

## Chapter 5

# Krikelas' Model of Information Seeking Behavior (1983)

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### ABSTRACT

*Over the period of four decades plenty of information seeking behavior models have been presented by many researchers. James Krikelas (1983) was the first to develop an information seeking model derived from published Library and Information Science (LIS) literature about information needs and uncertainty. The present chapter discusses the Krikelas model, the researcher's views of the model and the empirical studies that implemented it. The Krikelas model can be reassessed considering the advances taking place in today's online environment. The internal and external source preferences which are important part of the model have taken new form. The advanced online tools and techniques can help the researcher in capturing information, organizing and eventually collaborating with others to fulfill the information giving and gathering process. Further studies are recommended to redesign the Krikelas model considering new possibilities with the addition of feedback at the end.*

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of information behavior has been in use since the mid-1960s. In the 1970s, the concept of information behavior gradually began to set up its position in the dictionary, focusing on information needs, seeking, and use (Savolainen, 2007). In 1976, Feinman and his colleagues defined "information-seeking behavior" as "specific actions performed by an individual that are specifically aimed at satisfying information needs" (Finmen, et al., 1976).

Over the period of time several scholars have defined Information Seeking Behavior (ISB) in different ways at different contexts, a few are stated here:

A widely accepted definition amongst researchers is by Krikela (1983): "information-seeking behavior begins when someone realizes the existence of an information need and ends when that need is believed to have been satisfied". The seeker turns to formal and informal sources of information and is ultimately satisfied or dissatisfied with the result (Wilson, 1999).

### **Krikelas' Model of Information Seeking Behavior (1983)**

According to Marchionini (1995), information seeking connotes the process of acquiring knowledge; it is a problem oriented approach and the solution may or may not be found. Some of seeking behavior practices can include information retrieval.

Spink and Cole (2006) defined information seeking behavior as a subset of information behavior that includes the purposive seeking of information in relation to goals.

Hassan (2013) believed that information-seeking behavior refers to the activities that people perform starting from a situation or a problem where a need emerges, going through various activities to satisfy this need. It is the journey of answering information needs.

The process of information seeking behavior has been depicted in the form of a model by various researchers, such as Wilson (1981), Krikelas (1983), Dervin (1983), Ellis (1989), Kuhlthau (1991), Leckie, Pettigrew and Sylvain (1996), Savolainen (1995), Johnson (1997) and Wilson (1999), Sonnenwald&Livonen (1999), Spink & Cole (2006), Spink & Cole (2007). These models all show what happens when a person seeks information and examined components of process.

The present chapter highlights the Krikelas model's strengths and weaknesses and empirical studies that studied it.

### **KRIKELAS MODEL (1983)**

James Krikelas (1983) was the first to develop an information seeking model (Horning & Kraemer, 2008) derived from published LIS literature about information needs and uncertainty. He wanted to know what happens when a person needs information and examined the components of information process. Based on his studies he proposed a research model applicable to the general population that is a need-centred model where the process starts when recognizing insufficient information or uncertainty regarding a problem or task.

The following steps are involved in information seeking:

1. Perceiving a need,
2. The search itself,
3. Finding the information, and
4. Using the information, which results in either satisfaction or dissatisfaction

Krikelas (1983) stated that "information seeking begins when someone perceives that the current state of knowledge is less than that needed to deal with an issue (or a problem) which ends when that perception no longer exists".

The Krikelas model of information seeking is applicable in multiple contexts, occupations, roles and knowledge solutions (Agarwal, N & Poo, D. n.d.) as well as in ordinary life tasks and situations (Hassan, 2013). The Krikelas model is simple and widely accepted. It is a one-dimensional flowchart in which all of the arrows travel in one direction and no one part of the process encompasses another (Case, 2002). Krikela emphasized the need for personal information sharing before going to the literature highlighting information sharing. In this library information model, Krikela believed that the librarian acts as a mediator of information residing in the library materials (Lakshminarayanan, 2010).

The Krikelas model (Figure 1) contains 13 components and argues to be a general model that would apply to ordinary life. In the Krikelas model there are two separate actions: information gathering and information giving. Information gathering comes in response to deferred needs, which in turn have been stimulated by an event or the general environment of the seeker (Case, 2007). According to Krikelas, information gathering *does* have a more general and less formal purpose too, which he describes as "an attempt to continually construct a cognitive environmental 'map' to facilitate the need to cope with uncertainty" (p.9 Krikelas, 1983). Hence, Krikelas identifies uncertainty as a key concept. Krikelas

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