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**Goodbye, [Microsoft/Sony]...
Hello, [Microsoft/Sony]:
An investigation
into the information behaviour of console gamers
when looking to purchase a new console.**

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September 2018

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of MSc in Information Science

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**“No tolerably normal person
is totally absorbed in any group
in which he participates.”**

- Truman D, quoted by Jaeger PT & Burnett G,
(2010), Information Worlds, New York:
Routledge, p.24.

“Lee-ro-o-o-o-o-oy Jenkins.”

- “Leeroy Jenkins”.

Abstract.

Purpose.

The purpose of this research is to investigate the information behaviour of console gamers in the specific task of buying a new console. This takes place in two sections: firstly, to investigate the types of resources used and, secondly, to develop a picture of how four specific theories of information behaviour - Ellis' Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour, Erdelez's Information Encountering, Fisher's Information Grounds and Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds - may serve to provide an understanding of the behaviour exhibited.

Design, methodology and approach.

A mixed methods approach was adopted. An initial questionnaire was designed and distributed via Facebook and Twitter, in which the research questions were addressed. In addition, this questionnaire served as a means of gathering participants for follow-up interviews in which the specified theories were investigated.

Findings.

The finding of this paper is that whilst gamers as a whole value a range of formal and informal information resources, their specific information behaviour may be attributed of their categorisation of gamer type. Furthermore, depending on this categorisation, the behaviour exhibited may be understood in terms of one or other of the aforementioned theories.

Originality and value.

Theories and papers which investigate information behaviour are common, whilst the subset of information behaviour of gamers is less so, but it is a rich field of study. Studies into the information behaviour of gamers which focus on the information need of consoles when a new console is looking to be purchased, however, are limited in their number, and what papers there are represent a resource to be used - ie a review of consoles - rather than an investigation into how the resources themselves are utilised.

This paper provides an overview of the types of resources used by gamers and suggests how existing theories of information behaviour might help to explain this behaviour, and may be considered a platform for further investigation.

Preface.

The subjects of study of this paper are twofold, yet intricately intertwined. Firstly, it is an investigation into information behaviour (seeking, searching and use), which, given its relatively long history, will be familiar to those within the library and information science (LIS) domain. Secondly, it is an investigation of gaming and gamers, specifically home console gaming and gamers, of which those involved in the LIS domain may be unfamiliar, or certainly less so.

Overarchingly, it is an investigation into how these two concepts come together and when the one, console gamers, exhibit the other, information behaviour, when they are looking to purchase a new console. It is necessary, therefore, at the outset, to define the scope, extent and state of console gaming as it is today before the scope and research questions of this paper are put explicitly.

There will be, effectively, two literature reviews. Initially, there will be a description and explanation of console gaming, in which key terms and concepts will be outlined. This will lead to a statement of the specific context and scope of this paper, together with its objectives, aims and research questions. There will then be a review of the information behaviour literature in order to highlight how certain ideas may help to explain gamers' information behaviour. Specifically, four theories will be identified to be of key significance:

- 1) Ellis' Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour¹.
- 2) Erdelez's Information Encountering.
- 3) Fisher's Information Grounds.
- 4) Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds.

Such an initial outlay of this paper will provide the reader with an understanding in how the state of console gaming inspired this paper, and the ideas held within the information behaviour literature which may help to explain both how and why gamers seek for, search for and use information, or, conversely, why they might not.

Ed Newton. (23/09/2018)

¹ For the purposes of this paper, to aid ease of reading, all spellings within the main body are in UK English, unless text is quoted, when it appears as it was written, either in UK or American English. The references section includes the spelling as it appears in the titles of papers.

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Chapter summary.

Chapter 1.

This chapter will consider what “gamers”, “gaming” and “console gaming” are, and investigate the history of console gaming, which will serve to provide the background for when brand-new consoles are periodically released. Gamers’ preferences, central to this paper, will be studied, and the distinction between PC gaming and console gaming will be explained; furthermore, preferences for one particular manufacturer or other of consoles will be scrutinised.

Chapter 2.

In this chapter, the scope, aims and objectives and research questions will be detailed, taking into consideration the context and background of gaming that was explored in the previous chapter. At the proposal stage, the extensive information behaviour literature was examined, and four theories or models of information behaviour were identified that may have critical significance to this study, and they helped to form the overarching aims of it.

Chapter 3.

With the scope of the paper being detailed, and the aims, objectives and research questions having been issued, this chapter will examine information behaviour literature.

Chapter 4.

This chapter outlines the methodology and approach taken in the collection of data. The questionnaire and interview methods are detailed, and any potential bias, together with the limitations of the study are addressed.

Chapter 5.

This chapter will describe and discuss the findings from the questionnaire and interviews, which will lead on to a discussion and analysis of them in the next chapter in consideration of the aim and research questions of this paper. Firstly, the questionnaire will be examined, and then themes arising from it will be outlined and, secondly, the interviews will be summarised, and themes from them will be outlined and discussed.

Chapter 6.

In this chapter, the findings of this paper will be discussed in terms of both the general aim of this research paper, and the specific research questions stated in Chapter 2: Context, scope, aims, objectives and research questions.

Chapter 7.

The final chapter of this paper is the conclusion, in which it is proposed that this study may serve as the platform for further study, in particular the notion that a categorisation of gamer type may serve to be an indicator of a gamer’s information behaviour.

1) Home console gaming.

1.1) Introduction.

The focus of this research paper is the information behaviour (seeking, searching, and use) exhibited by home console gamers, in the niche area of the act of purchasing - or not - a new console: how is information sought and used - again, or not - and where from, in the decision-making process?

Initially, however - as has been indicated in the preface - the background of console gaming must be described and explored, for without a detailed understanding of this one might not hope to understand the key concepts within it that are representational of both the inspiration for this paper, and what it has been designed to investigate.

With this in mind, this chapter will consider what “gamers”, “gaming” and “console gaming” are, and investigate the history of console gaming, which will serve to provide the background for when brand-new consoles are periodically released. Gamers’ preferences, central to this paper, will be studied, and the distinction between PC gaming and console gaming will be explained; furthermore, preferences for one particular manufacturer or other of consoles will be scrutinised.

1.2) Definitions of “gamer” and “gaming”.

What is a gamer? Collins online dictionary gives the answer as, “A person who plays video games or participates in role-playing games,” which, for the purposes of this paper, will serve as a perfectly satisfactory definition. Therefore, given that the focus of this research is on home consoles, we may omit “..or participates in role-playing games,” and posit: What is a console gamer? It is a person who plays video games on a home console system.

What is “gaming”? Again, if we submit the question to the Collins dictionary, two possible outcomes are returned. It is either the action or practice of playing video games, or the action or practice of playing gambling games. Interestingly, in recent gaming history there has been some crossover of the two definitions, and a little attention must be paid to it.

Randomised loot boxes, or crates, in today’s video games, may trace their roots back to the cards found in cigarette packets over a century ago, and the first video game in which they appeared in a major way is 2010’s Team Fortress 2 (Wright, 2017). Using a game’s in-built, or real-world, currency, a gamer will purchase a “loot box” and receive a random special item.

According to Alexandra (2017), when a loot box is purchased, “You might get something really cool or you might get a ton of garbage,” and herein lies the issue. Specific items may be purchased in-game to aid progression in that game, or to alter a character’s appearance, but the randomised element has come under increased criticism in that it represents a form of gambling, and an explicit comparison to slot machines has been made: “..you watch this whole addictive animation play out as the slot machine spins” (Schreier, 2018a).

There has been significant controversy concerning the inclusion of these loot boxes in video games, although they represent an extremely profitable revenue stream for games companies: Blizzard’s record financial results for the first quarter of 2017 were aided by a

25% growth, year-on-year, in revenue from in-game content (Activision Blizzard Announces Better-Than-Expected and Record First-Quarter 2017 Financial Results, 2017).

This controversy has led to the Belgian Gaming Commission declaring that video game loot boxes are illegal, and they must be removed from video games in Belgium, although both the UK and US do not consider loot boxes in violation of their gambling regulations (Gerken, 2018).

Here, then, both the given definitions of Collins' "gaming" can be bundled together, yet for the purposes of this paper, this "super-definition" is unravelled, and so "gaming" is simply "the action or practice of playing video games", and when the term is used forthwith, no gambling connotations are intended either implicitly or explicitly.

1.3) Types of gamers.

Within this definition of "gamer", there are most certainly subdivisions, or types, yet the nouns used to identify the groupings, and even the number of subdivisions, varies depending on the author of the text describing them. Generally speaking, these categories are assigned on how gamers interact with a game, their approach to it, although a distinction along gender lines may also be attributed.

Regarding how players approach gameplay, Bartle's (1996) taxonomy of multi-user dungeon (MUD) gamers identifies four: achievers, who are focused on game progression; explorers, who look to maximise their experience of a game's environment; socialisers, for whom playing the game represents an opportunity to develop relationships - or at least interact - with other players; and killers (who, apparently, are people of few words), for whom imposing themselves on other players, positively or negatively, is a key objective.

Elsewhere, Fahey (2011) details 27 types of gamer, each focused on the characteristics of that gamer. Jacob (5 types of gamers you may encounter and what they are looking for, n.d.), however, draws an interesting distinction by naming professional gamers as a category. E-Sports (electronic sports), in which gamers compete in gaming tournaments, may trace their roots back to 1972 at Stamford University, where gamers competed on the game Spacewar, in which the prize was a subscription to the Rolling Stone magazine (The History and Evolution of Esports, n.d.).

Today, however, the prizes on offer far exceed a magazine subscription: Epic Games, for instance, announced a \$100,000,000 prize pool for Fortnite Battle Royale tournaments taking part in 2018 to 2019 (Fortnite Team, 2018). Teams of professional gamers, therefore, are able to compete full-time in tournaments². This aspect of gaming is interesting to note: Savolainen (1995) draws the distinction between work and nonwork information-seeking, yet the two may overlap, and for professional gamers, this blurring of lines is very evident.

² To illustrate the lucrative nature of professional gaming, a list of teams and their earnings may be found at: <https://www.esportsearnings.com/teams>

1.4) Computers, home consoles, gaming and the military.

Charles Babbage may, or may not, be considered the “father of the computer”. His Analytical Engine may “not unreasonably” be thought of as a programmable computer (Edmunds, 2017), although it has been argued that because the details of this machine were not, “..unearthed until after the modern computer age had begun,” it would be “overstating the case” to assign to Babbage the paternal title (Wilkes, 2002).

Nonetheless, the four “parts” of the Analytical Engine, an analogue computer, are comparable with the components of modern digital computers: the mill, or the calculating unit, may be considered a CPU; the store directly relates to memory and storage; and the reader and printer are the input and output devices (Freiberger and Swain, n.d.).

The first general purpose electronic purpose computers were developed by the military: the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC), was constructed at the University of Pennsylvania with the purpose of aiding artillery firing tables, and Colossus was used at Bletchley Park in Britain to help cryptanalytic work (Van Rijsbergen, 1985).

It is not overstating the case to state that the history of inventions is full of instances of entities created in wartime filtering down to everyday usage after a period of time: drones were developed by the US Navy; the network of satellites used for Global Positioning System (GPS), a feature of most, if not all, smartphones, was set up by the US Department of Defense in the ‘70s (Shu L, 2014); and research by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency allowed the development of ARPANET, precursor to the internet (ARPANET, n.d.).

Home consoles have both at least some military involvement in their beginnings - and future - and the title “father of the console” is more easily attributable than that of the computer. Ralph Baer, whilst working for Sanders Associates Inc - a US defence contractor which is now part of BAE Systems Electronics & integrated Solutions, a subsidiary company of BAE systems - built upon his earlier ideas from his time at Loral Electronics, developed and built the prototype Brown Box, completed in 1967, although it was not until 1972, after it was licensed to Magnavox, that it was released as the Odyssey.

This marks the start of console gaming, and one may observe that, technical specifications and capabilities aside, the consoles released today bear more than a little passing resemblance to the Brown Box and Magnavox Odyssey: an electrical box, with controllers, which enables users to play video games on a television.

It is interesting to note that video gaming’s relationship with the military has extended beyond Sanders Associates’ funding for the Odyssey: both the US and British military have used online simulators as recruitment tools, and in the US, virtual reality (VR) scenarios are used to treat soldiers with PTSD³ (Rayner A, 2012).

³ “Bravemind” was created at the University of Southern California Institute for Creative Technologies, and is used for the treatment of combat-related PTSD: <http://medvr.ict.usc.edu/projects/bravemind/>.

1.5) Console life cycles: “generations”.

Since the Magnavox Odyssey went on sale to the public in 1972, there have been many home consoles subsequently released: some successful, some not, and some cancelled before they were released, and these are divided into eras, or generations, of which, to date, there have been eight.

A generation is defined by the console type, whilst some are named for the number of bits processed - for example, the third generation may be referred to as the 8-bit era - although after the sixth generation this ceased to be the case. The dates of these generations are not consecutive, the reason being that the end of a console generation may be marked by the discontinuation of the last console within it still being produced: for example, the PlayStation 2 was discontinued worldwide in 2013 (Stuart, 2013a), which marked the end of the sixth generation.

The “list of home video game consoles” Wikipedia page⁴ provides the most up-to-date and extensive breakdown of each generation and the consoles released within it (see table 1.1 in Appendix A for a summary of the data). Prinke (2017) asserts that it is Wikipedia that has popularised this way of defining console generations, and that it is only, “..a convenient and clear means for the page to convey the history of game consoles...”. Nevertheless, it is an agreeable way of providing some sense of scope to console history and development.

One may observe from the data in table 1.1 that there has been a gradual thinning out of console manufacturers, and in the sixth, seventh and eighth generations - Sega’s Dreamcast aside - Microsoft (Xbox), Sony (PlayStation) and Nintendo (Wii) are the dominant manufacturers of home consoles today.

When the (European) release dates of the consoles produced by these three manufacturers are examined in more detail (see table 1.2), it may be seen that the life cycle of a console can, generally speaking, be placed at five to seven years.

Within a generation, there may be updated versions, or hardware revisions, of the same console released: the PlayStation 4 has two - the PS4 Slim and PS4 Pro - whilst the Xbox One had the subsequent releases of the Xbox One S and Xbox X.

At the time of writing this paper, it has been confirmed that the next-generation Xbox is in development (Hamilton, 2018). The same may not be said of a “PlayStation 5”. There are rumours that development kits have been issued to developers (Schreier, 2018b); however, to date, there has been no official announcement and any “information” on the subject is likely to be merely speculation. There is no doubt, however, that this timeline fits the five-to-seven-year console generation lifecycle.

⁴ The page can be found at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_home_video_game_consoles#Third_generation_\(1983%E2%80%932003\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_home_video_game_consoles#Third_generation_(1983%E2%80%932003)), and its lists omit handheld consoles.

1.6) Console gaming vs PC gaming.

The focus of this research paper is the information behaviour of home console, or simply just console, owners or gamers, and *not* personal computing, or PC gamers, once the decision has been made to purchase a new system to play games on.

The distinction is necessary: one might reasonably state the two - console and PC gaming - are distinct entities between which there is the propensity for a certain amount of friction. In evidence of this, take one community, or “subreddit”, on the Reddit website⁵: r/pcmasterrace⁶. Its very name has somewhat negative overtones; however, to draw comparisons with any other group that may have used the term “master race” would be stretching the imagination a little.

Granted, one of its stated beliefs is that, “PC gaming is wholly and objectively superior to console gaming,” (Why PC?, n.d.), but if we take into account that one of its aims is, “To strongly contribute to the spread of correct information as well as to fight against misinformation in technology and in gaming,” (What is PCMR?, n.d.) then from an informational standpoint it might appear a rather noble cause, especially so in today’s society when the term “fake news” is a common call to arms.

The term “Glorious PC master race” was coined by games reviewer Ben “Yahtzee” Croshaw, as part of the online magazine The Escapist’s Zero Punctuation video review series⁷, in a 2008 review of the video game The Witcher. Although it was meant as a slight, it was asserted that some PC gamers assumed this mantle and used the term “unironically” (Croshaw, 2013).

However, that such elitism is limited only to PC owners is erroneous: indeed, as Croshaw goes on to say, “Next gen consoles aren’t elitist the way PC gaming is, *it’s a whole other level*,” (ibid, italics added).

It is this statement, in the article The Glorious PC Gaming Master Race, published on 28th May 2013, not long after the eighth generation consoles the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One were announced, that is at the core of this paper. The “whole other level” of elitism pertains to the pre-release rumour that this generation of consoles would require an internet connection in order to play games.

⁵ With its tagline describing itself as “the front page of the internet”, Reddit’s homepage can be found at <https://www.reddit.com/>. On it, there are a number of gaming subreddits, including r/wiiu, r/Switch, r/PS4 and r/xboxone, which covers the current, or eighth, generation of home consoles.

⁶ This subreddit may be found at <https://www.reddit.com/r/pcmasterrace/>.

⁷ The catalogue of Zero Punctuation video reviews can be found at <http://www.escapistmagazine.com/videos/view/zero-punctuation>.

1.7) The eighth generation: rumours.

In 2013, Microsoft and Sony released their eighth-generation video consoles, the Xbox One and PlayStation 4 respectively, yet much as a simple Google search today for information regarding the ninth generation reveals speculation as to the next generation of consoles, for long before November 2013, rumours surrounded the release of those “eighth” consoles.

The Xbox console, it was rumoured, would require a constant internet connection, there was confusion over whether it would be possible to play second-hand games, and there would be a strict digital rights management policy (Conditt, 2018).

Regarding used games, responses to this measure may be seen in gaming forums. In a post on Reddit (Xbox One game discs are only used for initial installation, fee charged for second account, 2013), responses ranged from, “Goodbye Microsoft then if this turns out to be true”, to a more considered, “Fees for 2nd hand games still in the rumour stages and not a confirmed fact,” and it is interesting to note that this second post offers a website link to provide evidence for the statement.

What may be seen in these two examples is striking: on the one hand a post which indicates a willingness, whilst not to *believe* such a rumour, it does indicate a lack of investigation into the problem at hand, and on the other, a post which states its current understanding and offers evidence in support of it.

In any case, a gamer outcry - a “huge backlash” (Stuart, 2013b) - forced Microsoft to reverse its decisions in a statement issued on June 19th 2013 (Your Feedback Matters – Update on Xbox One, 2013), in which it was stated that an internet connection would not be needed to play games offline, and that there would be no restrictions on using and sharing games.

Kuchera (2017) suggests that Microsoft’s vision for the Xbox had been “poorly communicated”, which necessitated the policy reversal. Here, one may posit that this climbdown represents a breaking down of the “information communication chain” (Robinson, 2009, p.582), in which the creation and dissemination - on the part of Microsoft - of information purporting to the Xbox One’s release was poorly executed, which, travelling down the chain, affected how that information was used.

1.8) Summary.

Such, then, is the history and state of console gaming today. There are numerous types of gamer, although the noun used to describe categorisations may differ depending on an article’s author. Consoles have existed since the early ‘70s, although the number of manufacturers of consoles has thinned from then through to today.

Furthermore, releases of new consoles are typically defined as “generations”, and the release of the eighth generation was connected with a degree of controversy regarding how information was handled and released. This indicates a strong relationship to information and the purchasing power of gamers, which is at the core of this research paper. With this background and context laid out, the scope and definition of this paper will be detailed.

2) Context, scope, aims, objectives and research questions.

2.1) Introduction.

In this chapter, the scope, aims and objectives and research questions will be detailed, taking into consideration the context and background of gaming that was explored in the previous chapter. At the proposal stage, the extensive information behaviour literature was examined, and four theories or models of information behaviour were identified that may have critical significance to this study, and they helped to form the overarching aims of it.

2.2) Research context and scope.

The focus of this investigation is home console gamers, and “home consoles” will be taken to mean those who play video games in a home environment on any home console. Professional gamers, as discussed in the preceding chapter, who earn money from gaming tournaments will not be included in this study, as they may be considered a vastly and significantly different type of gamer in terms of their gaming needs.

Currently, an unbundled 500GB PlayStation 4 console (ie one that does not come with any games included in the package) may be purchased for £249.99, whilst a similar Xbox One costs £220⁸. It is believed that, for professional gamers, the cost of consoles is not a consideration of significance to them in their primary capacity as people who earn a living from gaming.

Hardware revisions such as the PS4 Pro or Xbox One S will not be considered to be “new” consoles in this regard, unless they are purchased by a gamer who has not previously owned a PlayStation 4 or Xbox One respectively. This is because by merely upgrading a console, a gamer still has the ability to play the games of that previous console on the upgraded model, thus negating the aspect of “starting afresh”: that is, having to construct a library of games from scratch.

The controversy surrounding the release of the eighth-generation consoles was the inspiration for this paper, and given that the ninth generation Microsoft console has been confirmed to be in development, together with rumours of PlayStation development kits being issued, the timing of this paper is significant.

It is intended, therefore, that driving focus of this investigation will be to investigate the current (eighth) generation of consoles - the PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Wii and Switch - and to see how the information behaviour of gamers within this generation may be applied to any release of the next (ninth) generation. It is anticipated that beyond this, poor information recall will be a significant factor.

⁸ These prices were taken from <https://www.amazon.co.uk>, and are correct as of 24/09/2018.

Notwithstanding, newer versions of older consoles are released periodically: for instance, a miniature version of the PlayStation One, the PlayStation Classic, has recently been announced and will be released on 3rd December 2018 (Introducing PlayStation Classic, with 20 pre-loaded games, n.d.). These will be defined as a “new” console, and so will be deemed an appropriate topic of discussion: they represent a significant purchase, and so a gamer’s informational approach in investigating whether or not to buy such consoles will provide an enriched aspect.

2.3) Research aims.

The overarching aim of this paper is to investigate the information behaviour (seeking, searching and use) of gamers when the decision has been made, or is being entertained, to purchase a new console, and to explore how, and to what extent, this behaviour can be explained by existing theories.

Given the broad scope of information behaviour literature available, with many theories attempting to explain various aspects of it, at the proposal stage of this paper, four theories were identified as potentially having significant use in explaining how information is both sought and used:

- 1) Ellis’ Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour.
- 2) Erdelez’s Information Encountering.
- 3) Fisher’s Information Grounds.
- 4) Jaeger and Burnett’s Information Worlds.

These will be explored within the literature review and their relevance assessed, and then be evaluated against the data collected from surveys and interviews

2.4) Research objectives and research questions.

The objective of this dissertation is to identify how gamers may search for information, the types of information resources used, and if there are any reasons whereby resources may be ignored or avoided. With these objectives in mind, six research questions have been identified, which will be at the heart of this paper.

- 1) How is information sought? Is it a passive or active form of information behaviour?
- 2) What are the sources, or documents, utilised and what are the reasons?
- 3) Are any resources rejected or avoided within an informational search?
- 4) Are the resources used formal, such as official websites or magazines, or informal, like friends or forums?
- 5) Are the sources’ relevance based on their formal or informal nature?
- 6) Is the information search biased in any way? That is, does owning, say, an Xbox 360 mean that priority is given to seeking out information about the Xbox One console, or is it a holistic process?

3) Literature review.

3.1) Introduction.

With the scope of the paper being detailed, and the aims, objectives and research questions having been issued, this chapter will examine information behaviour literature in five parts:

- 1) A broad definition of what information behaviour is will be considered, and why such a definition is necessary for this paper.
- 2) The extensive nature of information behaviour literature will be examined.
- 3) Four key ideas on information behaviour will be identified as having significant relevance to this paper: they are described, and their relevance is justified.
- 4) The concept of "context" will be examined in relation to the dichotomy between the individual and the social.
- 5) There will be a consideration of information behaviour literature which focuses on gaming, in order to judge if there are recurring themes or ideas within them that might have relevance to this paper.

Information behaviour has been studied extensively, and there is a vast amount of literature. Papers examining information behaviour and gaming, which may be seen as a focused, or directed, subset of the domain, have been studied from a variety of viewpoints.

However, a search of the literature within the library and information science domain revealed that studies which investigate the niche area of information behaviour and gaming which is the focus of this paper - the information behaviour of console gamers when looking to choose a new console to purchase - is, at best, somewhat lacking.

That is not to say it is an entirely neglected area: for example, Kania (2018) considers which console might be best to purchase for a library, although this is written for those who are unfamiliar with console gaming: she states, "...if you're not a gamer to begin with, it can be hard to know what to get" (ibid, p.70), and so the focus is on a review of three eighth-generation consoles to aid those with little or no knowledge of console gaming, rather than those familiar with the area.

It is interesting to note, however, that in the verdicts for those consoles, distinguishing demographics are identified: both the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One are linked to experienced gamers, whilst the Nintendo Switch is linked to beginners and families (ibid, p.70). One might draw the conclusion that in this scenario, the Switch would be a suitable choice for libraries looking to draw in and engage with its users.

Whilst the scope of this article has limited value to this paper, the remark that the Switch would be, "Great for [...] fans of other Nintendo consoles", has a direct resonance with one of its stated research questions, which is to investigate if information behaviour is based on some form of bias - that is, for example, whether being an owner of a Microsoft console would mean the search for information is primarily directed at a new console from that manufacturer.

3.2) Defining information behaviour.

Any examination of information behaviour must necessarily begin with a discussion of what exactly it is. Wilson (2000, p.49), suggests the following: it is "...the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking, and information use."

Whilst Bawden and Robinson (2012, p.188) note that some believe that such a definition might be too all-encompassing, and that there are certain aspects (for example, system evaluations and search strategies) which should be omitted, on examination of Wilson's definition, it is apparent that such a broad scope is useful for this paper.

Wilson (2000, pp.49-50), provides four definitions that are of key importance when discussing this topic: information behaviour; information seeking behaviour; information searching behaviour; and information use behaviour.

"Information behaviour" is taken to mean, "...the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information" (ibid, p.49), or how an individual - or group - interacts with these sources and channels, which includes active and passive aspects: one may actively engage in some form of information behaviour by interacting with information, or passively imbibe information that will not be used for any means, and one may note here that these active and passive facets of information behaviour are represented in different models: Erdelez's Information Encountering can be considered one model that focuses on passive IB, whilst Ellis' Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour is concerned with active IB.

"Seeking", "searching" and "use" can be seen, perhaps, as being three distinct parts of a single process: one seeks information on any given topic, because it is required to resolve a need for it, by engaging with the systems that hold that information; one searches those systems, for example online databases or the world wide web, using a bag-of-words strategy or one involving Boolean operators, clicking on links returned, and assessing the relevance of the document with regards to the topic in question; and finally one "uses" the information by incorporating it into an existing knowledge base.

These three parts of the process - seeking, searching and use - are broadly compatible and have similar scope with what Jaeger and Burnett (2010, pp.60-65) consider to be three forms of access to information, all of which play "significant roles" within an information world: physical access, intellectual access, and social access.

Physical access is the process of getting to the information, stored within a document or other form (ibid, p.60), and so may be equated with information seeking, although there is an element of searching as well: the location of a document and the technologies that allow a seeker to gain physical access to them are of significance, as well as, "...the abilities for reaching that document" (ibid, p61); that is, the search strategies which allow a user of a particular technology to reach that document.

Intellectual access may be described as a searching task; it involves knowing how to get to the document (ibid, p.61) - one might posit on the web by following the necessary links, or being aware how to download a document; and in a library how to follow information such as shelfmarks to the relevant location. Certainly, how information is catalogued and displayed is of crucial significance (ibid, p.62), yet there is also an element of actually understanding the information itself (ibid, p.61): without this understanding, a relevance judgment on it, central to the searching phase, would not be possible.

Social access encompasses, “..the ability to use the information in social contexts” (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p.60, and so can be related directly to Wilson’s “use” segment of information behaviour. However, when considering use, it is important to consider that although it may, or can, be incorporated into a knowledge base (either physically by, say, bookmarking a web document on a computer, or mentally by using the information to either confirm or alter an existing opinion or argument) there is a possible outcome of the non-use of information.

Burnett, Besant and Chatman (2001, p537), provide a definition of information behaviour as, “..a state in which one may or may not act on available or offered information,” and suggest that this non-use may involve an outright rejection, even though it may be offered to them at a time of great need. Furthermore, there might well, too, be a conscious decision not to initiate the seeking and searching stages of the process.

Here, social context is of key importance: information might not always carry the same value to each who is offered it: “..the value of information is not universal but is rooted within the norms and attitudes of a particular world” (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p.62).

If one considers, for example, the subreddit r/pcmasterrace, with its underlying belief that PC gaming is entirely superior, then “PC Gaming” may be seen as a “particular”, small, world, perhaps as a part of a composite world “Gaming”, then one might well argue that information which promotes PC gaming is assigned a higher value than that which supports the view that console gaming is superior; and information which serves to subserviate console gaming as well, even though it might not be partly or entirely accurate: for, “..information that meshes with the social norms [...] will tend to be accepted by members of the world and integrated into their lives, regardless of its accuracy...” (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p.64): that is, it will be incorporated into an existing knowledge base, whilst information which does not, will not.

Furthermore, given that one of the research questions of this paper is to investigate whether the information behaviour of console gamers may be in some way biased - that is, by owning one particular manufacturer’s console, this has a significant effect on the resultant IB when looking for a new console at the beginning of a new generation, either through avoidance or ignore-ance - the use or non-use of information, and reasons for it, are a key feature of this literature review and will be discussed at length in due course.

3.3) Theories of information behaviour.

Research into information behaviour may be traced back to the work in the 1940s which examined the information-seeking behaviour of scientists (Ellis, Cox and Hall, 1993, p.356; Wilson, 1999, p.250), and it is clear that it is a rich area of study.

Wilson (1997, p.551) notes that literature concerning information needs and information-seeking behaviour numbers thousands of papers and reports, and furthermore, that this is only within the domain of information science. Other domains have also studied this area: Case (2006, p.293) points out that, in attempting to review the information behaviour literature of a four-year period (2001-2004), over 2,000 documents that had potential relevance were identified and, furthermore, that this literature, “..presents a bewildering array of topics, populations, samples, sites, theories, and methods.” (ibid, p.295); whilst Fisher, Erdelez and McKechnie (2009) provide a detailed examination of 72 theories and models.

One reason for this is, as Wilson (1999, p.250) suggests, “Researchers have not built upon prior research in such a way as to cumulate a body of theory and empirical findings that may serve as a starting point for further research”; or perhaps one might state that when a researcher begins to investigate information behaviour, it is necessary to begin again, and create a new model or theory. In this regard, Foster and Urquhart (2012) note, too, that there is, “..a tendency for models to be published but never developed further.”

However, Savolainen (2017, p.594) notes that not all recently developed models are completely new, which makes sense in that they represent an attempt to strengthen existing knowledge. This can be done in two ways: one, by adding new components to an existing model; or, two, redefinition or restructuring of the components of a model (ibid, p.598).

Ellis (1984, p.551) notes that, “The notion that it is possible to derive a general theory of information-seeking behaviour is likely to prove a chimera”: that is, one might argue, there are too many variables involved that any attempt to provide a one-size-fits-all approach is doomed to failure.

Wilson (1997, p.551), however, is rather more optimistic and proposes that whilst the reasons for studying information behaviour across disciplines - including, but not limited to, psychology, consumerism and systems design - may differ, it should be possible to create a general model of information behaviour which is not restricted to the information science domain.

3.4) Four theories of information behaviour.

Given, then, that there are a limited number of papers that focus on console gamer information behaviour from a purchasing perspective, it was judged to be necessary, primarily, to review the literature so as to identify any models that would have significant relevance to this research paper. It was concluded that four fulfil that criteria, and these are at the core of this literature review and, furthermore, aided the design of the research questions and methodology to be used. For this reason, it is necessary to give a description of them, and to justify their inclusion.

3.4.1) Ellis’ Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour.

Ellis’ model (1989a) is based on the analysis of interviews investigating the information-seeking behaviour of social scientists, in order to guide information retrieval system design, and six “broad characteristics” (ibid, p.238) were noted:

- 1) Starting - the initial search.
- 2) Chaining - following connections between material.
- 3) Browsing - “semi-directed searching”.
- 4) Differentiating - identifying differences in the types of sources.
- 5) Monitoring - following developments.
- 6) Extracting - examining a source of information and determining relevant sections.

A study employing the same grounded theory approach was undertaken which examined the information-seeking behaviour of researchers in the physical and social sciences (Ellis, Cox and Hall, 1993), and two further characteristics were identified - verifying and ending - although these did not represent a significant difference in behaviour, rather a consequence of the type of work being undertaken (ibid, p.366).

Furthermore, when English literature researchers were investigated, (Ellis, 1993) the same conclusion was drawn - that although the terminology used to describe the characteristics (in this instance, starting, surveying, chaining, selection and sifting, monitoring, and assembly and dissemination), these terms could be said to represent the same activities, with the differences attributed, at least in part, to the type of subject in question (ibid, p.483).

These characteristics are not meant to represent a series of sequential stages in the information-seeking process: how this progresses is dependent on the information-seeker (Ellis, 1989b, p.178). However, Wilson (1999, p.254) suggests there must be at least some order to it. There is a start and an end, and certain characteristics must necessarily follow one another: for instance, extracting must succeed browsing.

This six (or eight, if starting and ending are included) characteristic model is of particular interest to this paper: for example, do console gamers differentiate between the types of resources available? Clearly, some form of relevance judgment must have been made, either consciously or unconsciously, by one who chooses formal (official websites, magazines and the like) over informal sources (say, a friend “in the know”, or web forums).

It is important to note here that Ellis’ model was not created with the web in mind, although it may be stated that the characteristics have a direct relevance within an online search (Choo CW, Detlor B, Turnbull D, 2000):

- 1) Starting - begin surfing the web.
- 2) Chaining - clicking on and following links.
- 3) Browsing - reading web pages.
- 4) Differentiating - bookmarking pages of interest.
- 5) Monitoring - subscribing to newsletters.
- 6) Extracting - examining a website for all pertinent material.

One might argue here that Choo et al’s idea of differentiating - bookmarking - is rather more representational of a monitoring characteristic, yet the fact remains that Ellis’ model can be converted into an examination of information-seeking behaviour of web users. It is vital that this is so for this paper, given that, in 2018, 90% of adults in the UK, and 99% of those aged between 16 and 34, were recent internet users (Office for National Statistics, 2018) - the internet is likely a key resource for console gamers.

3.4.2) Erdelez’s Information Encountering.

Whilst Ellis’ model can be said to describe an active form of information-seeking, information encountering (IE) is a passive aspect of it. Indeed, given the acceptance of Wilson’s broad definition of information behaviour as “..the totality of human behaviour in relation to sources and channels of information [...] both *active* and *passive*...” (Wilson, 2000), it is necessary to consider how such a passive model might be of relevance here.

“Information encountering” was defined by Erdelez (1999, p.25) as, “..a memorable experience of an unexpected discovery of useful or interesting information”; and four types of encounterer are identified: non-encounterers, occasional encounterers, encounterers, and super-encounterers (ibid, p.26), categories that are self-explanatory.

Super-encounterers are reliant on this form of information-gathering, although they may be reluctant to discuss it for fear of being “ridiculed” (ibid, p.26). This notion is borne out, certainly within a scientific context, with the finding that, “..some scientists may be reluctant to admit that the discoveries for which they are honoured were accidental” (Foster and Ellis, 2014, p.1020).

The internet is identified as a “conducive information-encountering environment”, for both occasional encounterers and encounterers, but not super-encounterers who look to avoid the internet (Erdelez S, 1999, p.27). Given the statistics for internet-usage in the UK in 2018, it is an interesting side note to posit that this might not be true in today’s information environment.

Regarding the internet, it is interesting to note that the definition of “information encountering” was later changed, or refined, to, “..an instance of accidental discovery of information during an active search for some other information” (Erdelez, 2009, p.180).

With this in mind, one might argue that this refinement would mean that following, or clicking, links on websites found through active browsing would have to be omitted from a genuine information-encountering experience, certainly from any “Related Topics”, or tagged articles, section of a website. Might the semantic web, with its linked articles, mean - somewhat perversely - that a more “aggressive” form of active information-seeking is now required in order to passively, accidentally, discover information?

3.4.3) Fisher’s Information Grounds.

An information ground is defined as a temporary setting in which people gather for one reason, yet this situation provides the context which encourages the “serendipitous sharing of information” (What are information grounds?, N.D.).

Seven propositional statements concerning information grounds were identified (Fisher, Durrance and Hinton, 2004, pp.756-757)

- Proposition 1: Information grounds can occur anywhere, in any type of temporal setting and are predicated on the presence of individuals.
- Proposition 2: People gather at information grounds for a primary, instrumental purpose other than information sharing.
- Proposition 3: Information grounds are attended by different social types, most if not all of whom play expected and important, albeit different roles in information flow.
- Proposition 4: Social interaction is a primary activity at information grounds such that information flow is a byproduct.
- Proposition 5: People engage in formal and informal information sharing, and information flow occurs in many directions.
- Proposition 6: People use information obtained at information grounds in alternative ways, and benefit along physical, social, affective, and cognitive dimensions.
- Proposition 7: Many subcontexts exist within an information ground and are based on people’s perspectives and physical factors; together these subcontexts form a grand context.

Different forms of information ground have been identified: Pettigrew (1999) studied those attending a community clinic, and other locations as diverse as hairdressers', quilting bees and tattoo parlours are noted (Fisher et al, 2005).

Within an information ground, social actors may have strong or weak ties with one another, which affects the type of information being exchanged. Those temporarily inhabiting an information ground who have strong ties are a highly homogenous group, and any information shared reinforces existing bonds rather than being new information; and highly heterogeneous groups, with weak ties, are conducive to new information being shared (Savolainen R, 2009, p.43). Therefore, from an informational perspective at least, weak ties hold more value than strong ties (Pettigrew, 1999, p.803).

One can consider here to what extent a computer server or network may be considered an information ground. Online gaming with consoles is permitted through its manufacturer's network⁹, and players can play individually or form teams. In a lobby or in-game, players may communicate through text or voice chat: for solo-platform play, where platform may be taken to mean the type of console, this would involve, say, PlayStation 4 gamers communicating with other PS4 gamers, but for cross-platform play, this might involve, for example, PS4 gamers interacting with those playing on PC. In this regard, cross-platform play would represent a heterogeneous group of players, whilst solo-platform play would be homogenous.

To what extent, though, does online play satisfy the seven propositions of information grounds? Certainly, it represents a temporal setting, with a focus on gameplay rather than the sharing of information, yet as Fisher et al (2005) suggest, further research is needed into what types of information is shared, how people use it, and the way in which it is used and/or shared.

Whilst that is not the focus of this paper, there is a certain crossover appear with the notion of information grounds and the research question, "Are the sources utilised when seeking and searching for information about one or other consoles formal or informal?" If the argument that people have a tendency to prefer informal - friends or, say, fellow gamers - over formal sources (ibid) then it is important to consider online console gameplay as a potentially fruitful information ground.

3.4.4) Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds.

Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds (2010) draws together the ideas of Chatman's small worlds and Habermas' lifeworld. Whilst Chatman's work is focused on the role of information in very localised, small world, settings - for example, a women's prison (Chatman, 1999) - Habermas' work is concerned with information and society in its entirety - the lifeworld.

Their criticism - and the terminology used in describing the flaws in either theory means the use of "criticism" is justified - is that Chatman "ignores" the way in which different smaller societies or communities interact with one another, and Habermas "...pays little attention, if any..." to how a wider society interacts with those communities which Chatman focuses on (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p.20).

⁹ For example, Microsoft's Xbox Live or Sony's PlayStation Network.

Rather, these two approaches are viewed as complementary to one another, rather than conflicting, in examining the access to and exchange of information within society (Burnett and Jaeger, 2008), and the theory of information worlds borrows heavily from them.

Central to Habermas' ideas is the "public sphere", a space which is free of the influence of both state and corporate power, in which free democratic discussion may occur. Attempts by the state and corporations to influence the public sphere - public spaces and forums - may be seen as an attempt to "colonise" the lifeworld, undermining its ability to function effectively as an informational place (ibid).

Habermas, it is noted (ibid), dates the origins of the public sphere to 18th century England, whilst in modern terms, the internet represents both a public sphere and a colonised space (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p.89).

The theory of Information Worlds borrows most heavily from Chatman's ideas. Small worlds are defined as the environment within which a collection of individuals live and work, who are connected by interests and behaviours, and who are governed by social norms (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, pp.21-22).

There are five critical concepts at this level of information worlds: social norms, social types, information behaviour, information value, and boundaries. Within any given world, behaviour is dictated by socially acceptable norms by actors who typify the social types of that world. The exchange and use of information in a world is governed by its understanding of information behaviour. Information is assigned a value based on its relevance to those norms: that is, information's value is contextual. Boundaries form the links between small worlds, across which information may, or may not, flow, based on its perceived value.

It is interesting to contemplate how this theory applies to the world of gaming. Certainly, colonisation of the internet may be observed. Take, for example, EA's defence of its use of loot boxes in the video game Star Wars: Battlefront 2¹⁰. In a post on the website Reddit, EA attempted to justify a pay-to-win element of the game - thus colonising an internet forum - although the information value of that post was rejected, and it became the most downvoted comment on that particular website.

It has been noted that there is a dismissal of console gaming by PC gamers: could "gaming" be said to represent a small world? Or might it be a composite world, consisting of several distinct components - for instance PC gaming, console gaming and mobile gaming? This has significant relevance to one of the aims of this paper: that is, when looking to purchase a new console, do gamers prioritise, and thereby assign more value to, information concerning a preferred manufacturer?

3.5) Trends in the study of information behaviour.

If the history of study of information behaviour is examined, it is clear there are "eras", or trends, within it. Most of the work in this field up to the 1970s was focused on systems as opposed to users (Wilson, 2000, p.51), whilst it is possible to think of the 1980s and '90s as "the golden age" of research in this area (Savolainen, 2017, p.594).

¹⁰ The post may be found [here](#). It was made in response to a Redditor's exclamation that a character in the game was locked behind a paywall.

In terms of how information behaviour is studied, Vakkari (2008) notes a decline in the use of quantitative studies is combined with a trend towards qualitative studies. By adopting such qualitative methods, one might hope to yield more relevant data. Indeed, Ellis (1993, p.469) argues that quantitative data, whilst being useful to provide a picture of how information might be used, is “ill-suited” to gaining insights into the information-seeking process, and also suggests that this is accompanied by a focus on the micro rather than the macro: that is, studies which focus on small groups, utilising observation - or an ethnographic method - have gained in what one might term “popularity” over the study of large groups using questionnaires and formalised, structured, interviews (Ellis and Haugan, 1997, pp.384-385).

Vakkari (2008) also points to a change of interest from the information behaviour of professionals - as typified by, for example, studies of academic researchers (Ellis, 1993), or engineers and research scientists (Ellis and Haugan, 1997) - to that of everyday life information seeking.

It may be noted that this trend may date back to at least 1995, where Savolainen (1995, p.259) pre-echoes Vakkari’s view and states that, “Until recently, studies of nonwork information seeking [...] have been overshadowed by surveys of job-related information needs, seeking and use...”, although such studies were carried out before and may be dated to at least the 1970s.

However, a content analysis of the IB literature published between 1999 and 2008 (Julien H, Pecoskie JL, Reed K, 2011, p.21) revealed that of the search methods used, questionnaires and interviews were utilised in 44.7% of studies, the largest proportion, and, furthermore, that the groups studied (professionals, students and scholars) remained “proportionally similar”, although this may be a result of ease of access to those groups.

3.6) Information behaviour: social context vs individuality.

Clearly, then, there is some conflict of views in how studies of information behaviour are changing, or evolving, in terms of the methods used and who is being studied. However, since the 1990s, the role of context has been a critical consideration, which can affect both information behaviour and information retrieval.

Indeed, context is a “foundational concept” (Fisher, Landry and Naumer, 2007), and Kari and Savolainen (2003, p.155) quote Kuhlthau, who states that, “To neglect context is to ignore the basic motivation and impetus that drives the user in the information seeking process,” which also serves to illustrate the importance of examining the user in information behaviour.

Pettigrew (1999), investigating the information behaviour of attendees at community clinics, identifies four types contextual factors critical for information grounds: physical environment, clinic activity, nurse’s situation and attendee’s situation. Together, these create a grand context which affect how health information flows. One might posit that these factors may be condensed, or collapsed, into three factors which can be translocated to other potential information grounds: physical environment (as is), location activity, and actors.

Yet it is not just a physical environment that may serve as a contextual factor. Computer-generated, or virtual, communities may be considered “textbook examples” of small information worlds (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p.93), and so, by extension, again, we might consider a computer server during online gameplay as a virtual information ground: it is a

virtual environment, that has an associated activity within it, which comprises of various actors.

Notwithstanding environmental context, there is concern that studies which look to embed ideas about information within a social context are “frustratingly rare” (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p.4). Such frustration may well be understandable: Bawden and Robinson (2013) put forward three reasons why information behaviour might be considered a social, rather than individual, phenomenon.

Firstly, purely from a practical point of view, it would be virtually impossible to study the information behaviour of every individual; secondly, the behaviour of groups may not be understood by looking at the individual; and, thirdly, information behaviour is necessarily a social construction for the reason that an isolated individual, cut off from society and without access to information, would be unable to have such a form of behaviour.

Yet the individuality aspect may not totally be ignored. Savolainen (1995) draws the distinction between work and nonwork information seeking, but suggests the two are complementary: information behaviour exhibited in work may also be applied for nonwork purposes: the example of “principle of least effort” is provided. Furthermore, this principle of least effort affords information being attributed a high value if it is easily accessed: as Jaeger and Burnett (2010, p.55) note, “..information with the highest value is often the first response to a Google query.”

Wilson (1981, p.6), too, acknowledges the importance of the role an occupation may play in how a user, or individual, interacts with information. An individual’s lifeworld is the sum of their experiences as a user of information, and a sub-world of this lifeworld is that of work. It is possible to observe the strong influence of this sub-world: Ellis (1984, p.268) noted that the definition of a task by researchers was affected by their occupational, as well as educational, experience.

Ellis, however, dismissed this notion as being “incidental”, yet it is possible to argue that individual experiences do have an effect on information behaviour. If one accepts that an “information need” is a subjective experience and that “selective exposure” to information arises because of it (Wilson, 1997) - that is, an individual will choose sources and information that fits or melds with existing beliefs - then this will have a significant impact on information seeking specifically, and information behaviour generally. Once someone has, or has not, selected a source or piece of information, this will have an impact on how the information task progresses (Wilson, 1981).

Yet here we veer away from the context of the individual and come back to the social. It is precisely this notion of “selective exposure” that Jaeger and Burnett (2010, p.54) attribute to social norms within a small, or information, world: “The value of information is a matter of social context.”

This dichotomy between individual experiences and social context is an interesting and significant debate with the field of information behaviour, and is perhaps best summed up by Bawden and Robinson (2013), who conclude that marginalising the role of the individual when studying information behaviour would be to the detriment the value of study in this field: yes, the individual is affected by the social, but investigating to what extent one affects the other would be a useful direction to take investigations into.

3.7) Information behaviour and gamers.

Whilst the literature into information behaviour is extensive, investigations into gaming and information behaviour are less so, although it is far from an unexplored field of study. However, information behaviour and choosing a console is limited. Kania (2018) provides an overview of current-generation consoles from a library perspective, although it is a review of the consoles for those unfamiliar with that genre of gaming.

Online reviews of consoles aimed at helping gamers, rather than librarians, decide which might be best for a particular gamer focus on a number of factors that could help in this process. Exclusive games and backwards compatibility - where games from a previous generation may be played on a newer generation console - together with which console a gamer's friends might own - indicating a social aspect to gaming - (Bakalar, 2015) may be contributing factors, and price and technical specifications are also highlighted (Martin, 2018). Furthermore, the demographics identified by Kania (2018) are also identified, drawing distinctions between types of gamers (GamesRadar Staff, 2018)

However, while this types of resources themselves might be useful for gamers, they cannot offer any insights into the information behaviour exhibited in seeking, searching and using: that is, they represent a potential end result in the process of this author's web search.

Information behaviour studies into gaming are somewhat focused on the games themselves, of which they generally fall into five categories (Lee, Clarke and Rossi, 2016, pp.834-835):

- 1) Design of games.
- 2) Understanding of players.
- 3) Usability of interfaces.
- 4) Gamification.
- 5) Game user research

That is not to say, however, that they may be dismissed outright for the purposes of this paper. Numerous sources have been identified for games themselves, which might help provide an insight into how consoles are investigated when considering one to purchase.

Lee et al found that game reviews represent an important resource, both those which are user-generated and from professional sources, and there is evidence of *differentiating* between the two: "When user-contributed reviews lacked authority, [...] users sought information from professional sources" (Lee, Clarke and Rossi, 2016, p.843). Furthermore, as for the *types* of sources, text-based sources such as iTunes and Wikipedia are used, whilst videos can provide more detailed picture of a game (Lee, Clarke and Rossi, 2016, pp.838-843).

Studies which focus on a specific video game, for instance the virtual world Second Life, have found that sociability in-game is a significant part of information-seeking: informational interactions with other users is viewed as more valuable than web search, and users from other countries are sought (Ostrander, 2008, p.517).

Interestingly, here it may be noted that this method of information-seeking suggests that Second Life represents an information ground, and furthermore that such a grouping of users represents is likely to be highly heterogeneous with weak ties, allowing the sharing of new information.

Ostrander (2008, p.519) also reports the importance of serendipity, or information encountering, within Second Life, a finding supported by Webber (2013, p.97), who also found that social networks are critical to information behaviour within Second Life, and furthermore that Web 2.0 applications facilitate these networks.

Clearly, then, although studies investigating information behaviour and the purchase of consoles is lacking, studies which focus on games themselves offer some insight into the information behaviour of gamers that may be applicable to this study. Information encountering has been recognised as a valuable method of information-seeking within Second Life, which may be recognised as a virtual information ground. Differentiating between sources of information has also been observed as a characteristic of buying games. Moreover, social networks are critical to information sharing, which may suggest some forms of social norms associated with gamers.

3.8) Summary.

Wilson's (2000, p.49) broad definition of information behaviour, which subsumes seeking, searching and use, has been accepted as being relevant to this paper. The extensive literature has been examined, and four key ideas have been drawn out that may have significant relevance to this paper: Ellis' Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour, Erdelez's Information Encountering, Fisher's Information Grounds and Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds.

Whilst the literature concerning the information behaviour of gamers when looking to purchase a new console is lacking, there are themes that arise out of studies into other areas of gaming which confirm these four theories *do* have relevance, and may be related to those theories which have been selected with which to uncover general themes within the information behaviour exhibited by gamers when looking to purchase a new console.

4) Methodology.

4.1) Introduction

At the outset of this section, it is necessary to restate the aims, objectives and research questions that underpin this paper.

The overarching aim of this paper is to investigate the information behaviour (seeking, searching and use) of gamers when the decision has been made, or is being entertained, to purchase a new console, and to explore how, and to what extent, this behaviour can be explained by existing theories or models.

Given the broad scope of information behaviour literature available, with many models and theories attempting to explain various aspects of it, at the proposal stage of this paper, four theories or models were identified as potentially having significant use in explaining how information is both sought and used:

- 1) Ellis' Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour.
- 2) Erdelez's Information Encountering.
- 3) Fisher's Information Grounds.
- 4) Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds.

These will be explored within the literature review and their relevance assessed, and then be evaluated against the data collected from a questionnaire and interviews

Research objectives and research questions.

The objective of this dissertation is to identify how gamers may search for information, the types of information resources used, and if there are any reasons whereby resources may be ignored or avoided. With these objectives in mind, six research questions have been identified, which will be at the heart of this paper.

- 1) How is information sought? Is it a passive or active form of information behaviour?
- 2) What are the sources, or documents, utilised and what are the reasons?
- 3) Are any resources rejected or avoided within an informational search?
- 4) Are the resources used formal, such as official websites or magazines, or informal, like friends or forums?
- 5) Are the sources' relevance based on their formal or informal nature?
- 6) Is the information search biased in any way? That is, does owning, say, an Xbox 360 mean that priority is given to seeking out information about the Xbox One console, or is it a holistic process?

It has been noted in the literature review that there has been a trend away from quantitative studies of information behaviour, with a corresponding interest in qualitative methods (Vakkari, 2008) and that quantitative data, whilst potentially being useful in studying how information is used, it is "ill-suited" to offer insights into the information-seeking process (Ellis, 1993).

However, given the aims, objectives and research questions of this paper are aimed at a holistic picture of information behaviour, it follows that both quantitative data and qualitative data are required.

4.2) Mixed methods.

To this end, a mixed methods approach to data collection was applied in this study. An initial, exploratory, largely quantitative - but with a qualitative aspect to it as well - questionnaire was designed and distributed. The aim of this was twofold: firstly, it was to directly address the research questions and, secondly, to garner potential interest in follow-up interviews. These follow-up interviews would explore the topics in more depth and largely explore the area of study in terms of the theories that had been identified as being potentially significant explanators of information behaviour. This approach would also allow the triangulation of the data discovered in the questionnaire.

4.3) Questionnaire.

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, a blog post was written and shared via Facebook and Twitter on 10th July 2018, with the hope that this would generate an interest in the topic¹¹ and enthuse gamers enough to complete the questionnaire once it had been issued.

A link to this blog post was also included within the introduction to the questionnaire itself, so that any potential participant, if feeling any uncertainty or confusion as to whether they might complete it, would have the information they required to explain the focus and intention of the study.

The questionnaire was created using Google Docs and issued via social media - Facebook and Twitter - on Sunday 22nd July 2018, and was held open for two weeks, until 5th August 2018. Whilst it was not shared on Facebook extensively, both people this researcher is following on Twitter and those they themselves are following, took up the mantle, resulting in the questionnaire receiving far wider interest than if it had been shared manually to individual participants.

Google Docs questionnaires have the advantage that charts are compiled automatically as and when participants complete the questionnaire, and in the data analysis this will help to provide an overall picture. However, individual responses will also be investigated to see if there are any underlying patterns hidden within the statistics: for instance, if the type of work a respondent is involved in affects in any way what resources are preferred.

That the questionnaire was not shared extensively on Facebook was a little unexpected, given that followers of this researcher on that platform are more well-known to the author than those on Twitter. However, it may be said that this somewhat unexpected occurrence had the unforeseen advantage that there would potentially be significantly less bias in the results: that is, a wider gamer population would be reached that had less connection to the

¹¹ The blog post may be found at: <https://larrypasty.wordpress.com/2018/07/10/small-worlds-lifeworlds-and-everything-in-between/>

researcher, and so subsequently less desire to respond to the questions based on what it was believed was required in the responses, for as Jaeger and Burnett (2010, p.92) state, “.Facebook situates the individual as the arbiter of his or her own interests.”

The questionnaire has now been closed, and a link provided to it would be of no use to the reader¹². However, the questions and proffered responses may be found in Appendix B. It consisted of three sections: part one gathered general information about respondents; part two was aimed at discovering the console-related background of respondents; and part three was created to elicit the types of resources gamers use or avoid when it comes to researching the purchase of a console.

As has been stated, but is worth restating, the questions and wording of the questionnaire directly addressed the research questions, and it was intended that a more in-depth exploration of the themes arising from it, together with those with which the four theories or models identified as being significant to the understanding of gamers’ information behaviour would be facilitated in the follow-up interviews.

In total there were 81 respondents who completed the questionnaire, of whom 20 offered their e-mail addresses, indicating they would consider taking part in a follow-up interview.

4.4) Interviews.

20 questionnaire respondents provided their e-mail address, indicating they might be willing to participate in a follow-up interview, and they were contacted via e-mail on 13th August 2018: included were a participant information sheet and consent form, which was to be signed and returned should they wish to participate. These are included in Appendix C.

Five questionnaire participants responded to the e-mail with a signed consent form, which was then signed by the researcher and a copy issued to them for their records. The interviews were arranged and took place in the period 22nd August to 3rd September 2018.

Two options were provided to interviewees as to how the interview could be conducted: either over the telephone or via e-mail. Both were deemed to have advantages. Telephone interviews would have to be arranged around the participants’ schedules, although the advantage of being conducted in person would be that it would be a more natural process, and off-the-cuff questions themes would be able to probe emerging themes. Interviews via e-mail would have the benefit of being transcribed as they occurred, thus cutting down on post-interview preparation for the researcher; however, they would lack an immediacy, giving the participant more time to think and prepare an answer.

In the end, two interviews were conducted face-to-face, and three over the telephone. All the interviews were recorded on a phone app, with the participants’ permission. The transcripts of the interviews are included in Appendix D.

The interviews were semi-structured, and the full list of potential questions, together with their associated potential follow-up questions may be found in Appendix E. The semi-structured interview format allowed that each interviewee was asked the same set of

¹² However, in order to provide the reader with an assurance of its existence the link to it may be found [here](#).

introductory questions, yet significant themes that emerged from these could be followed as they arose.

Of the five interviewees, three were known to the researcher, which might possibly mean that a pre-existing rapport might influence the shape of the interviews, compared to those who were not known. However, such a rapport helped to enrich the interview process and allowed the interviewer to develop and hone the questions, thus enriching those interviews where the participant was unknown to the interviewer.

In the analysis of the interviews, the text will be examined, and any themes arising from them will be drawn out.

4.5) Research bias and limitations.

Possible bias and limitations in the methodology have been addressed in part in the description of the methods, and this will be restated here and expanded upon.

The questionnaire was conducted using a (snowballing) convenience sampling method. Care must be taken, therefore, when considering how the results might be generalised to the wider gaming community. However, steps were taken within the questionnaire to help indicate whether this might be the case. For instance, the first two questions were aimed at discovering the age and gender of participants. Whilst this may not be said to be entirely significant when comparing with the types of resources used, they do help to give a picture of how questionnaire participants in this research may be measured against the gaming population as a whole.

Statistics show, for example, that in the UK, in 2016, 41% of males and 32% of females play games at home or anywhere else (Do you ever play games at home or elsewhere on any device? n.d.), whilst in the US, also in 2016, the percentages of computer and video game users were 59% and 41% respectively (Distribution of computer and video gamers in the United States from 2006 to 2018, by gender, n.d.). It is acknowledged that these statistics do not form a specific picture of console gamers - rather, a general picture of gamers - however, it does help to provide an overview of the split between males and females in the gaming community, and how the split of respondents to the questionnaire may be indicative of this picture.

There were 81 subjects who completed the questionnaire, and 20 indicated they were willing to consider taking part in an interview. Of these 20 potential interviews, five were conducted: a 25% response rate. Whilst the number of interviews themselves places limitations on how the results may be generalised, they can offer an interesting insight into the information behaviour of gamers.

It has been noted that three of the interviewees (subjects 1, 2 and 5) were known to the interviewer, and that this may affect the validity of the findings. However, the pre-existing rapport helped hone and develop the interview structure, thus enriching the findings of interviews 3 and 4.

The questionnaire was trialled on three subjects and then circulated more widely. No problems were encountered in the trial; however, some feedback from participants indicated issues with the wording of some of the questions. The questionnaire was created to be simple and easy to complete in as little time as possible, so as to maximise the number of

subjects willing to complete it. Furthermore, the questions were directly related to the research questions.

4.6) Ethics.

This study has been approved by City University London, School Of Informatics, BSc, MSC, MA Projects Research Ethics Committee. The ethics checklist may be found in Appendix F. Questionnaire respondents who indicated they were willing to take part in an interview were e-mailed a participation information sheet, and a consent form to sign and return, which can be seen in Appendix C.

5) Results.

5.1) Introduction.

This chapter will describe and discuss the findings from the questionnaire and interviews, which will lead on to a discussion and analysis of them in the next chapter in consideration of the aim and research questions of this paper. Firstly, the questionnaire will be examined, and, secondly, the interviews will be summarised, and themes from them will be outlined and discussed.

5.2) The questionnaire.

Whilst the questionnaire has been closed, it may be found on Google Docs [here](#). In this subchapter, the results to it will be outlined and discussed. The list of questions posed and the responses may be seen in Appendix B.

The first part of the questionnaire was aimed at discovering the demographics of respondents. Whilst it is acknowledged that this data may not be a significant factor or useful in explaining the information behaviour of gamers, their purpose was to discover any potentially significant implications when discussing the data and considering how the findings might be generalised.

Age, gender, country of residence and occupation were discovered through these questions. Age was required in order to determine that each respondent was over the age of 18, thereby fulfilling the ethical requirements of this research. Country of residence was requested as a means of uncovering any problems that might be encountered when attempting to arrange follow-up interviews, for instance, time differences. Discovering the occupation of respondents would ensure that no-one who identified as a professional gamer would be included in the data.

Age: 25 respondents (30.8%) were aged 18-30, 41 respondents (50.6%) were aged 31-40, 12 respondents (14.8%) were aged 41-50, 2 respondents (2.5%) were aged 51-60, and 1 (1.2%) respondent was aged 61+.

Gender: 55 respondents (67.9%) were male, 26 respondents (32.1%) were female.

Country of residence: 66 respondents (81.5%) were based in the UK, 8 respondents (9.9%) were based in the USA, 3 respondents (3.7%) were based in France, and there was 1 respondent (1.2%) each from Canada, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

If we take gender and country statistics together, we may see that the gender split of gamers in this research is indicative of the gaming environment generally in the UK and USA - from whom the greatest number of responses was recorded here. In 2016, in the United States, 59% of gamers were male and 41% were female (Distribution of computer and video gamers in the United States from 2006 to 2018, by gender, n.d.), whilst in the UK, a survey revealed that in the years 2013 to 2017, gaming was more popular with males than females (Do you ever play games at home or elsewhere on any device? n.d.). Furthermore, the average of

the gamer has been reported as being 35 (Goldhill, 2013), and the largest number of respondents to this questionnaire fell into the 31-40 age bracket.

Occupation: 1 respondent declined to respond to the question; all other respondents provided a response. A wide range of professions were indicated, and whilst there was no one who identified as a professional gamer, 4 respondents (4.9%) had with a connection to the gaming industry. However, none of these questionnaire participants had a connection to a console manufacturer.

Therefore, rather than introducing some form of bias into the results, this offers to provide an interesting element of the work/nonwork information-seeking duality. Likewise, 10 respondents (12.3%) work in the library and information science domain in some capacity and in this offers the capacity to provide enriched discovery in the analysis.

The second part of the questionnaire was aimed at discovering if respondents had a particular affinity or association with any particular manufacturer of consoles, and if any noted affinity had had a potential to influence the decision-making process when a new console was purchased; that is, if the two most recent consoles had been from the same manufacturer or if a change had been made.

When the results of these questions are examined, 39 respondents (48.1%) owned multiple consoles of the current generation (PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch, Nintendo Wii U, Xbox One, or any hardware revisions of them), whilst 36 respondents (44.4%) owned either a single console, or a console and an updated hardware revision version of the same console.

6 respondents (7.4%) indicated they owned no consoles of the current generation. Of these, 1 (1.2%) indicated they were a PC gamer, although interestingly, they did own both the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 2, which suggests two things: firstly, that although a PC gamer, the boundary line between PC and console gaming was blurred and, secondly, that there was no particular preference for one manufacturer or other. On the other end of the spectrum, only 5 (6.2%) owned all the consoles from the current generation.

That there is, or may not be, no overriding preference for one type manufacturer of console is further reinforced when the consoles from previous generations are investigated. Of the 36 respondents who owned only one of the current generation, 22 of these were Sony, 8 Microsoft and 6 Nintendo. Only 10 of these 36 have indicated brand loyalty by only buying consoles from one manufacturer, which is only 12.3% of the sample overall. Furthermore, only 17.3% of respondents indicated that they would prioritise their information-seeking to the console that they currently owned.

This might serve to indicate a holistic, pan-console-manufacturer, form of information behaviour. However, 46 respondents provided details of which factors are important to them when purchasing a new console. 58.7% indicated that which consoles their friends are purchasing is taken into consideration, whilst overall 67.9% of the whole sample indicated that friends were either a good or excellent source of information. This shows a strong social connection to gaming, and also that the information-seeking may be of an informal nature, rather than using formal resources.

Investigating the data, it is clear that the traditional print resources - national press and gaming magazines - are the least valued or trusted resources of information. 28% of respondents indicated a distrust of gaming magazines, whilst 59.2% rated the national press as being never used or terrible, or poor, with regard to consoles.

However, it is clear the web as a whole is a highly utilised resource. Gaming websites (86.4%), and social media (75.3%) were rated satisfactory, good or excellent, although manufacturer websites (49.3%) were considerably less trusted. There is an even split concerning forums, which represent an informal resource, but have an anonymous aspect to it. 38.3% of respondents rated them as poor or terrible, or never used them, whilst 45.7% rated them satisfactory, good or excellent.

The games available on release was a stated reason for either purchasing a console from the same or different manufacturer in the last two consoles bought by respondents: 44.4% indicated this was a reason for either staying with a manufacturer or choosing a different one, which suggests that games titles form a significant part of both information search and behaviour.

Regarding information resources concerning the consoles, 38.3% of respondents indicated they have known and valued websites from which they would gather information, whilst only 1.2% would initiate a random browsing session. 43.2% stated that they would search over time rather than one session, and the fact that 59.3% stated explicitly that they would not preorder a next-generation console if it were released tomorrow suggests that the searching process is a patient one, performed over time - mediated searching - and that information is needed to satisfy a need. Indeed, two comments in particular - "I don't preorder consoles; I need more information about what features and games will be available," and, "I would need more information about their specifications, and what games are available," - serve to illustrate this point.

Where a specific rumour about the release of the eighth generation of consoles was investigated - the need to have an internet connection in order to play games on a console - 56.8% indicated that more information would be needed in order to make a decision, whilst 40.7% felt that because they had a good internet connection, this would not be a factor that influenced their decision.

It has been noted that, of the respondents, 10 worked in some capacity in the LIS domain, and 4 had a connection to the gaming industry. It is essential to investigate these statistics specifically, so that we may see if these responses differed significantly from the general trends: any "insider knowledge" as to the purposes of this research, either from a gaming or LIS perspective, must be acknowledged and addressed and, furthermore, will help to enrich the findings.

Of those in the LIS sector, 1 respondent did not indicate which types of resources were utilised in the information search. However, 90% stated that friends were good sources of information, whilst social media and gaming websites were also rated highly. This follows the trends already stated, that there is a strong reliance on informal sources of information, whilst the internet represents a significant means of searching for information. In addition, the national press was rated as poor by 80%, and was recorded as not being used by 1 respondent.

This shows that, rather than having some form of heightened information behaviour due to their profession, the information behaviour may be said to be representative of the gamer population as a whole.

None of those involved in the gaming industry indicated a particular affinity with one console manufacturer; rather, each respondent noted owning the consoles of two manufacturers in the current generation and, furthermore - and perhaps not surprisingly - games were noted as being important in the decision-making process and, therefore, a specific information need when purchasing a new console.

5.3) Interviews.

As has been stated in the methodology chapter, the purpose of the questionnaire was twofold: the primary aim was to directly address the research questions, yet it was also an effective method of gathering a pool of participants for the interviews, in which the focus would be on addressing the overarching aim of this paper: to consider four theories of information behaviour from a gaming perspective.

20 questionnaire respondents offered their e-mail address and, after being contacted, five responded and agreed to be interviewed. The transcripts for the interviews are available in Appendix D. In this subchapter they will be summarised, then the themes will be drawn out.

5.3.1) Interview 1.

- **Gaming background.**

Consoles owned: Nintendo Entertainment System, Super Nintendo Entertainment System, Nintendo 64, Nintendo Wii, Sony PlayStation 2.

Handheld consoles owned¹³: Nintendo DS.

Interviewee 1 was a female student who fell in the 31-40 age category. She did not strongly identify as belonging to a particular type of gamer, although the word “obsessive” was mentioned. From their playing habits, which involved, “..playing for hours on end [...] then I can go for days,” she may be described - without any negative connotations - a “binger”. As a binger, it was problematic to put a figure on the number of hours played on consoles per week. In addition to console gaming, a strong affinity with mobile games was noted.

Although she did not play games on consoles currently, as they were in storage, there was a strong affinity with the Nintendo-manufactured consoles and, games-wise, platformers like the Mario games. No strong connection was noted with other manufacturers, part of the reason being the difference in types of controller. She was also a keen player of games on mobile phones.

If a game was released on other manufacturers’ consoles, cost was a key factor in the reason not to investigate purchasing another console - “Money rules everything.” However, it is noted that new Nintendo consoles might not warrant such considerations due to the factor of, “..if it's something like Nintendo, [...] I know there's going to be other games I want to play,” thus reinforcing the strong affinity to Nintendo, and indicating a willingness to buy a console based on the brand. Other consoles may be ignored, or not investigated, in order to, “..stay oblivious...”.

She did not play console games online, although she would use the internet to track down an emulator of games from her childhood. The strong connection with Nintendo consoles was echoed in her desire to purchase a replacement for her Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) console, although an unofficial model was desired.

¹³ Handheld consoles, where mentioned by an interviewee, are included here, yet they will not form part of the discussion as they do not fall within the scope of research of this paper.

- **Information behaviour.**

There were no specifically trusted “go to” websites that were utilised in the search process. A Google web search initiated the procedure. Gaming websites and reviews were targeted as a useful resource, although social media outlets like Reddit and Tumblr were not used.

However, an in-depth information-seeking process was reported. Although the Google search process might involve stumbling into information, from this a detailed search was conducted which involved trying to, “..to reach all corners of the internet.”

Interestingly, concerning the reviews, there would be further research of those. There was a review of the reviews, an investigation into what types of games those reviewers had previously reviewed and if she agreed with those, in order to see if they could be trusted: names from websites would be entered into Google

Information searches would be conducted as and when they are needed, although the search for a new, replica, NES had been conducted for around ten years. It was reported that the reviews for these, “..are never that great,” and so this indicates a usage and action, or perhaps rather inaction, of the information within those reviews. However, a definite end to the searching process was indicated: it was stated that it will end when a suitable console is found and purchased.

As to the types of resources used, text-based articles were preferred over a video format. Text-based resources, it was noted, were grouped together, and so videos were forgotten about.

If this is taken together with reaching all corners of the internet, it might also suggest an active avoidance of video resources.

There would be no “monitoring” of the situation through means as newsletters, and an avoidance of information was indicated by the statement, “If I don't know about it, I'm not missing out.”

5.3.2) Interview 2.

- **Gaming background.**

Consoles owned: Microsoft Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, Sony PlayStation 3, Sony PlayStation 4.

Interviewee 2 was a female subtitler (that is, one who provides access to television programmes for the deaf and hard-of-hearing), who fell in the 31-40 age category. The number of hours played on a console per week depended on what games were available or being played. As estimate was given at 15 hours per week, but it was stated that this could vary.

She identified as a hardcore gamer, whose leisure time is taken up quite a lot with related gaming behaviour, such as watching other gamers play on YouTube. She plays games online, although does not get involved in lobby or in-game chat because it can be, “toxic and horrible”.

No particular affinity was noted with one particular of console manufacturer over the other. Indeed, putting ownership of consoles within a timeline, a PlayStation 2 was followed by an Xbox 360, which in turn was followed by a PlayStation 3; however, it is noted that this last console was succeeded by the PlayStation 4.

- **Information behaviour.**

Interviewee 2's leisure time involved, "...looking at game related stuff...", and this might involve watching clips of gamers on YouTube, and keeping up-to-date by following gaming conferences like the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3). She noted that she follows gaming-type people, such as journalists and enthusiasts on social media.

A change in the types of resources used was discovered over time. At the time where the switch was made from Microsoft (Xbox 360) to Sony (PlayStation 3), it was pre-social media, or very early days in Twitter, and so magazines like Inside Xbox were used to keep abreast of the gaming world, although there was recognition that this particular magazine would not be offering unbiased information. Writers were discovered in other, more independent, magazines, whose style and types of opinions appealed to the interviewee, and these were then followed onto online resources.

Regarding online resources, it was noted that from 2000 to early 2010s, a lot of websites with a corporate feel to them popped up, and these were not viewed as trustworthy. Similarly, games news in the national press were regarded as, "...repurposed press releases." However, these were not actively avoided as resources; rather, the information within them was treated with suspicion.

There was discussion around the controversy surrounding the release of the eighth-generation of consoles. The resources that she trusted tended to be pro-PlayStation, and this led to a general acceptance of their views concerning the release. However, there was a degree of fact-checking: opinions would be listened to, for instance, about what happened at E3, and then clips would be watched to confirm. This would more likely be viewed as a method of confirmation, because, "...I would probably be coloured by their opinion first."

When looking to purchase a new console, it was noted that it was a matter of, "...keeping on top of the general discussion...", which fits with the idea that her leisure time involve, at least in part, with following the aforementioned "game related stuff".

If a new generation of consoles were released tomorrow, the people she follows on Twitter would be a valuable starting point in the informational process. Reddit was described as a resource that would be looked at, but not trusted, thus indicating that non-trusted information might not necessarily be avoided. Google, again, was mentioned as being key to the information-seeking process.

She is not an early adopter of consoles, and so the information-seeking process would take place over a number of weeks; again, the developing situation being monitored. This might result in a console not being purchased, as much as a console being purchased, depending on the information discovered from trusted sources; however, once the decision had been made to buy a console, there was a definite ending to the informational process, in that one or another consoles was purchased.

Quite a wide range of diverse resources were used by interviewee 2: text-based, whether magazines or websites; video-based, for example YouTube; and also audio, for instance

podcasts. In general, these resources were “goto”, trusted resources; however, it was also noted that on occasion, whilst browsing the internet for non-gaming specific information, “..something for gaming pops up...” and that, “...I will always go and look at it to see what they think,” which indicates an interesting aspect of serendipity whilst searching on the web.

5.3.3) Interview 3.

- **Gaming background.**

Consoles owned: Microsoft XBox One S, Nintendo Switch, Sony PlayStation 4 Pro.

Handheld consoles owned: Nintendo 3DS, PlayStation Vita.

Interviewee 3 was a male games journalist, who fell in the 31-40 age bracket. He writes about games for magazines and websites. He owned all of the current generation of consoles, in the case of Sony and Microsoft the hardware revisions, or updated versions, of them. There was some question about which held the status of “main” console: the Switch was the one that had been played the most recently, although it would be the PlayStation 4 for triple-A games¹⁴. Because he writes about games for websites and magazines, he plays “a lot” on consoles: at least a few hours a day, probably more. He identifies as an “avid”, “knowledgeable” and “core” gamer, presumably at least in part due to his profession.

The types of games enjoyed by interviewee 3 were JRPGs - role-playing games with a Japanese feel to them - action games and RPGs. He reported not playing online often, because playing socially isn’t a priority.

- **Information behaviour.**

Interviewee 3 follows the games press and specialist press: very much an example of monitoring the situation, keeping up-to-date with official sources took. There was a distinction between these resources and more informal ones: for instance, forums such as those on Reddit were avoided because, “It’s just a big rabbit hole of opinions.” Facebook is not a resource that is utilised; however, Twitter represents a significant source of information. Games outlets are followed on Twitter and so, “..the usual latest news will be on my timeline,”; however, if there is a gap in knowledge, then Google will be used to gather more information.

This monitoring the situation meant that, if a new generation of consoles were to be released tomorrow, an understanding of the current situation would be present and aid the decision of which console might be the most suitable to purchase.

¹⁴ Triple A games are those typically developed by a large studio, and which have a large budget.

5.3.4) Interview 4.

- **Gaming background.**

Consoles owned: Sony PlayStation 4, Nintendo WiiU.

Interviewee 4 was a male laboratory technician who fell in the 31-40 age category. His long gaming history was explored, beginning with a Spectrum computer, and following through to owning, at some point, every generation of the PlayStation console, and the PlayStation 4 was identified as being the “main” console. It was difficult to place a figure on the number of hours played per week on a console, due to other commitments, but on average it was said to be around five hours.

No type of gamer was discussed, although a strong social aspect to gaming was noted. He played online in the PC game Guild Wars with a group of friends. In the original Guild Wars, text chat was possible, but a TeamSpeak server was rented so that voice chat was possible.

When asked if chat was focused on the game, or other things as well, it was stated that it was of a social nature. It was also mentioned that you could be talking to a wide range of people from a variety of countries: in Denmark, or up and down the country in England, and South Africans as well. Friends were made, to the point of even meeting up in the “meatspace” (Jaeger and Burnett, 2010, p.96); that is, in the real world.

However, it was mentioned that one thing that is missed in modern gaming is the move away from local co-op play to online play; that is, it is very often no longer to play with friends in the same room using a split-screen method on the TV.

- **Information behaviour.**

The preference for Sony consoles was restated when asked about the process that would be initiated if a new generation of consoles were to be released imminently, although a holistic element was noted in that there was a tendency to look into what other consoles were doing.

Online searches were used to gather information: the gaming websites GameSpot and IGN were specifically mentioned as resources, but Google web search was also utilised to gather information. Concerning GameSpot and IGN, their history and credibility was noted, compared to sites such as YouTube or forums on Reddit.

When using resources like YouTube the problem of “random people”, who “you don’t know where they’re coming from”, was mentioned as reason for being “wary” of them. A problem with forums as resources was noted because of their tendency to be “toxic in its environment”. This indicates a measure of differentiating in types of resources.

Other social media platforms - Facebook and Twitter - were mentioned as a resource, although concerning Twitter, it was mostly board game companies that were followed on Twitter. However, some video game companies were followed as well, indicating, at least to some extent, an aspect of monitoring in his information behaviour.

Friends were also noted as a possible source of information on Twitter, and if something discovered was sufficiently interesting, sometimes this might be shared, although it was stated that if something was posted, then the chances were that others would also be aware of it, so there was no need to share.

Whilst magazines had been used as a resource in the past, this had been replaced with the internet. Whilst magazines in the past had been a useful way to obtain demos of games, companies nowadays put demos out on the internet.

When asked if whilst searching on the web any unexpected information had ever been uncovered, or encountered, the response was given, "I thought that's how the web works in general!" The internet, it was noted, is a means to finding something that you didn't know you were looking for, certainly when browsing for potentially interesting games to play.

5.3.5) Interview 5.

- **Gaming background.**

Consoles owned: Nintendo Entertainment System, Super Nintendo Entertainment System, Super Famicom, Nintendo 64, Nintendo GameCube, Nintendo Wii, Sega Master System, Sega Mega Drive, Sega Saturn, Sega Dreamcast. Sony PlayStation 1, Sony PlayStation 2, Sony PlayStation 3, PlayStation TV. NEC PC Engine, NEC PC FX, Microsoft Xbox, Microsoft Xbox 360.

Handheld consoles owned: Nintendo Game Boy, Nintendo Game Boy Advance, PlayStation Portable, PlayStation Vita.

Interviewee 5 was a male with the stated occupation of "sky pirate", who fell into the 31-40 age category. He identified as a "gaming connoisseur". Whilst it is noted that he was "predominantly" a PC gamer, the extensive list of consoles owned indicates a strong association with console gaming. Whilst no consoles of the current generation were owned, access to the streaming service PlayStation Now meant that there was access to current console games, only not with a physical console. The number of hours consoles were played per week varied, but was usually about one or two hours per day.

It was also stated that, of the list of consoles owned, there was no "main" console, although a slight preference for the PlayStation 3 indicated over the Xbox 360, for the reason that it was "somewhat superior" in terms of stability of games and frame rates when it came to gameplay. However, when asked if they had a particular affinity for one manufacturer over another, it was explicitly stated, "None at all."

- **Information behaviour.**

Interestingly, when asked to describe the process he would go through when choosing a new-generation console, rather than focusing on the console itself, interviewee 5 stated that the informational process would centre on the games themselves. The launch line-up of games and future releases took precedence over the hardware specifications of consoles. Furthermore, the number of developers on board with the console, and whether the

companies developing games are reputable were noted as facets that would be investigated before committing to a purchase.

Google web search was identified as a key method of searching for information, and also Reddit, because, "They're usually quite good at compiling information, well, the users are." Familiar forums are also noted as a resource that would be used; however, forums that were not usually visited would not be actively sought out. Forums with a "healthy community" were valued, and the commentators on those forums were "generally" trusted. No preference of poster - new or otherwise - was noted, "...unless they say something incredibly stupid."

Text-based resources generally formed the object of the information search, although it was noted that YouTube may be helpful in researching games and gameplay, more so for retro games than new titles. That games are the topic of the search serves to reinforce the idea that games rather than consoles, are the most important factor.

Gaming-related channels were followed, indicating at least some aspect of monitoring, although Twitter and Facebook, although the bitesize aspect of Twitter was mentioned negatively: "... there's only so much you can say in a tweet." Information would be sought directly from the web.

Again, the gaming aspect was reiterated when asked about choosing a new-generation console, and it was mentioned that a purchase might be an impulse buy, based on a game. Hacking the console was also mentioned as a deciding factor. Specific sites, for instance Wololo.net, were mentioned as a resource used in the hacking aspect.

5.3.6) Discussion and themes.

It is interesting to note that the five interviewees may be placed into four categories of type of gamer: binger (1); hardcore or core (2 and 3); social (4); and connoisseur (5). Of these, two were assigned by the interviewer (binger and social), yet based on the content of the interview, these allocations are justified.

That they represent different types of gamer has two important implications: given the number of interviews, it may not be possible to generalise these findings to "gamers" as a whole, complete, unit; however, it does serve to illustrate that a categorisation of gamer type may be more significant than drawing boundary lines between the types of consoles that are owned. In addition, the findings of these interviews suggest that it is or may be, possible to distinguish a gamer's information behaviour style based on their gamer type.

The "binger", who might play for days, then not play for months, engaged in the same form of information seeking; that is, engage in a dedicated and extensive search for information on a desired console. An identification of the information need was identified by the breaking of a console, and a very specific targeted search was initiated for a very specific type of console: a replacement. The search involved an extensive and in-depth exploration of the internet using Google, in which every corner of the internet was investigated, may be equated with an extensive and highly focused playing of games.

The core gamers, for whom playing on consoles represented in the first part a serious form of leisure and in the second a means of income, may be said to be "on top of the situation", as it were; that is, a pre-existing knowledge base of gaming meant that favoured resources were being monitored, rather than identifying a specific information need and seeking a solution to it.

The social gamer, for whom the social side of gaming represented an important aspect of gameplay, noted a wariness of websites such as YouTube and the “random people” who post on it, whilst social media sites such as Twitter or Facebook, self-curated informational spaces, were noted as a useful resource.

The information behaviour of the “games connoisseur”, rather than focusing on consoles, was very much directed to seeking and searching for information about games titles. Consoles, it was noted, might be an “impulse decision based on the game”, rather than the subject of an information need.

A wide range of the types of resources were reported across the five interviews, yet web search - specifically Google - universally represented a significant searching method. Traditional print-based resources such as magazines, were not utilised, although they had been in the past. Social media, too, formed a significant information resource, although it represented a more passive form of search rather than active. Initially, of course, there may be some type of active pursuit of people or companies to follow on Twitter, yet subsequently the benefits of that initial outlay of effort are reaped passively, allowing the information to flow to the individual as opposed to an active form of seeking. This facilitates a passive monitoring.

Sites such as Reddit and internet forums, with a large user input that is not regulated by the user in the same way as sites like Facebook and Twitter - that is, not self-curated; there is no active control of who is allowed to present information, be it fact or opinion - are not a resource that is generally valued.

Text-based resources are a valuable resource when investigating consoles, whilst those of a video-based medium, for instance YouTube, tend not to be utilised. However, both the hardcore gamer (interview 1) and games connoisseur (interview 4) noted them as a means of discovering about games.

This would appear to go against the findings of an investigation of web and online search as a means of discovering about the pre-release rumours of the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One, which concluded that YouTube “performed well” in resolving an anomalous state of knowledge concerning such rumours (Newton, 2018). However, it is noted in the same report that images were not a useful resource, and in the interviews, images - either on Google Images or Bing Images - were not mentioned.

Two of the gamers interviewed, the binger and the games connoisseur, did not own a console from the current generation, although the connoisseur had access to the games through a streaming service. However, significantly, without exception all interviewees owned two or more consoles, and from multiple manufacturers.

The games binger reported a particular affinity with Nintendo consoles, which may be attributed to the style of games preferred, yet even in this case consoles were owned which were released by Nintendo and Sony. This indicates that rather than gaming being split into multiple factions, as it were, together with an attitude towards manufacturers mirroring that which might be reported by PC gamers regarding consoles, “gaming” as a whole entity represents a rich and diverse world which is focused on the gaming aspect rather than individual manufacturers.

Indeed, the games connoisseur, who identified as being first and foremost a PC gamer, owned by far the greatest number of consoles, suggesting that even the PC-console world divide shares a boundary that is willingly crossed. Here, again, the focus on games and gameplay facilitates a crossing of that boundary.

5.4) Summary.

In this chapter, the responses to the questionnaire have been analysed, and they will be discussed in relation to the aim and research questions of this paper in the next chapter. Furthermore, the interviews were summarised, and key themes were drawn out. In the next chapter these themes will be discussed in relation to the general aim of this paper: that is, how the four named theories of information behaviour may help to draw a picture of gamers' information behaviour in the purchase of a new console.

6) Discussion and analysis.

6.1) Introduction.

In this chapter, the findings of this paper will be discussed in terms of both the general aim of this research paper, and the specific research questions stated in Chapter 2: Context, scope, aims, objectives and research questions. This will occur in two distinct parts, for whilst the questionnaire had the task of directly addressing the research questions, the interviews were designed to help develop an understanding of the wider picture of the information behaviour of console gamers when it comes to the purchasing of a new console. However, that is not to suggest that either the questionnaire results may not help in enriching the interview findings, or, conversely, that the interviews are exclusively useful to the aim of this paper. Therefore, both will be called upon where necessary in order to answer either part.

6.2) Research questions.

There are six research questions at the heart of this paper, and each will be stated and examined with regard to the findings of the questionnaire and interviews.

6.2.1) How is information sought? Is it a passive or active form of information behaviour?

Social media was noted as predominantly being viewed as a valued source of information, which represents a passive form of information-seeking. It is suggested that though there may be some active aspect of initially creating a self-curated informational space - that is, following friends or others on Facebook or Twitter - after the initial outlay of effort, information is drip-fed to the user by means of those being followed posting on a platform. In this sense, too, surreptitious information encountering is likely to be heightened.

However, if a rumour about a new-generation console were discovered, this would spark a specific information need, and an active form of information-seeking would be utilised in discovering more about the implications of that rumour. Interestingly, no respondents indicated that they would set up searches for information which would alert them to new information as it arises, suggesting that active web searching is viewed as being more important than passive web searching in the same way as social media is utilised.

6.2.2) What are the sources, or documents, utilised and what are the reasons?

The internet was identified as a key information resource of gamers in this study. The traditional print medium was not noted for either its usefulness in resolving the specific information need of researching consoles. Indeed, a specific criticism of the national press

was noted in that games news in it was regarded as being little more than “repurposed press releases” by manufacturers.

Similarly, manufacturer websites were found to be regarded as poor sources of information. However, it is interesting to note that interviewee 2 stated that as the internet became more predominant over print, the authors valued in independent magazines - that is, free from the influence of manufacturers - were followed onto the internet.

A wide range of the types of sources were utilised by the gamers in this investigation: text and video mediums were identified in the interviews, although universally images were not mentioned at all. Interestingly, there is a distinction in what these types are used for. Whilst textual sources are used for information about the consoles, videos are far more likely to be used to research games and gameplay. Audio, too, in the form of podcasts were identified as being utilised, although only by one interviewee.

6.2.3) Are any resources rejected or avoided within an informational search?

It has been stated that traditional print sources are generally noted as not being useful sources of information and, indeed, they were more often described as being “terrible”, “poor” or “satisfactory” as resources, and were more likely to be avoided than rated as “good” or “excellent. Forums, too, were likely to be avoided. They were described in the interviews as being either “toxic in its environment” and “a big rabbit hole of opinions”.

A range of resources were reported as being “never used”, although it is interesting to note that those resources mentioned the least in this category - friends, social media and gaming websites - rated the highest in those deemed to be “good” or “excellent. Similarly, those resources that were stated to be never used by the highest number of respondents - gaming magazines, national press and manufacturer websites - were rated “good” or “excellent” the least.

6.2.4) Are the resources used formal, such as official websites or magazines, or informal, like friends or forums?

Friends, social media and gaming websites were reported as being the most trustworthy information resources, which indicates an interesting dichotomy. Clearly, informal sources are valued most highly, yet gaming websites, essentially more formal sources in terms of the research, presumably, that goes into a gaming article, are also considered an important resource. However, clearly there is a distinction between manufacturer websites and gaming websites. We may observe that the gaming websites may be viewed as being informal, or perhaps more independent - as noted by interviewee 2 - than wholly formal manufacturer websites.

6.2.5) Are the sources' relevance based on their formal or informal nature?

Following on from this, it is clear that there is at least some form of judgment of a source's relevance to the gamer based on its formal or informal nature. Friends have been identified as a particularly trusted source of information, whilst manufacturer websites are more likely to either not be used, or rated as "terrible", "poor" or "satisfactory" as opposed to being "good" or "excellent".

It is interesting to consider, how social media might either be considered a formal or informal resource. A post on a timeline, for instance Twitter, might, as interviewee 5 noted, contain links. These might either be a link to a formal or informal source. Examples of both of these might be a link to the Microsoft website, or a link to a blog post by a gamer who is viewed as "knowing about these things" and, as such, be more likely to contain opinion than fact.

Interviewee 2 noted that they would fact-check where it was deemed necessary, but that this might only serve to "confirm" what had been read on a website or heard in a podcast.

With this in mind, an investigation into how social media forms part of the information behaviour of gamers might be a worthy focus of study in itself. It may be that there might be a distinction drawn around the lines of the nonwork versus work information-seeking. For example, the games journalist avoided forums as being noteworthy for their statements of opinion, whilst on Twitter, gaming outlets, more formal resources, were monitored.

6.2.6) Is the information search biased in any way? That is, does owning, say, an Xbox 360 mean that priority is given to seeking out information about the Xbox One console, or is it a holistic process?

It was discovered that, predominantly, there was no particular affinity with one console manufacturer over another; rather, gamers might be said to identify as just that, "gamers", as opposed to, for instance, "Sony gamers", or "Microsoft gamers". Furthermore, those who identified as being primarily PC gamers owned consoles, and in the case of interviewee 5, who identified as being a games connoisseur, an extensive number of consoles from a wide range of manufacturers were owned.

What may be said to be more likely, however, is that information behaviour is biased towards the games, rather than console manufacturers. Games line-ups and exclusive titles were found to be a significant point of interest of gamers, and this may be said to include backwards compatibility of new consoles. This may be linked together with the theme that video resources are more likely to be used when researching games and gameplay.

6.3) Research aim.

The overarching aim of this paper was to investigate how four theories of information behaviour might serve to provide a picture of the information behaviour of console gamers when a new console is sought. Therefore, in this section, each theory will be stated and then discussed in terms of the findings of the research.

6.3.1) Ellis' Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour.

Ellis model consists of six characteristics of information behaviour: starting, chaining, browsing, differentiating, monitoring and extracting. Two further characteristics were identified in a further study: verifying and ending. It is noted that this model is pre-web, yet the six initial characteristics have been compared to web search (Choo CW, Detlor B, Turnbull D, 2000):

- 1) Starting - begin surfing the web.
- 2) Chaining - clicking on and following links.
- 3) Browsing - reading web pages.
- 4) Differentiating - bookmarking pages of interest.
- 5) Monitoring - subscribing to newsletters.
- 6) Extracting - examining a website for all pertinent material.

However, it was noted that this view of differentiating - bookmarking - is perhaps rather more an example of the monitoring characteristic.

The research discovered that there are definite instances of at least some of these characteristics within the information behaviour of console gamers, and it may be the case that the type of gamer is indicative in which characteristics are more predominantly exhibited.

The "binger" type of gamer noted that browsing played a key part in the initial search for information on new consoles and, furthermore, that verifying any information found was an important aspect of information behaviour.

For the core gamers, with a more extensive knowledge base of the current state of gaming, monitoring is more likely to form the greater part of information behaviour, but this has been preceded by an active form of differentiating. For instance, again, a games journalist differentiates between informal resources - forums - and formal sources - gaming outlets on Twitter. Furthermore, the hardcore gamer exhibited a form of chaining, by following up on the information gleaned from their trusted resources, although, interestingly, this was indicative of verifying.

Both the social gamer and the games connoisseur indicated that browsing formed a key part of their information behaviour and that there was at least some aspect of differentiating between the types of resources. The social gamer relied on trusted web pages such as GameSpot and IGN, and generally distrusted sites like YouTube. But for the games connoisseur, whose information need focused on the games and gameplay rather than the consoles, resources in the video medium might be a more significant resource in resolving the need.

6.3.2) Erdelez's Information Encountering.

Information encountering is a passive form of information behaviour which has been defined as, "...a memorable experience of an unexpected discovery of useful or interesting information" Erdelez (1999, p.25). Furthermore, given that the internet is identified as a

“conducive information-encountering environment”, (ibid, p.27) and that the internet has been identified as a significant informational resource, it may be concluded that information encountering is a critical idea when gamers look to discover information when investigating a new console to purchase. Indeed, the comment that, “I thought that’s how the web works in general!” when interviewee 3 was asked if they had ever encountered unexpected information through web browsing.

Interestingly, core gamers, with a significant reliance on monitoring information on social platforms such as Twitter, may be considered super-encounterers, in that although such platforms are self-curated informational environments, the method of how this information is encountered, on a timeline of those followed, may lead to this information not being shared not through a fear of being “ridiculed” (ibid, p.26), but rather it would mean information were being re-shared with those who already have access to it.

6.3.3) Fisher’s Information Grounds.

An information ground is defined as a temporary setting in which people gather for one reason, yet this situation provides the context which encourages the “serendipitous sharing of information” (What are information grounds?, n.d.)

One significant way in which this might be applied to the world of gaming is that of online gameplay, during which players are able to chat to each other in pre-game lobbies, or in-game itself. Again, however, the type of gamer may be a critical factor in whether this theory of information behaviour that may be applied to gaming. The hardcore gamer avoided in-game chat and described it as being “toxic and horrible” because online games were not played with a group of friends; rather, a randomly assigned group of players.

For the social gamer, however, where online games were played with online friends, social chit-chat not associated with gameplay was experienced, which could involve discussion of any new generation of consoles and, furthermore, depending on the location of the server on which the gameplay was facilitated, players from the country of residence or worldwide might be engaged with.

Seven propositions are central to the idea of information grounds:

- Proposition 1: Information grounds can occur anywhere, in any type of temporal setting and are predicated on the presence of individuals.
- Proposition 2: People gather at information grounds for a primary, instrumental purpose other than information sharing.
- Proposition 3: Information grounds are attended by different social types, most if not all of whom play expected and important, albeit different roles in information flow.
- Proposition 4: Social interaction is a primary activity at information grounds such that information flow is a byproduct.
- Proposition 5: People engage in formal and informal information sharing, and information flow occurs in many directions.
- Proposition 6: People use information obtained at information grounds in alternative ways, and benefit along physical, social, affective, and cognitive dimensions.

- Proposition 7: Many subcontexts exist within an information ground and are based on people's perspectives and physical factors; together these subcontexts form a grand context.

Certainly "online gaming" may qualify as a virtual information ground when propositions 1, 2 and 3 are considered. However, given that only one of the interviewees stated that they engaged in online gameplay and online chat, it remains to be seen, firstly, the types of interaction that occur in such an information ground - be they of an informational nature or merely social chatter - and, secondly, how any information gathered in this virtual environment. It is believed that this is, again, worthy of a dedicated study in itself, in particular, how this might be applied to information behaviour.

6.3.4) Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds.

The theory of Information Worlds is a social theory of normative behaviour, in which information is assigned a value, high or low, depending on the small world in which an individual lives and works. A critical finding of this paper is that, rather than a distinction along the lines of "manufacturer-based console gamer", "console gaming" is a complete small world.

A holistic form of information behaviour is exhibited by console gamers based on the concept of consoles themselves rather than a particular brand of them. That is, gaming - which might even be expanded to include PC gamers - is a composite world with porous informational boundaries across manufacturer distinctions. When looking to purchase a new console, whilst the types of resources themselves might vary amongst gamers, it is certain that the content of those resources is not demarcated along manufacturer lines: that is, owning one type of console is not a factor that affects information-seeking behaviour when investigating which new console might best suit their needs.

The internet, which may be seen as both a public sphere and a colonised space, is a valuable resource for gamers in this specific subset of information behaviour; however, colonisation of this space by corporations is not, or may not be, tolerated by the inhabitants of the composite world of gaming. The rejection of EA's attempt to justify packeting part of a game's content, on Reddit, behind a paywall - noted in the Console Gaming chapter - is a prime example of this.

7) Conclusion.

This research paper has investigated the information behaviour of console gamers when a new console purchase is being considered. A questionnaire was designed to address the research questions, whilst the interview focused on developing a richer understanding of how four theories of information behaviour may help to understand the behaviour exhibited by gamers in this task.

It has been discovered that there is no definitive association of gamer to a particular manufacturer of console and, furthermore, that in the main, a holistic form of information-seeking is displayed: information is sought about gaming consoles in general when a new generation is released, although the games titles accompanying a release may represent a significantly more important information need rather than the consoles themselves.

The internet is a key resource for information searching, and there is evidence of information use and non-use or avoidance. With this in mind, each facet of Wilson's (2000, p.49) broad definition of information behaviour (seeking, searching and use) is accepted.

The findings of this study have indicated that gamers' information behaviour may be dictated by their categorisation of type of gamer. Whilst it was found that whilst gamers both share and differ in their information behaviour characteristics in terms of their usage of the different types of resources, both formal and informal, certain types of characteristics may be tied to certain types of gamer.

Furthermore, the four theories of information behaviour identified as being potentially significant in explaining the reasons for the seeking, searching and use of information when a console purchase is being considered - Ellis' Model of Information-Seeking Behaviour, Erdelez's Information Encountering, Fisher's Information Grounds and Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds - may have considerable significance for different categorisations of gamer. Each of the four theories might well deserve a dedicated study.

It is acknowledged that a small-scale study such as this, with a limited timescale, may not be discriminating in either the number or gamer type of respondents who either complete a questionnaire or allow themselves to be interviewed. Therefore, it is suggested that further research into the information behaviour of console gamers when looking to purchase a new console - a hitherto under-researched subset of information behaviour - may reap significant rewards by seeking out subjects based on their self-described gamer type and comparing their information-seeking, searching and use.

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9) Appendix A: tables.

Table 1.1: summary of generations and consoles¹⁵

Generation	Known as	Dates	Examples of consoles
First		1972-1980	Magnavox Odyssey Atari Pong Coleco Telstar Nintendo Color TV Game
Second	Early 8-bit era/Golden Age of Video Games	1976-1992	Fairchild Channel F Atari 2600 Magnavox Odyssey 2 Intellivision Atari 5200 Vectrex Emerson Arcadia 2001 ColecoVision Bally Astrocade
Third	8-bit era	1983-2003	SG-1000 Nintendo Entertainment System Sega Mark III/Master System Atari 7800
Fourth	16-bit era	1987-2004	PC-Engine/TurboGrafx-16 Mega Drive/Sega Genesis Super Famicom/ Super Nintendo Entertainment System Neo Geo AES Commodore CDTV CD-i, Pioneer LaserActive Neo Geo CD
Fifth	32-bit era/64bit era/3D era	1993-2005	3DO Interactive Multiplayer Atari Jaguar Sega Saturn PlayStation Nintendo 64 NEC PC-FX Apple Bandai Pippin Casio Loopy
Sixth	128-bit era	1998-2013	Dreamcast PlayStation 2 GameCube Xbox
Seventh		2005-2017	Xbox 360 PlayStation 3 Nintendo Wii
Eighth		2012-present	Wii U PlayStation 4 Xbox One Nintendo Switch

¹⁵ Compiled using data from [Wikipedia](#) and [Rich Graphics](#)

Table 1.2: European release dates of fifth-, sixth-, seventh- and eighth-generation Microsoft, Nintendo and Sony consoles.

Manufacturer	Console	Generation	Release date (Europe)	Years since previous console
Sony	PlayStation	Fifth	1995	N/A
	PlayStation 2	Sixth	2000	Five
	PlayStation 3	Seventh	2007	Seven
	PlayStation 4	Eighth	2013	Six
Microsoft	Xbox	Sixth	2002	N/A
	Xbox 360	Seventh	2005	Three
	Xbox One	Eighth	2013/2014	Eight
Nintendo	Nintendo 64	Fifth	1997	N/A
	GameCube	Sixth	2002	Five
	Wii	Seventh	2006	Four
	Wii U	Eighth	2012	Six
	Switch	Eighth	2017	Five

10) Appendix B: survey form.

A survey for console gamers.

Dear reader.

I am a postgraduate student, studying for an MSc in Information Science at City, University of London. As part of this, I am writing a dissertation which is looking at the information behaviour of users of home console systems for gaming purposes.

Further details may be found on my blog:

<https://larrypasty.wordpress.com/2018/07/10/small-worlds-lifeworlds-and-everything-in-between/>

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me: [*e-mail address removed*].

I have created a survey for those who wish to take part in it, and the information collected from it will be used for my dissertation. It should take no longer than ten minutes to complete.

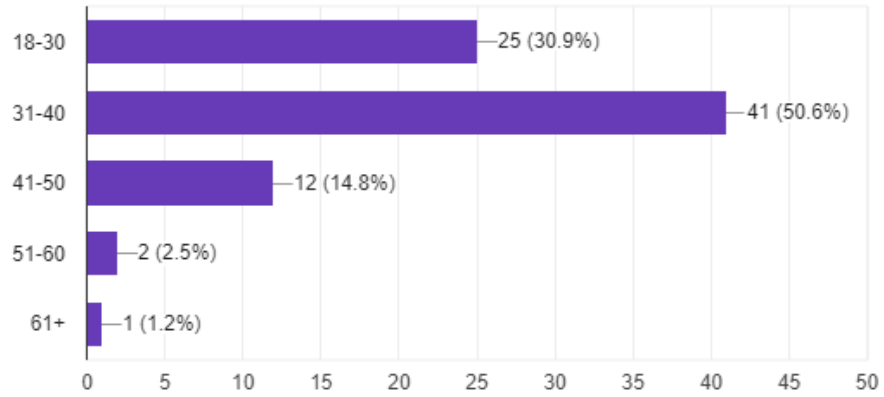
All responses submitted will be treated as confidential.

Thanks very much for your time.
Ed Newton.

Results:

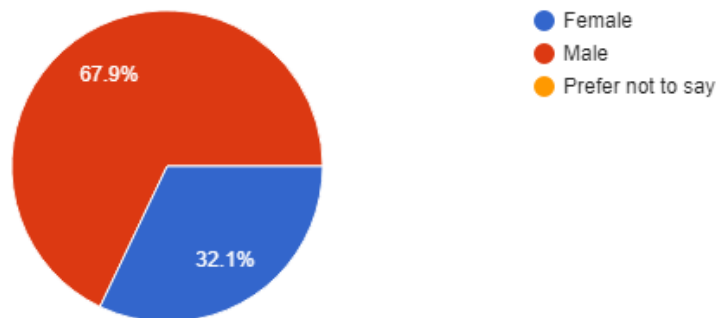
1) In which age category are you?

81 responses



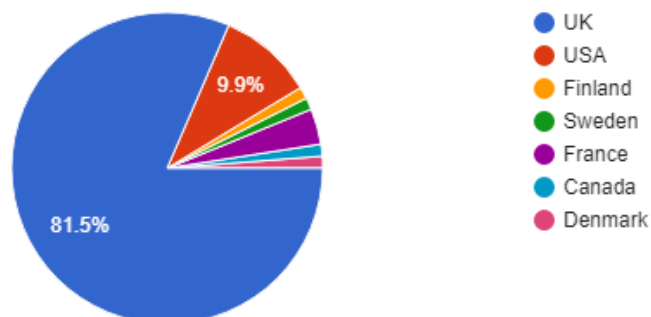
2) What is your gender?

81 responses



3) In which country do you live?

81 responses



4) What is your occupation?

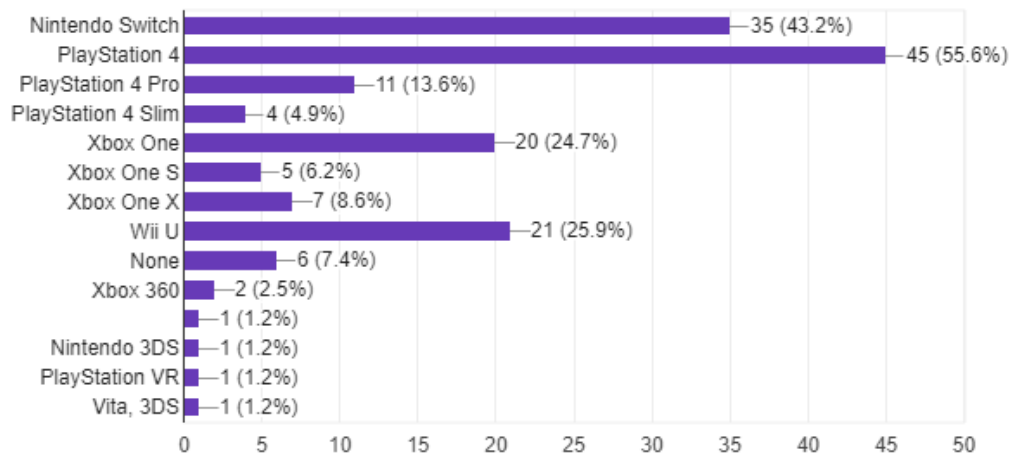
80 responses

Student (4)
Manager (3)
Subtitler (2)
Library worker (2)
Artist (2)
Games User Researcher (2)
Librarian (2)
Sky Pirate
Financial technology
Library Assistant
TV producer
Library Assistant
Knowledge Analyst
Bank Staff
IT Infrastructure
University Research Admin
Information assistant
Laboratory technician
Subject Librarian
Teaching Assistant
Information Assistant
TV Producer
Transport Engineer
Academic
HR Systems/ Analytics Manager
Project Manager
Bookseller
Driver
Scenes of Crime Officer
Marketing Manager
Teacher
Digital consultant
Accountant
Learning Assistant
Retail slash logistics. I put retail things in boxes, for mail order. I don't know the real job role title.
Front End Designer / Bar Manager
Advanced nurse practitioner
teacher
Senior business analyst
Journalist
Registrar
Civil Service
Game design student
Director
Vet
Business Intelligence Analyst
Marketing
Researcher

- Stay at home mom
- Professor
- Insurance
- Narrative designer for video games
- Business Analyst
- Homemaker
- Lecturer
- Student
- Consultant in Communications & PR
- Head of pr
- Qa tester
- Sales Assistant
- Teacher
- Photographer
- UX Designer
- None
- Finance
- Housewife
- Software Eng.
- Chemical Engineer
- Software Engineer
- PhD student

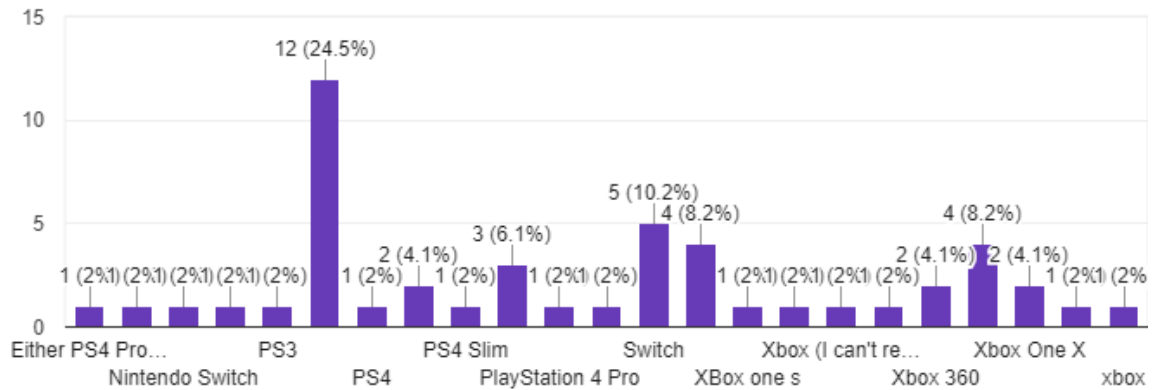
5) Which of the current generation of consoles do you own?

81 responses



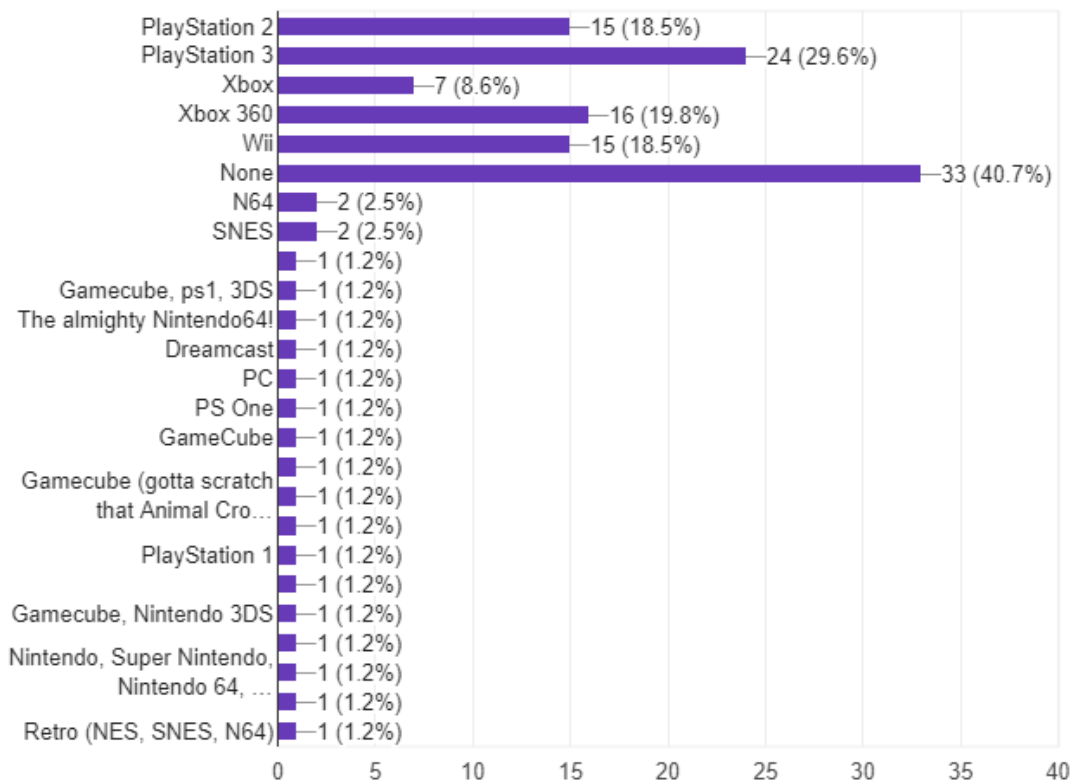
6) If you own more than one, which would you consider to be your "main" console?

49 responses



7) Which other consoles do you own that you still play games on?

81 responses



8) Which were the last two consoles that you purchased? 81 responses

Switch, PS4 Pro (3)
PS4 and Switch (3)
PS4 and Wii (2)
PS4 and PS3 (2)
Switch, PS4 (2)
Xbox One and PS4 (2)
Switch and PS4 (2)
PS4, PS3.
PlayStation Vita, PlayStation TV
Xbox 360, PS4
Xbox one and PS3
Switch and xbox
WiiU and Nintendo3DS
Switch and Xbox 360
Xbox 360 and Xbox One
Switch and Xbox One
PS3, Nintendo 3DS
Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4 Slim
PS4 Pro and Switch
PlayStation 4 and the Wii
PS3 PS4
Playstation 4 and playstation pro
My husband bought them despite me asking him not to. I think his last one was the Switch.
PS4 & 360
PS4
Switch, WiiU
Wii U, Xbox 360
Nintendo Switch, Xbox 360
Switch, PSVR
Nintendo Switch
Switch & ps4
Xbox 360 & Xbox One X
Xbox One X, Xbox One
Switch, Xbox One X
PS3, Wii
Xbox one x and s
Switch, Xbox One
Switch, xbox 360
Playstation 4
Xbox 360, Nintendo DS
PlayStation 3 and PlayStation 4
ps2, ps3
Xbox one X, playstation 3
Xbox One S and PS4 Pro
Xbox One, Nintendo DS
Switch and 3DS
PS4 slim and XboxOneS
PS3, PS4
Switch, PS4 pro
Switch, PlayStation 4
PS4,Xbox360
PS4 and Nintendo switch
WiiU, PS4 Pro

WiiU, PS4
PS4 Nintendo Switch
PlayStation 4, Xbox.
Before PS4 Pro - PS3 and Nintendo Wii
Nintendo Wii and DS
The Xbox 360 and the PS4
PS4 Slime
PS4 and Xbox One
X360, PS2
PlayStation 4, Xbox 360
PS4, PS3
Wii, x box one s
PS4, Switch
PS4 Xbox 360
Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4 Pro
Xbox One & Wii U
Xbox One.
Xbox 1, Sega Megadrive (new version)
Nintendo Switch, Wii U

9) If your purchases were from two different manufacturers, what was the main reason? 60 responses

Console exclusives (3)
N/a (2)
Different exclusives (2)
Exclusive titles existing on one or the other platform
PS4 looked the better current gen option
Different use cases
To play console exclusives that aren't available on other platforms
Game selection and handheld capabilities
To be able to play certain games that were console exclusive
Friends on Xbox but more interested in games from Nintendo that you couldn't get anywhere else
Games available - one handheld and one main console. PS3 also able to play Blu-ray Discs
I like to stay in the loop with what each manufacturer offers
NA
Games and friends' consoles
Because the two consoles are made by different people.
different games available
Form factor of the Nintendo Switch
Sony doesn't really offer a Switch alternative.
I like a lot of games
Kids (7 and 9) wanted the Switch for Christmas.
Differing games libraries (mostly drawn by big titles like MGS and Zelda)
Provides a greater range of available games
Access to JRPGs and Nintendo exclusives
Exclusives. I was gonna be witty, but really, you can't get zelda on an Xbox, so....
Wanted to try out the Playstation 4 after hearing good things. Was not super impressed and returned it.
Games & experiences. I've always loved Nintendo but they've traditionally struggled to get third-party support
Access to different games

The Xbox was from a friend who was upgrading to One X and I thought it was also time to upgrade PS4 to Pro

Home and handheld. Choice of games.

You can't get Nintendo games on other consoles

Different options

I'm generally manufacturer agnostic - I bought the consoles because they had games I wanted to play

Console exclusive titles

Games available on platform

Free shipping

Exclusive games

Available game titles

Different games available

Specific games that can only be played on those consoles.

Just different games

Different types of games available - Wii for more social co-located play

Exclusive games

I was for many years very content with my Xbox 360: I got it at the time as some of my friends had it and recommended it over the PS3. However, as I wanted to make the move to current gen, I looked at both the Xbox One and PS4 and considered the PS4 to have two things going for it: a slightly better reputation among gamers and a better selection of exclusive games. The only thing speaking clearly on behalf of Xbox One was that I liked its controller better. Additionally, I wanted a change and not stick with the Xbox just to feel safe and secure. But essentially, I would say that buying the PS4 and that way getting another manufacturer's console, the main reason for it was that the PS4 had a better reputation among gamers.

One for portable gaming and one for home

Hard drive and graphic card

Release date.

Availability of games

Game exclusives: I wanted to play Zelda

Switch for portability, PS4 for everything else

Fancied a change

Variety of games

Strengths and weaknesses of consoles, plus price

Friends on a different platform

Xbone - wanted to try mods

First party titles

Game exclusive

10) If they were from the same manufacturer, what was the main reason?^{32 responses}

N/A (5)

N/a (2)

n/a (2)

Got used to the PS controller. I preferred the exclusive games on PS4 when I was looking to upgrade. Heard bad rumours about the XBox being less game-friendly and more about being a complete entertainment system and connecting with others which didn't interest me.

They both have games releases that can't be played on other consoles

Always played playstation so brand loyalty, however the brand exclusive games in terms of single player games are way better (The Last of Us, Uncharted, God of War) which is very important to me
 The Xbox 360 was affordable at the time, it made sense to stick with Microsoft.

Better games, blu-ray player

Upgrading to the pro that also had monster hunter decoration on the console

I've always liked Nintendo, and the games specific to Nintendo

Reliable company

Xbox Live Account

Upgrade to HD 4k

Speed, picture, storage.

Exclusive games

better consoles

I wanted to discover Nintendo's recent catalogue

Having had an Xbox 360 that broke with not much use, I like the reliability of the PlayStations considering I have all four and they all still work.

Like the interface

They were not.

I love the classic Nintendo games and characters

Graphic card and speed data

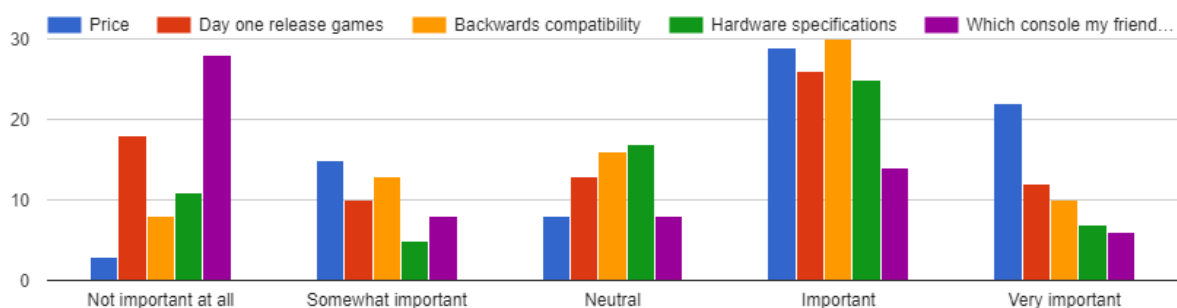
-

I have friends that I play with on PlayStation.

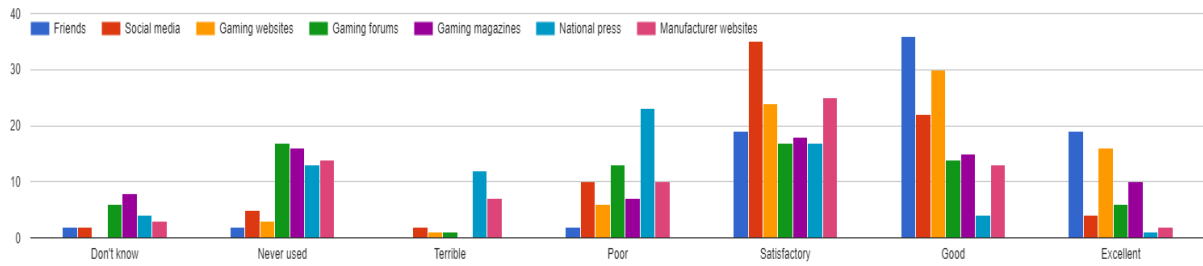
NA

I bought the Wii U, and then they announced the Switch, which I had to own for Zelda reasons.

11) What factors are important to you when purchasing a new-generation console?

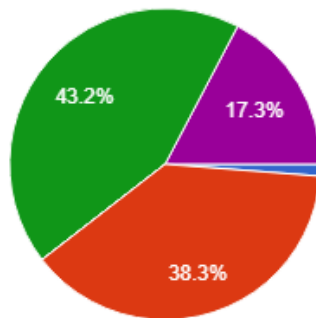


12) How would you rate the trustworthiness of the following sources of gaming information?



13) If you were looking to purchase a new-generation console, which of the following statements best describes how you would use the web to help you decide?

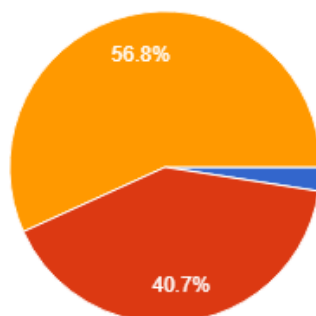
81 responses



- I would browse at random until I found something that interests me
- I know which websites will give me the information I need and would go...
- I would set up a search to alert me to any new information that arises
- I would take my time and search over many days or months
- I would prioritise seeking information about the console manufacturer tha...

14) Having decided on a console to purchase, you hear a rumour that it will require an internet connection to play games offline. Do you...?

81 responses



- Decide that you will buy a rival manufacturer's console instead
- Buy it anyway: you have a good internet connection and it won't affect you
- Seek out further information from your trusted sources before making a decision

15) If it were possible to do so today, would you pre-order a PlayStation 5 or Xbox Two? If you wish, you may briefly explain your reason(s). 81 responses

No (13)

PS5 (5)

Xbox Two (2)

Probably (2)

Yes (2)

PlayStation 5. I have recently bought a year's worth of PSN membership and I don't want that to go to waste! And I prefer the recent PS exclusive games I have seen advertised. I am used to how the PS works in terms of apps and achievements etc and don't want to learn how to use a new system.

I would not. Launch titles are usually ho-hum and newly released hardware tends to have a higher failure rate before being revised, I prefer to wait to see how things pan out.

No. Recent history has shown it is best to wait to see what issues there might be with a console or game before immediately purchasing it.

Yes, but only if the manufacturer released information on game releases simultaneously. Often I'll want to get the console purely because I'm itching to play a specific game on it.

I wouldn't pre-order a console.

No, it would be expensive right now and I have no idea how good they would be and I have plenty of games to finish as is. I don't pre-order as a rule.

Xbox Two, mostly because backward compatibility is very likely given what they are doing now and would help with the early lack of games by letting me play current games at better performance

No - cost usually goes down significantly after release. I also haven't bothered buying current consoles as currently studying and don't want to give myself reason to procrastinate

PS5, yes. Xbox 2 - no. Microsoft have lost me due to the poor number of exclusive games (and I don't like racing games, so their 8 million Forza games are of no interest to me)

No, because I don't think I'd have the disposable income required for the preorder.

No, because I like to wait until the console is cheaper and there are more games and how people feel which is the best one as I can't afford to buy both.

No because its harder to compare prices until at least very close to release, also depending on software releases it is often better to wait a year until software options increase and price of base unit decreases

No - very much, no. I don't play games on anything other than my phone or a computer - and even then, I only do it a couple of times a year. It would be a waste of money.

No. I don't see the point in pre-ordering something that I can simply buy when it comes out. If it's not a special edition (e.g. first edition of the book) is pointless

No pre-ordering.

No, I'd wait to see what games are available

Playstation 5 - I have a relatively good PC that covers multi-platform games, PlayStation usually has had better exclusives this generation.

PS5, always been in the PlayStation ecosystem, used to the controllers etc

No, because I like to see what people think about the consoles before purchasing myself

No because I don't know what will they be

No, to soon since last purchase and console generation change.

No.

No, I'd wait.

No. Im not an early adopter, I don't need to have a system day one. You pay more, for an inferior experience : bugs that haven't been ironed out, lack of game choices, lack of peripheral supply.

Preordering anything is a fools game.

More likely Xbox Two because I am more into the games they tend to release.

Nope. Not interested in big home consoles anymore - the Switch is so adaptable that I can't see me going back to being restricted to the TV screen to play my favourite games.

playstation 5

No, I've never felt the need to preorder

Xbox Two. Sony's stance on cross-play is poisoning its chances in the next generation

No. I prefer to buy once performance and game catalogue is established.

PS 5 only because I prefer PlayStation machines at the mo

I never pre-order, I prefer to wait until I have enough informations about what I'm buying

No. I don't find I have so much time for gaming, hower I would purchase at a later date.

No. No current plans to upgrade

Neither - I don't preorder consoles, always wait until launch

No. Would wait until they are generally available and then buy for an occasion e.g. birthday/Xmas

Xbox Two; I like the Xbox controller more and have more attachment to Xbox-exclusive IPs like Forza.

If the first day games are good, I would buy a PlayStation 5.

No.

No

No - tend to wait for the second or third version to come out as (1) usually cheaper and (2) usually better in terms of performance and/or efficiency

PlayStation 5. I've always owned PlayStation consoles but have never owned an Xbox, and have never felt the need to

No, probably far too expensive for my current budget

No, unless there was some type of major advantage to pre-ordering (like 50% off the retail price, a free selection 4-5 game titles of my choice including AAA titles, or something like that). I usually give the new console gen about a year before deciding which one to buy; games for brand new consoles are usually scarce and I want to read reviews of the hardware, let the price drop a bit and let the manufacturer deal with the early bugs and problems before buying a console.

PS5. Sony has never let me down.

I don't preorder consoles; I need more information about what features and games will be available

If pre-orders taught us anything it's to not to pre-order.

I'm not sure. I just bought a PS4.

No idea, I would need more information about their specifications, and what games are available

Yes. I'm gona buy it anyway might as well get it now

PlayStation 5

Not without knowledge of the available games, no

Would depend on various factors, price, capability, launch line-up etc

Xbox two. - In general I get the same benefits and the controller for the xbox fits my hands better.

No. I'm not one for being the first to have things.

PlayStation 5 - The PS4 has been good to me, but I'd reserve judgement until I got more of a sense of which each console was going to offer on launch, and what my friends were leaning towards.

No, I never pre-order things

11) Appendix C: Interview e-mail, participant information sheet and consent form.

1) E-mail:

Hello.

I am contacting you because you recently provided your e-mail address in my console gaming survey, indicating you might be willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

With this in mind I have compiled a Participant Information Sheet for you to have a read through, which explains about the research and what participating would involve.

If, after reading, you would still like to participate, there is a consent form for you to complete, which you can e-mail back to me - just type in your initials, name and the date in the boxes.

I will add my details and e-mail you back a copy of the completed consent form for your records, and then we can decide on a method and time for the interview that is convenient to you.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask me.

Many thanks.

Ed Newton.

2) Participant information sheet:



Title of study:

Goodbye, [Microsoft/Sony]... Hello, [Microsoft/Sony]: An investigation into the information behaviour of console gamers when deciding which console to purchase.

Name of principal investigator:

Edward Newton. (Supervisor: Lyn Robinson).

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether you would like to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?

I am carrying out a dissertation project as part of my Information Science MSc course at City, University of London. I am investigating the information behaviour - how people seek and use information - of console gamers when they are looking to purchase a new console, be it when a new generation of consoles is released, or an "in generation" purchase.

Why have I been invited?

I have asked you to participate as you provided your e-mail address in response to my survey question, "If you would be willing to consider taking part in a short follow-up interview, please add your e-mail address so that I may contact you. I will be conducting interviews with up to 18 other people.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in the project is voluntary, and you can choose not to participate in part or all of the project. You can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Once the data has been anonymised and published, you will no longer be able to withdraw your data.

What will happen if I take part?

Your participation should be limited to one phone interview, or a brief e-mail question and answer exchange.

I do not anticipate the interview lasting longer than 30 minutes.

I will be carrying out the research project over August and September, with the interviews taking place mid to end of August.

I will be carrying out the research by means of a semi-structured interview - there are questions I will be asking every participant, but if there are unanticipated lines of enquiry that arise, I may explore these in more detail.

I will carry out the interview over the phone, or via an e-mail exchange if this is preferable to you.

With your permission, I would like to record any interviews conducted over the phone.

What do I have to do?

I will ask you about the processes you go through when choosing a new console, which resources you might or might not use, and why. This could be for any console purchase, or it could be when a new generation of consoles is released.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

I do not anticipate that there are any disadvantages or risks in taking part.

What are the possible benefits of taking part? I do not anticipate that you will benefit directly from this research. However, so far there has been little research into this particular aspect of console gaming, and I hope that the findings will be useful in the future for others who wish to investigate it.

What will happen when the research study stops? After I have completed the research and handed the dissertation in for marking, any data I have collected will be destroyed. The completed dissertation will be available to staff and students of City University.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Your information will be anonymised. No personal details will be included in the dissertation. I will store any recordings of interviews on my home computer, which only I have access to. The recordings will be deleted after the research project is completed.

What should I do if I want to take part?

If you would like to participate in this research, after reading this information sheet, please complete the consent form and add your name and date. I will then add my name and e-mail you back the completed form for your records. I will then contact you to arrange the method and time for the interview.

What will happen to results of the research study?

I would be happy to provide you with a copy of the final dissertation, via e-mail, should you wish to see it. It will be made available to the university staff and students. It will also be deposited on the Humanities Commons website.

What will happen if I do not want to carry on with the study?

You are free to withdraw from the study without an explanation or penalty at any time.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been approved by City University London, School Of Informatics, BSc, MSC, MA Projects Research Ethics Committee

Further information and contact details

Researcher: Edward Newton (e-mail: edward.newton@city.ac.uk)

Supervisor: Lyn Robinson (e-mail: l.robinson@city.ac.uk)

Data Protection Privacy Notice: What are my rights under the data protection legislation?

City, University of London is the data controller for the personal data collected for this research project. Your personal data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice. The legal basis for processing your personal data will be that this research is a task in the public interest, that is City, University of London considers the lawful basis for processing personal data to fall under Article 6(1)(e) of GDPR (public task) as the processing of research participant data is necessary for learning and teaching purposes and all research with human participants by staff and students has to be scrutinised and approved by one of City's Research Ethics Committees.

The rights you have under the data protection legislation are listed below, but not all of the rights will be apply to the personal data collected in each research project.

right to be informed

right of access

right to rectification

right to erasure

right to restrict processing

right to object to data processing

right to data portability

right to object

rights in relation to automated decision making and profiling

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What if I have concerns about how my personal data will be used after I have participated in the research?

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What if there is a problem?

If you have any problems, concerns or questions about this study, you should ask to speak to a member of the research team. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this through City's complaints procedure. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary to Senate Research Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is: Goodbye, [Microsoft/Sony]... Hello, [Microsoft/Sony]: An investigation into the information behaviour of console gamers when deciding which console to purchase.

You could also write to the Secretary at:

Anna Ramberg

Research Integrity Manager

Research & Enterprise

City, University of London

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London

EC1V 0HB

Email: Anna.Ramberg.1@city.ac.uk

City holds insurance policies which apply to this study. If you feel you have been harmed or injured by taking part in this study you may be eligible to claim compensation. This does not affect your legal rights to seek compensation. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for legal action.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

V1.0. 08/08/2018

12) Appendix D: interview transcripts.

1) Interview 1.

EN: Thank you for taking part.

INT 1: Of course.

EN: So, first question is quite an easy one. How many hours a week would you say on average you play games on consoles?

INT 1: On consoles, not on my phone? Do you count that as a console?

EN: That's, we're going to come to that in a bit!

INT 1: OK.

EN: Yeah, on console.

INT 1: On console, right now, none because they're all in storage in California.

EN: Right.

INT 1: Typically, I couldn't do an average on week because at home, what I'll do is all have a moment where I'll just, like, binge, and play for like days on end and then not touch them for another two months and then come back and binge. So it's hard for me to gauge an hour.

EN: Is there a word that you used to describe you as a gamer, like, avid or...

INT 1: Definitely not avid. Well, on console, not avid, anyway. It's more, just, when the mood strikes me, but when the mood does strike me, then I'm very obsessive because I'm very obsessive in general. So when I am playing, I'm quite addicted and I'll play for hours on end. But then I can go for days without playing.

EN: What kind of games do tend to play? Is there a style?

INT 1: Yeah, I like games that have, one, I love like old Nintendo style games, like Mario style games. Have a level and beat it and then go to a new level. I like things...

EN: Platformers?

INT 1: Yeah, I like that, and I like things that have some sort of mystery or puzzle where I'm trying to solve something. There has to be some kind of goal, I have to keep trying to achieve something or I'll lose interest. So, I like Mario and Mega Man, that kind of stuff, and then I like Silent Hill because, again, mystery, puzzles, that kind of stuff. Really I think the only type of games that I say I don't like are first person shooter games, and that's kind of because one, I like to see the person that I'm playing, and two, I'm not good at them. So then I don't like them.

EN: I can understand that! They're very frustrating.

INT 1: Yeah, if you suck, you don't want to keep doing it.

EN: What consoles do you own, what consoles do you play games on?

INT 1: NES, Super NES, Nintendo 64, PlayStation 2, what do I have? That's all I currently have. Oh, no, Wii, I have a Wii. And I play DS. OK.

EN: So very much Sony and Nintendo?

INT 1: Yeah, I never got into Xbox. I don't know why.

EN: Any particular reason?

INT 1: I think that the controller was just more foreign to me, and most of the games were coming out on both when they first started, and it was, PlayStation and Xbox were competing, a lot of the games were on both so I was like, I had no real incentive to switch platforms. And then when it did get to the point where it was like, that game looks fun but I can't have it because I don't have that console, that console's hella expensive, so I'll do without it. Like, I have all of these consoles, I don't have to have that one too.

EN: Sure. Earlier, you said phone, so do you play games on your phone as well?

INT 1: Incessantly.

EN: Is that on the tube, on the bus?

INT 1: In class, wherever. Like, I'm pretty bad. I play on my phone a lot.

EN: I'm addicted to Candy Crush and I don't know why.

INT 1: So, basically, all the games that are made by the people who made Candy Crush, I play a lot. I don't play Candy Crush a lot, I usually play the Bubble Witch one and the farm one where you switch the things around. Those are the two that I play the most. But they make lots of fun games. Who's that, King? I think that's King, yeah. Their games are very addictive.

EN: So simple, yet so...

INT 1: Yeah, I do that pretty much, like, most of the day, probably, I have that going on.

EN: So you don't play games online, console games online, I guess, if you just got those?

INT 1: No. I don't usually, I haven't, rarely, really, used my computer to play games. Well, for a while, there was like, they used to be, there probably still are but there were these websites that they wanted your money but you totally play without money, and it would be games kind of like the Candy Crush game, there would be hundreds of games that you could choose and play or whatever. For a while, I was pretty mad about doing that, but then my phone happened, and I was like, I don't have to use the computer. I can use my phone. Occasionally, if there is a game that I like, think about that I miss from my childhood and I don't have it, I will find an emulator online. But that's rare.

EN: Going back to consoles again, so you wouldn't necessarily buy a console just for games? Did you say?

INT 1: Buy a console for games?

EN: Exclusives, so you wouldn't, if there was a game that was only on that platform.

INT 1: Probably not. It would have to be one hell of a game. If there were a few games, then it would feel worth it. But, yeah, at this point, it would probably be, if it were games that I already, not necessarily a specific game but something in the Mario universe or something like that, where it was like, ooh, I want to play that new Mario. But, again, I'm broke student

right now. So unless Santa wants to bring me the Switch or something, I probably won't get it!

EN: Yeah, I really wanted to get a Switch just because of Zelda, but it's just too much money.

INT 1: And that's the thing, sometimes even though it's one game, if it's something like Nintendo, it's, like, yeah, I know there's going to be other games I want to play. Whereas where it's something like a different platform, I'm like, I don't know about it, I'm not missing out on it. So I just try and stay oblivious to what's happening over there.

EN: So, just kind of ignore that?

INT 1: Exactly.

EN: So, say, you did have enough money to buy a console right now, could you describe the process you'd go through to find out which one you would want to buy?

INT 1: Yeah, so, well, for me... Here, I'll go to - so, my NES is broken but I still have all the games, do I want to buy another NES where it's just going to break again because the spring-loaded, it's just crap, it was bad engineering. So, instead, I want a new, basically, fake one that'll play it. So I have done online research in regards to that. And then I just go to a lot of gaming sites and read a lot of reviews and read a lot of what people have said which is why I still don't have one. Because most of the reviews of those are not good. They are like, the sound is off, or the plugs come unplugged easily and very weird stuff that you would never even think of if you hadn't done research. But for newer games, it would probably be more just, like, researching price points. Because I would already be like, no, I just want the Switch and there's only one of those. For the most part, you're not too much comparing, maybe some people do that, I don't really compare them because they're like apples and oranges. They're not playing the same games, they're doing different things. So at that point, it's more just trying to figure out where you can get the best bargain. Yeah, for the other ones, I can't think of any right now because I woke up and had no coffee! But what is that called, what are the fake Nintendos called?

EN: Emulators?

INT 1: No, that's the word, those others...

EN: No, that's on the computer, isn't it?

INT 1: It's like clone, but it's not clone. It's like a specific word just for all of the fake Nintendo systems. And there's one actually that I want to look into more, it plays NES, Super NES, Sega Genesis games, it just has multiple inserts in it and it can play all of these different cartridges. But it's also not cheap, it's \$400. But also it plays, like, five different generations of games which is kind of cool.

EN: So if you've got all those games anyway, then that's...

INT 1: Right. But at the same time, I'm like, but I already have two of those consoles. So do I need it to play all those games? But then I guess, I could sell those, I don't want to sell those consoles. I'm also ridiculously nostalgic about my consoles. I've had my Super Nintendo since eighth grade when Santa gave it to me. It still works. But it's so much better between NES and Super NES, it's crazy. Honestly because top loading just solved all of the problems. But, yeah, for those things that I can't remember the name, and that's going to drive me crazy for the next couple of hours, but for those, it's mainly just finding sites like different types of review sites online and then trying to determine if those review sites are

even credible. So then I try to see how many things they've reviewed and what they said about other things and if I agree with their opinion in the first place about other things they threatened about.

EN: So you kind of research...

INT 1: The researcher! A little bit, yet, because it's like a movie critic, I'm like, movie critics said that Ninja Turtles was a terrible movie and they're wrong, that's a great movie. The original, not that s--t Michael Bay made. The original. But, you know, you don't always agree with someone else's opinion. So I try to kind of gauge it by, like, let's look at the couple of games you played, did you like those? At least with the hardware it's a little bit more black or white because it makes a funny noise or it doesn't.

EN: Yeah, yeah. So you don't have any particular sites that you go to?

INT 1: Not off the top of my head, I would just Google. But first I'd Google, like, if I could think of the word, that's how I'd Google it! For Nintendo blah blah blah. And then that'll pull up a bunch of sites and then I just start going through to see what people have said about it. See which kinds there are, and the ones which have, then I'll find those names and I'll put those names into Google to search for that specific...

EN: Yeah.

INT 1: It's driving me crazy! But that specific clone, basically. And then just from there, just rabbit hole down the internet.

EN: I often think the worst thing you can do sometimes is look at what people have said about something because you think, I want this, I know I want this, then you read reviews and you're like, do I want this?

INT 1: Do I want this? It's true, yes. That's why I think for, like, newer things, I probably won't get into it. Like, the Switch, I will not read reviews on that because it's like either I want to play it or I don't. But when it something where it's something not made by the original manufacturer, it's more, like, it's a thing of does this work correctly? Because I guess I kind of just trust that if Nintendo bought Sony or whoever is making a console, it's going to work correctly. They put a lot of money and time into this, it's not going to, like... Whereas basically an emulator, I can't believe that that word is eluding me, it's really annoying, but basically those are made by people who are just waiting for the patent to run out and trying to get their money out of it. I don't know if it will work right and it wasn't made by the original person who made the games so are they completely compatible? That you kind of have to look into. Or you'll end up with s--t.

EN: So, that's going to annoy me now, I wonder what it's called, that thing?

INT 1: I'll Google it while we talk.

EN: How did you find out about that?

INT 1: That's a good question, because I've been looking into this since mine broke, so, probably, since when did that one break? Probably for, like, 10 years, at least. But I still haven't committed to one because like I said, the reviews are never that great.

EN: So do you find yourself keep coming back to it now and again?

INT 1: Yeah, basically, whenever I start bingeing on my games, and then I'm like, I have 50 NES games and I can't play them. That's frustrating. And then you, like, have a friend who

has the old Nintendo and you try to play the games and only one of them will work and the rest of them will just keep giving you the flashing coloured screen of death and you can't, I just want something that I can pop that game in and it actually works. And probably it that I need to clean those games also, but it's usually that the old NES, the spring-loaders just crap out. And on mine, I've bought a new spring-loader and took a thing apart and put in a new spring-loader and it only worked for 24 hours, and I was real mad. So I'm guessing that probably I went online trying to find a top loading NES, because there was one, I don't think it was a full year but before the Super Nintendo came out, Nintendo did have top loading because they knew that was going to be an issue, I guess, before it fully became an issue. I guess with kids they probably went out more quickly because you were, like, jamming them in there. There were top loading NES is for a very brief period of time before the Super Nintendo came out. So I was probably trying to hunt down one of those on Amazon or whatever, those are very hard to come by and when you do find them, they're real expensive. So while looking for that, I probably found things online saying, like, "here, this is a top loading Nintendo," when really it's not Nintendo. I'm assuming that's how I stumbled upon this and then I just started being like, oh, it is this, do I want... I think Fantacom is one of the people who makes them, let's see.

EN: So it was kind of by chance, really?

INT 1: Yeah, I was looking for the original and found these other things. Yeah, OK. No, that's a Japanese one. Where's something that's not... What are those things called? Let's look up third-party. Third-party NES console. Of course they're not having names... Because now everyone just wants to use the word retro. "Look at this retro gameplaying, so cool!" But no. That's annoying.

EN: I will be my tasks for the afternoon rather than write!

INT 1: You're like, that's a good way to procrastinate. What the hell is she talking about?

EN: So, just go back a bit, you say you've been searching on and off for a long time.

INT 1: Yeah.

EN: What do you think would cause that search to end, would it be buying one, or deciding not to?

INT 1: Yeah, the search will end when I find one that supposedly will work well and I buy it, and it does work well. Because if it's s--t, then I'm going to have to keep looking. So, yes, I have to find a way to play my Nintendo games. I even still buy them even though I don't have a system. Like some of the Nintendo games I've bought have been because I just know I will at some point have a way to play them because I love my original Nintendo games too much to give them up. See, if I bought that one console, I could also play Sega games, because I don't have a Sega Genesis.

EN: That's the MegaDrive over here, wasn't it? I think it was called the MegaDrive.

INT 1: The Sega Genesis is this one. It was what Sonic came out on originally.

EN: Oh, yeah.

INT 1: And then for a while, right when PlayStation Xbox happened, Sega had something on the market also, what did they have? Was it the Dreamcast, Sega Dreamcast? I think so. But then the games that they were making just didn't do very well. So that disappeared.

EN: I think that was the last Sega console.

INT 1: Sega quit playing that game, I think, yeah. But Genesis had fun games. It had all the sonic games, and it had Ecco the Dolphin, that was fun. And then there was a really fun X-Men game. But, yeah, they had all kinds of fun platform games. Oh, the Saturn, that's what they made. I also had a Saturn. Oh, they were the Dreamcast, though. I don't remember the Sega Saturn. Yeah, no, OK. I do remember that. Oh, there was a fun game on that. But, again, I'm not going to buy something for this one game. I can't afford that. If I could afford it, I would.

EN: So money is a big...

INT 1: Yeah, yeah. Money rules everything.

EN: Until you haven't got it, you can't really appreciate it.

EN: So I think that's kind of it, really.

INT 1: OK.

EN: Just to double check for my thing, so you said you don't really have particular sites that you go to. You're not a member of, do you ever go to forums?

INT 1: Forums? Only if I stumble onto them while I look into other stuff. There's nothing that I, I don't use Reddit or Tumblr or those kinds of things. There's nothing that I follow too closely, it's just more of when I'm searching, then of stumble into any, like, then try to reach all corners of the internet because I have OCD, and I'm like, oh, I didn't read everything! I have to look at all the things!

EN: So you don't, like, it's going to sound quite negative, I don't mean to be... Not keep up to date, it's when you need to know, then you go and find out what you need to know.

INT 1: Exactly, yeah. I don't stay up-to-date, I don't get newsletter telling me when these things are going to come out. Mainly just as a, like, if I don't know about it, I'm not missing out. So I kind of purposely stay away from things that I'm going to want to spend money on. Because I also don't have the best self-control and if I really want it go ahead and buy it even though I can't afford it. So if I just don't know about things, some things you can't avoid hearing about, like, the Switch and things like that. Because they're new and popular and everywhere and people are playing them and you see them. But when new games and stuff come out, for the most part, I stay obliviously happy not knowing that they exist at all. And, like I said, while it's not the same because these games are not nearly as satisfying or is fun to me, it does fill that addictive part of me that is like, I need to be playing a game. I can just play and then I'm not thinking about the fact that I'm not playing other consoles. So I don't stay up-to-date, per se, at all. It's more like, OK, I saw this and I want it. Now let's look into it. So I think this is the one that supposedly sucks but they're just calling it a console, they're not helping me! Dude, there is a specific word that is driving me crazy. I'm going to think of it as the most random time and be like, that's what it is!

EN: Middle of the night.

Ed Newton (25/09/2018): After the recording was stopped, a subsequent question occurred to the research, concerning what types of resources were used: text or video. The interviewee responded and notes were taken, which are included below:

- The web resources used were text-based. The way Google organised the results meant that they were generally not considered - text-based articles grouped together, so videos were forgotten about. It was mentioned that this might be an age thing. Twitch was mentioned, but it seemed odd to want to watch someone play a game online. However, the interviewee was happy to watch a friend playing a game at home.

2) Interview 2.

EN: So, just to start with, how many hours a week would you say you play on consoles?

INT 2: It depends, but at the moment where... It depends if I've got a good game that I'm really into. So if I have, probably, a couple of hours a day so what would that be? Say, 15 hours a week.

EN: But it can vary.

INT 2: But it can vary. So if it's going through a fallow period games wise, then I'll maybe do half an hour of something more casual every few days or something.

EN: So the game aspect is quite important to you?

INT 2: Yes.

EN: How would you describe yourself as a gamer? Is there a bracket you'd put yourself into?

INT 2: Probably more hard-core than average. I tend to do a lot of passive watching other people play on YouTube, that kind of thing. So quite a lot of my leisure time will be taken up with looking at game related stuff, whether that's other people playing all reading game sites, or generally... I keep myself very involved in what's going on in the world, the gaming world, I will pay attention to things like E3 and conferences in that kind of thing and see upcoming games and keep abreast of what's going on. I follow a lot of gaming type people on social media, so probably more than average but I don't play... For example, I don't play on PC, very occasionally on PC, I know that's not a console. And I don't do much multiplayer and I don't involve, I don't have many in real life friends who game. So it's not like I'm in an off-line gaming community as such. But I'm probably quite hard-core.

EN: So, do you play online at all?

INT 2: I do, well, yes. More kind of casual games, probably, things like Rocket League and very occasionally Call Of Duty, that kind of thing.

EN: So when you're playing those types of games, do you ever get involved in the online chat at all?

INT 2: Not really. I tend to avoid it because it's quite, well, it seems from what I read and absorb generally that it's quite toxic and horrible. And so I don't really get involved. And I don't play a lot of games that have a lot of chat capability. I never play with other people in a co-op manner online, I would only play against them vaguely anonymously.

EN: So what consoles do you own?

INT 2: At the moment, my main console is a PS4. I do also own an Xbox 360 and a Wii but I don't use them any more. So at the moment, only PS4. I would actually use the Wii if it worked but various bits of it have broken. I do have a hankering to play with it but because the controllers don't work any more and it's so outdated now that I can't really play it.

EN: So I'm guessing timewise, you owned a 360 first.

INT 2: No, I owned the Wii first, then 360, then a PS3, then PS4.

EN: Is there any reason you switched from Microsoft to Sony?

INT 2: Well, so, when I was looking to upgrade from a Wii... So, I got the Wii first of all because it was cheaper and it was fun, and had lots of... It was kind of a new and innovative way of console gaming. I did own a PS2 before that, I didn't say that. So, first of all, console wise, PS2 for a long time. Then had the PS2 and then got a Wii because it was a new and innovative and exciting thing, a new way to play and it used all these movement controls which seemed new and cool. So then I got that. And then when I was looking, then it was a kind of cost thing for a while because I didn't really have any money to spend on the consoles. And when I did, it was... What was the question, changing from Microsoft to PS4 or why I got an Xbox?

EN: Just from Xbox 360 to PlayStation.

INT 2: It was Xbox 360 and then I got a PS3 and then a PS4. So I got an Xbox 360 and then I was happy with that and I played on that for a long time, and then I think I got a PS3 because there were a few PS exclusive games that were very big and hyped and I wanted to play. Because I'd read a lot about them.

EN: How did you find out, where did you read?

INT 2: So most of my information for gaming would come from, at that point, it would have been online sources such as, what would it have been? It was pre-social media, or very early, Twitter, Reddit, before all of that. So it would have been reading sites like Videogamer, which is a specific online thing about video games, obviously. They seem to have quite a knowledgeable team behind them, and not particularly beholden... I think the problem with, I used to read magazines a lot. So I would read, I would get, not very regularly but I would get gaming magazines but they tended to be, for example, Inside Xbox. I was reading inside Xbox at the time because I had an Xbox but there was a feeling because it was an Xbox specific magazine, there was always the thing of, are they under the... I wanted impartial information. I didn't want it to be just a sponsored thing, like, if Microsoft was paying them to go, look at all these games, they're all wonderful. So I think there were a few magazines at the time which had a more independent focus, it seemed, so I trusted them. And then, it was probably people from those magazines, when they moved into, I would identify a few writers that I liked, I liked their opinions and I liked their style, and when they went on to... That's probably how I found places, specific sites, is that they would be magazine people who I then followed onto online.

EN: On the flip side to that, is there anyone that you found that you have purposely avoided after reading their work?

INT 2: Let's see. I wouldn't say avoided. I think there were probably certain magazines, and possibly a few... There's probably quite a lot of sites, especially more nowadays, when there's so many, there was a bit of a glut in the late 2000s and early 2010s, there was a bit of an explosion of online games writing and lots of sites popped up. And I think quite a few of them seemed to be more kind of corporate shill-y, if you see what I mean? And very sponsored content and all that kind of stuff. So if anything was like that, and I didn't even know the brand of the site or I knew some writers on it, I would probably not trust it to give me good information because I don't know... I didn't want anything to be swayed, I didn't want it to be just basically sales that I was reading and thinking that it was proper opinion and well researched content. When it's a regurgitated press release. So I think, for example, there's a lot of mainstream media that doesn't cover it very well, so I really trust for example the Guardian, because they seem to write about it. A lot of tabloid stuff and other broadsheets, it seems, when you look into it, it's very, the gaming content would be basically

repurposed press releases. And therefore, what's the point of reading that? I could just go to Sony.com and ask them what they think of the new Sony game.

EN: So you said you don't have many online friends?

NT 2: No, I don't.

EN: Do you talk to friends in person about consoles at all?

INT 2: Not that many, there's a few people I know who are into that kind of stuff and we'll have the occasional discussion but most of my friends have kind of, in quotes, grown out of it or they don't have the time, really. So occasionally we'll talk about, this game is good, that game is good but most of them, most people don't really play as much as me. And don't care.

EN: Say you mentioned that you use videos and texts looking into games. Would you say that's the same, that was true when you're looking into buy a console? Or is there any other source that you might go to?

INT 2: Podcasts, I used to listen to podcasts quite a lot as well but they were associated with the same sites, I suppose. But that's more general discussion about the pros and... I remember when going from PS3 generation to the PS4/Xbox One generation, I was listening to quite a lot and then at that time there was a lot of discussion on which one was better and why and which one you should stay with. Or, you know, if you were a loyalist or whatever, if there was anything that was worth... Because I think you generally, once you're in one, you get used to it, and once you stay... I mean, you get used to the way it looks, the way the controllers feel, and the way that the network stuff works, even just the interface, so it's probably quite jarring to switch to something new. So it would have to take a lot to jump from one to the other. But I probably, with buying a console, because it's quite a lot of money, it's quite a big purchase, so you wouldn't use consumer reviews in the same way that you would if you're buying a washing machine or whatever, because it's basically one or the other, there's not a million different types. So it's basically keeping on top of the general discussion and seeing which way. And I was probably swayed by the people, I had probably a narrow focus on what I was reading and listening to and so if they were Xbox apologist or whatever, I would have been persuaded towards Xbox.

EN: So quite a wide variety of sources, like podcasts, websites but there was a lot of focus on one or the other.

INT 2: Yeah, they all seemed to, especially around that time, everything I absorbed seemed to point more to PS4 than Xbox One. Because I think Xbox One had a lot of controversy when it was announced, more than the PS4 did. And the general thing that I got from reading people that I trusted was that it, you know, the always online stuff is controversial. And it was more being positioned as an entertainment hub rather than just a pure console.

EN: So did reading those kind of things make you want to research it further, or did you accept what people were saying?

INT 2: I think I probably accepted what they were saying, because I trusted their opinions and I found people who seemed to have the same kind of priorities in what they would be looking for as I did. Like, a focus on it being, because I think I was reading very game specific, people who were, very game specific stuff rather than more general technology reporting or whatever. So the guy on the BBC who does general technology reporting or

Click on something like that on the BBC which is a specific technology element of a big mainstream publisher, a big mainstream media source, like BBC or the Guardian or big names like that, the things that I were reading tended to be very individual voices very focused on the gaming itself. So, especially with the PS4 Xbox One thing, because the PS4 seemed to be more of a gamers' console and the Xbox One seemed to be more of an entertainment hub for your living room. And then I would go and also watch E3 reveal conferences and that kind of thing. So I would probably do it in the way that I would read articles or listen to podcasts or watch videos of people, trusted names that I liked and had been reading for a while, and they would say, this is what they said at E3 at the Xbox reveal, and then I would go back and watch the actual E3 reveal myself, to see if I kind of agreed with what they were saying and it usually... I would probably be coloured by their opinion first, because I'm very susceptible to people's opinions.

EN: So say there was a new generation of consoles released tomorrow. So you own an Xbox, you have owned an Xbox...

INT 2: Current generation, I own a PS4 only, I don't own an Xbox One.

EN: But you owned an Xbox 360?

INT 2: Yeah. Previous generation.

EN: So say there was a new drop of consoles tomorrow, you had money, money wasn't an issue but you could only afford one, can you describe the process you go through to choose that console?

INT 2: OK, so the first thing I would probably know about it is people, because I follow a lot of gaming journalists and enthusiasts on Twitter so I would see the social media chatter that this had happened. So there was a surprise announcement, tomorrow, both Sony and Microsoft both went, here's the new console, you can get it and this is what it looks like. So my first port of call would be Twitter, social media, more Twitter, Reddit, possibly. I don't really, when it comes to social media, does Reddit count as social media? I don't know.

EN: Yeah, I think so.

INT 2: I think I would look at Reddit but I wouldn't trust it because it's lots of anonymous people who I don't know and it seems to be quite flippant in its outlook. So I would see what the kind of general vibe of that section of the internet was, because I think that's quite representative of the hard-core basement dwelling idiots. So, yes, probably my first thing would be on Twitter so I would look at the people I follow on Twitter, they're people who I trust their opinion, who I know, who I like. Not personally, well, some of them I do, but knowledgeable sources that I know already, I would see what they are saying. From there, people would probably link to their own stuff on their own sites, there's a few sites that I would go to and see what they are writing about and see if they've got any specific content, and try and work out what the pros and cons of each one are. So, yeah, first social media. Then specific press online. I would then see if there was a general vibe going that one or the other seemed to be more highly praised. Because people would have different opinions and make different points about which one would be better, I'm sure, for whatever reason. So I would then go... From there I might do a bit of googling, so, if they said something specifically about a particular bit of functionality or something, or that it had this specific game or whatever, I would then go and Google those things and broaden out my search a bit to see what other big sources are saying.

EN: It's kind of a random question, not random, but would you have a timescale? How long would you...

INT 2: Say if they were released tomorrow?

EN: Would you go out, would it be, I'm going to research tonight and I'm going to buy one tomorrow?

INT 2: I'm not really a massive early adopter but if I had the money... Well, even if I had the money... OK, let's say that money is no option. No impediment or whatever. I would probably look around reviews. And I would also probably wait and see how they bed in, because if, say, they were both released tomorrow, then I would wait and see, a few weeks, maybe, and see what people playing them are saying. See what people on Twitter are saying, I've just bought this, and it does this and it's good, and this is bad. Because I think it's not, it takes a while for glitches to come out. Like, I remember there being a big thing about Skyrim, Skyrim is a big RPG game!

EN: I'll stick that in a footnote.

INT 2: I think it was out on the Xbox 360 and the PS3 at the same time and it was only after the releases had been out a while that people were seeing, there was a big, the PS3 one was a lot more buggy. Because it's such a huge game, it takes people a while to get into it and it takes a lot of people a lot of time to play it a lot to see what's going on. So then, on the PS3, the graphics were s--t, it was a lot more buggy. And so that kind of thing would probably make me, if there was a specific game that was going to be on both, like, a big branded game, like a new Elder Scrolls or a new GTA or Red Dead 2 or whatever, a big game that I would definitely want to play, then I'd have to decide which one to buy which would give a better performance. So, I would extend my research to watching people, Let's Plays and things like that. More video-based stuff to watch, if there was a specific game but I wanted. No, I wouldn't immediately go out and buy it. I'm not someone who needs to have it immediately, like, Oh, my God.

EN: So you'd see how things go, monitor the situation.

INT 2: Yeah, I would keep a very close eye on it and I would do a lot of... Probably a lot of my, if that were to happen, in the next few weeks, most of my research would be on the consoles rather than looking up anything else I would normally look up.

EN: And would that generally, is there a feeling from the start that, I am going to buy a console, and the result of that is that you buy a console, or have you ever considered buying a console and then not bought one because of something you may have read or found out about it?

INT 2: Yeah. I mean, for a long time, I was going to buy a PS3 and I kept putting off. This is when I had an Xbox 360, and then there were these games coming out that were PS3 exclusives and I was, I kept going, should I just buy one? And I kept putting it off because, I can't remember! Let me think about it. It would be such a lot of money, it would be a lot of, kind of, looking at... Well, it was for the PS3, it was entirely that there was a game I had seen so much of and read so much about that was, again, originally from my trusted sources, then going on. Like, sometimes searching and finding random people on YouTube playing it. And once you find them, it's odd, sometimes you get it from the most random sources. There is a site that I read quite a lot called AV Club which is all, basically, about, well, it has a games section but I don't really read it very much. It's mostly about TV and movies. But they do a thing of, what are you doing this weekend? And their writers will do a little paragraph. And

one of them once was, I watch this guy on YouTube playing Fallout and it's really good and really interesting. So from that I found this guy on YouTube who I now watch quite a lot of, loads and loads, he's very good, very insightful. And he's become a trusted source. Although he doesn't really talk about consoles much, he's very game focused. But you do sometimes find things from unexpected sources. So if that were to be, probably, something like that from the AV Club, if they did suddenly do that tomorrow, that would leak into more general mainstream stuff. It's quite a big deal. I can't remember where I was going with that, I thought I had a good point.

EN: Have you ever decided not to buy a console based on things you've found?

INT 2: Oh, yeah. So, when I was upgrading from a PS3, my Xbox 360 was pretty much, it was the end of the cycle but this was a couple of years into a new generation of PS4/Xbox One. And then I had a PS3 which tided me over and then that died, did it? I can't remember. Yes, it did. So then it was like, OK, now I have to upgrade. So a lot of what I read around that time was more pro-PS4 and it was pro-Xbox One. So that definitely would have pushed me in the direction. Although I probably would have, I don't know, because at that time I had been Xbox all the way and then only had a PS3 for a little... I'd had an Xbox for five, six years and then a PS3 for one. Although I'd had a PS2 before so I do hop around. You're just loyal to what you've got at the time, I reckon.

EN: So the result was buying a console, just which one?

INT 2: Yeah, I knew I needed to upgrade, I needed to buy a new generation. I do think that I always want to buy, I'm not usually in the first couple of years of a new generation but only because I'm stingy. If I was extremely rich, I would probably buy, still not within the first week or two, but within the first few months. If I was extremely rich, I don't think I would ever buy both. I know people do because there are still exclusive games on both sides even now. But I think, even if I was infinitely rich, I'd still think that's just a waste of the world's resources. Because, yeah, I don't know.

EN: I think that's kind of it, really.

INT 2: Are you sure?

EN: Do you play games on other devices, like your phone?

INT 2: Not very much, no.

EN: Have you ever been searching for one thing and found something console related then maybe you wanted to follow, did you follow it there or did you kind of store it for later? Console, rather than games. But game is relevant too if it was related to a console.

INT 2: Yes, because I've probably been, like I was saying with the Skyrim thing, I'm sure... I can't think of any good examples at the moment. I'm sure there's been, around the time that I would be looking, yeah, Skyrim is a good example. So it around the time that I would be looking to upgrade, I probably would have been looking at stuff about Skyrim specifically because I was interested in Skyrim. And that has led onto things saying, of course, the PS3 version is dogs--t. And the Xbox version is better. Which then I would use that and go, oh, that's interesting, and I would go and Google Skyrim PS3 versus, that kind of thing. But it would probably be, I don't think it would ever be from anything completely random. Apart from that AV Club thing which wasn't even about a console. It would normally be that I would be looking at other game related stuff and then it would... So it would never come at me completely randomly from something. Although, occasionally, like I said, the BBC will cover... The BBC is one of my main news sources, the BBC and the Guardian are probably

my main general news sources, just of what is going on in the world, and occasionally I will be browsing the BBC news site and the Guardian site and something will pop up about consoles and I will always click on it and see what they're talking about. Because even if it's something that I think that I, it's the weird thing of like, ooh, they're talking about something... It's like when you like a really obscure band and they're suddenly on the radio, and you're like, ooh! It's like, it's my little niche, well, it's not really niche, it's completely un-niche, but it still feels quite niche in a weird way. So I will always look at, if I'm just generally browsing on non-gaming specific things and something for gaming pops up I will always go and look at it to see what they think.

EN: Cool, thank you.

3) Interview 3.

EN: Thanks very much for agreeing to the interview, I really appreciate it.

INT 3: That's cool, so your thesis is on...

EN: It's the information behaviour of console gamers, when looking to purchase a new console. And the kind of resources people use, where they look for information, that kind of thing. Is there anything else you'd like to know?

INT 3: No, go right ahead.

EN: Cool. There might be a little bit of crossover with the survey, not too much, hopefully. Add it shouldn't take that long, 15 to 30 minutes, maybe.

INT 3: OK, that's fine.

EN: So I'll just kick off. Which consoles during the moment?

INT 3: I have all the current gen, the PS4 Pro, an Xbox One S. Not the X. Nintendo Switch. I still have a 3DS as well, and a Vita.

EN: I love the Switch. That's the next thing I'd like to buy. Is there one you would call your main console or is it kind of...

INT 3: I'd say the Switch is pretty much the one that I've been playing with the most of late. It's between that and the PS4, to be honest. So if it's, if there is a big triple A title, it will be PS4.

EN: Do you play games on PC as well, or is it just consoles?

INT 3: I don't have a PC. I have my Mac for work, but it's a very limited, of limited use, and Steam actually, I don't think I could use it at the moment because my Mac is a bit rubbish, it's a bit old. But not PC, no.

EN: So how often on average, average is a bad term, but do you play your games on the consoles? Say in an average week?

INT 3: A lot, I'd say, definitely, do you have a range?

EN: So, like, a few hours a day every day?

INT 3: Definitely a few hours a day. At least a few hours a day, definitely. Probably more sometimes because I also write about games as well.

EN: So you have to play games and you write about them?

INT 3: Yeah.

EN: Is their word you'd use to describe yourself as a gamer? Like, avid or casual?

INT 3: Avid, I'd definitely used avid in the past. Avid, knowledgeable. I suppose a core gamer as well. Someone who's grown up with it.

EN: So you've always had consoles growing up?

INT 3: Yeah, pretty much.

EN: And so what kind of game you like to play? Any particular type?

INT 3: Mostly into Japanese games. JRPGs, they have always been my favourites. I don't normally have time for them any more but they're still the ones I mostly go back to. That, action-based ones as well, and I also have time for a lot of indie games which is what I use the Switch a lot for. It's all the ones that are kind of based on classic styles, 2-D platform is, or Metroid games. Or, like, classic RPG styles as well.

EN: Do you play online at all?

INT 3: Not often, but, yeah, I've played a lot of Monster Hunter World this year, so a lot of that is online. I don't think I'm as actively online as other people because I don't have as many online friends, so that doesn't, playing socially online isn't as much of a priority.

EN: I'm the same, really, a lot of games that are designed for online use, you come across teams of players online. But I find I end up getting assigned with random people, a similar kind of thing. So do you play games on other devices, like your phone?

INT 3: Sometimes, sometimes, it's not usually the first choice but I do. I have an iPhone, so, it's not the latest model, but it allows me to play quite a few instances. Definitely stuff I try out, but I'm not as invested, but if I get to review something about it, Then I will, but don't go out of my way to do it.

EN: So obviously you have a lot of consoles, but, say, the next generation of consoles was coming out, and you were looking to purchase one, could you describe the process you'd go through when choosing?

INT 3: Because I always follow games press, games press reports and rumours and all that stuff, I already have a tentative...of what's happening next. So if they're putting it out that year, or in advance, about what the next generation console is, and seeing what the advantages of it is.

EN: Sure, sure, so you keep up-to-date?

INT 3: Yeah, I'm quite up-to-date on games, so I follow specialist press for that. I think the only console is bought in recent times before launch was the Switch.

EN: Did you pre-order?

INT 3: I pre-ordered, so that, it doesn't really count as next gen in a way, but it's still...

EN: Sure, yeah. Have you ever pre-ordered any other consoles, like your PS4?

INT 3: No, I got those later. Those I definitely waited until either there were more games on it, or there was a good bundle. I think that's the case, with most next gen consoles, unless it's got a decent line-up, there's not much incentive to buy straightaway. I think the last generation particularly, there was a lot of crossover. So there wasn't very much incentive. Especially in the first year, where it was remasters or slightly better ports. That was the case, I think.

EN: And so thinking about the last generation, did you own an Xbox 360 and a PS3 as well?

INT 3: Actually, I had a slight, I had a bit of a hiatus from games during the last generation, so I did actually catch up a bit late, I only caught up during this generation. But even then, before that, I took my time before I bought a new console. The generation before that, the GameCube, Xbox, PS2. I definitely didn't buy those at the current time. The only console I

actually bought really early was an important Dreamcast. That was about a year before it came out in the West. But otherwise, that was it.

EN: So you say you keep up-to-date with the press, official sources. Industry press?

INT 3: Mm-hmm.

EN: So you wouldn't have do, say, search Google for something that you needed to know?

INT 3: I'm on Twitter, so the usual latest news will be on my timeline. If I don't have, if it doesn't come on my Twitter, then I'd probably Google for more information.

EN: So do you follow the Twitter feed, and then...

INT 3: I follow most of the outlets, most of the game outlets, I'm most interested in, I follow them. So if they tweet any news or rumours or whatever, that's when I'll usually first see something. Other people go on forums and Reddit, I keep out of those. Usually, if a website reports on something on Reddit, then that's when I'll read about it. I don't actually go on Reddit.

EN: Is there any particular reason you don't?

INT 3: It's just a big rabbit hole of opinions. It's just too much, I just keep out of it. Last time I was on a forum was in the late '90s, and I kept out of it after that. Twitter is enough as it is, to be honest.

EN: There's so much to keep up-to-date with and get used to, isn't there? So you don't use any other kind of forms of social media, like Facebook?

INT 3: No, I was active on Facebook for a while, I still have my profile but I don't use it. I don't know what the algorithms are like any more. I think on Twitter, that's all I need.

EN: So you were saying you don't have a big group of friends online that you play games with?

INT 3: Not really, no.

EN: Do you write for magazines?

INT 3: Magazines and websites.

EN: Interesting. I think that's everything I need to know, really.

4) Interview 4.

EN: Thanks very much for taking part, I really appreciate it.

INT 4: That's OK, I understand, I was a student once.

EN: Did you do a Masters?

INT 4: I didn't do a Masters, but I know people that did. A lot of work goes into these things.

EN: As I said, I really appreciate it. Before we start, is there anything you'd like to know?

INT 4: Not specifically, no. I am OK with what I've read so far that you've sent through.

EN: Cool, and you're still OK for this to be recorded?

INT 4: Yes, that's fine.

EN: I'm going to delete everything after I've done my dissertation.

INT 4: OK.

EN: I should take 15 to 30 minutes, it shouldn't take long. And just kick off if that's OK.

INT 4: That's perfectly fine, yeah.

EN: Thank you. There might be some crossover with the survey, but not too much, hopefully. I'll start with what consoles you own.

INT 4: Currently I've got PS4, and a WiiU.

EN: Have you owned a Microsoft console in the past?

INT 4: I did have an Xbox, I don't think I ever... I did have a 360 as well, because I had the Kinect. It's a long time ago now.

EN: So why did you switch from Microsoft and Nintendo?

INT 4: Well, I suppose... My computer history, quick synopsis. It started off with old computers, I had a Spectrum, and then an Atari ST and things like that. My sister had a Sega Megadrive which I'd play on. When I was at university, a couple of friends, good friends got together and bought a PlayStation. And the year after they all went their different ways, so I bought it off them. So that's how I got into the PlayStation side. I've generally had every generation of the PlayStation since then. And I've bought the Xbox as... The first one I bought was because it had a hard disk which was something the PlayStation didn't have. I found it a selling point, plus they had Championship Manager on the Xbox at the time. And that's actually one of the drivers of why of why, I think, why I had the Xbox 360 because I still had the PlayStation. Well, actually, I had to get the Kinect, I thought that was potentially a quite interesting thing they were doing. Unfortunately, it never really panned out into too much. We offer had slight issues, I think our room was never quite big enough to really stand far enough away to do the Kinect property. But during all that time, I also owned, I would still say PlayStation was generally my main console.

EN: Do you PC game at all?

INT 4: Yes, yes, I suppose, I mean... Probably since meeting my wife in about 2000, she had a PC. Friends had PCs in the past so I played on theirs. I started playing games with my wife and then we ended up in a situation when we were playing things like Civilisation, still do. So we had a couple of computers that we could play that multiplayer, local area network. Then we also got into online gaming, like Guild Wars. So we were playing that together, and we still both own laptops now. For PC gaming stuff.

EN: With that, did you have a team of players that you would meet up with online?

INT 4: When we did the Guild Wars, we actually ran a Guild between me and my wife. And there was a, yeah, we had not huge Guild but there was sort of about between, about 20 regular people who would turn up the numbers fluctuated around about that.

EN: I've not played Guild Wars so I'm not sure how it works, is it your all linked up and you talk online?

INT 4: Well, the original one, you could text chat, it didn't have a voice service. So we eventually ended up renting a team speak server so that we could talk to people on team speak.

EN: And was the chat focused on the game, or would you talk about other things as well?

INT 4: Well, ours was social. Being, I suppose, you're on a European server so people you were talking to were from, some of them were from Denmark. We had some people in South Africa. Some other people up and down the country in England. There was definitely a social aspect. To the point where, later on down the line, one of the guys we used to play with, we actually went down to Devon on holiday and while we were there, we went down to see him, that's where he lived. And we actually going to their wedding in October.

EN: Oh, right, amazing!

INT 4: So it has had a long term relationship aspect from this. He's one of the only players who we still stay in touch with that we used to play Guild Wars with, but, yeah. It's unusual to have that kind of long-term relationships come from a computer game, I suppose.

EN: Yeah. It's good, though.

INT 4: Yes.

EN: And do you play games on your phone as well?

INT 4: I've got a couple of things I have on my phone, but I tend to play more on my pad than anything else. I've got an iPad, so I tend to play games on there.

EN: Is that casual games?

INT 4: There's a few of the casual games. I must admit, I've turned into... You pick some up, these free to play games, the downside is after a certain point, unless you're willing to put money in or you're spending a lot of hours on it every day, you hit the wall that you can't progress with. So I'm also a board game player, so I tend to pick up more of the board games apps. I've got one or two that I can play in 10 or 15 minutes, sort of time fillers. I suppose that's what I see pad gaming is for, more time filling and serious gaming.

EN: How many hours a week would you... a bad question, really, on average, what's an average week? But how many hours a week would you play games on consoles?

INT 4: On the console, it does vary. I try and schedule a couple of hours where I play with a couple of friends, we play Fortnite online. And then obviously, anything else is fitting round the kids, so it can be another... It depends what's going on, probably on average about five hours.

EN: I've not played Fortnite, I tried it, but I couldn't get on with it.

INT 4: I bought it on the PlayStation originally, into the save the world aspect rather than the battle royale. I'm too old to play things like battle royale because you get on there and all these youngsters who play it a lot, their reactions and things are like, I can't do that. I did have a couple of weeks of a while ago, I played battle royale a lot more, because we were playing that, my other friends hadn't bought in to save the world at the time. So we were playing battle royale, and I noticed a difference having time at home on my own while the kids were at school to actually play two or three hours a day, the difference it makes to how well you can play the game! I'm still not very good. But I'm definitely better than before. But, yeah, I prefer the more cooperative elements of the save the world aspect.

EN: So when you're playing with friends, again, do you talk about things other than gaming? Do you talk about other games that are available, or is it just focusing on that game?

INT 4: It's general chitchat. Again, on the PlayStation, I played a lot of World Of Tanks and got together with a group of people up and down the country in England, we meet together to play World Of Tanks. And other things like that. But the conversation would break out into general chitchat as well quite regularly.

EN: So now, I hope it's not an odd question, but say there was a new generation of consoles coming out, and you could buy one, can you describe the process you go through, how you'd choose that console?

INT 4: I suppose... I tend to look at, I do have a general preference for Sony. But I tend to also look into what the consoles are doing. With the Wii, or Nintendo, it had a habit of doing unusual things which I found quite interesting. Part of me will look into what software is going to be available, is there any sort of console specific software. So I will normally go on, I will have a look at the specs, but I find the specs don't really translate very well into how a console actually performs, really. A lot depends on the operating system and the programming that goes on behind it. So I will have a look and see what the differences are, in terms of things of things like, do they have a Blu-ray player, that multimedia aspect.

EN: Are you an early adopter or do you wait and see?

INT 4: I suppose, perhaps, not so much with the PlayStation 4, it slowed down a little bit, the more children I've gained, the slower it's got. But I've generally been a relatively early adopter. The temptation is definitely there right from the off. As soon as any of the new next ones are coming out, I've had a look, had a browse, tried to find any reviews, any other information. So that I can start the case to buy the next one and why it's so much better than the current one! Mainly to look into that to a certain degree. Obviously some of the consoles have offered the ability to play old games. But as much as I've always looked for that and found it a bit of a draw, I've also found the reality is that when I actually have a new console, it's been rare I've gone back and played the old games on the new console.

EN: Yeah, I'm the same, they all kind of seem a bit out of date.

INT 4: Yeah, it sounds really interesting, and I haven't got to buy a whole new load of games, but it's sometimes easier to keep your other console and just play them on that if you're really desperate to. But quite often, when you see the new graphics, the new functionality you get with a new console coming out, it's like, yeah, it doesn't... I wouldn't like to play that again now. So, yeah. I try and... Obviously price again becomes a big part of making choices in what I'd purchase.

EN: So where do you look for what the consoles can do? Online, or...

INT 4: Yeah, I do a sort of lots of online searches. You'll get some of the more known sites will put things up, Gamespot, IGN. And then obviously, I look at particularly, I'll do a Google search and see what comes up. Occasionally, I suppose you tend to see more YouTube videos relating to new stuff now. YouTube videos can be useful, but sometimes... It's mainly the credibility of where you're going to. I suppose that's why I like, certainly with IGN and Gamespot, you know the history of a website as such. Whereas obviously when you're just, sometimes there's some people in YouTube, you're picking on random people, you don't know where they're coming from in terms of what their preferences are and things like that. So they can provide you with some information but I'm always a little bit more wary of those.

EN: How about things like Twitter or Facebook, do you talk about consoles on there?

INT 4: Yes, I'm on both of those. I suppose I'm on both still, I think I would have let them both go, I think, if it hadn't had been for the fact that I follow a lot of, I follow games companies, more for the board game side. I do for some of the video games as well. So you know what's coming out and what's coming up. I see that as a good way of looking for information on what's coming in the future, because you tend to find a lot of that, you get a lot of information, or at least links, through Twitter and Facebook. And obviously people that you follow also broadcast these things out as something interesting is happening, I suppose, so it's quite a good way of finding new information on a lot of stuff.

EN: Do you ever find something that you might find useful, do you share that with other people?

INT 4: Sometimes. I try not to clutter Facebook and Twitter up with my rantings too often. Unless I feel like I have something to add. I will occasionally share something if I find it particularly interesting, but I normally work on the fact that if I've found it to somebody else's feed, inevitably, it might not be just you. Most people probably already know about it if I've found it, anyway.

EN: Do you buy any magazines?

INT 4: No, I don't tend to get magazines nowadays. I think I found that a lot of online sources fulfil the needs I need now. A magazine would be a bit of a waste of money, really, in a lot of ways.

EN: Did you use to back in the Spectrum days and things like that?

INT 4: Well, yes, actually. Those were the days when magazines are actually really useful because you would get demo tapes or CDs, discs and stuff, and you get some interesting stuff on there. But you don't get a lot of that with magazines now, I suppose, because a lot of companies are putting demos out on the internet, if they're available anyway. You don't get anything like in the old Spectrum days when you use to get programmes that you used to have to type in! Oh, the hours I spent typing programmes in out of magazines! A different world, I suppose, compared to where we are today.

EN: I had an Acorn electron, I used to do that and you'd run it and that be in error on line something or other, and it was like...

INT 4: I do remember doing one that took, I think, me and a friend, we spent all night, typing it in, and it never ran. And I'm not good enough to get in the programme and try and work out what was really wrong. I had a little tinker, but it was a lot of lines of code. So, very disappointing to say the least. But apart from that, I did occasionally used to have magazines but I'd tend pick them up more if I saw something interesting on the front of it. Rather than as a regular purchase.

EN: How about forums, do you visit forums, gaming forums?

INT 4: I tend to stay away from a lot of that stuff. I am on Reddit, but I don't tend to go on to Reddit very often. I tend to find a lot of forums, it's a lot more toxic in its environment. Very quickly, any useful information gets drowned out by lots of just arguments about what's important and not important, I suppose, sometimes. It's rubbish.

EN: Kind of not relevant to you at all.

INT 4: Yeah.

EN: Great stuff. I think we're kind of almost done, really. Just to go back to the social side of it, you play games with other people, do you have friends that have the same console and you meet up, or is it just a kind of...

INT 4: It's a bit of a mix. Because I suppose, I mean, I've got people that I've met through gaming online that I still play online with, that I've never actually met in person. Obviously now on PlayStation, I've got a list of people... It's dropped off a little bit recently because I've been playing different things. But still on your friends list, you still send messages to each other. And I think if I ever wanted to play a game with them, I'd shout out, they'd be there, we could play something. The one I play most frequently is my Wednesday night meet-up, and that's with somebody I know and a friend of his. And they knew each other in person but obviously used to play a lot of Team Fortress and stuff, a lot of first person shooters. They've done a Wednesday night thing for years, I think, so I've tagged into their group. But they're playing Fortnite, so they're playing on the PC and I'm playing on the PlayStation. But, yeah, the other thing I suppose is, I still play some stuff, quite a lot of couch co-op either with my wife or my daughter. Minecraft features quite heavily amongst that.

EN: Just one last one, have you ever been browsing on the web for something and then happened across something console related just purely by accident?

INT 4: I thought that's how the web works in general!

EN: Sure!

INT 4: I suppose, yeah, there have been certain instances where you're perhaps looking for something specific and you may be do get dragged into something. It all tends to be, if I'm looking for a type of game, perhaps, I maybe don't have a specific game in mind. I suppose this is a bit of an example in some ways, one of the board game podcasts I listen to, they were twitting out about video games. And obviously, they were looking for suggestions for games to play in that sort of two player couch co-op, sort of Boulder's Gate kind of, Diablo kind of thing. So I recommended Diablo as a possibility to play. But coming back from that conversation that happened, someone they know mentioned Divinity: Original Sin so I've recently picked number two up for the PlayStation, Based on seeing that and following up and looking at reviews and information and thinking, oh, yeah, that could be interesting for

me and my wife to have a go at. But otherwise, sometimes, I might be looking... I tend to be looking, I know there's a great website, Co-optimal or something like that. That has a list in couch co-op and other multiplayer games on the different consoles. And I find that a very useful way of going and looking for games that I can play with people I can sit with. One of the greatest things I miss from the more modern regime of consoles, I suppose, the last couple of generations, a lot of stuff has very much moved to online play rather than playing with the person sitting next to you. Perhaps I'm from the generation where you could play online games, play a game with someone who is sitting next to you. We had hours of fun, me and some of my friends, sitting there beating each other up on beat-em-ups, even to the point where we had original PlayStation 1s, we got a couple of them linked together so we could play Command and Conquer because we didn't have PCs. You can do that with two of you next to each other, you know where they are as well. So I'm kind of more used to, I missed that aspect of it more in terms of the sit and play with somebody. That's perhaps why Minecraft has been so popular, in terms of, you can all play together. You don't have to go online and sit in different rooms to play the same game.

EN: That's it from me.

5) Interview 5.

EN: So, what consoles do you own?

INT 5: I own a lot of consoles.

EN: Oh, yeah, I remember.

INT 5: So, what do I have? I've got a NES, SNES, Super Famicon, N64, Gamecube, Wii, Gameboy, Gameboy Advance, DS, 3DS, I've got a Sega Master System, Megadrive, Saturn, Dreamcast. Sony PlayStations 1, 2, 3. PSP, Vita, PlayStation TV. I've got an NEC PC Engine, an NEC PC FX. What else have I got? I have others, they'll come back to me. So I've pretty much got everything up until the current generation. I've got the Xbox original, Xbox 360.

EN: So nothing from the current generation?

INT 5: Nothing from the current generation, but I think I put on the survey that I use PlayStation Now, which is a streaming service. So I do have access to current console games, but just not with a physical console.

EN: Would you consider one of those to be your main console or would play them all?

INT 5: I play them all, I wouldn't say I have a main console. I usually just pick them up when I sort of, you know, whatever game I want to play. So I think it depends on what the game is I want to play. So that will be the decision in terms of what I, sort of, what console I play on. Because there's lots of platform exclusives and so on on consoles. So if I want to play Mario games, obviously, that's going to be on a Nintendo console. But, you know, if it's something that's perhaps cross-platform, then I'm possibly going to say pick up the PlayStation 3 over, say, an Xbox 360 port of the game.

EN: Is there any particular reason for that?

INT 5: Just usually, it's somewhat well known that the PlayStation 3 was somewhat superior to the Xbox 360. In terms of rendering resolutions and so on, and general stability of games in terms of frame rates. So it's usually one of the main reasons I would play PlayStation 3 over Xbox 360.

EN: But other than that, would you say you had an affinity with one particular manufacturer?

INT 5: None at all.

EN: On an average week, say, if there was such a thing, how many hours would you play games on consoles?

INT 5: That varies, depending whether I've got the time. I'd say currently I'm probably maybe playing may be an hour or two a day.

EN: And so, clearly, you've got a lot of consoles, how would you describe yourself as a gamer?

INT 5: I'd say I'm gaining connoisseur. Very much, I do enjoy playing retro games as well. I'm not really, I don't get excited about new games, or what's upcoming, really. It's sort of, I just generally will play anything from any period that takes my fancy.

EN: Do you PC game or play games on your mobile phone at all?

INT 5: I am predominantly a PC gamer. And I don't game at all on my phone.

EN: So, I've got kind of a hypothetical situation. So, say there were a new generation of consoles being released, imminently. And he wanted to pick one to buy. Can you describe the process you'd go through to find out which one you choose?

INT 5: I mean, I wouldn't really care about say, the hardware specifications. Things like that aren't too important to me these days. So my main place of interest would be the video games themselves. So, what's the launch line-up, what's the future launch, what's the line-up of games after launch? So I sort of look at what currently being presented on launch and then look further ahead just to see how many developers are on board with the console, and whether or not any of the games seem interesting or whether or not the companies that are developing are reputable in a way.

EN: How do you go about finding out about that kind of information?

INT 5: I probably just Google it, find some random games, gaming sort of general gaming magazine. If not Reddit.

EN: Not Reddit? Sorry, you would or you wouldn't use Reddit?

INT 5: I probably would look at Reddit. They're usually quite good at compiling information, well, the users are, so, I'd possibly find thing of value on there.

EN: So you'd just go onto forums?

INT 5: I wouldn't go seeking out a forum. If it's happening on a forum that I follow, then I might sort of read into it. But I probably wouldn't seek out a forum that I don't frequent normally.

EN: Any particular reason?

INT 5: I think, you know, the forums, the forums that I use have got quite a healthy community, so I generally trust their commenters on there.

EN: Do you recognise people's names on posts, and so you choose them, or read that they write over someone you don't know?

INT 5: Again, I probably wouldn't choose their comment over somebody else's, if they were new to the forum. Because you get new people on there with opinions and so on all the time. So I'd read their comments. Unless they say something incredibly stupid, I wouldn't ignore them.

EN: You said games were important when buying a console.

INT 5: Yeah.

EN: On the web, say, would you use videos, like YouTube, to have a look at them or would you use more text-based review?

INT 5: I would generally rely on text-based reviews. Of course, I would watch a video if there is, like, gameplay footage, just to sort of get an idea of the feel of the game. In terms of like if it's a YouTuber on a gaming channel, and there's a commenter, I don't really have any go to sources for that, people that I sort of trust in a way, unless it's more retrospective gaming. But for new and upcoming games or gaming reviews, I'm not really sure about YouTube. Whether or not I consider that to be a trustworthy source. Especially if it's coming from a game journalist, so to speak.

EN: How about social media, Facebook, Twitter? Do you follow...

INT 5: I do follow, I guess, gaming related channels. But Twitter and Facebook, I don't really do that.

EN: Any particular reason?

INT 5: Partly because you know, they're sort of bite sized tweets, so there's only so much you can say in a tweet. It might of course contain a link towards an article, but I wouldn't seek that information out on Twitter. I'd probably just directly search for it on the web.

EN: Going back to the theoretical buying of a console, do you take your time and search over time, or would you think, I want to buy a console, so let's sit down and research it and go away and buy one?

INT 5: Well, I probably wouldn't worry too much about researching the console, again, it comes back to the games. So if there's a game which I consider to be a killer app, and I have to have that game, I will just buy a console outright with the game. So it would be more of an impulse decision based on the game. There's one other thing that does affect my consideration of buying consoles, which I didn't mention in the survey. Another consideration that affects my decision to purchase something is whether or not it's hackable. So I do generally always hack my consoles at some point.

EN: Oh, I see, right, yes.

INT 5: Or get (INAUDIBLE) if you're in the olden days.

EN: Is that something you have learned how to do over time?

INT 5: I've been doing it since the late '90s, so, I sort of was aware of the hacking scene and modding scene for quite a while. It's one of those things I do keep an eye on. It's almost in the back of my mind when I do look at the console.

EN: Are there any particular helpful resources with that, that help you find out how to do it, or is it something you just know how to do?

INT 5: Generally, you do get resources. You do get hacker specific sites such as wololo.net or I think there's another one, it's a French one, I think that's called something paradise. So, yeah, there are these sort of, I guess, websites. They are kind of geared towards hackers or people who like to hack consoles and so on.

EN: We're nearly at the end, really. Just on web searching, when you're searching for information, can you think, has there ever been a time where you've been say, searching about one topic and then you just happen to find information on a console or gaming, almost by accident, bumping into it?

INT 5: Um... Typically no. I mean I usually have a good idea about what I'm seeking beforehand but in terms of accidentally finding things, it would be more likely to do, say, something to do more with retro gaming. So I could be sort of, you know, looking up for a console, then I could find people comparing it to another console in terms of capabilities and so on. So, OK, that's interesting, so look into that.

EN: Would you put it aside or would you follow it there and then?

INT 5: I'd probably follow it there and then and sort of file to memory.

EN: I think that's everything.

INT 5: OK.

EN: Thanks very much.

13) Appendix E: semi-structured interview questions.

- How many hours a week do you play games on consoles?
- How would you describe yourself as a gamer? (eg casual, avid)
- What consoles do you own?
- Have you ever upgraded to a newer version of this console?
- What made you decide to do so/not do so?
- What types of games do you like to play?
- Play online? Chat with other gamers?
- Do you talk to friends about consoles? What types of things? Games? Consoles themselves?
- Do you play games on other devices, eg phone?
- What types of games?
- What would you consider your main console?
- Can you describe the process you go through when choosing a new console?
- What resources do you use?
- Are they text-based or others as well like videos?
- Do you use social media to discuss consoles/find information?
- Why use them (as opposed to alternatives)?
- If the web, are there any particular sites you refer to? How do you search for information? (eg bag of words/advanced search/search casually/take your time)
- Are you a member of any gaming forums?
- If yes, why?
- If no, why not?
- If yes, are there posters who you would choose to prioritise/ignore over others?
- Are you an early adopter of consoles? Why/why not?
- If yes, do you find this affects the resources you use in any way?

14) Appendix F: proposal and ethics checklist.

Dissertation Proposal.

Working title:

Goodbye, [Microsoft/Sony]... Hello, [Microsoft/Sony]: An investigation into the information behaviour of console gamers when deciding which console to purchase.

Introduction:

I wish to investigate the information behaviour of the gaming community in the specific task of purchasing a new console: through which media is information sought, actively or passively, and how is this information weighted, or judged, prior to resolution, or (non-)purchase.

It is intended that the main focus of this investigation will be on the Sony and Microsoft consoles (PlayStation and Xbox respectively), for the reason that they are in competition with each other; however, users of other consoles, such as the Nintendo Wii, Wii U and Switch, can provide a rich stream of data into information behaviour in this area.

I propose to conduct this investigation through two means: initially a survey will be pushed through social media. Secondly, incorporated into the survey will be a way of measuring interest in follow-up, semi-structured, interviews which will provide a complementary, in-depth picture of how an information need is identified, what its criteria are, and how it is resolved.

Aims and objectives:

In November of 2013, Microsoft and Sony released their eighth-generation home video game consoles, the Xbox One and PlayStation 5 respectively, yet for long before this there had been rumours and leaks about and on both consoles, positive and negative.

There was considerable concern in the console gaming community at the time with regard to Microsoft's digital rights management (DRM) policy and an "always-on" internet connection that would be required to play games.

In response to such measures, gaming-related social media platforms like YouTube and forums were awash with posts which can, broadly speaking, be placed into two categories: reactionary, dismissive, statements of, "Goodbye, [Microsoft/Sony], I'm not buying this," and considered, informative, statements which discussed the issues in a rational manner. At the very least, the gaming community's reaction to these issues can be described as, "...a huge backlash" (Stuart, 2013).

The outcry over the issues forced Microsoft into a climb-down, and in a statement released on their website (Your Feedback Matters - Update On Xbox One", 2013), it was explained that an internet connection would not be needed to play games offline, and that there would be no restrictions on using and sharing games. It has been stated that Microsoft's vision for the Xbox had been poorly communicated (Kuchera, 2017), which necessitated the policy reversal.

Regardless of the climb-down, that poor communication indicated a failure at the first two links of the information chain (Robinson, 2009, p.582), creation and dissemination, which, further down the line, affected how that information was used, resulting, perhaps, in the aforementioned reactionary statements.

The overarching aim of this dissertation will be to investigate how gamers seek out and use information with regards to the significantly expensive purchase of a new console. Such an investigation holds particular relevance in today's gaming market: the PlayStation 3 was released in the US on 17th November 2006 (Vas, 2013), and the PlayStation 4 on 15th November 2013 (O'Brien, 2013), giving a generation lifecycle, albeit rather roughly sketched, at seven years. Although there is no official confirmation that a new PlayStation console is in development, there are already rumours that development kits for a "PlayStation 5" have been issued to developers (Phipps, 2018).

The objectives will be to discover how gamers encounter information when looking to purchase a new console. Does discovering information passively, through, say, browsing the world wide web or within a social context, create an information need, leading to a desire to actively seek out the information required to resolve it? How is it judged to be resolved? What are the sources, or documents, used in order to satisfy the information need? Are they formal sources, for example official websites or magazines, or informal, such as forums? Are the sources' relevance based on their formal or informal nature? For example, is "a friend who knows about these things" adjudged to be of greater relevance than a press release? Is the information search biased in any way; in other words, does owning, say, an Xbox 360 mean that priority is given to seeking out information about the Xbox One console, or is it a holistic information search in which information is required on all possible outcomes?

One consideration which might have to be taken into account is, does the information behaviour of someone who identifies as a "gamer" change significantly when searching for information about a console, or is it representative of their information behaviour in general? Does "donning a gaming hat" result in a different information retrieval method than searching for general everyday information?

Scope and definition:

In this investigation, "home video game consoles" will be taken to mean any console used to play video games in a home environment. As has previously been stated, the idea to research issue under investigation, the information of the gaming community with regard to purchasing a new console, originally arose because of the controversy surrounding the release of the current generation, the Xbox One, Playstation 4, and any associated hardware revisions (PS4 Slim, PS4 Pro, Xbox One S, and Xbox One X), yet the Nintendo consoles Wii, Wii U and Switch are also a relevant area of research for the subject matter. For clarity, "current generation" will refer to the latest versions of consoles currently available, in other words, the eighth generation. This will include: the Wii U, Nintendo Switch, PS4 and Xbox One (including the stated hardware revisions). Microsoft, Nintendo and Sony might well be said to be the "giants" of console gaming, however, hardware such as the Ouya may also be included in the "eighth generation" category of consoles. "Previous generation" will be taken to mean the seventh generation of consoles: generally speaking the Nintendo Wii, Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3.

It is intended that this investigation will be limited to the current generation and previous generation. The previous generation of consoles began with the release of the Xbox 360 in 2005, and the current generation with the release of the WiiU in 2012, followed a year later by the PS4 and Xbox One. It is anticipated that beyond this, information recall by those who

complete the survey or take part in follow-up interview would not be sufficiently accurate to be of relevance to the study.

It is not intended that handheld consoles like the Nintendo 3DS and PlayStation Vita will be included in the research. Currently it is possible to purchase a Nintendo 2DS bundled with a game for £79.99¹⁶, and it is believed that, whilst certainly not being cheap, the consideration given to purchasing one might well be less than a £249.99¹⁷ PS4 Slim, and so the information-seeking behaviour would not be comparable in terms of depth or range.

The term “gamer” can be said to be a rather wide-ranging category, and might include those who play games on a casual basis, through to those involved with the now-booming e-Sports business, in which teams of paid professional gamers take part in competitions with considerable monetary rewards. For the purposes of this investigation, “gamer” will be taken to mean those who play at home, casually or more seriously, but not those professional gamers, because their information needs, behaviour, and, indeed, console needs, would not provide relevant data in this case.

Research context/literature review:

Previous research into information behaviour is extensive, and ranges from the micro to the macro. Jaeger and Burnett (2010, p.20), in developing the notion of information worlds, note that Chatman focused almost exclusively on localised communities, whilst Haberman tends to disregard how, “..broader society might interact with [...] localised contexts and specific communities.” However, research into gaming from a library and information science perspective has tended to focus on the games themselves, or what role a library should play with regard to gaming.

With this in mind, this investigation into information behaviour concerning the means to play those games - the consoles - holds at least some originality. Although this means that a literature review will necessarily have to be primarily focused on how the macro theories may be related to this very specific task, research papers investigating video games themselves do hold relevance.

Clarke et al’s (2015, p3) recent study into video game information needs and behaviour posits that there is not enough information available on, “..the kinds of information needs game users have, where they go to see game-related information, how they seek new games...”, and whilst it is acknowledged that there is still work to do when considering the literature to review, having conducted some research into the area of general information behaviour theories, there are a number of key texts that must be investigated.

Chatman’s *Life In The Round*, with its focus on “small worlds” has direct relevance to the specific world of the gaming community, and the idea expressed in proposition five, that, “Members who live in the round will not cross the boundaries of their world to seek information,” (Chatman, 1999, p.214), can be related to, for example, gaming forums on the web, or gaming magazines.

However, Jaeger and Burnett (2010, p.30) argue that, “..small worlds exist within a broader lifeworld context, which influences them.” In this way, one of the aims of this research is to investigate if information behaviour differs when searching for information as an inhabitant of

¹⁶ <http://www.argos.co.uk/product/3491159>, checked on 14/05/2014

¹⁷ <http://www.argos.co.uk/search/playstation-4/>, checked on 14/05/2014

the gaming world and when searching for information in some other capacity, as an inhabitant of an unrelated small world, and so the information worlds theory will be explored in the literature review.

The models of information behaviour that will be considered and discussed in a gaming context within the literature review are:

- Chatman's Life In The Round.
- Jaeger and Burnett's Information Worlds.
- Ellis' Model of Information-Seeking Behavior.
- Fisher's Information Grounds.
- Kuhlthau's Information Search Process.
- Erdelez's Information Encountering.

Texts that will be examined include, but are not limited to:

- Case DO, Given LM, (2016), Looking for information: a survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior, Emerald Publishing
- Fisher K, Naumer C, Durrance J, Stromski L & Christiansen T (2005), Something old, something new: preliminary findings from an exploratory study about people's information habits and information grounds, Information Research, 10 (2) paper 223 [Available at <http://InformationR.net/ir/10-2/paper223.html>]
- Savolainen R, (1995), Everyday life information seeking: Approaching information seeking in the context of "way of life", Library and Information Science Research, 17 (3), pp.259-294
- Savolainen R, (1995), Small world and information grounds as contexts of information seeking and sharing, Journal of Documentation, 73 (5), pp.934-952

In addition, it is clear from the literature which examines gaming in particular that there is a strong social context regarding information behaviour. Papers that discuss this within a specific context, for example the virtual world Second Life, will be examined and reviewed against the aforementioned models.

Methodology:

It is intended that, initially, a survey will be rolled out through social media and email, which will be qualitative in nature. Incorporated into this survey will be a means to register interest in providing follow-up interviews which can be used to triangulate the survey information. Thought must be given to the fact that any survey, if too long or complicated to complete, will be dismissed by any potential respondent, and so further relevant information will be obtained through interviews.

The interviews will be semi-structured, with a list of questions prepared in advance, yet questioning will depend on how the interview proceeds: if it becomes apparent that more suitable questions will reap more relevant information, then the semi-structured format will allow these to avenues to be followed. Survey and interview questions will be formed around the areas specified in the "aims and objectives" section of this proposal. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed, and examined alongside the survey responses so that common themes regarding information behaviour may be extrapolated.

All research data will be stored on a personal laptop which is password protected, and will be deleted as necessary after the project is completed. Data will be anonymised within the dissertation itself.

Dissemination:

It is intended to write regular blogs whilst undertaking the research, which will be linked to on various social media platforms, for example Facebook and Twitter. It is hoped that in doing so, the research project itself will become publicised, and therefore enhance the survey's possibility of being completed by both a significant number of respondents, and increase the range of type (eg age, gender) of respondents.

After completion, and only if the project is successful, the completed dissertation will be deposited on the Humanities Commons website.

Work plan:

The final deadline for the research project is 1st October 2018, and accordingly, the following work schedule has been drawn up...

Mid-May to end of June:

- Background reading.
- Literature review.
- Survey produced and disseminated, interview questions defined.

July:

- Literature review continued if necessary.
- Follow-up interviews.
- Interview transcriptions.

August to end of September:

- Write-up and proofing.

Resources:

No specialist hardware or software is required to complete this research project: a personal laptop will be used to store data and write up the project.

It is believed that no significant cost will be incurred with regard to travel. The cost of phone interviews will be absorbed by the researcher, but these should not be significant either.

Ethics:

The ethics checklist has been completed, and is included after the references section.

Confidentiality:

All research material - survey responses, interview transcripts - will be stored on a personal laptop which is password protected. All respondents' identities will be anonymised within the dissertation itself.

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Part A: Ethics Checklist

Ethics Review Form: LIS Masters projects

In order to ensure that proper consideration is given to ethical issues, all students undertaking the LIS dissertation project must complete this form and attach it to their dissertation proposal. Consult your supervisor if anything in this form is unclear or problematic. There are two parts:

Part A: Ethics Checklist. All students must complete this part. The checklist identifies whether the project requires ethical approval and, if so, where to apply for approval. Students who answer 'yes' to any of questions 1-18 should consult their supervisor, as they may need approval from the ethics committee.

Part B: Ethics Proportionate Review Form. This part is an application for ethical approval of low-risk research. Students who have answered “no” to questions 1 – 18 and “yes” to question 19 in the checklist must complete this part; students who have answered 'no' to all the questions 1-19 may ignore this part. The supervisor has authority to approve this application.

Part A: Ethics Checklist

If your answer to any of the following questions (1 – 3) is YES, you must apply to an appropriate external ethics committee for approval:		<i>Delete as appropriate</i>
1.	Does your project require approval from the National Research Ethics Service (NRES)? (E.g. because you are recruiting current NHS patients or staff? If you are unsure, please check at http://www.hra.nhs.uk/research-community/before-you-apply/determine-which-review-body-approvals-are-required/)	No
2.	Will you recruit any participants who fall under the auspices of the Mental Capacity Act? (Such research needs to be approved by an external ethics committee such as NRES or the Social Care Research Ethics Committee http://www.scie.org.uk/research/ethics-committee/)	No
3.	Will you recruit any participants who are currently under the auspices of the Criminal Justice System, for example, but not limited to, people on remand, prisoners and those on probation? (Such research needs to be authorised by the ethics approval system of the National Offender Management Service.)	No

If your answer to any of the following questions (4 – 11) is YES, you must apply to the Senate Research Ethics Committee for approval (unless you are applying to an external ethics committee):		<i>Delete as appropriate</i>
4.	Does your project involve participants who are unable to give informed consent, for example, but not limited to, people who may have a degree of learning disability or mental health problem, that means they are unable to make an informed decision on their own behalf?	No
5.	Is there a risk that your project might lead to disclosures from participants concerning their involvement in illegal activities?	No
6.	Is there a risk that obscene and or illegal material may need to be accessed for your project (including online content and other material)?	No
7.	Does your project involve participants disclosing information about sensitive subjects?	No
8.	Does your project involve you travelling to another country outside of the UK, where the Foreign & Commonwealth Office has issued a travel warning? (http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/)	No
9.	Does your project involve invasive or intrusive procedures? For example, these may include, but are not limited to, electrical stimulation, heat, cold or bruising.	No
10.	Does your project involve animals?	No
11.	Does your project involve the administration of drugs, placebos or other substances to study participants?	No

<p>If your answer to any of the following questions (12 – 18) is YES, you should consult your supervisor, as you may need to apply to an ethics committee for approval.</p>		<p><i>Delete as appropriate</i></p>
12.	Does your project involve participants who are under the age of 18?	No
13.	Does your project involve adults who are vulnerable because of their social, psychological or medical circumstances (vulnerable adults)? This includes adults with cognitive and / or learning disabilities, adults with physical disabilities and older people.	No
14.	Does your project involve participants who are recruited because they are staff or students of City University London? For example, students studying on a particular course or module. (If yes, approval is also required from the Project Tutor.)	No
15.	Does your project involve intentional deception of participants?	No
16.	Does your project involve identifiable participants taking part without their informed consent?	No
17.	Does your project pose a risk to participants or other individuals greater than that in normal working life?	No
18.	Does your project pose a risk to you, the researcher, greater than that in normal working life?	No

<p>If your answer to the following question (19) is YES and your answer to all questions 1 – 18 is NO, you must complete part B of this form.</p>		
19.	Does your project involve human participants? For example, as interviewees, respondents to a questionnaire or participants in evaluation or testing.	Yes

Part B: Ethics Proportionate Review Form

If you answered YES to question 19 and NO to all questions 1 – 18, you may use this part of the form to submit an application for a proportionate ethics

review of your project. Your dissertation project supervisor will review and approve this application.

The following questions (20 – 24) must be answered fully.		<i>Delete as appropriate</i>
20.	Will you ensure that participants taking part in your project are fully informed about the purpose of the research?	Yes
21.	Will you ensure that participants taking part in your project are fully informed about the procedures affecting them or affecting any information collected about them, including information about how the data will be used, to whom it will be disclosed, and how long it will be kept?	Yes
22.	When people agree to participate in your project, will it be made clear to them that they may withdraw (i.e. not participate) at any time without any penalty?	Yes
23.	<p>Will consent be obtained from the participants in your project, if necessary? Consent from participants will only be necessary if you plan to gather personal data. “Personal data” means data relating to an identifiable living person, e.g. data you collect using questionnaires, observations, interviews, computer logs. The person might be identifiable if you record their name, username, student id, DNA, fingerprint, etc. <i>If YES, attach the participant information sheet(s) and consent request form(s) that you will use. You must retain these for subsequent inspection. Failure to provide the filled consent request forms will automatically result in withdrawal of any earlier ethical approval of your project.</i></p> <p>The adult consent form template will be adapted and emailed to those who wish to complete the survey as part of the survey, and those who express a willingness to be interviewed will be sent the form at least a week before the interview is conducted.</p>	Yes

24.	<p>Have you made arrangements to ensure that material and/or private information obtained from or about the participating individuals will remain confidential? Provide details: All data obtained as part of the research project will be stored on a home laptop which is password protected.</p>	Yes
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<p>If the answer to the following question (25) is YES, you must provide details</p>		<p><i>Delete as appropriate</i></p>
25.	<p>Will the research involving participants be conducted in the participant's home or other non-University location? It is intended that interviews will be conducted over the phone, and so no special safety arrangements are required.</p>	Yes

<p>Attachments (these must be provided if applicable):</p>	<p><i>Delete as appropriate</i></p>
<p>Participant information sheet(s)</p>	<p>Not available</p>
<p>Consent form(s)</p>	<p>Not available</p>
<p>Questionnaire(s)**</p>	<p>Not available</p>
<p>Topic guide(s) for interviews and focus groups**</p>	<p>Not available</p>
<p>Permission from external organisations (e.g. for recruitment of participants)**</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

Templates

The University provides templates which should be used as the basis for your participant information sheets and consent forms. These are available from the links below but must be adapted according to the needs of your project before they are submitted for consideration.

Adult information sheet:

http://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/word_doc/0018/153441/TEMPLATE-FOR-PARTICIPANT-INFORMATION-SHEET.doc

Adult consent form:

http://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/word_doc/0004/153418/TEMPLATE-FOR-CONSENT-FORM.doc

15) Appendix G: reflection.

This reflection is designed to be a personal take on the dissertation process, and will outline and discuss what has been learned throughout the experience.

Writing a dissertation is an upsettingly hard task. 15,000 words is the equivalent of four essays, or a term's worth of work, yet there is so much more to it than that. If it was just the writing, that would probably be fine; however, there are so many more aspects to it, and each is an extremely important factor in its success or failure.

It is believed that the proposal for this paper was highly focused and clearly outlined what was intended to be investigated. Upon implementation, however, it unravelled rather rapidly. I attribute this to a lack understanding of how things should proceed, and perhaps being a little ambitious in what I was trying to achieve.

Four months to complete a dissertation seems like rather a long time, yet as the days dissolved away, intrusive thoughts of, "I've messed this up," became stronger and more urgent. That is not to say, however, that the time was entirely wasted.

June and the first part of July were taken up with background reading for the literature reviews. It was felt that two forms of these were required: one, a full account of the state of console gaming and, two, an account of the literature concerning information behaviour.

Having set out with a clear idea of how I wanted to organise the dissertation, once I started writing about consoles, this became muddled. The aims, objectives and research questions needed to be stated clearly, yet it was felt that without an initial in-depth discussion of console gaming, these would remain rather vague and unfamiliar to the reader. Therefore, a preface was included which outlined what was intended with the first three chapters, to allow the reader to logically follow them.

The definitions in the Console Gaming chapter lead on to the research aims, objectives and questions, which lead on to the literature review. On reflection, this, it is believed, is a logical, although perhaps unorthodox, progression.

Regarding the reading for the literature review, I am sure it is a common theme for masters students that it is difficult to know when to stop. Many papers outside the cited items were read, although in the writing of the paper they were not referred to. That is not to say, however, that they were not useful; indeed, they helped to form an enriched understanding of both information behaviour and console gaming.

After the literature review reading was completed, the survey was constructed and distributed. It is noted that there were two responses that offered rather incisive criticisms and this, honestly, knocked me for six, and leads on to a key facet that has been learned in this dissertation process.

It is not just the writing of the dissertation that requires attention: the masters student is immediately required to become an expert in whatever methodology they utilise. A survey is required to be perfectly worded, interviews are to be conducted professionally.

The criticism of the survey was that it was rather leadingly worded. On reflection, I would have constructed it entirely differently, yet it was felt that they directly addressed the research questions. Indeed, on reflection, I may not have included a survey at all. The

interviews offered far more meaningful data, and if I were to do this again, I might only issue a plea for interview candidates on social media.

As it is, it was anticipated that 20 responses would represent a significant success, and if it had been known how many people would give up their time to complete it, more open-ended questions would have been included. In the end, though, I was a little overwhelmed with the number of respondents and the data gathered. There was a little too much of it to analyse in great detail.

20 respondents to the survey provided their email addresses, indicating they would be willing to participate in an interview. Six people were interviewed. Three of these were conducted with someone known to me, which helped to hone both the questions and process. However, the results of one interview was not included.

Three interviews were conducted over the phone and recorded via a phone app, and three were conducted face-to-face. Two of these face-to-face interviews were conducted in a controlled environment, yet the third took place outside, over lunch. This meant that the recording was of poor quality, and also that extensive notes could not be taken.

On reflection, this interview would have been conducted over the phone so that the data could have been included in the research. The discussion was valuable to the research, yet recall was not sufficiently extensive that it would be significant to the research.

Having never previously conducted an interview, I learned a lot about the process over the six interviews, to the point where by the last one, I felt as if I knew what I was doing sufficiently to both guide the interviewee when we were straying into unimportant areas, and to let the interviewee carry on speaking when they were offering valuable thoughts.

Everything takes longer than anticipated. This counts for aspects like the completion of the literature review, yet also such seemingly simple tasks like composing a participation information sheet and consent form to send out to potential interviewees.

Previous City LIS dissertations on the Humanities Commons website were consulted, yet the issue was compounded by the recent GDPR regulations which had not been required to be considered by recent alumni. It was deemed extremely important for this research that, having constructed and disseminated the survey, and completed the interviews, the data from them could be used, and not “not used” because of the wording of the participant information sheet and consent form.

In the proposal for this dissertation I indicated that six, rather than four, theories of information behaviour would be examined. However, owing to time constraints, Chatman’s theory of life in the round and Kuhlthau’s information search process were dropped. It was believed that Jaeger and Burnett’s information worlds, with its borrowing heavily from Chatman’s ideas, would be unnecessarily mean duplicating work. Kuhlthau’s ISP was dropped during the first interview, when it was realised that, owing to the limited time of the interviews – one in particular had to be rearranged due to other commitments – a decision had to be made as to what was more important and meaningful to discuss. Here, the overly-ambitious theme mentioned earlier raises its head.

Throughout the dissertation process, time was a constant agitator of stress, although in the end I wish at the start of the process I had had a little more confidence in my abilities. This would have allowed me to enjoy it, rather than feel constantly under the cosh.