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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research is to examine the factors that have influenced human information seeking behaviour's evolution from traditional papyrus-based methods to modern digital techniques.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research uses a mixed-methods approach that combines historical analysis, questionnaires, and behavioural observations to show how information seeking behaviour has changed through time and across various technological advancements.

Findings: The results show a substantial change in information seeking behaviour, with people becoming largely reliant on digital platforms, search engines, and social media. Accessibility, ease, and the sheer amount of information available digitally are some of the elements driving this transformation.

Practical Implications: The study's conclusions have applications for information producers, educators, and designers of digital platforms. It highlights the need to improve digital literacy abilities and efficiently organise content to meet the changing needs of information searchers.

Originality/Value: This research offers a thorough picture of the dynamic history of information seeking behaviour by combining historical analysis with current behavioural data. It emphasizes the role played by sociological and technical factors in the evolution of how people interact with information.

Keywords: Papyrus, Pixels, Dynamic, Evolution, Human, Information seeking Behaviour.

1. Introduction: Significant shifts in the evolution of human knowledge-seeking behaviour have occurred throughout history. The way people seek out, access, and engage with knowledge has changed across time, from the papyrus scrolls of antiquity to the pixels of today. This essay tries to investigate this dynamic evolution by emphasising significant turning points and alterations in information seeking behaviour over time.

Information seeking behaviour is the process by which people actively look for, acquire, and use information to satisfy their information needs. This behaviour is influenced by a wide range of circumstances, including social, cultural, technological, and economic developments. Information was mostly passed down orally in the past through storytelling and human dialogue, which was the main method of gathering information. Information was preserved and retrieved very differently when writing systems were developed, especially on papyrus scrolls in ancient Egypt.

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As various civilizations created their own unique writing systems and ways of preserving knowledge across time, information seeking behaviour changed. The mass manufacturing of books made possible by the printing press's creation in the 15th century revolutionised the way that knowledge was shared and expanded access to it.

Another significant change in information seeking behaviour was brought about by the development of digital technologies in the late 20th century. Information is now easier to access, search for, and find in a variety of formats thanks to the internet, search engines, and online databases.

2. Importance of Studying this Evolution: Researching the evolution of information seeking behaviour is important for several reasons. It begins by providing an understanding of the historical interchange and accessibility of human knowledge. Understanding these trends might help us better understand the obstacles and chances that earlier generations encountered when looking for information.

Second, by looking at how information seeking behaviour has changed through time, we may determine the variables that have shaped this behaviour. Understanding historical effects can offer helpful perspectives for the present and future. Socio-cultural, economic, and technological variables have changed how people seek for and use information.

Thirdly, being aware of this evolution helps us anticipate and get ready for the changing information landscape. Given how quickly technology is developing, it is critical to comprehend how people, society, and information professionals are affected. More effective services, regulations, and information systems may be developed as a result of this knowledge.

3. Objectives: The objectives of this paper are as follows:

a) To chart the progression of information seeking practices from the papyrus to the digital eras.

b) To comprehend how different historical eras' information seeking behaviours were shaped and affected by various variables.

c) To look at how technological development has affected how people connect and seek for information.

d) To investigate how people, society, and the field of information science have been impacted by this evolution.

4. Information Seeking in the Papyrus Era: Information searching during the Papyrus era was mostly focused on reading written materials on papyrus scrolls. The ancient Mediterranean civilizations, notably Egypt, Greece, and Rome, employed papyrus, a writing material derived from the Egyptian papyrus plant, extensively.

During that time, only those who had access to libraries, temples, or persons who owned scrolls had access to information. Information seekers were forced to travel to these sites in person or rely on middlemen who could access and translate the scrolls on their behalf. As a result, information was harder to come by, and the procedure took longer.

The papyrus age mainly relied on personal networks and word-of-mouth referrals for information. As the guardians of knowledge, scholars, scribes, and librarians were in charge of preserving, copying, and interpreting the texts. These middlemen were frequently relied upon by information searchers to direct them to pertinent information sources and aid in their interpretation.

The organisation and classification of information during the Papyrus era also differed from those of contemporary systems. Scrolls were frequently arranged according to their acquisition order or by major subject groupings. It was difficult to navigate and efficiently obtain certain information due to the absence of standardised classification systems. Despite

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its drawbacks, the papyrus age laid the groundwork for written records and knowledge preservation. The invention of writing systems during this time, along with the accumulation of texts, produced a priceless resource for subsequent generations and paved the way for additional breakthroughs in information seeking behaviour.

In the subsequent sections, we will delve into the transitions and transformations that occurred in information seeking behaviour as new technologies and societal changes emerged, leading us towards the digital age of pixels.

4.1 Role of Libraries and Scholars: Libraries were essential as knowledge reservoirs during the papyrus-based information age. These libraries, which were frequently connected to schools or temples, housed collections of papyrus scrolls carrying important knowledge. The main users of these libraries were scholars, who were typically educated people with a strong interest in obtaining and preserving knowledge.

Libraries served as hubs for education and intellectual conversation. Papyrus scrolls that are pertinent to their studies or interests can be accessed and studied by scholars by visiting libraries. To deepen their comprehension of various topics, they would refer to these scrolls, take notes, and have discussions with other experts.

Scholars played an important role in the papyrus-based information seeking process. They would participate in the development and sharing of knowledge in addition to looking for information for their personal needs. Scholars would write and copy papyrus scrolls, compiling information, theories, and discoveries. They would often annotate existing texts, adding their own insights and interpretations.

4.2 Transition to the Print Age: The shift from papyrus-based to print-based information gathering signified a profound change in how people communicated and shared knowledge. In the 15th century, the printing press was created, making information more publicly available and repeatable.

The invention of printed books revolutionised how people sought information. Papyrus scrolls had a number of disadvantages compared to printed writings. They were simpler to make in huge quantities, which made it possible for knowledge to be shared on a far wider scale. Because of the decrease in production costs, books are now more widely available and more reasonably priced.

As a result, the print age democratised information seeking. Prior to this transition, accessing knowledge was primarily limited to the elite, such as scholars and religious institutions. With printed books, a broader segment of society could engage in information seeking and education. This change had a significant impact on the dissemination of ideas, the growth of scientific understanding, and the general development of civilization.

During the shift to the print age, the roles of libraries and academics changed as well. Libraries still served as information repositories, but they now included printed books rather than papyrus scrolls. The study and analysis of texts by academics continued, but they now had access to a greater variety of published works. Because it was easier for scholars to share and consult printed texts, information spread more quickly, and collaboration among them became more practical.

Overall, the transition to the print age transformed information seeking behaviour, making knowledge more accessible and expanding the reach of intellectual pursuits. It laid the foundation for future advancements in information technology and the eventual shift from print to digital information seeking in the modern age.

5. Information Seeking After Gutenberg's Printing Press: The behaviour of people seeking information has changed significantly since Johannes Gutenberg's development of the printing press in the 15th century. Information was mostly scribbled or copied by hand

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before the invention of the printing press, which made it a labor-intensive and timeconsuming process. The accessibility, dissemination, and consumption of information were all revolutionised by Gutenberg's printing press. The two major effects are as follows:

Thanks to the printing press, books, pamphlets, and other printed items could now be produced in large quantities. It completely shifts information access and dissemination. The transition from hand-copied manuscripts to printed books increased access to information for a wider range of people. Before printing, books used to be hard to access, expensive, and mostly reserved for affluent and religious institutions. With the invention of the printing press, books were made more widely available and affordable, which accelerated the spread of information and ideas.

The increased availability of printed materials also led to a diversification of content. As printing became more widespread, a variety of subjects, genres, and perspectives were published, contributing to the expansion of knowledge and the democratisation of information. This diversification of content facilitated the exchange of ideas, intellectual discourse, and the advancement of various fields of study (Ingwersen, & Järvelin, 2005).

6. Information Seeking in the Digital Age: The advent of the digital age, particularly the rise of the internet and digital technologies, has further transformed information seeking behaviour. Here are some key aspects of information seeking in the digital age:

a) Access to vast amounts of information: We now have access to an unparalleled amount of knowledge thanks to the internet. People can quickly and easily access a vast range of information on almost any topic using search engines and online databases. People are now more empowered to actively seek out knowledge, allowing them to learn about, investigate, and interact with a variety of topics that interest them.

b) Global connectivity and social sharing: Global communication and the enormous sharing of information have been made possible by the digital age. People can interact, share ideas, and receive information from others through social media platforms, blogs, and online communities. Because of this interconnectedness, there are now more possibilities for cooperation, group thinking, and knowledge sharing.

c) Personalisation and customisation: Digital technologies have enabled personalised and customised information experiences. Through algorithms and recommendation systems, individuals can receive tailored content based on their preferences, interests, and browsing history. This level of personalisation has the potential to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of information seeking, allowing individuals to find relevant information more quickly.

d) Challenges of information overload and credibility: The digital era gives a wealth of knowledge, but it also has drawbacks. Due to the overwhelming volume of information available, people may feel information overload, which makes it challenging for them to sort through, evaluate, and understand the vast amount of data. Furthermore, the democratisation of content generation has led to an increase in false and misleading information. The ability to distinguish between dependable and dubious sources is now essential for navigating the digital information environment.

The rise of digital technologies and the internet has had a profound impact on human information seeking behaviour. Key elements of this progression include the following:

a) Instantaneous access to vast amounts of information: Internet connections and digital technologies have given people unprecedented access to a wealth of knowledge. People may access a wealth of knowledge on practically any subject with only a few clicks or touches. This ease of access has brought about changes in the ways that individuals look for and use information. People can now use search engines, online databases, and digital libraries to instantly find knowledge instead of just depending on conventional sources like books or actual libraries.

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b) Changing patterns of information consumption: The accessibility of digital tools has caused a substantial shift in how people consume information. Instead of reading continuously and in-depth, people increasingly frequently ingest information in shorter, fragmented spurts. This pattern has been influenced by the growth of social media, news aggregators, and internet platforms. To quickly learn new information, many people today rely on headlines, summaries, or bite-sized content. Concerns regarding information overload, superficial knowledge, and the possibility for disinformation to spread quickly have been brought up as a result of this change.

Digital technology has also made it easier to consume new kinds of media, such as music, movies, and TV series, on streaming platforms. Media content that is customised to a person's interests and preferences can now be accessed and consumed on demand. This has led to an ever more varied and customised way that people consume information.

c) Implications for Individuals, Society, and Information Professionals: The evolution of human information seeking behaviour in the digital age has brought about several implications:

i) Empowerment and democratisation of information: People are now more aware and knowledgeable thanks to the accessibility of information. By lowering entrance barriers and enabling a greater range of views and perspectives to be heard, it has democratised knowledge. People can now study various points of view, engage in self-directed learning, and contribute more actively to societal debates.

ii) Challenges of information credibility and reliability: While the internet has provided access to a multitude of information, it has also created issues with the validity and dependability of that information. The propagation of false information, fake news, and prejudiced viewpoints has been facilitated by the amount of content and the simplicity with which it can be created and shared online. Promoting information literacy, assisting people in navigating the digital world, and identifying trustworthy sources of information are all important tasks for information workers.

iii) Changing information seeking skills and behaviours: New information seeking abilities and behaviours have to be developed in order to keep up with digital technologies. People must be adept at digital literacy, critical source evaluation, and online search strategies. In the digital age, the capacity to filter, evaluate, and validate information has become essential.

iv) Privacy and ethical considerations: Concerns regarding privacy and moral ramifications have also been raised by the digital revolution. Questions concerning data privacy, surveillance, and the exploitation of personal information for commercial or political objectives have arisen as a result of the pervasiveness of the collection and analysis of personal data. Addressing these issues and ensuring the proper use of data and information is the responsibility of information professionals and policymakers.

7. Opportunities and Challenges in the Digital Age: Access to information resources is now much easier thanks to the digital age, which presents a number of important options. By putting a large amount of information at our fingertips, the internet has completely changed the way we look for information. People can access a variety of materials, including academic journals, books, articles, videos, and more, with just a simple search query. This improved access encourages people to learn about and delve into a variety of subjects, promoting lifelong learning and individual development.

a) Information overloads and filter bubbles: Information overload is a big problem, though, given the wealth of information available. It might be difficult to sort through the vast amount of information and decide which sources are trustworthy and pertinent. The development of personalised algorithms and recommendation systems can also lead to the construction of "filter bubbles," in which people only get information that supports their

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preexisting opinions and preferences. As a result, perspectives may become more limited, and individuals may not be exposed to a variety of viewpoints (Foster, & Ford, 2003).

b) Digital divide and inequality of access: The digital divide, which refers to the disparity in access to digital technologies and the internet across various groups, is another issue. Although overall information availability has risen, there are still large gaps between regions, socioeconomic groups, and marginalised communities. The digital divide can exacerbate already existing disparities and prevent people from fully embracing the digital era.

c) Privacy and security concerns: The digital era has also raised issues with security and privacy. People now face the dangers of data breaches, identity theft, spying, and privacy violations due to the growing gathering and storage of personal data. In the digital age, protecting personal information and ensuring secure internet practices are now top priorities.

8. Adaptive Strategies for Effective Information Seeking: The following are some of the key strategies for effective information seeking in the digital age:

a) Information literacy skills: In the digital age, learning information literacy skills is crucial. These abilities include the capacity to recognise information needs, find pertinent sources, assess their reliability, and use and transmit the knowledge in an ethical manner. By refining these abilities, people can more successfully navigate the immense ocean of information and come to wise judgements.

b) Critical evaluation of online sources: Given the abundance of online sources, it is necessary to assess their veracity and dependability. This entails evaluating elements including the author's experience, the credibility of the source, the veracity of the data, and any potential biases. People who adopt a critical mentality are better able to distinguish between credible and unreliable sources, which leads to better decision-making and a decrease in the dissemination of false information (Case, 2012).

c) Personalisation and customisation of information seeking: The digital era provides the potential for information seeking to be personalised and customised. To receive personalised content, users can use search engine filters, sign up for newsletters, and set preferences. Individuals can improve efficiency and relevance in acquiring information that is relevant to their needs and interests by personalising their information seeking process.

d) Collaborative information seeking: In the digital age, cooperation and collective intelligence are crucial. Utilising social media, online communities, and platforms to exchange, discuss, and analyse knowledge in a group setting is referred to as collaborative information seeking. Collaboration techniques can encourage different viewpoints, promote knowledge exchange, and improve the general effectiveness of information gathering and decision-making procedures.

Individuals can traverse the benefits and difficulties given by the digital age and take full advantage of the dynamic evolution of information seeking behaviour by utilising these adaptive tactics.

9. Key Findings: How individuals look for information has changed as a result of the switch to digital media. Online search engines and social media sites have displaced conventional approaches like libraries and physical archives as important sources for knowledge-finding. Some of the key findings of the study are

a) Accessibility: Information accessibility has been greatly improved by the switch from papyrus to pixels. People can now more easily and swiftly retrieve information thanks to digital platforms and search engines.

b) Information Overload: Information overload is a new problem brought on by the profusion of digital information. People must create efficient techniques to filter and evaluate information because there is an abundance of data available.

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c) Diverse Sources: Individuals now have access to more sources of knowledge because of the digital age. This presents opportunities for various viewpoints, but it also prompts questions about the validity and authenticity of sources.

d) Personalization: Algorithms are used by digital platforms to customize information recommendations and adapt content to user preferences. Although this may improve the user experience, it also raises questions regarding filter bubbles and the lack of exposure to many points of view.

Some of the research directions for future researchers who might study information seeking behaviour may consider the following:

a) Cognitive Aspects: Exploring the cognitive mechanisms involved in digital information seeking behaviour will require more study. Investigating techniques for attention, decision-making, and information assessment in the context of digital platforms is part of this.

b) User Experience: It is essential to comprehend how design and user experience affect how people seek information in digital spaces. Future studies should investigate the effects of interaction methods, material presentation, and interface design on the results of information seeking.

c) Information Literacy: Information literacy skills are becoming more and more important as information becomes more digitized. Future research should concentrate on discovering efficient tactics and programmers to raise digital information literacy among various demographics.

d) Ethical Considerations: Further research is necessary to fully understand the ethical ramifications of online information seeking behaviour. This entails looking into concerns including data security, privacy, and the impact of algorithmic suggestions on user preferences.

e) Cross-Cultural Perspectives: Understanding how people seek information in various cultures and societies might help us understand how cultural influences affect how we use digital information.

10. Conclusion: The evolution of human information seeking behaviour has experienced a significant shift from the age of papyrus to the age of pixels. Factors like technology, social changes, and economic developments have shaped how people find and use information. Technological developments and the digitisation of information, which have had a significant impact on how people access, assess, and use information, have been the driving forces behind this dynamic transition. Technology has dramatically affected communication and information intake.

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