



Information Research, Special Issue: Proceedings of the 15th ISIC - The Information Behaviour Conference, Aalborg, Denmark, August 26-29, 2024

Savolainen's everyday information practices: concept and development

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47989/ir292851>

Abstract

Introduction. This study is based on Reijo Savolainen's pioneering work on the Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) model and its evolution into the Everyday Information Practice (EIP) model and the Expanded Model of Everyday Information Practice (E-EIP), which have significantly influenced the field of information behaviour.

Method. Through a literature review, this study elaborated on the core concept and outlined the development of three generations of models.

Analysis. This study first summarised the concept of everyday information practice from a dual perspective that distinguished between narrow and broad perspectives and then proposed its development characteristics and future trends.

Results. A broad definition of everyday life would be more advantageous for future development. The advancements in the three generations of models were proposed as the clarification of components, the avoidance of typology, the emphasis on the life-world, and the extension of practices. The new development trends may focus on information creation, the emphasis on planning and time management, and the attention to multiple roles played by individuals.

Conclusion. Everyday information practice has been continuously developed and improved. It reflects a humanistic, user-centred perspective and remains a vibrant field of study.

Introduction

Everyday life is the foundation of an individual's existence and development. Through interactions in everyday life, individuals form social roles and identities and establish and maintain interpersonal relationships. Being grounded in everyday experiences is crucial for safeguarding and improving individuals' well-being in the information age (Wang et al., in press).

Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS) was proposed by Savolainen (Savolainen, 1995), which has been widely accepted by the academic community and has become a new direction in the field of information behaviour (Hartel, 2022). ELIS has evolved historically over the years, and Savolainen's perspectives have continued to develop, proposing the Everyday Information Practice (EIP) model (Savolainen, 2008) and the Expanded Model of Everyday Information Practice (E-EIP) (Savolainen and Thomson, 2022).

This current study first reviewed the related concept of everyday information practice and the three generations of models based on existing studies, and then summarised the developments and possible trends. The findings of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of everyday information practices.

Concept

Historically, the concept of everyday life has often been considered self-evident (Savolainen, 2023), and phenomena associated with everyday life have tended to be generalised, trivial, and ambiguous, leading to a lack of recognition by scholars of the importance of everyday life (Savolainen, 2017). However, everyday life is the most pervasive and enduring activity, and if information behaviour needs to be embodied in the whole life experience, a more holistic understanding of everyday life is essential (Ocepek, 2018).

However, there are different views of the EIP-related concept, including whether everyday should be defined by lifestyles or routine characteristics and relationships with work. Scholars have defined the nature of everyday

life as routine (Heller, 2015), familiar (Garfinkel, 1964), repetitive (Scott, 2009), and so on, while Savolainen (2023) believed such an approach limits the opportunity to study novelties and changes. While Savolainen himself made it clear that it shouldn't draw a false dichotomy between work-related and non-work information seeking (Savolainen, 2023), in previous studies, everyday information seeking was analysed in non-work contexts (Savolainen, 2009). By focusing on the daily lives of ordinary people in non-work contexts (Barahmand et al., 2019), it seems that everyday life information behaviour has become something separate from work.

This evolving and ambiguous expression may lead to a lack of coordination among researchers in their understanding of related concepts. As a universal social phenomenon that forms the basis of all social interactions in society (Berger and Luckmann, 2017), human (also known as actor) and context are the main components of social interactions (Hoppler et al., 2022). This study aims to clarify the concept of everyday life by proposing a distinction between a *narrow* perspective and a *broad* perspective.

From a *narrow* perspective, it is important to consider whether everyday life is based on personal lifestyles (*human*). Everyday life, in this perspective, is characterised as relatively stable, routine, and habitual (Ersche et al., 2017) and concentrates on non-work activities (Savolainen, 1995). For example, in wartime or other exceptional circumstances, such as COVID-19, major life transitions that break the routine lifestyle may not be considered in the narrow sense of every day. Leisure as a stress-free, relaxing, and enjoyable daily activity and everyday chores as routines may all become an integral part of everyday life. The *narrow* perspective emphasises the importance of non-work phenomena and draws the distinction between work-task driven information practices. By focusing on a *narrow* perspective, the importance of how social and cultural factors shape humans in everyday settings has been explained.

From a *broad* perspective, whether it is work-related or non-work-related, whether it is

familiar or novel, as long as the phenomenon is happening and discussed in the context of the life-world (Savolainen, 2008) or involves projects that are embedded in everyday settings, it could be included. Schutz emphasised that the life-world was an intersubjective world of experience and interpretation, and all explanations of the everyday life-world were based on people's previous experiences and stock of knowledge (Schutz, 1970). Therefore, as long as the context is within our life-world, such contexts could be considered everyday life. Especially with the widespread use of the Internet and mobile technology and the growing trend of remote work from home, work and non-work have become increasingly blurred (Savolainen, 2023). With the fast pace of life, work, leisure, and chores are all intertwined in everyday settings and have created novelties and changes.

From a *narrow* perspective, it helps to awaken attention to everyday life instead of taking it for granted. However, this issue has been addressed, and starting from a *broad* perspective nowadays, it could have greater influence. It is long believed that when studying everyday life, researchers should look more objectively at phenomena that we would otherwise dismiss as unremarkable, go beyond the surface, and dig deeper to relate these micro-level processes to the macro-level social order (Scott, 2009). The *broad* perspective of everyday, as a more inclusive concept, would offer more insights since it encompasses more phenomena and follows the trends of society. The work-life intertwined phenomena are worth attention and may make the familiar strange or combine to create, sustain, and exceed a sense of order, stability, and predictability in the life-world. The relevant models of EIP can be used as long as in the life-world.

Development

This study first summarised the main characteristics of the ELIS model, the EIP model, and the E-EIP model and then analysed the developments and future trends.

The ELIS model

As one of the most frequently occurring models or theories in literature (Lund, 2019; González-Teruel et al., 2022) and course syllabi (Hartel, 2022; VanScoy et al., 2022), the ELIS model was fundamental to the field of everyday information practice (Agosto and Hughes-Hassell, 2005; Ocepek, 2018). By not narrowly defining everyday life (Given, 2002), Savolainen contributed to ELIS as the foundation for exploring everyday contexts and sparked a significant shift in the study of information behaviour (Hartel, 2019). It has influenced the development of numerous other models, such as Williamson's (1998) ecological model and McKenzie's (2003) model. ELIS offers a unique perspective that helps to demonstrate everyday life contexts (Lawal and Bitso, 2020), combines social science theory (Pettigrew et al., 2001), provides a valuable theoretical framework for fundamental research addressing everyday life, and builds models for analysis (Ocepek, 2018).

The EIP model

Savolainen has been prominent in combining practice theory, which acknowledges the social nature, into the information behaviour field (Cox, 2012). Following the review of the umbrella concepts (Savolainen, 2007), Savolainen (2008) proposed the EIP model, which emphasised a more flexible construction of models in the life-world. This turn highlighted socio-cultural factors (Savolainen, 2007). In this case, EIP consists of more than just seeking but also use and sharing. The shift from seeking to practice is the biggest improvement of the EIP model compared to the ELIS model. Based on Savolainen (2008), a series of debates published on *Information Research* between Savolainen and Wilson about behaviour and practice have emerged (The behaviour/practice debate, 2009), which highlighted the dynamic and open nature of the information behaviour field.

The E-EIP model

Besides continuing to focus on the practice theory (Olsson, 2022), with an effort to reflect the user's initiative, the E-EIP model identified two modes, namely acquiring and expressing (Savolainen and Thomson, 2022). With users' everyday information practices becoming more

complex as technology develops and users' information literacy improves, users will show patterns through the process of acquisition and expression (Savolainen and Thomson, 2022). It is believed that the main contribution of the E-EIP model is to reveal the linkages between information seeking, use, creating, and sharing (Zhong et al., 2023). More than finding information about a specific issue (e.g., finding a fact), monitoring everyday events through the use of a variety of sources and channels has also become a major concern. In this narrow-focus model, situational factors have replaced contextual factors (Savolainen and Thomson, 2022), which refer to a smaller scale of scenarios and occasions. It reflects the trend towards the refinement of EIP.

The Developments Among the Three Generations of Models

The main components of all the EIP-related models remained unchanged, such as contexts (i.e., way of life, life-world), plans (i.e., projects of life, everyday projects), social-cultural factors (i.e., social capital, social rules), and practices (i.e., information seeking, information practice). With the integration of information practices with everyday social phenomena and practice theories, it has drawn attention away from the elite population and towards the highly diverse and universally shared realm of everyday life. By studying the three generations of models, the developments can be summarised as follows:

First, the clarification of components. The parts that are not easy to understand and operationalise are elaborated and explained more clearly. For example, the project of life was refined and integrated into everyday projects, and the generic and specific everyday projects were again subdivided to emphasise the inclusion of change projects, pursuit projects, and tasks specific to everyday projects.

Second, the avoidance of typology. Back in 1995, there were four main types of mastery of life (Savolainen, 1995). In 2008, there was a shift away from the typology of mastery of life and a shift to emphasise the stock of knowledge of practices and the individual's life-world (Savolainen, 2008). This may be because the

tendency to typify individuals omits a great deal of detail and is no longer applicable to today's context.

Third, the emphasis on the life-world. The theoretical sources generalised from Bourdieu's (1984) emphasis on habitus have changed to Schutz's (1970) emphasis on life-world, elevating the individual's current lifestyle to the context of the life-world in which the connected individuals live together. The social orientation was achieved by emphasising experiences and relationships that focus on inter-individual, inter-individual, and inter-group interactions to construct practices.

Fourth, the extension of practices. It concentrated on more diverse information practices, like use, sharing, and creating (Savolainen and Thomson, 2022), rather than the initial seeking (Savolainen, 1995). In information-rich environments, there is a strong emphasis on how people passively acquire information from the context in which they are, how people create information, and how people interact with one another.

Development trends

As deeply related to socio-cultural factors, the developments of the EIP-related model are directly linked with social developments. The study proposes that future development trends may include:

First, focus on information creation. With the rise of social media and AI tools, non-traditional information sources, such as sensory information, personal narratives, and memories, are becoming increasingly important in everyday life. This provides better possibilities for information creation. Representing a higher hierarchy of endeavours, information creation empowers individuals to participate in social, cultural, and civic discourses, bringing diverse perspectives and unique experiences to the forefront. This trend will lead to an emphasis on the skills required for information creation and a greater need to showcase creativity in everyday life, transcending the mundanity of traditional everyday activities. As Lefebvre (1947) said, men can begin their own struggle for life, rediscovering or creating the greatness of

ordinary life. In the process of creation, individuals could achieve what was previously unattainable in everyday life, breaking through the logic of existing actions and producing a new type of everyday life, expanding the scope of everyday activities.

Second, the emphasis on planning and time management. Time context has been a focus (Savolainen, 2006). Faced with an accelerating pace of life and increasing time pressure, EIP models may integrate with strategies for time management and stress relief, helping users achieve everyday life balance. This may include providing a scheme to assist individuals in organising their time more effectively, setting priorities, and managing tasks, as well as offering a framework to help people use information tools and resources, cope with the risk of burnout, and improve their quality of life.

Third, attention to the multiple roles of individuals. An individual's identity and roles are not static but are constantly constructed and reconstructed in different social and cultural contexts. Researchers should consider how individuals construct and express multiple social roles, including professional and family roles, as well as the conflicts and synergies between these roles. The different roles lead to differences in experiences and everyday projects, thereby affecting information practices. The same individual, when playing different roles in a similar context, will exhibit differences by acquiring and expressing

different types of information, which together reflect and shape their everyday lives. Individuals will also use information acquired and expressed in everyday life to support identity construction through different roles.

Conclusion

This study clarified the concept of everyday information practice and summarised the characteristics and developments of the ELIS, the EIP, and the E-EIP model. Interpreting everyday life practice means viewing information behaviour through a humanistic and user-centred kind of lens. Deciphering the tapestry of everyday occurrences with this lens has steered the study of information behaviour into the spotlight of real-world relevance, casting a wider net to capture quite diverse user needs and unlocking a treasure trove to solve basic problems that occur every second and everywhere. Attention to everyday life meets the need for holistic human development, helps to understand, develop, and empower people, brings various communities to the surface and gives them the attention they deserve, and echoes concerns about everyday issues that arise in social development.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express her gratitude to professors Jianlong Chen, Chang Liu, and Pu Yan for their valuable feedback.

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