# Information Behavior

## Part I

INFO 200

**Joseph Janes**
**Associate Professor, Information School**

Information School
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

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# Information Behavior 1

## agenda

- ❖ **why does information behavior matter?**
- ❖ **fundamental concepts**
- ❖ **information seeking**
- ❖ **ways of thinking about it**
- ❖ **kinds and examples**
- ❖ **categories**
- ❖ **an exercise**

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# aspects of information

- can be times and places when information is the most important thing you can imagine: verdict, waiting to hear about a loved one's surgery, making a critical decision, who won the game?, tip of the tongue
- isn't always good
- more isn't always better than less
- can make things worse, better, confuse, delight, send down a blind alley (red herring)
- can overload
- can change your mind, or not
- can't define it well, but everybody knows what it is
- can give it away, still have it ("nonrivalrous"); can be worth more (or less) if shared; can be lost, destroyed—or

- sit around for centuries waiting to be (re)discovered
- can't be worn out from overuse
- can be obsolete but not depleted
- can be lost (*Love's Labour's Won, Cardenio* by Shakespeare)
- can be hidden, lied about, made up
- can mean nothing to you/not even informative
- tangible, or not/entity with no mass
- could be potentially anything
- far more a presence in the moment-to-moment of everyday life than before
- **is power**…if you can find it, get at, read/view/listen/understand/use it
- **means to an end**

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# information behavior

Case calls seeking and using information "common and essential human behaviors," "basic to human existence"   Why?

**information**: "any *difference* you perceive, in your environment or within yourself"   Cf. Buckland?

**information need**: "recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal"   comments?

**information seeking**: "<u>conscious</u> effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge"   comments?

*So…what is the most frequently used source to seek out information?*

**information behavior**: "information seeking as well as the totality of other *unintentional* or *passive* behaviors…as well as purposive behaviors that do not involve seeking…."

## information seeking

**active**

   **decision-making**

      buying something, choosing courses/majors, picking paper topic

   **task completion**

      creating a web site

   **broad background**

      environmental scanning

**passive**

   **information encountering**

   **information grounds**

**good enough**

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## information seeking variables

seeker

situation (context)

main motivation

sources of information

time pressure

degree of thoroughness

From Case, Table 2.3

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Table 2.3: Comparison of six case studies.

| Seeker(s) and situation | Main motivation | Sources of information | Time pressure | Degree of thoroughness |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Julie: car purchase | Optimize functionality and value | Friends, Web pages, salespeople | Low (months) | Low |
| Leslie: library research | Class assignment; earn credit/grade | Online catalogs, books, journals, professional advice (on how to search) | Moderate (weeks) | Moderate |
| Hospital ICU team members: caring for an accident victim | Work assignment; desire to help others | Observation of patient, paper and electronic records, monitoring devices, medical manuals, hospital employees | Very high (hours or days, based on patient improvement) | High |
| Joe: horse race wager | Desire for thrill; to win money | Special journals, observation, intuition | Very high (minutes) | High |
| George: legal research | Work assignment; help relatives | Special databases and publications, professional advice | High (days) | High |
| Maria: information on cancers | Curiosity; preemptive information search | Web pages, books, brochures, friends, experts | None (lifetime) | Moderate |

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## categories of information behavior

information seeking

needing

creating

sharing

encountering

avoiding

withholding/censoring/destroying

evaluating, choosing, acting on/using/not

etc….others?

(also, potential ideas/sources for final project problems…)

# exercise

**observe, reflect, think about** examples of information behaviors online, offline

**creative, thoughtful, interesting, unusual (esp. ones we haven't discussed)**

> information seeking
> needing
> creating
> sharing
> encountering
> avoiding
> withholding/censoring/destroying
> evaluating, choosing, acting on/using/not
> etc

**second part of lecture to debrief and discuss**