

## **Absence of Information-Giver in Information Behavior Models**

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### **Abstract**

In addition to being utilized in areas such as Information Storage and Retrieval and Knowledge Management, investigating human information behavior as an independent field of knowledge has its issues. The concept of info-behavior somehow involves a reciprocal process: the info-giver and the info-receiver/seeker. On the other hand, in a logical analysis of information behavior, the elements required in this process are information and the source of information (i.e., the info-giver). Nevertheless, most of the discussions and the papers found in the literature on human information behavior (perhaps because of being interested in the applications mentioned above) are focused on info-seeking. And for any reason, little attention is paid to the role of the info-giver as the primary side in information behavior. However, the author's main idea in this paper is that the info-giver is central to realizing this process. The present article, having a glance at some of the most popular models on information behavior and the place of the info-seeker in the process, points to the absence of the info-giver in the mentioned models. Then, by providing some exemplary cases of information behavior initiated by the info-seeker/receiver in the absence, the paper emphasizes the information giver's central role in realizing the information behavior process.

**Keywords:** Human Information Behavior, Information-Seeking Behavior, Information-Giving Behavior, Info-Giver, Info-Seeker.

### **Introduction**

#### **1-1. Purpose**

The relationship between humans and information has been viewed from different angles. When speaking of information behavior, we refer to actions and reactions by humans while dealing with information. However, due to its nature, information is accompanied by several factors and elements while getting transferred, namely carrier, channel, time, place, symbol, and probably above all, sender and receiver.

A review of information behavior models reveals that the critical Element of this process (i.e., the sender of information) has not received the due attention. Instead, the recipient of information, also known as the info-seeker, has received primary attention. In this article, after reviewing the subject's background, the information giver's position in the process of information behavior is discussed. The question then answered is whether it is possible to realize information behavior in the absence of the info-seeker and only in the presence of the info-giver. Finally, the importance of this viewpoint and its functional consequences are

mentioned.

## 1-2. Background

Wilson (2000) defines *Information Behavior* as the totality of human behavior toward information sources and channels, including active and passive info-seeking; hence, this includes face-to-face interactions as well as the passive receipt of information (when watching TV, for instance) without having the purpose or the will to receive such information. Wilson proposed three more definitions to proceed further with academic fields: *info-seeking behavior*, *info-searching behavior*, and *information-use behavior*.

Identifying human information behavior helps in the disambiguation of issues concerning information behavior and is also helpful in many subordinate areas; areas such as designing data storage and retrieval systems, designing user-interface, information organization in storage and retrieval warehouses, designing information transfer chains and cycles, information organization in databases, information encoding and decoding, information interpretation, information reproduction by machine, information and knowledge management, and applied fields such as education and research that benefit from information technology achievements. As mentioned by Wilson, in information behavior models, proposed theories are focused on "the totality of human behavior about sources and channels of information" and particularly on *information seeking*.

Various theories and models about information have been put forward, from Shannon's theory (Shannon, 1948), to more recent ones, of which we can refer to about 70 models and theories related to human information behavior introduced in "Theories of Information Behavior" by Fisher, Erdelez and McKechnie (2005), and the other inclusive book by Al-Suqri and Al-Aufi (2015) entitled "Information Seeking Behavior and Technology Adoption: theories and trends." In the meantime, reviewing the information-related theories reminds us that communication comprises both the information sender and the receiver. Although Wilson's definition of information behavior focuses on "the totality of human behavior concerning information sources and channels," information behavior models and topics solely concentrate on info-seeking or, in other words, on the information receiver.

Paying much attention to the info-seeker has caused focusing much theoretical research and, consequently, much of innovations in the concepts of the info-seeker and info-seeking. This may have led to more attention to some functions of information. Nevertheless, ignorance or neglect on the other side of the communication process (i.e., the sender of information) causes deficiencies in the formulated or implemented processes, and mutually paying attention to the presence and role of the information sender/giver may lead to significant improvements in these models. In this article, due to the lack of appropriate attention to the role of the info-giver in the models of information behavior, the reader's attention is first attracted to the actual presence of the info-giver in the process of information behavior. Then, despite the emphasis in different models of information behavior on the role of the info-seeker, it is shown that the realization of the information behavior process occurs even in the absence of the info-seeker. More precisely, the realization of information behavior depends on the presence of the info-giver and the message containing the information, rather than the info-seeker, even if the information seeker/receiver is not present in the process.

## Literature Review

Before the main discussion, the background on info-seeking and info-giving behavior is

briefly reviewed. There will be a conclusion according to the background, and then the main topic of this paper will be discussed. Firstly by defining information behavior, the elements of this process should be determined.

**2.1. Information Behavior and Info-seeking**

Reviewing the literature related to informational behavior reveals that while, according to Shannon (1948), the communication process begins with sending of information by the message-sender, it is the info-seeker that has received much attention and has been the basis in proposing some models and theories for information behavior.

In his definition, Wilson (2000) provides definitions for *information-seeking behavior*, *information-searching behavior*, and *information-use behavior*. However, as he admits, his main focus is on information-seeking behavior, so it is not surprising if his approach is based mainly on info-seeker.

Comparing the information-behavior models with information-seeking or information-searching models, Wilson (1999) considers his model a good one to explain information-seeking behavior and the broader scope of information behavior. In his proposed model, Wilson shows that info-seeking behavior arises from the user's understanding of his information need.

Wilson's main focus in this model is on info-seeking; the predominant aspect of this model is the search for information - albeit performing *information exchange* (oval box located on the right side of the figure- Wilson, 1999) requires giving and receiving information, but he has not explicitly emphasized this. Do all info-seeking models focus solely on the info-seeker, or does any have an explicit reference to info-giving? Here is a brief review of some info-seeking behavior models.

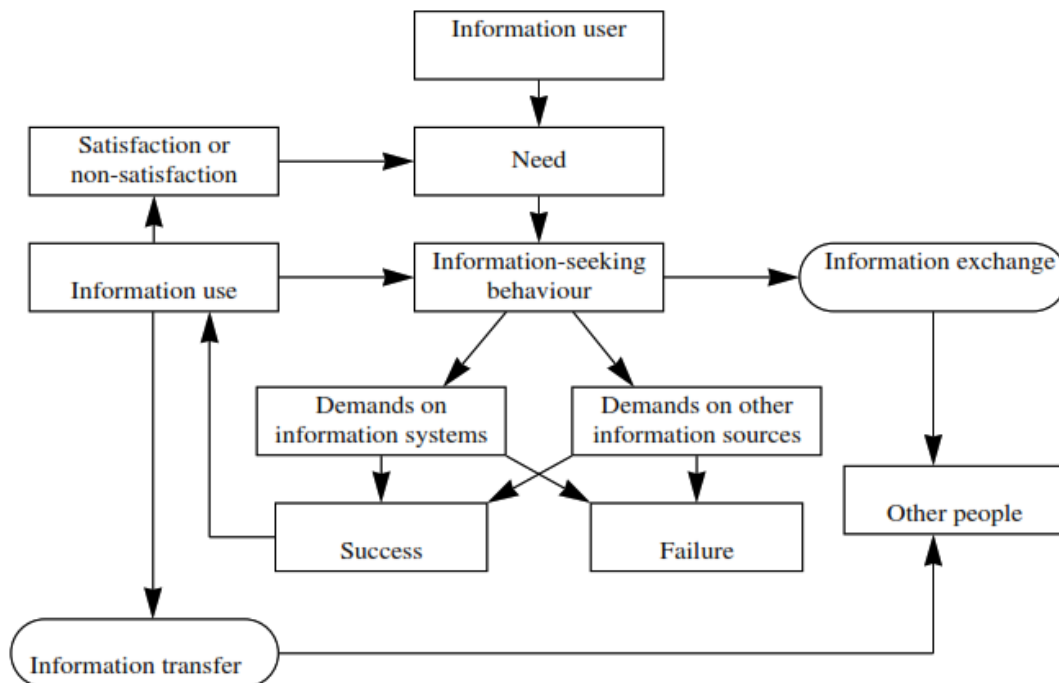


Figure 1: Wilson's model of information behavior (Wilson, 1999)

Krikelas (1983, p6; cited in Sawant, 2015) defines info-seeking behavior as "an individual's attempt to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need." There is a mention of info-giving

in Krikelas' model: it is described not as an independent process in the field of information behavior, but as the act of dissemination of messages (Krikelas, 1983, p. 13; cited in Sawant, 2015) which, depending on the nature of the individual's needs, is considered a part of the process of information gathering or finding.

Kuhlthau's theory of uncertainty (Kuhlthau, 1993; Kuhlthau, Heinström & Todd, 2008) is also based on a lack or gap of knowledge in the info-seeker, which prompts him to start info-seeking. What is noteworthy in this model is Kuhlthau's attention to the user's feelings and thoughts; however, these thoughts and feelings lead not to info-giving but to info-seeking. In this model, there is no mention of info-giving either.

Dervin's model (1998) is a cognitive approach toward info-seeking and concentrates on behavior originating from the user's daily experiences. Dervin (1998) does not insist specifically on emotional aspects of cognitive processes, but her model illustrates the info seeker's mental effort to fill up the gaps in his mind. The *semantics* included in Dervin's model can be considered an internal and introspective process. In contrast, the central concept of the present article is those instances of information behavior that lead to giving information, not inferring information, and giving meaning to it.

Ellis (2005) simplifies the complex fundamental patterns of info-seeking behavior into 6 activities: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring, and extracting. The info-seeker is the only actor, explicitly or implicitly, in all these activities. This model results from his studies on different groups of researchers (in English literature, chemistry, physics, and engineering). The model has been highly noted and cited. As a model of info-seeking behavior, Ellis's model focuses mainly on the info-seeker and practically ignores the info-giver.

According to Belkin (2005), info-seeking starts with the user's understanding of the anomaly of the current knowledge. This anomaly should be resolved, so the information needed should be responded to promptly. Therefore, Belkin (2005) considers info-giving only up to the point where the person seeks to present his information need to the system, and his model seeks to discover this information need as accurately as possible so that by responding to it, this anomaly is fixed.

In all these theories and models, the " info-seeker " plays the active role, who, in most cases, is faced with a pile of information- either organized or unorganized, in or out of a storage and retrieval system. Most of these patterns and models make no mention of the primary fundamental source and origin of the information delivered by the info-seeker to initiate the process of info-seeking.

Saracevic (1997) perhaps tried to compensate for this defect by proposing his "stratified model of information retrieval interaction," based on an interactive approach. This approach was widely accepted among experts, prompting Marchionini (2004) to propose Information Interaction, which seems to be generally accepted. Marchionini was trying to highlight the human's role in information behavior and retrieval processes. Earlier also, Belkin (1993) had identified humans as the focal Element of information retrieval systems. However, in all these cases, experts were looking at the human's role in the information retrieval process to better design information retrieval systems and enhance efficiency of these systems. However, the mutual transmission of information (i.e., *proximal development* from a psychological point of view: Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), or its inclusion of information sharing between people and their small world (Chatman, 1991), have been referred to in some cases.

Although the interactive approach was very attractive for theorists, interactive models and

patterns couldn't divert the attention from retrieval and info-seeking, as if information behavior is equal to info-seeking behavior and that an information retrieval system is comprised only of information organized for upcoming user queries. For instance, Spink and Wilson (1999) proposed evaluating information based on changes to the user's query (before and after retrieval). Thus, the attention of information behavior theorists is focused only on one end of the interaction: where the user of information initiates info-searching.

Referring to Wilson (2000), distinguishes four kinds of behavior: information behavior, info-seeking behavior, info-searching behavior, and information-use behavior. This distinction indicates that information behavior should include the three other behaviors logically. The three latter involve the actions of a user who looks for, finds, and utilizes information. These three behaviors are coincident, although each implies different roles of one person. This is where he concludes that information behavior is the totality of human behavior. Wilson's definition indicates that even in defining information behavior, he has been focusing and insisting on info-seeker and info-receiver.

## **2.2. Information Behavior and Info-giving**

In most of the information behavior models, which focus on info-seeking behavior, the primary role in information behavior is played by the info-seeker as the initiator of the process. However, as per the communication process model, communication is initiated by the sender of the message (Shannon, 1948), who wants his message to be received by the receiver, with no necessary indication of "information seeker." So, related resources are expected to pay due attention to the role of the sender of the information (i.e., the info-giver) and not the info-seeker. Nevertheless, only a handful of papers on info-giving behavior are available, some of which are mentioned in the following.

In examining the factors influencing pre-decision communication behavior after a help request, Tims, Swart and Kidd (1976) examined the role of help dependency and the cost of help in readiness for info-giving. Although Tims et al. (1976) focus on being ready to help, they study info-giving behavior and specifically review behaviors expressed in response to info-seeking behavior.

Park (1986), referring to Krikelas' model, highlighted the cycling nature of info-giving behavior. However, here again, info-seeking is the main ground for info-giving, and it's been pointed out that whenever an information source is located, info-giving behavior is suddenly stopped.

Rall, Peskoff and Byrne (1994), in a study entitled "The effects of info-giving behavior and gender on the perceptions of physicians: An experimental analysis," examine the info-giving behavior during the information transaction process in the medical context of a patient-doctor relationship. In such a context, the info-giver is not considered the initiator of information interaction.

Ong, De Haes, Hoos and Lammes (1995) study the information transaction between doctors and patients in a medical context. They also refer to several types of research conducted on the same subject (i.e., information transaction between patients and doctors) and some of its non-informative functions (like relief-providing and hope-giving). It's interesting to know that delivering bad medical news has been considered a type of such info-giving behavior (Brewin, 1991).

Hektor (2001, p. 87) is among the few writers who point to info-giving. He divides

information behavior into four categories: *giving*, *seeking*, *communicating*, and *gathering* information (ibid., p. 81) and considers the representation of these behaviors in the form of eight activities. For info-giving, he mentions three activities: *Publish*, *instruct*, and *dress*. *Dress* is an everyday activity between info-communicating and info-giving and is the packing of information in the form of symbols, signs, and images to externalize and express ideas and thoughts. By *instructing*, Hektor means the activities to disseminate dressed products. In *instruction*, the act of info-giving has a social aspect. Still, it is one-way from the individual to an anonymous or general counterparts, such as requesting a purchase on the Internet or paying a bill by mail, telephone, or the Internet.

Moreover, reciprocating action may be a request for explanation, reception, or confirmation on receiving the expressed content. *Publish* activities are actions through which a person sends information to others to attract their participation; they differ from *instruct* activities in that they are less executive, more personal, and often broader. A paper notice, a post on a website, or an explanation for a newsgroup are examples of *publishing*. Recipients of this category of information may be at any level and are not limited to a specific group. *Dress* frames the information in symbols and signs and publishes and sends it for public access.

Schouten, Hoogstraten and Eijkman (2003) in examining the factors affecting patients' info-seeking behavior and dentists' communication behavior, point to info-giving. However, this behavior is examined only in a mutual process and in the dentist's communicative response to the patient's information preferences and socio-demographic reactions and characteristics. They conclude that dentists' info-giving behavior (i.e., the content of given information to the patient) should be improved to enhance the patients' right to make informed decisions.

Arora (2003) studies doctors' info-giving behavior toward cancer patients. In such a situation, patients naturally seek information from doctors, and the information behavior process is not initiated through info-giving; so, it is studied as a positively influencing element on the treatment process and its outcomes. Takahashi, Kai, Hisata and Higashi (2006) also have focused on doctors' info-giving in the medical context.

Fong and Burton (2006) researched the effect of peers' recommendations on purchasing goods in the electronic environment. They sought the similarities and differences between the users of the electronic discussion boards on the electronic market platform by analyzing and comparing consumers' info-seeking and info-giving behavior with different cultural backgrounds.

Marijn Poortvliet et al. (2007) comprehensively discuss the info-giving behavior in the information exchange context and its due issues in such a context under the impact of achievement goals on task-related information exchange. In such a context, there would be an info-giver and an info-seeker, and they would exchange their role alternatively.

Machizawa and Hayashi (2012, p. 245), through a book chapter entitled "Birthing across Cultures: Toward the Humanization of Childbirth," discuss the problems stemming from the info-giving behavior of health providers in women's decision-making in a socio-psychological context.

## Results

### DISTINGUISHING ELEMENTS OF INFO-GIVING BEHAVIOR

#### 3.1. Info-giving: the Starting Point in Information Behavior

From a logical point of view and in compliance with Shannon's communication model

(Shannon, 1948), as the message sender initiates the communication process when studying information behavior, it is necessary to consider the information-giving behavior committed by the information owner/sender. This consideration will clarify the process of information behavior and yield optimum approaches towards some information issues, among which are knowledge management, educational issues, and some research methods.

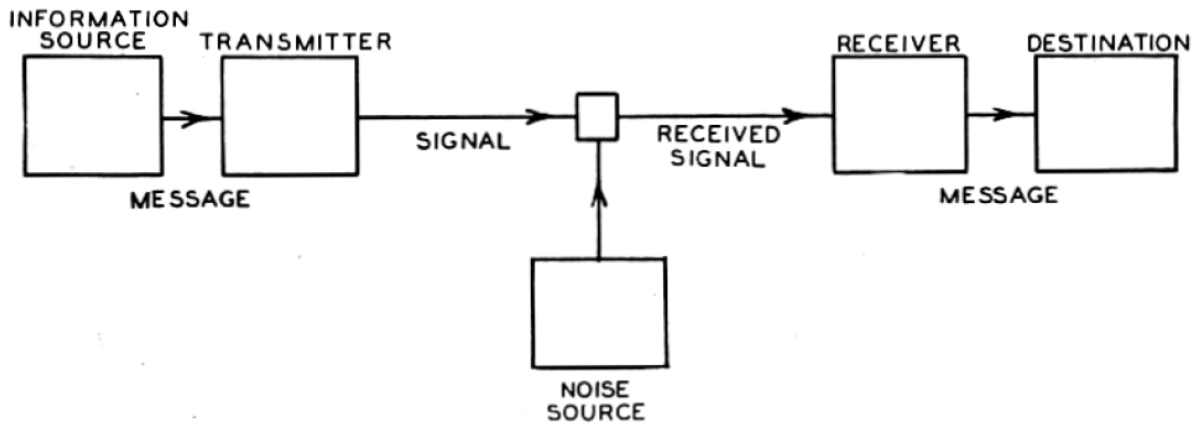


Figure 2: Schematic diagram of a general communication system (Shannon, 1948)

Obviously, in a conventional communication model, the information sender and receiver are present along with the message and communication channel (see schematic diagram by Shannon, 1948). However, logically it is clear that each case of communication is initiated by the message sender, not the receiver. Similarly, in an information behavior instance, the process starts with/by the sender of information. Even in info-seeking behavior - as an instance of the information behavior process - the info-seeker expresses his information-need/information request by sending the message and thus initiates the process of info-seeking behavior by giving information about his need/request; therefore, we can say that each information behavior case starts with the initiation of info-giving. In the meantime, since this information behavior is commenced to obtain information needed by the info-seeker, we carelessly call it info-seeking behavior. So, looking at all the models reviewed shows clearly that in all of them, though unspecified explicitly, any process of information behavior, and consequently any instance of info-seeking behavior, begins with the info-seeker's act as the initiator of the info-giving process.

In contrast to the attention paid to the notion of info-seeking, is it possible that information behavior doesn't lead to info-seeking at all? Better to say, is it possible that an information communication is established essentially with the sole purpose of info-giving? Is it possible that instances of information behavior do not involve info-seeking? In other words, is it possible for information communication to be done solely for info-giving, with no info-seeking or info-seeker in the process?

### 3.2. The Place of Info-giver and Info-seeker in Shannon's Communication Model

Now it is necessary to refer to what is connoted by *info-giving*. The lexical definition of this term is so clear: info-giving means the act of giving information, and the info-giver is the one who gives information. In the context of the communication process, as stated by Shannon, this

definition applies to the "sender of the message," the one who sends the message/information and initiates the communication process. In the context of information behavior, referring to the info-seeker, the info-giver is the one that provides the information required and requested by the info-seeker.

### 3.3. The Place of Info-giver and Info-seeker in Information Behavior Models

From the communication-based view, the info-giver is the initiator of communication, and from the view based on info-seeking behavior, the info-seeker has this role. The latter view, however, neglects that the info-seeker can expect to receive the needed/requested information from the info-giver only when he had previously given the information about the needed/requested information to the info-giver. So, since the info-seeker is firstly the info-giver and the sender of the message and then, by changing the role and taking the position of the recipient of the message, receives the requested information, the information behavior process is entirely consistent with Shannon's Communication Model.

### 3.4. The Basis of "Need" in Info-seeking and Info-giving

Like info-seeking behavior models in which some elements are introduced and their roles in the info-seeking process are highlighted, factual elements could also be distinguished in info-giving. Similar to the info-seeking process that starts with the need for information, the info-giving process is initiated with the need for giving information. However, what makes this process different are the type of need, the method of meeting it, and the kind of information provided. The main difference here with the information need is that in info-seeking, the motivation originates from the user's lack of sufficient information and that he attempts to gather it in all possible ways. However, in info-giving, the user initiates the process of info-giving based on his current possessed information and according to motives that are not necessarily related to mutually acquiring information- although such a motivation may already be present.

### 3.5. Inclusion of Info-giving on Info-seeking

The info-giving process may sometimes begin with the motive of seeking information, and the goal of the info-seeker may be to give information about their information need. However, that is not the case in every instance of info-giving.

A look back at Wilson's *information behavior model* and Shannon's *communication model* makes this point clearer. In Shannon's communication model (Shannon, 1948), the starting point of the communication process is the source of information (in other words, the info-giver), and it is the one who sends the message. In other words, the communication process does not occur if there is no information or the sender does not send the information/question/request.

However, in Wilson's information behavior model (Wilson, 2000), the process of information behavior begins with the need (or, better to say, understanding the need). Of course, understanding is an internal and psychological matter that needs to be externalized to be interpreted as behavior. Wilson interprets this external manifestation as *info-seeking behavior*. In Wilson's model, info-seeking leads to three types of behavior: *demanding information systems*, *demanding other information sources*, and *exchanging information* (with other people). In each of these three assumptions, for the info-seeker to turn his *understood need* into a tangible and obvious thing for the information system, another source of information, or other



people, he must initiate a communication process. Through this communication process, he should provide information about his *information need*. Thus, we see that information behavior again, as info-seeking behavior begins with info-giving, and the info-seeker must act as an info-giver.

What is perceived with the first look at the information behavior models suggests that information behavior is limited to info-seeking behavior or that information behavior begins necessarily with info-seeking. Despite that, what logically completes the cycle of information behavior is not necessarily the info seeker's satisfaction for getting his information needs met, but that is the feedback the info-giver expects and receives as a result of his info-giving behavior. In other words, each cycle of information behavior is initially initiated by the info-giver<sup>1</sup>, whether this initiation maybe with the aim of info-seeking or not.

### **3.6. Completing Element in the Information Behavior Cycle**

The so-called feedback the info-giver receives does not always come from the info-receiver and info-seeker, but it is essentially info-giver-based. In other words, what leads to the info-giver's final satisfaction from info-giving – although it may result from the feedback received from the info-receiver – is eventually originated in info-giver's perception, indicating that if he may end or continue the info-giving process. As a result, if the motive for info-giving is the request or question of the info-seeker and based on the feedback received from him, the info-giver concludes that the information need has been met, he will terminate the info-giving. However, suppose, for any reason, the info-giving is not related to the request or question of the info-seeker and is independent of it (such as the cases where the info-seeker is basically absent in the process of information behavior). In that case, the decision to continue or terminate the info-giving will depend essentially on the info-giver own inference.

The other point is that the info-giving process is not always completed in only one way. This could be explained by looking closely at the process of message transmission. For instance, in the communication process, if the sender/info-giver and receiver/info-seeker are present when the communication takes place and are aware of the presence of the other side, they will complete the process of communication by giving feedback. However, if they are not present simultaneously if they are not aware of the presence of the other side, if they feel that such presence is not required, or if they can't send feedback, could we still claim that the "communication" process (as a two-way and interactive process) is completed? In other words, in such hypothetical cases, if the info-giver is satisfied with giving information and thinks that the communication has been performed, the information behavior process is complete, and the info-giver can initiate another cycle. However, the communication process may not have been completed. Therefore, we can conclude that information behavior starts with info-giving behavior but doesn't necessarily include info-seeking behavior.

### **3.7. Some Instances of Information Behavior Lacking Info-seeker**

Here are some examples that may be regarded as information behavior in which the info-seeker/ info-receiver is not present in the process of information behavior at the moment or the info-giver doesn't necessarily receive instant feedback from the info-receiver; i.e., in these examples, the information behavior process lacks an info-seeker. All definitions are based on the Encyclopedia Britannica as a reliable and authoritative reference.

### 3.7.1. Will (Testament)

Will, also called a testament, is a legal means by which an owner of property disposes of his assets in the event of his death. The term is also used for the written instrument in which the testator's dispositions are expressed. There is also an oral will, called a nuncupative will, valid only in certain jurisdictions but otherwise often upheld if it is considered a deathbed bequest.

When *declaring a will* (i.e., info-giving), the testator (i.e., the info-giver) doesn't receive any instant feedback and in fact, drafting a will is either to fulfill a duty (religious practice, for Example) or to manage expected changes in (near or rather far) future.

### 3.7.2. Confession/ Profession

When an offender, in response to info-seeking behavior (as in a legal inquiry), stops resisting and begins to confess, he is not satisfied with his info-giving, which is contrary to the act of confiding. Regardless of the consequences and outcomes of the confession, the mere being surrender and getting bound to give information makes him feel discomfort. On the other hand, when the offender exposes his secrets (as in a religious situation), the info-receiver (i.e., the priest) is not an info-seeker and plays a passive role. The motivation here to start info-giving is the info-giver's need to share information with someone else, and the feedback he receives (which meets his need to give information) is that he knows someone else is now aware of his information.

Confession/profession has different definitions.

#### **The legal aspect of "Confession":**

Confession, in criminal law, is a statement in which a person acknowledges that he is guilty of committing one or more crimes.

This kind of confession (i.e., info-giving) may or may not be accompanied by the confessing info-giver's satisfaction. Also this kind of confession may also occur in response to an info-seeker's request or according to the info-giver's heart desire.

#### **The religious aspect of "Confession":**

Confession, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the acknowledgment of sinfulness in public or private, is regarded as necessary to obtain divine forgiveness. The need for confession is frequently stressed in the Bible. The mission of the Old Testament prophets was to awaken in the people a sense of sinfulness and an acknowledgment of their personal and collective guilt.

So confession (i.e., info-giving) does not occur in response to any actual information-seeking.

#### **Literary aspect of "Confession":**

Confession, in literature, is an autobiography, either real or fictitious, in which intimate and hidden details of the subject's life are revealed.

This meaning would lead us to another batch of information behaviors in which the information behavior process does not necessarily start with the expression of information need, like:

### 3.7.3. Literary/Artistic Production

Britannica defines "art" as follows:

Art, also called (to distinguish it from the other art forms) visual art, a visual object or experience consciously created through an expression of skill or imagination. Art encompasses diverse media such as painting, sculpture, printmaking, drawing, decorative arts, photography, and installation. Even within one form of art, motives may vary widely; thus, a potter or a weaver may create a highly functional work that is at the same time beautiful or may create works that have no purpose beyond being admired.

What motivates an artist to produce an artwork is to convey a message (=information) to the audience. This motive could be seen clearly in the case of performing arts (cinema and theatre), which reproduce artistic works in the audience's presence. However, some artistic works (in the field of literature in particular; like poems, stories, plays, and so on) are produced by the artist primarily to have his personal/private findings recorded without first intending his message to be received.

In literature, artistic production doesn't start with the information needed either. James Clear (no date) refers to the behavior of well-known authors like Franz Kafka (and quoting Mason Currey in *Daily Rituals: How Artists Work*), Haruki Murakami, Michael Chabon, and Maya Angelou to illustrate that their motives to produce outstanding artistic works have gone beyond their daily peripheral atmosphere. In other words, they have not been confronted by any need for information to have produced an artistic work to meet that need; rather, their intrinsic personal motivation (i.e., info-giving need) has led them to artistic production.

#### *3.7.4. Some More Examples*

##### *- Production/Presentation of Scientific Information and Literature*

When elites and scientists achieve discoveries, presenting and producing those findings initiate a new cycle in information interaction. Although in many cases, various motives-including the reception of feedback indicating the accuracy or inaccuracy of findings, registering the findings to their names, and so on- lead to this production and presentation, there are several cases where the author's only motivation is to share his findings.

##### *- Writing Mementos*

Those who carve rocks and trees and paint walls to leave mementos do not know their audience; they usually have no hope to receive any feedback. They sometimes leave the mementos for the people they don't know and are entirely sure they will not receive any answers, just like the emails sent to people in the future or auto-biographies written only for the information of posterity.

##### *- Confiding*

When someone confides, he agrees that someone else- usually acceptable to him- receives his information. In this process, different feedback the info-giver receives from the info-receiver would naturally alter the volume of the information given, the type of information, and the way information is conveyed. However, the presence of another person (information receiver) is not sine qua non for info-giving. Many stories have been heard and read about people confiding to the patience stone, emphasizing the responselessness of that stone (i.e., the information receiver). In other words, the info-giver listens to his own information, and merely reciting the information is the feedback he receives, meeting his info-giving needs.

- *Folklore Literature, Culture, and Lullabies*

In this kind of literature and particularly in folkloric ballads, the supposed singer/teller recites the words (mainly expressing pains and sometimes hopes and happiness) to a child. Although in the meantime, the harmony of the words will calm the child and make him sleep, the content of the ballads does not matter, and/or the words are not understandable to him/her. Anyhow, the child is not in the place of the receiver of the "information" contained in the recitals.

### Discussion

It is important to notice the role of the info-giver in the process of the information behavior from several points:

- Although representing the totality of information behavior process in a model requires properly considering the role of each of the elements involved in this process, but for any reason, more attention is paid to info-seeking. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that the leading and stimulating role of the info-seeker in information storage and retrieval systems is considered the due supposed final user in such a system's design. Investigating the characteristics and behavior of info-seekers has always led to significant advances in the design and structure of information storage and retrieval systems and their components (especially in designing the user interface, presenting the hits, and refining queries) to meet the information needs of the info-seeker better. This practical importance may have caused the info-giver's role in this process to be almost overlooked, and very few cases in the literature have investigated this aspect.

- In those information systems where the performance is oriented towards info-seeker, it may not be problematic to neglect the info-giver. In these systems, it is assumed that with a readily stored stock of information (which, of course, can be continuously increased and supplemented), the information needs of the info-seekers are to be met. Therefore, realizing the system's goal depends on the more accurate knowledge of the information-seekers characteristics and behaviors. The interaction taking place during the operation of such a system between the info-seeker and the system is defined in such a way that alternately, the system and the user take on the role of the info-seeker and seek information from the other side. However, it is forgotten that this alternative process can be viewed differently, and consequently, the info-giving role in this process is forgotten.

- Inevitably, in a system whose performance is linked with the interactive gathering of information, the info-giver - although not with this explicit name - is considered; but since what is specified in such a system is the role of info-seeking, it is not unexpected that the organization and the design of the system are such that they lead to complete receipt of information from the info-giver. So developing an info-giving behavior model will help to more efficiently design such systems and pay due attention to the info-giver's role in the information behavior process.

- However, contrary to the usual storage and retrieval systems with the info-seeker having the primary role, paying attention to the role of the info-giver becomes especially important in cases where the system seeks to gather information from the info-givers. That is especially important in knowledge management systems. According to the considered types of knowledge (e.g., explicit knowledge, implicit knowledge, organizational knowledge, and so on), fully and accurately collecting and recording information about some types of knowledge will be possible only with particular attention to the info-giving role of the target people. A new look at

information behavior and the role of the info-giver may lead to corrections in some definitions and interpretations in the Knowledge Management area.

- Accordingly, in some research methods (such as ethnography, behaviorology, and oral history), data collection is done not through info-seeking, but by relying on the info-giving features of individuals. It is not unlikely that new areas of information behavior research will be opened by changing the approach and by looking again from the info-giving perspective.

- The majority of information training and services are designed to lead to the development of skilled users in using information systems and resources. In designing these services, user-orientedness has been a step forward (for instance, see Ghasemi, 2006 in considering a new user-oriented approach in service-delivering in specialized libraries, or Ghasemi, 2012 on the role of information literacy in providing such a kind of user-oriented services). However, the designers' view of the user in these services has remained mainly within the scope regarding him as an information-seeker. Thus, a new look at the process of information behavior can also lead to significant changes in user education, which can change how the information systems work and what the users expect from them.

### Conclusion

Each case and instance of information behavior, including info-seeking behavior, begins with info-giving. In other words, without information-giving by the one seeking information, it is impossible to identify and determine the information need of the info-seeker; thus, the required information cannot be delivered in sequence and consequently. However, in this article, the writer emphasized that the process of information behavior may or may not be associated with info-seeking. In other words, in some cases, the purpose of initiating and conducting information behavior is not to seek information; instead, the initiator of information behavior is merely seeking to give information. Therefore, any instance of information behavior begins with the info-giver and with his intention of transmitting the information. However, without the info-seeker's presence, the info-giver seeks to convey his information to the info-receiver and, in many cases, without being sure of it, hopes that the information will reach the target audience. Therefore, although the process of information behavior is realized in these cases, this realization is not due to the first action taken by the info-seeker; essentially, the info-seeker is not present in this process.

Accordingly, given that the design and structure of many information models and services revolve around info-seeking, it may be necessary to reconsider these models and services from the info-giving perspective. For Example, the focus of information literacy topics (except in the field of information production and dissemination) is the info-seeking role of individuals in the process of information behavior. Also, regarding various other types of literacy (media literacy, scientific literacy, and so on), their focus is on educating users to be excellent and accurate info-seeker and, in the best case, *receive* and *evaluate* the information correctly and accurately. Thus, the role of the individual as the info-giver and the initiator of the information behavior process is neglected. Emphasizing the role of info-giving will cause that in addition to training and developing capable info-seekers able to access right, accurate, and relevant information, those involved in the information behavior process will also be trained info-givers capable of producing and disseminating accurate, precise, and relevant information.

It is expected that the educational process, both in its formal and informal form, will be a new field of research considering the role of info-giving in the information behavior process.

Among the other areas worthy of consideration is Knowledge Management, especially recording and obtaining *tacit knowledge* in individuals' minds and interpersonal relationships. Understanding and identifying the various info-giving behaviors and inventing and discovering models of these behaviors enable us to extract and record that hidden and tacit knowledge in more accurate and precise ways. Moreover, Understanding and modeling different aspects of info-giving can lead to more tremendous success in various user-oriented content production methods. For Example, in developing Folksonomies and Folksonomy-based services, encouraging the users to info-giving through providing feedback and participating in the indexing process is very important. Similarly, in Web 2.0 (and even in Web 3.3), the voluntary participation of users through info-giving plays a significant role in content creation.

#### Endnote

1. This argument is based on the fact that we cannot imagine any information behavior process without the given information as its basic element and it's obvious that information should first be provided by the information-giver.

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