

Week 3 Blog

The article that caught my attention this week was "The design of browsing and berrypicking techniques for the online search interface" by Marcia Bates. The idea of berry picking was interesting to me not only as someone who is naturally curious, but as a cognitive science major. I have learned about different structures of the brain and how they contribute to basic cognitive functions, but this article was fun to read because of how it applied our way of thinking to a different field.

Berrypicking, as a way of structuring information, is effective in combating cognitive overload. Our brains can only handle so much information effectively at once. So the way our brains work is by retrieving information in parts or, as the article referred to it, "berrypicking". I really enjoyed the way Bate applied this principle from our cognitive model to hypermedia and external information centers we encounter everyday. I found this sort of thinking similar to something I had read about quite recently.

A week ago, I finished reading a book called "Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World" by David Epstein. The book discussed how having knowledge in a multitude of areas is helpful in solving problems that we encounter in any context and how hyper-specialization can lead to not only narrow thinking, but a lack of original, effective solutions. So here, it would make sense to model external information structures like the way we think in our everyday life.

Another article that I found interesting this week was "Computing ethic values in design" by Knobel and Bowker. I was impressed with how short and informative the article was. Despite being three pages, I found the principles that need to be integrated every aspect of the internet

well thought out. The connection I saw with this article and the berrypicking article was it's interdisciplinary nature. Knobel and Bowker noted these design principles can't be implemented without the help of a variety of disciplines such as psychology, human-computer interaction, computer science, and sociology, to name a few.

I think the value of the privacy and security tradeoff will most definitely require the most interdisciplinary thinking. Privacy and Security ethics go so much deeper than computer science and hardware. Legal and societal implications will also need to be considered, especially with the public knowledge of companies like Google and Facebook knowing people better than they know themselves. It will definitely be a team effort of different disciplines.

I was happy to see that my pleasure reading was linked with some of the readings. We will truly need to be interdisciplinary in our thinking if we want to create the most efficient information systems for the next generation.

Citation:

1. Marcia J. Bates, (1989) "The design of browsing and berrypicking techniques for the online search interface", Online Review, Vol. 13 Issue: 5, pp.407-424, <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb024320>
2. Knobel, Cory, Bowker, Geoffrey C.. 2011. "Values in Design." Communications of the ACM 54 (7): 26–28.