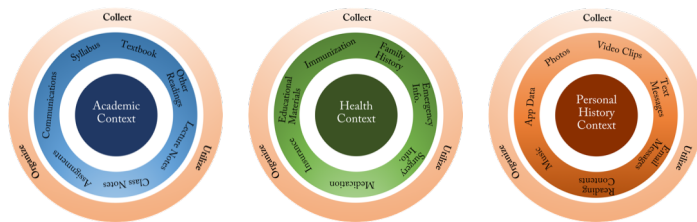


Information Activities within Information Horizons: A Case for College Students' Personal Archiving

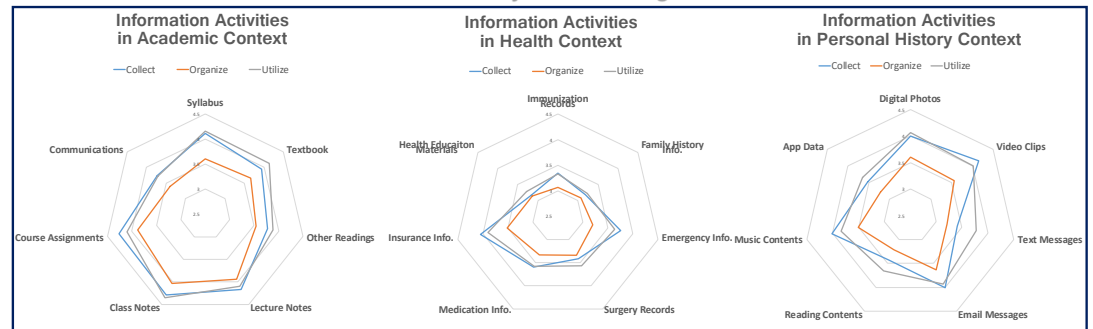
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Background: Information Horizon Theory

- People interact with information within a certain context, using information sources available to them depending on information needs. This is called an information source horizon. An information horizon is a densely populated solution space (Sonnenwald, 1999).
- Graphically and verbally described information horizons of individuals: information horizon maps
- Qualitative approaches to observe individuals' information horizons (Sonnenwald, 1999; Sonnenwald, et al., 2001).
- Information behaviors as for information seeking and selection, but no particular emphasis on other specific types of information behaviors (collect, organize, preserve, etc.) in this theory
- This study looks at specific information behaviors within information horizons.
- This study uses a quantitative approach to find general patterns in information horizons.



Data Analysis & Findings



Radar Charts for Information behaviors by context (information horizon maps)

- Radar charts as aggregated information horizon maps (active behaviors—larger radars—in academic and personal history contexts, less active in health context)
- Larger radars for **collect** (blue) and **utilize** (grey) than for **organize** (orange) in all three context
- **Best performances** by information items (pointy items in radars): **utilizing class notes** (M=4.35), **collecting class notes** (4.29), **collecting assignments** (4.27), **collecting photos** (4.26), **collecting lecture notes** (4.16)
- **Worst performances** by information items: **collecting health educational materials** (M=3.17), **collecting family medical history** (3.19), **organizing text messages** (3.21), **organizing reading contents** (3.21), **utilizing family medical history** (3.23)
- **Most cared information items** each context: **class notes, and lecture notes, assignments; insurance information and emergency information; photos, video clips, and email messages.**

Research Design

- **Research Questions:**
 - How do information horizons appear in certain specific contexts collectively among college students?
 - Are there discernable patterns in information horizons for college students?
 - Do specific information behaviors serve as an important factor in information horizons?
- **Research Setting:**
 - 3 Contexts (with 7 common information items)
 - **Academic** (writing a term paper): course syllabus, textbooks, lecture notes, class notes, assignments and instructor's communication
 - **Health** (visiting a new doctor): immunization records, family medical history, emergency info., surgery info., medication, and health education materials
 - **Personal History** (getting a new smart phone): photos, video clips, text messages, email messages, reading contents, music, and app data
 - 3 specific Information behaviors (Lush, 2014)
 - **Collect**: Identify, regularly collect
 - **Organize**: Categorize, Arrange, Label
 - **Utilize**: Preserve, re-find, Share
- Online survey (March to May 2017)
- College students from two institutions (UAlbany, CUA)
 - 233 responses collected, 132 responses analyzed
- Demographics of participants: 65.15% Females, average 21.25 years old, all years in college in 37 majors.

Pair	Item	Sig. (2-tailed)	Pair	Item	Sig. (2-tailed)	Pair	Item	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Syllabus (Total vs. Collect)	.000*	Pair 2	Immunization (Total vs. Collect)	.010*	Pair 1	Photos (Total vs. Collect)	.000*
Pair 2	Syllabus (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 3	Immunization (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 2	Photos (Total vs. Organize)	.000*
Pair 3	Syllabus (Total vs. Utilize)	.000*	Pair 1	Immunization (Total vs. Utilize)	.100	Pair 3	Photos (Total vs. Utilize)	.003*
Pair 1	Textbook (Total vs. Collect)	.119	Pair 2	Family History (Total vs. Collect)	.260	Pair 1	Videos (Total vs. Collect)	.000*
Pair 2	Textbook (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 3	Family History (Total vs. Organize)	.050	Pair 2	Videos (Total vs. Organize)	.000*
Pair 3	Textbook (Total vs. Utilize)	.000*	Pair 1	Family History (Total vs. Utilize)	.222	Pair 3	Videos (Total vs. Utilize)	.002*
Pair 1	Class Notes (Total vs. Collect)	.006*	Pair 2	Emergency Info. (Total vs. Collect)	.000*	Pair 1	Text Message (Total vs. Collect)	.001
Pair 2	Class Notes (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 3	Emergency Info. (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 2	Text Message (Total vs. Organize)	.000*
Pair 3	Class Notes (Total vs. Utilize)	.000*	Pair 1	Emergency Info. (Total vs. Utilize)	.016*	Pair 3	Text Message (Total vs. Utilize)	.000*
Pair 1	Readings (Total vs. Collect)	.051	Pair 2	Surgery Info. (Total vs. Collect)	.049*	Pair 1	Email (Total vs. Collect)	.004*
Pair 2	Readings (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 3	Surgery Info. (Total vs. Organize)	.003*	Pair 2	Email (Total vs. Organize)	.000*
Pair 3	Readings (Total vs. Utilize)	.000*	Pair 1	Surgery Info. (Total vs. Utilize)	.133	Pair 3	Email (Total vs. Utilize)	.192
Pair 1	Lecture Notes (Total vs. Collect)	.002*	Pair 2	Medication (Total vs. Collect)	.011*	Pair 1	Readings contents (Total vs. Collect)	.176
Pair 2	Lecture Notes (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 3	Medication (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 2	Readings contents (Total vs. Organize)	.000*
Pair 3	Lecture Notes (Total vs. Utilize)	.157	Pair 1	Medication (Total vs. Utilize)	.154	Pair 3	Readings contents (Total vs. Utilize)	.000*
Pair 1	Assignments (Total vs. Collect)	.000*	Pair 2	Insurance (Total vs. Collect)	.000*	Pair 1	Music (Total vs. Collect)	.000*
Pair 2	Assignments (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 3	Insurance (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 2	Music (Total vs. Organize)	.000*
Pair 3	Assignments (Total vs. Utilize)	.527	Pair 1	Insurance (Total vs. Utilize)	.028*	Pair 3	Music (Total vs. Utilize)	.194
Pair 1	Communications (Total vs. Collect)	.000*	Pair 2	Health Education (Total vs. Collect)	.511	Pair 1	App Data (Total vs. Collect)	.000*
Pair 2	Communications (Total vs. Organize)	.000*	Pair 3	Health Education (Total vs. Organize)	.142	Pair 2	App Data (Total vs. Organize)	.000*
Pair 3	Communications (Total vs. Utilize)	.025*	Pair 1	Health Education (Total vs. Utilize)	.271	Pair 3	App Data (Total vs. Utilize)	.000*

Paired Sample T-Tests (significantly different with $p < 0.05$ level)

Discussion and Conclusion

- This study echoes previous studies as information horizons appear differently in different contexts.
- Students are more active in collecting and utilizing than organizing. They care more about academic and personal health resources than health resources.
- Specific behaviors appear significantly differently in active performing contexts.
- As specific behaviors (*collect*, *organize*, and *utilize*) show different patterns, if they are aggregated simply as "information behaviors" in studies, we may overlook important implications.
- Specific information behaviors should be considered as an important variable in information horizon studies.