

Information Behavior Analysis

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Ongoing information seeking is occurring due to the most recent COVID-19 pandemic. This has led to an “Infodemic,” and people experiencing various information processes and concepts, such as information overload, selective exposure, and information encountering. I recently had an information seeking experience due to the pandemic and portrayed certain information seeking behaviors.

Information Seeking Experience

A recent information seeking experience I personally had was when I wanted to learn more about the COVID vaccinations. There have been such varying perspectives, information, and even rumors that I wanted to look for precise and true information.

Information Need

My information need was based on the fact that COVID vaccinations are becoming more widespread, recommended, and even required for some places. The context surrounding this was that my friend, who lives in South Korea, is reluctant to get the COVID vaccine due to her fear, anxiety, and rumors. Conversely, I am vaccinated and wanted to recommend it to her, so I wanted to find information to confirm the validity of the rumors she heard. This information need was prompted by the current pandemic and vaccination situation, and I believe we will continuously need more information to be well-educated.

Information Seeking Processes

The information seeking processes I took included a doctor’s insight, as well as using a search engine. The sources I consulted were my friend who is a doctor, Google Scholar, and journal articles. First, the doctor said that there could be side effects, but not like the ones that my friend was afraid of. This was helpful, but he did not provide any evidence to prove his

argument. Then, I started my information seeking using a search engine, finding information from the CDC website, news, and Google Scholar journal articles. The sources were helpful in that they provided evidence of their claims about the vaccine. I found information on the CDC website, stating that many vaccine rumors were only myths (CDC, 2021). However, I knew that it would not be credible to find information that only supports my opinion, so I searched for information from other sources, such as a journal article which stated that vaccinations could cause some menstrual changes (Male, 2022).

Barriers

While information seeking, I first encountered the barrier of information overload. At first, I wanted to find all of the information I could for my friend on Google, which led to information overload (Jean et al., 2021). Because of this, I started using selective attention (Jean et al., 2021) in order to filter the information. Then, I started to use selective exposure (Jean et al., 2021) to seek information that would support my thoughts. However, during this process, I realized that I only sought information that proved my point. One advantage I had in this process was that I learned that we should not be biased, so I tried my best to find neutral information.

Outcomes of Experience

Through this information seeking experience, I was both satisfied and dissatisfied with the outcomes. I was able to find credible information, such as how many rumors about the COVID vaccines are false. However, when I presented this to my friend, she is still reluctant, which shows how rumors, gossip, and word of mouth can still overpower the validity other information seeking processes.

Reflection

I learned that I, and many people in general, tend to lean towards selective exposure in order to convince others that their opinions are correct and should be agreed with. I realized that continued selective exposure like this could lead to confirmation bias, and I now know that I should always stay neutral when seeking information.

References

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