Comparing Information Seeking Models: A Content Analysis

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Abstract

The work we presented in is a study in progress. We examined similarities and differences among seven well-known information seeking models: those developed by Dervin, Ellis, Johnson et al., Krikelas, Kuhlthau, Leckie et al., and Wilson. We selected these models using three criteria:

1) the model explains a sequence of steps in the information seeking processes,
2) the model is sufficiently general to explain information seeking in various situations, and
3) the model introduces variables involved in information seeking.

Content analysis was applied to identify the variables in each model. Each of the researchers generated a list of variables from the models. The lists of variables were compared and then 10 variables which appeared in both lists were identified: demographics, personal experience/knowledge, information needs, cognition, feelings, actions, information sources, outcomes, contexts, and criteria for evaluating information sources.

Our next step will be to attempt to describe students' accounts of information seeking using the variables identified through this analysis.

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