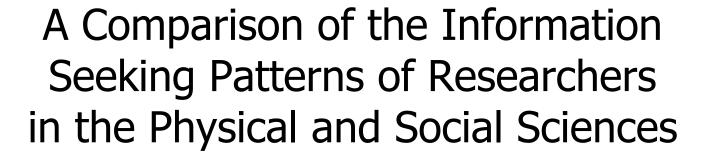
Discussion of



David Ellis, Deborah Cox, and Katherine Hall Journal of Documentation, vol.49, December 1993, pp. 356-369

Purpose

- Compare two groups of researchers
 - They are usually studied separately
 - Studies can't be compared because they differ so much in aim and design
 - The studies employ a shallow conceptualization – lack "explicit theoretical framework"

Recall the Physical Scientist study?

- Research physicists and chemists
- Information-seeking patterns analyzed for key patterns
 - Starting
 - Chaining
 - Browsing
 - Differentiating
 - Monitoring
 - Extracting
 - Verifying (new)
 - Ending (new)



Social Scientists

- Study took place before that of physical scientists
- Nomenclature standardized between studies

Conclusion?

- "no overriding differences between the groups"
- "characteristics ... fundamentally the same"
- "remarkable degree of homogeneity between the information seeking patterns of the physicists, chemists, and the social scientists"

Starting

- Definition: activities characteristic of the initial search for information
- Same : reliance on starter references, reviews, informal contact
- Different: chemists made more use of secondary material

Chaining

- Definition: following citation connections between material
- Same: backward chaining
- Different: physicists more aware of Science Citation Index than Social Scientist were aware of Social Science Citation Index

Browsing

- Definition: semi-directed or semistructured searching in an area of potential interest
- Same: browsing journals, Current Contents, abstracts, library, bookstores, poster displays
- Different: Browsing not so important to chemists



- Definition: activity which uses differences between sources as a filter on the nature and quality of the material examined
- Same: core journals
- Different: ?

Monitoring

- Definition: activity of maintaining awareness through regularly following particular sources
- Same: personal contact, journals, Current Contents
- Different: Physicists no books or newspaper articles



- Definition: Going through a source and extracting material
- Same:
- Different: not a significant activity for chemists except when writing reviews



- Ellis states information technology had a "minor impact" on information seeking and communication activities of the three groups (1993)
- Still the case?



- What is an electronic conference?
 - Still the same?
- Ellis notes "lack of formal recognition of electronic media as representing legitimate outlets for publication", "lower division outlets for minor league research"
 - Still the case?



- Why didn't they employ the same definitions through both studies?
- Does it make sense to study Social scientists separately from physical scientists? When?