

## **Collaborative auto-hermeneutics: Methodological openings and possibilities for studying information experience**

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### **PROPOSAL FOR ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

#### **Abstract**

As the conceptual interests and cultural import of information science continue to expand, it is important for the field to be open to information-related phenomena that are not captured by extant frameworks. In recent years, there is increasing theoretical interest in alternate ways of knowing and becoming informed, such as collaborative information behaviours (Foster 2010), serendipitous information discovery (Toms 2000; Erdelez et al, 2016) information as instinct (Spink 2010), and knowing in practice (Savolainen 2009). Information experience is another area of conceptual interest, which is defined as the way in which people experience or derive meaning when they engage with information within their everyday lives (Bruce et al., 2014).

To be open in this way requires us to embrace new methodologies, particularly those that are exploratory. We take inspiration from Robert Stebbins' serious-leisure perspective (SLP); this perspective provides a common ground for researchers – not unlike other serious leisure pursuers – who pursue a career volunteer activity that captivates participants with its complexity and many challenges and embodies unique qualities such as earnestness, sincerity, importance, and carefulness, with profound, long-lasting, and substantial skill, knowledge, or experience which provides them with common grounds for conversing and building togetherness (Stebbins 2001). The social inclusion developed from participating in leisure activities attracts cultural richness, notably for its shared goals, problems, values, experiences, and costs and rewards (Stebbins 2011). We hope that information science can experience a similar opening and renewal through this approach within our own exploratory research.

As one such exploratory methodology, Gorichanaz (2017) proposed auto-hermeneutics for the study of information experience. In our full paper proposed for this conference (Latham, Narayan, & Gorichanaz, 2017), we utilise auto-hermeneutics in a novel way: as collaboration. In this roundtable discussion, we discuss methodological issues and challenges of conducting collaborative auto-hermeneutics. We connect it to the idea of intrinsic motivation, or participation in an activity for its inherent satisfactions. Although, in one sense, intrinsic motivation exists within individuals, in another sense intrinsic motivation exists in the relation between individuals and activities (Ryan & Deci 2001). Because intrinsic motivation exists in the nexus between a person and a task, it is often defined in terms of the task being interesting or the satisfactions a person gains from intrinsically motivated task engagement (Ryan & Deci 2001). We propose the use of practice theory (Gherardi 2009) to build upon the concepts of serious leisure and intrinsic motivation in the study of information experience as a creative experience.

Other methodologies we plan to discuss in this round table are ethnomethodology, which offers methods of practical action in situated information use amongst members of a particular community of language users such as academic researchers (Fox 2006), along with discussions of 'the researcher as the instrument' (Janesick 2001), a concept which is underpinned by the researchers' understanding of what constitutes acceptable research for each of us. The roundtable will also highlight other methodologies presented at the conference, especially those around information and inspiration; inspiration that motivates people into

creativity in the workplace, community, education, and everyday lives. We propose that these approaches to our own serious leisure provide us with greater opportunities for wider recognition of non-traditional research outputs.

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