Living a Gourmet Lifestyle

The first cluster of information activities are best characterized as Living a Gourmet Lifestyle. Gourmet cooks go about their everyday lives and common happenings are recast

as extensions of the hobby. The gourmet cook orients to the culinary angle of situations that may not be primarily about food and cooking. For instance, friendships become a venue to talk about food or do culinary things together. Vacations are taken to destinations where the native cuisine attracts interest. Routine food shopping or meals at restaurants evolve into sessions to study food. For the gourmet cook all of these experiences present new aspects of the culinary universe and contribute to their knowledge.

Such workaday life happenings (friendships, eating out, vacations, shopping) are typically *not* factored into information research because they are not centered on documents or information systems. In Hektor's study of everyday life information seeking, these were instances of *life activities* (activities that physically manipulate the artifacts of everyday life, not information) and placed outside the research agenda. Differently, I propose that some life activities *are* information activities when they set up a platform of knowledge for the hobby. Since these activities blend almost imperceptibly into everyday life and become routines, they are called Living a Gourmet Lifestyle.

7.2.1 Having "foodie friends"

Over the course of the hobby career, most gourmets attract friends who share a passion for cooking. In the roles of a hobby social world, these are fellow *regulars* (Unruh, 1979, p. 119). Such friends may go to restaurants together, cook for each other, and share recipes. Gourmet cook Celeste explains, "I have one foodie friend in particular and we often will share ideas and try new restaurants. We'll cook for each other." Claire's best friend since childhood also loves to cook and they talk by telephone often about food and exchange favorite recipes and cookbooks.

A benefit of foodie friends is the mutual willingness to honestly evaluate the outcomes of cooking projects. Rose says, "If I made a cheesecake, I would give some to her

(a friend). Then I find out whether of not it is worth it. She reciprocates. If she makes a new type of cooking she will bring one over and ask: What do you think?" Similarly, Sara reports, "Most of my friends are food-centered enough that they are willing to have a long discussion about: Should we change the flavor? Would it be better with a little this or that…?"

7.2.2 Eating out

Americans love to eat out and gourmet cooks are no exception. However, unlike the average hungry and time-pressed consumer, hobbyists treat visits to upscale restaurants as educational experiences. While eating out they study menus, food combinations, presentation styles and flavors to expand their knowledge. Sara reports "My boyfriend thinks it is irritating because I don't chose what is the most *tasty*, but what I can learn the most from. It's school, not pleasure!" Similarly, gourmet cook Nancy explains that when she eats out she selects items that are "a little bit unusual" and then proceeds to eat them "very *very* slowly" in an effort to identify the ingredients and seasonings.

From the perspective of restaurant wait staff gourmet cooks may come off as challenging customers who ask a lot of questions. Eric calls restaurants "a living workshop" and says "I often ask questions…the more information you have about it (the meal), the more satisfying it is." Many gourmet cooks relish the chance to go into the kitchen and interrogate the chef directly. Eric continues, "I really want to understand the thinking of the chef in preparing this. I want to understand why they decided to use these specific ingredients to create this kind of flavor." Sara has learned strategies to access the kitchen and points out, "I find that if you are not dining on Friday or Saturday night, chefs are more than willing to talk to you."

Inspired by restaurant foods, gourmet cooks try to duplicate them at home. Hobbyist Katey explains that at a Mexican restaurant she and her boyfriend ate "this incredible chile"

stuffed with finely ground beef, ginger, and raisins. It was topped with pumpkin seeds and cilantro and finished with a sauce containing a whiff of vanilla. In her opinion the dish was "freaking amazing" and she said to her boyfriend, "We are going to figure this out!" Over the next three months Katey gathered, studied and implemented stuffed chile recipes, while her boyfriend served as taster and provided feedback on their resemblance to the restaurant version. Some cookbooks, culinary websites, serials, or weekly newspaper food pages satisfy the gourmet cook's interest in restaurant offerings by publishing restaurant recipes.

7.2.3 Experiencing foreign cuisines

Gourmet cooks take overseas vacations and their culinary horizons are expanded. Camilla recounts that in her early days as a gourmet cook, "I started…traveling a lot and really relating to the country I was visiting as much through my palate and gullet as through my mind and my eyes." Sara says "If I travel, the first thing I ask is 'What is done with the food here? What do people eat for lunch?" In keeping with their penchant for authenticity, gourmets avoid tourist fare and favor highly regarded restaurants or out-of-the-way spots of the locals. Not all countries equally attract gourmet cooks, who take the strongest interest in France, the birthplace of the gourmet approach, as well as the Mediterranean region and Asia.

Back at home, these culinary adventures provide ideas and inspiration for months to come. Camilla continues, "It is really nice to experience the cooking of a country you are going to and then come back and incorporate that into your repertoire." For instance, gourmet cook Tom and his wife Alice returned from a trip to France and hosted a dinner party for neighbors with the theme "A Taste of Paris." The event featured a French menu of onion soup, pissaladierre (an appetizer tart with anchovies), escargot (snails), beef bourguignon (a beef stew in red wine) along with French wine and champagne. As the *piece*

de resistance, a poster of the Eiffel Tower was mounted in their dining room for the night (Figure 14, middle).

Figure 14. Images from a French-themed dinner party (inspired by a trip to Paris). Onions and a mandoline (French slicing device) are ready to make French onion soup (left); a picture of the Eiffel tower (middle) is placed at the head of an elegantly set table (right).

In addition to new ideas, gourmet cooks obtain culinary souvenirs on their travels, to stock their personal libraries and kitchens. The most popular keepsake is a cookbook featuring the native cuisine. Memories from the trip are invoked when recipes are cooked and served. Souvenirs also take the form of ingredients or cooking gadgets. Gourmet cook Nancy takes a keen interest in foreign foodstuffs and explains, "One of the things I do (on holiday) is visit grocery stores, for I love to see what other products are available." She has purchased "pesto bullion cubes" from Italy that are not available in American supermarkets, spice grinders from Ireland, and an olive pitting gadget from Italy.

7.2.4 Adopting regional food cultures

As an affluent and professional population, gourmet cooks move around a lot. They embrace and study the regional food cultures where they live temporarily. Rose explains that her husband's Army career has involved frequent relocations around the world and the

United States, which informs her cooking. While in Germany she was fascinated by the breads and pretzels, and began to study baking. When she returned to the United States and lived in Arizona, she pursued Southwestern cookery. During a stint in Tennessee she "got into Southern food such as fried turkey and catfish." Now a resident of Colorado, Rose has learned to adapt to the impact of high altitude baking. She reports, "Each time we move there is a change in my cooking but overall I have gotten better and more confident." In the same way, gourmet cook Celeste lived in Denmark for 11 years and adopted the cooking and formal entertaining habits of northern Europe. Later, she and her husband moved to the country of Lasutu where she experimented with African cooking and traded recipes with other foreign aid workers from France, Russia, and Germany. She says, "We spent some time on the coast in Kenya and there is an Indian influence, we had access to Indian products and restaurants – that was really fun."

7.2.5 Visiting ethnic neighborhoods and markets

In many cases, gourmet cooks need not travel far from home to step into a stimulating foreign culinary environment. Almost all American cities have ethnic communities, such as Boston's Italian North End or Chinatown, where markets feature imported products and an array of sights and smells. Katey and her boyfriend regularly host food-themed parties, such as a night of Jamaican or Russian delights. She reports that these events, "always involve a couple of shopping expeditions, going to communities where there are authentic shops and immigrants. We'll go before to see what people are buying, and we'll get materials."

And while running workaday errands cooks keep their eyes open for specialty food shops, to escape into a moment of hobby pleasure. Roland says, "I always look around for bakeries, farms and such." While killing time before a chiropractic appointment he,

"…discovered this nice vegetable garden and bakery shop, a surprisingly fantastic place." He was impressed by a bunch of fresh, multicolored Swiss chard which became a featured item for dinner that evening. Even serendipitous visits to such places become a springboard for the hobby.

7.2.6 Review of living a gourmet lifestyle

The information activities placed under the banner of Living a Gourmet Lifestyle are distinct for being everyday life activities that are not usually seen as information-related. Yet by maintaining friendships with other cooks, eating out, traveling to explore new cuisines, embracing local and regional food traditions, and visiting ethnic neighborhoods and food markets the hobbyist creates a life rich with culinary knowledge and sets the stage for the hobby.

7.3 Expressing Culinary Expertise

A second set of information activities entails Expressing Culinary Expertise to others. This information activity happens later in the hobby career, when the cook feels qualified. Stebbins' (1994) has documented that the expression of knowledge is a central part of a Liberal Arts hobby, and often takes the form of public lectures or slides shows. Expression appears to be significant in the Making and Tinkering hobby of gourmet cooking as well. Here, the cook verbalizes their knowledge and enthusiasm for all things culinary and acts as an expert. This is a very social information activity since it is based on dialogue and requires an audience. Family and friends participate as listeners, respondents, clients, and students. While expression is the core of this set of activities, in the interplay of words and experiences, cooks acquire skill and knowledge as well.

7.3.1 Consulting

When gourmet cooks provide counsel to others on food-related issues, they are *consulting*. Usually consulting is quick and problem-focused. Katey says, "I get a lot of phone calls—'Kaaateeey, HELP!' I like doing that." She continues,

> I've got one friend who is very interested in cooking, she will send me emails or call me with questions, such as, 'Can I just melt the butter to stir it into the cookies?' And I say, 'No, you can't do that! *Please* don't do that!' This has been going on for 20 years. She keeps asking questions and I tell her the answer.

Other consulting projects are larger in scale and draw upon the cook's ability to conceptualize menus and events. Nancy recounts, "People ask me if I have ideas for something. My friend had a 40th anniversary party and needed a good menu for her Italian family. I put together the menu and gave her the cookbooks." Like any business consultant or even a reference librarian she has learned techniques for interrogating her 'clients,' "…I find myself asking questions about the types of guests, the nature of the event, whether they want light or heavy food, that kind of thing. I help to guide them into the foods that they like, presented for this setting. From there I might recommend recipes."

7.3.2 Teaching cooking

Hobbyists sometimes teach others to cook. Interestingly, the cooks in this study mostly taught others to do feeding work, not the hobby of gourmet cooking (as serious leisure), for their students requested help in getting daily meals on the table. In its simplest form, teaching can be a demonstration, without instructional rhetoric. Tom explains, "At a party recently I made deep fried strawberry and ricotta raviolis. Who would think that would be a good dessert?! It was delicious. I made them at home, brought the fryer to work, and made it in front of everyone."

Hobbyists with young children serve as teachers when they engage them in kitchen tasks, a way of blending the hobby with the demands of childcare. Rose's oldest daughter helps her prepare cake batters, and her younger ones shape bread dough. Anne bought a children's cookbook to use with her son and together they followed the recipe for roast chicken.

Going a step further as a teacher, some cooks orchestrate cooking lessons for adult family and friends. Celeste designed three cooking classes for her college-aged son and niece. She featured delicious, simple, everyday preparations like lasagna, salad, and a fruit dessert. During the session Celeste explained culinary principles and techniques while her "students" received hands-on practice. Similarly, one Thanksgiving Nancy taught her sons and their girlfriends how to make filet mignon and Caesar salad; she explains, "It was such fun to do that together."

Gourmet cooks in this study limited teaching to family and friends in the home setting, for free, with two exceptions. For several years Margaret taught Chinese cuisine at a community education center and offered culinary tours of Boston's Chinatown. Both served as ways to "keep her going" in the hobby. Dorene and a friend staged cooking classes to socialites in Los Angeles, for a small per person fee. An elaborate lunch would be presented in the form of a lesson, and then enjoyed together by the ladies. Dorene recounts "I got such pleasure in teaching and giving people the inspiration to do it for themselves."

7.3.3 Commenting online

Gourmet cooks can also express knowledge through online channels. For instance, Katey produces a food blog, *The Seasonal Cook*, where she writes about locally produced foods. This project keeps her engaged in the hobby and she says, "…I have my blog, which keeps me from drifting off. I've been doing that since June and found that it keeps me

learning things for I feel that there is always something I have to write and share." (There were no other instances in the study of such time-consuming, sustained dissemination; most of the publishing within this social world is done by professional food writers, not hobbyists.)

A popular online forum for opining is the website epicurious.com (see also 7.5.3.1). Those who have executed an epicurious.com recipe submit comments which appear online. Cooks provide a candid and sometimes very detailed assessment of the outcome of the recipe with occasional recommendations for improvement. Some cooks explain substitutions they used (i.e. "I didn't have any fresh corn, so used frozen instead and it came out fine"). Comments can be aimed at other comments and develop into a heated conversation about the recipe. The more popular recipes at this website have 400+ comments! These dialogues have proven so popular and informative that epicurious.com features the *Buzz Box* which is a direct link to a list of "recipes (that) have received the most comments and ratings from our users in the past 30 days."

7.3.4 Review of expressing culinary expertise

This cluster of information activity entails the expression of culinary knowledge, mainly to family and friends. Cooks willingly serve as on-call trouble-shooters or personal culinary advisors in the design of food-based events. As they mature in their hobby career, many are motivated to teach. This can be as simple as demonstration cooking or involving a child in a cooking project. Sometimes, more structured lessons are offered to loved ones with a curriculum and hands-on instruction. In a minority of cases, cooks teach formally and for profit in their communities or broadcast their knowledge through online channels such as recipe forums. For the gourmet cooks these information activities are fun and natural expressions of their culinary passion.

7.4 Staying Informed and Inspired

Gourmet cooks stay informed and inspired through regular contact with the culinary literature and media. These behaviors increase basic knowledge, keep the cook abreast of culinary trends, and supply a constant stream of cooking ideas. Such activities are *not* done for the immediate purpose of steering hands-on cooking and rarely occur in the kitchen. Instead, regular immersion in culinary information is a routine and cherished parts of a hobbyist's everyday life. For instance, cooks read cookbooks in bed before falling asleep, enjoy a newspaper's weekly food section while relaxing at a coffee shop, or tune in regularly to a favorite television cooking show. Such behaviors differ from Living a Gourmet Lifestyle by being explicitly information-based, and per Hektor qualify as *unfolding,* "continually directed attention towards an information system[6] and the symbolic display it offers, for instance by looking and listening, and thereby taking part in a content" (2001, p. 170). The extent to which cooks do this set of activities varies. Some make an effort to stay informed on a daily basis; others are less riveted to culinary media and may gain knowledge and inspiration simply by Living a Gourmet Lifestyle.

In terms of the three temporal arcs, this constellation of activities is more prevalent early in the hobby career (during the stages of beginning, development and establishment), when newcomers face the steep learning curve of the hobby. Intensity can lessen during the maintenance stage. One mature cook reveals, "I don't really watch cooking shows much anymore. Every once in a while I get a new book and follow it through. I suppose I have my ideas at this point!" Often Staying Informed and Inspired takes the form of a subject pursuit, as described in 6.4, The Subject Arc. A culinary topic such as *Thai* or *baking* can capture the cook's imagination and temporarily focus their reading and learning. To restate, these

[6] Hektor uses the term *information system* broadly, to include non-technical information resources.

information activities are *not* associated with an episode of hands-on cooking, a different context and set of information activities discussed later as Launching a Cooking Episode (7.5) and Using Information During an Episode (7.6).

Because these behaviors demand "focused attention on a resource" (Hektor, p. 170) they are usually done individually. In fact, cooks may covet moments away from family and friends to savor culinary learning. At the same time, Staying Informed and Inspired has social implications because in these private moments cooks communicate across the distributed hobby social world. Such exchanges are mediated via published or public artifacts like books, magazines, websites, and the like (Strauss, 1978, pp. 125-126; Unruh, 1979, pp. 279-280; see also 3.3.3). Non-hobbyists (engaged in feeding work) and dabblers (those who infrequently partake in a hobby) may have an occasional interest in these materials as well.

The universe of artifacts that mediate communication within the social world of the hobby of gourmet cooking is vast; it is one of the largest popular information domains. Resources come in print, digital, and multimedia forms through various public channels. About 50 million cookbooks are sold in the U.S. per year, roughly 4% of the adult book market (Reader Request, 2002). On a monthly basis, culinary magazines with nationwide circulation are mailed to several million households and also sold at newsstands and grocery checkouts. Most newspapers feature a weekly food column or section focused on the local culinary scene. Online, there are numerous gourmet cooking websites which serve as reference sources and portals to databases with upwards of 25,000 recipes. The cable *Food Network* supplies 24-hour a day culinary programming to 85 million viewers (E.W. Scripps, 2004), while many other lifestyle networks feature cooking-themed segments. Further, there are newsletters, newsgroups and radio broadcasts on a wide range of culinary topics. A sample of published or public information resources mentioned by the 20 gourmet cooks in

this study, in their own words, are listed below in alphabetical order:

- *1,000 Pasta Sauces* (cookbook)
- altavista.com
- America's Test Kitchen (website associated with *Cook's Illustrated*)
- *Bon Appétit* (magazine)
- CD roms of culinary topics
- charity/fundraising cookbooks
- *Chinese Food for Beginners* (cookbook)
- Chow Hound (online discussion forum)
- computer files (of recipes)
- cooking classes (in Chinatown, at retailers)
- *Cooking for Dummies* (cookbook)
- *Cooking Light* (magazine)
- cooking programs with chefs Mario Batalli, and Emeril Lagasi and
- *Cook's Illustrated* (magazine)
- *Culinary Institute of America* (cookbook)
- *Death by Chocolate* (cookbook)
- egullet (culinary discussion group)
- epicurious.com (website of *Gourmet* and *Bon Appétit*)
- essays by M.F.K. Fisher
- *Food and Wine* (magazine)
- food sections (from local newspapers)
- foodtv.com (website of *Food Network*)
- *Gastronomica* (quasi-academic food journal)
- google.com
- *Gourmet* (magazine)
- *How to Cook Everything* (cookbook)
- *How to Read a French Fry* (cookbook)
- *Joy of Cooking* (cookbook)
- *Larousse Gastronomique* (culinary encyclopedia)
- mailing lists from gourmet companies
- *Martha Stewart Living* (magazine)
- Martha Stewart Living (website of the magazine)
- *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (cookbook)
- online food pages from major newspapers (*LA Times*, *Daily News*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Washington Post*)
- *Pico Pico* (local LA food zine)
- restaurant menus
- *Saveur* (magazine)
- *Sunset* (magazine)
- *Taste* (cookbook)
- television programs with chef Bobby Flay
- *The Best Recipe* (cookbook)
- *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook* (cookbook)
- *The French Laundry Cookbook* (cookbook)
- *The Naked Chef* (program on The *Food Network*)
- *The New York Times* food section
- *The New Yorker* (magazine, an essay about pies)
- *The Way to Cook* (cookbook)Time

7.4.1 Reading cookbooks

Above all, cooks get informed and inspired by reading cookbooks. A hobbyist states, "Certain things like Fanny Farmer or Escoffier are just good reads, you don't necessarily do any cooking from them." Some cooks have a dedicated time for reading and a favorite location in the home. Nancy says, "Saturday morning is my reading time. I sit right where

you are sitting! (a comfortable chair in her dining room)." Gourmet cook Celeste settles into a loveseat in her den during the evening and reads while television plays in the background.

Cookbooks are valued for offering the most extensive treatment on culinary topics. Sara explains,

> I find that cookbooks go into greater detail than any other source. I have never been able to get someone to have an hour-long conversation with me about the 'emulsifying process'…but there are books that do this. Books give me the broadest and deepest information.

For gourmet cook Ken, cookbooks offer much more than recipes, "…I use them for background knowledge about cuisines, types of ingredients, menu planning, so it is not just to go and look at a recipe. I use them much more diversely."

Centuries ago the first cookbooks were simply lists of ingredients–not seemingly readable for pleasure. Today, the genre is evolving and many cookbooks include personal, social, cultural and historical discussions of food. Nancy says, "A lot of cookbooks are more like social studies…I like this trend; there is more background and depth. So I like reading cookbooks." Contextual information enriches a cook's understanding and motivates future cooking. During her interview, Nancy picks up a French cookbook, opens it to a chapter on olives and exclaims,

> There are all these awesome recipes for olives, and it is not just about making it, but background on where it comes from… Look at all this stuff about olives and olive oils! I love to read about this, like about home cured olives. Then I will look for a recipe because I get excited about it.

This reading behavior is particularly interesting because technically cookbooks are *reference books,* per Bates' seminal article, "What is a Reference Book?"(1987). Reference books are structured as a collection of short "records" (p. 13), in this case, recipes, within an

ordering scheme that facilitates "look up" and use, not reading (p. 17). According to Ranganathan (1961, p. 257; cited in Bates, p. 11), any effort to read a reference book results in "jerky" reading through independent sequential records. The distinct structure and purpose of reference books differs from the unbroken text and narrative arc of novels, which are the typical genre of pleasure and leisure reading.

Despite the "jerky" experience and lack of a narrative, gourmet cooks read and then *re-read* cookbooks. Ken, an avid re-reader reflects,

> I will re-read and re-read the same cookbooks for years!...I read the same books and the same recipes...even in the same day. Dozens of times! To a point of it almost being an obsession. It is really quite odd the number of times I can reread the same recipe!

For Ken, re-reading ingrains culinary skills so that they become automatic when cooking unfolds in the kitchen. He says,

> So I try to absorb it all ahead of time and then I just go to cook. I refresh my own knowledge from the cookbooks. Like, when the book says, '...when the consistency of the sauce gets to 'x'...' You can't be doing that with the book right there, you've got to already know this.

The cookbook is a favored information technology because it is easy to use, portable and familiar. A cook explains, "I like looking at books, web-crawling is not quite the same." Sara elaborates " …(cookbooks) are a very convenient source. If I'm online, at the library, or at work, I can use them. I can use them while I'm watching a movie or whatever. I can carry them around with me so they are where I am. Also, I am a reader, it is what I'm most familiar with."

7.4.2 Reading gastronomy

In addition to cookbooks, hobbyists read *gastronomy*, a literary genre developed in France in the 1800s that addresses proper eating and cooking habits, culinary history and myth, and the "nostalgic evocation of memorable meals" (Mennell, 1986, pp. 270-271). Recently in the U.S., gastronomy has been popularized through Random House's The Modern Library *Food Series*, edited by cookbook author and editor of *Gourmet* magazine, Ruth Reichle. This collection features classic gastronomic works in translation, life-stories of renowned cooks, and non-academic culinary social history. Some cooks in this study report being influenced by gastronomy. Celeste says,

> I read Laurie Colwin and got inspired. I wished I had her life! Laurie…was a food writer and wrote essays which were originally published in *The New Yorker*. She had an interest in culinary history and old cookbooks. She would write an essay about, say, gingerbread and then have a recipe. …I've always liked her and would love to do that kind of journalism but never did.

Celeste went on to create her own culinary diaries in the same style as Colwin (see also 8.2.12). A related genre of literature enjoyed by gourmet cooks falls under the Library of Congress subject heading *Cookery – Fiction*. These novels present a cooking-themed story sometimes interspersed with recipes, such as the 1997 best-seller by Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate*.

7.4.3 Reading culinary serials

All the cooks in this study have subscribed to culinary magazines. Some actively had three or more arriving per month. Cooks eagerly await new issues, one states that she, "reads it from cover to cover every month." Serials contain articles about foods with recipes and menus; reviews of equipment and restaurants; and reader exchanges or recipes and tips, among other things. They arrive just in time to supply cooking ideas as foods come into

season or as holiday meals loom. Roland explains, "I love the magazine *Bon Appétit*. I don't subscribe right now, but I'll pick it up, especially at the holidays." Monthlies also keep the gourmet cook abreast of fashions in the gourmet cooking social world, which is constantly championing new foods, techniques, chefs and restaurants. Mandy attests "…magazines are more innovative."

The most popular culinary serials with nationwide reach are *Gourmet*, *Bon Appetite*, *Fine Cooking*, *Food & Wine*, and *Saveur*, glossy high-end publications that glorify gourmet cooking and a lifestyle of world travel and luxury goods. (Though each magazine has a slightly differing emphasis, and cooks have their favorites.) An entirely unique tact is taken by *Cook's Illustrated*, a black-and white publication with no advertising and in-depth articles on classic recipes, designed for use as a handbook. *Cook's Illustrated* has popularized a scientific approach and articles often explicate the chemical reactions underway during cooking. Another form of serial is the weekly food section or pages within newspapers. These are similar in content to culinary magazines but showcase local food topics. (All of these publications have affiliated websites, which function more in Launching a Cooking Episode and are discussed in 7.5.3.1)

As they arrive month after month, serials accumulate in the homes of gourmet cooks, who are hesitant to throw them away. Usually the most recent issues are kept at hand on a coffee table or bedside and later moved to a permanent storage shelf in an office or den, to function as reference materials (Figure 15). In this study, hobbyists invented clever ways to locate recipes within these collections, and novel organizational and storage techniques. (These information management systems will be discussed further in Chapter 8: Managing a Personal Culinary Library.)

Figure 15. Culinary serials: on display (left); and in storage (right).

7.4.4 Watching television

Television has emerged as a popular channel for culinary information. American chef Julia Child is considered a pioneer of this genre. Child's award-winning series *The French Chef* debuted in February, 1963 on WGBH and ran for ten years. Today, the main outlet for culinary programming is *Food Network*, a 24-hour-a-day food-themed cable television network owned by the E.W. Scripps Company. Most programs on *Food Network* present hands-on cooking instruction; others are culinary-themed game shows or travelogues. *Food Network* has contributed to the rise of chef-celebrities. These gourmet icons host cooking programs and are known in the social world by their first names, such as "Emeril" (Lagasse) or "Mario" (Battali) or "Jacques" (Pepin).

Most of the gourmet hobby cooks in the study were enthusiastic about culinary television and its stars. Gourmet cook Roland claimed to be in love with Rachel Ray, the latest *Food Network* sensation. For Mandy, a turning point in her hobby career was when her parents got cable and she had access to *Food Network*. She says "I became a *Food Network* addict. I watched so much of the *Food Network* and I learned a lot. Not just about technical things but about combining ingredients. It was more inspiring more than anything" Ken values programming on *Food Network* because "…watching a good chef cook, watching how they use heat in a pan, *that* is what I'm looking for when I'm watching television – it is the

techniques, not a recipe." At the same time, some found the *Food Network* shows too far removed from reality; a cook says, "I can't relate to it in my everyday cooking. It is interesting and entertaining, like Emeril, but I would not go cook their ideas." Another concurs, "I used to like Emeril but I don't like him so much anymore, he is too glitzy for me now."

7.4.5 Surfing the Internet

The Internet provides access to a plethora of food and cooking themed websites and online communities, used occasionally to stay informed and inspired by some of the cooks in this study. The heaviest user, Dorene, was surprisingly the oldest at age 73. She keeps an elaborate hierarchy of bookmarks in her AOL web browser that link to her "favorite places" online. She has bookmarked collections of general culinary websites, newspapers with food sections, companies offering gourmet products, websites affiliated with culinary serials, and topical areas such as breads, chefs, pressure cookers, and restaurants. She surfs the Internet for one or two hours every day, following culinary news and gathering recipes that spark her interest. Katey participates now and then in *Chowhound*, an online discussion forum designed "For Those Who Love to Eat;" she reads their restaurant reviews and posts comments. Gourmet cooks in this study were more likely to use the Internet when on a mission to find a recipe, a different type of information activity discussed shortly as Launching a Cooking Episode (7.5).

7.4.6 Taking cooking classes

Cooking classes are offered in most American cities by community education programs, culinary arts institutes, and gourmet retailers. During cooking classes a topic or recipe is introduced and then students execute it for hands-on practice; the resulting

foodstuff is sampled and discussed. Often students don't get a complete cooking experience because the educators eliminate time-consuming prep work. Roland reports,

> …the topic was weekend breakfasts…they gave us 10 recipes to try. Each person would get a recipe. We'd go back into the kitchen area and each had a workstation. Everything was all prepared and chopped up…

Some gourmet cooks in this study attended a few cooking classes, though not to the point of it being a routine. This may be because cooking classes cater to novices and this can bore the advanced gourmet cook. For instance, Nancy recounts "The class was nice, good chef, but it was too basic, very broad for the newbie… Our recipe was so easy I finished it, and then went to help others and was giving them advice and tips."

7.4.7 Review of staying informed and inspired

To summarize, gourmet cooks stay informed and inspired via the mediated communication of their social world. They perform a constellation of information-intensive activities that are not tied to any particular culinary episode. Rather, the experience of learning via the culinary literature and media functions as a routine and cherished part of everyday life. The extent of such activity varies across cooks and is most prevalent during the early stages of the hobby career. The mediated communication of the social world of gourmet cooking makes up a large culinary information domain. Above all, gourmet cooks read cookbooks and the occasional work of gastronomy and culinary fiction. Culinary serials are valued for their timely coverage of seasonal foods, holidays, and trends, while weekly newspaper columns cover local culinary scenes. *Food Network* provides 24-hour a day food-themed instruction and entertainment; and the web is yet another culinary resource. The most information hungry gourmet cooks orchestrate all these mediums to stay well informed and inspired, providing a springboard for hands-on cooking, discussed next.

7.5 Launching a Cooking Episode

Thus far, information activity has not been discussed in the context of the central or core activity of gourmet cooking. In 6.6, The Episode Arc, this was described as taking the form of an *episode* "…a cooking project that generates an edible outcome…" To review, an episode can be seen as a nine-step cycle. The first two steps that launch a cooking episode, *exploring* and *planning*, draw upon all of the cook's culinary enthusiasm and knowledge, and engage the main genres of the hobby: cookbooks and recipes. Whereas the same resources played a role in Staying Informed and Inspired, here they are marshaled in a different way to get a job done. These information activities typically occur in the cook's home, near their recipes, cookbooks, and computer, at a comfortable work station such as a kitchen table. The moments are so interesting from an information studies point of view that they will be discussed collectively as the information activity: Launching a Cooking Episode (Figure 16).

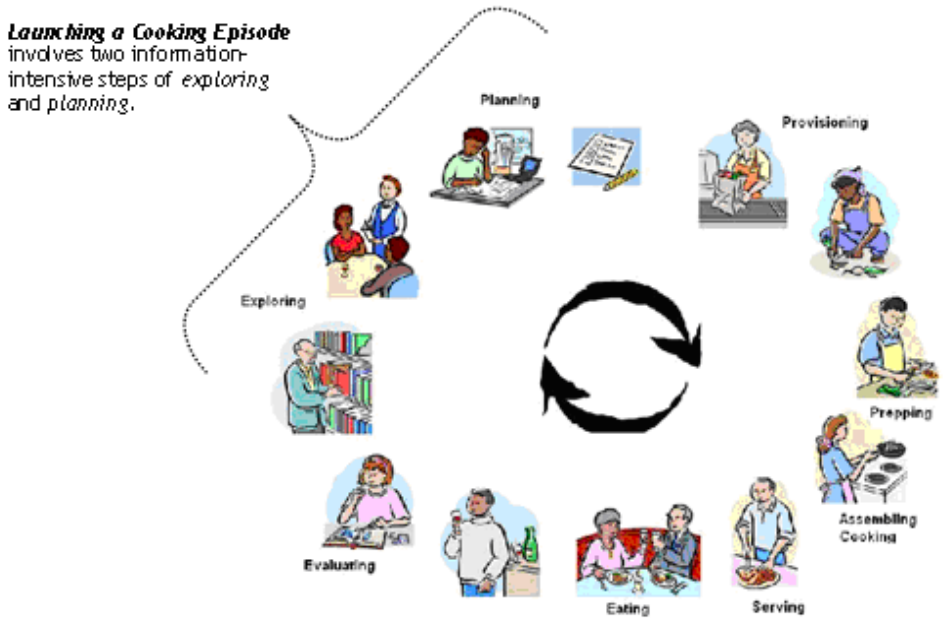

Figure 16. Launching a Cooking Episode.

To be sure, not *all* episodes take significant effort or information to "launch." As noted in 6.7, episodes can be *simple* or *complex* and *repeated* or *new*; the amount of exploring and planning depends upon these variables. Table 22 below revisits the variability of information need within episodes, and points to three instances where the information required to launch an episode would be moderate [B, C] or high [D]. It is the new and complex initiatives [D] that exhilarate and challenge the hobbyist, creating memorable and quintessential hobby experiences. In the discussion to come, a scenario of a new and complex project [D] is assumed.

Qualities of the episode	Repeated	New
Simple	[A] *low info need* (a salad that has been prepared before)	[C] *med info need* (a salad that has never been prepared before)
Complex	[B] *med info need* (a Thai feast that has been prepared before)	[D] *high info need* (a Thai feast with many items never prepared before)

Table 22. The four information experiences possible per episode. (Reprint of Table 18)

7.5.1 Exploring for ideas

The backdrop for an episode is the hobbyist's persistent desire to cook, sustained by Living a Gourmet Lifestyle, Expressing Culinary Expertise, and Staying Informed and Inspired. This leads to *exploring*, which is a quest for *inspiration*, not information. It may take the form of daydreaming about cooking possibilities, or browsing cookbooks, websites, magazines, or personal recipe files. At the start, the cook may harbor a vague sense of a food category, technique, or cuisine of interest, but no commitment or focus. A hobbyist recounts this moment as, "So, I flipped through my various magazines and cookbooks…. *what did I want to make?*" In this step cookbooks and recipes are engaged superficially (sometimes just skimming the text or

looking at pictures). The cook is in a mode of fantasy and an upbeat sense of opportunity. Non-documentary forms of exploring are to visit markets or restaurants; ideas may come from a display of produce or a beguiling flavor encountered during a meal out. At some point the hobbyist's interest is piqued[7], resulting in a vision for a cooking project such as duck a l'orange or a Southern barbecue.

7.5.2 Prelude to a search

At the end of exploring the hobbyist has a committed cooking concept in mind and begins *planning*. Since gourmet cooking involves advanced culinary techniques a necessary step is to obtain instructions, in other words, a recipe. Even for seemingly straightforward preparations most hobbyists will consult at least one recipe. One cook explains, "I'll usually look up three or so recipes and see the common ways, then decide what to do." This sets up the moment of traditional interest in information research: searching for a document. In cases when the cook is preparing multiple dishes or courses, not one, but many recipe searches occur.

The chosen food concept suggests key words to guide the searching. All cooking projects are associated with subjects such as cuisines, food categories, or cooking techniques. For instance, *lasagna* implicates Italian cookery as well as casseroles; *carrot cake* fits within baking. These associations become well known as cooks advance in their career. The point is that from the get-go the cook orients to a limited area of the culinary information universe. Like scholars who first utilize documents and texts at hand in their offices (Soper, 1976; Bruce, 2005, p. 3), cooks turn to their *personal culinary libraries* or PCL for short.

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[7] Many life factors can influence the decision of what to cook. Section 6.6 reports, "The episode can be an expression of the subject interest of that moment, or reflect other aspects of life. It may be tied to a holiday, social gathering, or inspired by a season and its produce. An episode could fill a window of available time such as a weekend, vacation, or snowstorm; or be sparked by serendipitously encountering a recipe."

7.5.3 Searching a personal culinary library for recipes: Beryypicking

Over the course of the hobby career, gourmet cooks build a personal culinary library within their households. It contains cookbooks, serials, recipes, and other sorts of culinary ephemera gathered from many sources. In this study, these libraries varied in size from small (20 texts) to large (1000+ texts), and included links to online Internet resources via a home computer.

The PCL has advantages as the natural first stop. It is within reach, usually based in a room adjacent to the kitchen. It is relatively small and does not induce information overload. Materials have been hand-picked and organized into a schema based upon the cook's own logic. It is familiar, since the cook has read many of the items while Staying Informed and Inspired. Often these resources are marked with annotations, stick-up notes, bookmarks or folded pages. Unlike a public library or bookstore, the PCL is steeped in sentiment, sometimes containing cherished documentary artifacts passed through generations (such as a grandmother's recipe collection, see also 8.2.11).

Overall, searching for recipes in a PCL and its online and human extensions resembles Bates' *berrypicking* (1989). In this model, searching is an iterative process in which a variety of search techniques into different information repositories are used sequentially. In the same way, cooks attempt a variety of search strategies leading into different sub-collections of the PCL. If one path fails to deliver, or if more information is desired, another is attempted. As in berrypicking, potential recipes are gathered "a bit-at-a-time" from each repository along the way. Bates asserts that during berrypicking the search query changes with each iteration. Likewise, in gourmet cooking the search experience may cause the cook to modify their original vision. For instance, a hunt for lasagna might end up with a recipe for the Italian casserole cannelloni if along the search route a compelling reason arises to

change.

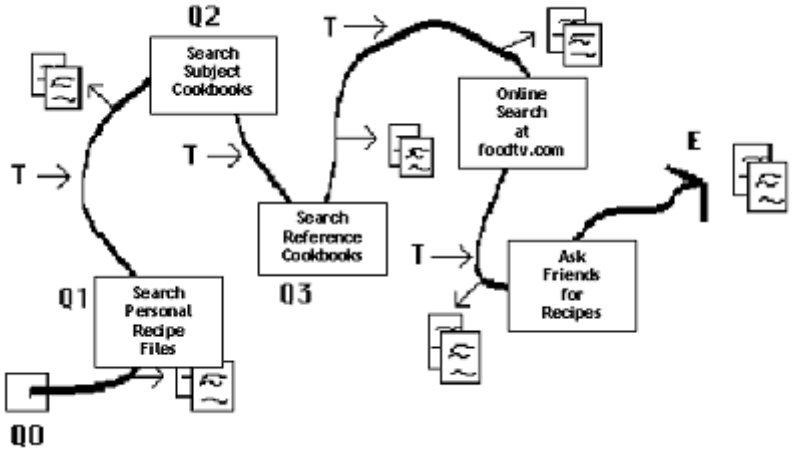


Figure 17. Bates' berrypicking model, modified for the PCL.

In their own words, three cooks reveal the berrypicking approach as follows:

> Say I need a recipe for roasted turkey. So I go to my old collection first: my cookbooks and magazines. I go through back issues of magazines. I look at the index. Recently when cooking pork shoulder I needed a recipe. I first go through what I have. If I can't find what I'm looking for I go onto the websites epicuruious.com or foodtv.com and search.
>
> I'd use my friends first. They are my library. If I couldn't get in touch with them I'd go to the Internet, to recipes.com. I've found good things there, not great, but I can get enough information to make what I'm making. So I may do something through email…ask someone for it. Finally, I'd just search through my cookbooks. You know, it depends on how much time I want to put into it.
>
> Well, if it is ethnic, I'll look at all my Chinese cookbooks. And, the resource I use all the time is Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook. We've got all these cookbooks, but if I need a basic recipe for French toast, or spaghetti and meatballs, that will have something.

Along their berrypicking path cooks apply a variety of search heuristics and techniques. They employ standard bibliographic metrics such as genre, subject and author to

isolate the most promising items to search. When then look into individual artifacts they use tables of contents, indexes, and culinary-themed ordering principles to hone in on recipes. (An example of a culinary-themed ordering principle is *the sequence of a meal* – from appetizer to dessert – a common linear format for many cookbooks; another is *the seasons*). A cook explains, "What happens is I'll look in the back of books, if there is a particular ingredient. I'll go through all the indexes, or look in my own recipe collection." Using the concept of *lasagna* as one possible episode and goal, various berrypicking strategies are:

- search within classic reference cookbooks (often this establishes a standard or benchmark), such as *Joy of Cooking*
- search cookbooks of the appropriate subject area, such as all Italian cookbooks
- search cookbooks of an author who is a subject authority, such as those by Italian cook Marcella Hazan
- search personal recipe collections (on cards or pages) in the fitting subject file, such as *Italian, pasta* or *casseroles*
- search the months of serials that are appropriate (not effective for the all-season dish of lasagna, but for some seasonal foods)
- search in a personal file containing recipes that have been earmarked as promising, to see if there is a lasagna recipe
- search online at culinary websites or recipe databases
- ask family or friends for recipes

A few of these search approaches deserve additional comment and are reviewed next.

7.5.3.1 Recipe databases

The Internet is an extension of the PCL and is a prime resource for recipes. The two most popular websites are epicurious.com and foodtv.com. (Epicurious.com is the online archive and index to recipes appearing in *Gourmet* and *Bon Appétit*; foodtv.com is affiliated with the *Food Network* and provides the recipes used in their television programs.) A cook attests "You can get anything online by going to epicurious.com. I do that often." Both

resources supply at no cost a instructional cooking videos, online culinary encyclopedias and discussion forums. However, the main attractions at the sites are the huge (25,000+) recipe archives which can be browsed or searched using simple or advanced interfaces.

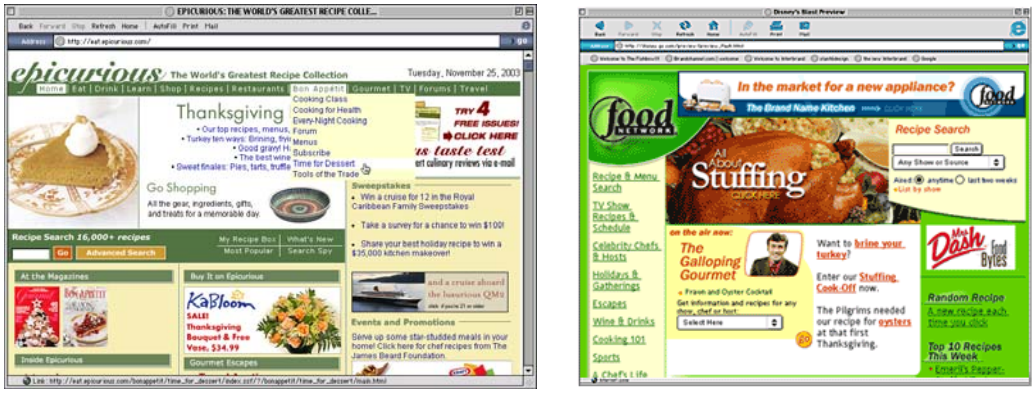
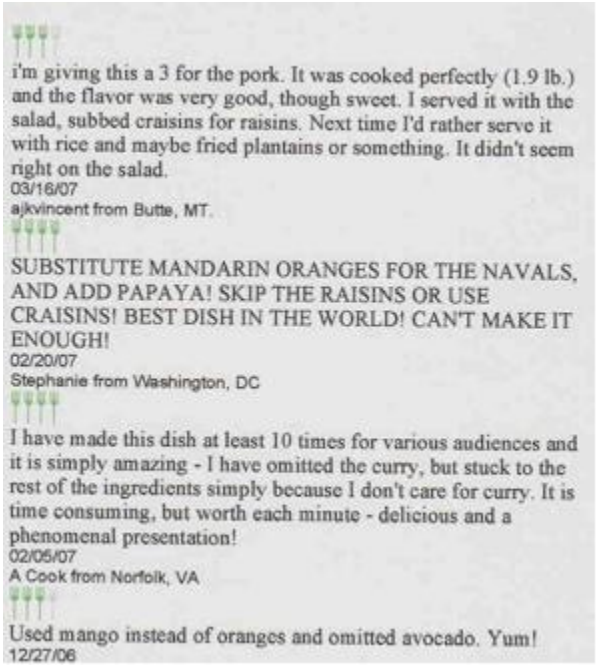


Figure 18. Screen shots of epicurious.com and foodtv.com.

These online resources have a number of benefits over home-based paper collections. They are free, quick, easy and effective to search. A cook explains, "…I go to the Internet. The problem with having so many cookbooks is it's hard to remember where things are and look them up…(the other day) I needed a pumpkin soup recipe and just went online. I probably do that more often then not (go online)." Online recipes can be custom formatted (as cards or full pages) and then printed to use in the kitchen; these documents are treated as disposable and can be marked up, splattered on, and thrown away since it is easy to re-print next time. Conveniently, the websites can be accessed while away from home or at work. Sara says , "Well, I use the computer more (for recipes) because it is in front of me at work all day. I'll do it on my lunch break or while waiting for a fax."

Another benefit of epicurious.com and foodtv.com is that recipes are reviewed and commented upon by other gourmet cooks (see also 7.3.3). This addresses the critical questions tied to any recipe: Is it really good? Does it work? At epicurious.com those who

have tried a recipe weigh in with a 1-4 fork rating; foodtv.com employs 1-5 star system. Figure 18 shows sample or ratings from a highly regarded (four fork) recipe at epicurious.com, "Island Pork Tenderloin Salad." A cook in this study reports, "If I can't find what I'm looking for (in my personal collection) I go onto the websites epicurious.com or foodtv.com and search. I look at ratings. If others rave about it, I will cook it."



i'm giving this a 3 for the pork. It was cooked perfectly (1.9 lb.) and the flavor was very good, though sweet. I served it with the salad, subbed craisins for raisins. Next time I'd rather serve it with rice and maybe fried plantains or something. It didn't seem right on the salad.
03/16/07
ajkvincent from Butte, MT.

SUBSTITUTE MANDARIN ORANGES FOR THE NAVALS, AND ADD PAPAYA! SKIP THE RAISINS OR USE CRAISINS! BEST DISH IN THE WORLD! CAN'T MAKE IT ENOUGH!
02/20/07
Stephanie from Washington, DC

I have made this dish at least 10 times for various audiences and it is simply amazing - I have omitted the curry, but stuck to the rest of the ingredients simply because I don't care for curry. It is time consuming, but worth each minute - delicious and a phenomenal presentation!
02/05/07
A Cook from Norfolk, VA

Used mango instead of oranges and omitted avocado. Yum!
12/27/06

Figure 19. A sample of recipe ratings and comments from epicurious.com. These are posted for the recipe "Island Pork Tenderloin Salad."

7.5.3.2 Google

Some cooks in this study use Google to locate recipes. Google functions more as an Internet portal, leading to other online recipe collections or to recipes directly. Sara says, "…if I am cooking something unusual, I'll just enter it into Alta Vista or Google, and I can get so many hits, hundreds and hundreds of pages…" Since these searches can return a mixed bag of hits, Tom prefers a Google *image* search. He explains "I wanted to make

cantaloupe soup. I went to Google, and if you do an 'image' search on Google, you get pictures and this ferrets out a lot of (irrelevant, low-quality) things. So the recipe is not mixed with other stuff. And clicking on the image takes you right to the site."

7.5.3.3 A "grapevine"

In a minority of cases, cooks turn to friends and family to acquire recipes. Here, they are cast as human information resources within the PCL. Gourmet cook Claire calls this her "grapevine" that serves as a first stop during recipe searching, "These are people that I love their cooking and I go to them for recipes. I love to eat their food. I know that if they recommend it, it will be yummy." When Roland sought to make a traditional French-Canadian Christmas tortilla (pork pie), he reached out to friends:

> We collected recipes from French friends. I asked people to pass me their tortilla recipes. All the recipes were different, some with pork, hamburger, potato, and different spices. We gathered about 100 different recipes, counting those from the Internet, too.

7.5.4 Comparing recipes

Gourmet cooks gather several recipes through their searching and then compare them. Dorene states "I like to check recipe against recipe and I'll know just what it is that I want." Comparing draws upon the cook's ability to "read" a recipe and grasp its implications. Katey describes this as, "…being able to conceptualize the thing in your mind…whether it is going to be good…is a question of experience." When comparing, the cook evaluates different elements of the recipe based upon some criteria they deem important. Rose, for instance, prefers the easiest recipe. She explains,

> I chose simple over complicated… If I am comparing two recipes and one has an additional complicated step I think, 'Why do I need to do this?' If I find anything unnecessary, I don't use it. I go for the simple.

Or, comparison may be driven by limitations tied to ingredients or equipment. For example, a cook might compare recipes for caramel sauce, seeking one that does not require a candy thermometer if they are without that tool.

The process of comparing recipes has been brought into the spotlight by *Cook's Illustrated*. Feature articles in this magazine focus on a food concept (such as apple pie) and discuss the outcomes of different versions of recipes, explicating the impact of variables such as ingredients, techniques, temperature and cooking times. An article entitled "Chocolate Mousse Perfected" (*Cook's Illustrated*, February 2006) described how different proportions and handling of four basic ingredients (chocolate, eggs, sugar, and fat) influenced the results. These articles lead to a recommendation for an ideal or master recipe. Several cooks in this study praised the *Cook's Illustrated* approach, suggesting they apply the same logic as they evaluate recipes.

7.5.5 Amalgamating, modifying or extending recipes

While planning, recipes are not considered indelible and gourmet cooks will change them in various ways. Tinkering is likely performed more often by advanced cooks. Two or more recipes can be amalgamated to bring together their best features. When making a Thanksgiving dessert Rose recounts, "One recipe called for pumpkin cheesecake, plain. The other was chocolate pumpkin cheesecake with a pecan topping. I didn't want the chocolate. I thought, 'Why don't I follow the pumpkin cheesecake recipe and take the idea of the topping from the other recipe?' And I did that."

Cooks also modify recipes in order to make something personal, original and special. Vincent explains, "… I take (a recipe) from the web, and I make it my own. I change it and mix it up on my own." (Some cooks are more cautious and implement a recipe exactly as

written the first time, in order to "give it a chance," and then tweak it the next time.) Recipes may lack details that are critical for seamless execution. So cooks will extend them through additional background research in culinary handbooks or encyclopedias, a favorite being *Larousse Gastronomique* (see also 8.2.6).

7.5.6 Creating menus and steering documents

When an episode entails an entire meal, with multiple food items and courses, the cook creates a *menu*. This epitomizes Hektor's *dressing,* "where information is framed and a cognitive product is externalized by an acting individual." Cooks juggle numerous requirements during menu design. Menus can be shaped by holidays and cultural practices, as when turkey anchors the American Thanksgiving dinner. Cuisines, too, provide guidance as to the ideal composition of a meal. As noted in 5.4, The Gourmet Aesthetic…, cooks aim for a pleasing contrasts of color, flavor, and shape when combining foods and courses. And, increasingly, gourmet cooks must accommodate guests with food allergies or preferences, such as vegetarianism. The ability to design menus gets refined as cooks advance in the hobby career. To ameliorate the challenge, some cookbooks and serials present recipes in the context of a menu. Ken says,

> I like cookbooks that are tied to menus. I do think of menus and not single dishes. I think of courses and how they relate to each other, and so I like cookbooks that think that way; that make recommendations about combinations of flavors and dishes.

The process of creating a menu usually overlaps with the stage of exploring and searching for recipes. Cooks go back and forth between brainstorming menu ideas and searching for recipes to sure up the menu. Ken describes the process as,

> I spend a lot of time considering which recipe and which technique, and then

> of course building a menu. 'What would be the appetizer? Salad or not? What wines to have?' I spend an unusual amount of time looking at different combinations.

Since many details are involved with menu design, cooks put thoughts down on paper, just as a mathematician would write out an equation. Gourmet cook Anne provides an example, "I write new (menu) possibilities onto paper to look at, and to see what goes together. At the same time I am looking through the cookbooks that appeal to me, getting ideas." Anne's Easter menu (two columns, for both kids and adults) is shown in Figure 20:

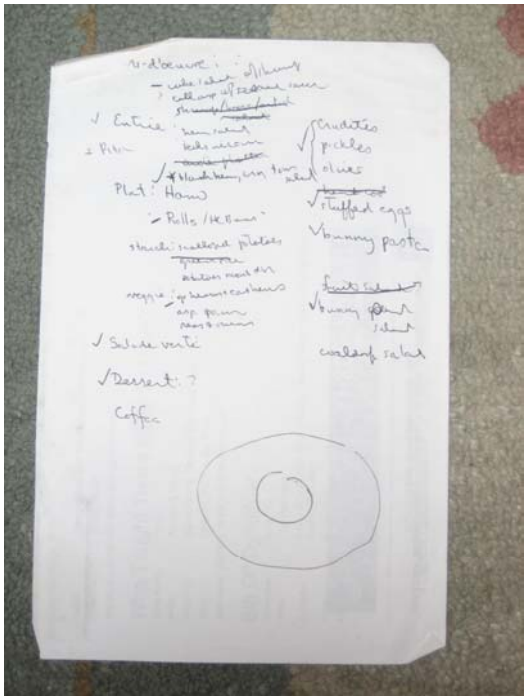


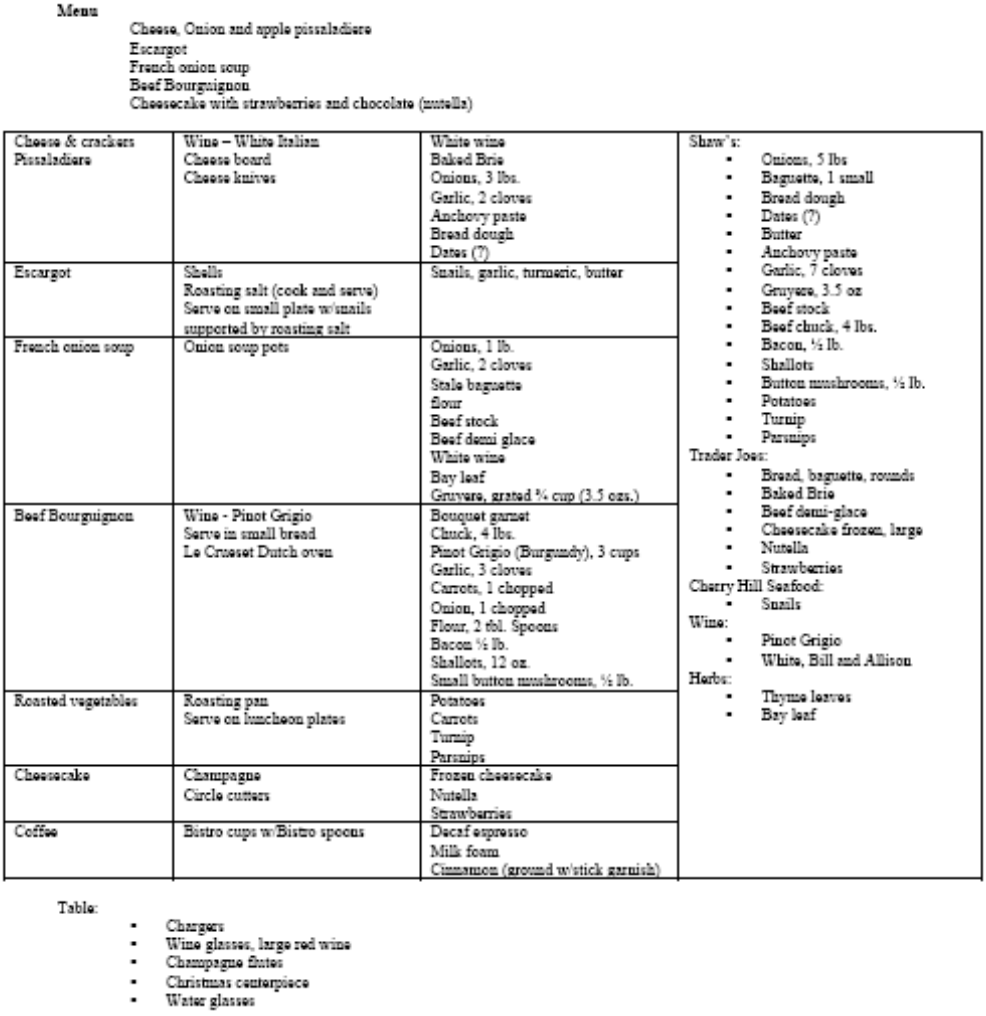
Figure 20. A menu created by a gourmet cook.

Menus are effective devices for organizing numerous elements of the episode. They establish necessary ingredients and equipment, the order of events, and implicate beverage options (gourmet cooks often pair wines with foods). Tom addresses all these matters in the

table below (Figure 21), which he produced on his computer in Microsoft Word while planning for a French-themed dinner party. He explains,

> I put this chart together with what we will eat, the necessary ingredients, and things we need to buy. I know what I need to do, like marinate the beef, and take the dough out of the freezer so that it rises and is ready around 5:00, for rolling out. I know how much time I have, that's how I do it.

Not all cooks produce meticulous plans like Tom's. At a minimum, during planning cooks sketch out the main components of a meal and produce a shopping list.



Menu

Cheese, Onion and apple pissaladiere
Escargot
French onion soup
Beef Bourguignon
Cheesecake with strawberries and chocolate (nutella)

Cheese & crackers Pissaladiere	Wine – White Italian Cheese board Cheese knives	White wine Baked Brie Onions, 3 lbs. Garlic, 2 cloves Anchovy paste Bread dough Dates (?)	Shaw's: • Onions, 5 lbs • Baguette, 1 small • Bread dough • Dates (?) • Butter • Anchovy paste • Garlic, 7 cloves • Gruyere, 3.5 oz • Beef stock • Beef chuck, 4 lbs. • Bacon, ½ lb. • Shallots • Button mushrooms, ½ lb. • Potatoes • Turnip • Parsnips Trader Joes: • Bread, baguette, rounds • Baked Brie • Beef demi-glace • Cheesecake frozen, large • Nutella • Strawberries Cherry Hill Seafood: • Snails Wine: • Pinot Grigio • White, Bill and Allison Herbs: • Thyme leaves • Bay leaf
Escargot	Shells Roasting salt (cook and serve) Serve on small plate w/snails supported by roasting salt	Snails, garlic, turmeric, butter	
French onion soup	Onion soup pots	Onions, 1 lb. Garlic, 2 cloves Stale baguette flour Beef stock Beef demi glace White wine Bay leaf Gruvere, grated ¾ cup (3.5 ozs.)	
Beef Bourguignon	Wine - Pinot Grigio Serve in small bread Le Creuset Dutch oven	Bouquet garnet Chuck, 4 lbs. Pinot Grigio (Burgundy), 3 cups Garlic, 3 cloves Carrots, 1 chopped Onion, 1 chopped Flour, 2 tbl. Spoons Bacon ½ lb. Shallots, 12 oz. Small button mushrooms, ½ lb.	
Roasted vegetables	Roasting pan Serve on luncheon plates	Potatoes Carrots Turnip Parsnips	
Cheesecake	Champagne Circle cutters	Frozen cheesecake Nutella Strawberries	
Coffee	Bistro cups w/Bistro spoons	Decaf espresso Milk foam Cinnamon (ground w/stick garnish)	

Table:

- Chargers
- Wine glasses, large red wine
- Champagne flutes
- Christmas centerpiece
- Water glasses

Figure 21. A menu extended into a shopping list and work plan.

Menus, steering documents and lists are handy to carry along during the next stage of provisioning to ensure that all ingredients are purchased. They are also present in the kitchen during *prepping*, *assembling*, *cooking* and *serving* (discussed next as Using Information During an Episode, 7.6). Gourmet cook Nancy creates artful versions of her menus to share with her dinner-party guests as keepsakes. Often cooks save these planning documents as elements of their PCL so that meals are memorialized and can be replicated.

7.5.7 Review of launching a cooking episode

To recap, one of the most information intensive moments in the hobby of gourmet cooking occurs when Launching a Cooking Episode. Fueled by a desire to cook and a life rich with cooking experiences hobbyists *explore* the culinary literature and environments for hands-on opportunities. When a food concept piques their interest they search for recipes in their personal culinary library. A berrypicking strategy is employed that entails multiple probes into different information repositories (including text, online, and human). Cooks usually gather several recipes which are compared, merged, modified or extended. For the most complex episodes recipes are assembled into a menu, influenced by holiday traditions, cuisines and the cook's culinary sensibility. This start-up process generates original planning documents that keep the enterprise on track and memorialize the project. After Launching a Cooking Episode, cooks go to their kitchen to use information in different ways, discussed next.

7.6 Using Information During a Cooking Episode

Now we turn our attention to information activity during what most people think of as "cooking." In the episode cycle, these are the hands-on tasks of *prepping*, *assembling*, *cooking*

and *serving* (shown in Figure 22). The four steps are a linear sequence and occur in one event lasting from about 30 minutes to a few hours. Based upon the nature of the episode a step may be skipped (as when a salad does not require cooking); or steps may happen concurrently (as when a sauce is assembled while being heated in a pan). If the episode has multiple food items or courses the sequence unfolds as repeated cycles.

During these steps information is used in a distinct manner worthy of description. In the context of gourmet cooking *use* means: consulting an information resource to determine the next proper action, as in checking a recipe or menu. The act of use is quick and deductive, unlike the more contemplative use of documents by scholars or by gourmet cooks during Staying Informed and Inspired. In reality, *re-use* may be a better term, for the cook is engaging information that has been considered already.

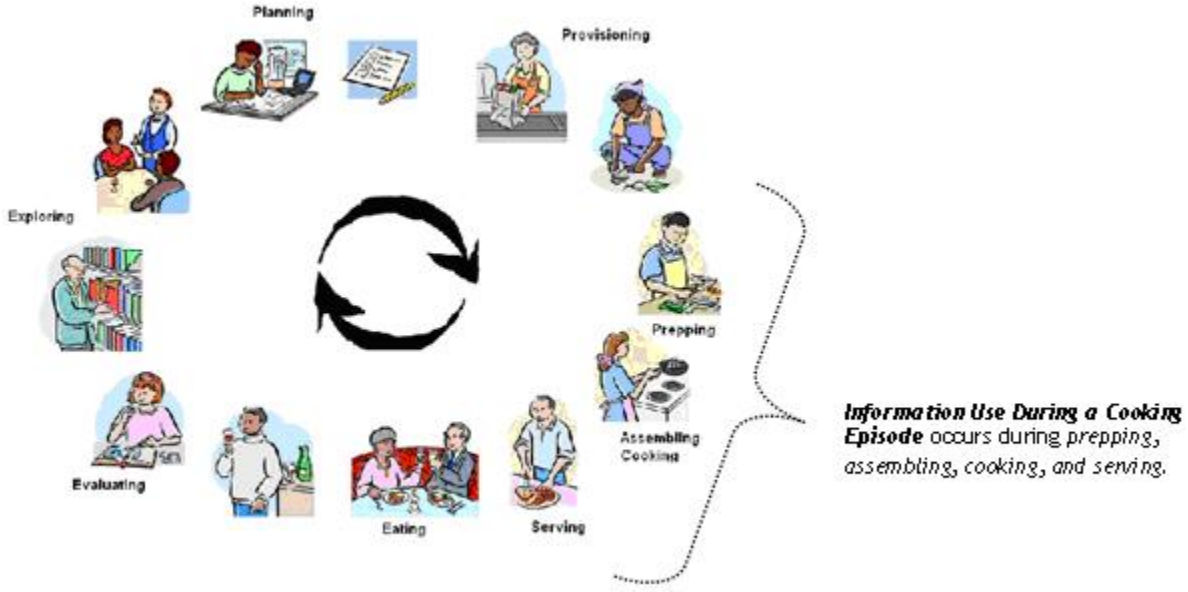


Figure 22. Information use during a cooking episode.

These steps of the hobby are usually performed independently by the gourmet cook,

reflecting the adage "too many cooks spoil the broth." For instance, when asked if he practices the hobby with others, Ken responds, "Rarely. Leanne (his wife) and I cook sometimes together, but only if it is a big party. Generally I cook alone." And, gourmet cook Hanna says "If I'm going to cook, *I'm* going to cook. I can't stand having him (my husband) there (in the kitchen)." It appears gourmet cooking is similar to the vision-driven realm of the humanities, where there is a minority of co-paintings or co-authored works. This idea is corroborated by Francis Short's (2006) study of American cooking habits, focused on feeding work not hobby cooking. In a section entitled "Cooks Want to Cook Alone" she states, "When people cook, they prefer to be left on their own in the kitchen" this is especially prevalent "…amongst those who see cooking primarily as a hobby or interest…" (p. 38).

Yet while hands-on cooking is *mainly* an independent creative enterprise, on occasion family and friends participate in limited ways. In such cases the gourmet cook retains authority but assigns discrete tasks, often at crunch moments when many elements of a meal are coming together. While preparing a multi-course birthday dinner, Vincent explains, "I had Chris (his friend) take care of the risotto, I set him up stirring and standing at the stove." Gourmet cook Eric shows an unusually collaborative approach when he says,

> I like involving people in the process. There are a lot of people who like to cook. So sometimes I don't even ask. They volunteer themselves. So I say, step right up, and I give them a knife. That way, it becomes an integrative process.

Since collaborative cooking is a minority event for gourmets, this section focuses on information phenomena of independent cooking.

7.6.1 Displaying recipes

This phase of the hobby happens in the cook's kitchen amidst the necessary equipment and ingredients. The cook (usually solo) occupies the *kitchen triangle* and repeatedly moves between its apexes: the heating appliance, food storage areas, and a work surface. Recipes and planning documents direct the process and therefore must be within view. Most cooks place these documents adjacent to the work surface. A variety of display methods may be employed. Recipe or cookbook holders prop up documents or texts at the best angle for reading (Figure 23, left); bulletin boards or the surface of a refrigerator are also recipe holders (Figure 23, middle).

Figure 23. Ways to display a recipe: a recipe holder (left); bulletin board (middle); and protective plastic covers (right).

A problem that may be unique to gourmet cooking is keeping culinary information clean during use, for food can splatter and the cook's hands can be food-covered and smear the documents. For this reason, some gourmets place recipes in plastic sheets or laminate that can be wiped clean, as shown by Celeste in Figure 23, right. Others feel that drips and crumbs add character and personal history to their cookbooks, and do not worry about the matter. Nancy remarks "If (the recipe) is on a piece of paper it will usually be right next to me on the counter to constantly refer to. I take a chance I may spill all over it, and books, too."

The dynamic and potentially messy nature of information use while cooking is one reason why computers are not ideal kitchen devices. As mentioned in Chapter 2: Literature Review (2.2.3), fanciful visions of the "kitchen of the future" include computer terminals that facilitate cooking. Yet no cooks in this study favored a computer in their kitchen to display a recipe for use. Paper documents or books remain ideal, effective technologies because they are cheap, movable, durable, easily reproduced, and can be marked up.

7.6.2 Following recipes: rational or sensual

There are two ways to follow a recipe, here coined *rational* and *sensual*. Cooks who take a rational approach execute the recipe *precisely* as written, staying especially true to the ingredients and amounts. Placing faith in the recipe, they may not even taste their preparations along the way. Cooks in this mode fix their attention upon the recipe and return to it many times over the course of the project. Rose employs the terms "read," "re-read," "consult," "look at," "check," "double check" and "follow" to describe the process:

> I *read* the recipe and get all the ingredients, I *read* it and *reread* it. If I am waiting for something to brown, I *consult* the recipe again. I *look at* steps ahead. I also have this habit, if I am waiting for something to cook, I move on to other recipes to *read* and *reread*. The recipe has to be in front of me. I *check* and *double check*. Even for those I have done many times, I have it out and *check* it. For a first time recipe I am very conscious of *following* it closely. It has to be in front of me.

Differently, those favoring a sensual approach consider the recipe a general guideline to be adjusted on the fly based upon real time impressions and their culinary acumen. Gourmet cook Eric explains,

> I tend to 'food-combine' more on instinct. I sometimes look through (recipes) when meal planning. Sometimes I'll look at a recipe to get an *idea* of where something is going. But I don't follow recipes *per se*, for the most part.

I look at them and use them as reference points.

Sensual cooks are less fixed on the recipe and more inclined, for example, to *listen* for the sound of food cooking, *feel* the density of bread dough, *smell* the ripeness of fruit, *look* to assess the thickness of a sauce, and of course *taste* their cooked products. Gourmet cook Ken notes how *Food Network* star Emeril encourages all cooks to,

> *Taste it!* Does it need salt? *Taste it!* What does it taste like? You've got to be working on the ground. If you are just following the recipe, it is not going to work. You have to trust your own techniques and intuition. You must respond to how it's evolving at the moment.

These two approaches, rational or sensual, may be determined by the food item or cuisine more so than the cook's style. Certain techniques that entail a chemical reaction, like baking, require exact measures, ingredients, and procedures whereas more forgiving concoctions such as salad invite modification based upon whims. When asked how often she refers to the recipe, Katey notes this distinction in her answer, "Quite a bit, I keep consulting it. I have short term memory problems! …If it is something like sponge cake, I consult it every few moments, it is something I need to know." Cuisines, too, influence the dynamic between the cook and the recipe. French is a highly codified and rational cuisine; whereas Sara notes that Iranian food is difficult and "…requires a lot of intuition about when it is done. You have to smell and adjust seasonings."

7.6.3 Staying on track

During a complex episode many elements may come together in a time-critical order. Cooks keep track of tasks and steps by marking up recipes and planning documents, as shown in Figure 24. Katey says, "I'll write a menu (on a large chalkboard) when cooking, and I'll place a check mark next to things that are done." And Rose explains, "Well…this

notepad… is a list of what I want to prepare. I cross it off as I prepare them" and Anne concurs "I have a list when I am doing two or three things at a time. I move through this master list and I check things off as I go along."

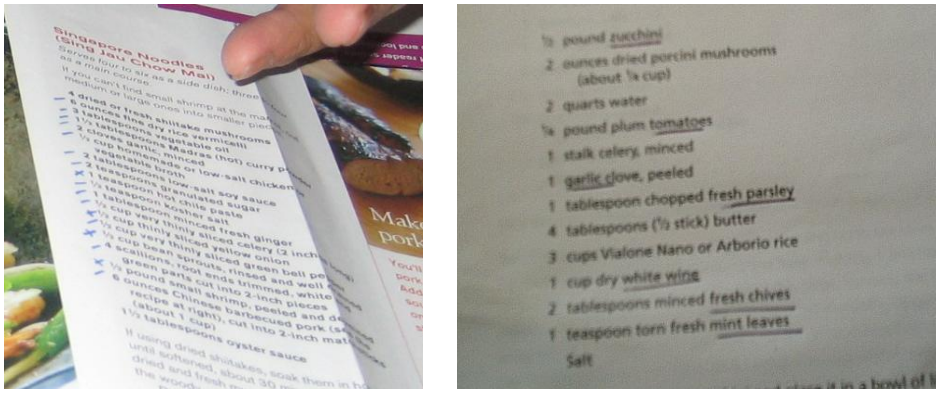


Figure 24. Markings on a recipe that keep the episode on track.

7.6.4 Serving picture perfect results

Ultimately, recipes come to fruition and the cook turns their attention to serving. As mentioned in 5.4, The Gourmet Aesthetic…, cooks aim for attractive presentations. This moment of the episode relies upon *visual* information, such as pictures in cookbooks or real-time demonstrations seen earlier on television. Images provide crucial clues to how foodstuffs come together, as Hanna notes,

> I like having pictures. I like seeing instructions played out…One cookbook shows step by step how to roll up a sponge cake. This shows you really specifically what to do. I am really visual. Telling me might not work, I like to see it.

Visual information helps cooks with final portioning, plating and garnishing. Some information resources are better than others for these tasks; Katey reports, "I confess that I

get *Martha Stewart Living* but that is because I like the presentations. Sometimes I'll take things from her presentations, hers are beautiful."

7.6.5 Review of using information during a cooking episode

To close, during the hands-on phase of the episode, cooks use information to guide the execution of a cooking project. In this context, *use* is the quick behavior of checking a document to determine the next proper action. This part of the episode unfolds in the kitchen among the necessary equipment, ingredients, and work surfaces. Culinary documents such as recipes, menus and work plans are kept within the cook's view. Simple technologies like cookbook holders and bulletin boards display the documents and protect them from food stains. Gourmets may take a rational approach to following a recipe and execute instructions precisely; *or* have a sensual strategy that relies more upon impressions and instincts in real time. To keep track of many concurrent elements during complex episodes, cooks check off tasks from their planning documents. Information resources containing images help to deliver a glorious result.

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented five clusters of information activities and their associated information resources in the hobby of gourmet cooking:

1. Living a Gourmet Lifestyle
2. Expressing Culinary Expertise
3. Staying Informed and Inspired
4. Launching a Cooking Episode
5. Using Information During a Cooking Episode

To review, the relationships, travel, and workaday shopping of gourmet cooks are oriented to culinary matters, leading to a lifestyle imbued with a gourmet esprit. Gourmet

cooks enjoy the role of expert and share their culinary knowledge with family and friends or with like-minded peers in online forums. They stay informed and inspired about the hobby by engaging the literature and media about cooking, a savored routine that punctuates everyday life. A most information-intensive moment in the hobby occurs at the launch of an episode, when gourmets create a vision and plan for a cooking project. Finally, when an episode comes to fruition in the kitchen they use information for guidance, a process that is quick and deductive. A sixth information activity, Managing a Personal Culinary Library, is special as a meta-activity solely involving information and is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 8: MANAGING A PERSONAL CULINARY LIBRARY

8.1 Introduction: the Personal Culinary Library

Managing a Personal Culinary Library, or PCL for short, is a sixth information activity. It differs from those surveyed in Chapter 7 because it is a *meta-activity*. The cook is not focused on gaining culinary knowledge per se, but on gathering and tending the materials (mainly cookbooks and recipes) that enable the acquisition of culinary knowledge.

Research into the practice of creating and managing information collections has been sporadic over the past three decades and there is no consensus on terms and concepts. It has been called *desk organization* (Malone, 1983), *personal documentation* (Stibic, 1980), and more recently *personal information management* (Bruce, 2005; Whittaker and Hirschberg, 2001). Bates (2002) uses a metaphor of *farming* to describe the act of cultivating an information collection. This line of inquiry into keeping behaviors is beneficial for advancing a more holistic view of the information experience, which has traditionally been seen as seeking and searching.

The settings where information is acquired, cultivated, and organized over time have been called information spaces (Lee, 2003), *personal information environments* (Malone, 1983; Kwasnik, 1991) or *personal information collections* (Bruce, Jones, and Dumais, 2004). Today, the mainstay of research into this area (coming out of the Keeping Found Things Found study based at the University of Washington) focuses on the *digital* realm of the PC or computer desktop; and almost without exception assumes a workplace context. My research into the upkeep of home-based collections by gourmet cooks illuminates keeping behaviors in a personal, domestic, leisure context not described before.

This chapter employs and enriches concepts from social worlds and serious leisure theory. According to Strauss social worlds have *locations* where activity routinely occurs; these are usually public settings. In the case of gourmet cooking the foremost location is the

home, which supplies the necessary equipment, materials, and work space for cooking. I will show how the home is also a critical storehouse for information resources and a site of knowledge acquisition. In serious leisure Stebbins (1994) notes that Liberal Arts hobbyists (a particularly learning-oriented sort) require a study of some kind to contemplate and read about their hobby. Here, I will present the first rich description of such spaces, and extend their role to the Making and Tinkering class.

To document information collections in the households of gourmet cooks I adapted an approach from the field of visual anthropology, called a *photographic inventory* (Collier & Collier, 1986; see 4.3.2). This technique is ideal for recording complex, multi-featured environments through still photography. After the interview, the gourmet cook took me on a tour of their residence, identifying and describing any information resources used in the hobby. Along the way, I systematically photographed the setting, focusing on *rooms*, *collections*, and *items*, following my shooting guide (see 4.3.2.2). This generated 468 photographs, an average of 26 per home. (Due to equipment failures, photographs are not available for 2 homes and the average is for 18, not 20, cases.) The cook's narration was tape recorded, transcribed, and added to the data set. After the tour, I diagramed the space using a pencil and graph paper, marking the spatial relations of the whole setting and its information resources. The transcripts of the cook's narration, photographs, and floor diagrams were analyzed for themes (see 4.4.1) and coded using NVivo software.

During analysis of the data, I generated 70 different codes under the heading of Personal Culinary Library. To bring order to the large set I reflected on their inherent properties and then collapsed them into 4 classes: *entities* (27 information-related objects), *features* (14 qualities of the phenomena), *processes* (21 series of actions directed to some end) and *spaces* (8 rooms or places in the home), shown in Table 23. These four dimensions

evince my growing sense that the self-provision of leisure information is complex and involves artifacts, behaviors, and a setting that vary in nature and scale.

Entities	Features	Processes
binders	aesthetics	acquiring materials
bookshelves	cognitive authority	annotating recipes or cookbooks
catalogues	enclosure	buying
collectibles	evolution	cataloging
cookbooks	family involvement	collecting
ephemera	information	creating
favorites	overload	cutting out
files	intentions	flagging or marking
folders	knowledge of organization	lending
heritage materials	ownership	non-use
Internet or technologies	problems	organizing or organization
journals or notebooks	propinquity	photocopying
keepers	scale or scope	printing or typing
magazines or serials	wear and tear	saving
misc. records		scanning
mother lode	Spaces	searching, browsing, looking
non-culinary information	bookstore	selling
non-information	den or tv room	sharing recipes
personal computer	dining room	subscribing
recipe card collections	kitchen	throwing away
reference materials	stairwell and back hall	upkeep or weeding
stacks	storage area	
staging or holding files	study or office	
structures	upstairs or downstairs	
subscriptions		
tools		
zones		

Table 23. Codes to describe information phenomena in the home.

I have coined this phenomenon the *personal culinary library* or PCL, following Francis Miksa's idea of the *personal space library* (1996) a customized, home-based, collection of multimedia materials. The phrase PCL better reflects the predominance of cookbooks and recipes involved, and casts the hobbyist as information expert and curator more so than the more prevalent and generic terms *information space* or *information environment*.

My effort at a definition is as follows: The personal culinary library is a constellation of information resources based in the home of the gourmet cook, and an associated set of upkeep tasks that increase with its size. It supplies information and inspiration for ongoing cooking and is an archive of culinary experiences. The PCL is *personal* because in most cases the cook uses and oversees the collection exclusively, though sometimes couples share provision. It is *culinary* because its materials pertain to gourmet cooking. PCLs vary in size and scale, from a small set of cookbooks that are tucked away in a cabinet to larger multimedia collections that are a striking feature of a household. Unlike public libraries, PCLs are limited in subject range and known intimately by the cook. Materials are organized by genre, subject, and author, without elaborate bibliographic access mechanisms. These personal libraries blend into the home and everyday life, and seen holistically and in context, also contain non-culinary information, housing infrastructure (i.e. bookcases, countertops, boxes), cooking paraphernalia, and décor.

PCLs are dynamic and develop over the course of the hobby career. Managing a PCL, especially larger ones, entails routine upkeep. New materials are acquired, reviewed, used, and placed into a permanent location. There is regular weeding, re-organization, browsing, and deacquisition of unwanted items. Subscriptions to culinary serials are renewed or cancelled annually. New technologies are tested and sometimes implemented. Just like a public library, some cooks have policies for lending materials. As the PCL grows in size the home spaces it occupies may be renovated. For many gourmet cooks these information-keeping activities are a cherished part of the hobby.

As a point of departure, I will first survey the artifacts in the typical PCL. Then I will address the varying extent and size of PCLs and provide two examples that display the range. Large PCLs tend to coalesce into information systems and structures, and I will describe their workings in greater detail.

8.2 Survey of Artifacts

As a starting point, the PCL can be characterized through a survey of its artifacts. From a material perspective this answers the questions *What does a PCL contain? What is it made up of?* The majority of items in the PCL are text-bearing information resources related to gourmet cooking. The prevalent genres are cookbooks and recipes, in a variety of documentary or digital forms. Most are published or publicly available in the social world, while some are one-of-a-kind, special keepsakes made by cooks or their loved ones. The library reaches outside the home via online connection to include culinary websites and recipe databases. Fellow cooks, family, or friends who provide culinary information are considered human resources of the library, though this is a minor element for most cooks. (Only one cook, Claire, stressed that she regularly turns to people first.) Human resources of the PCL will not be discussed here. The typical PCL contains the following:

8.2.1 Multi-purpose cookbooks

Cookbooks are the most prevalent items in the PCL. As a genre, a cookbook is "a book containing recipes and instructions for cooking." Many sub-genres of cookbooks appeared in the PCLs of this study. Seminal, multi-purpose cookbooks such as *The Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook* or *Joy of Cooking* cover the breadth of foodstuffs, from appetizers to desserts and feature staples. These classic works serve as reference texts, as Roland implies, "We've got all these cookbooks, but if I need a *basic* recipe for French toast, or spaghetti and meatballs, that (*Joy of Cooking*) will have something." Seminal cookbooks are regularly updated and reissued to appeal to evolving food tastes and trends. Some cooks in this study, such as Anne, owned and used multiple editions (Figure 25). Yet others, like Roberta, say "…*Joy of Cooking*…I've never been a fan. It's just so bland! I already know all

the basics."

Figure 25. Anne holding two trusty editions of *Joy of Cooking*.

8.2.2 Subject cookbooks

Most cookbooks in any PCL are narrower subject-themed cookbooks. These focus on cuisines such as French or Italian, or food categories like pasta or sauces. If cooks have a favorite subject they may own many (and sometimes a*ll*) related cookbooks, for instance, Dorene's collection of chocolate cookbooks (Figure 26, left) and Katey's vegetarian set (Figure 26, right) are shown below.

Figure 26. Subject cookbooks: Dorene's set of chocolate cookbooks (left) and Katey's vegetarian cookbooks (right).

8.2.3 "Prof" cookbooks

A relative newcomer to the cookbook category is what Hanna calls "prof" cookbooks – meaning *professional* cookbooks. These focus on fundamental techniques as taught in culinary schools and practiced in restaurants. Figure 27 shows examples of *The Professional Chef* and *Professional Cooking*. A blurb on the inside cover of the latter text extols, "…this best-selling culinary classic gives you a complete foundation in cooking techniques and the theories behind them."

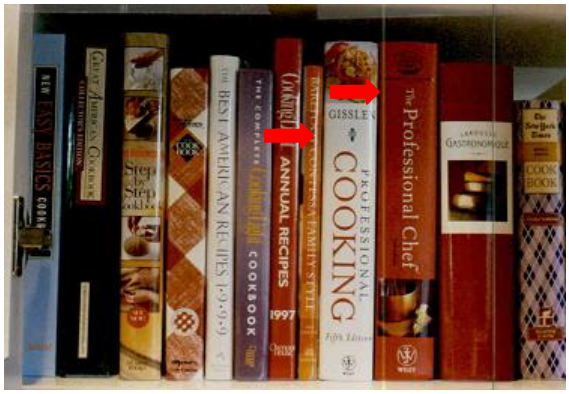


Figure 27. Two "prof" cookbooks in Hanna's PCL: *Professional Cooking* and *The Professional Chef*.

8.2.4 Vintage or rare cookbooks

Some cookbooks in the PCL are vintage works. Cooks take an historical interest in older recipes, culinary anecdotes, or period images. Katey enjoys the culinary surprises found in old cookbooks and explains "For a while there was a popular dish with mashed potatoes mixed with sugar, rolled into balls and dipped into chocolate….what were they thinking?!" Celeste smiles over old-fashioned books such as *Clementine in the Kitchen*, where whimsical illustrations reflect outdated ideals for women (Figure 28, left). Katey also appreciates imagery and picking up a cookbook with a colorful woodcut (Figure 28, middle) exclaims, "Sometimes the images are fantastic, look at this…I just want to frame this. It's fabulous.

How cool is that!" There is also a market for rare, collectible art cookbooks; for instance, Patty cherishes a cookbook by Salvador Dali (Figure 28, right) valued at several hundred dollars (though few others in this study owned such pricy rare cookbooks).

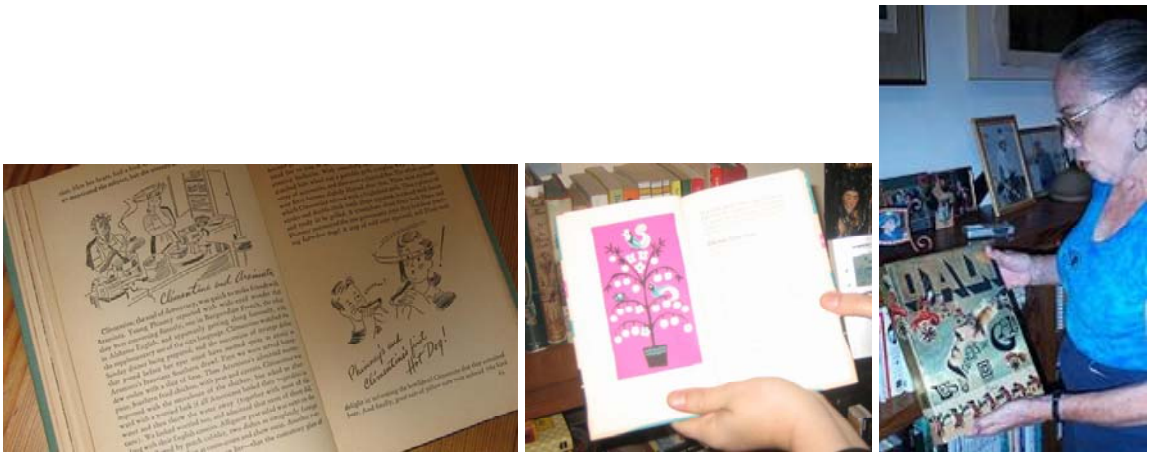


Figure 28. Vintage or rare cookbooks: Celeste's *Clementine in the Kitchen*; a woodcut that Katey loves; and Patty's rare Salvador Dali cookbook.

8.2.5 Cookbook series

Decades ago cookbooks were often acquired on a subscription basis. New issues were sent to the cook monthly. A few PCLs in this study contained Time Life's series *Foods of the World* (Figure 29, left) and *The Good Cook* (Figure 29, right) that were groundbreaking and remain highly regarded today. Gourmet cook Roberta says she learned to cook in the early 1970s by studying her monthly *Foods of the World*. She appreciates how these texts contain lush illustrations and informative narrative, while the recipes were issued separately in a small handbook (Figure 29, left shows both text and handbook).

Figure 29. Cookbook series appearing in the PCLs of this study: Time Life's *Foods of the World* cookbooks and handbooks (left); and *The Good Cook* (right).

8.2.6 Culinary reference books

The PCLs in this study usually contained at least one culinary reference text, such as a culinary encyclopedia, dictionary, or handbook. These serve as authoritative sources for information that may be missing from cookbooks and recipes. For example, beginner cooks may turn to a culinary dictionary for additional instruction when a recipe directs them to *julienne* a vegetable (meaning, to cut into thin matchstick strips). The favorite text of this kind is the encyclopedia *Larousse Gastronomique*, found frequently in the PCLs of this study (Figure 30). Dorene remarks with a wry smile, "Whenever we want to know something for sure, my husband is the first to run in and get this (*Larousse Gastronomique*), to check it and make sure I'm not giving him the business."

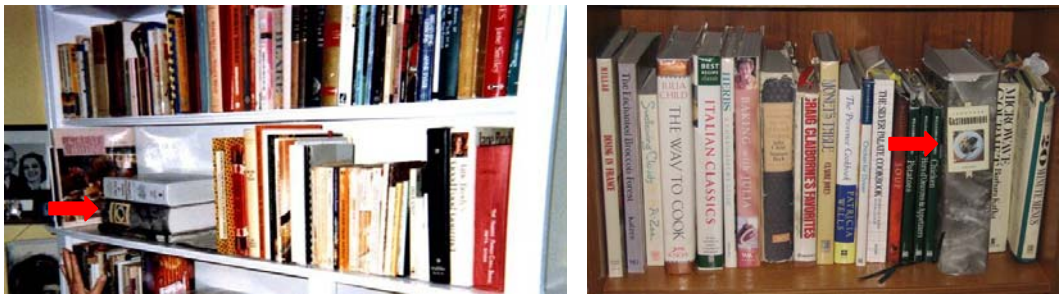


Figure 30. A culinary reference book: *Larousse Gastronomique*, a culinary encyclopedia, appeared in many PCLs of this study.

8.2.7 Gastronomy

As mentioned in 7.4.2, Reading gastronomy, cooks enjoy gastronomy, a literary genre that addresses proper eating and cooking habits, culinary history and myth, and the "nostalgic evocation of memorable meals" (Mennell, 270-271). Most cooks in this study had gastronomy in their PCLs, kept separate from cookbook collections. For example, Katey's gastronomy books (Figure 31) are on top of a bookcase in her bedroom.

Figure 31. A collection of gastronomy.

8.2.8 Culinary serials

Gourmet cooks subscribe to culinary serials that arrive on a monthly basis and are elements of the PCL. Recent issues are displayed on hand for browsing. Tom stores his in a

bin next to a couch (Figure 32, left). Back issues are placed out-of-the-way in storage. Dorene keeps 40 years of culinary magazines in her garage (Figure 32, middle). Gourmets sometimes purchase special issues of serials devoted to topics like "grilling" or "hot & spicy" (Figure 32, right). As magazines pile up in the PCL it becomes increasingly difficult to locate individual recipes therein. To solve this problem, some serials offer an annual paper-based index for an additional cost; or affiliated websites with recipe databases function as a searchable index for the paper volumes.

Figure 32. Culinary serials: Tom keeps recent issues of *Cook's Illustrated* in a bin next to his couch for browsing (left); 40 years of culinary serials in Dorene's garage (middle); special topic issues of culinary magazines (right).

8.2.9 Recipes

The central genre of gourmet cooking is the recipe, a set of instructions for preparing food. Recipes are relatively compact and usually occupy a single page. They may take the form of cards (Figure 33, left), clippings from newspapers (Figure 33, middle), or print-outs from online recipe databases such as epicurious.com (Figure 33, right). Recipes can be carried within other genres (such as cookbooks, serials, or websites) or exist as freestanding documents. Cooks group their recipes into collections within boxes, files, folders, or binders that facilitate organization, retrieval, and use; these structures will be discussed further shortly.

Figure 33. Different forms of recipes, on paper: As cards (left); newspaper clippings (middle); and print-outs from online recipe databases (right).

PCLs also contain recipes in digital forms (Figure 34). Most cooks think of the entirety of epicurious.com and foodtv.com (and similar recipe databases) as a personal resource, though it resides *outside* their home. Digital recipes take on actual presence in the PCL when they are downloaded from online databases and saved on a home computer (Figure 34, left and middle). Some cooks in this study maintained recipe collections in this way. Claire prefers to have her recipes in digital form so that she can easily email them to friends. Rose tried to retype or scan all her favorite recipes onto her computer though this became too time consuming. Cooks print the digital recipes onto paper to use in the kitchen. Some PCLs in this study also included culinary CDs, programs that help cooks to format their own recipes, or which supply recipes (Figure 34, right).

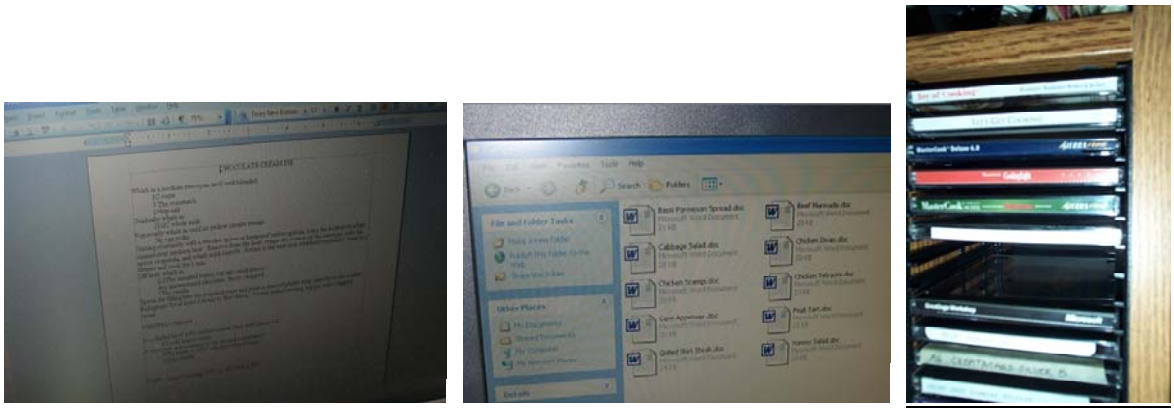


Figure 34. Different forms of recipes, digital: As text documents (left); in a digital folder (middle); on culinary CDs (right).

8.2.10 Culinary ephemera

Some gourmet cooks keep myriad documentary items related to food. For instance, Damon saves brochures produced by food industry promotional groups, such as a piece about apples (Figure 35, left). Patty keeps the manuals that accompany appliances because they provide usage instructions as well as recipes (Figure 35, middle) Celeste collects restaurant reviews and menus (Figure 35, right) in a manila folder in her PCL.

Figure 35. Culinary ephemera: Brochures (left); manuals (middle), and articles (right).

8.2.11 Culinary keepsakes

Special classes of items in the PCL are here called *culinary keepsakes*: cookbooks, recipes, or recipe collections that have special personal meaning and value to the cook. These objects imbue the PCL with sentiments, memories, and family legacies, enriching it from a functional resource of the hobby to a carrier of life experience and tradition. Every cook in this study had some form of culinary keepsake and Table 24 shows a sample from the data. These sorts of items are not purchased, but are passed along through generations or received as gifts.

- a culinary diary
- a grandmother's recipe box
- a grandmother's recipe notebook
- a mother-in-law's recipe notebook
- a son's gift of recipes for his mother
- a mother's recipe box
- a wedding present from friends of favorite recipes
- a hand-made cookbook from a child's class
- a first cookbook from childhood
- a best friend's binder (of recipes/menus)
- a cookbook from a hospital (where a son had surgery)
- a cookbook created by a best friend's mother

Table 24. Culinary keepsakes owned by the gourmet cooks in the study.

Most culinary keepsakes are fragile and lovely; distinctive handwriting, yellowed papers, and food stains give them character. For instance, Celeste marvels at the ornate cursive script in her Danish mother-in-law's first cookbook (Figure 36, top left). Roberta cherishes a modest wire-ringed notebook of her grandmother's recipes (Figure 36, top right) and explains,

> I never knew my grandmother. When she was dying my mother insisted she write down her recipes, so they wouldn't disappear. Yes, I remember these from my grandmother…a pie crust…a lemon chiffon pie…

Roberta also loves the booklet made by her young son as a class project for Mother's Day; called *My Mom Makes It Best*, it includes her own crab cake recipe written and illustrated in her son's hand (Figure 36, bottom, right). Celeste keeps notebooks created by her grandmother, who carefully clipped recipes from the newspaper and pasted them onto pages (Figure 36, bottom left); for a while she used this same approach to saving her own recipes.

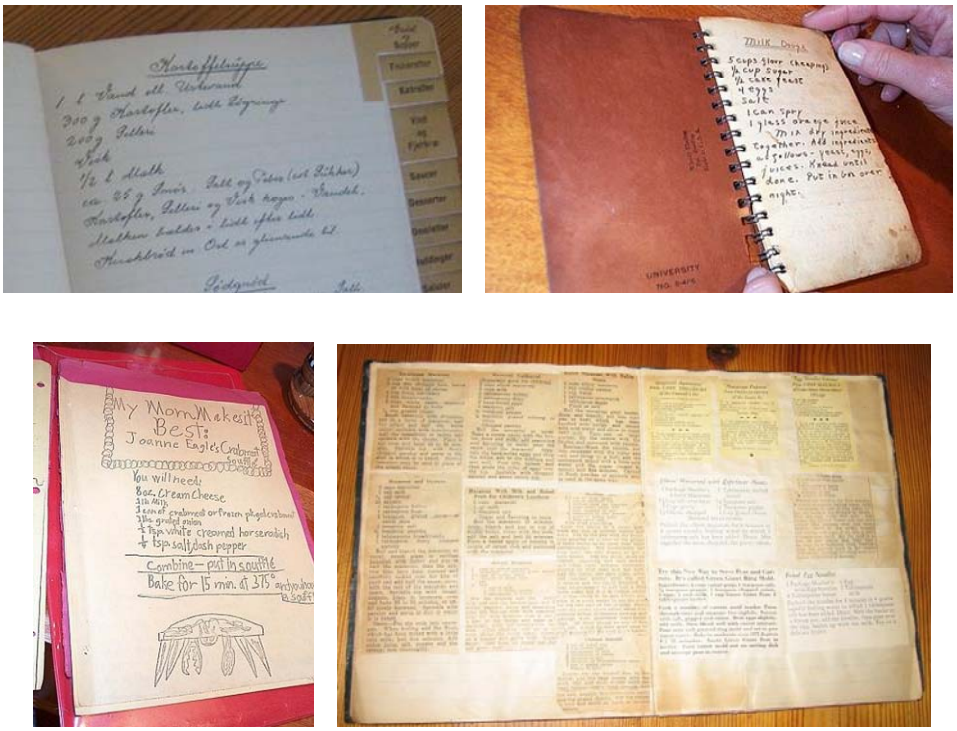


Figure 36. Examples of culinary keepsakes (clockwise from top left): The cookbook of Celeste's Danish mother-in-law; Roberta's grandmother's recipe notebook; a hand-made recipe book by Roberta's son; Celeste's grandmother's book of recipes clipped from the newspaper.

Culinary keepsakes are sometimes used for cooking. Anne picks up the cherished *Betty Crocker's Cook Book for Boys and Girls* (Figure 37) she was given at age 8 and says, "…The recipes are wonderful…Here's a great pudding cake, makes the sauce on the bottom, delicious, never found a better one anywhere." Cooking from culinary keepsakes invokes

memories, as Roberta explains, "When my son was 12, he had his appendix removed during a trip to France. So here is a cookbook from the American hospital there. When we use it, we all smile."

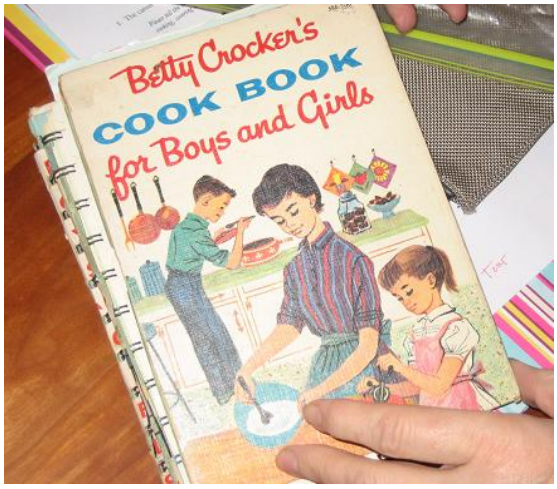


Figure 37. Anne's first cookbook, now a culinary keepsake.

8.2.12 Culinary diaries

Another culinary keepsake is the diary or journal, kept by about a quarter of the cooks in this study. These artifacts are used to record food-related experiences and musings. The most prolific diarist of this project, Celeste, makes entries every few days in an inexpensive wire bound notebook. One entry reads "Tonight I sautéed baby spinach with onions and garlic in oyster sauce." Then, she illustrates a technique for assembling spring rolls (Figure 38, left). Celeste has created a notation system for her diaries in which a *star* means "tastes great!" and a *cloud* represents a wish or idea for something she wants to cook. In Figure 38 (right), the star highlights a "Fab food day" spent in late January, 1999; the same entry is playfully illustrated with jumping fish.

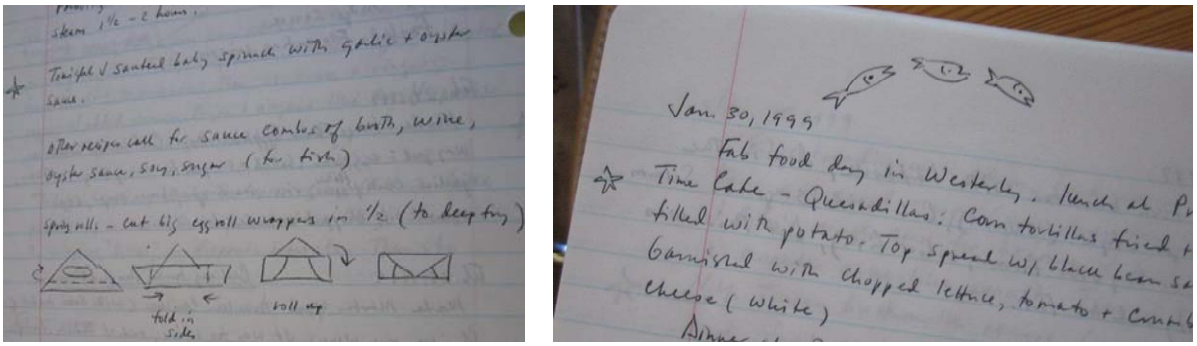


Figure 38. Celeste's culinary diary. It contains experiences, musings, tips, and illustrations.

Sara keeps a diary of favorite recipes encountered during travels. Figure 39 (top left) shows a recipe for a ragu (meat sauce for pasta) encountered in Italy, and the next page introduces a trip to Denver. Gourmet cook Margaret keeps a journal about experiences at restaurants. In Figure 39 (top right) she has placed a restaurant review into her journal and included her own comments; it reads, "I have gone twice to this restaurant and found it authentic. They were really preparing Sichuan dishes." Margaret also keeps records of the meals she prepares for friends. She photographs each dish (Figure 39, bottom) and mounts them in an album. This way she is sure to never prepare the same menu twice. Margaret intends to pass her journals along to a family member with culinary interests.

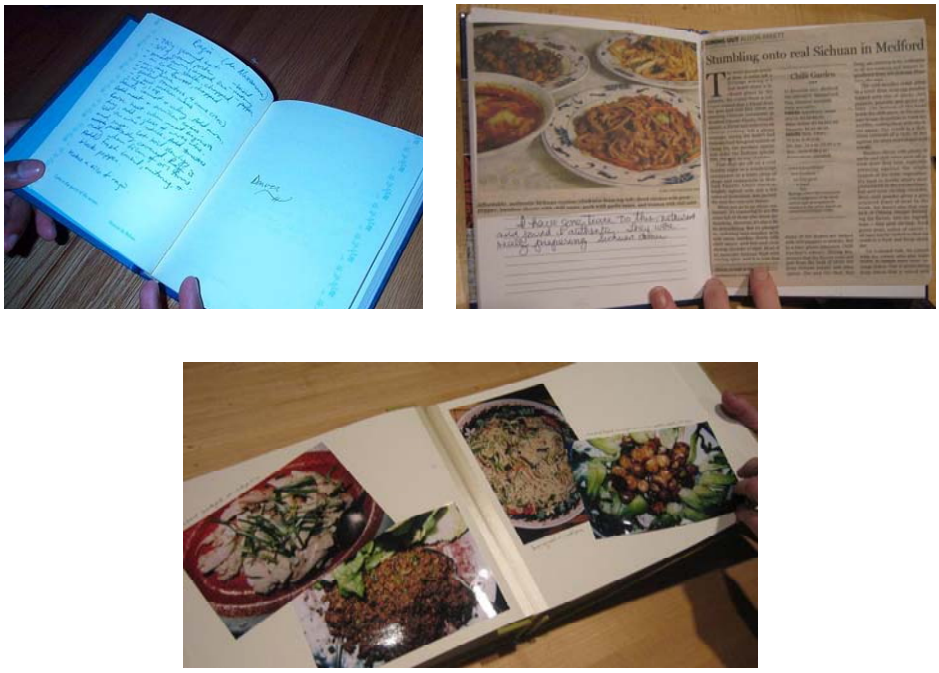


Figure 39. Examples of culinary diaries (clockwise from top left): Mandy's travelogue with recipes from Italy and Denver; Margaret's journal of restaurant experiences; and her visual record of cooked meals.

8.2.13 Non-culinary information

Sometimes, culinary information keeps close company with documentary materials unrelated to cooking. Hobbyist can be nonchalant about the composition of their collections, which are geared to personal (not public or institutional) needs and interests. For instance, Damon has an eclectic shelf of books (Figure 40), including: *The New York Times Cookbook* next to *How to Make Pictures Without Paint* which is alongside *Chinese Cuisine* and then *The Cubist Epoch* is followed by *Intermediate French Workbook*. Sara, too, mingles her cookbooks with other kinds of literature, such as college textbooks.

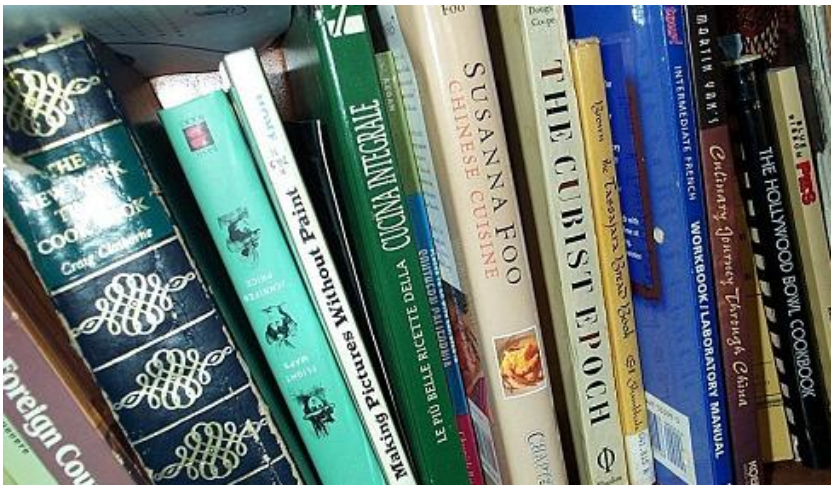


Figure 40. Cookbooks mixed in with non-culinary texts.

8.2.14 Cooking paraphernalia

A PCL exists in a household, a heterogeneous space where cooks go about their everyday lives. As a result, some PCLs contain mundane objects of daily living, in particular those related to cooking. These items are noted here to present the PCL in its natural context and to avoid a rarefied conception (not because these objects are used as information resources). For instance, in Figure 41 (left) a small stash of cookbooks is adjacent to a set of knives and a loaf of bread. In Figure 41 (middle and right) cookbooks are flanked by teapots, a collection of utensils, a cup, and jar of bay leaves. When present, these items give the PCL a homey and somewhat cluttered feel.

Figure 41. Cooking paraphernalia mixed into PCLs.

8.2.15 Décor

Some PCLs showcase a cook's sense of style or are coordinated to match household décor. Knickknacks and works of art have a place in the PCL. Celeste puts framed black and white photographs on her bookshelves (Figure 42, left). Gourmet cook Katey is learning to paint and one of her own culinary-themed works hangs adjacent to her cookbook collection (Figure 42, right).

Figure 42. Décor in the PCL: Sandy's PCL contains framed photographs (left); an oil painting by Katey decorates her PCL (right).

8.2.16 Support structures

A comprehensive material survey of the PCL should include the objects that support and contain the information resources. Documentary materials in quantity require *housing* and cooks in this study used bookcases, built-in shelves, file cabinets, desks, countertops, coffee tables, pedestals, bins, and boxes. To illustrate, the PCL in Figure 43 (left) is contained in a wire and wood baker's rack, a basket, and cardboard boxes. Some support infrastructure is technology. Home computers contain digital documents; and Internet access systems provide links to online materials (Figure 43, right).

Figure 43. Support structures in the PCL: Racks, baskets, and boxes support documentary materials (left); Computers contain digital recipes and links to online resources (right).

8.2.17 Summary of artifacts

This section has surveyed the material objects appearing in personal culinary libraries of the study. It has aimed to answer the questions: *What does a PCL contain? What are its contents?* In short, the PCL entails a wide variety of documentary and digital information resources related to gourmet cooking; the majority are published or publicly available, and some are one-of-a-kind keepsakes. A complete snapshot of the PCL also includes housing infrastructure, non-culinary materials, cooking paraphernalia, and décor. Table 25 provides a

summary and review of these items. Some readers may note the absence of television or radio resources. These broadcast media are not easily archived and searched on demand and hence are not deemed resources of a personal library. For sure, the 20 PCLs of this study varied in size and scale. Some contain only a few of the elements just mentioned, whereas others contain all. The next section quantifies the PCL and locates it graphically within the home.

- **cookbooks**: seminal, professional, subject-themed, historical/rare, series
- **culinary reference texts**: dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks
- **culinary serials**: monthly issues, special issues
- **gastronomy**: history, essays, fiction
- **recipes (on paper)**: cards, newspaper clippings, print outs
- **recipes (digital) and websites**: text files/folders, recipe databases, CDs
- **culinary ephemera**: brochures, manuals, restaurant reviews, articles
- **culinary keepsakes**: one-of-a-kind recipe books and cookbooks (from family), diaries
- **non-culinary information**: documentary materials on other subjects besides cooking
- **cooking paraphernalia***: utensils, foodstuffs, equipment
- **décor***: photographs, Knickknacks, works of art
- **support structures***: bookcases, built-in shelves, desks, PCs, networks, etc.

* non-information resources are included as elements of the PCL.
Table 25. Summary of artifacts observed in the PCLs of this study.

8.3 Quantifying the PCL

All the cooks in this study had culinary information in their homes, consisting of differing ratios of the artifacts surveyed above. The PCLs ranged in size and scale from a few dozen cookbooks with a short stack of recipes to larger multi-genre and multimedia collections that pervade a household. Correspondingly, some cooks were unconscious or nonchalant about the upkeep and use of these collections and others were zealous. I have found no single metric for measuring the size and scale of PCLs; all their elements must be

considered together. Next, I propose three types of PCLs–small, medium, large–based upon the prevalence of artifacts in the household, associated upkeep tasks, and the role in the hobby:

- A *small* PCL is unobtrusive or imperceptible in the home; its materials are tucked into a cabinet, shelf, or nook. For such a small collection there are no conscious maintenance activities. Cooks in this scenario are not document-oriented, and gain knowledge and inspiration through other means. (These sorts would probably resist the idea that they have a "PCL.")

- A *medium* PCL is a more noticeable, good-sized collection filling, for example, a few bookshelves with cookbooks and magazines. The cook occasionally tends to its composition or organization. These cooks likely consult their library for every cooking episode and may read or browse the materials for pleasure and learning.

- A *large* PCL dominates or permeates a setting such that guests to the home might say, "Wow! You must really love to cook." The cook engages the culinary literature above and beyond what is needed to execute regular episodes. These major sites entail routine upkeep tasks that coalesce into an information system, and the cook takes on the sensibility of a trained librarian.

In a grounded manner, the three classes span the smallest to largest PCLs observed in my study, and there are several instances of each type (4 small, 9 medium, 7 large). In the sample of 20, the distribution is slightly skewed toward larger PCLs. (I presume that during recruiting large libraries were brought to my attention more often than small ones.) Table 26 sums up features related to size and scale of PCLs in this project.

Type of PCL	#	Presence in household	Upkeep tasks	Role in the hobby	# of cookbooks *	The cooks
Small	4	imperceptible, tucked away	none	Not significant (experience and people are preferred)	<30	Vincent, Sara, Mandy, Eric
Medium	9	noticeable, but not striking	some, ad hoc	Consulted for each episode, regular learning/reading	31-99	Nancy, Rose, Claire, Damon, Hanna, Roberta, Camilla, Ken, Anne
Large	7	dominates and/or permeates the household	systematic	Engaged above and beyond episodic cooking	100+	Patty, Dorene, Margaret, Celeste, Roland, Katey, Tom

* This is a rough measure; I did not count cookbooks individually during data gathering.
Table 26. Summary of characteristics of small, medium, and large PCLs.

Two points should be kept in mind when quantifying the PCL. First, size is *not* a measure of the acumen or enthusiasm of the cook. In this study, cooks with small PCLs were as competent and passionate about the hobby as others. Rather, the extent of the PCL reveals differing cooking epistemologies. Some cooks orient primarily to documentary and/or digital information resources for knowledge acquisition; others use social, experiential or sensual approaches. This bifurcation was already noted in terms of recipe use as *rational* or *sensual* (see also 7.6.2: Following recipes: rational or sensual).

Second, any effort to measure the PCL must consider that they are dynamic and grow over the course of the hobby career. The cooks in this study had been in the *maintenance* stage of the career for 5 to 40 years. Younger cooks with shorter tenures (Mandy, Sara, Hanna, and Damon) unsurprisingly had some of the smaller PCLs; while older cooks (Patty, Dorene, and Margaret) had larger. A longitudinal study that tracks the evolution of PCLs over decades would shed more light on this matter.

To bring the range of PCLs into better focus, a small and large case will be profiled next. Vincent serves as an example of a small PCL and Celeste illustrates a large one. A medium PCL can be understood as existing in-between these poles.

8.3.1 Case study of a small PCL: Vincent

Vincent is a gourmet cook in his mid-40s who lives in a suburb north of Boston. He is married with three young children and works as a business consultant. Raised in a closely knit Italian family he reports, "All of my most fond memories of childhood revolve around the family and food." His mother went off to work when he was 12 and so he "started futzing around in the kitchen…with little things like scrambled eggs." During college Vincent worked in restaurants and learned a lot about food and wine while a line cook and waiter. He became increasingly interested in cooking for craft and pleasure, in part because it cast him as a more attractive bachelor. Later, his brother became a wine importer and mentored him about the regional wines and foods of Italy; over the years the brothers shared many eating and cooking experiences together.

Today, Vincent practices the hobby on a regular basis and favors "mostly American, classic French or Italian." For instance, he recently prepared a special birthday dinner with an appetizer of white bean bruschetta, a first course of tilapia on a warm spinach salad, and an entrée of beef tenderloin in a port wine reduction sauce with risotto. A cornerstone of his social life is cooking and entertaining with his children, extended family, and circle of yuppie friends. During our interview he was making a roasted chicken with his 6-year old daughter alongside (who piped in that her favorite thing to make is chocolate chip pancakes). Vincent recently completed a major ($50,000+) upgrade to his kitchen, installing cherry cabinets and high-end stainless steel appliances (Figure 44).

Figure 44. Vincent at his new professional-style range.

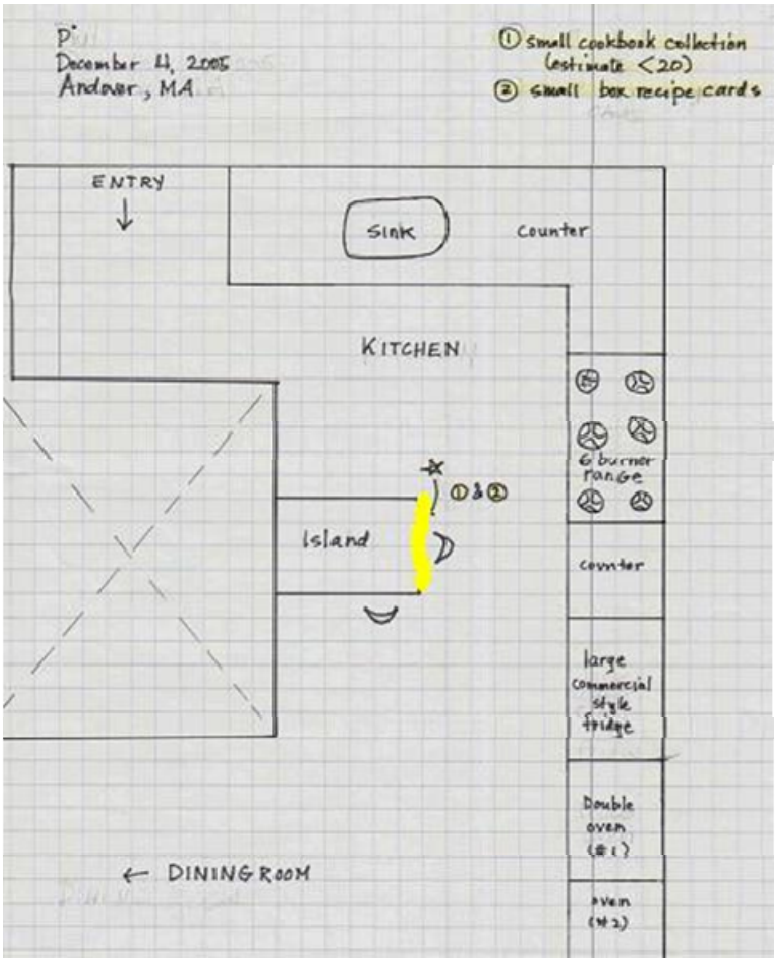
Vincent takes a *sensual* approach to cooking, relying more on his experience, instinct, and technical skills. He knows how to test steak for doneness by poking it, and uses recipes as a point of departure for his own creative interpretations. When he does purchase a cookbook he explains, "Well, I try to buy textbook-like cookbooks…like *Joy of Cooking* is more of a textbook about food than a cookbook. This one here – *Sauces* – is a textbook." To design a meal Vincent would "go to the market and see what's good" instead of resorting to texts or the Internet.

Vincent has a *small* PCL tucked into two built-in shelves of the island at the center of his kitchen, marked in yellow on the floor diagram of Figure 45. The collection contains 18 cookbooks (shown in photographs at right), including some classics (*The New York Times Cookbook*, *Joy of Cooking*) and some Italian (*Savoring Italy*, *The Sopranos Family Cookbook*). The small grouping of materials is not organized, since they are easy to identify and access. Sandwiched between the cookbooks is a folder of a few dozen recipes photocopied, torn from magazines, or printed from epicurious.com (Figure 45, bottom, left). Tucked inside a ceramic bowl is a box or recipe cards assembled by his wife years ago (Figure 45, bottom,

right). He does not subscribe to any culinary serials or accumulate recipes in his house because, "You can get anything by going to epicurious.com. I do that often."

When discussing his cooking history and recent projects, Vincent was very articulate and animated; as talk turned to information resources, he became less verbose and seemingly disinterested. To elicit commentary on his PCL I had to probe. Overall, Vincent's hobby appears rooted in and motivated by his family and its traditions, lived experiences with food, and culinary instincts while cooking.

Figure 45. Floor plan and photographs from Vincent's small PCL: The line drawing shows his kitchen, the sole site of materials. The elements of the PCL are centralized in a single location, marked in yellow. Various elements are seen in the photographs (and numbered to match the "key" in the diagram).



(#1 and #2) Phil's PCL consists of 18 cookbooks, a folder of recipes, a recipe box, and occasionally epicurious.com. The documentary resources are shown above.

A folder with a variety of recipes. This one is a print-out from epicurious.com, which Phil uses often.

The box contains recipes clipped from *The New York Times* by his wife. He doesn't use these often.

8.3.2 Case study of a large PCL: Celeste

Celeste is a reading teacher in her mid-fifties who lives south of Boston. As a young child she helped her mother cook traditional American "meat and potato" dinners. While a teenager she took an interest in herbs and recounts, "I remember cooking a lamb dinner when I was in 8th grade, and basting the lamb with vermouth and rosemary and feeling extremely sophisticated." She also served her girlfriends hot dogs–accompanied by a salad with fresh dill and chives. She points out that this was the early 60s and "people commented (about the herbs)…and thought I was weird!" In college Celeste visited Europe and was thrilled by new foods. Back in the States, she began cooking often and collecting cookbooks. She married into a Danish family and learned to cook Scandinavian foods by watching her mother-in-law in the kitchen. Later, she lived in several African countries, studying numerous cuisines along the way.

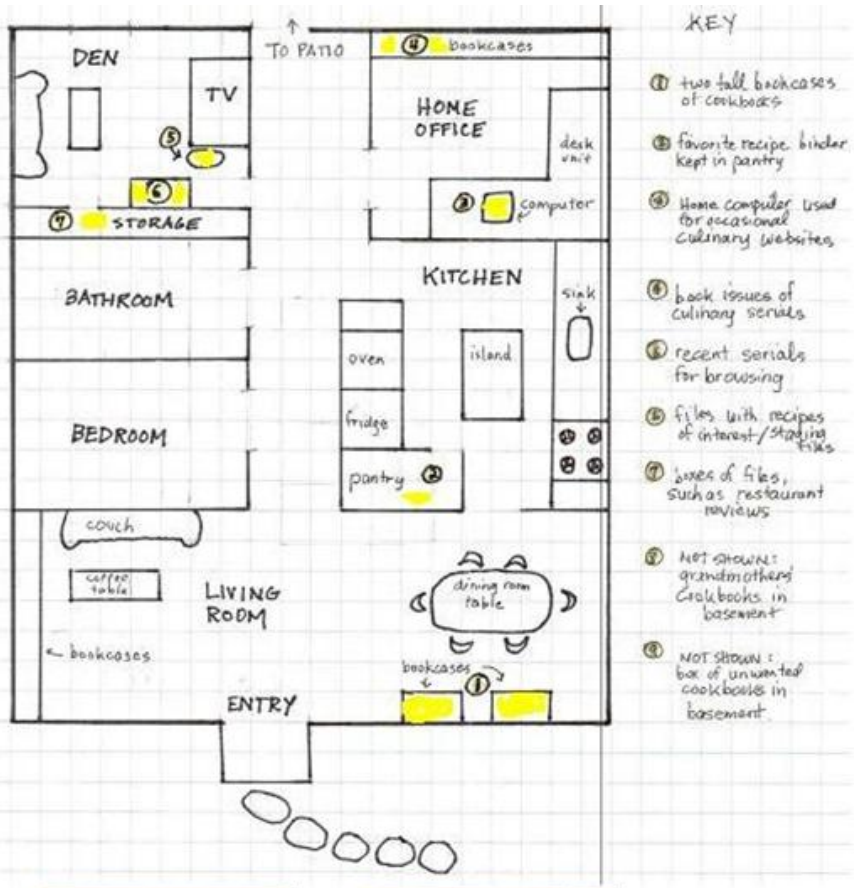
Today, Celeste's arts and crafts cottage is surrounded by herb beds that she cultivates for her cooking. She exudes a quiet confidence and great range in the hobby. Chapter 5: The Hobby of Gourmet Cooking, opened with an account of her trip to a local farmer's market and an afternoon spent making a vegetable torta, "a thing of great beauty and joy!" Yet she also enjoys rustic preparations and for my interview prepared a delicious lunch of lentil soup. Celeste has shared her love of cooking in informal cooking classes with her college-aged son and niece. As she approaches retirement and enjoys free time, financial independence, and a circle of gourmet friends, her culinary hobby is flourishing.

Celeste has a *large* PCL that sprawls throughout her house as nine repositories, marked by yellow in the floor diagram of Figure 46. In the dining room are two tall bookshelves containing more than 200 cookbooks, a cookbook series, gastronomy, culinary keepsakes, and some family photos (shown in photographs, bottom left). These books are organized by broad subject terms such as International, American, Italian, baking,

English/Celtic, Danish, desserts, and vegetarian, with "ephemera" mixed in. Many books are gifts from family and friends or acquired during trips. Special items in her collection have been passed through generations, such as her Danish mother-in-laws handwritten recipe notebook and a grandmother's recipe collection (shown earlier in Figure 36, top left). She presently receives *Gourmet* and *Cook's Illustrated*, and in the past has had other culinary subscriptions; back issues are stored in her home office. A box of unwanted cookbooks is in her basement, to donate to a Salvation Army book sale. For several years she has kept culinary diaries that she writes in every few days (discussed and shown earlier in 8.2.12, Figure 38).

This PCL functions as a culinary information system that supplies ideas and instructions for new cooking episodes. To this end, Celeste reads cookbooks, magazines, and newspapers on a daily basis to discover promising recipes (these materials are stockpiled throughout the house in areas marked in yellow). Recipes that seem interesting are isolated (ripped out or photocopied) and placed into a temporary file in her den. This smaller set of recipes have *potential* and serve as first choices when an opportunity to cook arises. Eventually, the recipes are cooked, tasted, and refined (as necessary). If they prove delicious and deemed to have enduring value, the recipes become "keepers" and are retyped, put into a plastic sheet, and secured in a binder for safe-keeping and easy re-use in the kitchen pantry. This system involves numerous genres (cookbooks, magazines, etc.), two original filing systems (the holding files and binder), and some simple technologies (plastic sheaths, word processor, photocopiers). The rooms of the house and their furniture demark the different steps in the system. Overall, Celeste's process monitors the culinary information universe for new cooking episodes and then archives those that generate delicious results.

Figure 46. Floor plan and photographs from Celeste's large PCL: The diagram shows the first floor of her cottage. The elements of the PCL are located throughout and marked in yellow. Various elements are seen in the photographs (and are numbered to match the "key" in the diagram).



(#4) Back issues of *Cook's Illustrated* are kept in her home office.

(#6) Promising recipes are placed into holding files in the den. This is the first place she looks when she feels like cooking.

(#1) Celeste's collection of 200+ cookbooks is kept in two adjacent bookcases in her dining room. These are organized by subject and genre. Some culinary keepsakes from her family are mixed in.

(#2) The very best recipes, called *keepers*, are retyped, placed into protective plastic sheaths, and secured in this binder. For easy access and use, the binder is kept in the pantry.

8.3.3 Reviewing the size of the PCL

This section has aimed to quantify the complex phenomenon of the PCL, for which there is no single convenient measure. The extent of a PCL is determined by the volume of artifacts in the home, prevalence of associated upkeep tasks, and their role in the hobby. After considering all these factors in 20 PCLs, I propose three types: small, medium, and large. A small PCL, like Vincent's, take up little space in a household. Such cooks orient mostly to culinary experiences and instincts, instead of the documentary universe. In contrast, a large PCL, like Celeste's, sprawls throughout a home. The cook draws heavily upon the materials to inspire and steer cooking episodes. (Medium PCLs fall somewhere in between the two poles). Large PCLs are particularly interesting to the field of LIS because they involve many informational concepts in a personal, domestic, leisure context not described before.

8.4 The Large PCL as an Information System

In a large PCL the superabundance of information resources and their application in the hobby coalesce into an *information system*. Some of these systemic properties exist in a medium PCL to a lesser extent; they are not apparent in a small PCL. The items listed in 8.2, Survey of Artifacts, are involved to varying degrees as content. The system's hardware is the residence and its rooms, furniture, and storage devices (for both digital and documentary materials). The software is the cook's informational acumen as expressed in a constellation of information-based upkeep tasks. This information system does not occur in a vacuum but is embedded in the home, the hobby of cooking, and everyday life such that some cooks do not perceive it as any distinct entity. Here the system is intentionally reified to isolate and document phenomena of interest to library and information studies.

A sensitizing concept for this information system is Shera and Egan's *bibliographic pyramid* (1952, p. 19), illustrated in Figure 47. This model shows how the literature of a discipline is treated to successive bibliographic processes of identification and distillation. The broad base of the pyramid represents its raw literature in the form of journals, articles, and monographs, located en masse in academic and digital libraries. These items are subject to abstracting and indexing and grouped into different repositories to facilitate their use, such as departmental collections or topical databases. In time, a leading scholar surveys and assesses all or a selection of work across the field and produces a literature review – the capstone of the pyramid and its critical navigational aid and reference point.

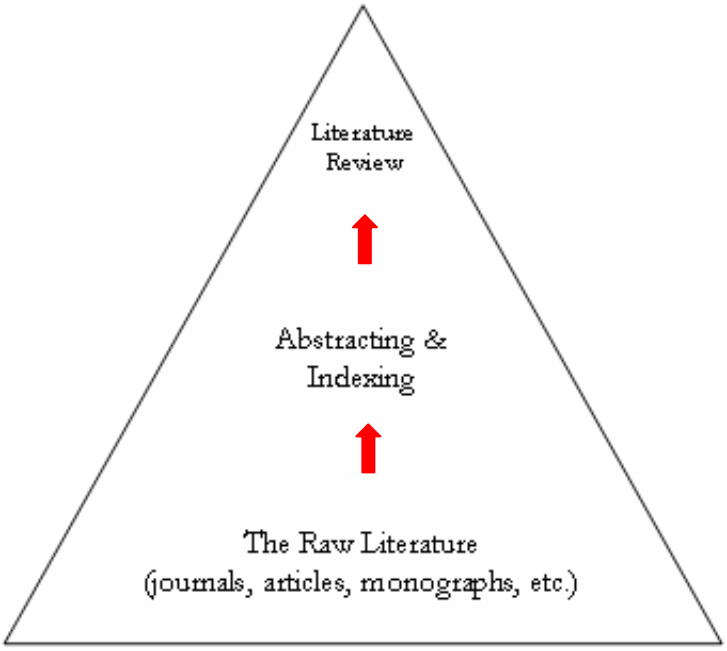


Figure 47. Visual model of Shera and Egan's bibliographic pyramid.

The skeleton of Shera and Egan's idea can be re-scaled to represent the information system maintained by the cook in the hobby of gourmet cooking (Figure 48). (Some elements of Shera and Egan's notion do not apply exactly, since it reflects a collective,

public, academic discipline while here I am modeling a personal, domestic, leisure context.) As a backdrop, culinary information resources exist outside the home in the *culinary information universe*, the mediated communication of the hobby social world. The cook chooses items from this universe to add to their PCL, akin to a libraries' *acquisition* process. Once inside the home, the majority of items are located in a central spot, here called the *mother lode*. Over time, small collections of artifacts are drawn from the culinary information universe and the mother lode, separated and grouped, and then placed for a variety of purposes into *zones* around the residence. Along the way, individual recipes are culled (mainly from the mother lode and zones) into *recipe collections*. Finally, the very best recipes – the *keepers* – are graduated to a *binder*, the gourmet cook's version of a literature review and the pyramid's capstone. The major information structures (mother lode, zones, recipe collection, binder) of the pyramid and associated processes are discussed next.

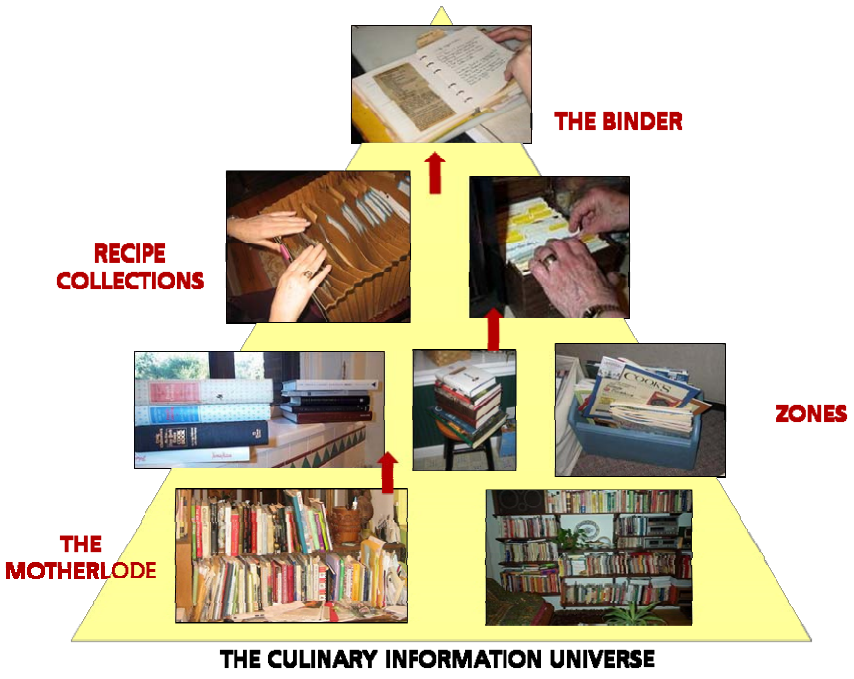


Figure 48. A model of the PCL as an information system; information structures shown in red.

8.4.1 Acquisition

This system is fueled by the steady acquisition of new materials, drawn from the culinary information universe. The most information-hungry gourmet cooks, such as Dorene or Patty, can acquire several cookbooks per month, plus other culinary genres. Since hobbyists are Living a Gourmet Lifestyle (see 7.2) and Staying Informed and Inspired (see 7.3), they intentionally and serendipitously have opportunities to obtain materials in the stream of everyday life.

Cooks purchase cookbooks at bookstores and through online retailers such as Amazon.com and eBay. Nancy says, "…I go into a bookstore and I will walk out with a cookbook. I can't stop myself!" She also participates in a cookbook club and explains, "I belong to The Good Cook…so I get their brochure once every three weeks, and I routinely order from them." Purchases are more frequent during special times like holidays or vacations. Celeste says, "When I travel I will get a cookbook as a souvenir. I just came back from Arizona, and I brought back two cookbooks." Some cooks enjoy the weekend routine of browsing used bookstores or yard sales for cookbook bargains. Katey explains, "a lot (of cookbooks) I got second hand, I scrounge secondhand bookstores and yard sales. You get so much good stuff at yard sales…people don't cook anymore so they get rid of great cookbooks…" Table 27 sums up acquisition strategies mentioned by gourmet cooks in this study.

- **purchasing**: from bookstores, grocery stores, department stores, on vacation
- **online (ordering)**: eBay, amazon.com, Barnes & Noble
- **cookbooks clubs**: The Good Cook
- **bargain hunting**: yard sales, book sales, used book stores
- **fundraisers**: from churches, schools, non-profit groups
- **subscriptions**: serials, newsletters
- **gifts**: at Christmas, for birthdays, at weddings
- **inheritance**: from mother, from grandmother
- **the library**: preview for purchase, temporary loan

Table 27. Acquisition strategies for a PCL.

The public library plays a role as an intermediary for cookbook or recipe acquisition. Rose explains, "This is what I do. If I see a cookbook, like *All About Braising*…I go to the library and borrow the book. I go through it and try a few recipes. If I like how it is laid out, and the recipes, then I go and buy it. This is better than buying it without trying." And Katey concurs, "I have in the past checked out cookbooks from a library, to see if I want to buy it." Hobbyists also "steal" recipes from borrowed library cookbooks to build their collections cost-free. Margaret says, "If I like something and don't want to buy it, I go to the library, request it, and then Xerox the recipes out of it."

Some acquisition requires no effort by the cook. Culinary serials and newspaper food sections arrive to the cook's doorstep and into the PCL on a regular basis. And, every cook in this study had received cookbooks or recipes as gifts. Celeste says, "People often give me cookbooks…I am always happy to get them. It is very seldom I don't appreciate it. I've gotten quite a few" Likewise, Nancy reports, "When I got married to my current husband…my coworkers, knowing I love to cook, all gave me recipes." Culinary keepsakes such as a relative's recipe collection or favorite cookbooks enter the PCL as an inheritance.

Gourmet cooks are guided by an evolving vision for stocking their library. Rose explains that early in her hobby career she sought general cookbooks such as *Joy of Cooking*, in order to cover the basics. Over time, her interests narrowed and she says, "Now I buy more subject specific cookbooks, not just general cooking. For example, I am considering buying one cookbook about braising. I want to learn the specifics of a method or dish." Like any acquisitions librarian gourmet cook Katey rattles off her present acquisitions strategy as follows:

- Any cookbook under $10.00 and pre-1930s
- Any intriguing and "funky old book" (for instance "Turkish cooking from the 1960's…who could resist?")
- Italian cookbooks, in particular those by Marcella Hazan ("I want them…I *need* them!"), preferably second hand
- Classic bread books (though she won't use them now, she wants to have them for later when she has more free time to bake)

New acquisitions are a bright spot in the day of a gourmet cook, who dives in and explores the contents right away. Recent acquisitions have special status. Katey continues,

> If I do get a new book, I tend to purposefully use it for a few weeks or months to try things, to get a feel for that book. So I know what is in it. Therefore, I will be likely to open it and look for things (in the future).

8.4.2 The mother lode

The majority of cookbooks (and other genres of culinary documents) form a *mother lode*: a singular, large, centralized grouping of culinary materials in the residence. This coinage aptly captures its wow factor. I stepped into the living room of Dorene's ranch home and was amazed to see an entire wall, from ceiling to floor, of cookbooks (Figure 49, top left). As her husband lounged in a recliner nearby I reflected that much of their lives together had unfolded in the shadow of these cookbooks. Patty's main stash of culinary information

wrapped around two walls of her study (Figure 49, bottom left) and was as neat, organized, and beautifully appointed as any special library. Roland's one-of-a-kind mother lode occupied a back hall and staircase of his Victorian home (Figure 49, right). The steps served as shelves for books and ascended up to a tall bookcase. Roland shrugged off the fact that he could no longer traverse the stairs and that accessing books higher up was tricky.

Figure 49. The mother lode (clockwise from top left): Dorene's wall of cookbooks; Roland's unique cache in a staircase; a section of Patty's study.

The mother lode typically exists adjacent to the kitchen. The kitchen itself is not the favored location because of heat, humidity, and food debris, plus space is limited in most kitchens. In all cases simple organizational principles are applied to facilitate access and use.

Materials are clustered by genre so that different types of texts, serials, and ephemera are collocated. For example, Camilla's materials in Figure 50 (left) are separated into reference texts, cookbooks, and serials. Further, cookbooks are clustered by subject and sometimes author, for canonical cookbook writers such as Julia Child and Marcella Hazan. Shared PCLs (where one partner is the primary gourmet cook), contain areas for "his" and "hers." No cook had a catalogue of items in their mother lode though Patty had tried and a few others aspired to one. Items are not marked or labeled in any way. Whereas books in public or academic libraries are always vertical on a shelf, some materials in the mother lode are aligned horizontally, to fill up every inch of space (Figure 50, right).

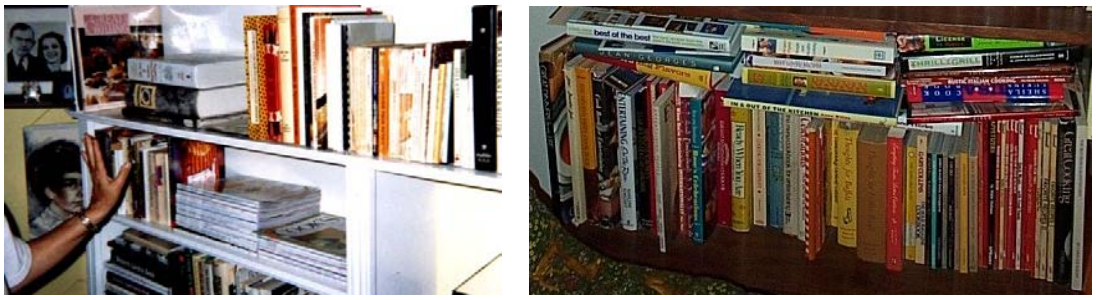


Figure 50. Organizational features of the mother lode: Camilla groups her collection into reference texts, cookbooks, and serials (left); Dorene places books horizontally (right).

The mother lode plays multiple roles in the hobby. It is one of the first repositories consulted during a berrypicking-style search for recipes. At the same time, a distinct feature of the mother lode is that most of its materials are rarely if ever *used* (other resources, presented shortly, are more heavily used.) As a cook acquires more and more items, the opportunity for time with any one necessarily decreases; the majority is left untouched for long periods (just like the mainstay of books in the stacks at public or academic libraries). Herein is an important point: cooks with medium to large PCLs are more interested in *owning*

culinary information, than using it[8]. Owned books have important symbolic and aesthetic values. They present a snapshot of the cook's experience in the hobby and announce the cook's passion and talent to anyone who enters the home. Further, most collections are beautiful and interesting to behold, adding character and intelligence to the residence and daily life.

8.4.3 Zones

Apart from the mother lode, medium and large PCLs contain *zones*. This term is borrowed from Lee, who conducts research on academic information spaces such as scholar's offices. She defines a zone as, "a limited area within an information space that contains a related set of materials" (Lee, 2003, p. 43). The contents in a zone are typically one culinary genre that is separated from the mother lode for a particular purpose. Celeste's PCL, surveyed earlier, provides examples of several zones throughout the house, marked in yellow on Figure 46. The number and diversity of zones makes larger PCLs web-like, for there is a sense that culinary information permeates a household. Different types of zones are described below:

- *Referencing.* The mother lode is not convenient for finding quick answers during cooking. Instead, a reference zone appears in some kitchens for trouble-shooting during episodes and contains basic information about ingredients and techniques, or oft-used master recipes. Dorene, for instance, keeps a cooking handbook and a binder of cheat sheets (Figure 51) tucked next to her refrigerator. She points out, "These are easy to get to in a hurry."

Figure 51. Materials in a reference zone.

[8] This same habit is probably present for academics, who buy monographs and subscribe to journals, yet may not read or use them.

- *Browsing*. Zones for browsing often appear on coffee tables or bedside nightstands. Here, items can be picked up and enjoyed during a free moment. These zones feature recent issues of serials, or the latest cookbook acquisitions. Roland, for instance, keeps his latest cookbooks and magazines in a coffee table of the den (Figure 52).

Figure 52. A coffee table as a browsing zone.

- *Displaying*. The primary purpose of some zones is aesthetic. Cookbooks can function as décor. I spotted zones of this kind during fieldwork because of their artful arrangement (which seemed impractical in terms of actually accessing and using the materials). For instance, Roberta perched two stacks of cookbooks on a window sill (Figure 53). Importantly, they are all fashionable cookbooks such as classics by Julia Child and the trendy *French Laundry Cookbook*. Tom placed a stack of contemporary and vintage cookbooks on a stool (Figure 54). Cooks may not be conscious of using cookbooks as décor. When asked about the stack Tom says, "Well, we are a creative household with a lot of stuff piling up! (Laughs) There is no particular reason they are there."

Figure 53. Roberta's chic stacks, a displaying zone.

Figure 54. Tom's column of cookbooks, a displaying zone.

- *Not for cooking.* Some cooks limit their mother lode to cookbooks, and place other sorts of culinary texts into zones elsewhere. Katey describes the materials at right as, "The top shelf of this bookshelf is food related. It is really a lot of odds and ends. For the most part, it is food history and food memoirs; and a few things on sustainable farming and local agriculture. Some are sort of historical cookbooks I am unlikely to use. It is all interesting, but not for cooking."

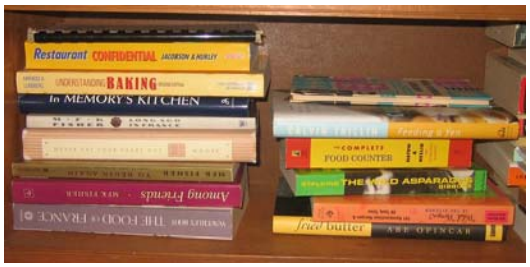


Figure 55. A zone of materials not for cooking.

- *Deaquisitioning.* Over the years cooks weed their collections and place items aside for deacquisition. Zones of unwanted materials exist until action is taken to get rid of them. For instance, Celeste has a box of cookbooks in her basement to bring to the Salvation Army for re-sale; Patty keeps boxes in her garage. Dorene gathers unwanted books into a spare bedroom (Figure 55). She attempted to bequeath these to a local library but they were not interested, so they stay in her home in this deacquisition zone.

Figure 56. Dorene's deaquisitioning zone.

8.4.4 Recipe collections

A special type of zone is a recipe collection, a set of individual recipes of similar provenance and form gathered by the cook and kept altogether. In the broadest sense, the PCL might be thought of as a recipe collection, but here the term is reserved for a discreet artifact therein. Cookbooks, too, are collections of recipes; yet they differ by being published and bound, with a unifying editorial treatment and theme. In contrast, recipe collections are home-made by the cook and therefore unpublished and unbound, with diverse content. (Groups of recipes bound by the cook will be discussed next as *binders*.) Recipe collections

are typically in the kitchen because they are frequently used, except when space does not allow. They are one of the repositories searched during a berrypicking-style recipe search that launches a cooking episode. The majority of cooks in this study had recipe collections, though a few did not, preferring to draw from cookbooks and serials directly.

While the recipe collection is a zone per Lee's definition, it entails an additional degree of distillation by the cook and is higher on the pyramid of Figure 48. These recipes are well regarded by the cook and deemed worthy of special housing and an accessible locale. Recipe collections come into being over time as the cook repeatedly draws individual recipes that look "good" or "interesting" from other zones, the mother lode, and the culinary information universe. Chosen recipes may resonate with an episode envisioned in the future, addressing what Bruce (2005) would call a *personal anticipated information need*. Some of the recipes within these collections are the staples in the cook's repertoire.

In popular culture there is a myth of the "secret recipe" and the idea that a recipe collection may be kept confidentially by the cook. Only one cook in this study guarded some of her recipes in order to protect her distinction and local acclaim. All other cooks happily share and exchange recipes from their collections; in fact some serve as consultants to others (see 7.3.1, Consulting) by drawing upon these repositories. For instance, Margaret says it is routine for her to "write up recipes and send them to people." And Claire saves some recipes as Microsoft Word files so that, "…when people ask for them, which happens all the time, I send them as an email attachment."

Cooks with large PCLs may have more than one recipe collection. Different collections come about because of the diverse formats of culinary information. A cook may have one recipe collection of clippings from the newspaper, which are irregularly shaped and tucked into a small box; while recipes printed from epicurious.com are placed into hanging

file folders, a separate recipe collection. As mentioned, some cooks maintain a discreet recipe collection on their home computer in the form of Microsoft Word files and folders.

Gourmet cook Margaret has three recipe collections, shown below. In this case the collections are not differentiated by format but by their role in her hobby. A small wooden box in her kitchen contains large laminated recipe cards (Figure 57, top left). She explains, "Anything that I use a lot is in here – my keepers. Anything that is loose that I like, I put it in here. During Thanksgiving and Christmas I'll be running through these to find favorites." Another collection of mostly Chinese recipes is housed in a portable accordion file (bottom, left) in her upstairs study. Yet a third, also Chinese-themed, exists in hanging vertical metal file cabinets in a storage closet. She has to crouch to access this collection and explains, "When you don't have room, you do what you have to do. You get used to it." The latter two collections are less used and consulted when she has Chinese themed dinner parties or informal Chinese cooking classes.

Figure 57. Margaret's three recipe collections (clockwise from top left): A box of recipe cards for her favorites; an accordion file of Chinese recipes; more Chinese recipes in metal file cabinets in a closet.

There is some documentary handiwork associated with the more meticulously maintained recipe collections. Recipes are clipped or torn from magazines and newspapers and trimmed if necessary. The clipping may then be taped onto an index card as in Figure 58 (left). Other recipes are rewritten onto cards by hand, as in Figure 58 (right). Some cooks photocopy recipes out of serials or cookbooks. Rose tried to store her collection on her computer and retyped or scanned recipes, though this proved too time consuming. Sometimes measures are taken to extend the longevity of paper recipes. Margaret is a teacher who uses her school lamination machine for this purpose. All this culinary paperwork happens at irregular intervals during leisure time; no cooks mentioned a firm recipe-processing schedule. Cooks appear to take the recipe-management process light heartedly. When I asked Dorene how often she weeds through a pile of recipes clipped from other sources, she laughs and says, "Not often enough!"

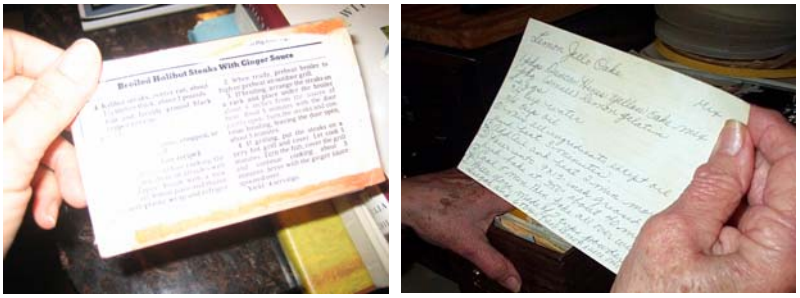


Figure 58. Examples of recipe cards: Vincent tapes clipped recipes onto cards (left); Dorene hand-writes recipes onto cards (right).

Most recipe collections house the full spectrum of foodstuffs and are organized into sections using broad culinary subject terms in alphabetical order. The headings appear on divider cards or tabs (Figure 59, left), making it easier to quickly find a desired recipe. The headings used by Margaret in her recipe box are shown in Figure 59 (right). Though this

study was not designed to focus on knowledge organization in a PCL, a few basic observations follow.

- Appetizers
- Drinks
- Desserts
- Fish
- Lunch
- Greek
- Italian
- Korean
- Milk
- Poultry
- Poultry breasts
- Poultry whole
- Poultry summer
- Starch miscellaneous
- Starch pasta
- Starch rice
- Starch summer
- Vegetables and beans
- Vegetable salads
- Vegetables potato
- Vegetables summer
- Vegetables tomato

Figure 59. Ways to organize a recipe collection: Subject headings appear on yellow tabs (left); Margaret' subject headings in her recipe box (right).

Cooks did not express difficulty in creating and employing their own classification schemes. They generate the headings based upon familiarity with the gourmet cooking subject landscape. Since the cook is the sole or primary user and searcher of the collection, there is no need to weigh diverse interpretations of concepts, as for more complex, negotiated, public access classification systems. When I pressed Dorene to explain how she sorted the several hundred recipe cards in her collection she implies the process is intuitive, with a "keep it simple" strategy.

> I would...(long pause)...it's just, just *the way you do things*. You know, you break it down into categories you can reach in a hurry. …You alphabetize and put it in an order that makes sense. If something goes with something else you just put it there. Like for *Bread*–muffins, scones, pancakes would go next to the breads because that makes sense.

As a follow-up question I asked Dorene whether a recipe for chocolate cake would go into Cake or Chocolate. She replied, "No, I don't break it down that finely, I use large categories."

On the other hand, some recipe collections are not classified or organized at all. These types contain recipes in a variety of formats, in no meaningful order. A folder is the typical container (Figure 60, left) or, a shoe box will do (Figure 60, right). About the collection shown in Figure 60 (left) Roland says,

> Well, I'm disorganized! I've got this folder. I throw everything in there. I have no organization at all. I was thinking of getting some software…a recipe organizer…for I get so many and forget where they are, I am totally disorganized. I was thinking of typing them in…but that's a lot of work!

Like Roland, many cooks find the idea of rigorous organization overwhelming and they are not concerned about a lack of reliable access to their recipes. This may be because gourmet cooking is a form of leisure and the stakes are not so high. Also, if a certain recipe cannot be found in one's PCL it is possible to trace it to its original source for a replacement or find a comparable recipe elsewhere.

Figure 60. Unclassified recipe collections: In a folder (left); in a shoe box (right).

At this level on the pyramid of Figure 48 some cooks sort recipes into a special collection of "recipes to try" in a future episode. It was mainly the cooks with large PCLs that maintained such a class, perhaps to limit the range of possibilities amidst information overload. For instance, Celeste has several colored files (Figure 61, left and middle) where she places intriguing recipes that are "sort of on probation" until they are cooked and sampled. Katey, as well, has a folder for, "Things I printed out because they looked good…things I might try…things I have not used…things I am vaguely interested in but haven't gotten around to." The collection of "recipes to try" is another repository consulted during a berry-picking style recipe search.

Figure 61. Collections of "recipes to try:" Celeste's are in a bookcase in her den (left); there is a folder for each major food category (middle); Katey uses a single notebook (right).

8.4.5 The binder

By routinely drawing from the culinary information universe and the different structures of the PCL the cook ends up with a small set of recipes they absolutely love and trust. These are the *keepers* and are staples of the cook's repertoire, family favorites during holidays, and sure-fire winners for impressing guests. All the cooks with large PCLs (and some with medium) placed keepers into a three-ring binder that was kept near the kitchen.

Celeste says, "I have a binder that has my most tried-and-true recipes ready to go." About her binder Katey explains, "…if I am looking for something I am sure is going to be good, it's in there."

A primary function of the large PCL is to facilitate the discovery of keepers for addition to the binder. An example of the path of a winning recipe through the system is as follows. A cooking magazine enters the home as a routine monthly acquisition for the mother lode. While new to the collection it is placed on a coffee table, a browsing zone. Soon thereafter, a recipe is flagged as promising, ripped out, and placed in a "recipes to try" collection. The recipe further piques the cook's interest while planning a cooking episode and is added to the menu of an upcoming cooking project. *If* the recipe delivers great results and stands out from other favorite recipes, then it is tweaked (if necessary) and added to the binder for future re-use. (If the results are not so impressive, the recipe is probably thrown out.) In this way, the binder is the capstone of the pyramid and a critical sample and survey akin to a scholarly literature review. However, unlike a literature review that covers a time span, the binder remains perpetually a work-in-progress underlying the hobby career.

It is striking that the same simple technology of the binder appears across the cases of this study, on both east and west coasts. The four pictures below (Figure 62) reveal surprising consistency of this home-made culinary artifact. (Yet I have never seen a set of instructions for creating a binder in the gourmet literature, which might explain the pattern.) Here again we see that for practical purposes old-fashioned paper trumps a digital form. A relatively small (1-inch), 3-ring binder houses recipes within plastic sheets; so that, as Margaret says, "they are pretty protected" from wear and tear. The cook makes the extra effort to standardize recipes onto letter size paper by retyping newspaper clippings or reformatting digital recipes from online sources. Some binders are organized into topical sections via tabs, whereas others are not (since it is a small collection, items are not difficult

to find in the binder.) It should be noted that the cook is really the editor of the binder, not its author, since recipes come from what Celeste describes as a "mish mash" of sources.

Figure 62. Examples of the binder (clockwise from top left): Binders by Dorene, Celeste, Patty, and Rose.

Most cooks have one binder though those with the two largest PCLs (with more than 1,000 cookbooks) had several. Dorene creates a binder for each of the major cuisines she likes to cook, such as Asian or French. She stores them in the mother lode, lying horizontally across the subjects they cover, physically mirroring the effect of a capstone on each shelf (shown in Figure 63, left). Patty creates binders for the major holidays that she hosts for her family. They contain recipes, menus, and shopping lists, and take a lot of the planning work out of each gathering. In Figure 62 (lower right), Patty displays the Passover binder while her Thanksgiving version with a turkey on the cover is in the background. These binders are kept in a reference zone in her kitchen for easy access (Figure 63, right).

Figure 63. Examples of multiple binders in the large PCL: Dorene keeps binders per cuisine and places them above related cookbooks (left); Patty has a binder for every major holiday and keeps them in her kitchen cabinet.

Above and beyond their practicality, binders carry a lot of personal and family meanings. For the cook they resemble a resume or portfolio, displaying the landmarks of their career. In some cases they play a role in friendships between cooks. Claire was given the binder of her best friend Brenda, also a gourmet cook, when the two settled apart from each other on different coasts. The binders also institutionalize family food traditions. Patty intends to duplicate her holiday binders to pass on to children and grandchildren so that events can be reproduced as she passes on the mantle of family cook. A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal*, "Comforting Food: Recapturing Recipes Katrina Took Away" (Brooks, 2007) describes the desperate measures residents of New Orleans took after losing favorite recipes to the water, wind, and mildew of this devastating storm – showing the importance of documented family food traditions to all people, not just gourmet cooks.

8.5 Cross-cutting Issues (a placeholder)

Several interesting issues cross cut the PCL, especially in instances of larger collections. I have run out of time to report these matters in this dissertation but name them here for future development. First, there are numerous ongoing *upkeep tasks* performed by the gourmet cook such as weeding, organizing, and loaning. Second, when couples come to live together in household there are *merging* and *sharing* issues. Third, multiple cooks expressed *aspirations*: a vision of their ideal PCL that is never quite achieved. The nature of this vision and the inability to reach it can be discussed. Fourth, cooks report *access problems* in finding items in the PCL, and some clever solutions. Fifth, the PCL's *relationship to the public library* can be examined in greater detail. Finally, the *digital and social dimensions* of the PCL deserve further treatment. These issues will be taken up in my future papers.

8.6 Conclusion

To review, a *personal culinary library* (PCL) is a result of the cook's desire to keep the mediated communication of their social world within reach in their homes. It supplies ideas and inspiration for ongoing cooking and is an archive of cooking events. Some cooks do not invest much in a PCL and center their hobby, instead, on culinary experiences and relationships. Other cooks appear enchanted with the culinary information universe, mainly in the form of recipes and cookbooks, and bring it into their households en masse. These large PCLs coalesce into information systems based in the residence and are structured as a mother lode, zones, recipe collections and binders. Several cross-cutting issues are still to be explored concerning the PCL and will be addressed in later articles.

CHAPTER 9: SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Overview of Findings

This study explored information in the hobby of gourmet cooking. The investigation approached gourmet cooking as a serious leisure social world. The main focus was the information activities, resources, and spaces of the hobby, seen from the gourmet cook's perspective and in the context of the home. The research method was a scientific ethnography; 20 gourmet cooks were interviewed and their home-based culinary information resources were documented by a photographic inventory and floor diagram. Data was analyzed using grounded theory and NVivo software. Five research questions (see 3.5) steered the project and are revisited as a means to sum up the main empirical results.

RQ1a. What are the features of the hobby of gourmet cooking?

Chapter 5: The Hobby of Gourmet Cooking outlines how this form of serious leisure is characterized by food preparation using *high quality* or *exotic ingredients* and *advanced technical skills*. The approach is marked by an *aesthetic* that showcases the intrinsic beauty of food and entails an elegant and orderly cooking process. Though projects are usually executed independently by the gourmet cook, it is often in the form of *entertaining* aimed at sharpening skills and pleasing others. This hobby is centered on the home, where the *kitchen* functions as a culinary workshop. As a form of serious leisure, it is not to be confused with feeding work or employment in the foodservice industry.

RQ1b. What do gourmet hobby cooks do?

Chapter 6: Three Temporal Arcs presents the cook's experience as three *temporal arcs* (Figure 6), concatenated activities that unfold through different periods of time. Cooks

pursue a *hobby career* that evolves over many years or an entire life. The career has five stages along which hobbyists advance from novices to experts. For periods lasting weeks or months gourmet cooks focus attention on *subjects* that organize activity around a limited culinary topic; common subjects are cuisines or cooking techniques. Finally, cooks perform numerous cooking *episodes*: the real time, hands-on, central activity of the hobby that generates an edible outcome. Episodes have nine typical steps (Figure 12) and can be *new* or *repeated*, and *complex* or *simple*, leading to four types of information experience. Each temporal arc has distinct information dynamics and features a quintessential information resource.

RQ 2 & 3. What are the information activities in the hobby? What are the information resources?

Chapter 7: Information Activities and Information Resources, presents six clusters of information activities and their associated information resources (see Table 19). To review, cooks cultivate a lifestyle rich with culinary experiences (Living a Culinary Lifestyle). They enjoy the role of expert and seek means to express their knowledge (Expressing Culinary Expertise). To stay informed and inspired gourmets routinely engage the literature and media about cooking (Staying Informed and Inspired). A most information-intensive moment in the hobby occurs at the launch of a cooking episode (Launching a Cooking Episode) which is followed by information use in the kitchen as hands-on projects come to fruition (Using Information during a Cooking Episode). A sixth information activity, Managing a Personal Culinary Library, is a special meta-activity solely involving information and is the topic of Chapter 8.

RQ 4. What are the features of information spaces in the hobby of gourmet cooking?

Chapter 8: Managing a Personal Culinary Library, introduces the *personal culinary library* or PCL: a constellation of culinary information resources based in the home of the gourmet cook, and an associated set of upkeep tasks. PCLs vary in size and scale, from a small set of cookbooks that are tucked away in a cabinet to larger multimedia collections that are a striking feature of a household. Personal culinary libraries blend into the home and everyday life, and seen holistically, also contain non-culinary information, housing infrastructure (i.e. bookcases, countertops, boxes), cooking paraphernalia, and décor. A special class of documentary items in the PCL are *culinary keepsakes* (see Figure 36 and Table 24) that have personal meaning and value to the cook. Larger PCLs coalesce into information systems and are structured as a *mother lode*, *zones*, *recipe collections*, and *binders* (see Figure 48) that altogether facilitate the discovery of *keepers* – proven, cherished recipes.

RQ5. How do all of the above interact in the hobby of gourmet cooking?

After the fact, this research question does not seem well posed. It suggests that the dynamic between all the concepts of the study can be decontextualized and modeled, an oversimplification which was not the case. However, every chapter of findings demonstrates the interplay between serious leisure and social world concepts and information activities, resources, and spaces.

9.2 Theoretical Implications

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework, proposed a research framework based upon three complimentary theories: domain analysis, serious leisure, and social worlds. When compared to the status quo in LIS research, the theoretical framework generates the effects listed below.

9.2.1 Bridging three disciplines

This theoretical framework draws upon three disciplines with overlapping concerns: LIS, sociology, and leisure science. LIS focuses on the provision of information and documents for the fulfillment of individuals and society as a whole. Sociology orients to human relationships; leisure science examines the nature of the leisure experience. Each field can contribute part of an answer to important contemporary questions, such as: *How can public information institutions (such as the Internet, the library, museums, schools, etc.) best serve individuals and communities?* Yet to date, there have been few instances of cross-pollination or integration between these disciplines, with the exception of the monograph *Leisure and the Rise of the Public Library* (Snape, 1995). My theoretical framework and resulting study are an example of work at the crossroads of these disciplines, and may inspire more integration and collaboration in the future.

9.2.2 Fortifying and extending domain analysis

To date, domain analysis has served as a high level metatheory with only a few explicit empirical implementations (i.e. Fry & Talja, 2004, 2007). As a recent approach, it is perceived as having gaps and limitations. My study addresses some of these issues and supplies a more complete precedent for others to follow. The key to implementing domain analysis was to bootstrap the unit theories of serious leisure and social worlds.

The foremost criticism of domain analysis is that it fails to define its primary concept: domain (Palmer, 1999; Tennis, 2003). I solved this problem by operationalizing domain via social worlds theory. This not only shores up the unit of analysis, it also expands it significantly. Previously, academic domains have been the *de facto* domain analytic research subject. Academe is an important but relatively small population within society. My

framework sanctions other kinds of communities, namely serious leisure social worlds, as collectives with researchable informational patterns. Such leisure communities are widespread and cherished and compose a vast new frontier amendable to the domain analytic view.

Finally, domain analysis points to epistemology as the force that influences information within a domain; this is its major strength. The theories of social worlds and serious leisure supply *other* structures and sensitizing concepts to consider as integrated with information use patterns, such as the domain's information resources, core activities, roles, locations, and career.

9.2.3 Orienting ELIS to serious leisure social worlds

My survey of the everyday life information seeking (ELIS) research specialty (see 2.4) described three research themes: holistic, compromised situations, and leisure. Holistic studies examine information across the entirety of daily living, resulting in high-level findings that do not refer to any particular context. Investigations of compromised situations, the most common ELIS approach, aim to solve what are perceived as informational problems within a marginalized or disadvantaged population. These results may have important practical applications but are highly specific and not transferable to non-problem scenarios–the predominance and norm within everyday living.

This dissertation makes a case for serious leisure social worlds as a fruitful line of inquiry and unit of analysis. As evidence within the hobby of gourmet cooking, the steady pursuit of a favorite interest generates robust constellations of information phenomena on both personal and social levels. The approach fits with a contemporary view that information should be studied in its social context.

Since there is already a strong tradition in ELIS to focus on scenarios perceived as *problems*, it seems logical to next consider situations that are pleasurable or profound (Kari & Hartel, 2007). Indeed, understanding the natural, upbeat, uncoerced use of information, as within a hobby, may hold the key to solving informational dilemmas elsewhere. Many decades of research in sociology and leisure science provide a springboard for this line of positive information research.

Taking up serious leisure social worlds as a unit of analysis contrasts with the recent interest in studying *tasks* (Vakkari, 2003). Tasks are narrower occurrences, and in my project would be short stretches within the cooking episode. This study reveals that a broader horizon is necessary to understand the information encounter: for instance, the stage of the hobby career (see 6.3) or nature of a subject interest (see 6.4) have an influence on information activities during cooking.

Finally, serious leisure social worlds are appealing research projects. Leisure enthusiasts are typically willing, articulate study participants. This line of inquiry may be a pedagogical boon; new students of LIS can investigate information phenomena in their own favorite leisure pursuit, taking up Lofland and Lofland's salvo to "begin where you are!" (1995).

9.2.4 Systematizing leisure research

A shortcoming of the few prior ELIS studies of leisure is that each focuses exclusively on one avocation or experience, without asserting an affiliation to the broader category of leisure. Thus far leisure has been under-theorized as a research subject in LIS. The lack of a research framework means it is difficult to synthesize insights of case studies into a critical mass, or to generalize–a perennial complaint in information seeking and use (ISU) research.

The theoretical framework of this study isolates and relates different types of leisure domains, and can be applied to insure that future research into leisure is embedded in a strong theoretical framework. The theory of serious leisure, used as a classification system and investigative rubric, enables specification, comparison, and synthesis across leisure realms. Information can be examined within various forms of leisure, its major types, and the subclasses. (Interesting lines of descriptive and comparative inquiry are proposed in Section 9.5.4-9.5.6).

9.2.5 Balancing the mental/material in ELIS research

Existing studies of leisure (and much information research, in general) are limited by their commitment to a person-centered perspective, in vogue since the 1980s. This approach orients to personal sense-making and pays minimal attention to documentary artifacts and information structures. The studies by Ross (1999) and Kari (2001) employ Sense-making (Dervin, 1983) and chronicle the mind-based information encounter. Yakel (2004), too, focuses on meaning-making, but as an exception briefly discusses information management and the distinct resources and genres of genealogy.

Yet the material and physical milieu of information within leisure is highly varied and interesting. As evidence, this project focused on the concrete features of culinary information resources and the personal culinary library. Other complex material information resources are yet to be discovered and described in other leisure realms. To this end, this dissertation sets a precedent for balanced attention to the user's experience and the information artifacts and settings of the social world.

9.2.6 Introducing scientific ethnography

This dissertation applied *scientific ethnography* (Sandstrom & Sandstrom, 2005) as a fruitful approach for ELIS or ISU research. Scientific ethnography even-handedly orients to the human *and* material aspects of a subject, and sanctions multiple types of data gathering. In my study the resulting data–transcripts, photographs, and diagrams–coalesced into a whole profile of a person, their hobby, and its context. In particular, the *photographic inventory* brought the information world of the gourmet cook into vivid focus; the combination of textual and visual data delivers the "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) that is a hallmark of ethnography. Scientific ethnography allowed the systematic study of constellations of information activities, resources, and spaces.

9.3 Challenges to ISU and ELIS Research

The insights from this investigation of information phenomena in serious leisure realms challenge some of the traditional conceptions held in the ISU and ELIS research specialties. These issues are raised in the section below. Altogether, it appears both research areas could be extended in interesting new directions by incorporating information phenomena from leisure contexts.

9.3.1 The principle of least effort

The most widely held tenet of ISU is the *principle of least effort*. It holds that information seekers favor the easiest paths to resources. Further, seekers tend to be satisfied early in the search process, though better materials may be available through additional perseverance. Studies have reported this pattern in many disciplines and professions (reviewed by Mann, 1993, Chapter 8) such that it is considered a nearly universal feature of human information behavior.

This principle does not characterize all of the information activities within gourmet cooking. Cooks *do* routinely reach for convenient sources, such as online recipe databases and their PCL. At the same time, they display extraordinary persistence in acquiring culinary information. One cook spent several weeks gathering recipes for a traditional holiday foodstuff; he searched online, skimmed magazines and cookbooks, and petitioned fellow cooks. Other hobbyists go to great lengths to obtain cookbooks for their PCL. They travel to out-of-the-way bookstores (instead of purchasing easily online), or visit multiple yard sales. Cooks with large PCLs acquire and screen materials on a weekly or daily basis, to sustain a flow of promising recipes. In fact, many cooks in this study described their pursuit of culinary information as bordering on crazy or obsessive.

It appears this hobby engenders a "principle of *significant* effort" in some circumstances. The striking contrast with the norm may be because effort is not deemed unpleasant in the context of serious leisure.

9.3.2 Problems, gaps, and doubt

Much of ISU and ELIS has a negative orientation in the sense that *problems* are seen as the trigger for informational activities; for instance, Allen asserts, "all information seeking is problem solving" (1996, p. 12). The Sense-Making methodology posits that seekers face discontinuity, or *gaps*; and Belkin argues that an uncertain or *anomalous state of knowledge* (Belkin, 1980) precedes searching. In another influential study, Kuhlthau reports that confusion, frustration, and *doubt* mark the information search process of students conducting an assignment (1988), a notion which has been generalized or assumed to be generalizable to other activity contexts.

Dire informational problems were not the primary springboard for information encounters in the hobby of gourmet cooking. Cooks *did* report occasional and minor

difficulty in finding recipes; they display a nagging aspiration to better organize their PCL; and they bemoan the high prices of cook books. Yet these issues were not conveyed with great distress or concern. Gourmet cooks pursue information as an *opportunity*, not a problem. They enthusiastically search for recipes; devote long periods to the study of culinary subjects, and happily share knowledge with others.

I believe the largely upbeat information experience in gourmet cooking is an important revelation of my study, and attribute this positive sensibility to aspects of context. Compared to work, leisure has forgiving performance demands and so stakes are not so high for gaining the *right* culinary information. Also, information in this hobby is *manifold*, meaning, "operating several similar or identical devices at the same time" (dictionary.com) and so access problems are ameliorated by the superabundance and propinquity of possible information solutions.

9.3.3 The focus on seeking and searching

Much of ISU and ELIS research focuses on seeking and searching. These actions have been prioritized above all, understandably so, because they engage the access systems that are the unique purview of the field. There are drawbacks to this limited view: seeking and searching are seen in a vacuum and other interesting information phenomena may be unconsidered. This dissertation drew inspiration from Hektor (2001) and Talja & Hansen (2005), who conceive of information activities and practices more broadly.

My findings further fortify this enlarged sense of the human information experience. In gourmet cooking, seeking and searching are necessary steps to the *planning* step of an episode. When considered in light of information phenomena across the entire hobby, they are often relatively fleeting. It is also important to remember that many gourmet cooking

episodes (in particular those that are simple and repeated - see Table 18) are performed by rote and do not entail an information search at all.

Other information behaviors appear as equally (or more) vital and prevalent to gourmet cooking. For starters, information *use* during hands-on cooking appears to be the most critical engagement of information. This is when the stakes are high and culinary information resources can make or break an outcome. Gourmet cooks also *create* information; they produce recipes, menus, lists and work plans to keep the enterprise on track. Many hobbyists memorialize cooking in artful journals or diaries. Finally, hobbyists *manage* information in their PCL, this entails acquisition and organization that are interesting in their own right, and bear directly on seeking and searching.

This enlarged perspective on information activity also leads to a more empowered and able view of the actor. Instead of being a seeker or searcher (in a state of need or lack), the gourmet cook is a user, creator, and manager of information.

9.3.4 The concept of re-use

Information *use* is not a well-studied concept in ISU and ELIS (Vakkari, 1997, pp. 461-462; Savolainen, 2000, p. 36). In gourmet cooking "use" entails consulting an information resource to determine the next proper action, as in checking a shopping list, timeline, or recipe. The act of use is quick and deductive, unlike the more contemplative use of documents by scholars. In reality, *re-use* may be a better term, for typically the cook is engaging information that has been considered already. Gourmet cooks recycle recipes and are avid re-readers of cookbooks. The notion of re-use brings new issues to ISU research. Re-use sets the stage for the phenomenon of information collecting, for cooks appear to favor information that is familiar and consulted again and again. Re-use shifts attention from access to public, new resources to those of the familiar, home-based, personal collection.

9.3.5 The digital versus traditional (paper) dichotomy

Many studies of ISU take a stance that digital and paper information resources are in competition, in an either-or scenario. One commonly asked question is: *Are cooks abandoning paper resources for digital (online) ones?* The phrasing reflects an inaccurate and polarizing view of information resources and their use. In the sample of 20 gourmet cooks a few strongly favored online channels such as epicurious.com while some strongly favored traditional text resources, namely their recipe and cookbook collections. The remaining hobbyists fell in-between and utilized *both* channels during berrypicking-style searching. What spurred the choice between online or text as a starting point is often not a fixed predilection of the cook but a factor of context. For instance, if the cook is planning an episode during a break at work, they may favor an Internet search; whereas at home on a weekend they turn to their cookbooks. This finding confirms Savolainen's (2003) observation that, "the Internet is changing ELIS, though not replacing traditional sources" (see 2.4.1).

9.3.6 Modeling

The typical end result of ISU and ELIS research is a *model* that displays an information seeking process or information behavior. In these models information phenomena appear distilled and uncolored by any situational factors. A strength of this tradition is that the information behaviors come across as vivid and ubiquitous; they can be generalized and considered fundamental. Such is the effect of Hektor's model of information seeking and use, which names 8 information activities possible for a citizen in any scenario.

My work did *not* lead to an abstract model of information activities with the same generalizability. Instead, in Chapter 7, I proposed information activities that are *grounded* in the hobby of gourmet cooking (plus a s sixth meta-activity discussed in Chapter 8). The titles

of each activity, such as "Expressing Culinary Expertise" reveal that they are native to the gourmet cooking realm.

There are disadvantages to the context-dependent approach taken here. The six information activities may seem ungainly and uneven, especially compared to Hektor. This is because each information activity serves as a banner over human experience and hobby territory that is *inescapably varied* in terms of its nature, temporality and sociality, among other things. Second, the classes are not mutually exclusive, and may sometimes be nested or dual. For instance, while Expressing Culinary Expertise one may simultaneously be Living a Gourmet Lifestyle. This illuminates the fact that many things are happening during information rich moments. Finally, it is unlikely these groupings can be extended to other leisure or non-leisure domains, since they are so wed to gourmet cooking, though perhaps they resemble informational patterns in other Making and Tinkering hobbies.

The context-dependent approach also has advantages. While generalizability is sacrificed, information phenomena in this hobby are more believably rendered. Informational concepts which were previously cast in a vacuum become recognizable and palpable. Generalizing models are an outcome of the cognitive tradition in ISU; within the domain analytic paradigm, new deliverables are likely, such as ethnographies and other narrative genres.

9.4 A Theory of Documents

This study was an exploratory venture and not meant to generate theory. However, the findings create an opportunity to propose, tentatively, some elements of a theory of documents in the hobby of gourmet cooking. This fits with the domain analytic approach, which posits "document and genre studies" as a goal (Hjørland, 2002, pp. 436-438). Already, Chapter 8 surveys the documents in a PCL and is a descriptive, grounded theory of sorts.

The statements below are more abstract propositions about the nature of documents in the hobby; these propositions may be useful starting points for other researchers.

9.4.1 The complex relationship between cooks and documents

The relationship between cooks and documents is complex. It does not lend itself to a simple model that predicts what a cook will do with a document. This runs counter to the typical aim of conceptual work within ISU research. What is possible is a sensitive understanding of some of the factors at play.

To start, each cook appears to have a predilection or habitual way of relating to documents. The range can be seen as a continuum, shown in Figure 64. The spectrum is *not* a measure or reflection of acumen or enthusiasm for cooking. Archetypes at each pole, and gradations in between, can be passionate, highly skilled gourmet cooks.

Some cooks are strongly oriented to documents (shown at the left pole of Figure 64). They follow recipes word-for-word, maintain a medium or large PCL, and read the culinary literature above and beyond what is necessary to cook. It would not be an exaggeration to say that these types are enchanted by culinary documents. On the other hand (shown at the right pole of Figure 64), some cooks favor non-documentary forms of information, like fellow cooks and food-related experiences. They cook by using their instincts and senses, hence may be coined "the sensual cook." These sorts do not cultivate a PCL and manifest ambivalence to culinary documents, though they cherish culinary knowledge in other formats.

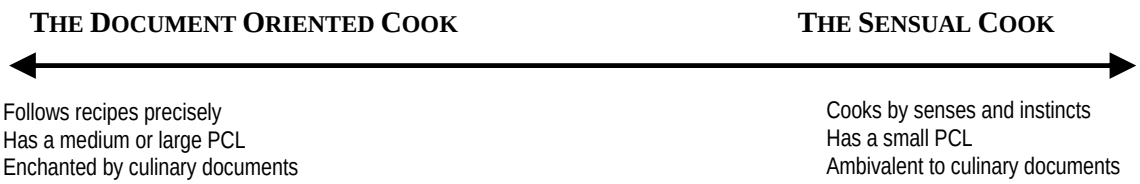


Figure 64. The documentary continuum.

A cook's document-related behavior along this continuum is *not* solely an attribute of their personality. An important mediating variable is the cuisine or cooking style that is engaged. Cuisines or cooking styles are conceptual systems that carry their own documentary practices. For instance, French and baking favor detailed written instructions; Iranian and barbecue are more inclined to non-documentary knowledge, as from sight, smell, touch, and experience. When a cook engages any culinary subject, its associated documentary tradition is impressed upon the experience (and can override the cook's innate predilection).

A cook's relationship to documents is also influenced by their stage in the hobby career. Initiates are more dependent upon written instructions. Advanced cooks in the maintenance stage can often forego recipes and rely upon experience and instincts. This suggests a steady movement away from documents over the course of the career. But this trajectory is not guaranteed if the cook avidly engages new cuisines and more complex preparations that entail documents as instructional aids.

Finally, the situational context of any cooking episode likely impacts the dynamic with documents. A cook in a hurry may ignore the culinary literature entirely; given free time they may become immersed. Location matters, too, for a cook on vacation at a summer cottage (or other remote site) would probably engage documents less than in their own home with its PCL.

These multiple influences – personal predilection, cuisine or cooking style, hobby career, and situational context – make it difficult to propose reliable patterns for document use. At best some of the forces that impact the relationship can be described.

9.4.2 Temporal factors

Documents take on different qualities that depend upon temporal contexts. Chapter 6: Three Temporal Arcs, describes the cooks experience along three time horizons: hobby career, subjects, and episodes. Documents, too, take on distinct purposes and uses at each arc. Hence, documents are temporally bound and an answer to the famous rhetorical question in LIS, "What is a document?" (Briet, 1951) should include temporal coordinates and qualifiers. This insight is best illustrated in an example of the central document of gourmet cooking, the *recipe*; Table 29 sums up a comparison of a document's purpose and use at each arc.

The career arc embodies the lifelong passage of the hobby. Cooks advance from novices to experts as a result of thousands of culinary experiences. In this long view, a recipe is a document that is collected and archived in a PCL. There, it is rarely, if ever, used (unless it is one of the select recipes in a binder); it is notable that a documents leading feature can be *non-use*. At this arc, the recipe exists as a *marker* of a past cooking experience or as a future cooking opportunity. The cook's action towards this document is *saving*.

At the subject arc, cooks explore culinary topics for weeks or months. Mostly, they read cookbooks to deepen understanding of a cuisine or cooking style. In this context a recipe functions as an *illustration* of the culinary topic being pursued. The cook's action towards the document is to *read* or *study*. For example, a cook engaged in the subject of Japanese cuisine would analyze a recipe for potsticker dumplings, seeking to understand how the composition of the recipe exemplifies Japanese cookery.

The episode entails real-time, hands-on cooking. Here the recipe takes on what may be thought of as its primary purpose: *instruction*. Cooks search for, compare, and sometimes amalgamate the recipe as they plan an episode. Here the recipe is at its most malleable. At

this arc, the recipe is taken into the kitchen to *use* in a repetitive manner of checking and re-checking that determines next steps.

	Purpose of the document	The cook's actions toward the document
Career	Marker of experience or opportunity	Save
Subject	Illustration of a subject	Read or study
Episode	Instruction for hands-on cooking	Use (also search, compare, amalgamate)

Table 28. How temporal arcs impact the purpose and use of a recipe.

It is easy to imagine that documents in other hobbies are temporally sensitive as well. In sailing, for instance, weather information changes per minute and during a storm can be a matter of life and death; yet after the fact the same document has little archival value. Going forward, theoretical statements on documents would be enriched by the addition of temporal qualifiers.

9.4.3 Multidimensionality

A simplified view of documents is that they are tools for getting a job done. Yet most documents in the PCL are rarely if ever *used* in the kitchen for cooking. Likewise, in a study of home Internet use, Hektor (2001) asserted the multiple dimensions of information resources:

> …a dictionary is a valued resource to one individual who finds it to be a thing of beauty, or if they like to look something up in it, or if they like for their guests to see that they have this dictionary on their shelf. As a resource this dictionary is to the holder an emotional resource, an instrumental resource, and symbolic resource respectively (p. 78)

Following Hektor, my study confirms the many dimensions of culinary documents. Gourmets aim for food that is striking and lovely to behold. This central *aesthetic* value

infuses the documentary universe. Cooks appreciate texts with lovely photographs or detailed illustrations, and take measures to protect these artifacts from wear and tear in the kitchen. Some hobbyists covet expensive and collectible cookbooks worth hundreds of dollars. Aesthetics can function as an organizing principle within the PCL. One hobbyist separated her cookbooks into "pretty" and "ugly" groupings. PCLs can be styled to match household décor, and contain visually interesting objects such as photographs and artwork. Culinary keepsakes, passed through generations, are treasured in part for the preciousness of yellowed paper and flowery handwriting. Culinary journals feature doodles, interesting fonts, photographs, and other design elements. Taylor and Swan (2005), in an article entitled "Artful Systems in the Home," discovered a similar aesthetic concern in family organizational calendars. Without a doubt, documents can be valued for their beauty.

Culinary documents can carry family memories and traditions. This *heritage* dimension is especially present in culinary keepsakes: recipes and cookbooks passed on through generations. Cooks value these items from the past because they convey the sense of knowing a deceased loved one. One cook had strong sentimental attachments to the recipe for a grandmother's pie crust and marveled that it stood the test of time. Culinary documents have the unique power to replicate family meals and holidays, which are often seen as the highlights of life. Many cooks in this study looked into the future to plan how they would pass on their own culinary collections, so that family traditions can continue into perpetuity. There is also a heritage dimension to some contemporary culinary documents. Items given as gifts, especially at weddings and other turning points, capture many different feelings.

Third, documents can be *property*, for a large PCL can have substantial market value. Some cooks were highly interested in reconnoitering the cookbook market in order to buy and own documents, rather than use them. Several cooks discussed the price of cookbooks

and magazine subscriptions. They sought bargain prices at yard sales or book clubs; and photocopied recipes from the library, to save dollars. The cook's strong sense of protective ownership is apparent in policies of not loaning materials, or sharing them exclusively with a few trusted friends.

Finally, numerous *symbolic* values surround culinary documents. Certain cookbooks in a collection, such as classics by Julia Child or professional-grade texts, convey the aptitude and taste of the cook. Some cooks place these items on display, to broadcast their acumen and refined culinary sensibility. Binders represent the career highlights and competency, akin to a CV or artist's portfolio, meanings that transcend practical usage.

Documents, seen holistically, are more than functional tools. They have aesthetic, heritage, property, and symbolic dimensions. These elements should be further explored through research, and factored into any theory of documents.

9.5 Future Research Directions

This dissertation suggests several new lines of inquiry that other information researchers may pursue in the future.

9.5.1 Documentary universes of leisure

The document is a longstanding major concept in LIS (Otlet, 1934; Briet, 1951; Buckland, 1997) that fell out of fashion following the user-centered research turn of the 1980s (Talja & Hartel, 2007). Recent enterprises such as The Document Academy and works like David Levy's superb *Scrolling Forward: Making Sense of Documents in the Digital Age* (1990) are attracting renewed interest in documents. My project adds momentum to this movement by suggesting that fascinating documents, and document universes (constellations of documents), exist within leisure realms. Gourmet cooking has been surveyed to reveal

culinary keepsakes, binders, and mother lodes, among other curiosities. For sure, unique documentary systems exist in other forms of leisure. Researchers can use exploratory field methods, similar to those of this study, to map these uncharted documentary universes and to challenge or extend the theory of documents proposed in 9.4.

9.5.2 Collecting, organizing, and seeking information in the home

This project provides a first detailed account of collecting, organizing, and seeking information *in the home*. Thus far, few ELIS or ISU studies have been centered on domestic contexts, and most look at one (usually seeking), not all, of these information activities. Rieh (2004), for instance, looks at home-based web searching; and the research specialty of *personal information management* (Bruce, 2005) explores collecting-organizing-seeking but focuses on the PC within work environments.

My findings suggest that a leisure, domestic scenario may breed a unique information encounter. In such cases, collecting, organizing, and seeking take on new meanings, and are blurred and intertwined. To illustrate, cooks acquire (collect) materials out of subject interest or in anticipation of future projects. Yet unlike typical information seeking, this behavior is unconscious, serendipitous, persistent, and non-problematical. After acquisition, cooks tend to study their materials, and then locate them in their PCL, using a minimal but effective and customized organizational scheme. When they need to seek information (probably a recipe for an episode), they engage a repository that is intimately known and organized based upon their interests and needs. In such a scenario, access problems fall away or are quite different than the usual conception of a user searching a public resource. Overall, the dynamic between seeking-collecting-organizing in a home context can be explored to offer new insights about the human information experience.

9.5.3 Information technologies and leisure

There is still much to learn about the use of information technology within leisure. Basic questions pertain to the way information technologies are changing leisure pursuits and how online communities influence and define leisure social worlds. This is a big research frontier that can be pursued through exploratory ethnographic methods, or any of the technologically oriented methods used in the field of LIS.

9.5.4 Exploring hobby subworlds

My study is about information in the hobby of *gourmet* cooking. There are *other* forms of hobby cooking, known as sub-worlds (see 3.4.3). *Down-home* cooking, for instance, favors low cost ingredients and quick or easy preparation techniques (the opposite of gourmet values). The various hobby cooking subworlds begs the question: *How (and why) do information phenomena in hobby subworlds differ?*

	Gourmet cooking	**Down Home Cooking**
Recipes	Long/technical	Short/simple
Authority structure	Professional chefs exalted	Everyday cooks exalted
Favorite genres	Cookbooks, gastronomy	Community cookbooks

Table 29. Comparison of information phenomena in two hobby cooking subworlds.

Without extensive research, it is easy to see that information phenomena differed in these two subwords, as profiled briefly in Table 29. Recipes in down home cooking are shorter than the recipes of gourmet cooking. The authority structure in down home cooking celebrates the everyday cook, whereas gourmet cooking exalts the professional chef. The subworlds also favored different culinary genres. At the same time, some of the general features were held in common: namely the prevalence of the cookbook and recipe.

An intriguing line of research would describe and compare information phenomena within hobby subworlds. Results may suggest how and why information becomes specialized within domains. Pinning the various information-related distinctions in each subworld to an identifiable social world structure would reveal a lot about the nature of information. Research in leisure science has already surveyed many hobbies for their subworlds, and serves as a springboard.

9.5.5 Exploring hobby classes

The classification system of serious leisure identifies five hobby classes: Making and Tinkering, Liberal Arts Pursuits, Sports and Games, Activity Participation, and Collecting. These five types of hobby activity have fundamental differences in their nature which likely impact information phenomena. An interesting line of inquiry would be to describe information phenomena in each of the five classes. Ultimately, the classes could be compared and contrasted, leading to informational theories of the hobby classes.

My dissertation research into gourmet cooking, representing the Making and Tinkering class of hobbies, serves as a model for research design and a starting point for comparison. Though I have not studied the Making and Tinkering hobbies comprehensively, I hypothesize that the general nature of information in this class is *technical*: its purpose is to provide instruction. In contrast, Stebbins has reported that the nature of information in the Liberal Arts hobbies is *humanistic*: its purpose is to generate understanding (1994). It would be valuable to know how these differing core natures (of information) per hobby class impact all other information phenomena in that class.

This research strategy seems overdue, since variations between the nature of information in the professions have been studied for decades and used as a foundation for

information provision; such distinctions have not been explored in everyday life social worlds such as hobbies.

9.5.6 Exploring forms of leisure

Casual, serious, and project are the three basic forms of leisure activity. While the general characteristics of these activities have been well described within serious leisure scholarship, their information features and dimensions are unknown. This is an opportunity to ask a big philosophical question about information, such as: *What is the nature of information in each form of leisure?* Based upon this research, I hypothesize that the three forms of leisure represent three fundamental *leisure information paradigms*. I propose that these major conceptual systems are akin to the epistemologies of the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Theorizing these three leisure information paradigms would illuminate information phenomena relevant to all of society.

APPENDIX A

Sample of leisure science scholarship on hobbies

I gathered these articles through successive searches in academic research databases in the social sciences using keyword and title searches for *leisure* and *hobbies*, and citation chaining, and utilizing literature reviews (viz. Stebbins, 2001b).

Hobby	Title	Author, date
Allotment gardening	Commitment, enthusiasms and creativity in the world of allotment holding; The allotment: Its landscape and culture	Crouch, D. (1993, 1994)
Barbershop singing	The barbershop singer: Inside the social world of a musical hobby	Stebbins, R.A. (1996)
Bass fishing	A model for commodity intensive serious leisure	Yoder, D. G. (1997)
Bush-walking	In the Australian bush: Some reflections on serious leisure	Hamilton-Smith, E. (1995)
Canadian curling	Curling for cash: The "professionalization" of a popular Canadian sport	Apostle, R. (1992)
Cat collecting	Living in a cat house	Dodge, A. and Rapp, L. (2003)
Collecting	Hobbies: leisure and the culture of work in America. New York: Colombia University Press.	Gelber (1999)
Contract bridge	Recreation specialization in the social world of contract bridge; An analysis of adult play groups: Social versus serious participation in contract bridge	Scott, D., & Godbey, G. (1994, 1992)
Dog sports	Exploring the dimensions of serious leisure: "Love me—love my dog!"	Baldwin, C. K. (1999)
Dog sports	If it weren't for my hobby, I'd have a life: dog sports, serious leisure, and boundary negotiations	Gillespie, D. L. and Lerner, E. (2002)
Do-it-yourself	Do-it yourself: Constructing, repairing, and maintaining domestic masculinity	Gelber, S.M. (1997, 1999)
Genealogy	Doing family history	Lambert, R.D. (1996)
Gun Collecting	Morally controversial leisure: The social world of the gun collector	Olmstead, A.D. (1988)
Liberal arts	The Liberal arts hobbies: A neglected subtype of serous leisure	Stebbins, R.A. (1994)
Masters swimming	Work routines in the serious leisure career of Canadian and U.S. masters swimmers	Hastings, D.W., Kurth, S.B., & Schloder, M. (1996)
Mushrooming	Community and boundary: Personal experience stories of mushroom collectors; Mobilizing fun: provisioning resources in leisure worlds	Fine, G.A. (1998)
Old car collecting	Rationality and passion in private experience: Modern	Dannefer, D.

	consciousness and the social world of old car collectors. Neither socialization nor recruitment: The avocational careers of old-car enthusiasts	(1980, 1981))
Pin collecting	Pin collectors and others: Pin trading at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics	Olmsted, A.D., & Horna, J.A. (1989)
Quilting	Why contemporary Texas women quilt: A link to the sociology of leisure	King, F.L. (1997)
Role playing games	Shared fantasy: Role-playing games as social worlds.	Fine (1983)
Running	The commitment to long-distance running and level of activities	Yair, G. (1990)
Shuffleboard	The social world of shuffleboard: Participation by senior citizens.	Snyder, E. E. (1986)
Stamp collecting	Free Market Metaphor - the Historical dynamics of stamp collecting	Gelber, S. M. (1992).
Surfing	Scenes	Irwin (1977)

APPENDIX B

Exemption certificate from UCLA's Institutional Review Board

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University of California, Los Angeles
OFFICE FOR PROTECTION OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

CLAIM OF EXEMPTION
FROM INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) REVIEW

PROJECT TITLE:
Information Practices, Resources, and Spaces in the Hobby of Gourmet Cooking

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	Name	Degree(s)	University Status	Campus Phone Numbe
	Jenna Hartel	BA	Doctoral Candidate	none
	Department	Campus Mailing Address	Mail Code e-Mail Address	
	Information Studies	GSEIS Building	Box 951521 jhartel@ucla.edu	
CO-INVESTIGATOR or FACULTY SPONSOR:	Name	Degree(s)	University Status	Campus Phone Numbe
	Gregory Leazer	BA, MLS, PhD	Associate Professor	310-206-8135
	Department	Campus Mailing Address	Mail Code e-Mail Address	
	Information Studies	GSEIS Building	Box 951521 gleazer@ucla.edu	
APPLICATION STATUS:	X New ☐ Amendment	If amendment, previous Exempt Protocol # ___		

Check all of the appropriate boxes for funding sources for this research. **Include pending funding source(s).**

☐Extramural* ☐UCLA Academic Senate ☐Department ☐Gift ☐Other: ___

* P.I. of Contract or Grant: ___

Funding Source: _____ Contract/Grant No. (if available): ___

Contract or Grant Title: ___

INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCE

- I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and correct.
- I understand that as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the study, the ethical perfo the project, and the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects.
- I agree to comply with all UCLA policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, State, and local laws reg protection of human subjects in research.
- I will ensure that this study is performed by qualified personnel adhering to the OPRS certified protocol.
- I will not modify the OPRS certified protocol or consent materials without first submitting an amendment to the certified Claim of Certification.
- I agree to obtain legally effective informed consent from human subjects as applicable to this research.
-

Jenna Hartel — Principal Investigator
Sept 8, 2005 — Date

FACULTY SPONSOR'S ASSURANCE

By my signature as sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeab regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to c particular study in accord with the approved protocol. In addition,

- I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress.
- I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving problems should they arise during the c study.
- I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant or untoward adverse effects to the OPRS in writing withi days of occurrence.
- If I will be unavailable, e.g., sabbatical leave or vacation, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume r during my absence, and I will advise the OPRS by letter of such arrangements.

Gregory Leazer — Faculty Sponsor * (if PI is a student or a fellow)
Sept. 12, 2005 — Date

* The faculty sponsor must be a member of the UCLA faculty. The faculty member is considered the responsible party ethical performance of the project.

APPENDIX C

Sample recruiting message posted to mailing lists

Do you love to cook? If so, I'd love to talk to you!

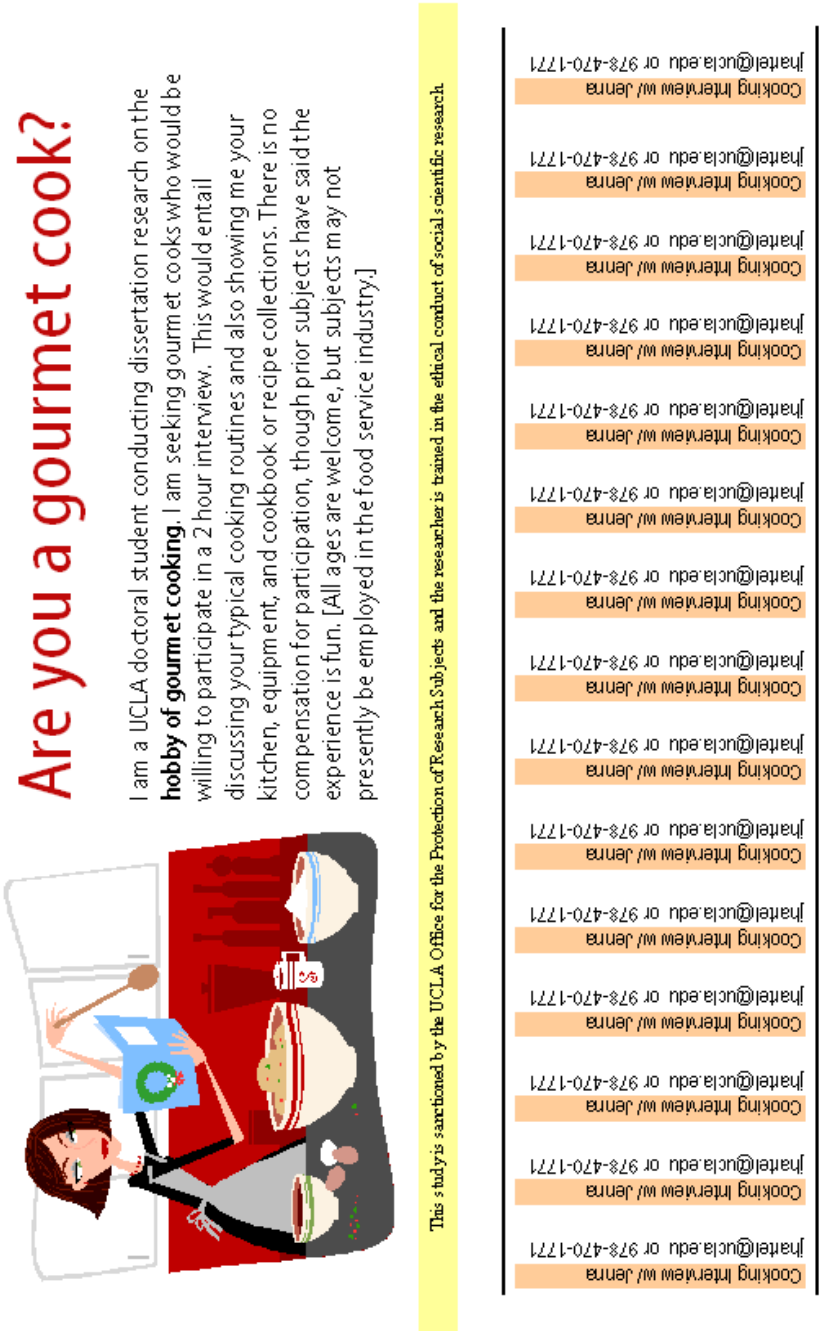
I am a doctoral student in Library Science and am conducting dissertation research on the hobby of gourmet cooking. I am seeking gourmet cooks who would be willing to participate in a 90 minute interview. This would entail discussing your typical cooking routines and showing me your kitchen and cookbook or recipe collections. There is no compensation for participation, though I will share my analysis of your culinary hobby, and may showcase your cooking habits on my webpage. Past interviewees have said the experience is exhilarating and fun.

To participate you must be a seasoned "gourmet cook," who cooks as a craft and pastime above and beyond the need for daily subsistence. (For example: do you devote the weekend to making bouillabaisse? Do you have homemade stocks in your freezer?) A "gourmet" is one who takes a particular interest in advanced culinary skills and high-quality ingredients, as opposed to simple or quick preparations. All ages are welcome, but subjects may not be employed in the food service industry.

To participate, please contact me, Jenna Hartel, at jhartel@ucla.edu or 978-470-1771. Thank you!

APPENDIX D

Sample recruiting advertisement posted at public places (i.e. libraries and doctor's offices)



Are you a gourmet cook?

I am a UCLA doctoral student conducting dissertation research on the **hobby of gourmet cooking**. I am seeking gourmet cooks who would be willing to participate in a 2 hour interview. This would entail discussing your typical cooking routines and also showing me your kitchen, equipment, and cookbook or recipe collections. There is no compensation for participation, though prior subjects have said the experience is fun. [All ages are welcome, but subjects may not presently be employed in the food service industry.]

This study is sanctioned by the UCLA Office for the Protection of Research Subjects and the researcher is trained in the ethical conduct of social scientific research.

Cooking interview w/ Jenna
jhartel@ucla.edu or 978-470-1771

Cooking interview w/ Jenna
jhartel@ucla.edu or 978-470-1771

APPENDIX E

Sample confirmation letter sent to informants

December 12, 2005

Dear Carol,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation research about the hobby of gourmet cooking. To confirm our plans: the interview occurs in your home at **5 Janice Ave in North Reading, MA on December at 2:00.** If the appointment must be changed, please do not hesitate to call me at 978-470-1771 or email jhartel@ucla.edu.

Attached for your consideration is the standard consent form that accompanies research conducted through the University of California, Los Angeles. I am available to answer any questions that you may have about the purposes and procedures of the research.

Our upcoming session lasts about an hour and entails two different types of activities. First, there will be an **informal interview** in which we discuss your cooking. Rest assured, there are no "wrong" answers! Four topics are covered and two may benefit from some forethought:

- Your "story" of being a cook. (Early recollections or interest in cooking, how you learned to cook, any major influences or turning points, the status of your cooking today.)
- A step-by-step description of something you've cooked recently.

After the interview I'll ask you to conduct a **tour** of your home, showing me areas used during cooking, with attention to information resources such as cookbooks, recipes, and technologies.

The entire session will be tape-recorded and photographs will be taken during the tour. I'd be glad to share all the data with you afterwards. For my research purposes, you will be "anonymous" within this data.

Thank you again for willingness to participate in this project. I look forward to meeting you and learning about your love of cooking.

Jenna Hartel
Doctoral Candidate, UCLA

APPENDIX F

Interview schedule

1. The career of the hobby cook. (*Estimated 10 minutes).*

   Please tell the story of your experience as a hobby cook, beginning with your earliest memories of interest in cooking, covering any turning points, and ending with your present participation.

2. An episode of hobby cooking. (*Estimated 15 minutes.)*

   Please tell me about a recent hobby cooking episode, beginning with your decision to cook and then covering the every step taken until you eat the food. Your reflections on the experience afterwards are also welcomed.

3. Information practices (*Estimated 25 minutes*)

   A. What do you do to stay informed about cooking?

   B. Please describe how you do the following:

   - *acquire new cooking ideas or stay current with trends**
   - *find the right recipe**
   - *use a recipe during the cooking process**
   - *maintain a recipe collection**
   - *maintain a cookbook collection**
   - *evaluate a cooking episode**
   - *share your knowledge about cooking**
   - *create your own information resources**
   - *stay aware of cooking information resources**

   * these phrases may change as more is learned about information practices in the hobby

4. Information resources (*Estimated 25 minutes*)

   A. *What are your main information resources for cooking?*

   B. Informant completes worksheet. When completed, the researcher asks the interviewee to comment upon the features of each resource.

APPENDIX G

Worksheet for discussion of information resources

Here are some information resources available to people who cook. Please rank them in order, based upon how often you ***use*** them. #1 is most often used, and higher numbers may be used very little. Please note with an ☒ if you ***don't*** use any of these resources. We will discuss your use of these resources when you are done.

☐ Cookbooks

☐ Cooking instructors or educators

☐ Hands-on experience or experimentation

☐ Internet mailing lists or newsgroups

☐ Internet recipe websites (epicurious.com, foodtv.com…)

☐ Magazines

☐ Markets or vendors

☐ People: family, friends or other hobby cooks

☐ Personal resources (a handbook you made, personal notes…)

☐ Professional chefs

☐ Radio

☐ Restaurants

☐ Stores (cookware, gourmet, department…)

☐ Television

☐ Other: _____

APPENDIX H

A sample memo on "Aesthetics"

A hallmark of gourmet cooking is an *aesthetic* concern. I will define that term and describe how it applies in this hobby, and the resulting impact on information phenomena/resources.

A history of the concept may be appropriate, likely it comes from the artfulness and precision of French Cuisine. (Aesthetics is likely a cuisine-dependent concept, as each cuisine has its own aesthetic.) Aesthetics are also clearly trend-driven, as in the popularity of large plates with sauce-based designs and tall food in the 1990s (in contrast to the gelatinous formality of 1950s food). Even a non-gourmet can detect the different styles from decades of culinary magazines.

In nearly every account, gourmet cooks display a concern for the appearance of food. This manifests foremost in the presentation of food at the table (during the *serving* stage of the episode). Here are various aesthetic concerns:

- how food is served (family style or plated)
- serving fanfare and ritual (carving a roast, flaming a dessert at the table)
- the organization of food on the plate
- the textures and contrasts of food in the menu and meal
- the colors of foods
- dramatic effects: heights, paint-like sauces and designs
- garnishing
- the table set-up (plates, napkins, florals, glassware, silverware)

Aesthetics also extends beyond the point of serving to infuse the entire episode and practice of cooking. Some cooks strive for an elegant, clean, ordered cooking process. This is evident in the *mis-en-place* approach, which includes an artful assembly and display of ingredients. Cooks in my study mentioned that they "clean as they go..." meaning, they keep a tidy kitchen throughout the cooking episode.

Aesthetic concerns carry over to information phenomena. Here are issues to address:

- Cooks value pictures in cookbooks and some cookbooks are more about photography and food styling, this helps in executing an effective presentation. In browsing cookbooks, cooks may just look at the pictures.
- Certain genres are more effective at displaying aesthetics, such as television—note how radio is not so popular. The restaurant experience also provides ideas and lessons on food display.
- Some cooks are known for elegant design, such as Martha Stewart, which carries over into a brand feature of their cookbooks and magazines.
- Cooks take photographs of their food and meals (such as Frances) to document the appearance.
- The Culinary Home Library is sometimes organized with an aesthetic sensibility. (see LA subject in the Valley). One cook put "pretty" cookbooks in the kitchen, and "ugly" ones in the den. Other cooks create attractive towers or books or displays of serials.
- Cooks create journals with an aesthetic sensibility (see Sandy's lovely illustrations).
- Heritage materials are often cherished for their unique aesthetics of old yellowed paper, antiquated designs, beautiful handwriting; these are treated as precious.

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