Chapter 22
Information Seeking Models in the Digital Age

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ABSTRACT

A model may be defined as a structure for thinking about a problem and may evolve into a statement of the relationships among theoretical propositions. Most models of information behavior are generally the statements, often in the form of diagrams that attempt to explicate an information-seeking activity, the causes and consequences of that activity, or the relations among stages in information-seeking behavior. This chapter explores, introduces, and discusses select information-seeking models and explains various elements of each model. Various online resources like database, research articles, and other web tools will be accessed to retrieve relevant information related to the select models. Further, the chapter also focuses on the diagrammatic or pictorial representation of each model.

INTRODUCTION

Information Seeking Behavior of students in higher academic institutions is an exhaustive and complex process. The theoretical representation of such process is very difficult to comprehend, thus the graphical or pictorial representation will make things easier to understand and the same principle forms the base of Information Seeking Models. A model may be defined as a structure for thinking about a perceived problem and may evolve into a statement of the relationships among theoretical propositions. Information seeking models diagrammatically represent the complex tasks of information seeking process. Most Information Seeking Behavior models are generally the statements, often in the form of diagrams that attempt to explicate an information-seeking activity, the causes and consequences of that activity, or the relations among stages in information Seeking Behavior (Wilson, 1999). Information seeking models aim to describe the process that a user follows to satisfy his information need and while fulfilling that need, he approaches towards formal and informal information sources or available services which finally

results in success or failure to retrieve desired information. A number of models have been designed by various authors and researchers from time to time globally relevant to information needs and seeking behavior of users in various academic institutions. Some models also highlight major as well as minor factors that may directly or indirectly influence the Information Seeking Behavior of users.

BACKGROUND

Most models of information behavior are generally the statements, often in the form of diagrams that attempt to explicate an information-seeking activity, the causes and consequences of that activity, or the relations among stages in information-seeking behavior. Behavior may be defined as the more general field of investigation with information-seeking Behavior being seen as a sub-set of the field, particularly concerned with the variety of methods people employ to discover, and gain access to information resources, and information searching Behavior being defined as a sub-set of information-seeking, particularly concerned with the interactions between information user (with or without an intermediary) and computer-based information systems.. The first model for study of Information Seeking Behavior was proposed by James Krikelas in 1983. This model suggests that the steps of information seeking process are as follows:

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

Over the period of four decades a number of information seeking behavior models have been propounded by many researchers globally (Sawant, 2015). Robson and Robinson (2015) reveal that *Model* presents practical vision into the information seeking behavior of users and the factors that influence them. A variety of models like that of Kuhlthau, Dervin, Wilson, Ellis etc. describe the information seeking process of researchers and students thereby highlight important activities, services, actions and issues related to their information search (Infomatters, 2006). Bates (2005) reveals that *Models* are most useful at the description and prediction phases of understanding a process. Proper explanation of a phenomena results in a *'Theory'*. It is believed that most of the theories in LIS are still at the modeling stage. Models are of great importance in the improvement of theory. They are a kind of proto-theory, a tentative anticipation set of associations, which can then be validated by means of various tests. McKenzie (2003) found that many information seeking models are limited in their ability to explain everyday life information seeking. These are generally related to the studies of scholars or professionals and some have been designed using a *cognitive approach* to model building. However, Robson and Robinson (2013) state that the existing models have some elements in common and most of these in the field of Library and Information Science focus on information seeking behavior of users. Nkomo (2009) divulges that scholars within Library and Information Science as well as outside the field have designed several information seeking models to sketch the information seeking behavior of researchers and students. It can therefore be supposed that the models somehow map out the development of information seeking and number of such models have been designed like *Ellis 1993 model, Kuhlthau's 1992 model* etc. These

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