

# The Information Behaviour of Authors of Children's and Young Adult Literature

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the  
*Degree of Doctor of Philosophy*

2015

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It's the books that you read when you're young that live with you forever.

- J.K. Rowling

# ABSTRACT

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The study explored the information behaviour of authors of children's and young adult literature in both the United States and the United Kingdom. In addition, it sought to determine whether personality and cognitive styles had any influence on this behaviour. The contribution of this study to the research base is due to the focus on a group of creative professionals that has received little attention in the information seeking field and has so far been under-researched.

The study followed a concurrent embedded qualitative dominant mixed methods research design. Instruments included in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 38 authors that took place in the natural work setting of these individuals, the BFI personality questionnaire, and the ASSIST learning styles questionnaire, modified to apply to the working lives of authors. Analysis of the qualitative interviews followed an inductive grounded theory approach with constant comparison and emerging codes while the quantitative results were analysed in SPSS with descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

Results from the quantitative elements demonstrated clear links between personality and cognitive styles and a significantly high openness to experience for this group of creative professionals. The qualitative data portrayed a group of authors with diverse and idiosyncratic needs. The combination of the two data sets showed relationships between all three elements, leading to the development of five information styles for authors and a model of information seeking for the group as a whole.

Key recommendations to information providers include enhancing resource access for authors, developing programmes to assist them in learning more about library resources as well as subject matter related to their novels, and providing creative workspaces that would double as an "office" environment. Recommendations for publishing professionals involves setting up a network of experts for authors to utilise for information, as well as obtaining key information from the target audience. These recommendations could assist authors in the development of their works and provide them with easier access to the sources they deem valuable.

Future research could examine a larger sample of authors, including those who write for adults. Doing so could highlight any differences in author groups and further enhance the findings of this study.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr. Allen Foster and Professor David Ellis, for the support, encouragement, and guidance. I would also like to thank the rest of the Department of Information Studies at Aberystwyth University for providing a supportive environment during my studies.

I would especially like to thank all of my wonderful participants, who took time out of their busy conference schedules to interview and fill out the questionnaires. Without them, this study would not have been possible.

Finally, my gratitude goes out to my family and friends, particularly my parents, who have supported me every step of the way. And to Josh, I couldn't have done this without you.

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# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>ALSI</b>	Approaches to Learning and Studying Inventory
<b>ASI</b>	Approaches to Studying Inventory
<b>ASSIST</b>	Approaches to Study Skills Inventory for Students
<b>BFI</b>	Big Five Inventory
<b>CSA</b>	Cognitive Styles Analysis
<b>EFT</b>	Embedded Figures Test
<b>ENTJ</b>	Extraverted, Intuition, Thinking, Judging
<b>EPQ</b>	Eysenck Personality Questionnaire
<b>EPQ-R</b>	Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire
<b>ESFP</b>	Extraverted, Sensing, Feeling, Perceiving
<b>FFM</b>	Five Factor Model
<b>INFP</b>	Introverted, Intuition, Feeling, Perceiving
<b>ISBN</b>	International Standard Book Number
<b>JUSTEIS</b>	JISC Usage Surveys: Trends in Electronic Information Services
<b>KAI</b>	Kirton Adaptor-Innovator Inventory
<b>LSI</b>	Learning Styles Inventory (Kolb)
<b>LSQ</b>	Learning Styles Questionnaire
<b>MBTI</b>	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Test
<b>MG</b>	Middle Grade
<b>NEO-FFI</b>	NEO Five Factor Inventory
<b>NEO-PI-R</b>	NEO Personality Inventory Revised
<b>PB</b>	Picture Books
<b>RASI</b>	Revised Approaches to Studying Inventory
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>YA</b>	Young Adult

# I. INTRODUCTION

---

## I.1 Background to the study

Studies of information behaviour are numerous in the field of information science and provide in-depth insights into the behavioural patterns of groups' and individuals' information seeking and information needs. These studies range from the development of conceptual models, including those by Ellis (1993), Foster (2004), Ingwersen (1996), Kuhlthau (1993), Saracevic (1996), Wilson (1981) to more descriptive profiles of occupational groups, such as the specific information behaviour of aircraft pilots (von Thaden, 2008), financial professionals (Huvila, 2010; Miranda & Tarapanoff, 2008), and knitting groups (Prigoda & McKenzie, 2007), among others.

In very few studies have creative professionals been examined. There has been some focus on the information behaviour of visual artists (Cobbledick, 1996; Cowan, 2004; Hemmig, 2008, 2009) and theatre artists (Medaille, 2010), but professional authors have only been explored in the context of their leisure reading needs (Paling & Martin, 2011) and through an examination of their Acknowledgements (Deroshers & Pecoskie, 2014).

As Bawden (1986, p. 203) states, "the literature of creativity, scientific and otherwise is vast, but relatively little of it refers explicitly to information gathering and processing." Kari and Hartel (2007) called for more information behaviour studies in relation to "the pleasurable or profound phenomena, experience, or activities that transcend the daily grind" (Kari & Hartel, 2007, p. 1131). In this context, the pleasurable refers to entertainment, hobbies, and leisure, while the profound refers to creativity, spirituality, and wisdom. Information provision that supports and encourages creativity and innovation could be enhanced by developing a better understanding of the information needs and information behaviour of these

individuals (Bawden, 1986; Ford, 1999; McGarry, 1991).

There are 22,000 authors, writers, and translators in the United Kingdom alone (Office of National Statistics, 2014), and as of 2013, there were approximately 113,826 individuals categorised as full-time writers and authors in the United States (United States Census, 2013). While broken down statistics are not available, it can be assumed that a significant percentage of these numbers are practicing children's authors. Additionally, those writers with a second mode of employment may not have declared themselves as members of this group, resulting in the true number of these professionals being higher than stated here.

Book sales in this segment of the market are also very enlightening. Children's and young adult fiction titles have seen a significant increase in the market during the past several years. In the United Kingdom, children's book sales were outperforming the rest of the market with £ 143 million in sales for just the first half of 2011 (Chilton, 2011). In America, annual book sales for both children's and young adult titles have experienced records exceeding \$3 billion (Martin, 2012). Additionally, in the first three quarters 2014, the young adult and children's book market saw a substantial increase in sales, up 22.4% over 2013 (Galleycat, 2014) while adult fiction was down 3.3%. With this data, it is easy to determine that these authors are an influential and large group of professionals affecting the fiction market in significant ways.

The novels these authors produce also affect children and young adults in positive ways. Reading for pleasure in children and teens has been identified in various studies as beneficial and even essential to learning and development. Novels "carry profound implications for the development of a wide range of cognitive abilities" (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007, p. 68). In *Children as Readers*, eight areas of development were identified as improved by reading, including the physical, intellectual, language, emotional, personality, social, moral, and spiritual

developmental categories (Spink, 1989, pp. 29-42). The Birmingham Bookstart (a national programme of universal book gifting and other reader development activities) project showed that children who read fiction perform better in school (Ghouri, 1997). Richard Gerrig and Deborah Prentice (1991) performed a psychology experiment that showed experiences and information encountered during reading novels are filed away in the brain and incorporated into existing world knowledge. Fiction also “plays a key role in attracting people to libraries in the first place, and that effect in itself has value” (Case, 2012, p. 112).

Due to the positive impact reading can have on young adults, as well as the largely untouched group of unique users of children’s and young adult fiction writers, the researcher was inspired to investigate how novelists find their information. With a background in the publishing industry, the researcher possesses the necessary contacts to obtain the access needed to explore a large sample of these users, including bestsellers and award-winners in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

Therefore, the current study seeks to delve deeply into the information seeking behaviour of authors, focusing on a subset of the population: professional writers of children’s and young adult literature. A study on the information behaviour of these authors can assist information seeking professionals to better understand their information needs, which in turn can aide in the development of these important creative works.

## **1.2 Aims and objectives**

### **1.2.1 Aims**

This study aims to examine the information needs and information behaviour of authors of children’s and young adult literature. It investigates how authors perform information seeking activities that relate to their story development and explores

how much of an influence these activities have on fiction idea generation and the creative writing process as a whole. In addition, it aims to highlight any observable patterns between information seeking behaviour, personality, and cognitive styles in this particular group of creative professionals.

### **1.2.2 Research questions**

The research questions are:

- How do authors of children's and young adult fiction seek and obtain information relating to their creative works?
- What is the relationship between genre differences, target age groups and information seeking behaviour?
- What information resources do these authors value and why?
- Does serendipity play a role in the generation and cultivation of creative ideas?
- What are the personality traits and cognitive styles of authors of children's and young adult literature?
- Are there observable patterns between these personality traits and cognitive styles?
- Can individual differences be considered influential on the information behaviour of authors?

### **1.2.3 Objectives**

The objectives of the research are:

- To establish, through a combination of quantitative questionnaires and in-depth interviews, the information styles of authors of children's and young adult literature.

- To examine any potential discernible patterns of behaviour in relation to genre, target age group, gender, and location differences.
- To explore the use of serendipity and any potential relationship between this type of information seeking and the cultivation of creative ideas.
- To measure any distinguishable patterns of personality and cognitive styles in this user group.
- To investigate how the information seeking process as a whole influences the generation and cultivation of creative ideas.

### **1.3 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into nine chapters. A full Bibliography can be found at the end along with a set of Appendices.

Chapter One includes an introduction to the study, detailing the gap in the literature, the reasoning behind the research, along with the aims, objectives, and research questions. Chapter Two demonstrates the search strategies for the literature reviews.

Chapter Three presents an overview of children's and young adult literature in order to provide a foundation of knowledge on the industry. Chapter Four reviews the literature in the field of information behaviour, providing an overview of various models, theories, and key concepts on information needs, information seeking, and serendipity. Chapter Five follows on with the literature review by exploring the models and theories surrounding creativity, the writing process, cognitive styles, and personality.

Chapter Six describes the methodological approach and the methods used during the study, including the personality questionnaire, the cognitive styles questionnaire, and the semi-structured interviews while Chapters Seven and Eight present the results and a discussion of the findings. Finally, Chapter Nine presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

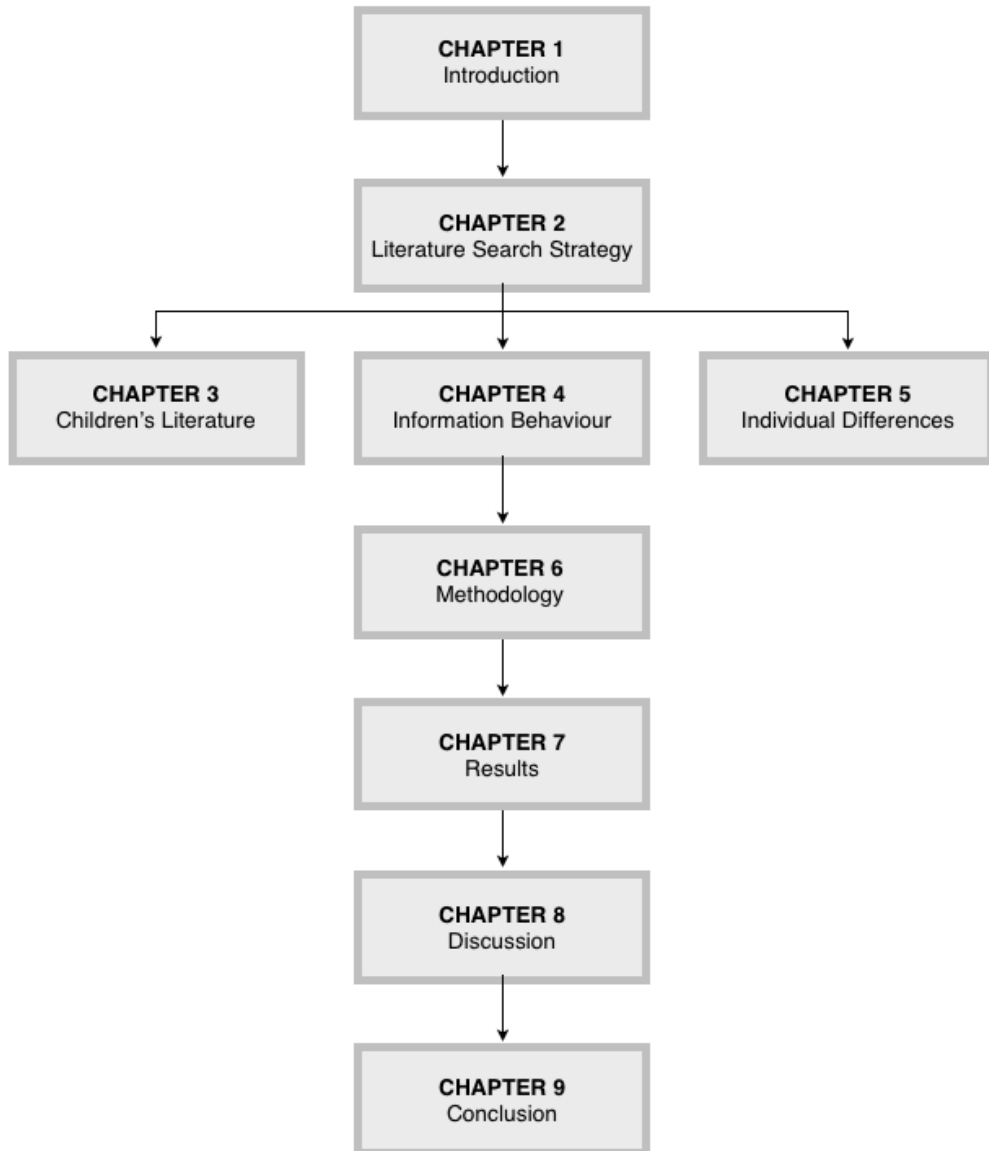


Figure 1.1 Outline of the thesis

## 1.4 Referencing

The Harvard American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is used throughout this thesis.



## 2. LITERATURE SEARCH STRATEGY

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the search strategy used for the three literature review chapters included in this thesis: Children's Literature, Information Behaviour, and Individual Differences. Providing this background demonstrates the steps taken during the literature review process in order to confirm the depth and rigour of the searches.

### 2.2 Search Strategy

The review of the literature for all chapters began by reading widely in the fields of children's literature, information behaviour, and individual differences. By approaching the search in this manner, the researcher was able to highlight various topics and areas that would require further investigation. From this, a list of keywords were identified and recorded in a spreadsheet in order to develop a structured searching strategy. These keywords are discussed in more detail in each of the sections further below in this chapter.

In addition to keyword searches, chaining and 'berry-picking' (Bates, 2005a; Bates, 2005b) techniques were used to locate relevant sources in the bibliographies of academic books, journal articles, and other theses to follow those sources through. Berry-picking can be defined as "a series of selections of individual references and bits of information at each stage of the ever-modifying search" (Bates, 1989). Often, relevant information was obtained in a serendipitous manner as the researcher found relevant references throughout the text of journal articles and other resources. These references were highlighted and explored in more depth, which often led to further studies to investigate. This process was time-consuming and involved, but the researcher felt this approach was necessary to obtain the maximum number of

sources and provide a rich and detailed literature review for each of the three disciplines focused upon in this study.

The literature searches utilised a variety of sources, though most research took place via electronic means. Sources included Aberystwyth University's Hugh Owen and Thomas Parry libraries for physical sources, Aberystwyth University's Primo for electronic journals, Google Scholar, LISTA (Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts), LISA (Library and Information Science Abstracts), JSTOR (Journal Storage), and the National Library of Wales. Sources used during this process included journal articles, conference papers, theses, books, bibliographies, and websites.

This literature searching strategy was an iterative process and continued throughout the life of the project. Journals were scanned regularly in order for the researcher to keep up-to-date with new developments within the fields, and alerts were set up in relevant journals. In-depth searches were conducted periodically throughout the full course of the thesis in order to obtain relevant information when needed.

At first, the scope of the sources was limited to articles dated 2005 or earlier in order to focus on up-to-date research and new developments in the fields, but the researcher soon found that many relevant studies had taken place much earlier than that date. In addition, theories of personality and discussions of children's literature had such a historical richness that it was deemed unwise not to expand the search parameters to include articles and academic books dated earlier. As such, the researcher sought to highlight as many recent studies as possible but determined it was best to include older sources as well in order to provide a richness and depth to the literature reviews that would not have been present otherwise.

As the search narrowed and keywords were refined, Boolean operators were used to link relevant topics, and limiting was employed in the initial stages. However, once the researcher decided not to constrain the search to recent literature, limiting was no

longer used as a strategy.

## **2.3 Children's literature**

The children's and young adult literature review process consisted of detailing a list of specific search terms, including the following: children's literature, young adult literature, children's genres, young adult genres, genre, children's books, young adult books, history of children's literature, and history of young adult literature.

Sources were used from both the United States and the United Kingdom found through Aberystwyth's Primo catalogue, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. The scope was limited to US or UK publications, as the concentration of this thesis was limited to literature published only in these two countries.

## **2.4 Information behaviour**

Alerts were set up on the following journals: Journal of Documentation, Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, Library and Information Science Research, and Library Quarterly. Journals were also scanned regularly in order for the researcher to keep up-to-date with new developments within the field.

Keywords were identified and used to locate the relevant literature from these sources, including, but not limited to: information behaviour/behavior, information needs, information seeking, creative information seeking, serendipity, information behaviour models, and information retrieval. As more sources were obtained, these keywords were further refined to include more specific terms such as self-efficacy, information anxiety, and creative information behaviour. No geographical limitations were made on the search, though only articles written in English were consulted.

## **2.5 Individual Differences**

The literature search that focused on personality, creativity, and cognitive styles followed a similar strategy as that for the information behaviour search. Alerts were also set up for field-specific journals, including: Psychological Bulletin, British Journal of Psychology, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal of Creative Behaviour, and Journal of Applied Psychology. Broad keyword searches began with personality, cognitive styles, learning styles, creativity, creativity models, individual differences, writing models, creativity and personality, and writing and creativity, and information styles before being refined to more specific terms such as big five inventory and ASSIST, though broad searches continued throughout the life of the project. Again, no geographical limitations were made, though only articles written in English were included in the search.

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter provided information on the searching strategies employed for the literature review chapters on children's literature, information behaviour, and individual differences. Berrypicking, browsing and serendipitous searching was utilised throughout the life of the project. Broad keywords were identified and then refined. Journals were scanned regularly, and alerts were set up to receive notification of new relevant articles. Each of the literature review chapters was developed using this search strategy, which provided a sound method for obtaining the most possible amount of information to be included in the study.

## 3. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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### 3.1 Introduction

The following chapter provides context for the population under study: authors of children's and young adult literature. An overview of the industry is also given. In addition, this chapter details various key discoveries, developments, and publications within the industry, explored in depth to allow the researcher to fully understand the rich field of children's literature and its history when interacting with the participants during data collection.

### 3.2 Introduction to children's literature

Over the centuries, children's literature has evolved from homemade educational cards created by mothers for their children and into a booming worldwide industry, with over 30,000 titles published each year in the United States (Bowker, 2014). In the UK, children's print book sales outperformed the rest of the market with £336.5 million in sales for 2014, up 9.1% over 2013 (Nosy Crow, 2015). This total was the highest it has been for the children's book market since records began. In the United States, annual book sales for both children's and young adult titles have experienced records exceeding \$3 billion (Martin, 2012) and experienced a growth of 13% in 2014 (Nowell, 2015).

Children's literature, as detailed in the following sections, spans across as many genres as adult novels, and in some cases, has spawned many genres dedicated to this particular audience only. While children's literature and young adult literature live underneath the same heading of juvenile fiction, they will be separated in this review to better examine each sub-section of the industry. Here, children's literature will designate books written for children under the age of twelve while those books intended for ages twelve to eighteen will be labeled 'young adult'.

### 3.2.1 Definition of children's literature

Literature can be defined as, "the body of written works produced in a particular language, country or age" (Merriam-Webster, 1995, p. 686) and can be as all encompassing to include "everything in print" (Wellek & Warren, 1956, p. 8).

However, such a broad definition includes a vast array of work that would not, in most readers' minds, classify as literature. Instead, it is useful to categorise works of literature based on their "fictionality, invention or imagination as the distinguishing traits" (Wellek & Warren, 1956, p. 14).

It is important to note what juvenile fiction specifically entails. Children's books, according to Peter Hunt must, "appeal to today's children, or at least be written expressly for children who are recognisably children, with a childhood recognisable today" (Hunt, 1991, p. 67). Most genres found within adult fiction can also be found within children's literature, and many additional formats using illustrations and extra features are included as well, such as "cut outs, pop-ups, and movable devices such as flaps, pull-tabs, and volvelles" (Reynolds, 2007, p. 5).

There are very few distinct rules for distinguishing juvenile fiction from adult fiction other than a few basic guidelines, as the genre has become very wide and varied over the past several decades. According to Blasingame (2007), juvenile literature can be categorised based on the following criteria:

- These stories highlight characters and issues young readers can identify with, and they are treated in a way that does not invalidate, minimise, or devalue them.
- These stories are written and framed in language that young readers can understand and relate to.
- These stories emphasize plot above everything else.
- These stories are written specifically for an audience of young adults.

### 3.2.2 Historical overview of children's literature

According to most cultural historians, children's literature, as an industry, began during the mid-eighteenth century in the United Kingdom with John Newbery. His manuscript *Instruction and Amusement: A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, published in 1744, using pictures, rhymes, riddles, stories, and moral lessons is "often regarded as the single most important single point of origin" (Grenby, 2009, p. 4) for children's literature. In addition to this book, Newbery opened a shop in London and began to publish and sell books for 'little masters and misses'. However, Newbery was not alone in the field. There were many others developing, writing, and publishing stories for children around this time, and "there is no doubt that the mid-eighteenth century was the time at which children's books as a serious branch of the book trade got under way" (Townsend, 2004, p. 1252).

However, not every theorist agrees with this notion. Gillian Adams (1986) argues that children's literature began over 4,000 ago while Jacqueline Rose (1984) states it is impossible to determine. Some consider the birth of children's literature to have come much later, or at least what we consider children's literature to be today. In 1865, Lewis Carroll published *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, the first novel written with the specific intent of entertaining children with no instructional purpose in mind. While Newbery's work was also designed to entertain children, the core of the book was focused on morality and manners, just as the other children's works did at that time (Grenby, 2009).

Before Newbery's era, children's literature was mostly regulated to the educational home environment. This included material created specifically for children, but it did not include literature or fiction. Instead, the focus remained on instructional works, such as schoolbooks, courtesy books (intended to teach children how they should behave), and religious books (Grenby, 2009). An example of a seventeenth century work such as this was James Janeway's *A Token for Children* in 1671, which

told the story of “holy and exemplary lives, and joyful deaths of several young children” (Janeway, 1671) in order to instil a sense of right and wrong in readers.

Many of these books were written because children, at that time, were believed to be “steeped in original sin” (Townsend, 2004, p. 1253). This view of children began to shift in England at the start of the eighteenth century with the philosopher John Locke. His views spoke of children being “born in state of innocence” (Townsend, 2004, p. 1253), the young mind a clean slate. He wrote of these views in the famous *Thoughts Concerning Education* in 1812 (Grenby, 2009), suggesting that children could be given an easy and pleasant book that could reward the reading experience without filling his head with “useless trumpery, or lay the principles of vice and folly” (Locke, 1812, p. 183). In his writings, he could find little to recommend for children, paving the way for someone to fill the gap he so readily pointed out.

After John Locke’s influential work, three major works of fiction were published in the United Kingdom. None of these books were written specifically for children, but they were eventually adopted as children’s literature and widely enjoyed by younger readers. These three works were John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in 1678, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* in 1719, and Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* in 1726. These three stories incorporate the archetypal story themes that have been in constant use ever since: the perilous journey, the desert island, and the imaginary society (Hunt, 2004). So, while these three works belong to the general history of literature, they can be considered highlights of the history of children’s literature, as they set the landscape and have influenced and inspired many children’s books over the years.

In the early nineteenth century, the output of books for children began to grow, but the focus was still largely instructional and fiction had not taken a strong root. Catherine Sinclair pointed out this gap in the preface to her manuscript, *Holiday House*, by saying:



Imagination is now carefully discouraged and books written for young persons are generally a mere dry record of facts, unenlivened by any appeal to the heart, or any excitement to the fancy. (Sinclair, 1839, p. vi)

*Holiday House*, though not popular in today's children's literature market, is one such work that livened up the genre in comparison to the more serious instructional and moral books available at the time. It focused on the exciting childhood adventures of two siblings and was one of the first books to show children for who they really were (Carpenter & Prichard, 1984).

Twenty years later, the 1860s became a key decade in the history of children's literature. Two major fantasies appeared on the market, one of which was perhaps the greatest English children's book and the most influential of all-time, Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, published in 1865 and followed by its sequel, *Through the Looking-Glass*, in 1871. In addition, *The Water Babies* by Charles Kingsley was published in 1863 as a serial for Macmillan's Magazine.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many other notable works for children began to appear. Some of these manuscripts were not written especially for children but were widely read by them at the time, due to their appealing storylines for younger readers and the appearance of juvenile characters. Some of these classics are highlighted in a list below as Table 3.1.

<b>Publication Year</b>	<b>Book Title and Author</b>
1812	<i>The Swiss Family Robinson</i> by Johann Wyss
1843	<i>A Christmas Carol</i> by Charles Dickens
1863	<i>The Water Babies</i> by Charles Kingsley
1864	<i>Journey to the Center of the Earth</i> by Jules Verne
1865	<i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> by Lewis Carroll
1868	<i>Little Women</i> by Louisa May Alcott
1869	<i>Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea</i> by Jules Verne
1872	<i>Around the World in Eighty Days</i> by Jules Verne
1876	<i>The Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i> by Mark Twain
1877	<i>Black Beauty</i> by Anna Sewell
1883	<i>Treasure Island</i> by Robert Louis Stevenson
1884	<i>The Adventures of Pinocchio</i> by Carlo Collodi
1894	<i>The Jungle Book</i> by Rudyard Kipling
1900	<i>The Wonderful Wizard of Oz</i> by L. Frank Baum

Table 3.1 Examples of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Children's Literature, as noted by Townsend (2004)

The Golden Age of children's literature occurred during the years of 1865 to 1914, coinciding with the end of the American Civil War and the start of the First World War (Grenby, 2009). This time period produced some of the most popular children's books of all-time, including *Little Women* (1868) by Louisa May Alcott, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) by Mark Twain, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) by L. Frank Baum, *The Secret Garden* (1911) by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902) by Beatrix Potter, and *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912) by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Many contribute this surge of literature to what many call the Era of the Child.

German philosopher and sociologist, Wilhelm Dilthey, introduced the term *bildungsroman* during this Golden Age of children's literature in 1870. This term refers to a novel that portrays "childhood, the conflict of generations, provinciality, the larger society, self-education, alienation, ordeal by love, the search for vocation and a working philosophy" (Buckley, 1974, p. 18). In other words, it involves a *coming of age* tale involving the maturing of the main character. Despite its origin in Germany, many *bildungsroman* novels began appearing in English-speaking countries around this time. Some of these included *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) by Mark Twain, *Great Expectations* (1861) by Charles Dickens, and *David Copperfield* (1849-5) Charles Dickens. Many of these *bildungsroman* novels followed in the following century, including *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by J.D. Salinger, *Cider House Rules* (1985) by John Irving, and *The Diviners* (1974) by Margaret Laurence, and they continue to be published in today's market.

In addition, school stories began to appear on the market in the nineteenth century. School stories are considered stories in which the school environment is not merely a setting but also an integral part of the story (Tucker, 1982). It allows a familiar location in which the protagonists of the story can interact, and "it is relationships, both in playground and in neighbourhood, that prove the most important focus for all books about school" (Tucker, 1982). Authors utilised this school setting as a way to examine the relationships between their characters. Thwaite (1964) argues the first true example of a school story was "The Crofton Boys", a short story by Harriet Martineau published in 1841. Other early school stories included *Tom Brown's Schooldays* by Thomas Hughes in 1857, *Mrs. Leicester's School* by Mary Lamb in 1809, *The Governess* by Sarah Fielding in 1749, and *The Fortunes of Philippa* by Angela Brazil in 1906.

The start of children's literature in America is much harder to pin down than in the United Kingdom. The colonists took many English books with them, including

alphabet books, books of manners, Aesop's fables, and many more (Griswold, 2004, p. 1270). Nonetheless, one particular book is considered the most likely to be the first written specifically for North American children, John Cotton's *Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes* from 1646 (Kiefer & Huck, 2010). This book led to the most popular educational texts in America, *The New England Primer*, with more than six million copies printed between 1680 and 1830 (Smith, 2008). In these works, Puritan beliefs greatly influenced the text and were used as a way to teach children how to not sin, much like the early moral texts in the United Kingdom (Kiefer & Huck, 2010).

In addition to the effect John Locke had on Britain's children's literature, his work also had a similar effect in America. His work began to shift the focus "from sanctimonious deathbed reading to a new kind of vigorous ethical Aesopian literature" (Griswold, 2004, p. 1271). From this, America's first secular storybook was *A New Gift for Children* in 1750, though it still focused on teaching children the way in which they should behave. While adult readers were being offered interesting stories, "their juvenile counterparts were regarded as empty-vessels-into-which-lessons-should-be-poured" (Griswold, 2004, p. 1272).

Some memorable books, according to Townsend (2004) that appeared between the First Golden Age and the Second Golden Age were A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* stories, beginning in 1926, Hugh Loftking's *Dr. Doolittle* series, beginning in 1922, Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* in 1930, John Masefield's *The Midnight Folk* in 1927 and *The Box of Delights* in 1935, and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* in 1937.

The point at which children's literature transformed into the booming industry it is today can easily be traced to the publication of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, first released in the United Kingdom in 1997 and published in the United States in 1998 as *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. The series has sold over 400 million copies worldwide, has been translated into more than 67 languages and has been made into eight box-office record-breaking movies (BBC, 2008). When first

released, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's/Sorcerer's Stone* won the 1997 British Book Awards Children's Book of the Year, the 1998 New York Public Library Best Book of the Year, and the 1998 Parenting magazine Book of the Year Award. In addition, an illustration of *Harry Potter* on the cover of Time magazine made J.K. Rowling the first children's writer to be featured in a Time cover story (Anatol, 2003, p. ix).

### **3.2.3 Historical overview of the scholarly discourse around children's literature**

Due to the comprehensive nature of the subject, a full description of the scholarly discourse surrounding children's literature will not be included in the chapter, as this is outside the scope of the study. However, a brief overview will be given to provide the broad trends found during the literature review.

Two of the first critical essays on children's literature were 'On three ways of writing for children' and 'On juvenile tastes' by C.S. Lewis, both released in 1966. In these essays, he opposes the idea that children should be "regarded as a distinct race and a distinct literary species" (Lewis, 1966, p. 40). Instead, he argued, that adults are wholly responsible for delineating fiction to children and that while some adults focus on creating quality literature for children, others merely operate with commercial and moral motives.

Some of the other early criticism surrounding children's literature focused on the division between academics and practitioners, the division between children and adults, the division between book people and child people (Townsend, 1983), and the lack of an agreed definition of children's literature in general. In addition, the definition of childhood came under question, and Rose (1984) argued that children's literature did not even exist by stating that it "hangs on the impossible relationship between adult and child" (Rose, 1984, p. 1), a common argument at the time.

Peter Hunt is a key theorist in the field. He advocated for the 'childist' approach,

which was “a distinctive kind of criticism to be adopted when working on children’s literature” (Hunt, 1991, p. 145). This methodology meant revisiting texts from new perspectives and challenging previous literary assumptions. It was argued that researchers of children’s literature needed to develop new and radical approaches to the children’s literature criticism (Lesnik-Oberstein, 1994).

Those suggestions have begun to find ground. In the early twenty-first century, academic research surrounding children’s literature has expanded to gender theory, post-colonial theory, reader-response theory, stylistic and linguistic approaches, historical approaches, and child-oriented theories (Reynolds, 2011). However, Reynolds (2011) notes that there is still room for much more research into the discipline.

### **3.3 Introduction to young adult literature**

Young adult literature, while being under the umbrella of children’s fiction, is often separated out as its own category. It has its own shelf space in libraries and in bookstores, and it differs from the broad scope of children’s literature in many ways. In addition, young adult literature has its own historical context while still contributing much of its birth and beginnings to the same origins as its counterpart. Young adult literature would not be what it is today without John Newbury’s embark into publishing children’s literature or John Locke’s revolutionary ideas on reading for children, but the true birth of what young adult literature is today did not happen until much later.

#### **3.3.1 Definition of young adult literature**

While children’s literature refers to works intended for children, ranging from infants to pre-teens, young adult literature refers to “anything that readers between the approximate ages of 12 and 18 choose to read” (Nilsen & Donelson, 2008, p. 3). These novels feature protagonists who are “adolescents suffering maturation or

puberty” (Griswold, 2004, p. 1277).

Young adult novels tend to tackle more mature and complex themes than in books for younger readers. These stories “don’t shy away from tackling the deepest and darkest issues that teens face, from identity struggles and sexual abuse to drug/ alcohol use and suicide” (Strickland, 2013). It’s a genre, much like children’s literature, that spans and mashes up multiple genres.

### **3.3.2 History of young adult literature**

Young adult literature is a relatively new phenomenon. While the number of books intended for young children grew in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was not until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that books aimed for an older YA audience began to appear on the market in earnest. Until then, children who grew out of juvenile books went on to read the classics before graduating to more demanding adult novels (Merriam-Webster, 1995). The early beginnings of books for teenagers can be traced back to several key texts published in 1916, including *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce and *Seventeen* by Booth Tarkington. These novels featured teenage protagonists undergoing a coming of age self-discovery through the trials of adolescence.

However, it was not until 1942 that what is considered the first young adult novel was published. *Seventeenth Summer*, written by Maureen Daly, was written and published explicitly for teenagers, according to Michael Cart, former editor for the Young Adult Library Services Association. It was a story for girls about experiencing adolescence and first love.

The Young Adult Services Division of the American Library Association was formed in 1957 and then coined the term ‘young adult’ in the 1960s to create a new genre of books aimed at 12 to 18 year olds. At the time, this genre incorporated influential works, such as *To Tell Your Love* by Mary Stolz from 1950, *Fifteen* by Beverly Cleary

from 1956, and *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger from 1951, which is considered one of the most important books in the history of young adult literature.

However, despite this bud of growth during the two World Wars, the market for young adult literature remained fairly stagnant until the late 1970s, though several notable works still appeared, such as *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton in 1967. Most teenagers still turned to adult novels when they progressed past children's novels and there were not many titles being published that targeted this particular audience. While the market did exist, it was still very niche at the time, and there was not a wide selection of novels from which teenagers could find something they could relate to. In addition, teachers and libraries were slow to accept the genre, too concerned with potential objections from parents and administrators about the more mature content found in these works.

In the 1970s, the young adult genre entered what many consider to be the First Golden Age. Mature realistic problem novels with complex themes began cropping up. Some of the more influential titles included Judy Blume's *Are You There, God? It's Me, Margaret* in 1970, Anonymous's *Go Ask Alice* in 1971, Louis Duncan's *I Know What You Did Last Summer* in 1973, and Robert Cormier's *The Chocolate War* in 1974.

The 1980s and 1990s brought with it more focus on genre fiction for teenagers. Christopher Pike and R.L. Stine released dozens of horror novels in the young adult genre, including the popular *Goosebumps* series, first published in 1992 and is still being published today. The teen high school saga, *Sweet Valley High* (1983-2003) by Francine Pascal, and the supernatural love triangle series, *The Vampire Diaries* (1991-1992) by L.J. Smith, also hit shelves during this time period.

The Second Golden Age for young adult literature began at the turn of the millennium after the publication of the first two *Harry Potter* novels in 1997 and 1998. While the beginning books in the series were considered middle grade novels, *Harry Potter's* popularity led to a boom time for books for teenagers. Young adult sections



in bookstores and libraries began to emerge, a surge of fantasy series aimed for teens began to appear, leading to the publication of *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer in 2005, *Uglies* by Scott Westerfeld in 2005, *City of Bones* by Cassandra Clare in 2007, and *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins in 2008. Following the publication of these books were film franchises that soared at the box offices, and have in turn, led to even greater sales in the book market. *The Hunger Games* series has sold more than 50 million print and digital copies in the USA alone and has been translated into 50 languages to date (Scholastic, 2012). The *Twilight Saga* has sold over 116 million copies worldwide with translation rights sold in almost 50 countries (Publishers Weekly, 2010).

The surge in popularity of fantasy, dystopian and paranormal stories can be explained by Jennifer Lynn Barnes and the modern-day teenager's situation in society:

Just like adolescence is between childhood and adulthood, paranormal, or other, is between human and supernatural. Teens are caught between two worlds, childhood and adulthood, and in YA, they can navigate those two worlds and sometimes dualities of other worlds. (as cited in Strickland, 2013).

However, it is not just fantastical stories that have succeeded in recent years. John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012) sold over 1 million copies in 2014 alone (Bookseller, 2014), and David Levithan and Rachel Cohn's *Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist* (2006) hit the New York Times Best-seller List. Both of these novels are realistic, contemporary novels about teens facing issues in today's world and have spawned film adaptations that brought in strong profits at the box office.

Today, the market for young adult literature is still growing. A recent Pew survey showed that the largest group of users checking out library books are 16 to 29-year-olds (Zickuhr & Rainie, 2014), while a Bowker survey revealed that 55% of buyers for this market are adults purchasing for themselves (Bowker, 2012). Not only are these books resonating with the intended market, but they are also reaching a far

wider audience and generating more profits than books published for adults.

### **3.4 Children's and young adult book publishing**

Children's book publishing originated in John Newbery's shop in the 1700s, who performed all phases of book production himself, such as creating, publishing, printing, and book-selling (Fraustino, 2004, p. 648). At this time, illustrations for picture books were only available in black and white, except for those created by John Harris, who employed young people to hand-paint the pages.

Over the next few decades, small, independent family-run businesses began taking up children's book publishing while the larger publishers refrained from taking an interest in the new market. It was not until the 1800s that technological improvements allowed better printing and publication of literature. At this time, books could be printed more quickly and cheaply than they had in years past, and 'penny dreadfuls' began to cop up on the market. Later on in the 1800s, illustrated books began using color, which enhanced children's book production.

In 1919, the publishing house Macmillan opened the very first children's imprint in the United States. This brought new attention to children's books, and many other major publishers followed in Macmillan's footsteps, including both publishers in the United States and the United Kingdom. Book review journals and bookstores dedicated to children's literature began appearing shortly after.

Children's and young adult book publishing was once a small business run by librarians-turned-editors with a passion for books and has now "become a fiercely competitive enterprise producing 'brands' and 'products' that must carry their share of the bottom line" (Fraustino, 2004, p. 654).

Technology is also changing the face of literature today, including children's and young adult fiction which have been on the forefront of innovation. Print-on-demand and self-publishing has increased rapidly over the past decade with more

than 3 million English titles added to Amazon in 2010 (Dale, 2015). As technology begins to change, connecting more readers with more titles, and sales continue to soar in the industry, there is still room for growth in the market.

### **3.5 Genre in children's and young adult literature**

Children's literature can be differentiated into two different categories: the target age group of the works (ranging from toddlers to teenagers) and traditional literary genres (ranging from historical to mystery to science fiction). After a thorough review of the current body of literature, the researcher highlighted the most commonly found genres and target age groups in today's market. This section will detail definitions of each of these genres and target age groups, as well as provide examples of works fitting these types.

#### **3.5.1 Definition of genre**

Genre is a term, which originated in France, that means 'kind' or 'type' and "denotes types of classes of literature" (Abrams, 1985, p. 108) on "the basis on their content, form, or technique" (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 189). It is "a matter of discrimination and taxonomy: of organising things into recognisable classes" (Frow, 2006, p. 51). Novels can be designated a genre based on the style, the conventions, the themes, the moods, and the narrative rules that have been used by the author.

In genre theory, researchers argue that genre classifications are more than simply base characteristics of a piece of literature, but instead are "mediating frameworks between texts, makers and interpreters" (Chandler, 1997, p. 8). Whether consciously or subconsciously, readers reference genre conventions, setting expectations for their reading of the story. When an author uses genre conventions, it is a method of framing the story so that it can be better understood. Kress (1988, p. 107) stated that genres can provide a 'reading position' for readers, a position constructed by the writer. This unspoken contract between the producer of the text and the consumer

means that each piece of writing operates “within a system of social norms and expectations” (Deane et al., 2008, p. 38). With this in mind, there may be differences in the writing process from one genre to another, which may include information seeking behaviour as well.

### 3.5.2 Target age groups of children’s and young adult literature

There are three major target age groups found within juvenile literature, though there are several smaller overlapping categories appearing on the market today.

Table 3.2 below details the full list of target age groups.

<b>Sub-genre</b>	<b>Age range</b>	<b>Format/Style</b>
Board books	Infants, toddlers	Picture books with 12-16 pages, often with sounds and pop-ups
Early picture books	2 to 5 years	Picture books with 32 pages, very simple stories
Standard picture books	4 to 8 years	Picture books with 32 pages, simple stories
Early readers	5 to 8 years	More complex books with illustrations and 32- 64 pages
Transition books	6 to 9 years	Easy-to-read books divided in 2-3 page chapters
Chapter books	7 to 10 years	Easy-to-read books divided into 3-4 page chapters
Middle grade	8 to 12 years	More complex books with at least 100-150 pages with more action, plot, and themes
Young adult	12 and up	Full-length works with teen protagonists and more sophisticated storytelling

Table 3.2 Full list of target age groups

After a thorough review of the literature, the researcher found most books fall under the umbrella of three of these types: picture books, middle grade, and young adult. Further definitions of each of these target age groups are included in the sections below.

### **3.5.2.1 Picture books**

Picture books, or picturebooks, are books “intended for young children which communicate information or tell stories through a series of many pictures combined with relatively slight text or no text at all” (Nodelman, 1988, p. vii). Picture books are distinctive because the story is told through a series of images. These illustrations are as important, or more important, than the text itself. Picture books can be of varying lengths, but in most cases, they are thirty-two pages. Longer picture books may have forty-eight or sixty-two pages, though these are rarer than the standard picture book length.

### **3.5.2.2 Middle grade**

The middle grade genre includes books that appeal to a pre-teen audience of 8 to 12 year olds with plots and characters that are relevant to this audience. The stories are more complex than those found in picture books and early readers, and include issues such as bullying, fitting in with friends, and conflicts with parents. Often, middle grade novels involve fantasy and adventure, such as in the case of the *Percy Jackson* series (2005-2009) by Rick Riordan, the *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) by J.K. Rowling, and *The Chronicles of Narnia* series (1950-1956) by C.S. Lewis.

### **3.5.2.3 Young adult**

Young adult literature includes books that are written about teenagers specifically intended for an audience of twelve to eighteen. In young adult literature, the characters usually face more mature and darker themes than those found in picture books and middle grade novels. Many times, the protagonists undergo a coming-of-age transformation, sometimes in the midst of supernatural experiences that directly reflect the experiences and troubles of adolescence.

## **3.5.3 Literary sub-genres of children’s and young adult literature**

Literary sub-genres can range from fantasy to romance, from historical to horror, and

from mystery to comedy. In the children's and young adult literature market, there are eight key literary genres that encompass the books published today. Under most of these, there are several sub-genres with their own conventions, plot elements, and recurring themes. These genre labels were identified by Book Country (an online resource for writers run by Penguin Random House, a major traditional publisher who publishes both children's and young adult literature) at the time of the literature review, though the genres of YA Romance, YA LGBTQ, and YA Steampunk have been added since that time.

### **3.5.3.1 Adventure**

Adventure stories have a history of being written almost exclusively for boys, often with a main character "who goes out into the wilds, mingles with natives and hunters, and comes back toughened, having learnt their ways" (Carpenter & Prichard, 1984, p. 6). Characters often find themselves in a remote location and must rely on their means of survival to get through the story intact. One of the first adventure stories enjoyed by children was Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719).

In today's market, adventure stories most often occur in the middle grade genre. They still feature boy protagonists on action-packed quests while sometimes overlapping with the fantasy genre. Key examples of adventure stories in today's market include *Double Vision* (2013) by F.T. Bradley, *The 39 Clues* series (2008-Present), written by a collaboration of authors, and *Treasure Hunters* (2013) by James Patterson.

### **3.5.3.2 Contemporary**

Contemporary is a term that can be considered synonymous with realism. A realistic novel "depicts characters, settings, and events in accordance with reality, or, at least, in accordance with reality as most readers perceive it" (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 399). These novels focus on current settings with modern-day protagonists facing true-to-

life issues with realistic plots.

Romance novels for young adults are usually classified as contemporary novels.

Romance is a term that dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, referring to fictional works and stories that focused on the world of the court, adventurous quests, heroic deeds, and the dramatic separation and reunion of lovers, often told in a very circular nature.

Today, the term romance refers to works written mainly for a female audience of both teenagers and adults. These novels often include “a fictional account of passionate love prevailing against social economic, or psychological odds” (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 415). *Anna and the French Kiss* (2010) by Stephenie Perkins and *Eleanor and Park* (2012) by Rainbow Rowell are examples of popular romance novels found within young adult literature.

Contemporary novels, however, do not always include romances. Another subset of this genre is the contemporary problem novel. These types of novels are usually found in the young adult genre, rather than in novels for younger readers. They focus on portraying “problems of family tension and violence, child abuse, alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness, sexual frustration and exploitation, truancy, delinquency, even terminal illness and death” (Nelms, Nelms & Horton, 1985, p. 92).

### **3.5.3.3 Dystopian**

Based on the Greek word for “bad place” dystopian novels include stories that are “usually set at some point in the author’s future and describes a society in which we would not want to live” (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 122). These imaginary worlds are often portrayed using the worst tendencies of own present social, political, and technological realities, and are often only slightly exaggerated to be “projected into a disastrous future culmination” (Abrams, 1985, p. 328). In these novels, the protagonists usually rise up to fight against the oppressive society, in hopes to build a better life for those they love.

Dystopian is a genre that can often be considered part of the fantasy or science fiction genre, but dystopian novels do not always fit into either of these categories. In addition, dystopian literature, in young adult fiction particularly, increased significantly in the closing decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As such, it is most often considered its own separate genre in the industry. According to Pat Pinsent in *Modern Children's Literature*, this surge of dystopian fiction may have been "in response to social changes associated with 'Thatcherism' and 'Reaganism'" (Pinsent, 2005, p. 141). Some popular examples of the dystopian genre in children's and young adult fiction are *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins, *Divergent* (2011) by Veronica Roth, and *The Maze Runner* (2009) by James Dashner.

#### **3.5.3.4 Fantasy**

Fantasy comes from the Greek word meaning "a making visible" and is one of the most popular genres in children's and young adult literature. As Kathryn Hume (2014) explains in *Fantasy and Mimesis: Responses to Reality in Western Literature*, fantasy is simply "any departure from consensus reality" (Hume, 2014, p. 21). In many cases, these types of stories are set "in a vaguely medieval Arthurian or imaginary land populated by inhabitants subject to magic, as well as magical figures, creatures or beasts" (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 151). However, this is not always the case, as the umbrella of fantasy fiction includes many sub-genres, including epic (or high) fantasy, urban fantasy, portal fantasy, magical realism, paranormal fantasy, and contemporary fantasy.

Epic fantasy is the type of fantasy mentioned in the paragraph above, one which is set in an entirely different world from our own (Murfin & Ray, 2003). An example of epic fantasy in children's literature is *The Hobbit* (1937) by J.R.R. Tolkien, a magical adventure that takes place on Middle Earth, a world that exists purely in the reader's imagination. Portal fantasy, on the other hand, is a story that begins in the real world



before the characters move across some threshold into a entirely different reality (Murfin & Ray, 2003). Examples of portal fantasies in children's fiction include *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (1950) by C.S. Lewis and *The Golden Compass* (1995) by Philip Pullman.

Magical realism is a sub-genre that has grown in popularity during recent years. In these works, much focus is on the realistic elements, and the fantastic is interweaved in such a way that it 'feels' realistic as well. The characters rarely take notice to the magical events occurring around them, and instead matter-of-factly embrace them as ordinary rather than extraordinary. Writers of these novels interweave "a sharply etched realism in representing ordinary events and descriptive details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements" (Abrams, 1985, p. 196). Examples of magical realism include *Imaginary Girls* (2011) by Nova Ren Suma and *Tuck Everlasting* (1975) by Natalie Babbitt.

Another type of fantasy found specifically in children's literature is the animal fantasy. Animal fantasies, sometimes called beast fables, are stories in which the main characters are animals and that focus on an allegory in order to display moral beliefs (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 38). These type of stories are often found in picture book format. In more recent years, the industry has shifted away from the implicit moral lesson found within these stories, though it is still a widely found phenomenon.

Fantasy and science fiction novels are often shelved together in bookstores and libraries, and the two genre terms are usually mentioned in conjunction with each other, and many identify it as one overarching genre. However, while fantasy and science fiction both tackle the 'impossible' they tackle it in very different ways. Fantasy stories focus on magical elements and "de-emphasize technology and science" (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 151). On the other hand, science fiction emphasises these qualities, as can be seen below.

### 3.5.3.5 Science fiction

Science fiction is a genre that is “grounded in scientific or pseudoscientific concepts” (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 430). These stories can be set on Earth, on a different planet or in a parallel world, and they often explore big questions of the universe, science, and life. Usually these narratives “render plausible the fictional world by reference to known or imagined scientific principles, or to a projected advance in technology” (Abrams, 1985, p. 279). As the term itself suggests, the science, or pseudo-science, is the crucial element to a fictional work being categorised in this genre.

As with other genres, science fiction has its own sub-genres, including space operas, time travel, steampunk, cyberpunk, military science fiction, slipstream, and many more. The most well-known of these is the space opera story which is considered a “futuristic melodramatic fantasy involving space travellers and extraterrestrial beings” (Merriam-Webster, 1995, p. 1056). Some examples of space operas in children’s and young adult fiction include *Ender’s Game* (1985) by Orson Scott Card, *Zoe’s Tale* (2008) by John Scalzi, and *Across the Universe* (2011) by Beth Revis.

In cyberpunk, “the events take place partially or entirely within the ‘virtual reality’ formed by computers or computer networks, in which the characters may be either human or artificial intelligences” (Abrams, 1985, p. 279). Some examples of this type of fiction include *Ready Player One* (2011) by Ernest Cline and *The Diamond Age* (1995) by Neal Stephenson.

Time travel stories are tales which focus around protagonists moving forward or backward through time. There have been a surge of time travel stories in the young adult genre over the past few years. Some examples of these include *Tempest* (2012) by Julie Cross, *Hourglass* (2011) by Myra McEntire, and *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962) by Madeleine L’Engle.

### 3.5.3.6 Historical

A historical fiction novel takes place during a period in the past and “attempts to convey the spirit, manners, and social conditions of a past age with realistic detail and fidelity to historical fact” (Merriam-Webster, 1995, p. 549). Sometimes authors choose to write a fictional account of an actual historical figure, such as Anne Boleyn or Abraham Lincoln, flourished with wholly imaginary events, oftentimes seen through the eyes of a character entirely of the author’s own making. In contrast, some of these novels focus on the lives of ordinary and imaginary characters taking place within a historical setting or during historical events. A well-known example of this type of writing in children’s literature is *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (1985) by Patricia MacLachlan, which won a Newbery Medal in 1976.

### 3.5.3.7 Horror

Horror can be described as stories with “frightening situations that create and even exploit a sense of uncertainty, suspense, or fear in the reader or audience” (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 278). They often “feature supernatural elements such as ghosts, witches, or vampires, or they can address more realistic psychological fears” (Merriam-Webster, 1995, p. 559). Some examples of the horror in children’s and young adult fiction include R.L. Stine’s *Goosebumps* series (1992-Present), Christopher Pike’s *Spooksville* series (1995-1998), and Neil Gaiman’s *The Graveyard Book* (2008).

Horror has several sub-genres within it, the first of which being camp-horror, or the fear of the suburban. In camp-horror, there is often comic and disruptive scares, “full of self-conscious, self-referential theatrical irony and exaggeration” (De Rijke, 2004, p. 512). It is led by the belief that “terror is conquered by laughter” (Bakhtin as cited in Morris, 1994, p. 195).

Gothic horror, on the other hand, is a story that includes “a plot that turns on some threat to civilisation from evil or irrationality; highly dense, or intensively

descriptive writing; and the device of the unreliable (or maniacal/homicidal) narrator” (De Rijke, 2004, p. 513). Gothic horror has a rich history, beginning in 1764 with the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole. These stories included mysterious elements, frightening old buildings, brooding villains, resourceful yet innocent heroines, and hints of the supernatural (Mullan, 2015), aspects of which were later satirised by Jane Austen.

### **3.5.3.8 Mystery/Thriller**

Mysteries are novels “concerning any type of perplexing mystery, criminal or otherwise” (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 100) while thrillers are “designed to hold the interest by the use of a high degree of intrigue, adventure, or suspense” (Merriam-Webster, 1995, p. 1113). Mysteries and thrillers are often held under the same genre umbrella and are shelved together in bookstores and libraries. In mysteries, stories often utilise an amateur detective to solve a case, whether it be to avenge a loved one or to help out a friend in need while thrillers employ edge-of-the-seat action and chase scenes.

Detective fiction is a subset of mystery fiction. These stories usually feature a crime that is solved by a detective protagonist from a series of clues (Murfin & Ray, 2003, p. 100). Unlike the classic mystery story, detectives usually solve the crimes for a fee, “working out of a cheerless office, tired and cynical” (Nilsen & Donelson, 2008, p. 200). This type of story is less likely to show up in children’s and young adult fiction as the age of the protagonists keeps them from having entered the working world.

In relation, another subset of the mystery genre is the police procedural. In these stories, the protagonists are “officers doing their mundane jobs and tracking down murderers with scientific methods and machines available only to the police” (Nilsen & Donelson, 2008, p. 201). Again, this genre subset would rarely be seen in children’s and young adult literature due to the nature of the working world focus. However, there are exceptions to this rule, including Jennifer Lynn Barnes’s

*The Naturals* (2013), about a teenager working for a classified division of the FBI.

### **3.6 Benefits of children's and young adult literature**

The benefits of children's and young adult literature has been studied extensively and by many over the years. In addition to the studies mentioned in Chapter 1, the positive implications of reading has been researched in great detail, especially in relation to creativity, learning skills, and information literacy:

Books open to a child a range of communication far greater than that of conversation within his own family. . . for books and the written word are still the primary means by which knowledge is passed from mind to mind, between people who have never met and never likely to meet, between people of different countries, and of different epochs. A child who learns to learn and understand has his own independent road to every kind of knowledge. (Williams, 1970, p. 24)

Reading imaginative fiction is one way to enhance information literacy skills. As Eyre (2003, p. 4) states, "it has long been recognised that imaginative literature plays an important role in the acquisition of reading skills, not to mention aiding in the development of imagination, appreciation of narrative and providing enjoyment of story." Motivation and engagement in relation to reading has been studied in depth (Alexander, 2003; Alexander, Kulikowich, & Jetton, 1994; Alvermann et al., 1999; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000) and has shown that reading comprehension and general school achievement can be enhanced through high levels of reading comprehension. Teachers and librarians can encourage this motivation by suggesting young adult titles, as these books are most often chosen in a voluntary capacity. Young readers are more likely to pick up this type of book because they "view characters in young adult novels as living and wrestling with real problems close to their own life experiences as teens" (Bean & Moni, 2003, p. 638). In addition to these findings, Krashen's (1993) research demonstrated that reading can result in better literacy skills, comprehension and writing, especially when the reading is done voluntarily.

Another argument in favour of reading popular texts is that they have become entrenched in the popular culture of today. Pop culture can encompass both print and non-print formats, including television, music and video games, as well as fiction and nonfiction books (Botzakis, 2011). “When we ask students to make connections, some of the most readily available images they have come from pop culture” (Hall, 2011, p. 296). A research project at the University of Sheffield examined the effect popular culture has on motivating young children to read. They set up a “batcave” with pop culture icons, and the children flocked into it to read, some of whom had not shown interest in reading before the project (Marsh, 2000). In addition, a study by Hall (2011) found that middle-school students used pop culture texts in reading comprehension tasks to analyse the reading and understanding of other fiction titles, as well as to understand academic texts.

A key study that examined the relationship between creativity and engaging with fictional works focused on the *Harry Potter* films rather than the novels, but the results can still be very illuminating. After a series of experiments with young people, testing their creative skills after watching both magical and non-magical portions of the first film, it was concluded that “showing children a magical display promotes divergent thinking and subsequently increases creativity” (Subbotsky, Hysted, & Jones, 2010, p. 276). By viewing these characters in magically creative scenarios, young people can increase their own creativity and divergent thinking skills.

Educational theorists, such as Piaget (2002) and Vygotsky (1986) believe that language development and cognitive thinking abilities are closely related. In addition, Vygotsky (1978) tells us in his circular zones of proximal development that learning takes place when a student is in a certain zone. Being in this zone can create fertile opportunities for the teaching professional to lead students to think critically, and that this type of thinking is facilitated by example. Reading novels that highlight characters, especially young people and students, thinking critically can be the type

of example a teacher needs in order to lead a student's creative thinking further along in its development.

The literature highlights many areas in which creativity is positively associated with reading. Davidson (1994) states that reading instruction can promote critical thinking, Sturgell (2008) believes that reading allows creative ideas to flourish, and Wang's study (2012) confirms that there is a positive relationship between reading and creativity, especially in the ability to expound upon and enrich previously-developed solutions to problems.

### **3.7 Introduction to authorship**

This research aimed to explore the authors of the literature discussed in this chapter. By this token, it is important to examine the nature of authorship and what it entails.

#### **3.7.1 Definition of author/authorship**

The term author is derived from the Latin *auctor*, meaning responsible agent, originator, maker. Authors are "individuals who, by their intellectual and imaginative powers, purposely create from the materials of their experience and reading a literary work that is distinctively their own" (Abrams, 1985, p. 14).

Usually authors are distinguished from others who may be involved in the creation of a literary work, such as agents, editors, copyeditors and publishers.

At its basics, an author is a person who has written a piece of work, however, "to talk of an author is to appeal to a shared knowledge of [...] discourses and of the conventions governing their transmission and circulation" (Hawthorn, 1992). An author is not merely someone who writes down a story, whether fiction or non-fiction, but someone who develops or discovers an idea and expresses it in his or her own words. What distinguishes one work from another is the style in which it has been written and how the ideas were expressed.

### 3.7.2 History of authorship

Authorship, as a concept, originally started as an oral culture with bards and minstrels performing songs with lyrics that formulated stories. Over time, authorship shifted from this oral culture into a more literate one. Written texts in the form of scrolls and manuscripts became more prominent, and inherited subject-matter that relied on memory was replaced by more enduring texts and storylines.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, manuscripts were slowly replaced by printed works due to the invention of the printing press. This in turn “greatly expedited the manufacture and dissemination of printed texts, and so multiplied the number of producers of literary works, and made financially important the establishment of the identity and ability of an individual writer” (Abrams, 1985, p. 15). This increase in ease of manufacture and distribution not only increased the number of writers, but also increased the revenue they received in return for their works. Moving away from a reliance on individual literary patrons, writers began to turn to publishers and booksellers for a greater profit.

Many suggest that authorship appeared as the consequence of the printing press (Eisenstein, 1980), as the first actual usage of the term did not occur until 1710, though the concept was in place longer before that. With it brought a new notion of personhood and individuality. As many argue, “the coming into being of the notion of ‘author’ constitutes the privileged moment of individualisation the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences” (Foucault, 1969).

The literary author, one might say, is not one who draws ideas from within but from without, from other literary texts. The personality of the “great author” is created out of words, drawn together from innumerable sources into a new, or another text, just as our personalities are cobbled together out of the various possibilities being offered to us by our culture. (Mandell, 2004)

Authorship is arguably a result of the rise of capitalism in western culture, emerging from a combination of technical, philosophical, political, sociological, legal and



economic developments. Publishers and booksellers saw the opportunity of creating the idea of authorship as a way to own copyright in order to make a greater profit. From this, lawyers developed the concept of intellectual property, allowing publishers to own literary ideas and the style authors used in order to express them.

### **3.7.3 Authors of children's and young adult literature**

Little formal empirical focus has been made on how authors of children's literature develop their ideas and write their work. However, some informal articles found through *writersandartists.co.uk* (an online community to provide toolkits and advice for both aspiring and established authors, developed by the major publisher Bloomsbury) does highlight some of the behaviours these creative professionals portray when seeking information related to their work.

Polly Courtney, an author of contemporary describes her research process as involving extensive reading online as well as interviewing others who had knowledge about the subject (Courtney, 2016). In addition, she engaged in environmental browsing by physically going to the location in which the book was set to seek sensory information.

A historical fiction writer, Kate Manning, describes her process of combining fact with fiction. She states that she prefers to weave invention into the history she researched. While true historians are required to depict history as it truly happened, "the novelist has a single task only: to construct a coherent picture, one that makes sense" (Collingwood & Knox, 1946, p. 246). This behaviour does not seem applicable only to historical fiction writers, though their specific approach to history is unique to that genre (Manning, 2016). Similarly, Roz Morris, an author and an editor who writes many books to assist writers in their work, suggests that authors should use genre conventions as a guide to making creative decisions about their novels (Morris, 2016).

Jayne Ferst coined a term called Over-Active Research Syndrome (OARS) to describe the tendency to get bogged down by research rather than doing the actual writing part of the project (Ferst, 2016). She states the importance of not getting too caught up in the small details, and that while it is important to create an authentic and believable story, writers should remember they are not researchers but creators of fiction.

These insights, while not empirical, highlight the unique information behaviour of fiction authors. They approach accuracy in a different way than more scientific professionals, blend fact with fiction, and utilise a combination of internet sources and networking sources. However, these insights demonstrate merely an overview and do not provide an in-depth view of their behaviour. More academic and empirical studies could accomplish this, and while there are a small number that have examined fiction authors (detailed in Chapter 4), as well as the Cognitive Process of Writing (examined in Chapter 5) none have completed rich, in-depth, and detailed profiles of this group of professionals.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter has provided context to the study by detailing the history of children's and young adult literature and examining in detail the various genres found within today's market. It has also provided background on the benefits of this type of fiction and the positive implications it has on young readers. It has also identified a gap in the academic literature in regards empirical studies that focus on the research needs and behaviour of authors of children's and young adult literature. The following research questions of this study seek to fulfil this gap:

- How do authors of children's and young adult fiction seek and obtain information relating to their creative works?
- What is the relationship between genre differences, target age groups and

information seeking behaviour?

- What information resources do these authors value and why?

Chapter 4 will present the literature review on information behaviour while Chapter 5 will explore the psychology of writing and introduce the cognitive underpinnings of creativity, personality, and cognitive styles.

# 4. INFORMATION BEHAVIOUR

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## 4.1 Introduction

Given this study's research questions, the literature review involved delving into the literature of multiple disciplines. An overview of the children's literature field was presented in Chapter 3, and the following two chapters will explore the literature within the two frameworks that inform the theoretical underpinnings of the research.

This chapter presents research from the field of information behaviour, including the historical background and an overview of selected theories and models from the literature. Key concepts were highlighted and explored as well. During the data analysis of this study, the models and theories from the literature provided a source of concepts to compare with the emerging themes from the qualitative data, aspects of which are discussed in detail here.

Finally, this chapter reviews the related studies into the information needs and information seeking behaviour of other creative and artistic user groups in order to provide an understanding of the literature that informed this study. While there have been a small number of studies that have investigated or discussed the information needs of fiction writers, none of these have provided a comprehensive insight or a cohesive theory of their information behaviour.

## 4.2 Introduction to information behaviour

The history of information studies is often dated back to Charles Eliot's (1902) article that detailed the various levels of use in regards to the materials in a library's collection. Research into user studies in particular is sometimes recognised as originating in the 1920s (Bouazza, 1989) or pointed toward Ayres and McKinnie's (1916) study of Cleveland public libraries (Wilson, 1994). Regardless of its origins,

the study of information has long been in existence, covering a span of topics, concepts, and theories.

Information seeking and information behaviour originally focused on the systems and venues of information use rather than on the users themselves (Case, 2012). It was not until the 1970s that studies began to shift away from systems research in order to explore the experiences of individuals, and the range of studies has continued to expand since that time. Information behaviour research now explores not only directed information seeking but also serendipitous encounters with relevant information, how people use information and pass it on to others (Rioux, 2005), how people have both current and future information needs (Erdelez, 1999), and that individual personality traits and learning styles could play a role in the information-seeking process (Heinström, 2005; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011).

As Shenton (2004) states, any study that addresses information behaviour should include an explanation of how 'information' is understood within the context of the research. This, in turn, allows the reader to better understand the nature of the phenomenon and the boundaries of the work (Shenton, 2004, p. 367). Therefore, the following terms will be reviewed and defined: information, information needs, information seeking, and information behaviour.

#### **4.2.1 Information**

According to Case (2012), one of the earliest uses of the term 'information' occurred in one of Chaucer's tales between the years 1372 and 1386, and Capurro and Hjørland (2002) mark its origin as the pre-Christian era. Over the years, there has been much discussion surrounding the actual nature of information and what exactly it entails. Buckland (1991) has suggested there are three ways of looking at information: information as a process (act of gaining information), information as knowledge (that which is gained), and information as a thing (physical information, such as documents).

A few of the more widely shared definitions include:

- “Information can be any difference you perceive, in your environment or within yourself. It is any aspect that you notice in the pattern of reality” (Case, 2012, p. 4).
- “Information is any difference that makes a difference to a conscious human mind” (Bateson, 1972, p. 453).
- “Information is stimulus that reduces uncertainty and a purely quantitative measure of communicative exchanges” (Shannon & Weaver, 1949, p. 100).
- “All knowledge, ideas, facts, data and imaginative works of mind which are communicated formally and/or informally in any format” (Chen & Herson, 1982, p. 5).

These definitions combined point to the idea of information as all-compassing, including all knowledge, all ideas, all stimuli, all differences, and all realities that exist in the world.

Dervin (1976, 1977) put forth the idea that there are three types of information within the context of information seeking:

1. Objective and external: this type of information describes reality outside of the confines of an individual’s context.
2. Subjective and internal: this type of information represents an individual’s view of reality, depending on his/her own context.
3. Sense-making: this type of information includes the methods of incorporating both external and internal information into our understanding.

This view on information highlights the possibility of information arising from within an individual rather than solely from the external environment, which

expands the traditional view on the subject. Information is not only outside knowledge, ideas, and stimuli, but also that knowledge and insight that which is already contained within our minds.

#### **4.2.2 Information Need**

An information *need* can be considered “a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal you have” (Case, 2012, p. 5) or “an anomalous state of knowledge” (Belkin et al., 1982, p. 61). According to Dervin (1983, p. 156), the term ‘need’ suggests a gap that requires filling and “when applied to the word information, as in information need, what is suggested is a gap that can be filled by something that the needing person calls ‘information’.” Dervin views this gap in knowledge as a user’s compulsive need to make sense of the world:

The individual, in her time and place, needs to make sense...She needs to inform herself constantly. Her head is filled with questions. These questions can be seen as her “information needs.” (Dervin, 1983, p. 170)

#### **4.2.3 Information Seeking**

Information *seeking* is a term that refers to the “conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge” (Case, 2012, p. 5). When viewed from a problem-oriented approach, information seeking can be considered “a process in which humans purposefully engage in order to change their state of knowledge...” (Marchionini, 1995, pp. 5-6). Information seeking is discussed as a separate term, because it is not considered synonymous of information behaviour but rather a subset of it. Specifically, information seeking involves the realised behaviour that occurs during the search process when an individual responds to an identified information need. It is the “purposive seeking for information as a need to satisfy some goal” (Wilson, 2000, p. 49). From this viewpoint, information seeking is the active and conscious side of information behaviour and does not include the more passive elements, such as serendipity and

information encountering:

Information seeking takes place when a person has knowledge stored in long term memory that precipitates an interest in related information as well as the motivation to acquire it. It can also take place when a person recognises a gap in their knowledge that may motivate that person to acquire new information. (Zerbinos, 1990, p. 922)

Some examples of the various ways in which information seeking can be conducted include:

- Finding books in the library
- Browsing the Internet
- Speaking with friends
- Reading a newspaper article
- Consulting an expert

#### **4.2.4 Information Behaviour**

Information *behaviour* is a term that “encompasses information seeking as well as the totality of other unintentional or passive behaviours (such as glimpsing or encountering information), as well as purposive behaviours that do not involve seeking, such as actively avoiding information” (Case, 2012, p. 5). Wilson further defined information behaviour to include “face-to-face communications with others, as well as the passive reception of information as in, for example, watching television advertisements, without any intention to act on the information given” (Wilson, 2000, p. 49). Davenport (1997, p. 83) states that information behaviour “refers to how individuals approach and handle information” which can include searching, using, modifying, sharing, hoarding, and even ignoring. Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that information behaviour is “an all-encompassing term that involves various forms of users’ conceptual and physical contacts with information” (Erdelez, 1997, pp. 412-413).



Information behaviour has also been defined in terms of the individual:

Information behaviour is, by definition, individual, and the idea that a person may have an 'information style'—a way of dealing with information, depending on individual personality and cognitive traits. (Bawden & Robinson, 2011, p. 128)

Wilson's (1999) nested model, shown as Figure 4.1 portrays these various aspects of information behaviour and the relationship between each of the areas of study. It suggests that information behaviour encompasses both information seeking behaviour and information searching behaviour. Here, information seeking behaviour refers to the methods employed to discover and access information sources. Information searching behaviour represents the interaction of users with information retrieval systems and resources, a concept that has been determined outside the scope of this study.

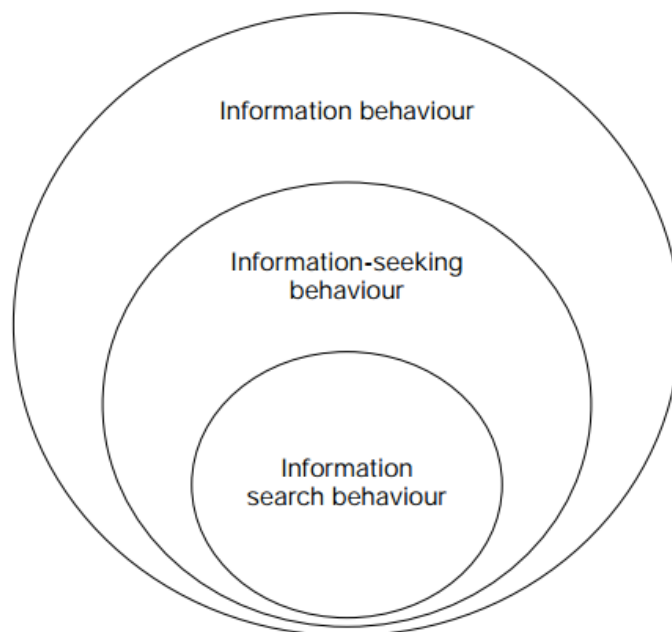


Figure 4.1 Wilson's (1999) nested model of the information behaviour research areas

### 4.3 Models

When reviewing the literature surrounding models, it is important to distinguish their purpose from that of theories. While theories are defined as “a set of related statements that explain, describe, or predict phenomena” (Case, 2012, p. 134), models are often the tools that precede the development of the theory itself. They are “a tentative ideational structure used as a testing device” (Bates, 2005a, p. 2) and map reality, guide research, and systematise knowledge (Jarvelin & Wilson, 2003). Models are typically demonstrated through a diagram, making the hypotheses easier to understand and translate into first-hand observations (Reynolds, 1971). Wilson’s description of the development of models in regards to the information seeking field explains how these diagrams help form a framework for the stages of information behaviour often presented:

A model may be described as a framework for thinking about a problem and may evolve into a statement of the relationships among theoretical propositions. Most models in the general field of information behaviour are of the former variety: they are statements, often in the form of diagrams, that attempt to describe an information-seeking activity, the causes and consequences of that activity, or the relationships among stages in information-seeking behaviour. (Wilson, 1999, p. 250)

Models in the field of information seeking needs and information behaviour are numerous and comprehensive, ranging in their assumptions, structure, purposes, scope, and intended uses (Case, 2012, p. 135). Therefore, it would be difficult to discuss each model found in the literature within the scope of this thesis. Instead, the following sections will give an overview of the most cited models in the field, as well as those found to be most applicable to the focus of this research. Some of the heavily cited models within the literature, such as the models developed by Krikelas (1983), Ingwersen (1996), Saracevic (1996), Spink (1997), and Savolainen (1995) are not included in the discussion below as they were not deemed directly relevant to the research. More specifically, those models which contain an element of serendipity,

artistic creativity, passive information seeking, or non-linear behaviour, will be examined, in order to best contextualise the study.

### **4.3.1 The Wilson Models**

One of the key researchers in the field of information behaviour has been T.D. Wilson, who developed a series of information seeking models (Wilson, 1981, 1994, 1997, 1999). These models presented the idea that an individual's perceived information need arises from a physiological, cognitive, or affective need and that the individual will encounter various barriers during the information seeking process. These barriers can be related to the individual's own perceived self, the contextual demands surrounding work or life, or the environmental situation (Wilson, 1999). In the original version of the model, several end points to the information seeking process were included: Success, Failure, and Other People. It is not made clear what happens after a user reaches any of these stages. "Other people" as a source for information should arguably not be an end point of its own, which is a weakness in this particular model.

The second Wilson model expanded on the original framework, removing the end points in the previous version and incorporating research from additional fields, including "decision-making, psychology, innovation, health communication, and consumer research" (Wilson, 1999, p. 256). Additionally, further categories of information behaviour have been included in the revised model:

- Passive attention, such as listening to music or watching a movie, where no information-seeking was intended.
- Passive search, which refers to conducting a search for one information need and discovering unrelated information that fulfils a different information need.
- Active search, which refers to the process of an individual actively seeking

out information.

- Ongoing search, which occurs when an active search is completed and is intended to update or expand on that information through ongoing, continuous search.

The revised model (shown as Figure 4.2) also includes various activating mechanisms, such as the risk reward theory and the social learning theory, which presents the idea of self-efficacy having an effect on an individual’s strategy toward information seeking. The updates to the model expanded upon and acknowledged the external factors that may influence an individual’s information seeking activity. It also allows for the idea of “looping” (Wilson, 1999) rather than a strict beginning-to-end process. These revisions to the original model provided a much richer view of the information seeking process and allowed for a more complex view of how external factors can contribute to an individual’s behaviour.

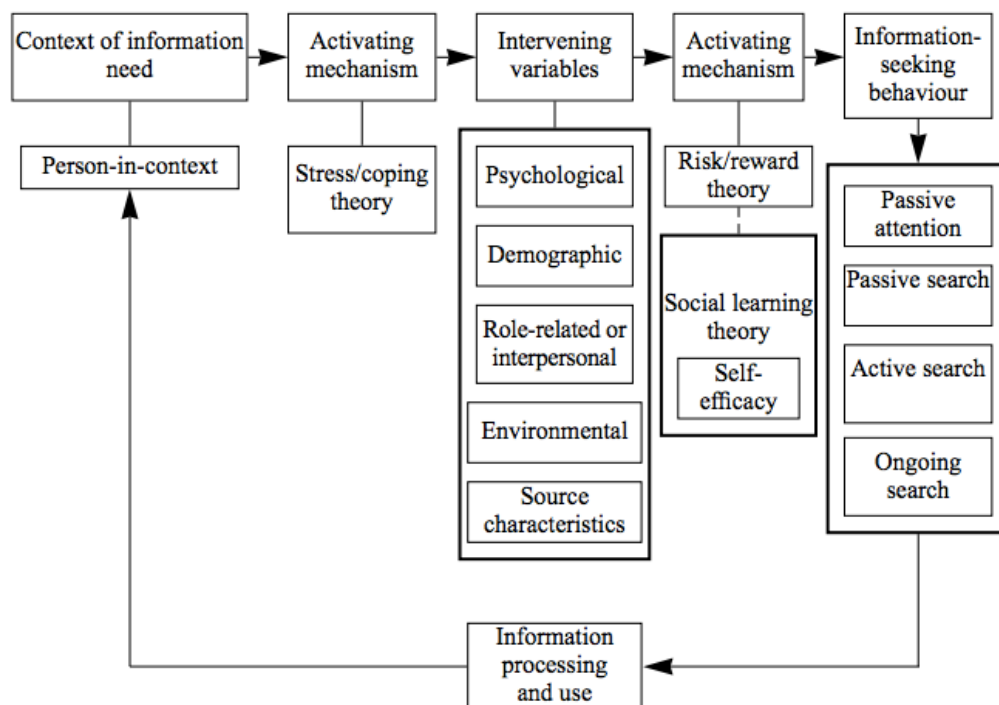


Figure 4.2 Wilson’s (1999) model of information behaviour

### 4.3.2 The Ellis Model

The Ellis (1989) model was developed using a grounded theory approach through initial research into university-based social scientists, followed later by empirical studies of physicists and chemists (Ellis, Cox, & Hall, 1993), and then engineers and scientists (Ellis & Haugan, 1997). This model proposed a set of actions involved during an individual's information seeking, a series of activities that could be undertaken sequentially or non-sequentially. While the model's diagram suggests that an individual moves through each stage in a linear fashion, particularly with the use of "starting" and "ending" as terminology, Ellis (1989) was careful to point out that it did not represent a sequential set of phases. Instead, researchers could go through the stages in various ways with different starting and ending points.

The eight activities included in the Ellis model are described in Table 4.1 below, including the initial six stages and the additional two stages added at a later time. These activities demonstrate some similarities to Kuhlthau's (1991) stage-driven model, which is further discussed below.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description of the activity</b>
Starting	Beginning the search process by identifying potential sources
Chaining	Following forwards or backwards chains of connecting materials
Browsing	Semi-directed searching in areas of interest
Differentiating	Filtering sources by determining quality and reliability
Monitoring	Staying aware of current developments that relate to the field of interest
Extracting	Returning to relevant sources to extract material of interest
Verifying	Checking that the information gathered is correct
Ending	Finishing the search process with a final review of the literature

Table 4.1 Information Seeking Activities in the Ellis Model

Wilson (1999) incorporated the Ellis Model activities into his revised model of information seeking (as shown previously in Figure 4.1 above), and Meho and Tibbo

(2003) expanded upon the model based on a study of social scientists, supporting the non-sequential approach and including four additional activities: networking, managing, synthesising, and analysing. In addition, Jarvelin and Wilson (2003) argue that the Ellis model is applicable to many situations and contexts, suggesting that it be used as a framework for additional research into the information behaviour across various domains.

### **4.3.3 The Kuhlthau Model**

Carol Kuhlthau's (1991) Information Search Process placed the focus on the affective elements (feelings, thoughts, and actions) of the information seeking process rather than the identification of information needs, the characteristics of the sources, or the availability of those sources. Unlike many of the other models presented in the literature, Kuhlthau's model "does not depict any contextual factors leading to the recognition of an information need" (Case, 2012, p. 146). Instead, it simply emphasises the components of the actual search.

The model (depicted as Figure 4.3 below), based on learning theories and years of research with students, contains seven affective and cognitive stages. In Kuhlthau's model, *feelings* (such as uncertainty, confidence, and a sense of accomplishment) play a significant role in the search process. *Thoughts* range from vague to focused before ending with increased self-awareness. Physical *actions* are also included, with exploration occurring in the beginning stages (when an individual is seeking relevant information) with documenting occurring in the later stages of the process (when the individual is seeking pertinent information).

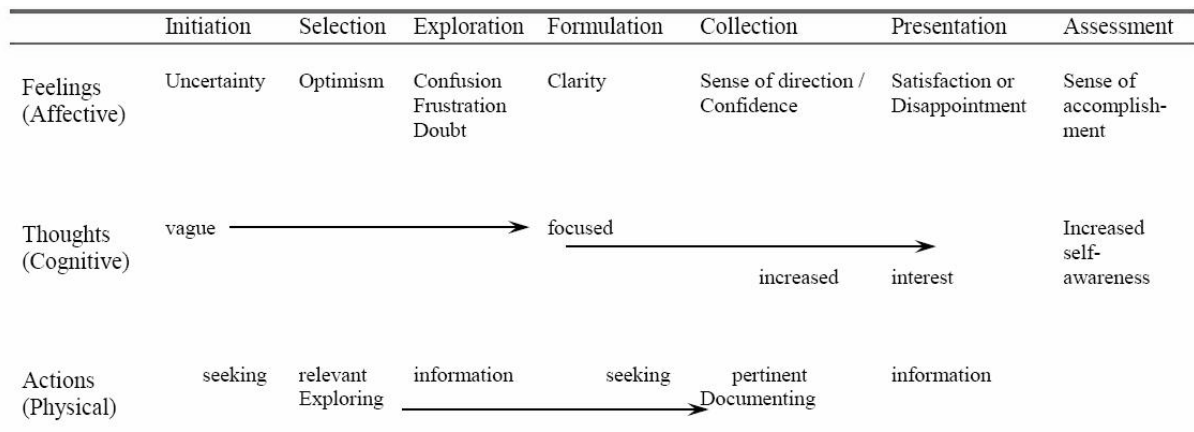


Figure 4.3 Kuhlthau's (1991) Model of the Information Search Process

The series of stages (beginning with initiation and ending in assessment) signify the feelings, thoughts, and actions the individual will experience as he moves—essentially linearly—through the search process. The information seeker begins the process with uncertainty and vague thoughts during the initiation stage as the information need is identified. The individual then begins moving through the process of selecting, exploring, and formulating (going from feelings of optimism to confusion to clarity) before finally gathering pertinent information with a sense of direction during the collection stage. The search process then ends in the presentation stage, where the individual feels either a sense of satisfaction or disappointment with the information they have obtained.

This model expresses some similarities to the Ellis model (discussed above) with many of the stages. The “initiation” and “starting” stages, for example, both highlight the point at which an individual begins the search process while the “presentation” and “ending” both demonstrate the seeker’s end point. However, the Kuhlthau model is intended to be viewed from a linear standpoint while the Ellis model is not. As such, the Ellis model forms a much stronger theoretical basis for the creative model discussed later in this chapter.

#### 4.3.4 The Foster Model

Foster's (2004) model approaches information seeking from a non-linear viewpoint

and was developed from a study of 45 interdisciplinary academics using naturalistic inquiry. The concepts behind this model are “analogous to an information seeker holding a palette of information behaviour opportunities, with the whole palette available at any given moment” (Foster, 2005, p. 11). The information seeker may proceed with different starting and end points, looping through the core processes in a non-linear way, an approach that differed from the earlier stage-driven models. These processes (shown in Figure 4.4) are influenced by cognitive approach, internal contexts, and external contexts:

- Cognitive approaches include four modes of thinking, including Flexible and Adaptable (mental agility and willingness to adapt), Openness (open-mindedness), Nomadic Thought (seeking information in diverse and new ways), and Holistic (gathering and understanding information from diverse areas and the ability to bring them together)
- Internal contexts include knowledge, understanding, feelings, and thoughts
- External contexts include time, project, access, navigation, social, and organisational

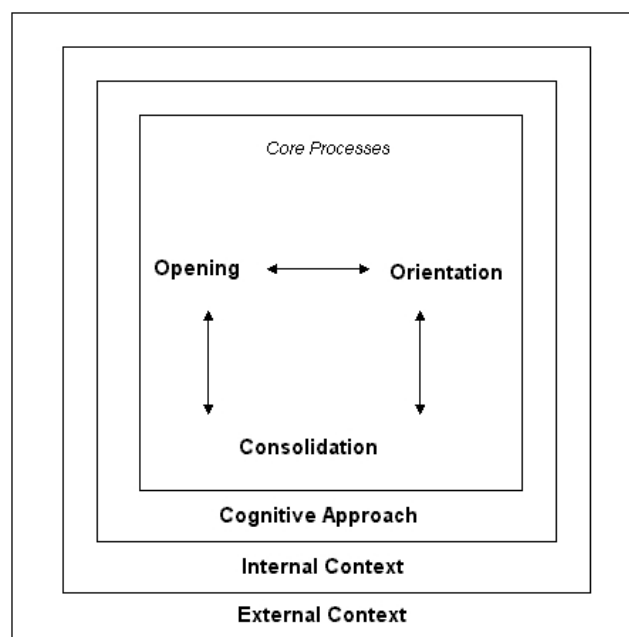


Figure 4.4 Foster's (2004) Non-Linear Model



The model contains three core processes and eighteen micro-processes, categorised accordingly. Each of these elements is listed in Table 4.2 below. It has several activities in common with Ellis's (1989) model: Chaining, Browsing, Monitoring, and Verifying. Some additional key terms that arose during this study included networking, eclecticism, and picture building. Networking was found to be a significant activity for interdisciplinary researchers during the empirical study. It was often the chosen resource when there were issues of accessibility, time, and information overload (Foster, 2004). Eclecticism involves "a determination to obtain information from as many channels as possible and to absorb as many pieces of information as possible to reveal new concepts and ideas" (Foster, 2005, p. 7) and incorporates not only active information seeking but passive and serendipitous seeking as well. Picture building refers to the process of mapping out, whether in the mind or on paper, the various concepts relevant to their information need (Foster, 2004).

<b>Opening</b>	<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Consolidation</b>
Eclecticism	Picture building	Refining
Networking	Reviewing	Sifting
Keyword searching	Identifying keywords	Incorporation
Browsing	Identifying the shape of existing research	Verifying
Monitoring	Problem definition	Knowing enough
Chaining		Finishing
Serendipity		
Breadth exploration		

Table 4.2 The processes and micro-processes of Foster's model

Further research (Foster et al., 2008) refined some of the activities and factors included in this model. Internal and external contexts became intrinsic and extrinsic contexts. The element of motivation was also added as a contextual element affecting an individual's information behaviour.

This model demonstrates many similarities with the cognitive process theory of

writing by Flower and Hayes (1980) and the flexible creativity model proposed by Cawelti et al. (1992), both described in more detail in Chapter 5. These various models, while originating in assorted research fields, all emphasise a non-linear and looping set of activities which the individual may dip in or out of at any point in their unique process, simultaneously being influenced by various internal and external factors.

#### **4.3.5 The Leckie Model**

The model developed by Leckie et al. (1996) narrowed the focus from a general view of information behaviour to the information seeking strategies of working professionals in particular, such as lawyers, engineers, and doctors. In this model (shown as Figure 4.5), the prime motivator for an information search is an individual's work role, which leads to the various tasks that must be completed in association with it. These identified tasks then generate information needs that must be fulfilled in order for the professional to complete the tasks sufficiently. Most of the stages in this model are unidirectional, flowing from one factor to the next, except in the case of "outcomes" and "characteristics of information needs" which influence each other in a bidirectional way.

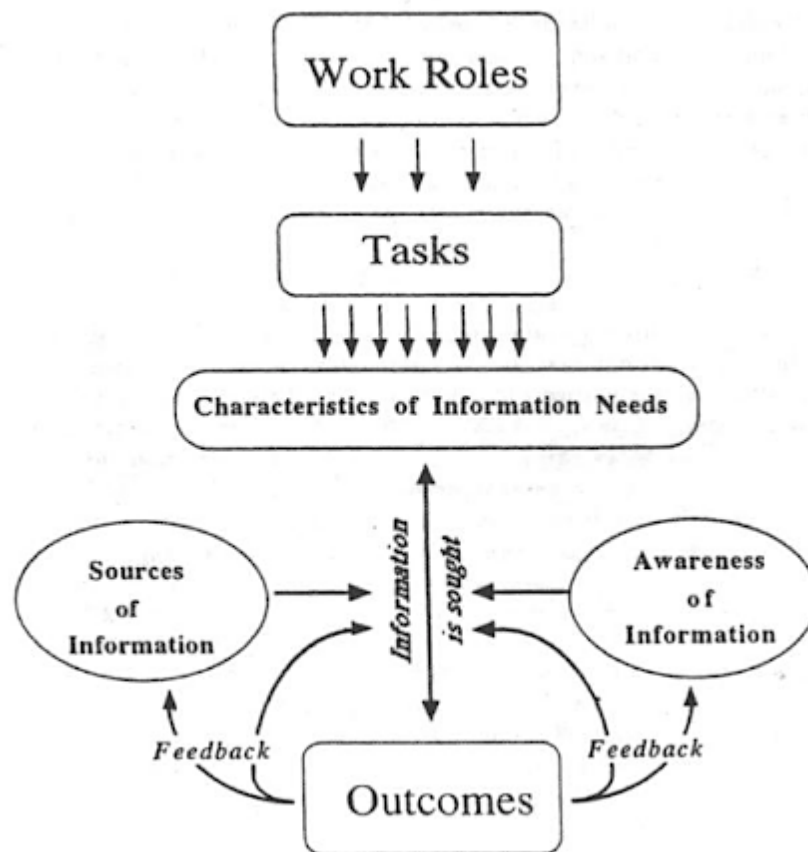


Figure 4.5 Leckie's (1996) Model of Information Seeking of Professionals

In addition to these work roles and tasks, the developers of the model specified that individual demographics, such as profession, geographic location, and career stage, are also important, as they are “variables that influence or shape the information needs” (Leckie, et al., 1996, p. 182). They also made note of the importance of context, frequency, predictability and complexity of the need situation in affecting a seeker’s behaviour. Additionally, the information search is influenced by a potential source’s trustworthiness, packaging, timeliness, cost, quality, and accessibility (Case, 2012, p. 148). Since the focus of this model is on information seeking processes that occur for professionals only, there is no mention of more affective or cognitive elements, such as feelings, thoughts, or attitudes.

### 4.3.6 Dervin's Sense-Making Theory

Dervin's Sense-Making Theory is not a "model" in the strict sense of the term, but it has been cited often in the field of information behaviour, specifically as a way to examine and understand how people use information. It is a methodology intended for the research into communication as "a human tool designed for making sense of a reality assumed to be both chaotic and orderly" (Dervin, 1983, p. 2). In this context, information is subjective and a product of the individual observing the world around him/her (Dervin, 1983).

This theory posits the idea of a gap, such as uncertainty or confusion, occurring in an individual's situational reality, which drives the need for information. This gap "identifies the difference between the contextual situation and the desired situation" (Wilson, 1999, p. 253) while the outcome is the end result of the information seeking process. In order to overcome an information need, an individual must bridge the gap in some way. A graphical representation of the sense-making theory is shown as Figure 4.6, as modified by Wilson (1999).

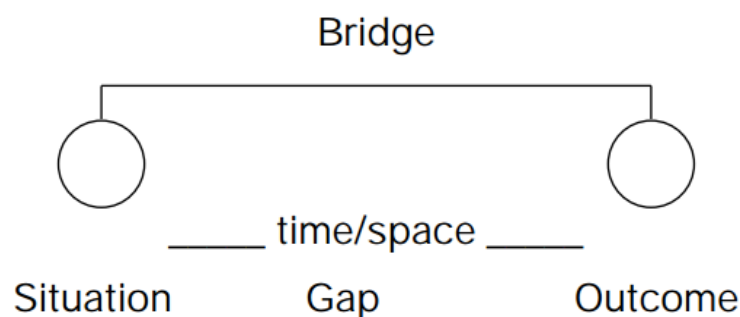


Figure 4.6 Dervin's Sense-Making Theory as modified by Wilson (1999)

In later studies, Dervin highlights the importance of "verbings" in relation to this theory. Verbings are considered the "designing of cognitive and emotional elements that serve sense-making and sense-unmaking" (Dervin & Frenette, 2003, p. 237), which can include making use of ideas, cognitions, thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, values, feelings, emotions, intuitions, memories, stories, and narratives. It shifts the focus from information as an object to information as a process, determined by the

individual's perception and understanding of what they find. This acknowledgement of the more personal and emotional aspects of information seeking can be useful when considering the information behaviour of a group of creative individuals.

In addition, the sense-making theory does not limit itself to a linear and structured process with a beginning and an end. Instead, it posits that individuals are constantly observing and interacting with the world around them and therefore information behaviour is an ongoing process with a variety of sources being combined and used at any given time. While it does not acknowledge certain aspects such as serendipity and more passive information encountering, the inclusion of "verbings" in this theory offers a unique perspective that was reflected somewhat in the findings of this study, as discussed in Chapter 8.

#### 4.3.7 Bate's Model

Bates (2002) proposed an information seeking model with the intention of integrating the biological and anthropological levels of the human experience. In this model, she posited that information seeking can be classed into four modes.

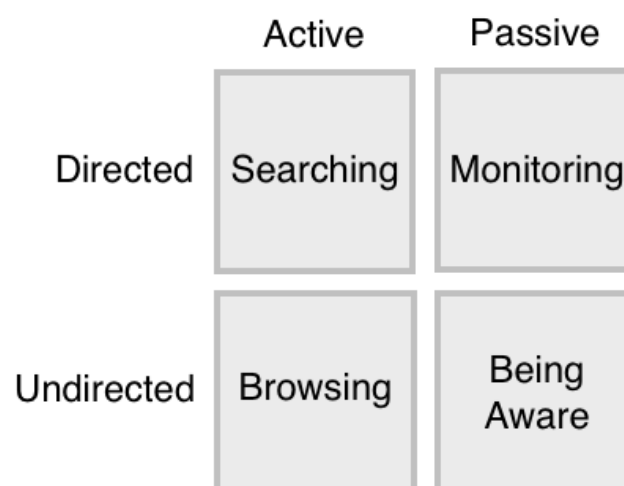


Figure 4.7 Modes of Information Seeking by Bates (2002)

Two of the modes are presented as comprising of passive information seeking, which many of the earlier information behaviour models did not acknowledge. The directed, passive node represents Monitoring. This type of passive strategy refers to maintaining “a back-of-the-mind alertness for things that interest us, and for answers to questions we have” (Bates, 2002), which is a sort of unconscious way of keeping oneself open to encountering relevant information. The undirected, passive node represents Awareness. This simply refers to being aware of everything in the world, whether or not it relates to something of interest or an information need in the back of the mind. Awareness as a type of search strategy came into being because “an enormous part of all we know and learn surely comes to us through passive undirected behaviour” (Bates, 2002) due to the belief that these two activities (monitoring and being aware) “almost certainly provide the vast majority of information for most people during their lives” (Bates, 2002).

The two modes that represent the active components of information seeking included browsing (having a specific information need and actively exposing oneself to information), which may begin due to curiosity, and directed searching (focused searches to resolve a specific information need). When referencing directed searching (and browsing to some extent), Bates (2002) argues that quite often this type of search strategy involves something she coined ‘berrypicking’ in her original study (Bates, 1989). Berrypicking refers to the idea that an information seeker “typically finds information a bit at a time, uses a variety of sources...and a variety of search methods to find everything wanted” (Bates, 2002).

In general, Bates (2002) suggests that the majority of people operate in one of two general modes: berrypicking information in an active manner, whether through directed or undirected searching, or remaining passively aware and absorbing information from the surrounding environment.

This model differs from the structured stage-driven models found in the literature.

There is no starting or ending point and no identified phases a user proceeds through, but rather different *strategies* for finding and processing information. It offers a different viewpoint on information behaviour and forms a solid base for the ecological models discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.3.8 Williamson's Model**

The Ecological Theory of Human Information Behaviour was developed based on Kirsty Williamson's (2005) Ecological Model of Information Seeking and Use, which was influenced by Bates (1989, 2002) and the integrated model of information seeking. Williamson was also influenced by the work of Hummert, Nussbaum, and Wiemann (1992), which suggested that research of people should be grounded in the concept of nature as personal existence.

The emphasis of this model, which differs from many of the other models found in the literature, is placed on information seeking in everyday life rather than the information behaviour of professionals or other formal groups, based on the results from a large-scale study of older people's everyday information seeking. Despite this focus, Williamson has since undertaken further studies that have suggested the Ecological Model of Information Seeking and Use can be applicable in many situations other than simply everyday life information seeking (Williamson & Manaszewicz, 2002), which could be further expanded upon by additional empirical studies.

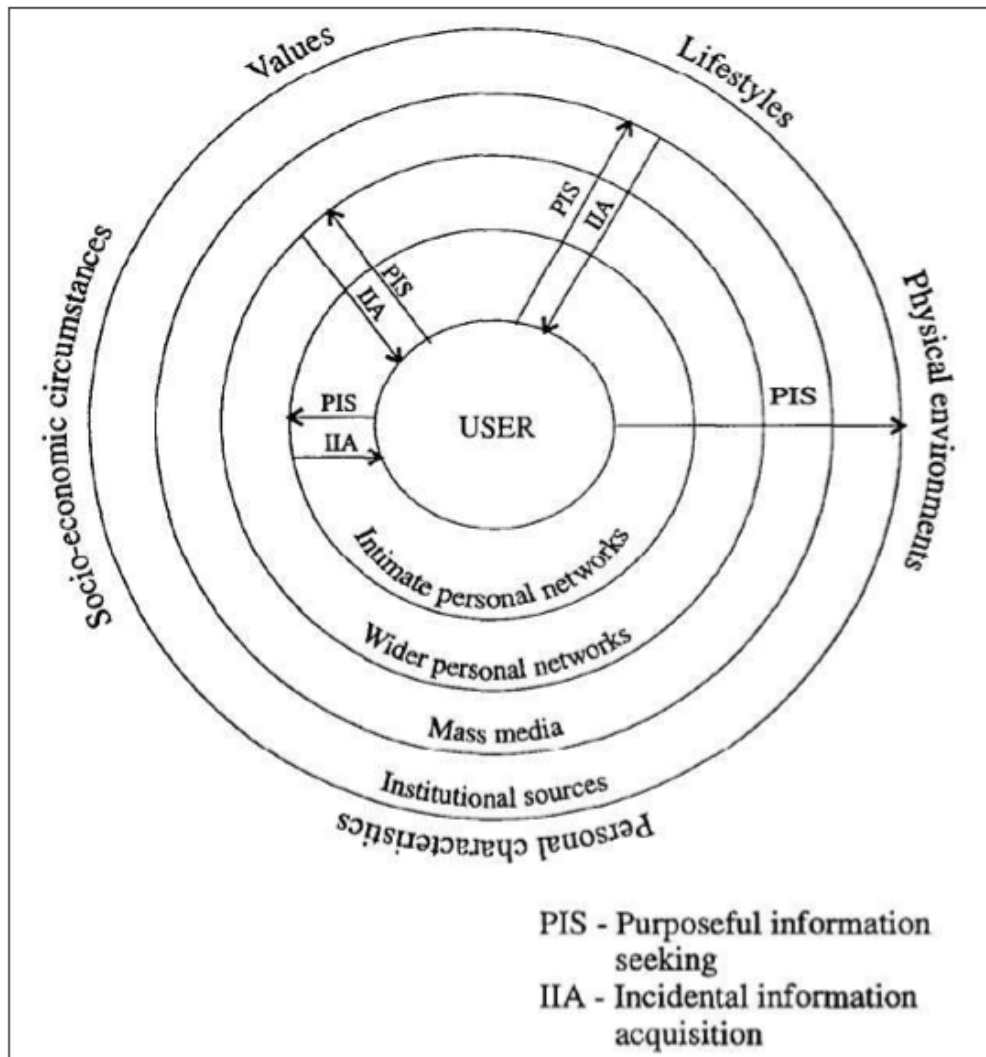


Figure 4.8 Williamson's (1997) Ecological Model of Information Seeking and Use

This model (shown as Figure 4.8) focuses on the notion that information is often accidentally obtained rather than purposely sought, which is called 'incidental information acquisition' in this context. While incidental information acquisition is a key element, Williamson (1998) also posited that individuals can often experience unconscious information needs. These needs are hidden somewhere within the unconscious mind and are only recognised when the individual encounters the relevant information as they regularly monitor their environment. As with many other models examined in this chapter, the Ecological Model of Information Seeking and Use highlights the importance of information seeker's contextual elements. These elements include an individual's socio-economic circumstances, social and



cultural values, lifestyle, affective influences, personal characteristics, work situation, and physical environment (Williamson 1997, 1998, 2005). These contextual aspects influence the search process whether the information is obtained purposefully or incidentally.

Williamson's model focuses on the resources used and the contexts that can influence behaviour rather than on stages, similarly to the Bates model discussed above. Instead, information seeking is merely divided into purposeful or accidental without addressing the steps an individual takes to find information. This focus on ecology rather than process forms a dynamic and individualistic way of demonstrating information behaviour.

#### **4.3.9 Creative Information Seeking Model**

The creative information seeking model (Lee et al., 2007) was developed on the assumption that "every information seeker is creative and hence engages in creative information seeking" (Lee et al., 2005, p. 461) and to better provide support to users of IR systems. The model was based on a foundation of creative process models (details on these models are presented in Chapter 5), in order to identify the various stages of the creative process. These different models were then synthesised into a holistic model of creativity.

Six stages of creative information seeking were developed by mapping the phases of the holistic model of creativity to the activities in Ellis's behavioural model of information seeking (Ellis, 1989; Ellis et al., 1993) after a determination that this model best linked to the stages of the creative process. The resulting model defined the creative information seeking stages as Preparation (the 'trigger' of an information need), Chaining (either backward or forward), Browsing and searching (a combination of directed and undirected searching), Incubation for differentiation purposes (unconsciously working on the problem, filtering information, and making connections), Monitoring and extracting for illumination (maintaining awareness

and working through relevant sources on a regular basis), and Verifying and ending (checking accuracy and completing the information seeking process).

The original version of this model put forth the notion that when the individual completes one stage of the creative process, he then proceeds linearly to the next. However, this model was developed before any empirical research was conducted, based solely on the researchers' exploration of creativity and information behaviour models in the literature. In addition, it did not address passive information seeking or serendipity, two aspects of creative behaviour that have been found present in other studies, which are discussed in greater detail further in this chapter.

However, to confirm these hypotheses, Lee et al. (2007) conducted two empirical studies of university students to better understand the nature of creative information seeking. The study found that creative information behaviour was in fact non-linear. Instead, the stages of the model can occur in an iterative manner for undirected, complex tasks, and when they do, more creativity is needed during the information seeking process. The revised version of the creative information seeking model is shown as Figure 4.9.

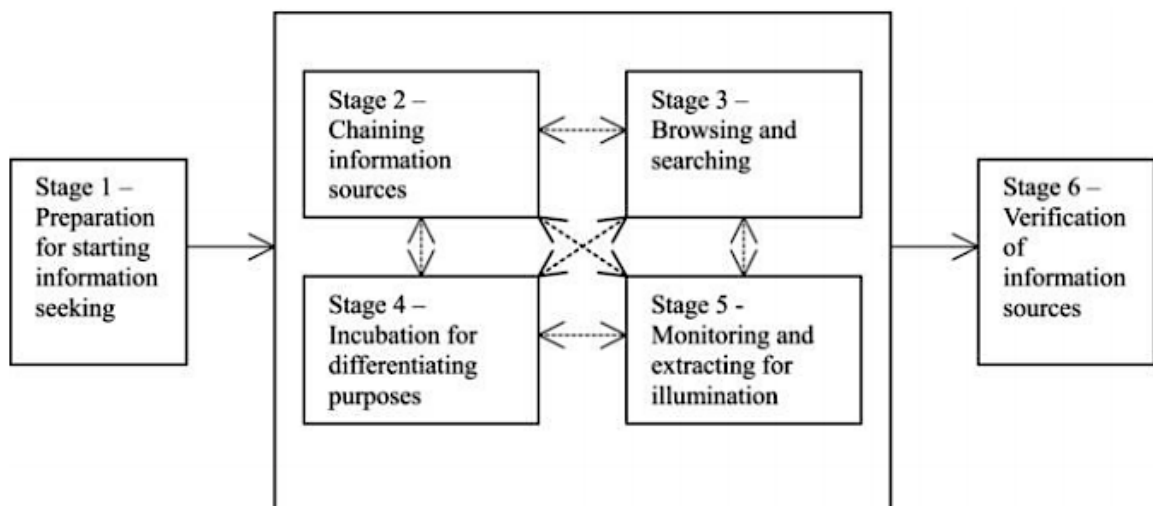


Figure 4.9 The Revised Creative Information Seeking Model by Lee et al. (2007)

The results from the empirical studies also suggested that creative information

seeking involves looping through each stage of the process several times before reaching the verification stage, at which point, the information seeking has completed. Lee et al. (2007) also discovered that the nature and complexity of a task affect the nature of the search process, as well as an individual's experience with and knowledge of the resources available. The more experienced and knowledgeable an information seeker, the more they were likely to display creative behaviour.

This study still has some limitations. While the model was revised based on the empirical findings, approaching the development of the theory in a grounded approach would have provided a more robust model. In addition, it still produces a stages-driven structure (even though it has been identified as non-linear) which may not be the most relevant approach for creative individuals. When comparing this model to the creative writing models included in Chapter 5, one can see that a more holistic model for information behaviour could be more applicable to the creative process.

#### **4.3.10 Larkin's Model**

Larkin (2010b) determined there was a gap in the literature regarding models that represented the information seeking methods of creative individuals, specifically visual artists, during a collaborative mixed methods study with the Art History Information Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust and the Institute for Research and Information Scholarship of Brown University. To fulfil that gap, she examined the information behaviour of scholars in the visual arts, within the context of Williamson's Ecological Model of Information Seeking and Use (1997) and Wilson's Model of Information Seeking (1999) through a quantitative self-reported questionnaire and a qualitative interactive survey instrument. Participants came from a wide range of professional experience, age, and artistic background. The findings led to the development of the Ecological Model of Information Seeking in the Visual Arts, as shown as Figure 4.10 below, using the idea of nesting and

combining complimentary models to best understand the unique behaviours of visual artists.

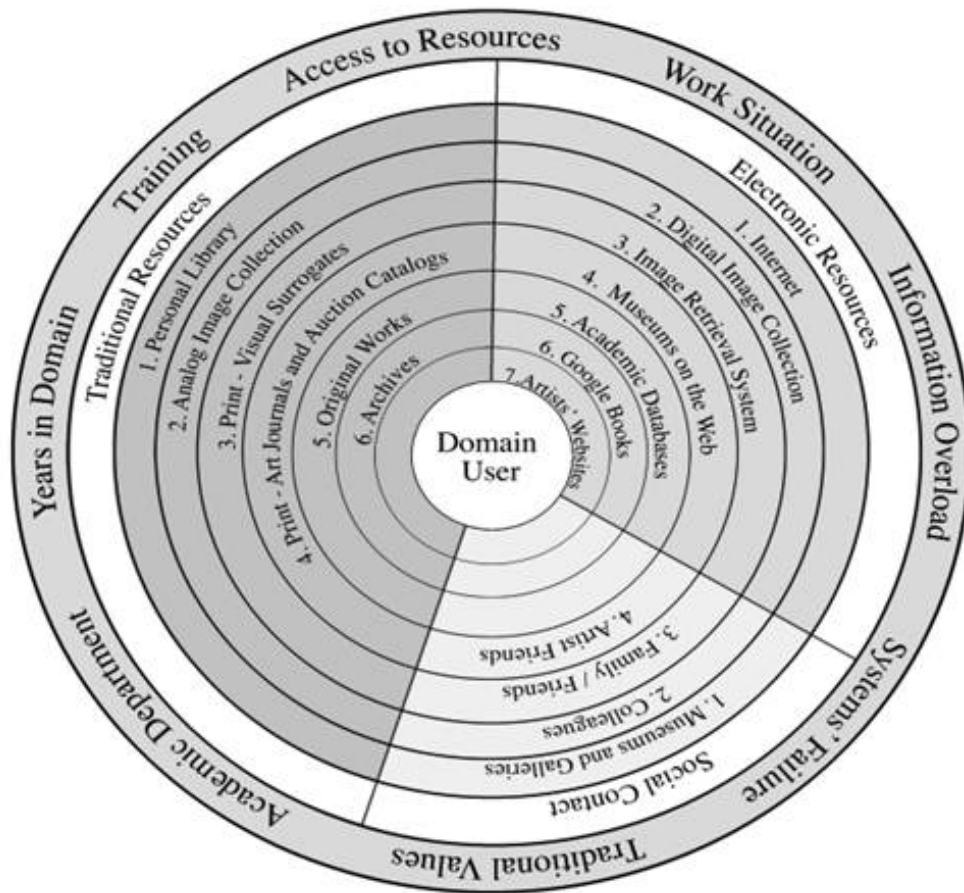


Figure 4.10 Larkin's (2010b) Ecological Model of Information Seeking in the Visual Arts

The model highlights the various sources used by visual artists, including traditional resources (art journals and auction catalogs, archives, libraries, analog image collections, original works), electronic resources (the Internet, digital books, digital image collections, museums on the web, academic databases), and social resources (colleagues, family and friends, artist friends). Results from the study demonstrated a preference for image sources, whether primary or secondary, heavy reliance on the Internet, Google, Amazon, and personal collections in order to satisfy information needs with a preference for an isolated work environment.

Also highlighted in this model are the various contextual elements that were found to either enhance or hinder the information seeking process: training, access to

resources, work situation, information overload, system's failure, traditional values, academic department, and years in domain. This ecological model was intended to offer an alternative to the traditional linear viewpoint in order to allow for the idiosyncratic needs of visual artists as information seekers. It offers a new perspective on the information behaviour of artistic individuals and its plasticity allows for future revision in order to account for dynamic shifts in artists' behaviour due to technological changes and developments (Larkin, 2010b).

This model is user-centric as well as flexible and adaptable, an approach to understanding information behaviour in a more dynamic and holistic way. It is structured quite differently than the Creative Information Seeking Model (Lee et al., 2005; 2007) discussed above. As Larkin (2010b, p. 12) states, "no existing model included the distinctive combination of elements essential for information-seeking" for artists, a fairly unique group of users with idiosyncratic needs. It provides a strong visual aide for better understanding the complex ways in which artists seek and obtain information related to their projects. While the small and non-random sample means that the results cannot be generalised, the study still provides insight into the information behaviour of artists as well as gives guidance for further research into creative groups.

#### **4.4 Serendipity**

While reviewing the models of information behaviour during the literature search, the term serendipity, incidental information acquisition, information encountering, and even 'being aware' appeared to demonstrate a similar phenomenon: the accidental discovery of information. The first use of serendipity as a term occurred in 1754 by Horace Walpole, the British author and politician, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann:

This discovery indeed is almost of that kind which I call *serendipity*, a very expressive word...I once read a silly fairy tale called 'The Three Princes of Serendip': as their highnesses travelled, they were always making discoveries,

by accidents and sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of...  
(Remer, 1965, p. 20).

Later, this definition was further explored with the identification of the following principle elements: “the gift, the discovery, the accident, the sagacity, the things, and the non-search” (Anciaux, 1994). The nature of serendipity provided a way in which to identify the phenomenon of accidental discoveries, often of a happy nature. As a concept, it is present in many disciplines, most notably in arts and humanities, social sciences, and the sciences. However, due to its wide scope, it has often proved difficult to research:

There is much of interest in this subject [serendipity] from different disciplines . . . There are no cohesive theories about serendipity, as it is associated with a wide range of meanings . . . There is little consensus on theoretical frameworks . . . [and] a lack of empirical evidence to demonstrate the nature of serendipity. (Sun, Sharples, & Makri, 2011)

The formal introduction of serendipity into the social sciences occurred through Robert K. Merton, an American sociologist, who identified serendipity as both a word and as a pattern. Serendipity itself simply refers to the case of an accidental finding while a serendipity pattern involves not only the encountering an unsought finding but also recognising its potential and using it accordingly (Perry & Edwards, 2010, p. 858). This viewpoint presents a more active, more purposeful view of serendipity. Thus, this research will focus on this sociological view of serendipity as both a “pattern of behaviour and as a word” (Merton & Barber, 2004, p. 20) when contextualising it within the framework of information behaviour.

In this vein, Van Anandel (1994) identified four domains in which serendipity can occur, which included science, technology, daily life, and art. When describing the domain of art, Van Anandel details a serendipitous story of Pablo Picasso, who, one particular day, discovered that he only had access to blue paint. This lack of a diverse palette inspired his now famous ‘blue period’ and how he later described his painting process as: *Je ne cherche pas je trouve*, which can be translated as: *I do not search but I find*.

Additionally, Van Andel (1994) proposed seventeen possible serendipity patterns. Some of these patterns included events such as successful error, repetition of a surprising observation, playing, and even dreams. This wide range of patterns suggests that serendipity can occur in many ways and in many situations, and in turn can lead to a variety of outcomes:

The sum of these patterns describes serendipity as both passive and active, suggesting that serendipity can involve unexpected results, unexpected changes in direction, and/or finding of something in unexpected environments or from unexpected sources. (McBirnie, 2008, p. 604)

Serendipity has become a common theme in the literature surrounding scientific investigation and advancements, highlighting that important discoveries are often a product of the “prepared mind” (Roberts, 1989). The discovery of penicillin is often linked to serendipity (Rosenman, 1988), as well the discoveries of a large percentage of cosmic phenomena (Kellermann & Sheets, 1983) and the invention of the telegraph (Van Andel, 1994). In a scientific context, serendipity is often viewed as the culmination of chance and an open, prepared mind,, which lends to the idea that serendipity is something that can be cultivated and encouraged if desired:

By realising that discovery involves a dynamic interplay between conventional scientific methods and chance in all of its forms, and by cultivating an aptitude for serendipity, scientists can greatly enhance their investigative powers. (Rosenman, 1988, p. 137)

Several other scholars have discussed the idea of cultivating serendipity, providing a context in which serendipitous events are more likely to occur. McBirnie (2008) highlights the need for an ideal mixture of insights and events, confirming that “for serendipitous outcomes to occur, both the internal and external conditions must be right” (Makri & Blandford, 2011). It often “involves planned insight coupled with unplanned events” (Fine & Deegan, 1996, p. 9). This view suggests that while serendipitous events often occur in an accidental and unplanned manner, there are ways in which to better prepare oneself to make these fortuitous connections.

In addition to the sciences, serendipity has been linked to innovation (de Rond, 2005; Johnson, 2010; Koenig, 2000) and creativity (Bawden & Robinson, 2011; Eaglestone, Ford, Brown, & Moore, 2007; Foster & Ford, 2003), as well as a combination of the two (Anderson, 2011; Thagard & Croft, 1999). In fact, several studies have suggested that serendipity often plays a supporting role in the creative process (Anderson, 2011; Cunha et al., 2010; de Figueiredo & Campos, 2001; Mueller, 1990; Ram, Wills, Domesck, Nersessian & Kolodner, 1995). Writers themselves have stated the importance of serendipity in their creative process, linking the generation of new ideas to chance discoveries:

To describe their own writing experiences, professional writers tend to use the word discovery, since novel ideas often emerge spontaneously through the process of writing. (Deane et al., 2008, p. 6)

To further highlight the link between serendipity and creativity, serendipitous individuals have been described as being “open-minded, perceptive, curious, intuitive, smart, flexible, artistic, humorous, and diligent” (Van Andel, 1994, p. 645), while Ford posits that “creativity often depends on relatively unplanned and often sudden recognition” (Ford, 1999, p. 532). Cobbedick (1996) also notes that serendipity is an important source of inspiration in her study of the information behaviour of artists. Delgadillo and Lynch (1999) identified the serendipitous nature of research within the humanities, stating that it reveals hidden connections and allows for creative translations (Cory, 1999). This viewpoint of the hand-in-hand nature of creativity and serendipity can be summed up well with the following quote:

Accounts of the creative process of research do not leave serendipity as Walpole’s classic “fortuitous discovery”, but hint at something more active, operating at the edge of consciousness. (Foster & Ford, 2003, p. 323)

Serendipity has also been studied in conjunction with individual differences, such as personality and learning styles. McBirnie found that “individuality affects the tendency both to notice unexpected events and to be willing to act upon



them” (McBirnie, 2008, p. 608). Similarly, a study into serendipity by Foster and Ford (2003) suggested that the presence of serendipitous information seeking was affected by approach and attitude, suggesting that personality traits and cognitive style can affect an individual’s tendency to encounter information accidentally (Merton & Barber, 2004).

Heinström (2006b) identified a relationship between personality and incidental information seeking in university students, linking serendipity to those individuals whose scores reflected a low level of neuroticism, a high level of motivation, a high level of openness to experience, as well as an extroverted personality. Based on these results, Heinström (2010) later developed a categorisation of “information attitudes” toward browsing behaviour, including an invitational attitude (which includes those individuals with an open personality and an intuitive searching style) and an exploring attitude (which refers to those individuals with an open personality and a broad scanning style). Both of these attitudes indicate a preference for serendipitous information encounters and suggest that an open personality has a tendency to experience it over a personality that is more closed.

Stokes and Urquhart (2011) also studied serendipity in relation to personality and learning styles in a research of nursing students. They found that strategic learners were more likely to encounter serendipitous information, as well as individuals with a low level of conscientiousness. These results suggest that individuals with an impulsive and spontaneous personality are more likely to encounter information in an accidental way.

When viewing serendipity from an information behaviour standpoint, it has often been linked in some way to the strategy of browsing, where browsing is considered “scanning the environment, prompted by interest or expectation, but without a clearly defined goal or plan” (Case, 2012, p. 381). Cove and Walsh (1988) describe browsing as “the art of not knowing what you want until you find it.” It is a way of

exploring information in an undirected and unplanned manner. Because browsing is an unstructured method of scanning information, serendipity has often been considered its by-product or a phenomenon that occurs specifically within the process of seeking information of some other type:

People find valuable information on subject B when searching for subject A, a phenomenon often called serendipity. The very act of browsing allows a user to recognize information of value in other contexts than that in mind when the search was started. (Boyce, Meadow, & Kraft, 1994, p. 177)

However, this definition of serendipity has been expanded in recent years to include “methods for achieving breadth and identifying information or sources from unknown or partially unknown directions” (Foster, 2006, p. 157), as well as “the action of, or aptitude for, encountering relevant information by accident” (Case, 2012, p. 390). Foster and Ford (2003) classify these serendipitous methods as four distinct types. The first two classes focus on the impact of serendipity rather than the act itself. In these cases, the discovery of unexpected information either leads the researcher down a new path or reinforces the existing solution to the information seeker’s problem. The final two classifications focus on the actual nature of the serendipitous event. This involves either finding the information in an unexpected location or in an unexpected way, or it can refer to the information itself being of an unexpected value, found by chance or through the scanning potential sources.

In a study of information systems and creativity, Bawden (1986) detailed three types of browsing to highlight the differences between the more explicit browsing and the more exploratory kind that typically leads to serendipitous discovery. Purposeful browsing was defined as the “deliberate seeking for new information in a defined (albeit broad) subject area” (Bawden, 1986, p. 211) while capricious browsing includes the browsing of materials without a clearly defined goal. Finally, exploratory browsing was a type of exploration intended for the search of “quite literally inspiration” (Bawden, 1986, p. 211).

The type of information behaviour that an individual portrays depends on the clarity of the information want, ranging from clear to vague. A diagram of this spectrum is shown as Figure 4.11 below with clear wants signifying more directed searching, such as hunting or comprehensive scanning. More passive searching, such as encountering or serendipitous finds, represents the behaviour of individuals with unclear information wants.

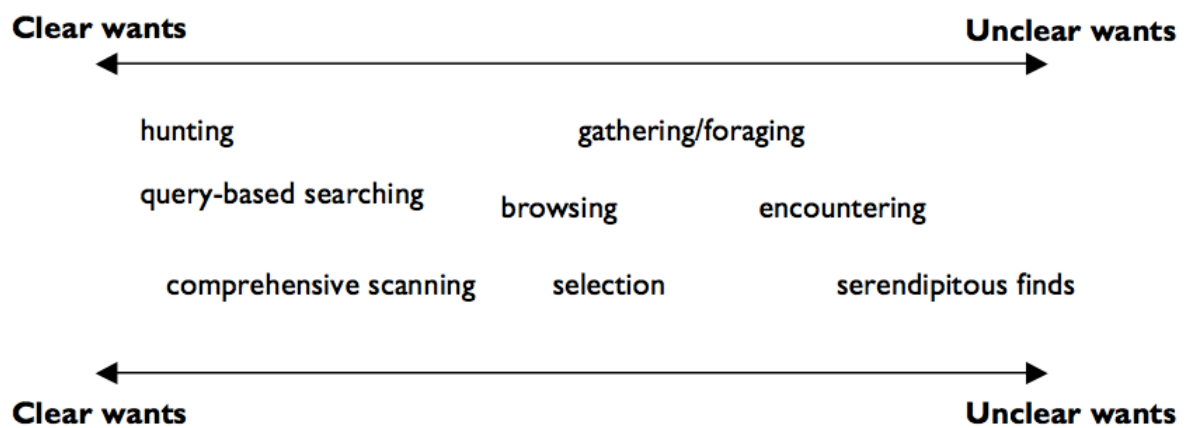


Figure 4.11 Bawden's (1986) spectrum of information behaviour and wants

Erdelez (1997, 1999, 2004, 2005) focused several studies on the concept of 'information encountering' and developed four profiles of information seekers based on their own perceptions of information encountering. These profiles are as follows:

- Non-encounterers, which includes individuals who do not believe they encounter information very often.
- Occasional encounterers, which includes individuals who recognise they encounter information occasionally, though not often.
- Encounterers, which includes individuals who recognise they encounter information on a regular basis.
- Super-encounterers, which refers to individuals who recognise they encounter information very regularly and consider it an essential component of their information behaviour, though they are often hesitant to admit how often

they experience these serendipitous encounters.

Erdelez (2005) suggests that super-encounters may have more sensitive perception when it comes to recognising information channels when compared to those who identify themselves as non-encounterers. Because of this, they may be more likely to notice information in their surrounding environments and may be more “primed” to experience serendipity and recall experiencing it in the first place (Erdelez, 2005). It is also important to note that users may view the exact nature of information encountering in different ways and therefore identify their behaviour based on these varying perceptions. Studies into serendipity within a controlled setting may provide more rigorous results, however, it is a difficult phenomenon to examine in such an environment as the very nature of serendipity is founded upon the principle of accidental discovery.

In addition to the research described above, several studies have explored serendipity as a component of a research project focusing on the information behaviour of certain user groups. Foster and Ford (2003) found that interdisciplinary academic researchers widely experience serendipity. Heinström’s (2006a) study highlighted the positive role serendipity plays in the information behaviour of students across a wide range of subjects, which corresponded with the results from Makri and Warwick’s (2010) study of architecture students. Incidental information acquisition has also been shown to play an important role in the information seeking of everyday life (Williamson, 1998). In a similar vein, Ross (1999) found that people who read for pleasure often accidentally discover information in the text that positively influence their lives and can impact the decisions and choices they make.

In conclusion, there is much to suggest that there is a prevalence of serendipity in wide range of groups, individuals, and situations within an information behaviour context. It has been positively linked with creativity, innovation, and the arts in the studies noted above. As this study focuses on creative writers, the researcher is

interested in discovering the extent to which serendipity plays a role in their information seeking process.

## **4.5 Unconscious information needs**

Unconscious information needs can be considered an aspect of serendipity, though there has been little explicit focus made on this concept in the information behaviour literature. Roberts (1989) coined the term 'pseudo-serendipity', in which unconscious motives drive the serendipitous event. This definition is somewhat similar to that of browsing, though less directed and purposeful.

Unconscious cognition can be defined as "that set of cognitive contents and processes in the cognitive system that is unavailable to awareness but nevertheless affects thought and action" (Harmon & Ballesteros, 1997, p. 422). It has also been described as the non-conscious, or "the converse of conscious cognition" (Hider, 2006, p. 6). The origin of the unconscious can be traced back to Freud (Ellenberg, 1970), who believed that most of our mental life occurs outside of our awareness (such as thoughts, feelings, and motives) as unconscious processes. These processes affect how we feel and what we do (Pervin & John, 2001). Because our unconscious controls much of what we feel, this in turn affects our our decisions, as well as our cognitive attitudes (Westen, 2007).

Research into the realm of consciousness has been studied in depth by psycholinguistics, who have found that eight-five percent of what people understand from reading a text comes from previously obtained knowledge while only fifteen percent of understanding comes from the explicit meaning of the text itself (Harmon & Ballesteros, 1997). In addition, research into dreams has shown that information is often subconsciously processed during sleep, which affects waking, daytime behaviours:

Continually, awake or asleep, consciously or unconsciously, we rummage through our minds, reviewing the data we have collected and stored within

them...[W]e know, or our minds store memories of, what interests us, and we match the contents of what we sense, regardless of where it occurs, against what interests us. (Herner, 1970, p. 408)

Taylor (1968) studied information needs in relation to how information seekers interact with information professionals through a series of unstructured interviews with librarians. From these findings, he posited four levels of information needs, one of which he coined a 'visceral need' which he explained as:

...the conscious or even unconscious need for information not existing in the remembered experience of the inquirer. It may be only a vague sort of dissatisfaction. It is probably inexpressible in linguistic terms. This need (it really is not a question yet) will change in form, quality, concreteness, and criteria as information is added, as it is influenced by analogy, or as its importance grows with the investigation. (Taylor, 1968, p. 182)

This need was distinct from what Taylor distinguished as a conscious need, which he theorised as being "the conscious, within-brain description of the need" (Taylor, 1968, p. 182), highlighting the difference between an unknown and a known information need. This suggests that unconscious information needs can be experienced by individuals. However, much of Taylor's study was focused on the face-to face interaction between a seeker and a library professional rather than on virtual queries or machine-based searches, which are much more in tune to today's information seeking processes. Additionally, Taylor pointed out that written queries were not helpful because there was no in-person dialogue taking place at the moment the information need occurred, which he deemed essential to the process (Taylor, 1968). This dates his findings to some extent, as emails and online searches are much more common in today's information environment. However, his theories on information needs can still be considered a solid base for understanding the information behaviour of individuals in present studies as they have led to "subsequent insights by researchers such as Belkin, Saracevic, Ingwersen, Dervin and Kuhlthau" (Bruce, 2005).

Harmon and Ballesteros (1997) conducted a study of graduate students and

university faculty members to investigate unconscious cognition bound within an information retrieval context through the use of in-depth inquiry, as well as an audiovisual integrator and computerised biofeedback technology. Their findings suggested that there may be an element of unconscious information seeking that can later lead to the discovery of information within the own inquirer's mind. They argued that users can be unaware of information needs or even knowledge contained within them. When opening themselves up to such ideas, the group studied portrayed a notable increase in intuition, insight, ideas, affect, and conceptual fluidity. They suggested that information retrieval theories should not be solely focused on the outside sources that individuals use but that they should also acknowledge that information can be obtained from "the deeper recesses of the inquirer's mind" (Harmon & Bellesteros, 1997, pp. 431-32). While the study was fairly experimental in nature, the findings are worth noting for future studies into serendipity and information behaviour.

#### **4.6 Entertainment as Information**

The use of entertainment as a source of information is one of the lesser discussed topics in information behaviour research, though the vehicles for delivering entertainment to individuals are often the same vehicles for delivering information. In today's technologically-orientated world, there are fewer instances of pure entertainment and pure information. Instead, much information and entertainment exists in tandem, blurring the lines between the two. Despite this growing coexistence, there has been little discussion of it in the literature.

Zillman and Bryant (1986, p. 303) define entertainment as "any activity designed to delight." They note that early Western philosophy (beginning with Plato) disparaged entertainment, just as many still believe that only serious uses of information sources are worth studying (Zillman & Bryant, 1986). These scholars have not been the only ones to note the apparent disregard for entertainment as a

legitimate information source:

Experts make judgements as to how their 'information' will help. They deem some observations as 'information,' others as 'entertainment,' some as 'factual,' others as 'opinion.' (Dervin, 1983, p. 27)

Allen (1996) challenges the tendency for entertainment to be disregarded as an information source by saying that a:

...search for information is purposive and thus can be analysed as a kind of problem solving. These narrow assumptions exclude a range of information behaviours that are not associated with information needs and do not appear to fit the problem-solving perspective. It is quite possible for someone to search for information, not because of an information need, but for some other motivation. People who watch television programs may do so because they need to know what is going on in the world, or they may just wish to be entertained and diverted. (p. 55)

Despite these negative viewpoints on entertainment as an information source, there are some arguments towards its inclusion in research focusing on information needs. Information can come from a variety of methods and in a variety of contexts and situations, especially in regards to more passive browsing behaviour. Finding information in entertainment, and in anything and everything, only further highlights the concept of an 'open mind' as argued by scientists in favour of encouraging serendipitous discoveries. The following quote exemplifies this idea of the world, including entertainment, as a constant source of information:

...for many of us, a good deal of time is spent gathering information in the activity best described as simply watching the world go by. The world is a spectacle, a great show, and watching it is an endless source of entertainment and instruction. We can do it seated in a cafe, watching television program, looking out the window, reading newspapers, or traveling. (Wilson, 1983, p. 142)

In addition, Cermak (1996) even argues that entertainment is even broader than the concept of information. He states:

Humans can derive enjoyment from activities that have little obvious information content: playing softball or dancing. Alternatively, one can view



“information” as the broader category as in cases such as seeing crossing signals at an intersection or hearing the directions to a retail store. However, often entertainment becomes a consequence of information transmission as in reading a book or listening to music where information and entertainment are inseparable. (Cermak, 1996, p. 116-117)

According to Dervin (1983), a major portion of information derives from media, particularly entertainment television. The Associated Press (2007) conducted a study and determined that, without including the Bible, Americans read far more fiction than nonfiction. Studies have shown that public libraries circulate mostly fiction (Rubin, 2010). In addition, Gerrig and Prentice (1991) found that we learn from fiction and the “facts” that are added to our knowledge base from these fictional works are incorporated into world knowledge. In terms of thoughts and emotions, “fiction may be twice as true as fact” (Oatley, 1999, p. 101). Spacks (1985) even argues that the emotional components of narratives are influential enough to determine that “fictional characters and actions, comprehended, may teach us to understand better...characters and actions that comprise our real-life experience” (Spacks, 1985, p. 23). Ross (1999) explored fiction readers’ motivations for the books they chose to borrow or purchase. The results of this study found that people read in order to explore new possibilities, confirm their own self-worth, and connect with the experience of others. In addition, Ross (1999) found that, quite often, the relevant information in these texts is encountered by accident, rather than by design.

When it comes to examining the information behaviour of a group of users who create a type of entertainment content themselves, the lines become even more blurred. Entertainment, in this case, is the product these professionals develop. As such, these works may require seeking out entertainment, especially other literature, for market considerations, idea generation, or a variety of other information-seeking reasons.

Therefore, it seems only logical to determine that entertainment can be considered a

legitimate source of information, especially in regards to individuals who create entertainment themselves. In today's modern world of technology and ease of access to various types of media, much of what we learn and discover can be traced back to fiction, movies, television, and other types of entertainment.

## **4.7 User Studies**

While Cobbley (1996) points out that there are many more artists than lawyers in the United States, little research has been made into the information needs and information seeking behaviour of students, emerging practitioners, or experienced professionals of the various arts, whether they be musicians, visual artists, performance artists, or novelists. The studies that have been done on these groups have focused heavily on visual artists, and of the most recent, nearly all of the literature has remained with an eye toward students (Littrell, 2001; Lorenzen, 2004), faculty (Reed & Tanner, 2001), and librarians (Hemmig, 2008). There still remains a need for studies into the information behaviour of creative professionals, particularly groups under-represented in the literature. As there is little to find on fiction writers, this section will have a heavy focus on visual artists. While their information needs will surely not be an exact match to those of novelists, the two professions should share some commonalities. Therefore, reviewing the past research can provide a reference point for the results obtained in this study.

According to the literature, the first research conducted on the information needs of art students arose from Derek Toyne, who created an academic library for the Falmouth School of Art in 1967. Toyne developed an art library collection from informed guesswork before later surveying the art students to determine which materials they were actually using. He combined these surveys with a review of the library's queries, the findings of which resulted in the first published study on the information needs of art students (Toyne, 1975). During this study, he found that art students focused their efforts on specific books related to the coursework,

information on other artists, and reproductions of art and illustration. Toyne (1977) followed up on his findings with a later article that emphasised the importance of a library contributing to both the practical and inspirational elements of an artist's creative process.

In a similar vein, Pacey (1982) followed with an anecdotal study on the way in which art students use academic libraries. Visual information was deemed most important and sought most frequently. Children's books were also considered a valuable source of artistic inspiration. Just as Toyne (1977) argued the importance of libraries to artists, Pacey suggested that artists can get by without using libraries, but that they perform much better if they incorporate them into their information seeking strategy (Pacey, 1982).

Several years later, Day and McDowell (1985) formed their own study based on the observations provided by Pacey. Again, they focused on art students (including art history, fine art, industrial design, and fashion marketing) through a series of interviews in order to determine their information needs. Their findings reflected Pacey's observations, noting that art students rely heavily on libraries as a source of visual information. The study also demonstrated that art students incorporate serendipity and browsing into their search behaviour and seek out social sources of information, such as librarians and fellow students.

Frank (1999) conducted a study very similar to that of Day and McDowell (1985) through a series of interviews with art students. Through this study, she discovered that art students often use libraries to find images and art reproductions and that browsing plays a key role in the search process. These findings confirmed much of what Day and McDowell (1985) found in their study of a similar nature.

In 1986, four artists discussed their reading habits at a conference of the Art Libraries Society of North America as a session titled "What Do Artists Read?" (Ferguson, 1986). On this panel, the artists highlighted their information behaviour,

demonstrating their idiosyncratic and diverse needs and habits. In addition to the wide range of sources listed, they highlighted that most of their inspiration came to them through serendipitous encounters with other works. This panel is notable due to being one of the early insights into the way in which practicing artists find information rather than art students or faculty members.

Layne (1994) explored the needs of artists and art historians through general observations. Once again, the importance of visual information was paramount, though the general artists tended to search for a wider range of resources than the art historians, who demonstrated more specific needs. In addition, artists tended toward browsing behaviour, seeking information about a broad subject of interest as well as being in search of inspiration. Based on these observations, Layne noted that, for artists, almost anything could be considered information:

Art information is both visual and textual, that is, it may be conveyed through images and through words, it may take the form of pictures, both still and moving, or of books, journals, and manuscripts. Art information includes representations of works of art and text about those works; it also encompasses, more broadly, any information that may be used in the creation of art works or in understanding or giving context to those works. Indeed, almost any information might at some time or another be considered 'art information': for example, an artist may find inspiration in music or in scientific phenomena, while an art historian, trying to understand the context of a work of art, may draw on sources in history of literature. (Layne, 1994, p. 24)

Cobbledick (1996) examined the information behaviour of four artists of different types of media by conducting in-depth qualitative interviews. Based on the results, she determined that artists have five types of information needs: inspiration, specific visual information, technical, current developments in the market, and information about shows and exhibitions. The study also found that these particular artists use a wide range of sources, but rely heavily on printed material and consultations with other people. As this study's sample was very small, it is impossible to generalise these findings. However, they are a starting point for further studies into the

information behaviour of artists.

Cowan (2004) sought to understand the role of information in creative works by performing an in-depth interview with one professional artist. This interview highlighted five themes surrounding the information behaviour of this particular artist: the natural environment (sensory information, such as colours, sounds, and smells), the work itself (the artist's interaction with the materials used to create the art), relationships with the surrounding environment, self-inquiry (inner feelings and emotions), and attentiveness to the world. Again, it is impossible to generalise these findings, and they highlighted different behaviours than the study done by Cobbedick (1996). There was much more focus here on the surrounding environment and emotions rather than on physical material and technical requirements.

Based on a review of the literature, Hemmig (2008) determined that artists typically display four types of general information behaviour: an idiosyncratic pattern of needs, a need for "non-art" information, a preference for browsing, and a preference for social networks as a source of information. In order to confirm these findings, Hemmig (2009) then examined this further by conducting an empirical study on 44 practicing artists. The results identified that artists tend to browse, use social contacts, and look to nature, their own personal experiences, and other artwork for inspiration. In addition, artists demonstrate a need for information relating to artistic materials, techniques and marketing. These results once again confirm much of what the previous studies on artist's information behaviour determined, as well as expanded to include more inspirational needs and sources.

In relation to the concept of inspiration, LeClerc (2010) performed an exploratory ethnographic investigation into the *inspiration* seeking processes of a professional artist. This study argued that information studies have "not yet recognised inspiration as a kind of information and inspiration seeking as an information act in

response to an information need” (LeClerc, 2010, p. 2). Therefore, the focus of the inquiries of this study was much more on the inspiration side of the process. The results suggested that inspiration seeking involves two activities: active inspiration seeking and passive inspiration seeking. Serendipity was also highlighted as an essential component of the creative process, as well as the importance of having an open mind, being receptive, and cultivating the unplanned and unexpected.

More recently, Mason and Robinson (2011) conducted a study of emerging artists and new practitioners by surveying 78 practicing artists who had graduated within seven years of the study. The findings showed that the group employed similar information strategies as established artists, although they placed a higher reliance on the internet and social networks as sources, though these results could be affected by the age of the participants rather than the nature of their professional work. Serendipity and browsing played a role in inspiration, and they tended to favour low cost sources and interaction with peers.

Medaille’s (2010) study focused on a different kind of artist by combining the results of questionnaires taken by 73 theatre artists with interviews with 8 theatre professionals. Findings showed that this particular group of artists seek information as a way to find sources of inspiration, understand a work’s background, enrich their career, learn about theatre productions, artists, and techniques, and gather performance materials. The sources used greatly varied, though results showed a significant reliance on social networks, the Internet, and other artistic mediums, such as video, audio, and images.

Information seeking in regards to the creation of music has been given little attention in the literature. The way individuals seek music and manage their collections has been studied (Futrelle & Downie, 2002; Orio, 2006), but only one study has addressed the needs of the musicians themselves, which is currently ongoing research. Lavranos et al. (2015) proposed a conceptual framework to examine the

information needs and information behaviour of musicians as it relates to their creativity, with an empirical study to follow.

Few studies were found on the information needs of fiction writers, and many scholars note the need for further research into the relationship between the creative process and information behaviour (Hemmig, 2008; Case, 2012; Paling, 2006; Russell, 1995). An early study explored the research needs of fiction writers, highlighting the relationship between authors and libraries, people as sources, and the importance of writers' organisations (Russell, 1995). Paling (2006, 2008, 2009) and Paling and Martin (2011) have investigated how members of the literary community find new works of literature to read, making no note of other types of information needs or behaviour, nor any specific needs in regards to their professional work. Osborne (2010) briefly discusses the information behaviour of novelists in archives, though no empirical study has been performed in conjunction with these observations.

Most recently, Deroshers and Pecoskie (2014) explored the information behaviour of fiction writers through a qualitative study of the Acknowledgements section found in novels. Their findings suggested that fiction writers tend to rely on other individuals, communities, and publishers during the information seeking process. However, the scope of these findings is limited. The researchers solely focused on the written acknowledgements provided in the authors' novels, which often only recognises individual contributions, such as editors and agents, as well as familial support throughout the writing process. There is often little to no discussion in these passages about the various sources used to obtain information for their works nor the processes undertaken to access them. Some insight can be obtained, but it is difficult to develop an in-depth view of their information behaviour through this particular methodology.

In conclusion, previous studies of creative information behaviour have found that artistic individuals tend to find browsing and serendipitous encounters with

information valuable. Social connections and communities are heavily used. They also seek a wide range of sources, have diverse and idiosyncratic needs, and are always on the look out for inspiration. However, there has been little focus on the information behaviour of fiction writers, and this study seeks to fulfil this particular gap in the literature.

## **4.8 Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy was developed as a construct of the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977). It can be defined as “a person’s estimate that a given behaviour will lead to a certain outcome” (Bandura, 1977, p. 193) and is “concerned with judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations” (Bandura, 1997, p. 122). It is considered one of the driving forces of behaviour, along with self-esteem, locus of control, perceived control, and self-reliance (Baron & Rodin, 1978; Grimaldi & Goette, 1999; Gist, 1987).

Many studies have examined self-efficacy in relation to motivation and performance. Research has found that self-efficacy does in fact have an effect on the amount of effort an individual puts into a specific activity as well as the outcome of that effort (Barling & Beattie, 1983). Studies have also shown that a lack of self-efficacy can lead to technostress (Moreland, 1993), information anxiety (Wurman, 1989; 2001), computer anxiety (Fakun, 2009), and library anxiety (Bostick, Jiao, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Cleveland, 2004; Katopol, 2005; Mellon, 1986; Mizrachi, 2010), and that anxiety can have a negative effect on cognitive processes (Kwon, 2008).

Much of the research of self-efficacy in information seeking has focused on electronic information behaviour (Monoi et al., 2005; Ren, 2000; Debowski et al., 2001; Yi & Hwang, 2003). For example, Compeau and Higgins (1995) conducted a study on computer self-efficacy and found that individuals with a high self-efficacy had higher expectations on the outcomes of their searches, a more positive emotional response to computers, and better computer skills in general. This positive



relationship between self-efficacy and computer use has been confirmed in other studies as well (Hill, Smith, & Mann, 1986; Taylor & Todd, 1995).

In general, the literature demonstrates that self-efficacy can have a positive or negative effect, depending on the individual's perception of their abilities, on the resulting motivation, amount of effort, performance, as well as the richness and depth of the information search process.

## **4.9 Information Anxiety**

While there is no generally accepted definition of information overload, information anxiety can be defined as a "condition of stress caused by the inability to access, understand, or make use of, necessary information" (Bawden & Robinson, 2009, p. 6). There is a tendency in the literature to focus solely on overload (too much information) as a source of information anxiety, however, Wurman (1989, p. 44) states that it "is as likely to result from too much information as too little information." Users can also experience anxiety due to insufficient information, not understanding the search environment, poorly-organised information (Bawden & Robinson, 2009, p. 6), lack of self-efficacy, and not knowing where to find information (Wurman, 1989).

Girard and Allison (2008) conducted three empirical studies to explore Wurman's theories on information anxiety and determine whether there may be a difference between information overload and information anxiety. These three studies analysed middle managers (Girard, 2005), military personnel (Allison, 2006), and Air Force officers (Allison, 2008). Due to the varying samples, these studies yielded conflicted findings. However, while the level of information anxiety differed between the samples, results suggested that participants in general found information overload and information anxiety to be separate issues.

Studies into information overload have also had mixed results. Gender and

information overload have been found to have both significant correlation and no correlation (Chowdhury & Gibb, 2009; Kim, Lustria, & Burkey, 2007; Williamson, Christopher Eaker, & Lounsbury, 2012, Walsh & Mitchell, 2004). In addition, studies have found a positive relationship between age and information overload while others have found no significant relationship between the two factors (Chowdhury & Giff, 2009; Kim, Lustria, & Burkey, 2007; Williamson, Christopher Eaker, & Lounsbury, 2012).

However, despite these varying results, information anxiety and overload pose as potential issues for information seekers and should be considered when exploring the information behaviour of a particular group of users. It is difficult to predict which variables cause information anxiety and overload (Girard & Allison, 2008), but empirical evidence suggests that uncertainty (Blundell & Lambert, 2014), emotions (Williamson, Christopher Eaker, & Lounsbury, 2012), and lack of self-efficacy (Katapol, 2005) can be considered contributing factors.

#### **4.10 Source Quality**

Source quality in the context of this research refers to the relevance of the information a user finds during the search process. From an information retrieval standpoint, relevance is concerned with how well the output from a system matches the user's query (Harter, 1986). A more subjective view regards relevance in terms of the user and how their knowledge, experience, and situation affects their determination of whether or not a particular piece of information is relevant (Buckland, 1983).

Cosijn and Ingwersen (2000) argue that there are four types of relevance in regards to information seeking. The first of these is topical relevance. This refers to the aboutness of the information. The second, cognitive relevance (often called pertinence) refers to the information's quality. The third of these is situational relevance, which leads to a reduction of uncertainty. The fourth type of relevance is

affective relevance, or the level of satisfaction with the source found during the search process. Affective relevance includes the “user’s knowledge of the field, ability to understand, content novelty, source novelty, user’s beliefs and preferences, and emotional responses” (Heinström, 2002, p. 24).

To further explain situational relevance, it can be explained best by Patrick Wilson, who first coined the term, and his definition that explains situational relevance as:

Relevance to a particular individual’s situation—but to the situation as he sees it, not as others see it or as it “really” is...But we do not care about every feature of our situation; not everything is of concern to us. Situational relevance is to be confined to aspects of our situation that concern us. (Wilson, 1973, p. 473)

Pertinence, on the other hand, is a separate construct that takes into consideration the specific pattern of thought in an individual’s mind during the search process (Foskett, 1972). Originally, pertinence was studied in relation to information retrieval, but in recent years, this focus has shifted from a systems focus to user-defined relevance (Park, 1993, 1994).

Similar to Cosijn and Ingwersen (2002), Schamber et al. (1990) developed a definition of relevance that includes three separate dimensions. This definition highlights the individual’s perspective on their information and their situation during the search process. Here, relevance is considered:

- A multi-dimensional cognitive concept focused on the user, their perceptions of information, and their specific information needs.
- A dynamic concept focused on how users perceive the quality of the information in relation to the information need.
- A complex but systematic and measurable concept focused on how users approach the information conceptually and operationally.

Ford (2004, p. 779) follows a similar viewpoint, stating that relevance is “a

multifaceted phenomenon dynamically shifting over time, whereby a given piece of information may be differentially relevant at different stages in the sense-making process." This viewpoint on relevance has been confirmed by several studies (Greisdorf, 2003; Maglaughlin & Sonnenwald, 2002; Vakkari & Hakala, 2000).

Overall, the literature suggests that pertinence, affective relevance, and situational relevance are important to information seekers. This is particularly determined by the user's own perceptions rather than by any objective measure. Depending on how the individual feels about the information they have obtained, satisfaction or disappointment can be the result of the information search. This perception of relevance can also change over time, depending on new information that is obtained or through new methods of information gathering.

#### **4.11 Knowing Enough**

Knowing when enough information has been obtained is an important component of the search process. Simon (1971) refers to this decision-making process as 'satisficing'. From this viewpoint, "an individual decides when an alternative approach or solution is sufficient to meet the individuals' desired goals rather than pursue the perfect approach" (Simon, 1971, p. 71). Individuals compare the benefits of gathering more information against the additional cost (such as time) of doing so (Schmidtz, 2004). Often times, information seekers will forego the additional cost of acquiring information and produce an outcome that is simply 'good enough' (Stroh et al., 2002, p. 94).

Zach's (2005) study into the nature of 'stopping criteria' during the search process interviewed twelve art administrators on their information behaviour. Findings of the study suggested the amount of effort and time an individual spends on the search process is related to the perceived importance and complexity of the task (Zach, 2005). Once a certain level of comfort is obtained, the individual feels that enough information has been gathered and will stop searching even if they are

aware that more information is available.

## **4.12 Ease of Use**

Convenience in terms of information behaviour refers to “familiarity with a resource, perceived ease of use, and physical proximity” (Connaway, Dickey, & Radford, 2011, p. 180). This type of convenience can have implications for access to physical resources, such as a library, and electronic resources, and often provides a reasoning behind the proliferation of the Internet as a chosen information source (Foster & Ford, 2003).

For example, the JUSTEIS project (Urquhart et al., 2004) identified Google as a growing source of information, and studies have shown that Google has become the preferred electronic tool for a variety of users due to its ease of use and near-instantaneous access to information (Griffiths & Brophy, 2005; Jamali & Asadi, 2010; Haglund & Olsson, 2008; De Groote, Shultz, & Blečić, 2014). Information seekers “believe that web search is fast and easy, providing immediate access to information and giving them what they want” (Bawden & Vilar, 2006, p. 349).

Griffiths and King (2008) conducted a study on the use of libraries, museums, and the Internet by adult users. Their results demonstrated that the Internet was most often the chosen resource. This was not because it was viewed as having the best quality information but nearly always because it was considered convenient and easy (Griffiths & King, 2008).

Head and Eisenberg (2010) focused a study on students’ use of Wikipedia to determine how and why they use the crowd-sourced website for their academic work. Again, ease of use was found to be the driving force behind this type of information behaviour. The results showed that students use Wikipedia because “it offers a mixture of coverage, currency, convenience, and comprehensibility in a world where credibility is less of a given or an expectation from today’s

students” (Head & Eisenberg, 2010).

*Time* is often connected to users’ preferences for convenience and ease of use.

Savolainen’s (1995) research into everyday-life information seeking showed that time was a situational constraint that affected an individual’s desires for easy to use resources and convenience of access. If “time is a scarce resource for information seekers . . . the time available for information seeking usually permits people to access and use only a limited set of information sources” (Savolainen, 2006a, p. 116).

A need for ease of use and convenience in regards to time and speed has also been identified in other similar studies (Julien & Michels, 2004; Fisher, Naumer, Durrance, Stromski, & Christiansen, 2006; Agosto, 2002).

In addition to time, information overload, as discussed above, can affect an individual’s perception of a source’s ease of use (Agosto, 2002; Christensen & Griffiths, 2000). The Internet both helps and hinders this issue (Edmunds & Morris, 2000), by providing overly large amounts of information but also making it easier to find the relevant data. Information overload can occur due to the information itself (quantity, frequency, quality), the information seeker (skills, experiences, motivations), the tasks and processes involved in retrieving the information (level of complexity), and whether or not the technology is misused (Eppler & Mengis, 2004; Jackson & Farzaneh, 2012). To counter information overload, individuals adopt strategies such as filtering (Savolainen, 2007; Miller, 1960), although this can often lead to omission and error (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

### **4.13 Summary**

Information needs, information seeking, and information behaviour are rich areas of research in the field of Library and Information Science. This chapter presented the most cited models found within the literature, as well as the theories, models, and key concepts deemed most informative for the elements of this study. These models ranged from a focus on the actual information seeking process to a focus on the

contextual elements that influence an information seeker's behaviour. The concepts of serendipity, unconscious information needs, information anxiety, self-efficacy, source quality, knowing enough, and ease of use were also discussed. Similar studies of the information behaviour of artistic and creative students, professionals, and emerging practitioners provided a background of the related research in this area of the field. As with Chapter 3, this chapter highlighted a lack of empirical research into the information behaviour of authors, particularly those of children's and young adult literature. Therefore, the following research questions will seek to fulfil that gap:

- How do authors of children's and young adult fiction seek and obtain information relating to their creative works?
- What is the relationship between genre differences, target age groups and information seeking behaviour?
- What information resources do these authors value and why?
- Does serendipity play a role in the generation and cultivation of creative ideas?

The models, theories, and previous studies helped inform the process of developing the resulting theory discussed in Chapter 8. Chapter 5 will present the the findings from the literature review that focused on personality, cognitive styles, the writing process, and creativity.

# 5. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

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## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter of the literature review presents research from the field of individual differences, including creativity, personality, and cognitive styles. It details the history, models and developments, and examines the various instruments available for research studies that aim to measure individual differences. It also covers creative process models, in order to provide a full understanding of the writing process of authors.

Finally, this chapter reviews related studies to the present research, including those which examine a link between creativity and personality, information behaviour and personality, as well as cognitive styles and information behaviour. These studies provided the researcher with a reference point when examining the quantitative data gathered during this study. Details on the searching strategy used for this literature review can be found in Chapter 2.

## 5.2 Personality

Personality can be defined as “an individual’s characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behaviour, together with the psychological mechanisms—hidden or not—behind those patterns” (Funder, 1997, pp. 1-2) that “persists over time and situation” (Phares, 1991, p. 4). It is the combination of biologically based and learnt behaviour which drives an individual’s responses to the world around them (Ryckman, 1982, pp. 4-5). This suggests that personality can be defined as the fundamental differences or similarities between individuals. While we all share certain characteristics, our individual cognitive traits do not always cause us to respond in the same manner:

There are certain universal characteristics of the human race and particular



features of individuals. We all for example experience stress, and the elevated cortisol that goes with it, and we all suffer the immune suppressive effects thereof. But each of us is unique, too. (Carver & Scheier, 2000, p. 5)

That is to say that while all humans experience stress to some degree, this stress is experienced in different ways, at different intensities, and each person reacts to it according to their own individual self. Because of this, research into personality often deals with the differences and similarities between individuals, in order to predict future behaviour, performance, stress, health, and happiness (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011). These traits can be understood hypothetically (Ryckman, 1982, p. 4), however, some researchers argue that there is no neurological link to personality (Rowe, 1989; Pickering & Gray, 2001).

Research by Cattell (1950) suggested there may be different depths to an individual's personality. The innermost layer forms the basis of the personality and is resistant to change while the outermost layer can be influenced by situational and environmental stimuli. Some theorists argue that personality is often stable and predictable across time and situation (Heinström, 2002; Goldsmith, 1989), and other studies have reflected this theory (Rowe, 1989), though changes can and do happen as a consequence of major life issues or through effort on the part of the individual (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 9). Research has suggested that there is a higher likelihood of personality changes during the younger years of a person's lifespan, until an individual reaches the age of 50 when personality remains generally stable (Neyer, 2000). However, this view is not universal, and some studies have found variances in personality as individuals progress through their adult years (Fraleley & Roberts, 2005; Soldz & Vaillant, 1999; Roberts et al., 2006).

### **5.2.1 Personality theories**

The history of personality theory can be traced to as far back as ancient Greece (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011), beginning with the Hippocrates/Galen theory on personality in which four distinct "humors", or temperaments, were developed.

These original personality types are shown in Table 5.1 below, along with the various traits that apply.

Temperament Type	Traits
Sanguine	Enthusiastic, positive, cheerful, satisfied
Phlegmatic	Dull, lazy, apathetic, slow, controlled, careful
Melancholic	Sad, depressed, reflective, asocial, pessimistic
Choleric	Aggressive, tense, volatile, impulsive, restless

Table 5.1 The Hippocrates/Galen Temperament Types

This early theory on personality significantly impacted several leading intellectual figures who examined the nature of personality. Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, wrote *Anthropology from the Pragmatic Viewpoint* in 1796, discussing the four temperament types as indicators of a person’s individuality. In the early 1800s, Franz Joseph Gall developed the science of phrenology, linking physical brain regions to psychological processes in order to reveal an individual’s personality. An additional theory regarding phrenology was developed by William Sheldon through his somatotype theory. In this, Sheldon “associated psychological dispositions and patterns of behaviour with external—that is, physical—features” (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011, p. 34). His three major personality types (endomorph, mesomorph, and ectomorph) were closely linked to an individual’s body type, including strength and weight. However, this unique outlook on personality has very little support in modern personality theories.

One of the most well-known theorists in the field of personality has been Freud, a psychoanalytic who developed his theories on personality based on his own personal reflections of human behaviour through his work as a therapist (Heinström, 2002). According to Freud, personality can be divided into three aspects: the id (a manifestation of the emotional and irrational), the ego (a manifestation of the rational), and the superego (a manifestation of the moral part of the mind). The ego mediates between the internal and external pressures an individual encounters, forming a compromise between the id and the superego. Each of these aspects of

personality holds a different level of consciousness. The id operates on an unconscious level, fuelled by basic life and death, sexual, and aggressive instincts. The ego operates on the preconscious level, fuelled by the pleasure principle in order to pursue pleasure and avoid pain. The superego operates on a conscious level and represents an individual's values, ideals, and morals. He believed that while these three levels of consciousness operate distinctly, they all have an influence on an individual's personality (Freud, 1996).

Many argue that Freud's psychoanalysis lacks sufficient empirical evidence (Colby, 1960; Grünbaum, 1986; Greenberg, 1986). His findings relied on the analyst-patient relationship and clinical data which was susceptible to suggestibility during treatment. There have also been many questions on the validity of his techniques of free association and the reliance on dreams (Grünbaum, 1986; Farrell, 1981) in determining an individual's personality. In addition, his methodology is not the only aspect of his theories that falls under criticism. His focus on sex is considered overemphasised (Grünbaum, 1986) which may have been a result of his sample of almost exclusively women. By contrast, the Neo-Freudians who followed with alternative perspectives to the Freudian theories put much less emphasis on sex, though they did not remove it completely.

Carl Jung (1941), influenced by Freud's positions on personality, developed his own theory. He posited that the unconscious can be further influenced by the collective unconscious, which is a "latent memory base of our ancestors" (Heinström, 2002, p. 28). In addition, he introduced the concept of archetypes, which are different constructs of personality, including the persona, the anima or animus, and the self. In these archetypes, Jung (1986) argues that each individual is in possession of a 'persona', meaning an outward mask or role played in daily life that differs from the 'self' and the potential for self-actualisation. Regarding an individual's actual personality, Jung (1941) posits that it is composed of three dimensions: extraversion versus introversion, sensing versus intuition, and thinking versus feeling.

Combined, these dimensions create eight distinct personality types, which have been reflected in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Test (MBTI), a personality measure that will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

However, Jung's theories appear to contain little scientific rigour, based more on pseudo-psychology and speculation than on evidence. Some have argued that Jung's archetypes are too narrow and are the result of a biased study on Indo-European cultures (McGowan, 1994) and that these archetypes remove the cultural context altogether. Because of this, there is an element of mysticism to Jung's theories, compounded by his focus on linking mythology with patients' dreams (McGowan, 1994). However, despite these criticisms, Jung's work has been important to the development of personality theory with psychologists such as Raymond Cattell and Hans Eysenck building upon this foundation.

Like Freud and Jung, Allport's theories were based more on philosophical speculation rather than scientific evidence. He believed that personality was a combination of hereditary traits and environmental traits that formed each individual's unique self (Allport, 1937). In addition, Allport (1937) believed that even though there could be commonalities of type between people, the only way to study an individual is by focusing on that individual exclusively rather than in groups.

Based on this stance, he identified over 4,000 possible traits to describe personality through a comprehensive examination of English language dictionaries, arguing against the technique of clustering personality traits. He identified three levels of traits. The first of these was cardinal traits, which are those aspects of personality which are pervasive. The second of these was central traits, which describe an individual's character, and the third of these was secondary traits which includes preferences and dislikes.

While Allport's theories were more philosophical than scientific, they provided a solid foundation for later trait theorists, such as Raymond Cattell, in developing the

factor approach to personality theory, which are discussed in greater detail below.

### 5.2.2 Personality measures

As theorists further studied the nature of individuality, the desire stemmed to quantifiably measure personality. Many instruments have been developed in order to assess the levels of the different traits, as this can help predict and understand behaviour (Funder, 2007). Some of these key measures include Eysenck's personality questionnaires, Cattell's 16PF inventory, Block's California Q-set inventory, and the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, as well as the questionnaires based on the Five Factor Model.

Hans Eysenck's work was heavily influenced by the Hippocrates/Galen theory of personality types through his dimensions of Neuroticism (a combination of melancholic and choleric types) and Extraversion (a combination of choleric and sanguine types). These two dimensions are often used in many other current personality measures, though occasionally under different labels. In addition to these two dimensions, Eysenck later included the dimension of psychoticism, which he regarded as encompassing those qualities that can be found in psychotic individuals (Eysenck, 1991). At a high level, these would include being aggressive, cold, unempathetic, creative, and sensation-seeking, as seen in Table 5.2 below.

<b>Personality dimension</b>	<b>High level</b>	<b>Low level</b>
Neuroticism	Anxious, moody, depressed, pessimistic, tense, shy, low self-esteem	Stable, positive, calm, optimistic, confident, relaxed
Extraversion	Energetic, sociable, lively, active, assertive, confident, dominant	Asociable, passive, slow, reflective, introspective, unconfident
Psychoticism	Unempathetic, creative, sensation seeking, aggressive, cold	Altruistic, rational, patient, conformist, organised, down-to-earth, empathic

Table 5.2 Eysenck's (1991) Personality Dimensions

From this, Eysenck developed several psychometric instruments to measure an individual's level on each of these three dimensions. These include the Maudsley Medical Questionnaire (MMQ), the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI), the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ-R), and the Eysenck Personality Profiler (EPP), all of which are self-reporting inventories that utilise a Likert-type scale.

Raymond Cattell (1950, 1943) developed a 16 factor theory of human personality by reducing Allport's list of traits and separating them into clusters, correlating the traits until only sixteen unique and major traits remained. He did this by distinguishing *traits* from *types*. For example, he categorised extraversion and introversion as a *type* whose traits could include descriptors such as sociable, treacherous, and vain.

He also distinguished what he called surface traits from source traits in order to highlight only those that were identified as source traits, because "personality is that which permits a prediction of what a person will do in a given situation" (Cattell, 1950, p. 2). He believed that source traits are the traits that actually cause behaviour and can then in turn influence surface traits. Therefore, his theory concentrated on discovering an individual's source traits to best predict behaviour (Cattell, 1950).

Following his theoretical research, Cattell went on to develop the self-reporting 16PF personality questionnaire to measure an individual's scoring on these factors. The most recent version of the test includes 185 multiple-choice items to examine a wide range of behaviour. The sixteen factors included in this questionnaire are shown in Table 5.3 below.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Low Scorers</b>	<b>High Scorers</b>
A	Reserved, aloof, detached	Outgoing, warmhearted, easygoing
B	Low in intelligence	High in intelligence
C	Low ego strength, easily upset, less emotionally stable	High ego strength, calm, emotionally Stable
E	Submissive, obedient, docile, unsure, weak	Dominant, assertive, forceful
F	Serious, sober, depressed, worrying	Happy-go-lucky, enthusiastic, cheerful
G	Expedient, low in superego	Conscientious, high in superego
H	Timid, shy, aloof, restrained	Bold, adventurous
I	Tough-minded, self-reliant, demanding	Tender-minded, sensitive, dependent
L	Trusting, understanding, accepting	Suspicious, jealous, withdrawn
M	Practical, down-to-earth, concerned with detail	Imaginative, absent-minded
N	Forthright, unpretentious	Shrewd, worldly, insightful
O	Self-assured, secure, complacent	Apprehensive, insecure, self-reproaching
Q1	Conservative, holds traditional values, dislikes change	Radical, liberal, experimenting, embraces change
Q2	Group-dependent, prefers to join and follow others	Self-sufficient, resourceful, independent
Q3	Uncontrolled, lax, impulsive	Controlled, compulsive, exacting
Q4	Relaxed, tranquil, composed	Tense, driven, fretful

Table 5.3 Factors in Cattell's 16 PF Test (Schultz & Schultz, 2005)

The California Q-set personality inventory was developed by Jack Block (1961) and a team of professional psychologists through an in-depth series of discussions and panels (McCrate, Costa, & Busch, 1985) to determine the appropriate common language for various personality characteristics. In each iteration, new items were

added to address a particular characteristic while redundant items were combined. From these discussions, a 100-item test was designed to explore individuals' personalities by sorting them into nine categories, measured by trained and expert raters to provide more validity to the results. In addition, this measure incorporates a fixed distribution of scores, which "has psychometric advantages and eliminates much of the measurement error or 'noise' inherent in standard rating scales" (Shedler & Westen, 2010, p. 131). However, self-reporting scales based on the California Q-set have also been developed in subsequent years (Bem & Funder, 1978) with more simplified language for non-experts. While some studies using the Q-set inventory have examined adults (Klohn, 1996; Letzring et al., 1986), much of its focus has remained on children and adolescents (Gjerde et al., 1985; Huey-Jr & Weisz, 1997; Juffer et al., 2004).

As mentioned previously, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test was developed in the 1960s based on the personality research of Carl Jung (1941). There are three versions of the MBTI, but the most widely used is the 93-item questionnaire which measures an individual's personality across the four Jungian scales. These scales include Extraversion to Introversion, Sensing to Intuition, Thinking to Feeling, and Judging to Perceiving. Each of these scales is combined based on an individual's score to provide one of sixteen personality types (such as, ENTJ, INFP, ESFP - see p.xvii for acronyms written in full). Myers-Briggs is one of the most popular personality measures at the present time, though it is heavily criticised on its validity (Gulliver & Ghinea, 2010) and its perceived lack of scientific basis (Mezey, 2010).

### **5.2.3 The Five Factor Model of personality**

Based on the Big Five theory of personality, the Five Factor Model (FFM) takes the stance that there are five core traits that can be measured and used to describe an individual's personality, and it is the most commonly used model for measuring personality at the present time (McCrae, 2001). There have been many investigations



into these five core traits, beginning with Donald Fiske's (Fiske, 1949) studies, which were based on Cattell's list of 16 source personality traits. In order to test this model, Fiske studied first year clinical psychology students, using 22 of Cattell's traits in a rating scale, and analysed those traits into five recurrent factors, including Social Adaptability, Emotional Control, Conformity, Inquiry Intellect, and Confident Self-Expression. These results had a direct bearing on future research into the five distinct personality traits. Over the years these traits have had many terminology changes, which are numerous, and it is outside of the scope of the study to discuss each one in great detail here. A brief overview of these five factor variations are included on the following page as Table 5.5.

The current five dimensions of the Five Factor Model were derived from adjectival factor analytic studies (Goldberg, 1992) and personality questionnaire data (Costa & McCrae, 1992). These traits are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Table 5.4 below shows the different traits and identifies the characteristics of these traits on both the high and low ends of the scale. Each of these will be discussed in greater detail below.

<b>Personality dimension</b>	<b>High level</b>	<b>Low level</b>
Neuroticism	Sensitive, nervous	Secure, confident
Extraversion	Outgoing, energetic	Shy, withdrawn
Openness to experience	Inventive, curious	Cautious, conservative
Agreeableness	Friendly, compassionate	Competitive, outspoken
Conscientiousness	Efficient, organised	Easy-going, careless

Table 5.4 Costa & McCrae's (1992) Personality Dimensions

Author	I	II	III	IV	V
Fiske (1949)	social adaptability	conformity	will to achieve*	emotional control	inquiring intellect
Eysenck (1970)	extraversion	psychoticism	neuroticism	neuroticism	
Tupes & Christal (1961)	surgency				
Norman (1963)	surgency	agreeableness	conscientiousness	emotional	culture
Borgatta (1964)	assertiveness	likeability	task interest	emotionality	intelligence
Cattell (1957)	exvia	cortertia	supergo strength	anxiety	intelligence
Guilford (1975)	social activity	paranoid disposition	thinking introversion	emotional stability	
Digman (1988)	extraversion	friendly compliance	will to achieve	neuroticism	intellect
Hogan (1986)	sociality & ambition	likeability	prudence	adjustment	intellectance
Costa & McCrae (1985)	extraversion	agreeableness	conscientiousness	neuroticism	openness
Peabody & Goldberg (1989)	power	love	work	affect	
Buss & Plomin (1984)	activity	sociality	impulsivity	emotionality	
Tellegen (1985)	positive emotionality		constraint	negative emotionality	
Lorr (1986)	interpersonal involvement	level of socialization	self-control	emotional stability	independent

\* Not in original but noted in a re-analysis by Digman & Takemoto-Chock (1981)

Table 5.5 The five personality dimensions comparison, adapted from Digman (1990, p. 423)

The extraversion dimension, which was originally coined *Surgency* by Goldberg (1981), has previously been referred to as assertiveness, power, activity, positive emotionality, and interpersonal involvement (Carroll, 2002, p. 103) and has also been explained to measure social vitality and social dominance (Roberts, Walton, & Viechtbauer, 2006). According to Costa and McCrae, (1992), extraversion refers to the sociability aspect of the term. They suggest that those who score high on this domain are adventurous, assertive, talkative, and sociable while those who score low (introverts) are quiet, reserved, shy, and unsociable (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 49). Howard and Howard (1998) agree, identifying extraverts as physically and verbally active, and introverts as reserved and independent.

However, some argue that this factor can also measure impulsiveness (Eysenck, 1997) rather than solely sociability. Others argue that sociability is merely a by-product of other aspects of extraversion (Lucas, et al., 2000). Because of this, Block states that “different psychologists project importantly differing views of this fundamental domain” (Block, 2010, p. 9) and therefore cannot be used accurately within scientific reporting. However, McCrae (2001, p. 110) has defended their lexical FFM framework, stating that many studies (Benet-Martinez & John, 2000; Somer & Goldberg, 1999) have confirmed their five-factor solutions, and most personality theorists do agree on the basis of this particular FFM dimension (Digman, 1990).

In the FFM, the neuroticism dimension is used to measure emotional stability (Peabody & Goldberg, 1989). Individuals who score on the low end of the scale can be considered to have a calm, relaxed, and stable personality, while the high end of the scale represents individuals with anxious and depressed personalities (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 49). However, a high score on the dimension of neuroticism does not necessarily refer to an unstable personality, rather that these individuals are more easily reactive to stimuli in their everyday lives and more easily become worried, temperamental, or sad (Howard & Howard, 1998). This dimension has also been termed *Negative Emotionality* (Tellegen, 1985), *Emotional Control* (Fiske, 1949),

*Anxiety* (Cattell, 1957), and *Emotionality* (Tupes & Christal, 1961; Borgatta, 1964; Buss & Plomin, 1984). While the terms differ, the traits this dimension represents are generally agreed upon. However, it is not without its critics. Loevinger (1957, p. 675) suggests that “neurosis is far too variable in its manifestation to conform to a scale model” and Block (2010) states that it is akin to a evaluative wastebasket, holding too many varying traits of an individual’s personality.

Agreeableness as a dimension has been agreed upon by a number of researchers (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Tupes & Christal, 1961; Norman, 1963; Goldberg, 1981). In the FFM, an individual who scores high on the agreeableness scale is considered to have high levels of the more “humane aspects of humanity” (Digman, 1990, p. 422), including altruism, nurturance, caring, and emotional support. By contrast, an individual scoring low on this scale tends to have higher levels of hostility, indifference, self-centredness, spitefulness, and jealousy (Howard & Howard, 1998). Those with an agreeable personality are also considered to be gentle, kind, sympathetic, and warm (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 49) and can sometimes be said to follow the group instead of taking on a leadership role. Those on the low end tend to enjoy positions of power and being in control (Howard & Howard, 1998). Some researchers have had a different view of this dimension in regards to terminology. Guilford and Zimmerman (1949) proposed *Friendliness* as a factor instead of Agreeableness. Fiske (1949) suggested a trait termed *Conformity*, and Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981) argued that *Friendly Compliance* versus *Hostile Non-Compliance* worked as a more accurate interpretation of this particular personality dimension. In addition, Eysenck (1992) has suggested that self-reporting participants may have a tendency to report higher levels of agreeableness than they actually portray in order to “erect a more favourable social facade” (Block, 2010, p. 10).

According to Costa and McCrae (1992), the conscientiousness personality trait measures the extent to which an individual is dutiful, orderly, responsible, and thorough. On one end of the scale, a person with a high level of conscientiousness

concentrates on a limited number of goals, strives hard to achieve them, and is very career-oriented (Howard & Howard, 1998). On the other end of the scale, an individual with a low level of conscientiousness is more flexible and adaptive but also more impulsive and easily distracted from one task to another (Howard & Howard, 1998). In addition, several studies have linked this trait to educational achievement (Smith, 1967; Digman, 1972; Wiggins et al., 1969).

However, some argue that this definition of conscientiousness ignores the moral and ethical definition of the term, and there is much less agreement about this dimension than the other factors discussed thus far (Digman, 1990). Block (2010) notes that the Costa and McCrae factor focuses on a “respondent’s likely rule-abiding, diligence, assiduousness, organisation, perfection” (Block, 2010, p. 9) rather than one’s internal ethical dictates, which refers to a person’s conscious, a criticism also reflected upon by Loevinger (1994). Tellegen (1985) suggested that this trait should be labeled *Constraint*, in order to reflect impulse control and reliability, and Fiske (1949) originally labeled this term *Conformity*. Digman and Takemoto-Chock (1981) proposed that this dimension might be better termed *Will to Achieve* or simply *Will*. Ashton and Lee (2005) proposed a *Honesty-Humility* sixth factor that would address this gap and lack of an ethical factor in the model, however, the FFM has not adopted this addition, and Conscientiousness, in the FFM, has become the interpretation of general choice (Digman, 1990).

Openness to experience has been described as an individual’s need and desire for novel experiences, and the depth, breadth, and variability of their imagination (Pervin & John, 2001). Howard and Howard (1998) identify those who score high on the openness to experience dimension to have broad interests, be liberal, and enjoy novelty and new situations and experiences. On the other end of the scale, they highlight individuals who are conventional, conservative, and prefer familiarity rather than the unknown (Howard & Howard, 1998). Activities such as writing, painting, drawing, and exploring scientific topics are connected to a high openness

to experience (Wallach & Wing, 1969).

Openness to experience has been termed *Intellect* in the past (Goldberg, 1981; Hogan, 1986; Digman & Inouye, 1986), as well as *Intelligence* (Borgotta, 1964). Hogan (1986) suggested that in addition to creative and cultural interests, educational aptitude belonged under this dimension. Some researchers state that the Openness trait is not always confirmed in empirical lexical analysis (Block, 2010; De Raad, 1998), but McCrae (2001) argues that these findings are merely the result of a lack sufficient terms in the native language to describe openness of experience.

Measures developed based on the Five Factor model include Goldberg's International Personality Itinerary Pool (IPIP) (Goldberg, et al., 2006), Costa and McCrae's NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992), the Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ) (Zuckerman, 2002), the Five-Factor Personality Inventory (FFPI) (Hendricks, et al., 1999), the Big Five Inventory (BFI) (John, et al., 1991), Saucier's Mini-Markers (Saucier, 1994), and the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) (Gosling, et al., 2003). The NEO-PI-R contains 240 items and has been used in over a thousand studies (Costa et al., 2002) and has been proven to display high levels of validity (McCrae & Costa, 1987; Costa & McCrae, 1995; Schinka et al., 1997; Major et al., 2006).

There are some criticisms of the Five Factor Model in the literature. Saucier (2002) argued that it lacked replicability across methods, that it was not cross-culturally generalisable, comprehensive, or high in utility. Indeed, there is evidence in the literature that these concerns may have merit.

Some have questioned the use of the Five Factor Model in evaluating an individual's personality because it can be considered to overly simplify personality traits (Block, 1995), not be comprehensive enough (Ozer & Reise, 1994), and not portray personality in real terms (Briggs, 1989). Paunonan and Jackson (2000) found that personality traits may extend beyond the factors provided in the Big Five and

suggested the incorporation of additional traits, such as Conservativeness, Honesty, Deceptiveness, Conceit, Masculinity-Femininity, Thriftiness, Humorousness, Sensuality, and Religiosity. This view on the limitations of the Five Factor Model are also discussed by McAdams (1992), who posits that while scales should remain simple, they then lack context, and the scales are only dependent on how individuals view themselves in relation to the world around them. John and Srivastava (1999) argue that the purpose is not to simplify an individual's personality. Its measures are solely intended to represent personality based on a number of distinct characteristics and provide an integrative descriptive model for personality research (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Boyle (2008) critiqued the model by arguing that many studies had difficulties in replicating the factors presented here, particularly those in various languages. As De Raad (1998, p. 120) stated, "trait terms in one language do not necessarily have matching translations in other languages" and the Five Factor Model operates under the assumption that these traits are universal. There have been several studies that have found inconsistencies across languages (Hofstee, Kiers, Goldberg, & Ostendorf, 1997; De Raad, Perugini, & Szirmak, 1997), with particular difficulty in replicating the Openness trait (De Raad, Perugini, Hrebickova, & Szarota, 1998), including the trait semantics as well as the number of traits, suggesting that a cross-cultural and universal trait model is not feasible. However, some studies have found replications of the FFM using representative adjectives in various languages (Goldberg, 1992; McCrae & Allik, 2002; McCrae et al., 2004), and despite his critiques, De Raad (1998, p. 122) agrees that the Big Five factors "form the best working hypothesis" of personality at present time.

Terracciano et al. (2006) argued that the five factor model was too static an account of personality. While McCrae and Costa (1999) initially suggest that personality traits develop throughout childhood and remain relatively stable after the age of thirty, many other leading personality theorists, such as Cattell, Allport, and Murray,

believed personality to be more dynamic than portrayed here. There have been empirical studies to examine this further, some of which have suggested ongoing personality changes throughout an individual's entire lifespan (Cattell et al., 2002; Fraley & Roberts, 2005; Roberts, et al., 2006). Soldz and Vaillant (1999) conducted a comprehensive test-retest study across a 45-year period and found that the five factors can change considerably as an individual ages. However, McCrae (2001) has acknowledged that there may be variances across age, stating that Agreeableness and Conscientiousness often increase as a person ages while Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Openness often decrease, describing these shifts as part of the natural maturing process of human adults.

Despite the perceived limitations discussed here, the the Five Factor Model highlights a set of broad dimensions that can characterise individual differences and act as a solid basis for measuring personality (Digman, 1990, p. 436). Therefore, the Five Factor Model provides a useful framework for understanding personality constructs and how they operate in the real world (McCrae, 2001, p. 109).

#### **5.2.4 The Big Five Inventory**

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) is a 44-item self-reporting personality inventory that measures personality on each of the Five Factor Model dimensions, discussed in much greater detail in the previous sections, and is freely available for non-commercial research purposes. The questionnaire consists of short phrases in easy-to-understand language with a five point Likert scale (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Studies have shown that the BFI is efficient, easy to understand, and appropriate for determining the core attributes of an individual's personality (John, Naumann, & Soto, 2008). While the NEO-FFI and the NEO-PR-I (longer versions of the same approach) are considered more comprehensive psychometrically superior (Gosling et al., 2003), they are often found to be too lengthy for many research projects. More details on the design of the BFI is included



in Chapter 6.

### **5.2.5 Personality and creative individuals**

Barron and Harrington (1981) determined that creative individuals could be described by their “high valuation of aesthetic qualities in experience, broad interests, attraction to complexity, high energy, independence of judgement, autonomy, intuition, self-confidence, ability to resolve antinomies or to accommodate apparently opposite or conflicting traits in one’s self-concept, and finally, a firm sense of self as ‘creative’” (Barron & Harrington, 1981, p. 453).

Some argue they are more intrinsically motivated (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011), and Amabile (1990) went so far as to say that extrinsic motivations can hinder creative thinking. Artistic individuals have been found to be creative, express themselves through their art, and are introverted, emotional, and independent (Holland, 1966). Art students in particular have been found to have high levels of openness to experience (Costa, McCrae & Holland, 1984; De Fruyt & Mervielde, 1996; Gottfredson, Jones & Holland, 1993; Schinka, Dye & Curtiss, 1997; Tokar, Fisher & Subich, 1998).

According to Dacey and Lennon (1998), creative individuals have ten personality traits, including:

- Tolerance of ambiguity
- Stimulus freedom
- Functional freedom
- Flexibility
- Risk-taking
- Freed from sex-role stereotyping
- Perseverance

- Courage

In regards to creative writers in particular, it has been posited by the literature that these individuals are independent, non-conformist, and highly concerned with aesthetics. They exist in a state of wonder and curiosity that enables them to have imaginative insight into emotional truths and the environment around them (Piiro, 2002).

The relationship between personality and creativity has been examined by many studies. Wolfradt and Pretz (2001) found a positive relationship between Openness to experience and creativity. Gotz and Gotz (1979) found a link between neuroticism and creativity in the arts in contrast to a negative link between neuroticism and creativity in science. However, some studies have reported no relationship between neuroticism and creativity (McCrae, 1987; Eysenck & Furnham, 1993; Martindale and Dailey, 1996), which suggests further studies may be required.

Creativity has often been examined in relationship to the Big Five. The most notable correlation found between traits and creativity has been in relation to Openness to experience, so significantly that some have argued that this trait should be named 'Creativity' rather than Openness to experience (Chamorro-Premuzic, Furnham, & Zhang, 2005; Matthews et al., 1998). Positive links between Openness to experience and verbal creativity has also been found (King, Walker, & Broyles, 1996), as well as the ability to improvise (Dollinger & Clancy, 1993), and enhance creative performance at work (George & Zhou, 2001).

Batey et al. (2009) conducted a study with 82 undergraduate students on the relationship between personality, intelligence, and divergent thinking through the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and Guilford's (1967) *Uses* test. The results demonstrated a positive relationship between divergent thinking fluency and extraversion, as well as a negative relationship between divergent thinking and agreeableness. Unexpectedly, openness to experience resulted in no correlation at all,

which offers a different viewpoint than the other studies presented here. However, the researchers of the study posited that the lack of a connection between divergent thinking and openness to experience may have been a result of the chosen measurements, as “a measure of fluency leaves no room for an assessment of originality, flexibility, or elaboration” (Batey et al., 2009, p. 65).

Feist (1998) explored the relationship between creativity and personality in relation to both the arts and sciences by analysing 83 experiments that were recoded into the Big Five taxonomy. He found that the more creative individuals in both disciplines were more open to new experiences, less conscientious, more driven, and more impulsive than the non-creatives (Feist, 1999). The results also showed that the creative artists in particular were more neurotic, more introverted, and less conscientious than the scientists.

King et al. (1996) studied 75 individuals in order to link creative accomplishments, creative ability, and Big Five personality traits. The results suggested a positive relationship between Openness to experience, creative ability, and creative accomplishments. Extraversion also showed a positive link to creative ability while Agreeableness resulted in a negative link to creative accomplishments. Finally, high scores in conscientiousness were suggested to aid in high accomplishment among individuals with a low creative talent.

One study examined the personality traits of science fiction writers in contrast to artists in general by examining the traits of 153 artists, 58 of which were science fiction writers. They were measured by Cattell’s 16 PF Test (Cattell, 1950). The science fiction writers demonstrated to be more intelligent, radical, and dominant, as well as less stable and controlled (Drevdahl & Cattell, 1958). This suggests that writers may express higher levels of neuroticism than artists in general as well as a higher openness to experience.

In a study on the personality of creative artists (Cross, Cattell, & Butcher, 1967), 63

visual artists and 28 craft students were measured against a matched control group of non-artists using Cattell's 16 PF Test (Cattell, 1950). In general, the artists were found to be introverted, assertive, and self-sufficient when compared to the control group and non-artists. They scored highly on the M factor (see Table 5.3 for further details on Cattell's factors), suggesting they have a "bohemian" (Cross, Cattell, & Butcher, 1967) or unconventional tendency and are imaginative individuals. They also had low scores on factor G (suggesting low conscientiousness), factor C (suggesting anxiety and neuroticism), and factor Q3 (suggesting impulsive tendencies).

In another study focusing on authors, Barron (1966) examined the personality traits of creative writers as part of a larger project for the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research. He assessed 30 writers with a California Q-sort inventory and found participants to be independent, verbally fluent, aesthetically inclined and to value intellectual and cognitive matters. In addition to these measures, Barron (1968) also administered the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Myers, 1976) and found creative writers to be more introverted than extroverted.

Mohan and Tiwana (1987) also focused on writers by examining the personality traits of 100 authors using the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975). They found that writers scored higher in Neuroticism and lower in Extraversion in comparison to the general population norms provided in the EPQ manual. These results reflected Barron's (1966) findings on creative writers and Drevdahl and Cattell's (1958) finding on science fiction writers, suggesting that writers in general may express a similar combination of traits.

The Big Five was used to measure the personality traits of comedians by Greengross and Miller (2009). In this study, they tested 31 professional comedians, 9 amateur comedians, and 10 comedy writers. Compared to a control group, all comedians scored high on Openness to experience with the comedy writers in particular scoring

highest on this personality trait, suggesting that writers may have a higher Openness to experience than other individuals.

Kaufman (2002) compared the personality traits of 41 creative writing students to 40 student journalists. This study utilised the NEO Personality Inventory Revised (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Results showed that creative writing students have a higher Openness to experience, higher Neuroticism, and lower Conscientiousness than student journalists. In a different study, Kaufman (2001) found that poets, playwrights, journalists, and fiction writers have a higher psychopathology than other groups. These findings again reflect those of other studies noted here. Writers tend to express higher Neuroticism and higher Openness to Experience when examined through self-reporting personality questionnaires.

Maslej et al. (2014) sought to measure the differences in personality traits between aspiring creative writers and non-writers. The Big Five Inventory (John & Srivastava, 1999) was used to score the difference between 93 writers and 114 non-writers. The study found that writers scored significantly higher than non-writers on Openness to experience while no differences were found for the other traits. This both confirms and contradicts the previous studies discussed, which is surprising, though the variations could be explained by the varying measures used in each of these with varying sample groups. A more comprehensive study utilising a consistent personality measure could yield interesting insight into the nature of writers' personalities.

Overall, these studies have suggested that creative individuals, such as artists and writers, tend to have a higher openness to experience than the general population. Often, creative writers in particular are shown to be introverted and intellectual, as well as neurotic and emotionally unstable, though these results are not always demonstrated. In addition, many of the creative groups that have been studied yielded a low score on conscientiousness. These results suggest that creative

individuals may have a tendency toward new ideas and experiences but are not as proficient with time management and organisational skills.

### **5.2.6 Personality and information seeking behaviour**

The idea that personality and information behaviour may be associated has been increasingly discussed in the literature in recent years (Heinström, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006a, 2006b; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011; Bawden & Robinson, 2011), and it has been demonstrated that personality traits can affect the way in which an individual stores, retrieves, and detects information in the brain (Revelle, 1995). In addition, if an individual's everyday behaviour can often be explained by their personality traits, the leap is not far to suggest that, in turn, information-specific behaviour can be influenced as well. This viewpoint can be demonstrated when viewing information gathering as:

an integral part of our personalities, and we all do it differently. There is no such thing as a homogenous body of information users. A group of people with the same level of education may be working on the same subject at the same time, but they will use information in different ways. Some information will be obviously relevant to all of them, some to only one or two. Some of the group will scan and absorb vast quantities of material, others will read much less. Some will be content with abstracts of many articles, others will not. Some will prefer oral channels, some will prefer to see information in print, where they can pore over it; some always prefer to ask other people, some prefer to avoid people whenever they can. Some like browsing, some find it wasteful in time and effort. Some enjoy computer searching, and some have technophobia... (Line, 1998, p. 223)

However, while the psychological aspects of information behaviour have been highlighted as important (Awaritefe, 1984; Summers, Matheson, & Conry, 1983; Wilson, 1981, 1997, 2000), research into the relationship between personality and information-seeking behaviour has, so far, been limited. There have been a small number of studies examining these two components in relation to each other, some of which will be detailed below, focusing specifically on those studies directly relevant to library and information science.

One such study explored how university students utilised information throughout a problem-solving process (Kernan & Mojena, 1973). The results showed that students could be grouped into three distinct types based on a combination of their patterns of information seeking behaviour and their measured personality traits. These groups were ritualistic, efficacious, and venturesome. The ritualistic group was responsible and persistent but lacked confidence, and they used an exaggerated amount of information sources and resources during their problem solving process. The efficacious group fell into the middle range of all personality traits and demonstrated average patterns of information seeking behaviour. The venturesome group showed personality traits relating high levels of risk-taking, self-confidence, dominance and extraversion, and their information-seeking behaviour showed an aversion to routine and a low utilisation of available information resources.

Palmer (1991b) tested the influence of personality on the information-seeking behaviour of scientists as measured by the Kirton Adaption-Innovation Inventory (Kirton, 1989) and the Learning Styles Questionnaire using cluster analysis. Palmer found that innovators usually sought information widely, enthusiastically, and used many different sources of information. Adaptors were vulnerable to social pressure and authority, prone to conformity, and doubted their abilities. They were, in addition, more controlled, methodical and systematic in their information seeking activities (Palmer, 1991b).

One of the highlights in the studies of information behaviour and personality has been Heinström's (2002, 2003, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) research. In the first of these studies, Heinström (2002) measured the personalities of 305 postgraduate students with the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992) in comparison with their information behaviour. Findings suggest that personality does in fact influence an individual's searching style. Those who scored high on openness to experience, for example, employed broad searching styles, seeking a wide range of sources and encountering useful information by chance (Heinström, 2002). From these results, Heinström

(2002) developed three distinct information-seeking patterns: fast surfers, broad scanners, and deep divers. A comparison of these three information-seeking patterns is included as Table 5.6 below.

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Fast surfers</b>	<b>Broad scanners</b>	<b>Deep Divers</b>
Personality	Neuroticism, cautiousness, carelessness	Extraverted, competitive, openness to experience	Openness to experience
Learning style	Surface	Deep	Deep/Strategic
Source preferences	Written material, overview material, clearly written material	Internet, media, groups, and written sources	Respected, acknowledged, and high quality sources
Level of effort	Low	Moderate	High

Table 5.6 A comparison of Heinström's (2002) information-seeking patterns

Fast surfers scanned quickly and chose documents based on the ease of access, utilising a surface approach to information seeking. Broad scanners had an open, competitive, and outgoing personality with a flexible information seeking attitude, seeking information from a wide range of sources. The deep divers were highly motivated and worked hard in order to obtain reliable and scientific information. The results seemed to suggest that personality and approach to studying do in fact influence information-seeking behaviour.

Stokes and Urquhart (2011) researched personality, as well as learning styles, in relation to the information behaviour of 261 nursing students. This mixed methods study used the following measures: a questionnaire based on Foster's non-linear model of information seeking (Foster, 2004), the ASSIST for learning styles (Entwistle & McCune, 2004), and the Mini-Markers questionnaire for personality traits (Saucier, 1994), as well as follow-up interviews to further explore the quantitative results of the information behaviour questionnaire.

Foster's (2004) model was used as a framework for approaching the information behaviour research questions. As discussed in Chapter Three, Foster (2004)



categorised information behaviour into eighteen micro-processes (such as eclecticism and knowing enough). Stokes and Urquhart (2011) developed the information seeking behaviour questionnaire based on these micro-processes using a two-statement juxtaposition. For each micro-process, participants selected which of the two statements accurately reflected their information behaviour, signalling whether they utilise that micro-process or not.

The results of this investigation suggested associations between personality and information behaviour: higher levels of conscientiousness suggested an avoidance of serendipity, and high levels of openness to experience related to browsing behaviour (Bawden & Robinson, 2011). In addition, Stokes and Urquhart (2010) enhanced the ASSIST framework by incorporating two additional learning styles: mixed, which referred to individuals who scored the same on two domains; all-rounders, which referred to individuals who scored the same on all three domains. This addition allowed the researchers to include individuals with more than one type of learning style in the analysis.

Halder et al. (2010) conducted a study with 600 university students using the Information Seeking Behaviour Inventory (ISBI), the General Information Schedule (GSI), and the NEO-FFI, measuring their individual differences in relation to their information-seeking behaviour and found significant correlations with each of the traits. Neurotic individuals scored negatively in all information seeking dimensions except for the perceived obstacles domain, indicating they used few sources, had a low motivation for searches, and had issues dealing with obstacles found during the process. Agreeableness was found to have a relationship with motivation, frequent use of information, and encountering few obstacles, while Extraversion demonstrated a link with the sharing and exchanging of information and the use of diverse and wide sources. Conscientiousness displayed a positive relationship with all of the information-seeking dimensions, except for the encountering of obstacles. Finally, Openness to experience was associated with high motivation, a preference

for broad and diverse sources, a high level of satisfaction with the search process, and a desire for thought-provoking documents (Halder et al., 2010).

In a different approach to research into the relationship between personality and information behaviour, Hyldegard (2009) examined these two components in regards to group-based information seeking by using the full NEO and diaries. Three groups of 10 library and information science students were measured according to a course-related group project. Results demonstrated a link between their group work and extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness, though the researcher stated these correlations could have been influenced by the academic discipline, the task, or the individual (Hyldegard, 2009). However, due to the small number of participants, the researcher determined that it was difficult to confirm any potential associations between information behaviour and personality in this particular study.

Tidwell and Sias (2005) studied 187 new university employees to examine any potential links between their personality, perceptions of social costs, and information seeking. The researchers argued that an individual's sense of threat to their "social acceptance, personal attraction, or social approval" (Tidwell & Sias, 2005, p. 58) could affect the way in which they choose to seek information and the personality traits they portray. Information behaviour was measured through Miller's (1996) Information-Seeking Tactic Instrument, which focuses on task, performance, and relational information factors. Findings from this study suggested that overt and directed information seeking is positively linked to conscientiousness and negatively linked to neuroticism. In addition, perception of social costs can be influenced by personality traits (such as neuroticism) and information seeking behaviour (Tidwell & Sias, 2005).

Overall, these studies have suggested at least some relationship between personality and information seeking behaviour. However, due to situational and environmental

factors, as well as demographics such as age and gender, there may be more influences on these links than what is demonstrated, and it is best to approach these correlations with the view that “personality does not determine information-seeking behaviour, but it creates boundaries and possibilities for the way information seeking is executed” (Heinström, 2005, p. 244).

### **5.3 Creativity**

The creative person can be defined as having imagination, independence, and divergent thinking (Diakidoy & Kanari, 1999), as well as a psychological richness, complexity, and openness to experience (King & Pope, 1999). Creativity is often defined as a process-orientated event that results in the development of innovative products (Edmonds & Candy, 2002; Kazanjian et al., 2000) and can refer to individuals, process, products, and environments (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011). It is associated with concepts such as motivation, imagination, meta-cognition, social influence, potential, leadership, humour, and even mental illness (Runco, 2004).

Creative individuals generate new ideas in a variety of ways. Herring, Jones, and Bailey (2009) performed a qualitative study of 10 creative designers to determine the process of their idea generation. They found that inspiration played a heavy role in this stage of their creative process, as well as passive searching, socialising, brainstorming, incubating, and encompassing themselves in the topic. This suggests that information behaviour is a crucial aspect of their creative process, one worth exploring in greater detail.

Critical thinking and creativity can be linked to positive information seeking behaviours. Creativity is the basis for the exploration of alternative ideas while critical thinking is the basis for judging these ideas and venues. The creative thinker sees beyond the obvious to produce new ideas and new solutions, and the critical thinker reviews and evaluates these ideas to determine the best feasible solution. When these two skills are combined, optimal thinking (which produces optimal

information seeking behaviour) can be found (Callison, 1998).

### 5.3.1 Creative Process Models

Models exist to describe the creative process, including the information seeking involved throughout the various stages, which can be instrumental in developing a model for the information behaviour of individuals with a professional creative career. One of the earliest creative process models originated from Wallas (1926) and is the basis for most creative thinking training programs today (Torrance, 1988). The four stages of his model were identified as preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. Preparation refers to understanding the problem and gathering relevant information, and incubation includes the subconscious aspect of solving the problem. Illumination refers to the sudden flash of realisation when the solution has been discovered, and the verification stage consists of evaluating the final idea. These components of the creative process can be seen in Figure 5.1 below.

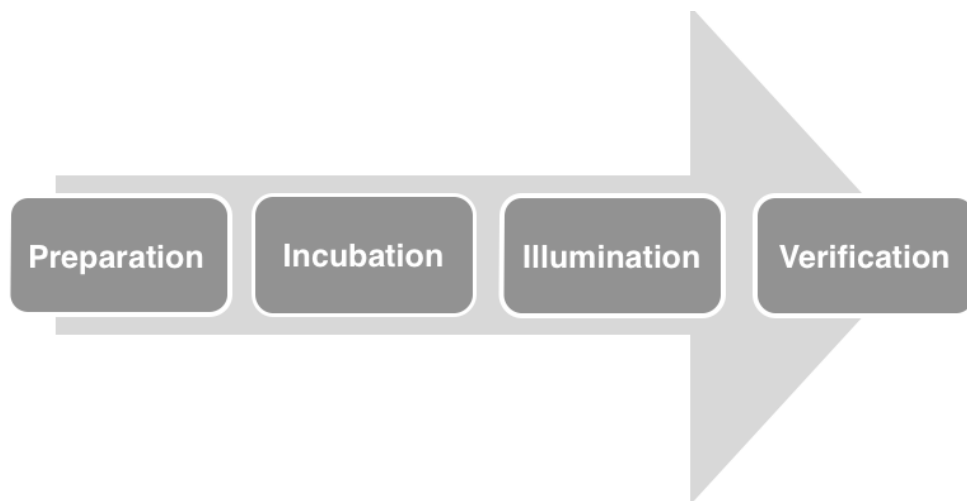


Figure 5.1 The Wallas Model of Creativity (1926)

This model demonstrates much in common with many of the earlier linear information behaviour models, such as Wilson's (1981) original model as well as the more recent original version of Lee et al.'s (2005) Creative Information Seeking Model, as discussed in Chapter 4. Each stage of the process is clearly defined, and the individual proceeds through each step once the previous one is complete.

Indeed, Lee et al. (2005, 2007) relied heavily on these earlier creative process models when developing their own model creative information seeking, borrowing similar terminology to describe the stages, such as “Preparation” and “Verification”. However, the Wallas Model was merely the foundation of more the more dynamic models that were developed in subsequent years.

Figure 5.2 depicts below the Investment Theory of Creativity model developed by Sternberg and Lubart (1995), incorporating six factors that were identified as feeding into creativity: intelligence, knowledge, thinking styles, personality, motivation, and the environment. When these traits are measured, they can be “regarded as a proxy measure for creative thinking and creative behaviour” (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011, p. 306).

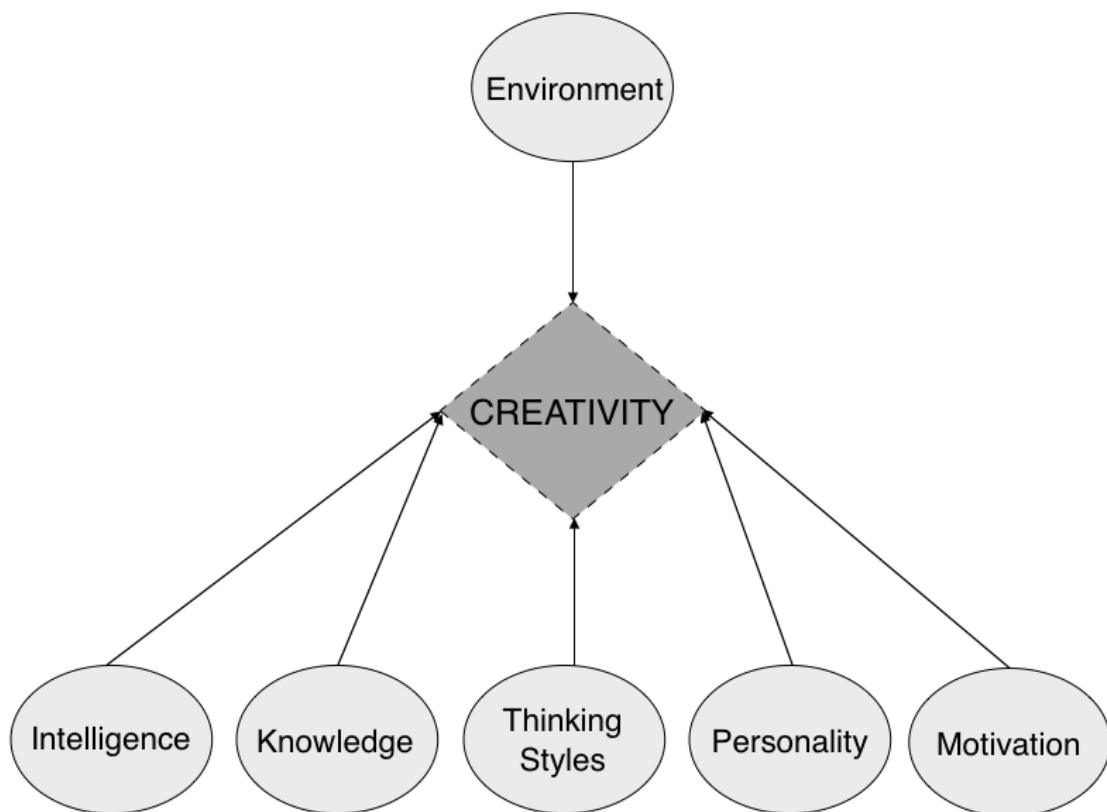


Figure 5.2 Sternberg and Lubart’s (1995) model of creativity

In this theory of creativity, Sternberg and Lubart (1995) argue that several factors have an influence on creativity, including thinking styles, intelligence, and current

knowledge, highlighting that intrinsic motivation is essential (Hennessey, 2010) as well as a person's environment. Without an environment that encourages and rewards creative behaviour, those with creativity tendencies might not have the opportunity to display it (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995; Sternberg & Williams, 1996; Sternberg, 2012; Lubart, 2010).

Sternberg (2012) describes personality in regards to creative behaviour as 'buying low and selling high' which refers to the willingness to think differently, think outside the box, and break conventions, a type of personality that has much in common with the measure of Openness to experience found in the Big Five, as discussed previously in this chapter. In addition, Sternberg (2012) suggests that creative individuals have a willingness to take risks and a high sense of self-efficacy.

Barron's (1988) Psychic Creation Model highlights four stages of creativity and focuses on the extent to which the subconscious and the element of chance play a role throughout the process, often beyond the control of the creator. The first of these stages is 'Conception', in which the individual first generates the idea. This is followed by a 'Gestation' period which is very similar to the 'Incubation' stage in the Wallas model. The 'Parturation' stage includes the moment in which the idea finally emerges from the mind, ready to be used by the creative individual. Finally, the 'Bringing up the baby' stage involves further developing the concept to completion (Barron, 1988). This model had much in common with the Wallas Model, focusing on the linear stages in which an individual proceeds through the creative process.

Rossmann (1931) conducted a study on 710 inventors and expanded upon Wallas's (1926) original model through the use of seven stages rather than four. These stages include many steps that refer to the use of information which suggests that the creative process may share some similarities to information seeking models. The stages are:

1. Observation of a need or difficulty
2. Analysis of the need
3. A survey of all information
4. A formulation of all objective solutions
5. A critical analysis of the solutions
6. The birth of the new idea
7. Testing the solutions and selecting the best fit

Similarly, Amabile's (1983) componential model of creativity includes five stages that an individual goes through when undergoing a creative task. The stages of this model proceed linearly, as shown in Figure 5.3 below.



Figure 5.3 Amabile's (1983) componential model of the creative process

In this model, the individual completes information seeking tasks during the Preparation and Response Generation stages, and then proceeds on through the rest of the steps of the creative process. Amabile (1983) also reveals three environmental elements that may influence the creative process, including extrinsic/intrinsic motivation, domain-relevant skills, and creativity-relevant skills (such as personality and individual differences). As with Sternberg (2012), this model highlights that "creativity should be highest when an intrinsically motivated person with high domain experience and high skill in creative thinking works in an environment high in supports for creativity" (Amabile, 2012, p. 3), and similarities can once again be seen in regards to the Lee et al. (2005, 2007) model as well as the original Wilson (1981) model discussed in Chapter 4.

The Directed Creativity Cycle (Plesk, 1997) was developed after the researcher

approached the literature surrounding creativity models and determined there were several consistent patterns, proposing a new integrated version of creativity based on the concepts of these various models. The resulting model is shown as Figure 5.4 below.

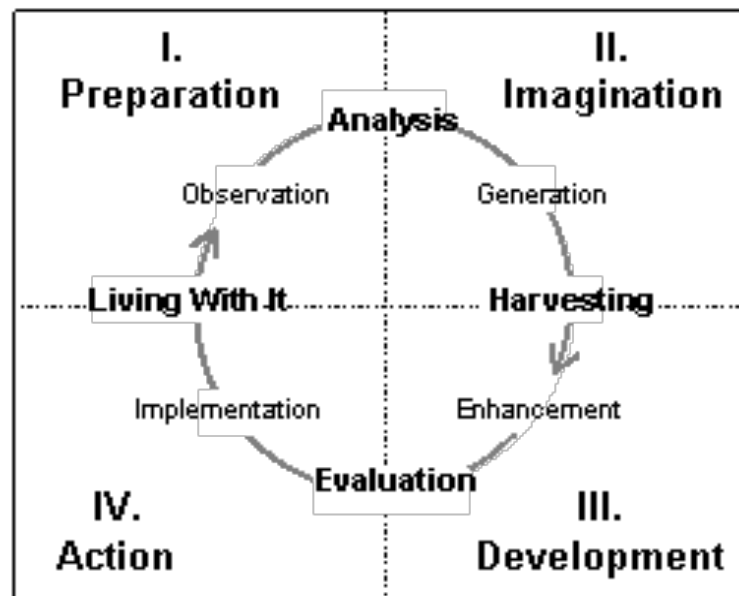


Figure 5.4 Plesk (1997) The Directed Creativity Cycle Model

Plesk (1997) noted that this model follows a more purposeful view of the creative thinker, positing that directed creativity can aid in the search for novel and useful ideas. Imagination plays a key role in the creative process, and creative ideas do not have value until they are put into action (Plesk, 1997). Once the ideas have been implemented, the looping creative process can begin again.

It is worth noting that the structure of these models began to shift, suggesting a more cyclical than linear process, similar to the shift in models found in the field of information behaviour. While separate and distinct disciplines, the models in both areas began in a very structured and stages-driven way before slowly introducing the more dynamic processes found in modern studies.

For example, in contrast to the original linear viewpoint, Cawelti et al. (1992) undertook a study to develop more flexible models of the artistic creative process.



These researchers found that “creative activity contains simultaneity, meaning multiple activities that occur together as independent and ultimately inseparable elements” (Cawelti et al., 1992, p. 83). Some of these simultaneously occurring elements include exploring the work of others, reworking the art, selecting sources, engaging in the outside environment for stimuli, and long periods of research. An additional aspect of this model is “the hum of the universe”, in which Cawelti et al. (1992, p. 90) list the various internal and external contexts that may influence the creative process.

This view of creativity as a non-sequential, flexible process better associates with the theoretical underpinnings of the cognitive process of writing, which will be discussed below.

### **5.3.2 The Cognitive Process of Writing**

The cognitive process of writing has been researched extensively in the field of writing research, specifically when referencing writing in terms of problem-solving (McCutchen, Teske, & Bankston, 2008). Writers often encounter various needs such as seeking to generate new ideas, identifying the correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation, how best to tailor the idea and tone to the target audience (Deane et al., 2008). Studies have shown that more skilled writers will approach these problems with elaborate goals and sophisticated problem-solving while novice writers will take a much simpler approach (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

Flower and Hayes (1981) proposed a cognitive framework that has been widely accepted as a successful determination of what is involved in this type of creative enterprise. The model was developed in response to the traditional paradigms of linear stages that had been dominant in the literature until then.

Flower and Hayes (1981) operated under the assumptions that writing involves a set of distinctive thinking processes which are arranged in a hierarchical manner rather

than linear. They argued that a non-linear approach was more applicable as “each of these mental acts may occur at any time in the composing process” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 367). In addition, any of these processes could be embedded within another. They also posited that the actual composition of the text was one of these thinking processes and that the goals of the writer develop, shift, and change over the course of the project.

This framework proposed that there are three major components involved, as shown in Figure 5.5.

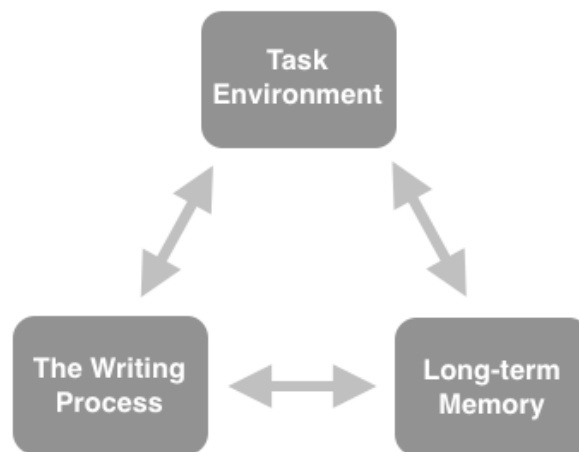


Figure 5.5 Flower and Hayes (1981) The cognitive process of writing

In this model, the task environment contains the actual writing problem, and once text has been generated, the writing itself. Long-term memory refers not only to the knowledge that writers store within their own internal memory but any information stored in outside resources, such as books or the internet. This knowledge can include information about the chosen topic and information about the intended audience. The writing process refers to the various micro-processes used when developing a text. These include generating ideas, goal-setting, organising, evaluating, and revising.

Flower and Hayes (1981) determined that these three elements are often interwoven, the writer engaging in complex problem-solving throughout the process. As the

writer is evaluating the text, he may also be adding to his long-term memory through subject-matter information gathering. The model also posits that the writing process is influenced by various internal and external factors, including insufficient knowledge and outside demands, such as editorial requests. In the revised version of the model, Hayes (1996) focused on the more cognitive dimensions of the writing process and highlighted long-term memory, short-term memory, motivation, and affect as key influences.

Olson (1999) identified ten essential characteristics of this process approach to writing, positing that writing is:

- An activity, one that is composed of a variety of other activities.
- Recursive rather than linear.
- A social activity.
- A means of discovery and learning.
- Intensely related to audience, purpose, and context.
- Includes large amounts of invention and revision activities.
- An activity that can be taught and learned through effective instruction.
- An activity with ample opportunities for peer review.
- Not only measured by the final product but all efforts involved.
- An activity that can be improved, during the learning process, by the intervention of the instructor.

As a contrast to the view of writing as a problem-solving activity, Galbraith (1999) explored the writing process and found it to be a dual process, utilising knowledge transforming (a controlled and conscious process) and knowledge constituting (an automatic and unconscious process). This model focused on the concept that “writing is a recursive process of knowledge development and knowledge

expression...an active process of questioning, research, and rethinking” (Deane et al., 2008, p. 35). This model puts forth the idea that writing is a process of text production, which involves viewing the process differently than Flower and Hayes (1981). In this context, text production is not just “a passive translation of content determined by higher level thinking processes but [plays] an active role in the generation of content itself” (Galbraith et al., 2007, p. 5).

These approaches to the process of writing demonstrate that it is a non-linear process that engages in a great deal of information acquisition, knowledge generation and expression, and is influenced by external demands, such as task, environment, motivation, and affect. Based on these insights, it can be suggested that the cognitive process of writing has much in common a non-linear view on the information-seeking process (Foster, 2004; Ellis, 1989; Larkin, 2010b) that takes into account the feelings, motivations, and attitudes of the individual (Kuhlthau, 1991; Dervin, 1983), as well as having much in common with the creative process model developed by Cawelti et al. (1992).

## **5.4 Cognitive Styles**

Cognitive styles can be defined as “the manner in which an individual receives, processes, and uses information” (Palmer, 1991b, p. 256). Riding and Rayner (1998) posit that cognitive styles are an individual’s approach to organising and representing information (Riding and Rayner, 2013, p.8). It “represents a cognitive strategy for moving towards a goal” (Palmer, 1991b, p. 257) and refers to the way someone prefers to perform intellectual activities (Goldsmith, 1989).

While learning styles are often regarded as the approach students take to learning, many theorists argue it is much more than that. Busato et al. (1998) posit that learning styles incorporate deep processing of information, holistic and serial processing of knowledge, and retention and systematic recalling. An individual’s particular learning style can be considered the way in which he or she retrieves and

processes information (Ekici, 2013) rather than specifically the way in which he learns. It has been argued that there are no sharp distinctions between cognitive style, thinking style, and learning style (Bawden & Robinson, 2011). In addition, Vilar and Zumer (2008, p. 1996) posit that ‘in essence, learning styles are an application of cognitive styles to a learning environment.’ Therefore, for the purposes of this research study, no distinction is necessary between the terms, and ‘cognitive styles’ and ‘learning styles’ will be used interchangeably.

As with personality, cognitive and learning styles are generally considered stable across time, though they can sometimes vary across situation (Geisler-Brenstein, Schmeck & Hetherington, 1996). Studies have shown that the deep, surface, and strategic approaches are more stable over time and situation than other learning style dimensions (Murray-Harvey, 1994), while thinking styles change as an individual gains more experience (Sternberg, 1994). Cultural and socio-economic factors can also influence an individual’s cognitive style (Williamson, 1997).

Curry (1987) proposed four distinct approaches to measuring learning styles and the chosen focus of the various measures available. Two of these approaches include: ‘instructional preference’ style (preferred learning environment) and ‘social interaction’ style (preferences for social situations when in a learning environment). However, the two factors most applicable to the current study include those measures that focus on ‘information processing’ and ‘cognitive personality’. The cognitive personality style describes the “relatively permanent personality dimension...apparent only when an individual’s behaviour is observed across many different learning situations” (Riding & Cheema, 1991, p. 195). Information processing style, however, includes “an individual’s intellectual approach to the processing of information” (Cassidy, 2004, p. 423) and is more stable than the instructional preference and social interaction styles. A comparison chart detailing the key models and measures of each of these two learning style dimensions is

shown as Table 5.7 below.

<b>Model</b>	<b>Information Processing</b>	<b>Cognitive Personality</b>
Witkin (1962) field-dependence / independence		❖
Pask (1972) holist-serialist		❖
Pavio (1971) verbaliser-visualiser		❖
Kirton (1994) adaptor-innovator		❖
Kolb (1984) experimental learning	❖	
Honey & Mumford (1992) learning styles	❖	
Vermunt (1994) learning styles	❖	
Entwistle & Tait (1995) deep-surface	❖	

Table 5.7 Taxonomy of learning style models, based on Curry (1987)

As the current study measured the personality of participants separately using the Big Five Inventory, the researcher deemed to utilise one of the learning style measures that focused on determining an individual's preferences toward *information processing*, as identified by Curry (1987) above, despite the 'learning' terminology. As noted above, there are no sharp distinctions between cognitive style, thinking style, and learning style (Bawden & Robinson, 2011).

Therefore, these four models,—Honey & Mumford (1992); Kolb (1984); Vermunt (1994); Entwistle & Tait (1995)—as well as the cognitive personality measures, will be examined and discussed in further detail later in this chapter to determine which is the most appropriate measure for this study.

#### **5.4.1 Measures of cognitive styles**

Gordon Pask (1976) researched cognitive styles and identified two types of personalities based on how they dealt with complex information. The first of these was the 'serialist' style, which refers to an individual who focuses on isolated elements of a problem and then links them together into a bigger picture; the second of these is the 'holist' style, which includes those who start with the big picture

before moving onto the details later (Ford, 2000, 2004; Ford, Miller, & Moss, 2001; Pask, 1976).

Witkin's (Witkin et al., 1977) field-dependence and field-independence cognitive styles measure the level at which an individual has the ability to dissemble in perceptual tasks. Field-independent individuals are analytical and prefer to structure their own learning process and work in isolation whereas field-dependent persons rely on others to analyse information for them and seek integration into the learning environment. These traits have also been considered to have an underlying connection with Pask's (1976) holist and serialists. However, significant correlations between the two have not been confirmed (Ford, 2000; Riding & Cheema, 1991; Pask, 1976). In order to examine field-independence versus field-dependence, the Embedded Figures Test (EFT) measures the ability of an individual to find a basic shape within a much more complex shape. While the EFT has been used in educational contexts (Noble et al., 2008; Zhang, 2004), it has been argued that it cannot be generalised to personality or behaviour (Griffith & Sheen, 1992) and therefore has little value when measuring cognitive styles (Cassidy, 2004).

Pavio's (1971) verbaliser-visualiser theory is founded on the dual coding theory, which suggests that each individual has a deep-rooted propensity to process information either verbally or visually. This cognitive dimension is tested by an individual's ability to view a spontaneous image and generate information from it, and the speed at which they respond determines whether they are a visualiser (fast responder) or a verbaliser (slow responder). Findings suggest that visualisers learn better from pictorial information while verbalisers work best with text-based material (Riding & Buckle, 1990), and that visualisers have an inverse relationship with science and analytical skills (Alesandrini, 1981).

Kirton's (1976) adaption-innovation dimension is based on the notion that cognitive styles are related to creativity, problem-solving skills, decision-making strategies,

and personality. This measure is described as an individual's "preferred mode of tackling problems at all stages" (Kirton, 1989, p. 5). The Kirton Adaptor-Innovator Inventory (KAI) measures an individual's placement on the scale through a 32-item self-reporting questionnaire. Those who score as adaptors seek to do things in a better way while those who result in an innovative style tend to desire to do things differently (Kirton, 1989).

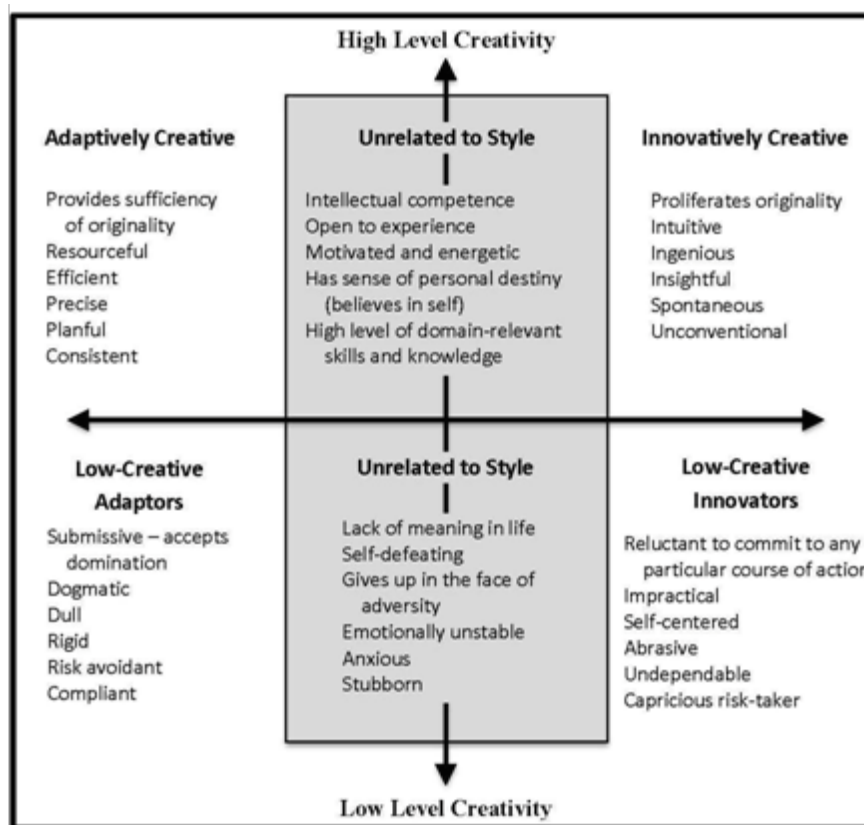


Figure 5.6 Kirton's (1976) Adaption-Innovation Theory

The dimensions of Kirton's Adaption-Innovation Theory can be seen in Figure 5.6, relating the level of creativity with a person's cognitive style, including high and low levels of creativity that are not related to either of the cognitive styles.

Kolb (1984) developed four distinct types of learning modes, including the following:

- Concrete experience, refers to individuals who are social, emotional, artistic, and intuitive.



- Reflective observers, refers to individuals who are open-minded, observant, and reflective.
- Abstract conceptualisation, refers to individuals who are logical, systematic, and analytical.
- Active experimenters, refers to individuals who are practical and active pragmatists.

From this, he translated the modes into learning styles. The first, convergent learning, combines the modes of abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation to specify those who have good problem solving skills and are practical, reserved, focused, and technical. The assimilation learning style combines abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation to highlight those who are logical, practical, and focused on ideas and abstract concepts. A divergent learning style refers to those with combined concrete experience and reflective observation modes. Individuals with this style are imaginative, social, sensitive, and reflective. Finally, the accommodative learning style combines the concrete experience and active experimentation learning styles to refer to those who are active, willing to take risks, easily adaptable, and sociable (Kolb, 1984; Heinström, 2002).

The original measure of these learning styles was a 9-item self-report questionnaire (Kolb, 1976), although a later revised 12-item version was developed (Kolb, 1985), named the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI). In order to determine an individual's style, the participant must rank 4 sentence endings depending on how best it fits their preferences. Views are mixed when it comes to this method. While some studies have reported extremely high (0.99) reliability and validity scores (Veres, Sims, & Locklear, 1991), many others have expressed concern about the nature of its psychometric properties (Freedman & Stumpf, 1981; Geiger, Boyle, & Pinto, 1992; Gellar, 1979; Newstead, 1992).

Honey and Mumford (1992) expanded on Kolb's (1984) learning style model and

developed four distinct learning / cognitive styles, including the activist, the reflector, the theorist, and the pragmatist. Individuals with an intuitive and spontaneous personality tend to result in an activist (represents the concrete experience learning mode) or pragmatist (active experimentation learning mode) style while those who are factual and analytical tend to have a reflector (reflective observer learning mode) or theorist (abstract conceptualisation) style (Honey and Mumford, 1992). The resulting measure, the 80-item self-reporting Learning Styles Questionnaire (LSQ), was introduced as an alternative to Kolb's LSI and was intended for use with management trainees in order to determine their behavioural and preference orientation (Cassidy, 2004).

Vermunt (1992) posited that learning styles are heavily influenced by an individual's processing strategies, perceptions, aims, expectations, and intentions. Based on this, four learning styles were developed:

- Undirected learning includes a difficulty in handling the work load and understanding the material, and having trouble prioritising in order to complete the task.
- Reproduction learning includes the bare minimal reproduction of material in order to put the least amount of effort into the work.
- Application directed learning includes applying the material to concrete situations in order to understand the work.
- Directed learning includes putting effort into gaining a deep understanding of the topic.

In order to measure these learning styles, specifically aimed at university students, Vermunt (1994) created the Learning Styles Inventory (LSI), a 120-item self-reporting questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. Studies have shown the LSI to be reliable and valid (Busato et al., 1998; Coffield et al., 2004; Boyle et al., 2003), though its specific aim at university students limits its use (Coffield et al., 2004).

Entwistle, Hanley, and Ratcliffe (1971) developed the Approaches to Studying Inventory (ASI) as a way to measure level of engagement and depth of processing. This approach to learning styles focuses on the idea of four distinct modes of orientation that, when measured in various combinations, lead to an individual's preferred learning style. These modes include meaning orientation, reproduction orientation, achieving orientation, and holistic orientation, and they identify individuals as having a deep, surface, or strategic approach to studying (Cassidy, 2004). A detailed list of the characteristics that each of these learning styles expresses can be seen in Table 5.8 below.

<b>Deep approach</b>	Seeking meaning by:
Intention is to understand ideas for yourself  Has an interest in course content	Relating ideas to previous knowledge/ experience Looking for patterns and underlying principles Checking evidence and relating it to conclusions Examining logic and argument cautiously and critically Being aware of understanding developing while learning Becoming actively interested in the course content
<b>Surface approach</b>	Seeking meaning by:
Intention is to cope with course requirements  Has a lack of purpose and confidence	Treating the course as unrelated bits of knowledge Memorising facts and carrying out procedures routinely Finding difficulty in making sense of new ideas presented Seeing little value or meaning in either courses or tasks set Studying without reflecting on either purpose or strategy Feeling undue pressure and worry about work
<b>Strategic approach</b>	Seeking meaning by:
Intention to achieve the highest possible grades  Has a determination to do well	Putting consistent effort into studying Managing time and effort effectively Finding the right conditions and materials for studying Monitoring the effectiveness of ways of studying Being alert to assessment requirements and criteria Gearing work to the perceived preferences of lecturers

Table 5.8 The defining features of Approaches to Learning and Studying, taken from Entwistle et al. (2001) and Entwistle and Peterson (2004)

Many measures have been developed over the years to identify these three learning styles: the 64-item, 30-item, and 18-item Approaches to Studying Inventory (ASI) questionnaires; the 60-item and 44-item Revised Approaches to Studying Inventory

(RASI) questionnaires; the Approaches to Learning and Studying Inventory (ALSI); and the 52-item, 24-item, and 18-item Approaches to Studying Skills Inventory (ASSIST) questionnaires. These measures operate with a five-point Likert scale to determine how much the participant agrees or disagrees with each statement. The 18-item scale measures each of the three approaches to studying: deep, strategic, and surface, determining which approach an individual most strongly portrays.

All versions of the ASSIST have been found to be reliable (Stokes & Urquhart, 2011; Heinström, 2002, 2006b; Speth et al., 2007; Diseth et al., 2006), and they are considered to have “robustness and ecological validity” (Coffield, et al., 2004, p. 51). They have been used extensively in many studies and have much support for continued use in research (Duff, 2004; Cassidy, 2004).

However, there are some specific limitations that should be noted here. The results of the ASSIST are often dependent on context, the individual using certain approaches in different situations (Heinström, 2002; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). The ASSIST often reveals only a tendency for an individual to adopt a certain approach rather than identify the approach one might take in all instances. The results can also be influenced by the participant’s intentions toward or perceptions of the task (Laurillard, 1984) rather than any ingrained behavioural tendencies. Despite this, it is a useful tool for measuring the typical behaviour (Schouwenburg & Kossowska, 1999) for certain tasks and situations, though, as a measure, it has been found to be culture-specific and most reliably used in Western countries (Richardson, 1994).

Due to its high reliability and validity, its focus on information processing, and its use in similar studies (Heinström, 2002, 2006b; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011), though these studies focused on students, the shorter 18-item version of the ASSIST was chosen for this research project to measure the cognitive styles of the participants. This shorter version correlates with the full version of the test with deep (0.93), surface (0.93), and strategic (0.91), which confirms the validity. Reliability of the scale

with this study's population was tested and presented in Chapter 7.

Further information on how and why this measure was adapted for writers is included in Chapter 6. A discussion on this particular contribution to knowledge is included in Chapter 9, as this is the first instance of the ASSIST being modified for use outside of an educational context, though it has been modified previously by Heinström (2006b) for secondary school students.

### **5.4.2 Cognitive styles and information behaviour**

There has been some focus in the literature on the possible correlation between information behaviour and cognitive styles, using a variety of measures and approaches. Fidel (1984) examined a potential link between cognitive styles and searching styles using the case study method. While the sample was limited (only five experienced searchers participated, all female), Fidel (1984) was able to observe first-hand their regular, job-related searches, which provided a comprehensive insight into their individual approaches to seeking information.

Based on the data collected from each of these observations, as well as follow-up data provided by the participants, Fidel (1984) highlighted two searching styles that suggested the following relationships:

- Operationalist searchers demonstrated an analytical and precise approach to the searches and used a broader range of systems capabilities and search terms.
- Conceptualist searchers showed a tendency toward starting narrow before widening the search scope to gain more information and placing their searches within a context.

However, this model is not comprehensive and while it presents “operationalist” and “conceptualist” as types, the focus of the results lies on the search strategies rather than on the individuals themselves and their cognitive approaches to

performing those searches. The investigation was limited to a certain type of searcher in a certain type of setting, and cognitive styles was not measured by any of the established scales found in the literature.

In a study using the Honey and Mumford (1992) Learning Styles Questionnaire and the Kirton adaption-invention inventory (Kirton, 1989), Palmer (1991b) used multivariate analysis to examine the possible relationship of individual differences, discipline, and organisational structure on information behaviour, focusing on scientists. Those who scored with an activist learning style used a diverse and wide range of sources and were enthusiastic about their search process. On the other end of the spectrum, those who scored with a reflector style were systematic and methodological, seeking very specific sources (Palmer, 1991b). However, the correlations between information behaviour and these various learning styles were not strong (Palmer, 1991b), which questions the strength of these findings.

Wang, Hawk, and Tenopir (2000) used the Embedded Figures Test to measure cognitive styles in relation to how graduate students used Web search systems. The results from this study revealed that students who scored high on the field-dependent style took significantly longer to perform their search and visited more web pages than those who scored low on that dimension. Similarly, Palmquist and Kim (2000) used the Embedded Figures Test to study Web searching sessions of college students. Similar results were found. Individuals who scored high on the field-dependent style visited more websites and took longer to complete the search process. However, once students gained experience and confidence in their search abilities, these differences became less noticeable, suggesting that self-efficacy and searching knowledge can influence both learning styles and information behaviour.

Through the use of Kolb's Learning Style Inventory, Logan (1990) researched the relationship between cognitive styles and online bibliographic search behaviour for university novice searchers by measuring connection time, number of references

retrieved, and search commands. Some significant results were found. Those with an accommodative learning style approached the task with a surface level of interest, finding the least amount of information possible, putting in a minimum effort, and spending little time searching. Individuals with an assimilation learning style went about the search in the opposite way, spending a much higher amount of time on the search process, seeking more sources, and referencing more material (Logan, 1990). This suggests that those who are logical, reflective, and who are focused on ideas, tend to perform more in-depth searches than searchers who are active and sociable.

Researchers at Sheffield University have been studying information behaviour and cognitive styles for over ten years (Bawden & Robinson, 2011) through a series of studies. One of the early projects by Ford, Wood, and Walsh (1994) studied the information behaviour of 67 university students through the use of CD-ROM databases in conjunction with their cognitive styles, which were measured by the Short Inventory of Approaches to Studying. Following, a further study was conducted of 105 university students, once again measuring cognitive styles by the Short Inventory of Approaches to Studying as well the the students' uses of a variety of databases (Wood et al., 1996). In both studies, cognitive styles were found to be significantly correlated to search behaviour, results that were confirmed with further studies at Sheffield University on the topic (Ellis, et al., 1993; Chen & Ford, 1998; Ford & Chen, 2000; Ford, Miller, & Moss, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005).

Heinström (2006b) studied 574 secondary school students with a modified version of the ASSIST learning styles questionnaire (Entwistle & McCune, 2004) in order to measure information seeking style through the three dimensions (Fast Surfers, Broad Scanners, Deep Divers) she developed based in her previous study (Heinström, 2002). The results demonstrated that the learning styles (deep, surface, and strategic) may have a relationship with information behaviour, supporting the connections found in the original study (Heinström, 2002, 2006b).



Students with a surface learning style related heavily to the fast surfing information-seeking profile, highlighting a preference for ease and availability of the sources, being driven by extrinsic motivations, and having issues with determining the relevance of the documents. In this particular study, those with a strategic learning style tended to have deep diver characteristics. However, their searching strategy motivation relied heavily on a tactical decision to achieve high grades in a search for accomplishment rather than any intrinsic interest in the material. Finally, students with a deep learning style were also found to have a relationship with the deep diving information-seeking profile, seeking high quality sources and engaging in high levels of effort during the search process (Heinström, 2006b). Unlike their strategic learning style counterparts, their motivation to engage with the material went deeper than a quest for high grades.

Part of the research done in the study by Stokes and Urquhart (2011), previously discussed in Chapter 4 as well as in this chapter, involved measuring learning styles in relation to students' information behaviour through the use of the ASSIST questionnaire. The results suggested that learning styles share some associations with information-seeking strategies and other elements, such as self-efficacy. Those with a Deep approach demonstrated a broad, exploratory searching style and had a high openness to experience. Strategic approach learners were adaptable, emotional stable, and conscientious while Surface approach learners did very little planning (Stokes & Urquhart, 2011).

Odds ratio analysis was conducted to determine how likely students with particular learning styles would perform the various micro-processes from Foster's (2004) Model, such as serendipity, networking, or browsing. This approach provided a unique and more in-depth investigation of information behaviour in relation to learning styles than has been seen previously. However, while the learning styles questionnaire was pre-validated, the information seeking behaviour scale was developed solely for this particular study. While the tests suggested validity (Stokes

& Urquhart, 2011) further studies confirming the reliability and validity of this measure would better enhance the findings presented here.

Graff (2005) sought to examine the link between cognitive styles and online browsing behaviour, using the verbaliser and visualiser scale. The results from this study demonstrated that individuals with a verbaliser profile referenced more webpages when menus were set up hierarchically, while the visualisers preferred using linked pages relationally (Bawden & Robinson, 2011). However, these links were replicated when measuring the ages of the participants against their searching behaviour, which may account for the differences rather than learning styles. In addition, a study by Kim and Allen (2002) similarly examined the potential relationship between learning styles and web-based searches, and no significant correlations were found.

Another study that focused on university students examined cognitive styles in relation to the use of digital library catalogues (Frias-Martinez et al., 2007) through the measure of the field-dependent and field-independent dimensions, in order to develop an automatic personalisation system between the digital library and its users. While the focus of the study was on the foundation for developing an automated system that could determine a user's cognitive style, and therefore provide the appropriate digital library personalisation for that unique user, the results shed some insight into the potential relationship between cognitive styles and information behaviour. A positive correlation was indeed found, and participants with a field-independent cognitive style in particular had a tendency to be more advanced in their searches even though they went through the process fairly quickly.

Chen et al. (2005) also utilised the Cognitive Styles Analysis (CSA) to study 57 computing students to determine their individual differences and searching styles of online directories in particular. Field-independent individuals had a preference for alphabetical ordering of the directories, as well as fewer categories. On the other

hand, those with a field-dependent cognitive style preferred a larger number of categories, arranged in order of relevance (Bawden & Robinson, 2011). This reflects the literature found on Field-dependent individuals, as they are said prefer more global and expansive information. However, these results are based upon a small-scale study and a larger sample size could enhance the findings further.

A study in Slovenia by Vilar and Zumer (1998) examined the individual differences of 61 postgraduate students against the use of e-journal systems through the use of the ASSIST, Sternberg's Short Questionnaire on Thinking Styles (Sternberg, 1988), and a thinking styles test (Reynolds, Kaltsounis, & Torrance, 1979; Torrance, 1988). Positive links were demonstrated during this study, including correlations between thinking style and preferences for search interface, particularly in regards to disciplinary groups. Results also showed a relationship between cognitive style and search preference. However, despite these results, the authors were clear to point out that while their findings confirmed the relevance of examining individual differences, there was enough evidence to suggest that the user's discipline might be just as, if not more, relevant to information behaviour (Vilar & Zumer, 2008).

Several other studies have examined the relationship between cognitive styles and information seeking behaviour (Salarian, Ibrahim, & Nemati, 2012; Weiler, 2005; Changthong, Manmart, & Vongprasert, 2014; Bousbia et al., 2010; Worth & Fidler, 1997), and cognitive styles have shown a relationship with personality. A study by Furnham (1992) measured learning styles in relation to extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. Statistically significant relationships were found between each of the learning styles and personality traits studied. Similarly, studies have demonstrated a link between the Big Five personality traits and learning styles (Blickle, 1996; Schouwenburg, 1995; Schouwenburg & Kossowska, 1999), results which suggest that personality is a "deeper structure which may be expressed in approaches to studying" (Heinström, 2002, p. 3). Therefore, a combination of these two measures can provide a more in-depth insight into individual differences than

merely one alone.

## 5.5 Information Styles

Bawden and Robinson (2011) presented the notion of 'information styles', a concept which refers to the development of profiles intended to identify how an individual seeks and handles information based on the combined dimensions of personality and cognitive styles. One example given in Bawden and Robinson's (2011) essay refers to Gardener's (2006) development of the 'five minds' or the five ways of thinking, which while it is not a specified study on 'information styles' provides a framework that relates well to the concept. Each of these ways of thinking highlights how individuals approach tasks, work, and problems, and it suggests how they might in turn obtain and process information.

These five ways of thinking include

- The disciplinary mind, which has a mastery of multiple academic subjects and professional crafts. Individuals with a disciplinary mind focus on how they approach their daily work from a more broad perspective rather than on subject matter alone.
- The synthesising mind, which has the ability to integrate multiple sources of information. Those with this type of mind collect a great deal of information through observation and contact with others before putting it all together in a synthesised form.
- The creating mind, which has the ability to uncover and clarify new ideas. Gardner (2006) suggests a creative mindset is as much about personality and temperament as it is about the cognitive process and that those with a truly creative mind are the individuals who develop new and innovative ideas.
- The respectful mind, which has the appreciation of different cultural

perspectives. These individuals view the world in a more open way and seek to unify varying viewpoints, cultures, and experiences.

- The ethical mind, which enables responsible behaviour. Those with an ethical mind are more in tune to their role in the workplace and in society and focus on the best way to fulfil those particular responsibilities.

In each of these mindsets, individuals may process and handle of information differently as they approach the world in a particular way. Those with a synthesising mind might be more likely to browse widely for information and discover new ideas serendipitously while those with an ethical mind might be more focused on the task and likely to have a more structured searching style. Because of these different approaches, Bawden and Robinson (2011) suggest that Gardner’s research could be used as a typology for information styles.

Alternatively, Heinström (2010) linked personality traits with ‘information attitudes’ based on her earlier research (Heinström, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006a, 2006b), which Bawden and Robinson (2011) argue could also provide a framework for determining information styles. These five information attitudes are displayed in Table 5.9 below in relation to the corresponding personality, search style, emotions, and motivational triggers.

<b>Information Attitude</b>	Invitational	Exploring	Purposeful	Passive	Avoiding
<b>Personality</b>	Open	Open	Conscientiousness	Laid back	Sensitive
<b>Trigger</b>	Receptivity	Curiosity	Ambition	Requirement	Fear
<b>Search Approach</b>	Intuitive	Broad scanning	Deep diving	Fast surfing	Do not search
<b>Emotion</b>	Contentment	Enjoyment	Drive	Indifference	Worry
<b>Result</b>	Serendipity	Discovery	Problem solving	Minimum	Ignorance

Table 5.9 Hypothetical connection between information attitude, search style, emotions, and personality, adapted from Heinström (2010, p. 160)

Hannell (2001) sought to measure information styles with a newly-developed 18-item self-reporting questionnaire that used a five-point Likert scale, identifying three

dimensions and eight styles. These three dimension include: Entrepreneurial-Cautious (representing the level of ease or unease with new sources and questions); Fat-Thin (representing the amount of information an individual prefers to gather during the information seeking process); Browser-Hunter (referencing focused searching versus broad, depending on the level of interest in the actual search process).

Each of these dimensions were combined to create the information profiles, such as Entrepreneurial Fat Browser or Cautious Thin Hunter. In order to examine these results further, Hannell (2001) measured the participants' personality using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and cognitive styles using the Honey-Mumford's (1992) Learning Styles Questionnaire (LSQ). While the results were not validated, they can provide an interesting viewpoint on this approach to examining individual differences as they relate to information behaviour.

Based on these limited studies, it could be suggested that an individual's 'information style' is a combination of personality, cognitive style, feelings and emotions, and search preferences. A visual diagram of the relationship between these components is shown below as Figure 5.7.

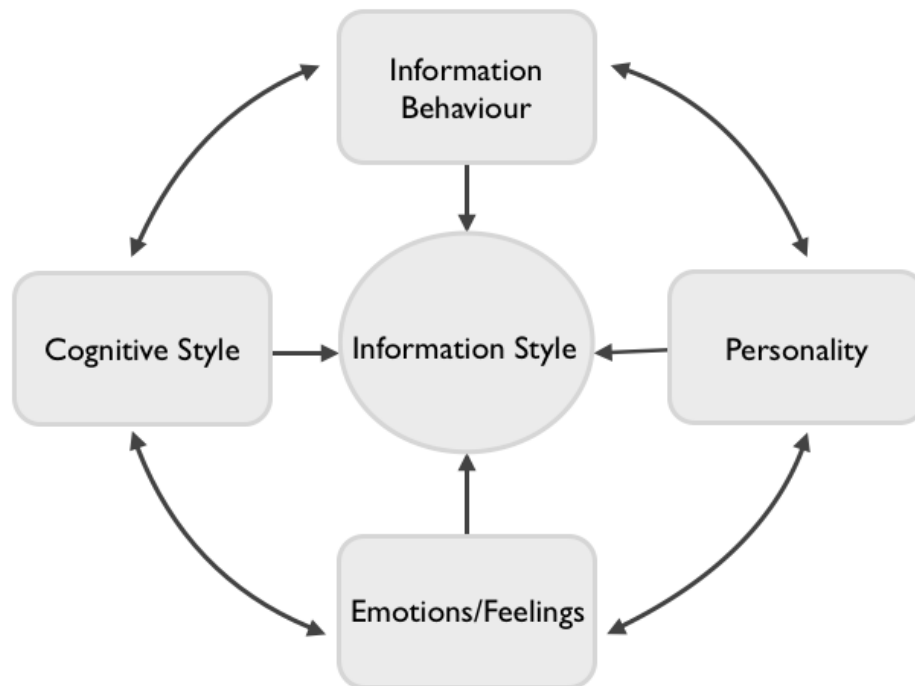


Figure 5.7 The components of an information style

Relationships have been found between personality, cognitive styles, learning styles and information behaviour, though not all findings have been consistent (Bawden & Robinson, 2011), and “the evidence is suggestive rather than in any sense conclusive” (Ford, Wilson, Foster, Ellis, & Spink, 2002, p. 734). Bawden and Robinson (2011) suggest that it may be difficult to identify information styles that would apply to individuals across all dimensions, and therefore, categorising information styles within particular user groups is the best way forward in the research of personality, cognitive styles, and information behaviour. However, in producing a framework of the information styles within certain contexts or groups, information professionals could better understand the nature of information seeking behaviour.

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature surrounding personality, creativity, cognitive styles, and the cognitive writing process. It presented the leading models and theories in each of these fields, as well as relating each to the applicable studies found in the information behaviour literature. Furthermore, this chapter examined

the suitability of the personality and cognitive style measures available and determined the most appropriate instruments for the current study. Based on this review of the literature, the researcher seeks to answer the following research questions:

- What are the personality traits and cognitive styles of authors of children's and young adult literature?
- Are there observable patterns between these personality traits and cognitive styles?
- Can individual differences be considered influential on the information behaviour of authors?

In order to do so, the researcher determined the Big Five Inventory and a modified version of the ASSIST would be most suitable for the nature of this research. Further information on the research methods and instruments will be discussed in Chapter 6.



# 6. METHODOLOGY

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## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological foundation of the study and describes the research design undertaken. Before beginning a research project, the appropriate research approach should be determined because it “provides a framework within which social phenomena can be understood and the research findings can be interpreted” (Bryman, 2012, p. 20). In this chapter, potential methodologies for this study are explored, including a justification of the philosophical perspective and the research design chosen. The practical application of the study is discussed, including a full description of the population, sample, data collection instruments and data analysis procedures. This chapter also details the steps taken to ensure ethical issues were handled appropriately. Finally, the validity of the study is examined, detailing potential gaps in the methodology and how these were addressed to adhere to the principles of rigour.

## 6.2 Research Questions

As noted in Chapter 1, this study aimed to examine the information needs and information behaviour of authors of children’s and young adult fiction. It investigated how authors perform information seeking activities that relate to their story development and explored how much of an influence these activities have on fiction idea generation and the creative writing process as a whole. It also aimed to highlight any observable patterns between information seeking behaviour, personality and cognitive styles in this particular group of creative professionals.

The research questions were:

- How do authors of children's and young adult fiction seek and obtain information relating to their creative works?
- What is the relationship between genre differences, target age groups and information seeking behaviour?
- What information resources do these authors value and why?
- Does serendipity play a role in the generation and cultivation of creative ideas?
- What are the personality traits and cognitive styles of authors of children's and young adult literature?
- Are there observable patterns between these personality traits and cognitive styles?
- Can these individual differences be considered influential on the information behaviour of authors?

### **6.3 Philosophical Approach**

A research paradigm refers to "a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 24). The term is often used in conjunction with the worldview of the researcher (Mertens, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Research paradigms are chiefly concerned with:

- assumptions about reality
- how knowledge is obtained
- the methods of gaining knowledge

Paradigms have three major components: ontology, epistemology and methodology

(Guba, 1990). Before a research study can commence, the chosen paradigm should be detailed because it determines “how we view the world and, thus, go about conducting research” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 21). This approach then leads to the appropriate research strategies for collecting and analysing the data.

Ontology refers to “the nature of social entities” (Bryman, 2012, p. 32) and focuses on making sense of the world (Crotty, 1998). While many variations have evolved over the years, there are two main, extreme, ontological positions that exist on opposite ends of a broad spectrum. The first of these two extremes is objectivism, a position which adheres to an objective reality, absolute truths, and asserts that meanings are independent of social actors (Sarantakos, 2005). That is, reality is completely separate from those who experience it.

The second major ontological position is constructionism. The constructivist viewpoint argues that “social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). There is no objective reality or objective truth (Sarantakos, 2005). In contrast to objectivism, constructionism is founded on the belief that there are independent, multiple realities, each constructed by its own social actor, and that these realities are not constant.

In addition to these two extremes, there are several positions that fall in between, including but not limited to perspectives that have been termed shallow realism, conceptual realism, cautious realism, depth realism, relativism, and subtle realism (Blaikie, 2007). Guba and Lincoln (1994) note critical realism and historical realism as alternatives to the two major ontological positions. Morgan and Smircich (1980) have also defined a continuum of core ontological positions through presenting six major philosophical perspectives, as shown as Figure 6.1 below.

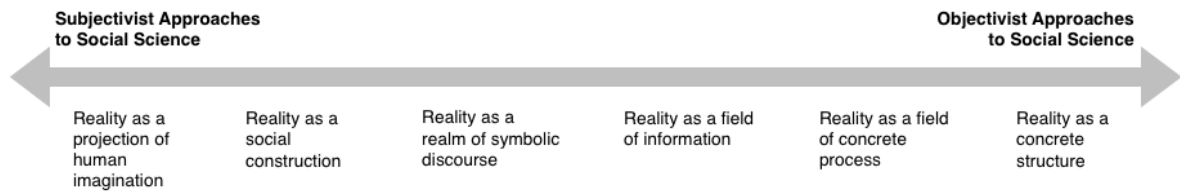


Figure 6.1 Core Ontological Assumptions, Adopted from Morgan & Smircich (1980, p. 492)

As well as the ontological position, it is important to consider the epistemological viewpoint of the researcher. Epistemology can be defined as “how we gain knowledge of what we know” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 23). As with ontology, there are two extreme theoretical positions that are cited most often in the literature. The first of these two extremes is positivism, which “advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond” (Bryman, 2012, p. 28). It highlights objective research and the use of deduction and is most often used as the foundation for quantitative studies (Sarantakos, 2005) as it is founded on data and facts (House, 1991).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, post-positivism emerged as a reaction to positivism (Pickard, 2007). It holds similar positions (measuring objective reality and often quantitatively in nature) with a few notable exceptions. Post-positivism focuses on the *belief* in the truth of tested hypotheses (Popper, 1959) and puts forth the notion that scientific theories can never be irrevocably proven (Ernest, 1994). Rather, they can merely be tentatively accepted (Popper, 1959).

The second major epistemological viewpoint is interpretivism. Interpretivists argue for an alternative to positivism that “requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). Rather than objective deduction, interpretivists utilise inductive theory and approach the research from the point of view of the person being studied (Neuman, 2011). The findings develop the theory instead of the other way around, making interpretivism a logical match for qualitative research.

Bryman (2012) explains the differences between these two schools of thought by detailing that positivist paradigms aim to “explain, predict and control behaviour” (Bryman, 2012, p. 165) while interpretivists aim to “describe and reflect upon behaviour” (Bryman, 2012, p. 165). The differences between these two opposite positions is highlighted in Table 6.1, matching each viewpoint with the appropriate epistemological position.

<b>Positivism/Objectivism</b>	<b>Interpretivism/Constructivism</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determination</li> <li>• Reductionism</li> <li>• Empirical observation and measurement</li> <li>• Theory verification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding</li> <li>• Multiple participant meanings</li> <li>• Social and historical construction</li> <li>• Theory generation</li> </ul>

Table 6.1 Two Main Worldviews, adapted from Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 22)

Again, these two extremes have a broad spectrum of other theoretical positions between them. Blaikie (2007) identifies six epistemological positions, including empiricism, rationalism, falsificationism, neo-realism, constructionism, and conventionalism. As with ontological positions, Morgan and Smircich (1980) also identify six core epistemological goals along the continuum between interpretivism and positivism, as shown as Figure 6.2 below.

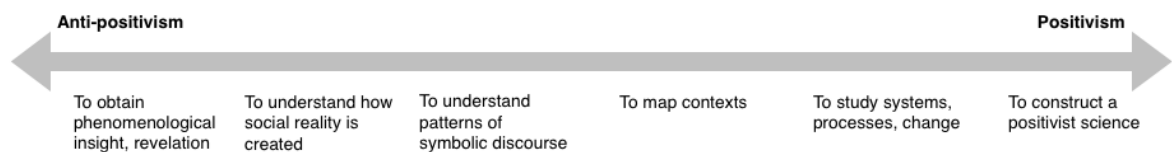


Figure 6.2 Core Epistemological Goals, Adopted from Morgan & Smircich (1980, p. 492)

The approaches to ontology and epistemology are rich, varied and complex. However, a full and detailed exploration of each of these positions is beyond the scope of this study. The distinctions noted here, though not exhaustive, illustrate the core theoretical positions in which research can be approached, as well as the relationship between epistemology and ontology.

## 6.4 Pragmatism

Pragmatism can be traced back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the work of Charles S. Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead. Peirce's pragmatic views were based on the desire for practical applications of theory and research and the connection between knowledge, habits and action. He believed that researchers should "consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object" (Peirce, 1878, p. 132). These early pragmatic philosophers introduced the idea that knowledge is action and the way in which realities can be changed (James, 1907).

Over the years, pragmatism has joined the ranks of positivism and constructivism as legitimate options for the philosophical framework of a research project. Johnson and Obwuegbuzie (2004) offer that pragmatism should be considered for social research because:

it offers an immediate and useful middle position philosophically and methodologically; it offers a practical and outcome-oriented method of inquiry that is based on action and leads, iteratively, to further action and the elimination of doubt; and it offers a method for selecting methodological mixes that can help researchers better answer many of their research questions. (Johnson & Obwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17)

Patton (1990) argues for the use of pragmatism as a paradigm of choices. From this viewpoint, pragmatism is highlighted as the appropriate strategy to selecting methodologies based on the research problem and the research questions rather than uniformly following positivism or constructivism. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 23) confirm this stance on pragmatism by arguing its focus as being "on the primary importance of the question asked rather than the methods." Pragmatism offers choices on how best to answer the questions at hand, highlighting the need for researchers to stay open-minded in order to allow presuppositions and expectations to be affected by the study (Baert, 2004). In other words, a pragmatist philosophy

“conveys an image of the world brimming with indeterminacy, pregnant with possibilities, waiting to be completed and rationalised” (Shalin, 1986, p. 10).

According to Morgan (2007), a pragmatic theoretical positioning focuses on choosing methods according to what works best given the research problem, using diverse approaches, giving priority to the research problem and the research questions, and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge. It utilises “abductive reasoning that moves back and forth between induction and deduction—first converting observations into theories and then assessing those theories through action” (Morgan, 2007, p. 71), as can be seen in Table 6.2.

	<b>Qualitative Approach</b>	<b>Quantitative Approach</b>	<b>Pragmatic Approach</b>
Connection of theory and data	Induction	Deduction	Abduction
Relationship to research process	Subjectivity	Objectivity	Intersubjectivity
Inference from data	Context	Generality	Transferability

Table 6.2 A Pragmatic Alternative to the Key Issues in Social Science Research Methodology, from Morgan (2007)

In addition to abduction, Morgan (2007) highlights intersubjectivity as an essential component of pragmatism. In this context, pragmatic researchers can support the argument that there is a single reality while still acknowledging that individuals will have their own personal conception of reality. Usually this is seen as a dualism that is incommensurable, but pragmatists “treat issues of intersubjectivity as a key element of social life” (Morgan, 2007, p. 72).

Pragmatism also concerns itself with transferability rather than context-dependent knowledge or generalisable results. The concept of transferability focuses on how knowledge learned in one context can be applied in other contexts in an empirical manner (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 297). In this sense, pragmatism focuses on the practical and usable applications of knowledge rather than abstract generalisations.

Pragmatism is considered a worldview that focuses on “the consequences of research, on the primary importance of the question asked rather than the methods, and multiple methods of data collection inform the problems under study” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 23). By this token, it has become the philosophical partner for mixed methods (Denscombe, 2008).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) have suggested that pragmatism should be used as the “umbrella” paradigm for a mixed methods study using triangulation or an embedded design, honouring multiple paradigms when deemed appropriate. In addition, Morgan (2007) posits that pragmatism supports the combination of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study. Many other theorists support a pragmatic perspective as the appropriate paradigms for mixed methods (Johnson, Owuegbuzie & Turner, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003).

## **6.5 Research Strategy**

A research strategy is “a general orientation to the conduct of social research” (Bryman, 2012, p. 35). Before beginning a study, the appropriate research design should be chosen and examined in detail. In general, there are three main approaches that can be considered: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.

### **6.5.1 Quantitative Research Strategy**

Quantitative research can be defined as “a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2012, p. 36). Those who employ a quantitative research strategy often, though not always, utilise a positivist philosophy, a deductive approach to hypotheses, and objective collection and analysis of data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

Researchers who focus on quantitative research are often preoccupied with casualty and replication, as well as measurement and generalisation. In this context, measurement is intended to provide a consistent method of delineating “fine



differences between people in terms of the characteristics in question” (Bryman, 2012, p. 164). It offers a way to gather close-ended answers in order to test pre-determined hypotheses. Generalisation is also key in a quantitative strategy, and “is concerned with the application of research results to cases or situations beyond those examined in the study (Collis & Hussey, 2003), allowing the results to have implications for a larger population than examined in the study.

There are some criticisms of quantitative strategies in regards to social research. These criticisms centre around the idea that objective measurements cannot sufficiently investigate the subjective interpretations of the social world (Bryman, 2012, p. 179). In addition, quantitative methods ignore “the process of interpretation or definition that goes on in human groups” (Blumer, 1956, p. 132). In other words, those who argue against quantitative strategies posit that its often objectivist philosophy is not compatible with research into the social world.

### **6.5.2 Qualitative Research Strategy**

Qualitative research, on the other hand, is “a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (Bryman, 2012, p. 36). Qualitative researchers tend to reject positivism in favour of constructivism, employ an inductive approach to theory generation, and perform analysis through subjective interpretation of data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

This type of research involves exploring and understanding the meaning of the social world and how individuals and groups ascribe this meaning to problems (Creswell, 2009). Instead of focusing on numbers, qualitative strategies place emphasis on gathering words and stories and analysing this information through interpretation. According to Bryman (2012), qualitative researchers are concerned with seeing through participants’ eyes, collecting descriptive detail, and developing a contextual understanding of social behaviour by employing a flexible approach to

data collection.

As such with quantitative research, qualitative research has its own set of criticisms. Some consider the process too subjective, the researcher's own beliefs and feelings influencing the findings. Qualitative research can also arguably be difficult to replicate "because it is unstructured and often reliant upon the qualitative researcher's ingenuity" (Bryman, 2012, p. 405). It is difficult to generalise the findings of qualitative research, due to smaller sample sizes that are not representative of the population, though qualitative researchers are more concerned with the authenticity, trustworthiness and transferability of the data.

### **6.5.3 Mixed Methods**

Mixed methods research is "an approach to knowledge (theory and practice) that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions and standpoints" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p. 113), including both quantitative and qualitative data.

The defining characteristics of this type of research strategy are:

- a research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods within a single research project
- a research design that clearly explains the sequencing and priority of each data collection and analysis method
- a research design that details how the quantitative and qualitative methods relate to each other and how triangulation (or other mixed methods design) is be used
- a research design built upon the pragmatic philosophical viewpoint

#### **6.5.3.1 Background of Mixed Methods**

The origins of mixed methods can be traced to Campbell and Fiske (1959) who

championed the multitrait, multimethod matrix in order to measure individual variation in personality scale scores in relation to psychological traits. This was soon followed by Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, and Sechrest (1966) and Jick (1979), identifying the method of triangulation, which involves “the combination of methodologies to study the same phenomenon” (Denzin, 1978, p. 291). During this formative period of mixed methods, Cooke and Reichardt (1979) also discussed mixed methods, presenting ways to combine both forms of data and how it could be done successfully.

Following this formative period, mixed methods entered a ‘paradigm debate’ era in the 1970s and 1980s (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007), which is sometimes also referred to as the ‘paradigm wars’ (Bryman, 2012; Hammersley, 1992; Oakley, 1999). During this period, many researchers argued against the notion that quantitative and qualitative data could be combined. Both positivist and constructivist purists were not in favour of the use of mixed methods as a research design, as it did not conform to either of the traditional philosophical viewpoints. They argued that mixed methods requires paradigms to be combined and, therefore, these two opposing methods are incompatible (Smith, 1983). Kuhn (1970), for example, posited that distinct paradigms are incommensurable, which would suggest that quantitative and qualitative strategies cannot be combined in a single study.

However, there has been an increasing number of supporters for mixed methods over the years, recognising the epistemological and ontological differences by introducing pragmatism as the way to reconcile the incommensurable philosophical viewpoints. Now, “mixed methods research has evolved to the point where it is a separate methodological orientation with its own worldview, vocabulary, and techniques” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003, p. x). Rather than two alternating paradigms, quantitative versus qualitative, mixed methods is now “recognised as the third major research approach or research paradigm” (Johnson, Owuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p. 112).

Bryman (2012) details four reasons why a mixed method design would be appropriate for a research study. These include the need for:

- completeness
- information not available through qualitative or quantitative data alone
- a more comprehensive picture of the phenomena under study
- answering different research questions

He goes further to say that “a more complete answer to a research question or set of research questions can be achieved by including both quantitative and qualitative methods” (Bryman, 2012, p. 637). This indicates mixed methods would be applicable to a study such as this where research questions in need of qualitative-driven information behaviour data were combined with research questions that sought the more quantifiable data needed to determine personality and cognitive styles.

### **6.5.3.2 Elements of a Mixed Methods Design**

When designing a mixed methods study, there are several elements the researcher must take into consideration. This includes the timing, the weighting and the mixing of the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis.

Timing, or sequence, refers to the temporal relationship between the quantitative and qualitative data collection within the study (Greene et al., 1989). In other words, the researcher must determine the sequence in which data is collected and analysed. Simultaneous sequencing is one option, which is labeled concurrent data collection, or the timing can be done sequentially, which entails handling the data at different times throughout the research process. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), timing is most important when considering at which point the researcher actually uses and analyses the data, not when the researcher collects the data.

Weighting is another important element of mixed methods design. This refers to “the

relative importance or priority of the quantitative and qualitative methods to answering the study's questions" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 81). In other words, the researcher must determine whether to put more emphasis on the qualitative data or on the quantitative data. Some mixed methods studies determine that equal weighting of these aspects is the most appropriate way in which to handle the data. By examining the research questions of the study, a researcher can make the best judgement as to which data type requires a stronger emphasis.

Mixing is essential to distinguishing a mixed methods design from a multiple methods design that simply uses two or more methods without incorporating the data together. Specifically, mixing refers to "how the quantitative and qualitative methods will be mixed" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 83). This can be accomplished through merging the data sets, embedding the data of one type within the other type, or determining a need to collect a data type through the analysis of the original type. Often, this requires one data type to be transformed into the other, such as using information from the qualitative dataset in conjunction with the quantitative dataset.

These three criteria (timing, weighting and mixing) can be integrated in any manner, though Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) argue that they are most logically formed into a certain four combinations. These four mixed methods designs will be discussed below, including the design determined most appropriate for this study.

#### **6.5.3.3 Types of Mixed Methods Designs**

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), there are four major types of mixed methods designs. The first, and most widely used, is triangulation. This design follows "the traditional view that quantitative and qualitative research might be combined to triangulate findings in order that they may be mutually corroborated" (Bryman, 2012, p. 633). Researchers who use this design can "directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative

findings” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 62). Methods used for triangulation often begin with a quantitative phase using a large sample, such as a questionnaire, which is then followed by a smaller round of corresponding qualitative interviews.

A mixed methods study can also be developed as an embedded design. In this approach, “a dataset of secondary priority is embedded within a larger, primary design” (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Smith, 2011, p. 6). The secondary data (such as quantitative questionnaire data) supports the more dominant data (such as qualitative interview data), in order to provide a more comprehensive view of the cases under study.

The remaining two mixed methods designs are similar in nature. The first, an explanatory design, refers to an approach in which “one of the two research methods is used to explain findings generated by the other” (Bryman, 2012, p. 633). In this design, quantitative data is usually collected first before being followed by a supporting qualitative data collection phase. The second of these is the exploratory design, which “starts with qualitative data, to explore a phenomenon, and then builds to a second, quantitative phase” (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 77). In this instance, the quantitative data is collected in order to further expand upon the findings of the qualitative data collection.

These four designs are compared and contrasted in Table 6.3, detailing the timing, weighting and mixing elements needed to implement each of these successfully.

<b>Design Type</b>	<b>Variants</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Weighting</b>	<b>Mixing</b>
<b>Triangulation</b>	Convergence Data transformation Validating quantitative data Multilevel	Concurrent: quantitative and qualitative at the same time	Usually equal	Merge the data during the interpretation or analysis
<b>Embedded</b>	Embedded experimental Embedded correlational	Concurrent or sequential	Unequal	Embed one type of data within a larger design using the other type of data
<b>Explanatory</b>	Follow-up explanations Participant selection	Sequential: Quantitative followed by qualitative	Usually quantitative	Connect the data between the two phases
<b>Exploratory</b>	Instrument development Taxonomy development	Sequential: Qualitative followed by quantitative	Usually qualitative	Connect the data between the two phases

Table 6.3 The Major Mixed Method Design Types, from Creswell and Plano Clark (2007, p. 85)

The dominant focus of this particular study is to gather in-depth qualitative data on the information behaviour of authors, and therefore, an embedded mixed methods design was chosen as most appropriate to answer the research questions presented earlier in the chapter, using the pragmatist viewpoint as the philosophical framework. The supporting, or embedded, data includes the quantitative information on the personality and cognitive styles of the participants of the study.

In addition, the researcher elected to analyse both data types simultaneously, which lent itself to a concurrent mixed methods approach. This resulted in an embedded concurrent design with dominant qualitative data and supporting quantitative data, mixing the results of both to thoroughly answer the full set of research questions.

Creswell (2009) notes that there are some limitations to an embedded mixed methods design. The data often needs to be transformed in some way in order to allow full integration of both the qualitative and quantitative results of the study and once the data is compared, discrepancies may occur. In addition, the unequal status between the methods can lead issues when interpreting the results.

However, there are ways in which to address these limitations, which the researcher has sought to do in this study. Many of the limitations of an embedded are a result of transforming and comparing of data. However, the qualitative and quantitative methods of this study focus on different research questions. As such, there is less need for the transforming and comparing of different types of data. In addition, while there is an unequal status between the methods, this merely reflects the focus of the research. The quantitative individual differences data is intended to provide a supporting role to the qualitative data obtained on authors' information behaviour.

## **6.6 Grounded Theory**

Grounded theory refers to the data analysis strategy of having "data collection and analysis proceed in tandem, repeatedly referring back to each other" (Bryman, 2012, p. 387). A study that uses grounded theory involves results that are "discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis pertaining to that phenomenon" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 23). Instead of developing a theory and testing the resulting hypothesis, grounded theory is concerned with building theory from data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and is considered primarily a method of analysis (Charmaz, 2012).

The originators of grounded theory are universally recognised as Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser (Bryant, 2009; Strübing, 2007; Case, 2012; Bryman, 2012), the two researchers behind *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, which was published in 1967 (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Their work developed "a way to generate theory by systematically gathering and analysing data, and working



back-and-forth between data and theory” (Johnson, McGowan & Turner, 2010, p. 70). Together, they provided the original framework for grounded theory and “provided a powerful argument that legitimised qualitative research as a credible methodological approach in its own right” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 6).

These two theorists originated from seemingly opposite backgrounds. Strauss hailed from the qualitative Chicago School of Sociology while Glaser focused his research at the more quantitative Columbia. After they combined their expertise to create a new basis for rigorous qualitative research, they diverged in their views on grounded theory soon after. Glaser’s approach to grounded theory remained influenced by his background in positivism while Strauss’s views became increasingly more in line with pragmatism, though he never named it as such. From this divergence stemmed a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2000) that has become increasingly utilised in recent years, as well as Clarke’s (2005) postmodernist view. However, despite the varying approaches to the same research strategy, these versions of grounded theory share key methodological elements.

The key elements include employing open coding from the beginning of data collection, using constant comparison, writing memos and conducting theoretical sampling in order to fulfil theoretical categories until saturation (Charmaz, 2012) when no new discoveries can be made. This will ensure the emerging theory will be grounded in the data. Grounded theorists “compare data with data, data with codes, codes with codes, codes with categories, and their finished analyses with relevant theoretical and research literatures” (Charmaz, 2012, p. 4).

The approach to data analysis is one of the key features of grounded theory. This is done through the technique of coding, which can be defined as “reviewing transcripts and/or field notes and giving labels (names) to component parts that seem to be of potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social worlds of those being studied” (Bryman, 2012, p. 568).

Grounded theory employs open, axial, and selective coding techniques without predetermined categories in order to allow the theory to develop from the data analysis.

Constant comparison is an essential component of grounded theory in which data are continuously examined and compared over the period of data collection and analysis, allowing for an iterative process that leads to the development of theoretical concepts. In addition, grounded theory can only be successful if the researcher is open to the possibilities of ideas and theories that will emerge from the data rather than coming to the research with preconceived notions of what will be discovered in the process (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007).

### **6.6.1 Advantages of grounded theory**

Grounded theory provides many advantages that may be attractive to the qualitative researcher, including the detailed and systematic approach to carrying out the research (Charmaz, 2006). While other qualitative measures may provide broad guidelines rather than explicit instructions, this can lead to varying degrees of application and interpretation (Myers, 2009). Instead, the systematic approach to grounded theory better ensures rigour and trustworthiness of the data analysis (Hussein et al., 2014).

Grounded theory also allows the researcher to derive meaning from the data and assists in the emergence of original findings (Jones, Kriflik, & Zanko, 2005). It opens the mind of the analyst to a myriad of new possibilities" (Glaser, 1978, p. 6) while preventing bias during the analysis. In addition, it provides the ability for concept generation and theory development through constant comparison and memo writing (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Through grounded theory, the researcher can seek "thick descriptions" (Ceertz, 1973) and collect rich data that allows insight into participants' feelings, views, and actions (Charmaz, 2006).

## 6.6.2 Limitations of grounded theory

While there are many advantages to utilising grounded theory, there are a few limitations that must be acknowledged. As Myers (2009) states, the coding process is time-consuming, exhaustive, and laborious. Grounded theory is “not simple” (Annells, 1996) and should not be hurried, as it can take months for the researcher to properly develop the emerging theory.

In addition, there is the potential for methodological error as Charmaz (1989) warns. Often, researchers choose a purposeful rather than theoretical sampling technique which could result in a lack of conceptual depth (Benoliel, 1996). While Charmaz (1989) states that researchers can begin with purposeful sampling, they much revert to theoretical as, in grounded theory, data collection should be “controlled by the emerging theory” (Glaser, 1978, p. 36).

Grounded theory falls into a unique position in regards to the development of a literature review. In most research studies, the literature review precedes data collection. However, in the case of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) have argued that the literature review should be written after the data collection and analysis, in order not to contaminate the data and to prevent the researcher from developing assumptions.

However, this view is not unanimous. Schreiber (2001) argues that it is possible for the researcher to guard against bias from previous knowledge of the literature, and instead, that it is essential to obtain theoretical sensitivity through awareness of previous studies in order to “comprehend and interpret data” (Hussein et al., 2014). Reviewing the literature before the data collection allows the researcher to see “how these studies leave unexplored certain critical aspects of the phenomenon” (Stebbins, 2001, p. 43) and many research programmes require researchers to identify the gap in literature prior to commencing their study. Therefore, in order to combat the potential for bias, the researcher must keep an awareness of her own background,

knowledge, and perspective in order to approach the data without predetermined judgements or explanations (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

In addition, it is important to note the limited generalisability found in grounded theory research. Generalisation can be defined as “an act of reasoning that involves drawing broad conclusions from particular instances that is making inference about the unobserved based on the observed” (Polit & Beck, 2010, p. 1451). While Glaser (1992) argues that grounded theory can reveal high level concepts and theories that are not limited to a particular participant, the qualitative nature of the research suggests a limitation to the generalisability of the results (Hussein et al., 2014).

### **6.6.3 Alternatives to grounded theory**

Grounded theory is not the only available strategy for qualitative data analysis. Discourse analysis, phenomenology, and ethnography all provide alternatives. However, grounded theory was deemed the most appropriate fit for this research project. Discourse analysis is concerned with understanding human experience through the interpretation of narrative forms and the language used to express these experiences (Thorne, 2000). As this study is focused more on authors’ actual experiences rather than how these experiences are expressed in narrative form, discourse analysis was not deemed an appropriate strategy.

Phenomenology focuses on the “descriptions of what people experience and how it is that they experience what they experience” (Patton, 1990, p. 71) and seeks to highlight how participants *feel* about their experiences rather than their specific actions. Again, the researcher did not feel this was a good fit because the research questions focus on how the authors find information rather than how they feel about their search process, though affect as a theme did emerge during data analysis.

Finally, ethnography is the description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system (Creswell, 1998). It requires full immersion through participant

observation and extensive fieldwork, an approach that was deemed unfeasible for this study.

In conclusion, grounded theory is a methodological standpoint that works well with the qualitative elements of this study, as it best addresses the focus on human information behaviour and how individuals experience the world around them. It is a systematic approach while providing flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data (Charmaz & Bryant, 2008).

## 6.7 Evaluating Qualitative Research

Charmaz (2006) provides criteria for evaluating grounded theory research, shown in Table 6.4. These criteria include credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness. These guidelines assist in establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative studies.

<b>Credibility</b>	<b>Originality</b>	<b>Resonance</b>	<b>Usefulness</b>
Are there strong links between gathered data and argument?	Do the categories offer new insights?	Do categories portray fullness of the studied experience?	Can the analysis spark further research in other substantive areas?
Are data sufficient to merit claims?	What is the social and theoretical significance of this work?	Does the GT make sense to the participants?	How does the work contribute to knowledge?
Do categories offer a wide range of empirical observations?	How does grounded theory challenge, extend, refine current ideas, concepts and practices?	Does analysis offer them deeper insights about their lives and worlds?	Does the analysis offer interpretations that people can use in their everyday lives/ worlds?
Has the research provided enough evidence for the researcher's claims to allow the reader to form an independent assessment?			

Table 6.4 Criteria for grounded theory, adapted from Charmaz (2006, p. 182)

Guba and Lincoln (1989) also provide two criteria for evaluating qualitative studies. The first of these is authenticity, which includes three guidelines. As stated by Guba and Lincoln (1989, pp. 233-243), these are:

- does it fairly represent differing viewpoints?
- does it provide a better understanding of the social setting and of other members?
- does it encourage change?

The second criteria named by Guba and Lincoln (1989) is trustworthiness. To determine trustworthiness, the researcher must examine the credibility, the transferability, the confirmability, and the dependability. In this instance, credibility refers to confirming the right interpretations have been made about the data. Transferability refers to the ability to apply the results to other participants and settings. Confirmability represents the researcher's actions to be true to the data, and dependability includes keeping complete records that are able to confirm the results and analysis.

Alternatively, Cho and Trent (2006) suggest approaching the evaluation of qualitative research with a more holistic view. This strategy does include the elements of trustworthiness that Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest but with more flexibility. Cho and Trent (2006) assert that qualitative research validity cannot be defined to the extent that validity is examined in quantitative research.

In this study, the elements discussed here were incorporated to the furthest extent possible in order to enhance validity. The researcher adopted the well-established grounded theory approach to data collection and analysis and developed an in-depth familiarity with the culture of authors (Shenton, 2004) based on the researcher's past experience in the publishing industry. In addition, participants were provided every opportunity to exit from the study whenever they wished and reflective commentary of the data was documented through the use of memos. It is difficult to ensure generalisability and objectivity in a study involving qualitative

data, but the above strategies help to enhance the validity of the results.

## **6.8 Research Design**

The research questions for this study required both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, therefore a mixed methods approach was chosen as the appropriate design, which is compatible with the pragmatic philosophical viewpoint. A grounded theory approach to the qualitative data collection and analysis was also chosen in order to gather in-depth information about the information behaviour of authors of children's and young adult fiction. A quantitative approach was deemed most appropriate for collecting data on personality and cognitive styles.

A table detailing the research design framework of this study is included as Table 6.5 below.

<b>Research strategy</b>	Embedded, concurrent mixed methods (QUAL + quan)	
<b>Research questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do authors of children's and young adult fiction seek and obtain information for their creative works?</li> <li>• What is the relationship between genre differences, target age groups and information seeking behaviour?</li> <li>• What information resources do these authors value and why?</li> <li>• Does serendipity play a role in the generation and cultivation of creative ideas?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the personality traits and cognitive styles of authors of children's and young adult literature?</li> <li>• Are there observable patterns between these personality traits and cognitive styles?</li> </ul>
<b>Methodology</b>	Qualitative	Quantitative
<b>Instruments</b>	Semi-structured interviews	Questionnaires
<b>Analysis</b>	Grounded theory	Statistics

Table 6.5 The research design framework for this study

Further details on the semi-structured qualitative interviews and the quantitative personality and cognitive styles questionnaires will be given in later sections of this chapter.



A visual diagram was developed for this study, as suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) and Ivanokva, Creswell and Stick (2006), and is included as Figure 6.3 below.

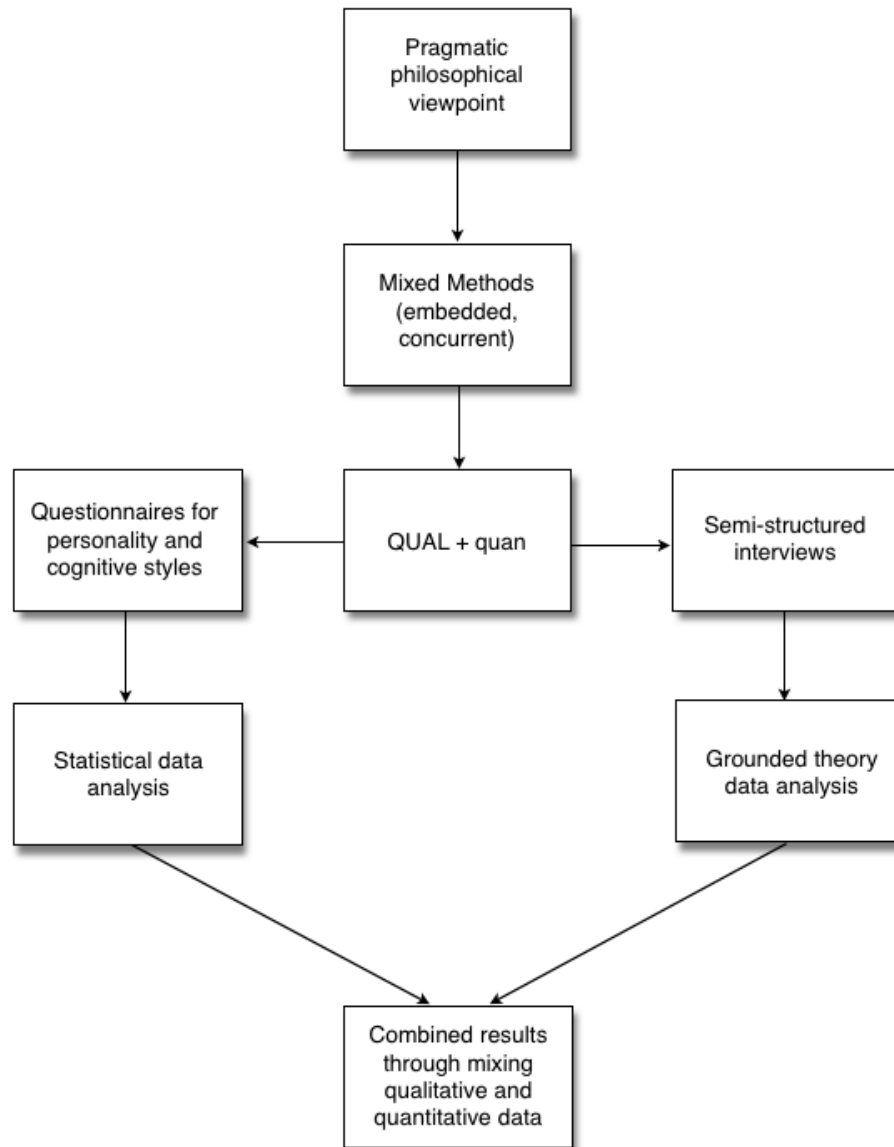


Figure 6.3 Visual Diagram of the Methodology

## 6.9 Related Studies

Key studies were highlighted, based on citation count and relevance, during the literature review that focused on similar creative professionals, such as artists, designers and theatre artists, as well as studies that focused on a combination of information behaviour, personality and cognitive styles, as can be seen in Table 6.6 below. The majority of studies focusing on information behaviour alone employed qualitative interviews while those incorporating personality and cognitive or learning styles into the study utilised questionnaires or mixed methods.

Study	Participants	Focus	Research strategy	Methods
Mason & Robinson (2011)	Artists and designers	Information behaviour	Quantitative and qualitative	Questionnaires
Cobbledick (1996)	Artists	Information behaviour	Qualitative	Interviews
Cowan (2004)	Artists	Information behaviour	Qualitative	Interviews
Hemmig (2009)	Artists	Information behaviour	Quantitative	Questionnaires
Medaille (2010)	Theatre artists	Information behaviour	Mixed methods	Questionnaire and interviews
Attfield & Dowell (2003)	Newspaper journalists	Information behaviour	Qualitative	Interviews
Olsen & Diekema (2012)	Writing students	Information behaviour	Qualitative	Interviews
Halder, Roy & Chakraborty (2010)	Students	Information behaviour, personality	Quantitative	Questionnaires
Tidwell & Sias (2005)	University employees	Information behaviour, personality	Quantitative	Questionnaires
Stokes & Urquhart (2011)	Nursing students	Information behaviour, personality, learning styles	Mixed methods	Questionnaires and interviews
Heinström (2002)	Students	Information behaviour, personality, learning styles	Quantitative	Questionnaires

Table 6.6 Key information behaviour studies with comparable focus

Following this comprehensive literature review, three instruments were chosen for the study: semi-structured interviews with authors of children's and young adult literature, a personality questionnaire, and a cognitive styles questionnaire. The researcher sought sole responsibility of the data collection during the study, administering both the interview and personality questionnaire on site and the cognitive styles questionnaire electronically.

## **6.10 Overview of the population**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are 22,000 authors, writers and translators in the United Kingdom alone (Office of National Statistics, 2014), and as of 2013, there were approximately 113,826 individuals categorised as full-time writers and authors in the United States (United States Census, 2013). Broken down census data is not available to determine the total number of authors writing children's and young adult fiction, but according to Bowker (2014), the distributor of ISBNs, over 32,000 juvenile titles were published in the United States alone during 2013, and this number has been growing each subsequent year. This total includes all target age groups and sub-genres found within the overarching umbrella of juvenile fiction.

Over the past several decades, children's and young adult literature has expanded due to its growing popularity. Most genres found in adult fiction have cropped up in stories geared toward these age groups, including a wide range of fantasy, science fiction and contemporary. The table below (Table 6.7) lists and defines the most prevailing sub-genres found in young adult literature today, as examined in detail in Chapter 3.

It was the goal of the researcher to gather data from authors writing fiction in each of these sub-genres in order to determine if there were any differences or correlations to be discovered. It is also important to note that the lines between these genres can sometimes become blurred, and often, a particular novel can fall within two (or more) of these. In addition, some authors write in multiple sub-genres and target

multiple age groups.

<b>Literary Genre</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Adventure</b>	Historically intended for boys, involves epic quests and survival situations, usually set in the wild.	<i>Robinson Crusoe, Treasure Island, The 39 Clues series</i>
<b>Contemporary</b>	Focuses on modern-day characters, settings and events in accordance with reality.	<i>The Fault in our Stars, The Perks of being a Wallflower, The Outsiders, Diary of a Wimpy Kid</i>
<b>Dystopian</b>	Focuses on dark future societies in which we would not want to live. Can be realistic or science fiction.	<i>The Giver, The Hunger Games, Life As We Knew It, Feed</i>
<b>Fantasy</b>	Uses fantastical and magical elements, whether in character, setting or plot.	<i>The Harry Potter series, The Hobbit, Coraline, Chronicles of Narnia</i>
<b>Historical</b>	Bases the fictional world on a period of history using realistic detail and fidelity to historical fact.	<i>Little House on the Prairie, The Book Thief, Code Name Verity</i>
<b>Horror</b>	Revolves around frightening situations intended to instil a sense of suspense, foreboding and fear.	<i>The Fear Street series, The Spooksville series, Anna Dressed in Blood</i>
<b>Mystery/Thriller</b>	Focuses on a suspenseful crime or mysterious event in which the main characters seek to solve.	<i>The Nancy Drew series, The Westing Game, Pretty Little Liars</i>
<b>Science fiction</b>	Employs both realistic and science-based fantastic elements to render a plausible fictional world, using projected technological advances or imagined scientific principles.	<i>A Wrinkle in Time, Ender's Game, Journey to the Center of the Earth, Across the Universe</i>

Table 6.7 Most prominent literary sub-genres in children's and young adult literature

In addition, juvenile fiction is often sub-categorised by the target age group of the particular work of fiction. These age groups begin with newborns and go as high as young adult, which is the largest age group and geared toward ages 12 to 18. In the table below (Table 6.8), the researcher has detailed a full list of the age groups found within juvenile fiction that were included as part of this study. More detail on these age groups was provided in Chapter 3.

<b>Target Age Groups</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Picture books</b>	Target age group: 3-8 years. Picture books tell stories through a series of illustrations with little to no text at all.	<i>Where the Wild Things Are, The Tale of Peter Rabbit, The Cat in the Hat</i>
<b>Middle grade</b>	Target age group: 8-12 years. Middle grade novels feature pre-teen protagonists with few (if any) illustrations.	<i>Bridge to Terabithia, Matilda, Charlotte's Web</i>
<b>Young adult</b>	Target age group: 12-18 years. Young adult books focus on adolescents and coming-of-age experiences with more mature, complex themes and plots.	<i>The Catcher in the Rye, Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist, Divergent</i>

Table 6.8 Most prominent target age groups in children's and young adult literature

As well as reaching theoretical saturation in the literary sub-genres found within juvenile fiction, the researcher aimed to reach theoretical saturation in the age group categories in order to provide a full, accurate view of the information behaviour of all types of authors found within children's and young adult literature.

## **6.11 Data collection and instrument design**

### **6.11.1 Qualitative data collection**

Semi-structured interviews were chosen in order to allow participants of the study to share in great detail their information behaviour experiences according to their own situation and reality. Qualitative interviews "make it possible for the person being interviewed to bring the interview into his or her world" (Patton, 1990, p. 279).

While there are several different approaches to qualitative interviewing, semi-structured interviews have the advantage of being flexible and relatively unstructured while providing insights into how research participants view the world and their situation (Bryman, 2012).

When possible, the researcher conducted the interviews in a natural workplace setting. Since many authors attend various publishing conventions, conferences and

book fairs as part of their career, these events were targeted as the key natural settings for this study. An interview schedule was detailed in advance of the data collection stage but was adapted over the course of the research to respond to needed changes emerging from the participants' responses, as well as to allow for any publishing events not identified at the start of the study. This adaptable schedule allowed for the development of grounded theory as new ideas and topics emerged from the data collection and were applied in later interview rounds. For those authors who wished to participate but did not have time during the conference, a Skype session was scheduled, and the audio recorded.

#### **6.1.1.1 Interview Pilot**

The interview instruments were pilot tested with two authors before the dates of the chosen publishing conferences and book fairs. The researcher used the pilot interviews to obtain detailed, constructive feedback in order for the instruments to be revised accordingly for the first round of the data collection process.

#### **6.1.1.2 Interview Sampling**

Grounded theory calls for theoretical sampling. For this type of sampling, data collection is used "for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 45). In addition, theoretical sampling allows for the flexibility to "move around and pursue areas of investigation that might not have been foreseen and planned, yet that appear to shed light upon or add a new perspective to one's area of investigation" (Corbin & Strauss, 1985, p. 178).

This study used a theoretical sample of authors of children's and young adult fiction based in either the United States or the United Kingdom who were attending a relevant publishing conference or book fair. The geographic location was limited due

to time constraints and resources, in order to allow the researcher to attend the events for in-person interviews. Widening the scope of the study to include other countries would increase the validity and rigour of the research but was deemed unfeasible for this particular study.

Once appropriate conferences were investigated, an invitation to participate (Appendix A) was sent out by e-mail to all attendees who were practicing published authors of children's and young adult fiction. This contact information was obtained from the conference website listings. Rather than aim for a high number of participants, this study focused on obtaining depth and richness of information, as the purpose of qualitative research sampling "is to maximise information, not facilitate generalisation" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202).

Thirty-eight authors volunteered to participate in the study over the course of several interview stages. By the thirty-fourth participant, the researcher determined that theoretical saturation had been reached. Theoretical saturation occurs when "successive interviews/ observations have both formed the basis for the creation of a category and confirmed its importance" (Bryman, 2012, p. 420) and "no new or relevant data seem to be emerging regarding a category" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 212). The researcher continued with the four remaining scheduled interviews, which confirmed theoretical saturation.

Of the thirty-eight participants, twenty-five were female and thirteen were male. Only those authors who live in the UK or in the US were approached for the study, as it was unfeasible to conduct interviews with those from other countries. From these, twenty-eight participants were from the US and ten participants were from the UK.

The participants were divided between the identified target age groups: picture books, middle grade and young adult, represented in Table 6.9.

Target age group	Number of participants	Percentage
Picture books	6	16%
Middle grade	7	18%
Young adult	25	66%

Table 6.9 Target age groups of interview participants

They were also divided between the identified sub-genres, including adventure, contemporary, dystopian, fantasy, historical, horror, mystery / thriller, and science fiction. The spread of these sub-genres can be seen in Table 6.10.

Sub-genre	Number of participants	Percentage
Adventure	4	10.5%
Contemporary	5	13%
Dystopian	4	10.5%
Historical	2	5%
Horror	3	8%
Fantasy	12	32%
Mystery/Thriller	5	13%
Science fiction	3	8%

Table 6.10 Literary sub-genres of interview participants

The researcher compared the spread of sub-genres against the current publication count of these sub-genres through an in-depth review of the number of books published on Amazon UK and US for both the Young Adult Books category and the Children's Books category and tallying the number of books per sub-genre. The results yielded the following in Table 6.11



<b>Sub-genre</b>	<b>Young Adult</b>	<b>Children's Books</b>	<b>Combined</b>
Adventure	3%	23%	19%
Contemporary	13%	32%	27%
Dystopian	3%	4%	4%
Historical	8%	6%	7%
Horror	9%	5%	5%
Fantasy	40%	19%	24%
Mystery/Thriller	10%	6%	7%
Science fiction	14%	5%	7%

Table 6.11 Percentage of Published Books on Amazon by Sub-genre

These results reflected the sample's sub-genre spread fairly well for Historical, Horror, and Science Fiction. However, there were far fewer Contemporary authors in the sample, which could be explained by the more fantasy and science fiction focus of the conferences the researcher attended. Indeed, there were more Fantasy, Dystopian, and Mystery authors in the sample than the identified percentages found on the publication count. There were also far fewer Adventure authors, though this could be explained by the tendency for fantasy and science fiction novels to be categorised in the Adventure section.

However, while the sample size did not fully reflect the current publication count, the researcher deemed this was not a limitation of the study. The aim of the data collection, according to the grounded theory strategy, was to reach theoretical saturation rather than fulfil a representative sample.

The participants' writing and publishing background also varied, representing all levels of experience in the industry. This ranged from authors who had recently published their first book in 2015 to authors with over twenty years of experience in the field, as well as one participant who had first published in the early 1970s. Ten participants had published 1-2 books by the time of the interviews, seven had published 3-5 books, eight had published 6-9 books, and thirteen had published 10 or more books.

Seven participants were New York Times Bestsellers and some were recipients of prestigious literary awards. Twenty-five participants had been published by traditional publishers (such as Scholastic and HarperCollins), and the sample also included nine small press authors and four independent authors to provide a rich set of data.

#### **6.1.1.1.3 Interview Schedule**

After developing a database of publishing industry conventions, conferences and festivals, the gathered list was then narrowed down to a manageable set of events for the researcher to attend in a suitable timeframe. In order to fit within the constraints of the study, low cost or free events were given priority over more expensive events.

The researcher informed the event organisers of the purpose of the study ahead of the scheduled date to ensure there would be interview space and to inquire for any special passes. In the case of the London Book Fair and Book Expo of America, the researcher was able to gain free entry with a 'press pass'. Large and well-known events were also given priority, in order to gain interviews with a wide range of authors in the industry. These events were then further grouped by location (United Kingdom or United States) and date, in order to account for the pilot, the necessary travel involved, and three rounds of interviews. These three rounds allowed for continuous data analysis in accordance with grounded theory, ensuring that ideas and themes emerged throughout the research process.

The event schedule for interviews was as follows:

1. Decatur Book Festival - Atlanta, GA (30 August - 31 August 2013)
2. DragonCon - Atlanta, GA (30 August - 31 August 2013)
3. Imagine Children's Festival (17 February - 20 February 2014)
4. London Book Fair (8 April - 10 April 2014)
5. Book Expo of America - New York, NY (29 May - 31 May 2014)

From these five events, 123 authors were contacted for an interview, and a total of 38 agreed to participate, yielding in a 31% response rate.

#### **6.1.1.1.4 Interview design**

All participants were asked to participate in an in-depth, semi-structured interview. Before conducting qualitative research, “a planning phase should always precede the actual interviews” (Mellon, 1990, p. 48). The planning phase for this study included an in-depth review of past studies in the information behaviour field that have used grounded theory in the qualitative research design. These studies were used as a starting point for ideas and topics to be explored during the interviews for this study.

According to Bryman (2012), a basic interview guide should be developed prior to the actual interviews. These guides focus on discovery and open-ended questions, outlining a set of topics to address over the course of the interview, though the actual wording and sequence is open to flexibility and adaptation (Patton, 1990). The interview guide for this study was based on the idea of an inductive process and open conversation, employing prompts in order to allow for a semi-structured setting. Advantages of using this method are being able to evaluate beforehand how best to build the interview and using limited time most efficiently while still allowing the interviewee to ask questions spontaneously depending on the flow of the conversation (Patton, 1990). The final interview guide is included as Appendix B, though the questions and prompts went through several iterations due to emerging themes and additional lines of questioning that commenced from the grounded theory approach to data collection.

Bryman (2012) suggests the researcher ensure several practical details are covered prior to the interview. The first is familiarity with “the setting in which the interview works or lives” (Bryman, 2012, p. 473). This was addressed by the researcher’s previous experience in the publishing industry and knowledge of the field. The

second is ensuring the interview takes place in a quiet setting. The researcher attempted to perform the interviews in quiet areas on the conference grounds and was successful in most cases. However, because these were public events, there were a few instances of background noise during the interviews, though the high-quality Mp3 recordings prevented most transcription issues that would have occurred as a result. The third practical detail to address previous to interviewing is to cultivate the criteria of a quality interviewer, which includes being a good listener, flexible when appropriate, and non-judgemental (Bryman, 2012, p. 473). The researcher addressed these by practicing active listening and allowing the natural flow of conversation and inquiry to deviate from the interview guide when necessary.

Each interview was recorded, after obtaining verbal permission from the participant, on a digital Mp3 recorder. Immediately following the interview, the recording was backed up on the researcher's password-protected laptop in order to prevent any loss of data. Only one interviewee requested not to be recorded, and detailed notes were taken to record the participant's responses to the questions from the interview guide. In one other instance, the recorder batteries failed during the interview, though the accompanying notes taken by the researcher filled in the missing gaps not captured digitally.

### **6.11.2 Quantitative Data Collection**

Questionnaires were deemed most appropriate for answering the quantitative research question using a cross-sectional design. Cross-sectional refers to "the collection of data on more than one case and at a single point in time" (Bryman, 2012, p. 58). The research tools chosen were pre-validated and verified in order to enhance validity and reliability. The strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires are included as Table 6.12 below.

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Easy to conduct and understand	Once distributed any errors cannot be corrected
Can obtain large amounts of data from large samples	May lack depth
Low costs	Response rates can be low
Relatively non-intrusive (anonymity can be ensured)	
Data collection and analysis are robust to bias	

Table 6.12 The strengths and weakness of using questionnaires in research, Watson and Coombes (2009)

The weaknesses of the study were addressed by pairing the questionnaires with in-depth, semi-structured interviews and inviting interview participants to complete them on-site (in the case of the personality questionnaire). The response rate of the cognitive styles questionnaire could have been further improved by administering it on-site as well, but the need for this data was not identified until a later point in the study when themes emerged from the data analysis.

### **6.1.1.2.1 Personality Questionnaire**

As detailed in Chapter 4, a review of the literature suggested that personality and creativity may have a positive relationship. Authors, especially those who write the speculative fiction often found in children's and young adult fiction, employ a high level of creativity when writing and developing their stories. During this review, several studies were discovered that investigated the relationship between personality and information behaviour, and they highlighted the fact that there may be a positive correlation between these two elements. As such, the researcher wished to investigate whether any themes would emerge from the personality traits exhibited by these authors.

### 6.11.2.1.1 Personality Questionnaire Sampling

All authors who participated in an interview were asked to complete a short personality questionnaire, which was administered on-site by the researcher. In addition to the qualitative interview participants, 364 authors were invited to complete the personality quiz (Appendix C) through an online questionnaire. This wider sample was obtained using purposive sampling and was intended to create a richer and more valid insight into the personalities of authors of children's and young adult fiction. Of the 364 contacted, 72 additional authors completed the personality quiz for a 20% response rate and a total of 110 personality quiz participants when including the interview participants. The target age groups and sub-genres of the personality questionnaire participants are detailed in the tables below (Table 6.13 and 6.14 respectively).

Target age group	Number of participants	Percentage
Picture books	6	5%
Middle grade	11	10%
Young adult	93	85%

Table 6.13 Target age groups of personality questionnaire participants

Sub-genre	Number of participants	Percentage
Adventure	6	5.5%
Contemporary	36	33%
Dystopian	5	4.5%
Historical	5	4.5%
Horror	7	6%
Fantasy	36	33%
Mystery/Thriller	9	8%
Science Fiction	6	5.5%

Table 6.14 Literary sub-genres of personality questionnaire participants

#### **6.11.2.1.2 Personality Questionnaire Pilot**

A pilot of the personality questionnaire was completed during the pilot stage of the interview process. Feedback allowed the researcher to evaluate the chosen questionnaire design before the first full round of interviews. No changes were deemed necessary.

#### **6.11.2.1.3 Personality Questionnaire Design**

The personality questionnaire used in this study was the Big Five Inventory as developed by Oliver P. John in 1991 for the University of Berkeley's Personality Lab (John, Donahue & Kentle, 1991). As outlined in Chapter 4, this questionnaire is freely open-access to researchers and includes 44 easy-to-understand items to determine a participant's percentage on the scale for each of the big five personality factors. These factors include Openness to Experience, Neuroticism, Extroversion, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness. The Big Five Inventory questionnaire was chosen after a comparison of the many personality questionnaires available to test a participant's personality. The longer, more extensive personality tests include a number of questions and have costly licenses for use. To fit within the constraints of the study, as well as to refrain from overburdening the participant with a lengthy questionnaire, the researcher found the Big Five Inventory was the most appropriate design for the current study.

#### **6.11.2.2 Cognitive Styles Questionnaire**

A review of the literature found that cognitive styles are often examined in relation to both personality and information behaviour to provide a well-rounded view of the user group being examined. The researcher began the study with the intention of exploring information behaviour and personality alone, but as data collection commenced, the researcher determined it was best to expand on the data in order to create the most robust picture of author as information seeking individual.

### 6.1.1.2.2.1 Cognitive Styles Questionnaire Sampling

All authors participating in an interview were asked to complete the cognitive styles questionnaire. As the questionnaire was implemented later in the data collection phase, the authors were sent a follow-up email with an invitation to participate in an online questionnaire.

The full 38 interview participants were invited, and 29 agreed to participate in the cognitive styles questionnaire for a response rate of 76%. The spread of the target age groups and literary genres are displayed in Tables 6.15 and 6.16 below.

Target age group	Number of participants	Percentage
Picture books	5	17%
Middle grade	3	10.5%
Young adult	21	72.5%

Table 6.15 Target age group sub-genres of cognitive styles participants

Sub-genre	Number of participants	Percentage
Adventure	2	7%
Contemporary	5	17%
Dystopian	2	7%
Historical	1	3.5%
Horror	3	10.5%
Fantasy	9	31%
Mystery/Thriller	5	17%
Science Fiction	2	7%

Table 6.16 Literary sub-genres of cognitive styles participants

### 6.1.1.2.2.2 Cognitive Styles Questionnaire Pilot

The original pilot study authors were approached to test the questionnaire design. Feedback allowed the researcher to evaluate the questions before distributing the questionnaire to the participants. A few small terminology changes were deemed necessary in order to make some items more applicable to the work and research of



authors, creating more of a working/cognitive styles questionnaire, such as changing 'studying' to 'writing'. More information on these modifications is included in the section below.

#### **6.11.2.2.3 Cognitive Styles Questionnaire Design**

This study used a revised version of the 18 item ASSIST questionnaire introduced in Chapter 4. The items from this questionnaire generated a profile of three possible cognitive styles, including deep, strategic and surface, as well as an options for a mixed or all-rounder cognitive style (Stokes & Urquhart, 2010).

While this instrument has been historically used to measure the learning styles of students, its focused on the approach individuals take to their information processing (as discussed in Chapter 4), the researcher felt it provided a solid framework for the study. In addition, by choosing an instrument that has been used in very similar studies, though the focus was not on creative individuals (e.g. Heinström's studies), it allowed the researcher to fully compare and contrast the findings to those of other groups of users. This instrument has also been modified in the past by Heinström (2006b), though the study still focused on students.

To ensure the instrument remained valid and comparable across disciplines, the researcher made small modification to the original version, which can be seen as Appendix D with the modified version as Appendix E. Phrasing adjustments were made to apply to authors and their work, though these changes were minor with every effort made to keep the meaning intact. The aim of this study was not to construct a modified version of the ASSIST, however, the researcher felt it was essential to ensure that the instrument remained valid. Therefore, these modifications were tested by the pilot study participants, who completed both the original ASSIST questionnaire as well as the adjusted version. Feedback from this round was incorporated into the adaptations for optimal phrasing. These modified instrument was then tested using Cronbach alpha, and it was deemed valid with the

following results: deep (.619), strategic (.650), and surface (.681). These results correspond with the original ASSIST instrument, and the modified version was deemed valid.

While the longer version of the ASSIST is more commonly used, the short version has been found to be reliable and valid as part of a research project, and the shorter length is ideal when used in conjunction with other questionnaires (Heinström, 2002, 2006b; Speth et al., 2007; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011). As this was a follow-up questionnaire after full rounds of interviews and personality questionnaires, the shorter version was deemed the most optimal for generating a higher response rate.

### **6.11.2.3 Questionnaire Advantages and Disadvantages**

Self-reporting measures are widely used in research studies in the social sciences, particularly those focusing on individual differences (Bawden & Robinson, 2011; Schwarz, 1999). According to Vazire (2006), 98% of studies published in the *Journal of Research in Personality* in 2003 used self-reporting measures when assessing personality traits. In addition, more than 95% studies published in the *Journal of Personality* in 2006 were found to use self-reporting measures as well (Kagan, 2007). Therefore, this approach is well-documented in the literature as well as widely accepted as the preferred method of choice in a large percentage of studies exploring personality. These measures are practical and efficient (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007), scoring is usually straightforward (Kline, 1993), and respondents are much more likely to identify with the questions about themselves in ways that others would not (Paulhus & Vazire, 2007).

However, self-reporting measures are not without their limitations, and they should be acknowledged when undergoing a study of this nature. As Moskowitz (1986) argues, there may be a response bias when individuals report on their own self. Participants may respond in ways that would put them in a more favourable light or answer the questions without considering what it really asks and rather answer as

they understand it in relation to their own biases (Paulhus, 1991). Similarly, Fiske and Taylor (1999) suggest that some individuals may have too positive a self-perception and may view their personality differently than it really is. While participants themselves would identify with questions about themselves more strongly than those around them might, it is worth noting that they may not be able to provide accurate self-information (Kagan, 2007) because they have a distorted outlook on who they truly are (John & Robins, 1994). In addition, it is important to note that for both personality and cognitive styles, the results depend upon how the participant interprets the questions. In the case of the participants of this study, they are very language-oriented individuals, which suggests they might analyse the word choices much more deeply than other individuals. This could lead to a misinterpretation of the question.

These limitations to self-reporting are worth noting and acknowledging. However, these measures have a solid foundation in the literature, and they can provide insight into the personal concepts of the self (Kagan, 2007). While they may not provide definitive proof of an individual's personality or cognitive style, it can provide insight into how they feel about who they are and how they approach their work.

## **6.12 Data Analysis**

### **6.12.1 Interviews**

An inductive approach was used to analyse the findings from the interviews. The analysis of each round was completed directly after the interviews to allow for grounded theory and reevaluation of the methods, the interview structure, and the interview guide, in order to allow the researcher to explore new threads of inquiry that appeared throughout the analysis stages. Further details on each phase of the data analysis is included below.

**Phase One:** Once interviews were complete, the researcher familiarised herself with the data by listening carefully to the recordings and solely transcribing each one through InqScribe. Following the transcribing, interviews were read through to obtain further familiarity before being imported into the NVIVO software for detailed coding and data analysis.

The NVIVO software provided the researcher with additional tools to aide in the analysis. The software afforded the ability to display excerpts from the transcripts based on assigned codes, as well as perform structured queries to examine differences or similarities between groups. In addition, it provided the ability to organise memos, linking to the appropriate codes, in order to keep a full documentation of the entire data analysis. An example of these queries can be seen in Appendix F.

**Phase Two:** Initial codes were identified and generated during a further read-through of the transcripts to highlight ideas and behaviours that might be worth examining further. An example of these initial codes is included in Figure 6.4 below.

Participant ID	Data Extract	Initial Codes
P14 (Katie)	<p>"I'm trying very hard to do more background, or what I call in my head "platform" research. This to me is just building my platform of ideas by reading more non-fiction and more varied fiction, not just in the space I write in. I also try to listen to podcasts and watch documentaries. I find ideas gleaned working themselves into my work more and more in unexpected places. I try to be more alert when I read and to take notes when something sparks my interest. I keep a notebook on me most of the time now and when I don't, I have notes in my phone. I also try to gather books that seem to fit the mood of what I'm writing and use those for research."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading non-fiction</li> <li>• Reading fiction</li> <li>• Listening to podcasts</li> <li>• Watching documentaries</li> <li>• Serendipity</li> <li>• Using books</li> </ul>

Figure 6.4 Example of initial codes for research data

Some of these initial codes highlighted similar behaviour, as in the case of "Reading fiction" and "Using books" above, however, the purpose of the initial coding phase was to identify potential behaviour to re-examine and refine. Care was taken to approach the data with no preconceived ideas, and models from the literature were not used to develop a list of *a priori* codes.

**Phase Three:** Once the initial set of codes was generated, the researcher returned to

the data to review for refining of the smaller descriptive codes and generating of larger thematic categories. This involved a cyclic process through which the researcher re-read the transcripts, re-named codes when more appropriate terminology became apparent, merged codes when two codes highlighted the same behaviour, and re-coded into different codes when the data was deemed to be different. An example of the code set for Networking is included as Figure 6.5 below.

Primary Code	Description	Sub-codes
Networking	Networking involved the information seeker interacting with other individuals in order to obtain information, either formally or informally. This most often involved speaking to others, though it also involved emailing, texting, and other forms of written contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interacting with agents</li> <li>• Interacting with editors</li> <li>• Interacting with experts</li> <li>• Interacting with friends and family</li> <li>• Interacting with other authors</li> <li>• Interacting with other publishing professionals</li> <li>• Interacting with the target audience</li> </ul>

Figure 6.5 Example of codes from the data analysis

Care continued to be taken regarding preconceived ideas from the literature, and the researcher deemed to use her own terminology for many of the themes and categories. However, the researcher did chose to incorporate coding names from the literature, such as Networking as presented above, but only when certain the data truly reflected the same behaviour.

**Phase Four:** The results of each stage of this coding fed back into the next interview stage as the interview instruments were revisited for revision. When themes emerged, such as the authors’ use of environmental sources, prompts were added into the interview guide in order to investigate the theme further.

**Phase Five:** After the second interview round, the researcher returned to review the data and examine it for further refining. New codes and categories were added based on the new data that had been obtained, continuing the cyclic process of data analysis. This iterative approach meant “generating, developing, and verifying concepts” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 57) throughout the entire data collection process. When new concepts were identified, transcripts from the previous round

were re-examined and re-coded in order to reflect these emerging themes.

Once the data was coded for all data collection rounds, the researcher examined the final results for distinguishable patterns in order to develop a theory of the information behaviour of children's and young adult fiction writers. This process involved a number of iterations through the data. Memos regarding the development of themes and categories was kept throughout this process to ensure the integrity of the data analysis.

### **6.12.2 Personality Questionnaire**

The results of the personality questionnaires were imported into SPSS and coded according to the guidelines provided from the Berkeley Personality Lab. These statistics highlighted emerging trends in personality traits for the researcher to compare against the results from the interviews and cognitive styles questionnaires.

### **6.12.3 Cognitive Styles Questionnaire**

The results of the cognitive styles questionnaire were also imported into SPSS and then coded according to the guidelines provided from Entwistle and Tait (1995). Once the cognitive style type was generated, it was measured against personality type in order to determine any correlations and connections.

## **6.13 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity can be defined as "the careful consideration of the phenomenon under study, as well as the ways a researcher's own assumptions and behaviour may be impacting the inquiry" (Watt, 2007, p. 82) and been highlighted essential in qualitative researcher as the researcher is an instrument of data collection (Glesne, 1999; Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998).

By being reflective, researchers can better understand how they approach the data and what might be limiting the ability to see the data correctly (Russell & Kelly,

2002) based on the researcher's assumptions or behaviours.

One way in which to enhance reflexivity is through the use of written notes to oneself (Elbow, 1995; Woods, 1999) to deepen understanding and awareness of each stage of the research process. Memos, as asserted by Glaser (1978), are strategy of grounded theory that can contribute to a researcher's reflexivity. Memos can "convert thought into a form that allows examination and further manipulation" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 11). By keeping an introspective account of the work, a researcher can "take stock of biases, feelings, and thoughts, so they can understand how these may be influencing the research" (Watt, 2007, p. 84).

## **6.14 Memos**

Memos were written and saved throughout the process to keep track of data collection and data analysis progress "as written reminders or explorations of ideas that help researchers make sense out of the data" (Mellon, 1990, p. 79). An example memo has been included as Appendix G.

Memos used in conjunction with a grounded theory approach usually contain information about coding and concepts and "serve as reminders about what is meant by the terms being used and provide the building blocks for a certain amount of reflection" (Bryman, 2012, p. 573). As stated above, these memos helped keep the researcher informed of progress, past ideas and emerging concepts through each round of data collection and analysis.

## **6.15 Research ethics**

Ethical approval was received from Aberystwyth University, where the researcher is a student, and confirmed the study complied with the Department of Information Studies Ethics Policy for Research as well as the ESRC's Framework for Research Ethics. All research data was handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998. The results of the interviews, the personality questionnaires and the cognitive

style questionnaires were stored on a password-protected computer for the duration of the study.

An informed consent form (Appendix H) and a participant information sheet (Appendix I) was provided to each participant in accordance with the ethical principles by Bryman (2012, pp. 135-143). All participants were detailed the full purpose of the study both in the informed consent form and the information sheet sent out with the initial letter explaining the interview process. Participants volunteered to take part in the study, and were given the choice to discontinue participation at any time. Interview consent was also reconfirmed verbally prior to beginning the interview.

The researcher requested to record each participant before the start of the interview, but for those who preferred not to be recorded, notes were taken instead.

During transcription, interview data was recorded anonymously, and all hardcopy data was stored securely in a locked filing cabinet with all electronic data stored on a password-protected computer used only by the sole researcher. The data will continue to be stored for six months after the completion of the study. All data was anonymised with book titles and other personal information changed or removed before use in the thesis. Any excerpts of data (quotations) preserve the anonymity of the participants through the use of gender-specific pseudonyms issued by an online name generator (<http://www.babynames.co.uk>).

In-person interviews were held in a public setting, such as in a conference room at a convention or in the press centre of an expo, to ensure the safety of both the participant and the researcher.

## **6.16 Summary**

This chapter has described the philosophical and methodological approach to the research and the particular methods used. It has provided a background on



pragmatism, grounded theory and mixed methods, as well as provided an explanation of the reasons for why it was appropriate to adopt this strategy for the study. This was reflected in the choice of a combination of semi-structured interviews, the Big Five Inventory personality questionnaire, and the ASSIST questionnaire. The qualitative interview data was then coded thematically using NVIVO software, and the quantitative personality and cognitive styles data was coded into SPSS to generate statistics. This data collection and analysis procedure was completed in three stages in order to allow for emerging themes and ideas and to generate grounded theory based on the findings.

# 7. RESULTS

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## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results from the qualitative interviews and the quantitative personality and cognitive styles questionnaires. Combined, these elements provide the basis for an information profile of authors of children's and young adult literature.

## 7.2 Qualitative Results

### 7.2.1 About the Interview Participants

The interview process gathered demographic data of the participants, including gender and country of residence, as well as target age group and literary sub-genre information.

#### 7.2.1.1 Gender

Of the 38 interview participants, 13 (34%) were male and 25 (66%) were female. According to a poll conducted by NPR (2012), the top 235 YA Novels included 147 (63%) books written by female authors, results which correspond with the gender split in this study's sample.

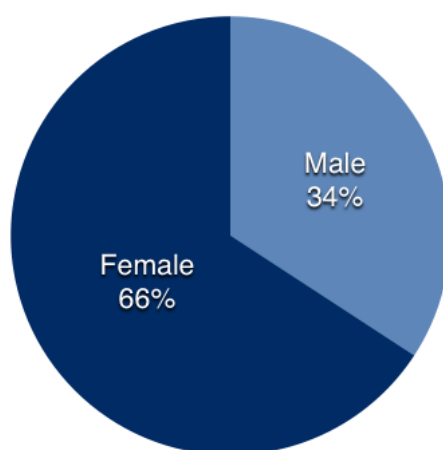


Figure 7.1 Gender of interview participants

### 7.2.1.2 Country of Residence

Twenty-eight (74%) of the interview participants were residents of the United States while 10 (26%) were residents of the United Kingdom. Only authors from these two countries were approached for this particular study, and the emphasis on authors from the United States stems from the researcher's own personal contacts in the American publishing industry.

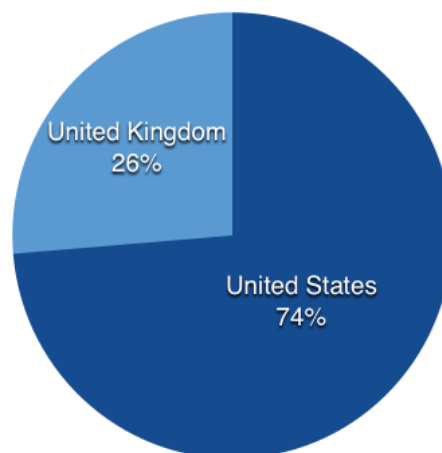


Figure 7.2 Country of residence of interview participants

### 7.2.1.3 Target age group

Six (16%) of the interview participants were authors of picture books, 7 (18%) were authors of middle grade novels, and 25 (66%) were authors of young adult novels.

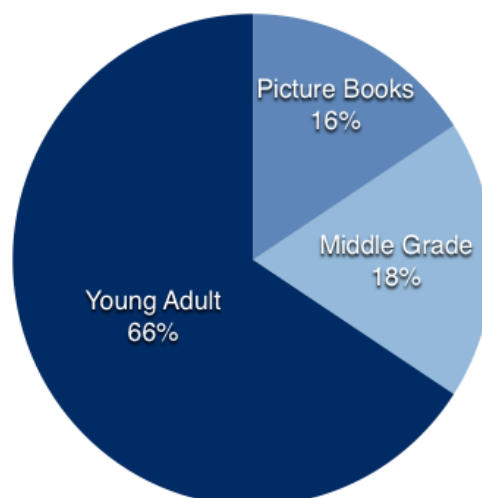


Figure 7.3 Target age groups of interview participants

#### 7.2.1.4 Literary sub-genre

Participants were spread across the identified sub-genres. Some authors wrote novels in more than one sub-genre and were labeled according to their most recent sub-genre. Four (10.5%) authors identified as writing in the adventure genre, 5 (13%) in contemporary, 4 (10.5%) in dystopian, 12 (32%) in fantasy, 2 (5%) in historical, 3 (8%) in horror, 5 (13%) in mystery / thriller, and 3 (8%) in science fiction. The spread of these sub-genres can be seen in Figure 7.4 below.

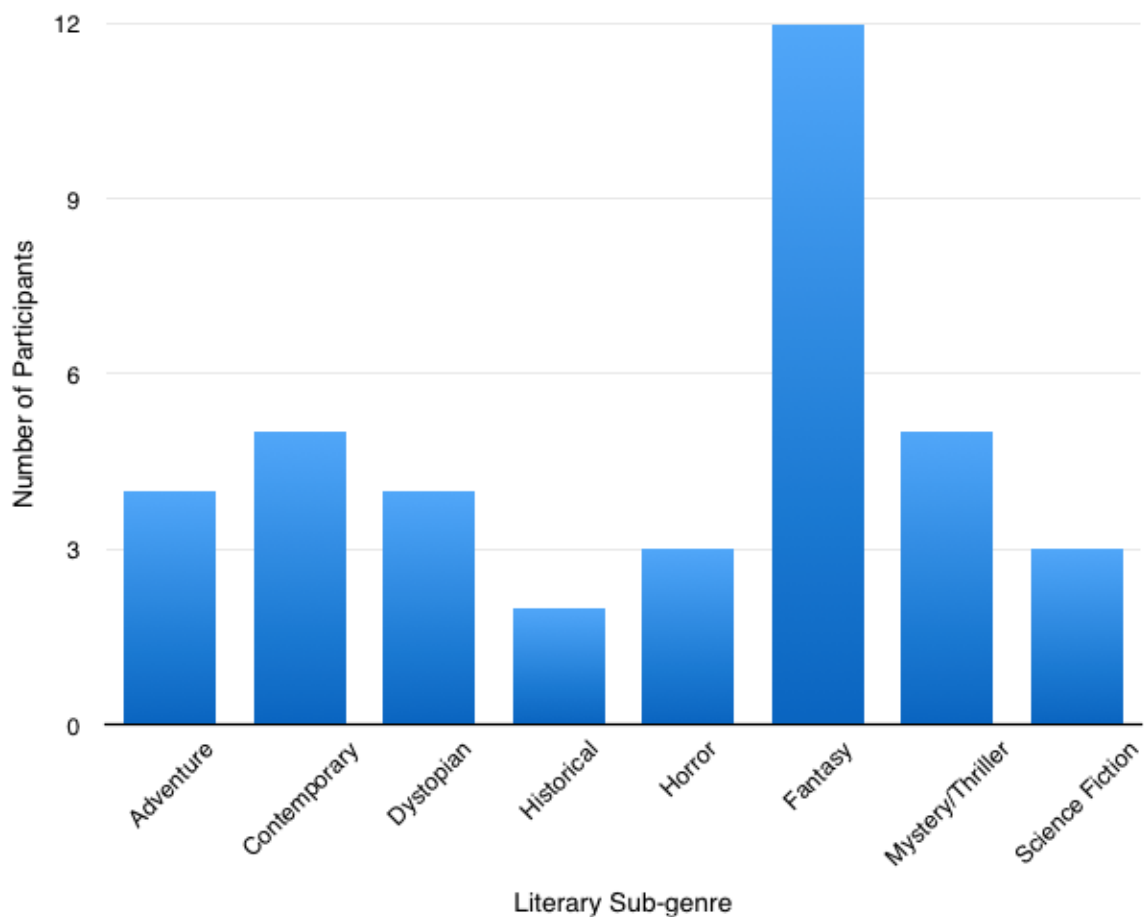


Figure 7.4 Literary sub-genres of interview participants

The percentage of fantasy writers can be explained by the nature of the publishing conferences and conventions attended for the interviews. There were a larger number of speculative fiction authors available at these events, most notably at

DragonCon, which is a convention focused solely on science fiction and fantasy.

### 7.2.1.5 Writing experience

The researcher identified the number of books published by each participant to establish at which point they were in their career. From these findings, the researcher developed four categories, including Debut (1-2 books published), Emergent (3-5 books published), Established (6-9 books published), and Eminent (10 or more books published). The spread of these authors' experience is shown in Figure 7.5 below.

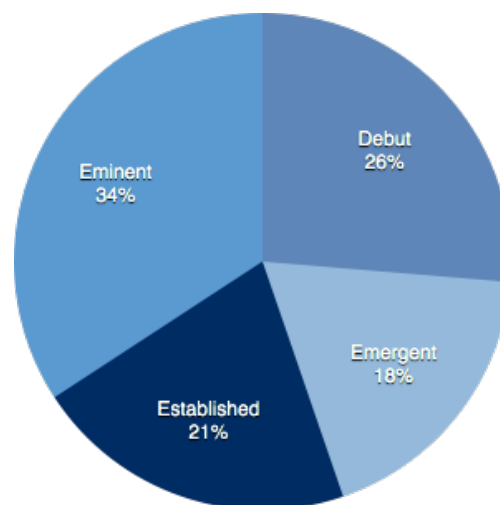


Figure 7.5 Writing experience of interview participants

Ten (26.5%) authors were identified as having 1-2 books published at the time of the study, 7 (18.5%) as having 3-5 books published, 8 (21%) as having 6-9 books published, and 13 (34%) as having 10 or more books published.

### 7.2.2 Writing Strategy

In order to understand the context of authors' information behaviour, respondents were asked to share their approach to the writing process. The majority of authors interviewed stated that they employed some level of planning, plotting, and outlining before the actual writing began. The level of detail in these outlines varied across authors. Some (8) authors stated the need to develop a very in-depth outline while other participants only needed to discover the major aspects of the story, as demonstrated in the quote below.

*"I plot everything. I have to have a beginning, like a first line, and a character, and a title. And an ending. And then I can write."* [MADISON]

One author described this outlining process as developing a "skinny skeleton draft". A skeleton draft is more in-depth than a traditional outline but precedes the first full draft of the manuscript.

*"In general, what happens is I know what the beginning of the story is, and I know what the end of the story is. And I usually write the last paragraph or sentence of the book...And then what I do is I kind of write the parts that I like, and then I'll put placeholders. So, I'll just write scenes and random things or like feelings and you know, and stuff like that. And I sort of cobble it into a skinny skeleton draft."* [LINDSAY]

Some (10) authors explained that this detailed outlining approach was not the way they developed stories when they initially began their career. When discussing their story development process, they stated that they did not do much planning and outlining until further into their professional writing career.

*"So, when I first wrote my first book...I kind of had the basic idea. Nowadays, before I write, I like to have the entire book outlined for the most part, though flexible obviously. And I like to have each chapter...I like to have a detailed outline of each chapter before I write it. Or at least have the major plot points."* [KENT]

*"When I first started, I would just kind of open up a blank page and see what came out. No plan, no characters, or anything. But now, I'm very big on planning things and figuring out what happens in each scene before I actually write the scene. I find it leads to better writing because I'm not doing a lot of guesswork, and less revision."* [AUDREY]

However, while the majority of authors interviewed utilised some form of outlining, whether in-depth or only brief, three participants stated that they did not do much planning up front. Instead, their writing process involved delving into the story without an outline, with more of the detailed work going into the second and third

drafts rather than the beginning stages. A young adult fantasy author described this approach as intuitive writing, as can be seen in the quote below.

*"I'm quite an intuitive writer so I don't really plan out my books. It takes me a little bit longer than other people to write, but yeah, I just trust in the process." [GEMMA]*

To further examine how the writing process may change over time, the researcher sought to compare the number of books each participant had published to their self-described writing style. The comparison suggested a similar finding as stated above. The participants who stated they plotted, such as Madison and Kent above, were either Emergent (3-5 books published), Established (6-9 books published), or Eminent (10 or more books published), except in the case of two Debut (1-2 books published) Young Adult authors, who discussed preferences for planning.

Each of the remaining Debut authors (7 in total), which included all three target age groups, mentioned a reliance on dreams and random inspiration as preferred over planning, a tendency to make things up as they go, or they did not discuss outlining at all:

*"I can't do outlining. Like, people will sit down, and they'll know like the whole book before they start writing it, and I have tried to do that, and it's awful. Like, it's awful. It's like pulling teeth for me, and the book is awful, and I just have to start over again anyway." [GEMMA]*

Interestingly, the 13 Eminent authors (10 or more books published) were split, despite their years of experiences in the field. However, upon further investigation, the researcher noted that those Emergent authors who wrote Young Adult novels discussed their preference for outlines while those who wrote Picture Books or Middle Grade novels did not discuss its importance or put little emphasis on the need for one. Established and Emergent authors demonstrated these same findings. Therefore, the results suggest that target age group may have a bearing on the

writing process as well as years of experience.

Viewed together, the results suggest that while a small number of authors may not spend much time developing the story before writing it, the majority do employ some level of planning, outlining, and orientating themselves within the project before putting the pen to paper, and the approach to this process may be influenced by the author's own writing experience as well as the target age group of the project.

### **7.2.3 Search Strategy**

Participants were asked about their search strategy and how they developed their story ideas in conjunction with their information seeking. There were varying responses to this question. Several (4) authors stated that they did the majority of the research up front before beginning to write, which coincides with the results found for the writing strategy as a whole.

*"I'm a big planner, so I create a detailed outline of every plot element that I think needs to be in the book, and so I do a lot of my research up front for that, especially when I'm just trying to figure out the idea and where to take it." [AUDREY]*

*"In the brainstorming stage, what's really important for me...that's when research is the most important, in the early stage. Because it helps me develop the world and develop a sense of the characters' lives and then that's where the characters come from." [HOLLY]*

However, some (3) authors stated that they were unable to do much information seeking before they began to draft the story and that this stage of the process came later.

*"I wouldn't do research and then start to write a book because you don't know what you need to know until you've written it." [LEIGH]*

*"I don't always know where the story is going until I'm writing, and so I don't always know what I need to know in terms of descriptions or technology. And so I'll usually try to find*



*that as I write.” [MAY]*

Most (31) authors fell somewhere in the middle, stating that they sought information all throughout the writing and editing process. These authors had a tendency to do a large amount of reading prior to drafting the story and then return to the information as needed.

*“It’s kind of a mix of both where prior research will kind of give me a well to start drawing from, and then as I go, I can research different aspects more in depth.” [EDISON]*

*“I really like to just kind of fill up with facts and information and then go back as other things come along and weave it together. But, you know, right up until the final editing, it’s, oh, I’m doing this fact-checking or I’m like, oh it might be better to do this, and going back through things. So, it’s an on-going process.” [CHELSIE]*

One author pointed out the changing nature of drafts and how this can influence search strategy. While performing the research up front may fulfil initial information needs, subsequent drafts may call for more in-depth or completely different information, depending on the changes required to the story.

*“My outline constantly shifts, and so, the research I have to do to fill in the gaps I have to do along the way, and then when I go back and revise, especially between my first draft and my second draft, there’s so much change that happens. I end up having to do even more research. Things that are a little, like minor things, I might leave until the second draft.” [SHELLEY]*

Similar to this response was one in which the participant stated the information seeking process can actually inform the plot and overall outline of the story rather than just fill in various needed details.

*“I find that the research helps me develop plot, and especially when I’m reading non-fiction sources. I’m always amazed that something I read in a history book or a science book or, you know, a first-hand account of something, can dovetail so perfectly into a plot that I’m*

*struggling with and really help me develop it.” [GRACE]*

One author commented on the change in her search strategy over time, a response which corresponds to the results found in the authors’ writing strategies. In the beginning of her writing career, she did not perform much research, and she gave an example of how much more pre-planning has gone into her more recent works.

*“Early on, and probably as a new author, a new writer...early on, I did rely more on imagination being able to create whatever I wanted. And it just never felt right. It was too much of a struggle. So, now, I research more in advance. For instance, my book series that just released last year, I researched it. I had six years of research before I really embarked on that series. Now, I’d been researching it just because I was enjoying it and thinking about different ideas, but it was so entrenched by the time I actually wrote the book that it just flowed. And that’s really important. It’s really important to me, I learned the hard way, that your imagination’s just not enough.” [AMY]*

As with the writing strategy, the researcher sought to determine any shifts in search strategy according to an author’s publishing experience. In contrast with the findings from the writing strategy, no trends emerged from this portion of the data. Writers at all experience levels approached the search strategy in different ways, whether that be beginning with a great deal of searches upfront or searching throughout the entire life of the project.

#### **7.2.4 Amount of Information**

Participants were asked to discuss the amount of information they felt was necessary to obtain throughout the writing process. Some (8) authors responded that they did not require a large amount of information when developing their story ideas, because of the types of books they chose to write, whether this be down to the literary sub-genre or the fact that the books written were fiction rather than non-fiction.

*“Okay, most of my stuff is fiction, so, and most of it is not historical fiction or things like that though I have a couple pieces that are. So, for most of my work, I don’t have to do a lot of research.” [JARED]*

*“I tend not to choose things to write about that need a lot of research. My stories do tend to be ridiculous in one way or another.” [ALFIE]*

On the opposite side of the spectrum, some (9) authors stated they required a lot of information when crafting their work. One author shared the experience of gathering large amounts of reference material for every project she begins.

*“I get an idea and I start amassing research materials for it all the time, and they’re all arranged by topic on my bookshelves. I have just books for writing on writing, writing resources, and I have all the research books, like all my American Revolution War stuff, and I’ve got like all my demonic possession, and like demonology stuff, and I have a bunch of stuff on Alaska because I was going to write a book set in Alaska a long time ago. And I’m now amassing books on late nineteenth century mental health practices, and the Ziegfeld follies in the late twenties and early thirties. I find comfort in research books.” [GRACE]*

One participant described this process as total immersion in a topic, as see in the quote below.

*“What I would do with my adventure books would be to sort of completely immerse yourself into this topic and you sort of reach, not a saturation point because you know I’m hardly as knowledgeable on the topic as like a real expert...But you reach this sort of point where you kind of internalise it all, and then you can start to create your fiction based on this research that you’ve done.” [EDMUND]*

However, the majority (21) of participants tended to steer toward a middle ground approach, with these authors gathering what they deemed a sufficient amount of information before filling in the gaps with their imagination and what they felt worked best for the story.

*“First of all, I did some basic research on the actual case, but I didn’t want to be hampered by the real details of it, and I didn’t want to...I wanted to be able to use my imagination.” [HOLLY]*

*“I find that I need there to be a base of truth, but I can build the fiction around it and I’m ok with that.” [KATIE]*

These results suggest that while the amount of information required varies across individual authors, perhaps depending on target age group and literary sub-genre, most authors do require at least some amount of information in order to develop and write their books. This idea is encapsulated in a quote from one of the participants, as seen below.

*“I think every single YA author does some amount of research, even if it doesn’t make it into the book, just because there are things about knowing something that help deepen the colours in the book.” [LINDSAY]*

### **7.2.5 Accuracy**

Accuracy was an interesting theme that emerged from the qualitative data. Since authors are creating fictional worlds, the researcher sought to discover the importance of accuracy of the information required for the stories. The results showed that this particular group of professionals differs from the needs of other groups, such as scientists and academic researchers, in this context.

Some (6) of the participants stated that accuracy was not very important at all. For example, a young adult fantasy author stated that, for her particular genre, accuracy in the details did not matter, as can be seen below.

*“And everything else I write is fantasy or sci-fi, and it doesn’t really matter as long as it works for the story. The series I’m working on right now is set in a sort of alternate version of the Venetian Empire, and so I steal things from that, but it doesn’t matter if Wikipedia is that*

*accurate because it's still my made-up version of it."* [MAY]

Another participant had similar views on the fantasy genre, stating that authors were able to take liberties in fiction, depending on what worked best for the story.

*"And sometimes, I want things...because I'm in speculative and slightly fantasy, I want things to function a certain way and they don't. So, sometimes I have to figure out theoretically how I could achieve that end, so that takes a lot of backtrack. And finally I read enough scientific theory where I was like, they're just making shit up. I can do whatever I want, too. Fiction liberties, really. There are some liberties in fiction, and I think that that is something that's challenging for me. Coming from an academic background, I want things to be correct, but there are times when you have to walk away and be like, this is fiction."* [ISABELLA]

Some (10) authors, however, found accuracy to be extremely important. One author, who wrote in the historical fantasy sub-genre, expressed the view that accuracy in the historical details was essential to crafting a good story.

*"I'm a trained historian. I work in a library. You need to have...The details are what make the story true, I think. So, I like to be as true as possible to what happened and what it looks like or how it felt to be there."* [SHELLEY]

A dystopian author stated the importance of grounding the scientific and technological aspects of her science fiction world in real-world information.

*"The medical or technical, the other sort of more technical information that I read is because I want to get it right. I feel like it's interesting to me to write about these things, and as a fiction writer, to make up certain parts of it. But I want it all based on something that's scientifically valid. So, it's really important to me to try to get the technology and the science behind what I'm saying correct."* [LINDA]

In contrast to that viewpoint, another science fiction author stated that the accuracy

of the technological details was not as important as the accuracy of the imaginative details within the confines of the fictional world that had been created.

*"It needs to be accurate within the novel. So, it needs to be logical and make sense and have an explanation that the reader can follow, but I don't think...In terms of reality, because it's fiction, and I'm inventing new technologies that don't actually exist, it doesn't need to adhere to the rules of our world."* [AUDREY]

Four participants commented specifically on how genre can shape the nature of their information behaviour. In particular, authors of historical fiction stated that they required a certain degree of accuracy in order to realistically portray the time period.

*"I think that there needs to be some accuracy in that there's an opportunity there, and if you have the choice between presenting fiction that's based in historical fact, it goes much further than just to say, 'Okay, I'm just going to make it up as if I'm creating a fantasy world.' Because I'm not. I'm really setting it in a specific time and period. And I think it's important for kids to get sense of that time period."* [CHELSIE]

Other authors (5) stated the importance of accuracy in the emotional and psychological aspects of the story in order to properly connect with the intended audience. This highlighted an interesting information need for this particular group of professionals, as can be seen in the three quotes below.

*"It's important. Especially if I'm talking about...For instance, look at what I'm researching. Psychological problems. You know, and I think, these are real things that kids have to deal with, with the adults in their lives or themselves. I mean, I have a book coming out a little later about a young man who is suffering early on-set schizophrenia. And I need to get that right. It's important because if these books are going to be instructive and believable and something that a reader can use or relate to, it has to be accurate."* [OLIVIA]

*"So, accuracy about emotion is crucial. You know, I mean, especially for kids. Like kids will not work any bullshit. You know what I mean? You know, but the kinds that I like to write*

*are...really need to feel, at least for me, accurate feelings-wise. Like, is this how someone would actually react? Is this how someone would talk? Like what is, you know, is this...Am I actually speaking to my audience? Cause you know, I'm writing across age, right? And so, that's really important to me to make sure that that's accurate." [ROSANNA]*

*"I'm sort of fixated on telling the truth, and so, for me, my books are all about sort of telling the emotional truth or being emotionally honest." [MILLIE]*

In a similar vein, some (8) authors commented on accuracy from a reader's point of view. These participants believed that this was where accuracy became crucial, as an incorrect detail can interrupt the reading experience. This applied to both factual and emotional details in the books.

*"I know from being a reader that the most annoying thing to me in the world is to read a book and to come upon something that I know is wrong. Either it's a wrong fact or it's just wrong intuitively. I just know that is not the way it is. And I'll stop reading. You know, it interrupts the reading. It pulls you out of the story." [AVA]*

*"I did screw up a detail in my second book. Apparently, when you are indoors, you don't salute in the military. And I had that happen, because I didn't even think to ask anybody that. So, that's a mistake that bugs me, because I feel like it knocks people out of your story." [TRACY]*

One author shared the lengths she went to just before her book went to print to reconcile the timeline of the events in her novel, in order to prevent disrupting the reading experience due to the inclusion of an incorrect date.

*"For instance, recently, I was working on a book that came out in October where I just happened to discover that I had set a prom...you know, a bunch of kids were going to have a prom, and it just so happened that it hit Good Friday. The book was literally almost ready to go to print, and when I really looked at the date, it was Good Friday, and there was no way in the United States that we would have a prom on Good Friday. I had to take out ten chapters,*

*break it into scenes, and completely reorder it. It took me a week to do that. Just because I didn't want somebody to be thinking, oh wait, in reality, that day would be Good Friday."* [AMY]

Participants were then asked if they had experienced any reader reactions to the accuracy of the story details presented in their novels, whether positively or negatively. Most authors (36) stated that they had received at least some communication from their readers in regards to this aspect of their books.

One author commented on his readers' positive reactions to the accuracy of his historical setting details, as can be seen in the comment below.

*"In this book, I have had a lot of comments from Memphians who said, 'Oh, I so remember midtown Memphis, and the names of all the streets.' So, I think people enjoyed that it was a very specific place."* [PERRY]

In terms of negative comments, one participant shared the experience of another science fiction author, who had presented the physics of space flight in such a way that multiple readers had emailed with complaints.

*"It's important with young adult writing in particular, and I'm sure it's the same way with adults, but this is my experience, that you get those little, tiny facts correct. I can remember someone giving me an example of...In her first book, something seems to be functioning one way in a spaceship, and it was incorrect. Like, from a physics standpoint, this couldn't happen. And it was actually, it turned out purposeful on her end. Something was coming up in the second book. But, this author got email after email from teenagers who were like, 'Do you know this is not actually what would be happening?' So, you'll get called out on it if there's a perception that it's a mistake."* [ISABELLA]

These results suggest that while authors create their own imaginative worlds and do enjoy the liberties of fiction, there is some importance placed upon the accuracy of the information included in these projects. Readers can and will recognise



discrepancies and may put down the story as a result of inaccuracies.

### **7.2.6 Serendipity**

Authors were asked to discuss the amount of information they discovered through purposeful searches versus the amount of information discovered accidentally. In all cases, the participants of this study experienced at least some degree of serendipity when it came to the development of their story, most notably in the beginning stages of idea generation.

*"I'm finding, though, that my best ideas seem to be coming to me accidentally, when I'm not expecting them and when I'm not necessarily wanting them. It's key now for me to write down those ideas immediately and save them for later. I now have notes of lots of ideas that I want to write. I never used to have that before. I think the accidental ideas come from the effort of trying to generate the non-accidental ideas though. It's continuing to try to find story everywhere. It's left me more open to good ideas dropping in, so to speak." [KATIE]*

One author shared the accidental discovery of one of his book ideas and how this project came into existence due to an unanticipated walk in New York City. The example he detailed reflects what many of the participants shared about their experiences with serendipitous information retrieval.

*"It's almost always accidental in the beginning. I made a book called [The Highline], and the main inspiration for that book is a place in Manhattan called the Highline, which is now turned into a park, but at the time was just this abandoned space in Manhattan. And so I saw it, and that was really inspiring to me because it was covered in wildflowers and grasses and trees. It was this abandoned area that had kind of turned into a little wilderness, you know. I just happened to stumble upon it one day. I had no idea what it was. I followed it as far as it could until I could climb up and walk around and check it out. And then went home and got online and started researching it and realized that it was, you know, an active railway throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and you know, there was a group, an*

*organisation in the neighbourhood, who wanted to preserve it because the city wanted to tear it down. So, there was like an organisation called Friends of the Highline, and their mission was to keep it around and turn it into a public park, which they eventually did. So, that book never would have happened if I hadn't turned right in Chelsea and walked underneath this elevated railway." [FRED]*

Serendipity was also found to be instrumental in not only the beginning stages of a writing project. Participants stated that they continued to experience accidental discovery throughout the entire writing process, even as they performed their purposeful searches.

*"As I was writing the thing I'm writing now, I stumbled upon a really strange bit of information that I had no idea existed, just from my research, and it became a part of the story." [LILY]*

One author went further and posited that serendipity is essential to the creation of all story ideas, as can be seen in the quote below.

*"There is a certain amount of accident in everything. There's got to be because that's what creates the ideas. It's sort of the open door to all kinds of things that happen, so when they do happen and they're right, you get this book." [WILSON]*

Participants also commented on serendipity in the context of seeking or hoping to encounter some form of inspiration for their projects:

*"I find a lot of personal inspiration in things that I encounter, stories that I overhear, things that I'm reading." [ISABELLA]*

*"I'll outline a project, and there will be times where I'll have just a blank space where something needs to happen, and I just kind of hope that inspiration will hit me along the way, and it usually does." [EDISON]*

Participants also commented on ways in which they seek to encourage accidental

discovery of information with a strong focus on physically moving into new and different places as a method of encouraging serendipity. They suggested that taking breaks from the work and exploring the world with an open mind can keep an author tuned into potential story ideas.

*“Oh, you can’t go in search of ideas. You have to be a sponge. I spent almost 20 years in advertising and anytime you sat down and said, ‘I’m going to come up with an idea!’ You don’t come up with an idea. But what is very important I think for all creative people is to take breaks from the writing and go see movies and walk around and go to places you wouldn’t normally go and go to art museums and go to museums and natural history.” [DENNY]*

*“What I enjoy doing is getting away from my desk and walking around a city, for example. I live fairly close to Bristol, and I will go and wander around and just seeing new things, having a sort of open mind to a problem, images you’re not used to seeing can spark up interesting dispositions.” [HUDSON]*

These results suggest that serendipity plays a large role in the information behaviour of authors, particularly in the initial stages of a writing project. In addition, it highlights an interesting trend of physical exploration in order to generate ideas.

### **7.2.7 Unconscious Information Seeking**

While examining the participants’ use of serendipity, the theme of unconscious information seeking emerged from the data, suggesting that authors are always researching, in some way or another, even in everyday life, and that idea generation and information gathering can happen in an unconscious or subconscious form.

For example, one participant shared the following comment about the subconscious nature of her first drafts.

*“It must be what your subconscious mind is sort of working on or thinking of. And I really*

*am fascinated by the whole creative process, because I've noticed there's a lot of stuff that comes out in that first draft that subconsciously, you know, I didn't logically think about it. But subconsciously it works. It fits. It's right."* [AVA]

Another author discussed how entertainment was not a conscious form of information seeking but one that she used as a method for generating ideas, as an example of how authors are constantly gathering information and seeking inspiration for writing projects.

*"They really do stir the imagination. You get a lot of ideas from them. And what your characters might look like as well. From films, that's quite useful. But that's not conscious research. I think that's just something that happens. And I think all writers actually are researching all the time. Always looking for ideas. Always absorbing what's going on around them. And suddenly, ah, there's an idea."* [EMILY]

This idea was further expressed when participants discussed how other interests and activities will often feed back into writing projects, even if they were not initially connected in any way. These participants expressed how important it is to follow other pursuits in order to allow the mind to fill with information and ideas that might later prove to be useful for a story.

*"Lifelong research...following passions and interests even if they have nothing to do with work. My love of photography turned out to be really important to my new book. A sort of unconscious research that later may feed back into the real work."* [EDGAR]

*"I think that one thing that I try to do is constantly nourish my creative bank. So that I'm always going to the theatre, going to the movies, going to museums, going on travel and trips and historical houses and walks in the flora and fauna."* [LINDSAY]

### 7.2.8 Affect

Affect refers to the feelings and the emotions that relate to an individual's information behaviour. This can include uncertainty and self efficacy, as well as the extent to which one enjoys the information seeking process. Responses in this category seemed split across the participants. Some authors (8) expressed an enjoyment of the information seeking process, as can be seen in the two quotes below.

*"The research is my favourite part of writing so, I'll buy ten, twelve books and I'll have them sent to me from Amazon, and I'll start with those." [BYRON]*

*"One of the reasons I like being a writer is I get to learn new stuff all the time, so it's kind of fun." [DENNY]*

This positive attitude toward information seeking appeared to go hand-in-hand with a high level of self efficacy. Two authors stated that they tended to perform more traditional research due to their background in academia and having been trained accordingly, which resulted in confidence in their searching abilities.

*"I'm probably a little more well-versed in academic styles of research from being an academic myself, so that's naturally where I go. Like, I wanted access to databases with very specific information that I needed." [ISABELLA]*

*"So, I think I might take a little more of an academic approach to, especially to historical research, than I think other people might, just because that's how I'm trained to do it." [SHELLEY]*

On the opposite side of the spectrum, some (6) participants stated that they did not enjoy or care about the research process. These responses tended to come from the participants who had stated they did not believe a large amount of research was needed for their projects.

*"I don't love research. I like making stuff up. So, it isn't until I'm afraid of not being believable that I research."* [OLIVIA]

*"But I think probably one of the reasons that I've done the kind of fiction that I do is that I don't have to do loads of research, because I like to just think up a story."* [ALFIE]

*"There are writers who really do research, and they really care about it. I don't fall into that category. I just figure, I control the universe and everything."* [CHRISTINA]

These results suggest that affect and attitude toward information seeking does in fact play a role in the amount and depth of information gathered by authors for their writing projects and their willingness to engage in information seeking activities.

## **7.2.9 Information Sources**

Participants were asked to discuss the various information sources used when crafting their fictional works. These discussions gave way to a wide range of sources, detailed in full in the following sections.

### **7.2.9.1 Internet Sources**

Internet sources were stated by the majority (33) of authors as the main resource used when seeking information for their books. These particular sources included Amazon, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Youtube, Google, Wikipedia, online courses, and digital book websites. Amazon, in particular, was stated as a resource for staying abreast of the children's literature market and being aware of the developments and recent releases in the field.

*"I do use Amazon to do some research on what books are out there in the market."* [MILLIE]

Another participant used Amazon as a way to discover other books related to a previous purchase, a process that can be seen as a method of chaining material. It provided a way in which the author could find further related material that she might not previously know existed, opening up more avenues of exploration.

*“One of the great things about Amazon is that if you are looking at a book, it’ll show you other books related to it or books that other people have purchased or looked at in addition to that one, which sort of opens up a realm of possibilities.” [GRACE]*

Social media was cited as an information resource. It was used in conjunction with networking as a way to utilise personal contacts’ knowledge base in order to find solutions to a problem encountered while writing.

*“For my most recent book under contract, I altered my approach a bit. I went to Facebook to ask friends if they knew anyone or were themselves from the town where my book was set.” [KATIE]*

*“The hive mind. So, Facebook, Twitter. Minneapolis has a lot of, like a really cool kidlit community, and so I ask people around.” [ROSANNA]*

Pinterest was an internet resource that was used as a method of gathering visual information in order to help with descriptions of settings, fashion, and animals.

*“I do use Pinterest a lot. It’s very visual. Especially with the circus stuff, there’s all of these, even if I’m just pulling photos from somewhere else, it really helps to have everything kind of in one place for me to just go and look at as a reference. There are these great boards, too, that are fashion and stuff like that from, you know things you want to be authentic to, and it really helps to see that.” [SHELLEY]*

*“I’ve got together a Pinterest page full of images about Iceland, which is an extraordinary place and has lots of weird and wonderful geographical, geological formations. And so I’ve done a lot of visual research for that. I must have about a hundred, at least a hundred, images, which because the story isn’t properly formulated, it will serve as inspiration as I go along.” [HUDSON]*

Another visual resource for animals in picture books was YouTube. Four participants highlighted the value of video-based information, as can be seen in the quote below.

*“YouTube is amazing for that. You know, you can look at any given time and can see how any animal moves.” [MILLIE]*

Wikipedia was one an often-stated internet source. Fourteen authors expressed some use of this particular website when developing their story ideas and fact-checking certain details. In some cases, Wikipedia was considered the go-to resource.

*“Quite honestly, I use some Wikipedia to get me started on all sorts of things. Like, that’s my first go-to as far as basic information, and then you have to double-check it. Cause I’m a school teacher and all that, and I know that. But I use it more and more.” [BYRON]*

Wikipedia was also seen as a jumping off point for the beginning of the search process rather than the single point of information. Participants would scan the entry and then seek the references at the end of the article in order to find more in depth and authoritative information on the subject.

*“So Wikipedia is a place I go to, and, except with it, since it’s not necessarily authoritative, a lot of times, I’ll go down to its...it’s usually got bibliographies down at the bottom, and I’ll go and pursue those.” [AMY]*

*“My research usually starts with Wikipedia, and then I use references there to expand outward.” [KENT]*

*“I always, the first thing I do is I look at like certain things, like a Wikipedia page will be like the first thing, and then I’ll go to see where the Wikipedia page’s references are. And I’ll read from there.” [WHITNEY]*

However, three participants did state that they avoided Wikipedia, if possible, as an internet resource due to its unreliable nature. This viewpoint was expressed by the more thorough information gatherers, such as Grace, whose search strategy included amassing large amounts of research books rather than relying on internet sources.

*“I try to avoid web sources like Wikipedia because they are notoriously unreliable, and I don’t*



*want to be basing my research on sort of crowd-sourced information.” [GRACE]*

*“I never go to Wikipedia unless I need very basic information. And it’s not that Wikipedia is bad, it’s just that I know that there’s better and more thorough out there.” [HOLLY]*

While Wikipedia was a popular choice, Google was the one resource mentioned by all participants. The following quotes sum up the group’s viewpoint toward Google as the single most important go-to resource for authors.

*“I would go to the internet first. The first thing I would do is just go the internet. I would ask Google first.” [NORMAN]*

*“Inevitably, these days, it’s just...I’m afraid, I guess lots of people are going to say the same thing. It’s just, Google it.” [HUDSON]*

*“I’ll admit, if it was something simple, it would be Google.” [ISABELLA]*

*“Google! Google, yeah. I don’t know how writers did it before Google.” [DENNY]*

In a few instances (4), participants did have negative feelings toward Google, even though they used the search engine as their go-to resource regardless. These participants seemed to display a certain amount of guilt in using the search engine. This feeling was expressed in the following two quotes.

*“Google’s the go-to. Yeah, it’s almost like you don’t want to admit it sort of. At least I don’t. I feel like maybe I should I have an Encyclopaedia on hand at all times, but honestly, the internet is like a giant Encyclopaedia, you know, but interlaced with a lot of crap as well.” [GRACE]*

*“It’s, we’re lazy. It’s the simplest way of doing it. It’s not necessarily the best...But I know it’s...should I hate myself for doing it? I don’t think so because it does make life so much easier. It’s like having the world’s libraries at your fingertips. So, I don’t regret, and I shouldn’t feel guilty about it. It’s just the way of the world these days, and you know Google is one of the many evil empires that are springing up and controlling our world, but I have a*

*Gmail account and I'm afraid you go with the flow when it comes to these things."* [HUDSON]

However, all participants demonstrated that they used Google to some extent, regardless of whether or not they felt they should. The majority (34) of authors stated Google as their number one go-to resource when they needed to find information for their works in progress. In addition, nine participants commented on using Google Maps and Google Earth when seeking setting details.

*"You can actually put yourself right in the location and walk around, and look at different things. I was once doing a chase scene in one of my adult books where I went from Yankee stadium to a subway stop, and I just did it on Google Maps and knew what I'd be running by."* [DENNY]

*"I do have another one that's set in a real city in Florida, so I've been using Google Maps for that and street view to see what the area looks like, and just reading up on what it's like."* [AUDREY]

Coursera, an online course website, was another internet resource that two young adult authors, one a writer of historical fiction and another a writer of science fiction, named as being instrumental in their information seeking process.

*"There are Coursera, free, the massive online courses that are available. I've taken a couple of those relating to Ancient Greece and Philosophy. There are also courses that you can take through The Teaching Company called The Great Courses, and I've done a number of those."* [CHELSIE]

*"So, I've become a really big fan of this series of massive online college classes called Coursera, and you take, you know, there are like, I took Astrobiology, for example, from the University of Edinburgh."* [LINDSAY]

Another internet resource that emerged from the data was digital book websites.

One of the websites mentioned was Project Gutenberg, which lists free public domain books available for download.

*“And this particular book is going to be all about classic books like Huckleberry Finn and Robin Hood and The Three Musketeers coming to life, so I did a lot of...there’s a Project Guggenheim, no Gutenberg. So, I just got all the classic books, and downloaded.” [DENNY]*

*“There are a lot of references online now, especially the older books that you can just get for free because they’re public domain. So, I have hundreds of books from, you know, ages ago, from I think it’s the Gutenberg Project.” [EDISON]*

Free digital books seemed to be more desirable than paid. In another instance, a participant found a free book available from NASA and downloaded that to her Kindle in order to gather information about space travel.

*“I Googled space travel, and I found that NASA had a free book that you could download on your Kindle called The Psychology of Space Travel. And so I downloaded that, and I read that.” [LINDSAY]*

#### **7.2.9.2 Written Sources**

Some written sources were discussed by participants. These tended to be books rather than newspapers, magazines, or other forms of written material. One author expressed a preference for physical books over digital material due to the depth of information that could be obtained.

*“I prefer reading books about the topic because it just has a lot more, I don’t know, just way more information in books.” [NORMAN]*

Several participants (8) commented on purchasing books written by other authors in the genre, in order to perform market research and keep up-to-date with the newest releases in the industry. While this type of information gathering does not focus on factual details that go into the actual manuscript, participants considered this type of

market research to be important to their professional careers.

*“Whenever I go to a bookstore to sign, I’ll go buy somebody else’s book just to say thanks to them for having me there. So that’s more the kind of research you do to stay current with what’s popular with kids or what are kids reading as opposed to what am I going to put into my next story.” [DENNY]*

*“I got a list from the American Hearing Speech Language Association about all the works of fiction that had stutterers as characters in there. And there’s over a hundred, and while I didn’t read all the books, I kind of checked into all of them, and you know, to see.” [PERRY]*

In addition to the above, the researcher sought to determine whether there were any variations on the use of written sources in regards to an author’s genre or target age group. However, no trends emerged from the data. For example, historical fiction writers did not use written sources any more or less often than authors of other genres.

### **7.2.9.3 Environmental Sources**

An interesting theme that emerged from the data was the heavy use of environmental resources. Environmental resources referred to in-person locations, such as a zoo or a landmark, that participants physically visited in order to gather factual and sensory details to be included as setting descriptions in the books. An example of this type of environmental browsing can be seen in the quote from a science fiction author below.

*“Another thing that I did for [Out in Space] was because of just various other things, a friend of mine who works at JPL...when I went to Houston, I got a private tour of the Johnson Space Center.” [LINDSAY]*

One participant went as far as to say that she would not write a book set in a location that she had not personally visited.

*"I like to walk the way they walk. So, I've been there. I went to Ireland a couple weeks ago and now that I've been there, I would be more likely to set something there because it's like I know the people and I know the smell and the way it looks." [AMY]*

The participants who participated in this type of information gathering cited the need for sensory details as one of the main reasons why they chose to visit locations in person. These details included scents, sights, sounds, and a general feeling of the place.

*"So, in the book, the hero kind of spends a lot of time outside this very particular subway stop. So, after I wrote the book, I did go and hang out outside that particular stop even though I'd been there a million times. Just to kind of be like, 'Okay, so this is where he's hanging out.' What is he hearing? What is he seeing? Where would he be standing?" [SOPHIE]*

Three participants stated that they took cameras with them when they went on environmental browsing trips. They took photos of the locations they visited, so that they could then later refer back to them, as visual information, when drafting the manuscript.

*"There was a thriller I wrote years ago about a part of Brooklyn where a lot of Russian toughs lived, so I went out there and just walked around and took pictures of things." [DENNY]*

*"I realized I needed sort of like a layout of this place, and so I went and took about 800 pictures. And so as I was writing, I was just flipping through the pictures, and like, okay, I'm in this room now, and I would be able to see what was going on, which was super cool." [ROSANNA]*

However, three authors stated that they had not yet been able to physically visit locations, due to time constraints and monetary limitations, such as having a full-time job, especially if the book is set in another country. However, these participants expressed a desire to perform this type of information gathering in the future, if

possible.

*"I wish that I could go visit, but I have a full-time job, and I don't have a lot, you know, a ton a money, so you know. You do what you can."* [KENT]

These results suggest that settings and locations are important components of fiction and that authors seek to gather in-depth information about these places by physically visiting and recording sensory details when possible.

#### **7.2.9.4 Media Sources**

Media sources were cited as important sources for information. This type of resource refers to films, music, television shows, and other types of non-written media.

Several (9) participants stated that they had found inspiration and story ideas by simply watching films.

*"You know, my [Great Heist] books were really sort of inspired by the kind of movies like Ocean's Eleven and The Italian Job, like the great complex heist film, you know, and sort of asking myself, 'Well how can I kind of recreate that, you know, sense of adventure and complexity and difficulty and daring and the idea of the teen having to work together to get something done with a bunch of kids?'"* [EDMUND]

One author shared his approach to developing a picture book by watching Disney films to see how they had handled anthropomorphic animal characters in order to generate ideas for his own take on a similar subject.

*"You know, Disney, the company, made so many household names out of these anthropomorphic animal characters. So, I kind of researched those movies and watched how they would handle things. Like, in Robin Hood, for example, Robin Hood was played by a fox. So, you know, he's walking on two legs and talking and eating like a human, but every now and then, he might snap or snarl at something and show a little bit of his inner fox. I loved that stuff. So, I started watching lots of old Disney movies, just to see how they handled it*

*and get ideas.” [FRED]*

#### **7.2.9.5 Professional Sources**

Participants in this study did not tend to use professional sources as a component of their information seeking process. However, a science fiction author did include an example of a professional resource she used that is limited to her particular genre.

*“Well, I actually got a fellowship to this thing called Launch Pad, which is...I don’t know if other people have talked to you about it, but it’s a seven-day crash course in space science at the University of Wyoming for science fiction writers. And they accept ten people, and it’s fully funded. And it was funded NASA and the National Science Foundation through this university. It was a grant that this professor got, but now it’s funded by another science fancy thing.” [LINDSAY]*

This crash course involved five days of university-level lectures on astronomy, as well as telescope observations, with the intent to educate science fiction writers and provide them with a knowledge base on the physics of space. While other participants did not discuss using this type of resource, this may be down to subject differences and the lack of similar courses available that focus on other genres.

#### **7.2.9.6 Networking Sources**

The majority (33) of participants discussed some use of networking when seeking information for their novels. This included a wide range of activities, from speaking to friends, to contacting experts, to even approaching members of the target audience.

One participant noted the value of having contacts within the publishing industry, particularly with librarians or booksellers. He reached out to these contacts when he had trouble finding a particular book or information on a certain topic, and these contacts assisted him in finding the information he needed.

*"I have a lot of friends now who are in publishing or who are librarians and who are booksellers. So, a lot of times if I'm having trouble finding a book or if I'm looking for some sort of book on a subject but it's hard to describe, I talk to a bookseller or librarian friend of mine and see if they have any ideas and can point me in the right direction." [FRED]*

Friends were mentioned as an important resource, particularly when it came to personal accounts that could assist the author in regard to character details. Often, authors will write about characters who have very different life experiences from themselves. In these situations, the author must seek out information in order to accurately portray their character within the text.

One author shared an experience of interviewing a friend who was a competitive swimmer, in order to understand how best to write the protagonist of her story.

*"I have a friend who was a competitive swimmer, and so I interviewed him extensively. And then he took me to an early morning 4am practice, so I like met the coach, and...I'd much rather have a real world experience if I can and talk to people." [HOLLY]*

Similarly, a female participant discussed writing a novel about a teenage boy of a different ethnicity than herself. She felt it was extremely important to provide an authentic portrayal of that character and approached a friend who had a comparable life experience in order to accomplish this.

*"The protagonist is a third generation Mexican-American boy, and I am none of those things. And so, I have a friend who's Mexican American, and is I think a third or fourth generation. And so I just, you know, with his permission asked him a lot of questions and asked him to take a look at this when I'm done to make sure that I'm not, you know, overstepping or doing something stupid. You know, and making sure he...that it's respectful and it's the full character." [ROSANNA]*

In addition to speaking to friends, participants have interviewed experts and professionals in order to obtain the necessary information for their writing projects.



Some examples of this type of information gathering are expressed in the quotes below, all of which are excerpts from authors of young adult fiction.

*"I was able to meet one of the lawyers on the case actually and did a little more interviewing there, but then just opened it up to interviewing all defence and prosecuting attorneys and talked to them about their clients and what they understood about jail life, that kind of thing, and the process of these kinds of cases." [HOLLY]*

*"So, for that book, I went and I talked to social workers. I talked to nurses, and I talked to someone who works in a hospice. And I just kind of rang them up and I said, 'Look, I'm writing a book, can I talk to someone?' And just went and said, 'What would his life be like?'" [LEIGH]*

*"And in book two, I have a space walking scene, and so this woman at NASA hooked me up with an astronaut who'd just come down from a space station, and I was able to ask him some questions about space walking to sort of make that correct." [LINDSAY]*

Middle grade and picture book authors did not tend to approach experts and professionals. This could be explained by the greater need for more in-depth information in longer novels targeted at older readers.

One networking resource that several (7) participants cited was actual members of the target audience. In particular, two authors discussed school visits as a method of information gathering, particularly pertaining to discovering what resonates with younger readers. As can be seen in the quote below, this does not necessarily happen in conjunction with purposeful information seeking but rather unconscious and serendipitous information seeking.

*"I'll tell you what I do, what I find very useful. I do a lot of work visiting schools and talking with kids and doing workshops and session with kids. And hearing their ideas and their thoughts I'm sure does inspire me quite a lot. Maybe not directly. You sort of understand all their sort of things they say and what they respond to when I read stories and talk to them."*

*Whether consciously or sub-consciously, it all feeds into your brain, so that you know how things, when you're writing a story, how it would work with kids, just from the experience."* [WILSON]

However, five authors did utilise the target audience for more purposeful information seeking. For example, one participant also worked as a teacher and approached three of her students in order to gather information for a novel that centred around a football player.

*"I had three students. Two of them were in my Poetry Club. They were poets, and they were also football players. And they were very generous. I asked them a million dumb questions."* [OLIVIA]

Participants also spoke about consulting teenagers in regards to dialogue, music, and technology, in order to ensure the details accurately reflected the modern teenage experience.

*"I guess that's another primary source for dialogue. Even in contemporaries. I have an eighteen-year-old daughter and a twenty-two-year-old daughter, and my twenty-two-year-old daughter lives with a bunch of other twenty-somethings, so I'm also constantly checking the dialogue. Would you ever use this word? What would you think about this?"* [AMY]

Participants also mentioned other authors as networking sources for information. One author discussed organising a drink night with other children's book authors, in which they often talk about their projects and brainstorm solutions to problems they might be struggling with.

*"Yeah, you know, well I organise this, mostly drink night, in Brooklyn for authors and illustrators of kids' books. So, once a month we get together at a bar and we drink and talk and we chat about all sorts of stuff. And, as you would imagine, a lot of stuff that we talk about is our work. A lot of brainstorming happens. A lot of commiserating, you know. It's a weird business making kids' books, so we'd share horror stories and what not. But, of course,*

*at some point, we often get around to what we're working on or maybe a problem we're having or an illustration technique that we're struggling with or curious about." [FRED]*

Another participant mentioned becoming involved in local writers' groups as a way to source information and brainstorm solutions to problems.

*"I'm a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, and I also am a member of the local...so Indiana has a chapter, and then I have a local writers' group. And we meet once a month, and I definitely rely upon them." [CHELSIE]*

As a whole, the majority (33) of participants employed some element of networking. Young adult authors tended to approach professionals and experts more often than authors of fiction targeted toward younger readers, and in many cases, members of the target audience provided valuable information about the teenage experience.

#### **7.2.9.7 Personal Experiences**

An interesting theme that emerged from the data was the use of authors' own past personal experiences as a source of information and inspiration. In all but one case, participants who discussed this resource were authors of picture books.

*"Most of my books come from personal, very intimate, personal experiences. So, they all start with an emotional experience that I'm having. And then I may, you know, branch out and look at my experiences with my children, other children...you know sort of, my books tend to be about more universal emotional experience." [MILLIE]*

*"A lot of times I'll just be reminiscing about childhood, and I'll have an idea. My book, [Animal Kingdom], was based on my experiences as a kid bringing home wild animals to be pets, like frogs and turtles and stuff." [FRED]*

*"Family, that inspires me. My children get into my stories. They're in there. So, having children around inspires me, you know. I'm not sure about resources other than just life. Life's a resource, yeah. You draw from your own life and everything around you and write, is*

*the way I create stories.” [WILSON]*

However, a young adult author also shared a situation in which her own personal experience was used as an information source for her novel.

*“So, I grew up in this creepy little mountain town, and I knew I wanted to write a weird, creepy book, and I thought, what better place than a town just like the one I grew up in? So, that was drawing a lot on my own personal experience.” [SHELLEY]*

However, while personal experiences were not cited by many authors of fiction for middle grade and young adult fiction, Emily, a middle grade author, posited that most writers likely draw from past experiences, whether or not they are conscious of it at the time.

*“I think writers draw from all sorts of sources and things that have happened to them that might be meaningless at the time.” [EMILY]*

This viewpoint feeds back into the idea of unconscious information seeking, a method employed by many of the participants.

#### **7.2.9.8 Library Use**

There was much less discussion of library use by participants in comparison to the other sources mentioned above. However, eleven participants did mention libraries in relation to their search process. In two instances, library use was mentioned in conjunction with how the participant felt about libraries in general. One participant expressed negative feelings toward libraries and did not include it as an information source, as can be seen in the quote below.

*“I buy my books. The library’s kind of a pain in the butt now. They don’t have a lot of stuff.” [BYRON]*

On the other hand, another participant expressed pleasure with performing searches in libraries, which led to the participant using libraries more often in her searches,

suggesting that affect does play a role in search strategy:

*"I love doing real library research. It's fascinating. You find all kinds of amazing things." [HOLLY]*

When discussing library searches, participants seemed to approach it with a browsing strategy in mind rather than a structured one. However, this could have more to do with the nature of authors' searching styles in general rather than the specific use of libraries:

*"Maybe I'll go to the library, see a few books, see what they have to say, and then that'll help me get a little more, you know, narrow down what it is that I'm looking for." [FRED]*

*"The only time I can remember doing any research other than on the internet was...I think either for one of my Zeus stories, and I'm not sure if it's one of the published ones or not, I did go and get a book on Greek mythology from the library and sort of searched through it for inspiration as much as anything else." [ALFIE]*

Two authors highlighted the access issue of libraries, although in opposite ways. One author expressed frustration at the lack of access she encounters when she requires specialist information from a library:

*"The special collections library in like Salem, Massachusetts is not going to ship me a book to Los Angeles, or even worse are university libraries because they don't share with anybody and you can't check anything out unless you are an alumni or a student." [GRACE]*

Another author, however, had the ability to access these resources due to the nature of her primary job. Because she is able to access these resources, she uses them much more often and more thoroughly than any of the other authors included in this study, who do not have the same kind of ease of access:

*"I work in an academic library, at [Academic Library]. So, I used a lot of our books and databases and articles. I mean, I'm pretty lucky in that I have everything that [Academic*

*Library] has, and I know how to use it, which is also nice.” [SHELLEY]*

This suggests that authors might in fact use academic and specialist libraries more often if they were granted the access and had greater knowledge in how to use the resources available.

Another interesting approach to library use was stated by one of the UK participants in this study. Rather than solely using the library as an information resource, he combines his need for physical resources with his need for a space to work.

*“I go to the British Library, and I would get books out and would sit in the British Library. I work a lot at the British Library. It’s kind of my office. Yeah, don’t tell the people at the British Library that’s my office because they want me to always take out...they want me to always be reading rare manuscripts, and I’m not.” [NORMAN]*

These insights into how authors utilise libraries have potential implications on how libraries could construct better resource access as well as creative spaces where writers can complete their work, in order to encourage greater use of their resources. These implications are explored further in Chapters 8 and 9.

### **7.2.10 Eclecticism**

Based on the results demonstrated thus far, the participants of this study have shown aspects of Eclecticism, as discussed in Chapter 4. Eclecticism is “the combination of active, passive, and serendipitous information seeking to reveal new concepts and ideas” (Foster, 2004, p. 233), and it involves using a wide range of sources, often across a long period of time.

As shown above, participants use active searches, such as directed online searches for specific information, as well as more passive searches, such as browsing through a library. And finally, participants rely heavily on serendipity for inspiration and ideas.

For example, one author described the entire process of writing and developing one of her novels, the quotes of which are included below:

*"I was watching Casablanca, and I was like really fascinated by the idea of Casablanca, this city during World War II, because this sort of limbo spot where it didn't matter what status you had, and that it was, it sort of felt very isolated. You know, what's the word? Like, internal, a sort of internal, you know, city. Self-contained. I thought that was really interesting. Coupled with the fact that I thought the idea of the Vichy government and collaboration was interesting. So, I thought, well what if you put that in outer space?" [LINDSAY]*

Here, the author gets inspiration of the idea through a serendipitous encounter with information through watching a film. Her information search then follows through a series of wide range of sources and strategies, including courses, environmental sources, expert sources, written sources, and online sources, both active, passive, and serendipitous in nature:

*"I actually got a fellowship to this thing called Launchpad, which is a...I don't know if other people have talked to you about it, but it's a seven-day crash course in space science at the University of Wyoming for science fiction writers." [LINDSAY]*

*"I went to Houston, I got a private tour of the Johnson Space Center, and met a lovely woman who's the sort of wrangler for the astronauts, their PR person." [LINDSAY]*

*"You know, like, and it's completely random where, like I've never, I can never predict where an idea comes from. That's why I, you know, I always say to kids I'm never not working. I never know where an idea's going to come." [LINDSAY]*

*"With the space stuff, I've bought a lot of books or things that, you know. I Googled space travel, and I found that NASA had a free book that you could download on your Kindle called The Psychology of Space Travel. And so I downloaded that, and I read that. Even though it really didn't have anything to do with my particular book, you know, it was just sort of*

*interesting. You never know where that's going to lead. You know, for the next thing."* [LINDSAY]

This example highlights the theme of Eclecticism that emerged from the data. Authors approach the information seeking process in a dynamic way, utilising a diverse range of sources and incorporating both active and passive searching into their information behaviour.

### **7.2.11 Ease of Use**

Participants were asked to discuss the value of their chosen go-to resources, and authors focused on ease of use, particularly in regards to the internet. This viewpoint can be somewhat contributed to the environment in which a writer works. When a question arises as they are working on their laptop, they can do a quick search online without interrupting their work flow.

*"I just go ahead and start writing out a skeleton of the book and as questions come up in my mind, I pause, and I go onto the internet and I look for it."* [AMY]

*"Google and I were very intimate on that book. And I would write something, and I would need a word or a phrase or an image, and I would just stop typing and zip on over to Google, and try to find what I was looking for and then come back and put it back in there. So, that one was on-going throughout the entire book."* [CHRISTINA]

*"Because I work mostly at home, and I work straight on my computer, and it's already there. And it's so easy just to click onto the internet. It's right there."* [EMILY]

*"I mean, you know, that's the go-to, especially for a writer who is in front of a computer all the time writing. The internet is right there."* [GRACE]

Another participant noted how his search habits have changed over time, most notably due to how much easier it is to log onto the internet to find information rather than browse through stacks of books.



*“Yes, I still have at home a load of dusty, old books that I never use anymore that I bought as reference material. And I think of the mind-numbingly boring process of finding a particular image. How difficult it used to be and how relatively easy it is now. It is just a few clicks of the button, and you can usually find the information you need.” [HUDSON]*

In a similar vein, another participant stated that while he might be using a different searching strategy than he did in the past, he is still accessing the same sources, just in different ways, due to the ease of using the internet.

*“The internet definitely has made it easier. I do feel bad not using books as much as I used to. For a lot of the folklore, though, I still either buy a book or use a reference, so. The sources that I’m drawing from haven’t really changed, but the way that I’m accessing them has.” [EDISON]*

## **7.2.12 Problems Encountered**

Participants shared several issues that they encountered during their information seeking process. The most noted issue was that of time. Eight authors commented that they would prefer to perform more in-depth research but that they were unable to because of the time-consuming process it entailed.

*“Lack of time. If I didn’t teach full-time, I would probably be a much more careful and thorough researcher.” [OLIVIA]*

*“I would love, love, love to do more research surrounding my writing, but tight deadlines and a day job make that really tough.” [KATIE]*

One participant stated that he would even steer clear of a story idea that would require a large amount of information gathering because he was not at the point in his career where he could afford the time needed to research.

*“I think there probably have been times when I’ve had a bit of an idea for a story, but I don’t know enough about it, and you know, I can’t afford to set aside six months to research this*

*topic properly. And it would be great to get to the stage in my career where I felt I could do that.” [ALFIE]*

Participants commented on the issue of balancing the actual writing work with the information seeking process. Many stated the danger of spending too much time dedicated to research, as can be seen in the two quotes below.

*“The tricky balance is always going to be drafting and getting the actual writing time, and the research. Because it’s very easy to be like, ‘And now I’ll go into the land of research.’ And just spend hours just reading from Wikipedia article to Wikipedia article to Google, and just playing around reading all sorts of things that aren’t actually helping you. So, the balance of actual writing versus making sure that you’re factually correct and having the little things in order.” [ISABELLA]*

*“And I had to be careful if I was working on the story, and I went to check something, I had to be sure I didn’t get lost in research. And just go back to my story, you know. Because that’s easy to do.” [PERRY]*

Information overload was another issue mentioned. This issue was discussed in conjunction with research performed on the internet. In these cases, six participants felt there was too much information to wade through in order to find the details they were seeking.

*“Also, there’s certain kinds of things that are impossible to research on the internet just because of the other stuff that’s on the internet. Like, researching scuba-diving on the internet is impossible because you just cannot get past every dive boat for rent in Key West. So, you may just forget it. Don’t even try.” [EDMUND]*

*“I don’t find the web that helpful because there’s too much information.” [EDGAR]*

In contrast to this viewpoint, three participants found there was too little information available on certain topics. This was most often stated in regards to

information on historical places and events.

*“Just that the information isn’t out there, yes. I definitely...particularly in regards to what things look like in randomly obscure locations in 1876, and then I just kind of take creative license. But again, I’m searching in such a specific time period, and you know, specific locations, so that can be hard to find information on, certainly.” [MAY]*

One participant mentioned resource access as an issue. When performing research for one of her books, there were items in a library’s special collection that she could not access since she was not an alumni or student of the university. She stated the desire for digital access to these collections, especially in regards to libraries that are located in other states or countries.

*“I would love to have all books available in digital copies from libraries, especially stuff in special collections because, you know, they’re not going to ship. The special collections library in like Salem, Massachusetts is not going to ship me a book to Los Angeles, or even worse are university libraries because they don’t share with anybody and you can’t check anything out unless you are an alumni or a student.” [GRACE]*

Participants have also come into contact with conflicting information, a difficult problem encountered during the information seeking process. One author wished to research a psychological issue but found contradictory information both online and in the textbooks she read on the subject.

*“That’s about a child who has attachment disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder. And that attachment disorder is a hell of a thing to research because there’s not a lot of information about it. And what information there is, is wildly contradictory.” [LEIGH]*

One participant expressed frustration in the information seeking process after spending a considerable amount of time and effort on pinpointing the time period in which certain historical events occurred. In this instance, the experts he contacted in order to double check his dates ended up being the source of conflicting information.

*"I was so proud of myself, and I'd done this research... And then when I was bragging to another expert about this article [I read], I was trying to prove to him that I'd done my homework before I bothered you sir, and he was like, 'Oh that guy, he's an idiot, he's off by 200 years.' And then went off on his own tangent on why that article was wrong. And I was sort of like, like I'm done. Like I don't know what to do here. Like I spent so much time doing this, and you two experts are arguing with each other. And I'm just some guy, you know, in his house, trying to figure out what date to set this story." [BYRON]*

Another participant experienced a similar issue. In the end, he could not use any of the information he gathered from the experts he consulted and instead had to use his imagination in order to fulfil the needs of the story elements.

*"I was writing about an escape where someone was using a gem to escape by using it to scratch through an iron bar. And I needed to know...I emailed several gemologists to make sure that that was a feasible idea. Like, if these conditions were met, could you use this to do that. And I actually got varying feedback from the experts. Some were like, yeah, you could probably do that. And some were like, no, that wouldn't really work. So, I ended up just making it more of...I ended up using more of a fantasy twist to make my idea work around what I had to work around" [KENT]*

## **7.3 Quantitative Results**

This section will detail the results from the quantitative portion of the study, including the personality questionnaire and the cognitive styles questionnaire, as well as explore any possible correlations between the two sets of data.

### **7.3.1 Scale Reliability**

In order to determine the scale reliability of the personality and cognitive styles questionnaires, the researcher performed Cronbach's alpha on both sets of results. Because Cronbach's alpha should be conducted on each sub-scale separately, the BFI personality questionnaire was tested on its individual metrics. This resulted in the following scores: extraversion (.866), openness to experience (.695), agreeableness (.765), conscientiousness (.833), and neuroticism (.823), which indicated the results can be considered valid for this study.

Cronbach's alpha was also performed on the cognitive styles questionnaire, again on each of the individual metrics. This gave the following: deep (.619), strategic (.650), and surface (.681). These measures were comparable to the scores found in related studies (Heinström, 2006b; Speth et al., 2007; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011), which therefore suggested the results could be considered valid.

### **7.3.2 Personality Questionnaire Results**

The personality questionnaire gathered demographic data of the participants, including gender and country of residence, as well as target age group and literary sub-genre information.

#### **7.3.2.1 Gender**

Of the 110 personality questionnaire participants, 17 (15%) were male and 93 (85%) were female. The population contacted for this study reflected the gender breakdowns of children's and young adult literature as mentioned at the beginning

of this chapter, however, that did not translate into those authors who responded to the questionnaire. The gender split of the participants meant it would be difficult to draw any statistically significant relationship between gender and personality.

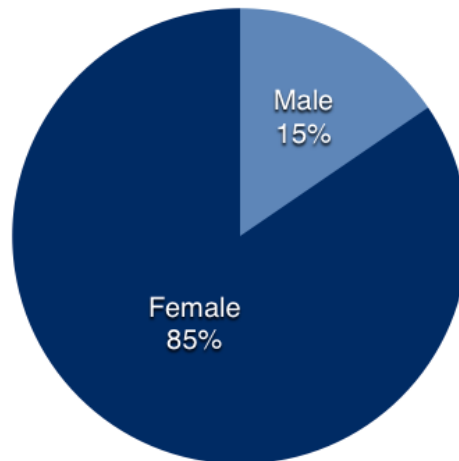


Figure 7.6 Gender of personality questionnaire participants

### 7.3.2.2 Country of Residence

Ninety-six (87%) of the personality questionnaire participants were residents of the United States while 14 (13%) were residents of the United Kingdom. Only authors from these two countries were approached for this particular study, and the large proportion of authors from the United States is a result of the researcher's own personal contacts in the American publishing industry.

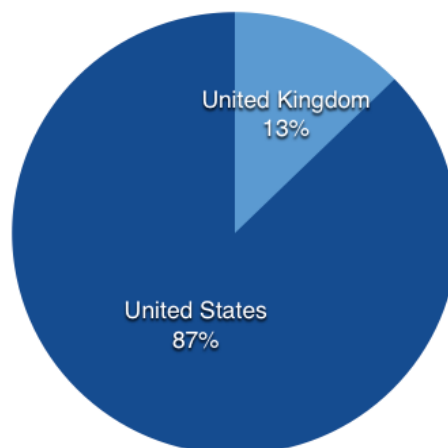


Figure 7.7 Country of residence of personality questionnaire participants

### 7.3.2.3 Target age group

Six (5%) of the personality questionnaire participants were authors of picture books, 11 (10%) were authors of middle grade novels, and 93 (85%) were authors of young adult novels.

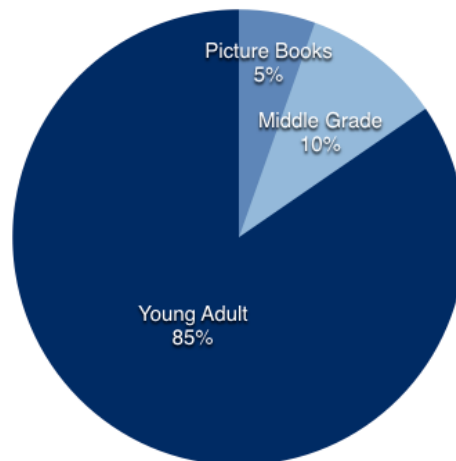


Figure 7.8 Target age group sub-genre of personality questionnaire participants

### 7.3.2.4 Literary sub-genre

Participants were spread across the identified sub-genres. Some authors wrote novels in more than one sub-genre and were labeled according to their most recent sub-genre. Six (5.5%) authors identified as writing in the adventure genre, 36 (33%) in contemporary, 5 (4.5%) in dystopian, 36 (33%) in fantasy, 5 (4.5%) in historical, 7 (6%) in horror, 9 (8%) in mystery / thriller, and 6 (5.5%) in science fiction. The spread of these sub-genres can be seen in Figure 7.8.

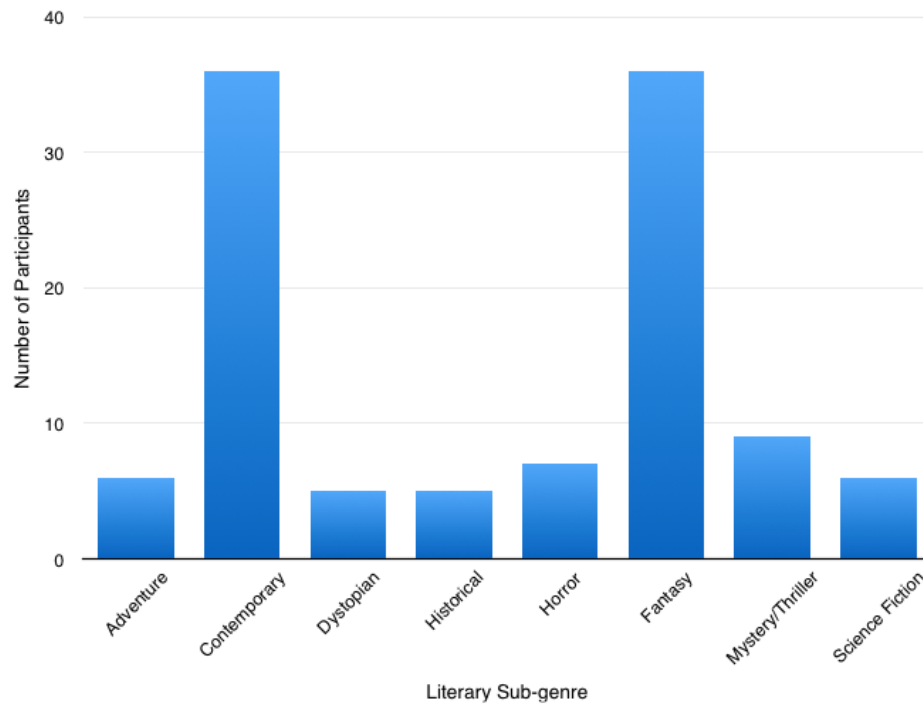


Figure 7.9 Literary sub-genre of personality questionnaire participants

### 7.3.2.5 Personality Scores

The mean personality scores were calculated and can be seen for each target age group in Table 7.1 below, with the standard deviation displayed in parentheses.

	Picture Books	Middle Grade	Young Adult	Total
<b>Extraversion</b>	23 (5.7)	23 (4.7)	<b>28 (6.9)</b>	27 (6.7)
<b>Agreeableness</b>	33 (4.9)	34 (4.5)	34 (5.7)	34 (5.5)
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	33 (4.9)	34 (9)	33 (6.5)	33 (6.6)
<b>Neuroticism</b>	25 (7.6)	26 (6.3)	25 (6.6)	25 (6.6)
<b>Openness</b>	43 (3.1)	43 (4.1)	43 (4.3)	43 (4.2)

Table 7.1 Mean scores and standard deviation for personality traits across target age groups

There were very slight differences in personality traits between target age groups. Young adult authors displayed a noticeably higher Extraversion score (shown in bold). This was then measured with an analysis of variance to reveal a significant difference ( $F=3.032$ ,  $p=.05$ ). Across target age groups, Extraversion was the only trait



to result in any significance.

The mean personality scores across literary sub-genres were then examined, as shown in Table 7.2. Only slight differences can be seen across the categories. Authors of historical fiction scored highest in Openness to experience while mystery / thriller authors scored highest in Conscientiousness, and authors of science fiction scored highest in Agreeableness, though none of these differences was deemed significant.

	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>Contemporary</b>	26 (6.7)	34 (5.6)	32 (6.1)	26 (7.1)	43 (4.1)
<b>Historical</b>	28 (6.3)	35 (5)	35 (8.7)	23 (5.4)	<b>46</b> (4.6)
<b>Mystery</b>	26 (7)	33 (5.3)	<b>36</b> (6.1)	23 (6.9)	43 (5.2)
<b>Sci-Fi</b>	25 (6.4)	<b>36</b> (4.1)	33 (4.5)	24 (5.9)	43 (5.6)
<b>Fantasy</b>	28 (7.3)	33 (6.3)	35 (6.6)	23 (6)	43 (3.6)
<b>Horror</b>	28 (8.1)	33 (4.4)	28 (6.8)	27 (6.7)	42 (3.8)
<b>Dystopian</b>	28 (6.5)	34 (5.2)	33 (7.1)	23 (9.7)	44 (7.4)
<b>Adventure</b>	25 (3.8)	32 (5.8)	32 (8.8)	<b>29</b> (3.1)	44 (4.2)
<b>Total</b>	27 (6.7)	34 (5.5)	33 (6.6)	25 (6.6)	43 (4.2)

Table 7.2 Mean scores and standard deviation of personality traits across literary sub-genres

Therefore, the researcher chose to look at the personality traits of this group as a whole. They were then compared against the norms found in Srivastava, John, Gosling & Potter (2003). In that study, a total of 132,515 participants completed the BFI questionnaire for the Gosling-Potter Internet Personality Project. The participants were between the ages of 21 and 60 and provided a reasonable base for the personality norms of the general population (Srivastava et al., 2003). As part of the study, the researchers developed a POMP score for each sub-scale by subtracting the average of each BFI metric by 1 and then multiplying by 25. In order to fully compare the results of this study to the norms provided by the Gosling-Potter study, the researcher transformed the raw BFI scores into the corresponding POMP score.

A t-test was then performed to compare the mean POMP score of each BFI personality metric to the norms. The results were statistically significant, showing that authors have a higher Openness to experience (M=83, SD=10.98) than the general population (M=74.5, SD=16.4),  $p < .0001$ . There were no significant differences found for the other BFI personality metrics.

### 7.3.3 Cognitive Styles Questionnaire Results

The full 38 interview participants were invited to complete the cognitive styles questionnaire, and 29 agreed to participate, yielding a response rate of 76%. The spread of the target age groups and literary genres are displayed in Tables 7.3 and 7.4 below.

Target age group	Number of participants	Percentage
Picture books	5	17%
Middle grade	3	10.5%
Young adult	21	72.5%

Table 7.3 Target age group sub-genres of cognitive styles participants

Literary sub-genre	Number of participants	Percentage
Adventure	2	7%
Contemporary	5	17%
Dystopian	2	7%
Historical	1	3.5%
Horror	3	10.5%
Fantasy	9	31%
Mystery/Thriller	5	17%
Science Fiction	2	7%

Table 7.4 Literary sub-genres of cognitive styles participants

Each participant was assigned a cognitive styles profile based on the results of the questionnaire. These profiles included Deep, Strategic, Surface, Mixed (a combination of deep and strategic), and All-rounder (a combination of deep, strategic, and surface). These two additional terms (Mixed and All-rounder)

originated in the study by Stokes and Urquhart (2010) that focused on the information behaviour, learning styles, and personality of nursing students. More information on this study can be found in Chapter 5.

The total number of each profile type per target age group is shown in Table 7.5. The largest percentage of authors showed a mixed approach with 12 (41%) out of 29 participants. There were 10 (35%) participants who scored a deep approach, 4 (14%) a strategic approach, and 3 (10%) an all-rounder approach. No participants scored a surface approach.

	<b>Picture Books</b>	<b>Middle Grade</b>	<b>Young Adult</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Deep</b>	2	1	7	10
<b>Strategic</b>	0	1	3	4
<b>Mixed</b>	2	1	9	12
<b>All-rounder</b>	1	0	2	3
<b>Total</b>	5	3	21	29

Table 7.5 Cognitive styles profile totals per target age group

Young adult authors had a tendency to display either a deep or mixed approach while picture book and middle grade authors were spread fairly evenly across the styles. Zero picture book authors displayed a strategic approach while zero middle grade authors displayed an all-rounder approach. However, there were so few participants in these categories that it is difficult to make any significant assumptions based on these results.

Mean scores of each cognitive style metric were also calculated and examined, as displayed in Tables 7.6 and 7.7. Based on an analysis of variance, there were no significant differences in these scores across target age groups or literary sub-genres.

	<b>Deep</b>	<b>Surface</b>	<b>Strategic</b>
<b>Contemporary</b>	25 (2.7)	12 (2.1)	23 (2.7)
<b>Historical</b>	<b>29</b> (0)	8 (0)	26 (0)
<b>Mystery</b>	24 (5)	12 (5.7)	23 (4.9)
<b>Science Fiction</b>	25 (0)	<b>16</b> (5.7)	19 (2.1)
<b>Fantasy</b>	25 (2.5)	13 (4.5)	23 (5.3)
<b>Horror</b>	24 (2.7)	13 (5.8)	20 (5.6)
<b>Dystopian</b>	25 (6.4)	9 (3.5)	<b>27</b> (0.7)
<b>Adventure</b>	25 (6.4)	14 (7.8)	19 (5.7)
<b>Total</b>	25 (3.1)	13 (4.5)	22 (4.5)

Table 7.6 Mean scores and standard deviation of cognitive styles across literary sub-genres

As can be seen above, the differences in mean scores between literary sub-genres are minor in most cases. Authors of historical fiction showed the deepest approach while authors of dystopian fiction showed the most strategic approach. However, these results can not be deemed significant.

	<b>Deep</b>	<b>Surface</b>	<b>Strategic</b>
<b>Picture Books</b>	26 (2.2)	12 (4.8)	23 (6.1)
<b>Middle Grade</b>	21 (5.1)	10 (3.8)	23 (6.7)
<b>Young Adult</b>	25 (2.8)	13 (4.6)	22 (4.0)

Table 7.7 Mean scores and standard deviation of cognitive styles across target age group

An analysis of variance showed a difference in deep approach in relationship to target age group, but it was not deemed significant ( $F=2.5$ ,  $p=.106$ ). When comparing the means, it can be seen that middle grade authors scored lowest on the deep approach scale, as well as on the surface approach scale. However, in all three target age groups, participants were most likely to employ either a deep or strategic approach.

The highest score for each metric was 30 points while the lowest was 6 points, which revealed interesting results for the group as a whole. Mean scores showed that this particular group demonstrated many more aspects of deep and strategic approaches (mean scores of 25 and 22 respectively) than a surface approach (mean score of 13).

The researcher was also interested in determining whether there were any variances between gender and country of residence. An initial analysis of variance showed that there were no significant differences in cognitive styles between countries. However, it did show a significant difference in deep approach scores between genders ( $F=7.12, p=.013$ ). A comparison of the means then followed, as shown in Table 7.8 below.

	<b>Deep</b>	<b>Surface</b>	<b>Strategic</b>
<b>Male</b>	23 (3.6)	12 (4.7)	22 (4.8)
<b>Female</b>	26 (2.4)	13 (4.5)	23 (4.5)

Table 7.8 Mean scores and standard deviation of cognitive styles across gender

As can be seen above, mean scores for surface and strategic approaches were very similar across genders. However, females scored higher on deep approach elements than males.

Mean scores of the individual scoring elements of the questionnaire were calculated and examined in order to further investigate the behaviours of the group as a whole. The deep approach elements included Seeking Meaning, Relating Ideas, and Use of Evidence. The strategic elements included Time Management, Achieving, and Organising. The surface approach elements included Unrelated Memorising, Lack of Purpose, and Fear of Failure. A more detailed discussion of these individual elements was included in Chapter 5.

The mean scores and standard deviation of each of the deep approach elements was calculated and examined first. The maximum possible score for each of these

elements was 10 while the minimum possible score was 1.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Maximum Score Possible</b>	<b>Mean Results</b>
Seeking Meaning	10	8.07 (1.4)
Relating Ideas	10	8.83 (1.2)
Use of Evidence	10	7.72 (1.8)

Table 7.9 Mean scores and standard deviation of deep approach elements for all participants

As can be seen by the results, participants scored relatively high for all deep approach elements. The highest scoring item was Relating Ideas, followed closely by Seeking Meaning. This suggests that authors tend to piece together various ideas and delve into the meaning behind information when performing information seeking activities.

Mean scores and standard deviation of the strategic approach elements were then examined. Below, table 7.10 displays these results, as well as the maximum possible score for each metric.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Maximum Score Possible</b>	<b>Mean Results</b>
Time Management	15	10.93 (2.7)
Achieving	10	8.03 (1.4)
Organised	5	3.34 (1.4)

Table 7.10 Mean scores and standard deviation of strategic approach elements for all participants

Achieving was the highest scoring item (relative to the maximum possible score) under the strategic approach umbrella. This was followed by a high mean score for Time Management and an average mean score for Organised. This suggests that authors have a strong desire to succeed, good time management skills, and average organisational skills.

Element	Maximum Score Possible	Mean Results
Unrelated Memorising	15	6.17 (2.7)
Lack of Purpose	5	1.14 (0.4)
Fear of Failure	10	5.03 (2.5)

Table 7.11 Mean scores and standard deviation of surface approach elements for all participants

The mean scores and standard deviation for each of the surface approach elements can be seen in Table 7.11, along with the maximum score possible for each metric. Across the entire questionnaire, these elements were the lowest scoring items. Fear of Failure was the highest scoring surface approach element with a mean of 5.03 out of 10 possible points. Unrelated Memorising had a relatively low score of 6.17 out of a possible 10 while Lack of Purpose was a mere 1.14 out of 5 (with a lowest possible score of 1). These results suggest that authors may experience fear of failure to some degree, but most authors do not suffer from unrelated memorising issues. In addition, there is very little lack of purpose, if any at all, to be found in these authors.

### 7.3.4 Personality and Cognitive Styles

The results from the personality and cognitive styles questionnaires were combined and analysed for the 29 participants who completed both tests. From this, a correlation analysis of the raw scores showed that some personality traits could be linked to certain cognitive styles. These are shown as a summary in Table 7.12. A plus sign indicates a positive correlation while a minus sign indicates a negative correlation.

	Deep	Surface	Strategic
<b>Extraversion</b>			
<b>Conscientiousness</b>			+
<b>Agreeableness</b>			
<b>Neuroticism</b>		+	-
<b>Openness to experience</b>	+	+	

Table 7.12 Summary of correlations between personality traits and cognitive styles

Openness to experience was positively linked to both a deep approach ( $r=.610$ ,  $p=.0001$ ), as well as a surface approach ( $r=.377$ ,  $p=.044$ ). Neuroticism was positively linked to a surface approach ( $r=.385$ ,  $p=.039$ ) and negatively linked to a strategic approach ( $r=-0.482$ ,  $p=.008$ ). Conscientiousness was positively linked to a strategic approach ( $r=.375$ ,  $p=.045$ ) while Extraversion and Agreeableness did not show any significant correlations to cognitive styles.

In order to investigate the link between Openness to experience and a surface approach more fully, the scores of Openness to experience and Neuroticism were combined and were correlated with the cognitive style profiles. The results showed a significant correlation ( $r=.578$ ,  $p=.001$ ), suggesting that it is the combination of these two traits that links to a surface approach, rather than Openness to experience alone.

Mean scores of the personality traits were then calculated for each cognitive styles profile, as shown in Table 7.13. Highest scores are highlighted in bold while lowest scores are shown in italics. An analysis of variance showed that there was a significant difference between cognitive styles and Openness to experience ( $F=5.018$ ,  $p=.007$ ) as well as Neuroticism ( $F=2.796$ ,  $p=.041$ ) which further confirms the results of the raw data scores.



	<b>E</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Deep</b>	27 (8.5)	43 (3.8)	26 (6.4)	32 (6.5)	35 (6.3)
<b>Strategic</b>	<b>32</b> (7.6)	38 (1.9)	21 (5.4)	<b>36</b> (8.2)	31 (3.7)
<b>Mixed</b>	28 (4.8)	44 (3.3)	21 (5.2)	34 (3.6)	34 (3.3)
<b>All-rounder</b>	29 (4.6)	<b>46</b> (1.2)	<b>28</b> (3.2)	29 (8.2)	<b>37</b> (6.1)
<b>Total</b>	28 (6.5)	43 (3.8)	24 (6.1)	33 (5.9)	34 (4.1)

Table 7.13 Mean scores and standard deviation of personality traits across cognitive styles

Participants with a deep approach scored the lowest in Extraversion. They also scored high in Agreeableness, average in Neuroticism and Conscientiousness, and high in Openness to experience, as all groups did.

Those with a strategic approach scored the highest in Extraversion and Conscientiousness, lowest in Agreeableness and Openness to experience, as well as lowest in Neuroticism in conjunction with those participants with a mixed approach (combination of strategic and deep). Those with a mixed approach scored high in Conscientiousness, Openness to experience, and Agreeableness, as well as average in Extraversion.

All-rounders scored highest in Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Openness to experience. They also scored the lowest in Conscientiousness and average in Extraversion.

The researcher then further examined the results from the cognitive styles questionnaire, in order to identify any potential correlations between the individual elements for each cognitive style metric and each personality trait. The results of the correlation data can be seen as a summary in Table 7.14. Only those elements that demonstrated a significant correlation have been displayed.

	<b>E</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Unrelated Memorising</b>	+		+		
<b>Lack of Purpose</b>	-				
<b>Relating Ideas</b>		+			+
<b>Use of Evidence</b>		+			
<b>Fear of Failure</b>		+			
<b>Time Management</b>			-	+	
<b>Organised</b>			-		

Table 7.14 Summary of correlations between personality traits and cognitive style elements

Extraversion was positively linked to unrelated memorising ( $r=.431, p=.020$ ) and negatively linked to lack of purpose ( $r=-.407, p=.028$ ). Openness to experience was positively linked to relating ideas ( $r=.663, p<.0005$ ), use of evidence ( $r=.485, p=.008$ ), and fear of failure ( $r=.379, p=.042$ ).

Neuroticism was positively linked to unrelated memorising ( $r=.445, p=.016$ ), negatively linked to time management ( $r=-.399, p=.032$ ), and negatively linked to organised ( $r=-.413, p=.026$ ). Conscientiousness was positively linked to time management ( $r=.402, p=.031$ ). Agreeableness was positively linked to relating ideas ( $r=.377, p=.022$ ).

As the combination of Openness to experience and Neuroticism was examined in the previous section, it was also examined here. These two traits combined positively linked to Fear of Failure ( $r=.438, p=.018$ ) and Unrelated Memorising ( $r=.581, p=.001$ ).

## **7.4 Summary**

This chapter has explored the information behaviour, personality traits, and cognitive styles of authors of children's and young adult literature by detailing the results of the qualitative interviews and the quantitative questionnaires conducted during this study. Chapter 8 will further discuss these results, situated within the context of the current body of literature, and present an information profile for this particular group of professionals.

# 8. DISCUSSION

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## 8.1 Introduction

The following discussion further examines the results presented in Chapter 7 and explores them within the current body of literature that was presented in Chapters 4 and 5. The first section discusses the results of the qualitative elements in regards to the major themes that emerged during the data analysis. The second section discusses the results from the quantitative analysis, including the personality traits, the cognitive styles, and the combination of the two. Finally, the quantitative and qualitative results will be examined in relation to each other in order to present an information profile of authors of children's and young adult literature.

## 8.2 Qualitative Element

The qualitative interviews illuminated the similarities and differences in authors' information behaviour in relation to their writing projects, addressing the following research questions:

- How do authors of children's and young adult fiction seek and obtain information relating to their creative works?
- What is the relationship between genre differences, target age groups and information seeking behaviour?
- What information resources do these authors value and why?
- Does serendipity play a role in the generation and cultivation of creative ideas?

### 8.2.1 Writing Strategy

The researcher felt that understanding participants' writing strategies would be important in placing their information behaviour within the appropriate context of

their work. In the majority of cases for middle grade and young adult novelists, participants spend a significant amount of time up front planning a detailed outline of the events that will occur in the story, as well as developing character profiles, researching setting details, and developing background information. These authors then work through smaller plot issues as they write, sometimes tweaking the outline, and then returning to the story for editing in drafts two and beyond in order to make the necessary changes for issues that crop up during the process of writing the first draft. These authors label themselves *plotters*.

A preparation-driven approach to the writing process resembles some of the stages in the original Wallas Model of Creativity (1926), in which the creative individual begins the process with a Preparation stage. Following this stage, the process includes the Incubation stage (working through the problem sub-consciously), and the Illumination stage at which point there is a flash of insight and realisation (Wallas, 1926) about the project. Sudden ‘flashes’ within the writing were described by many of the authors interviewed, as a way of discovering the solution to a problem or a new aspect of the story that needed to be added to the original idea.

However, despite the links to the Wallas Model, the stages of their process do not seem quite so linear as that. While they do spend some preparation time up front, they continue to refer back to their original plan, make changes, and seek new ideas all throughout the process. Therefore, their process better matches a flexible creative model, in which “creative activity contains simultaneity, meaning multiple activities that occur together as independent and ultimately inseparable elements” (Cawelti et al., 1992, p. 83). The stages of the writing process in this case could be better represented by a non-linear model shown below as Figure 8.1

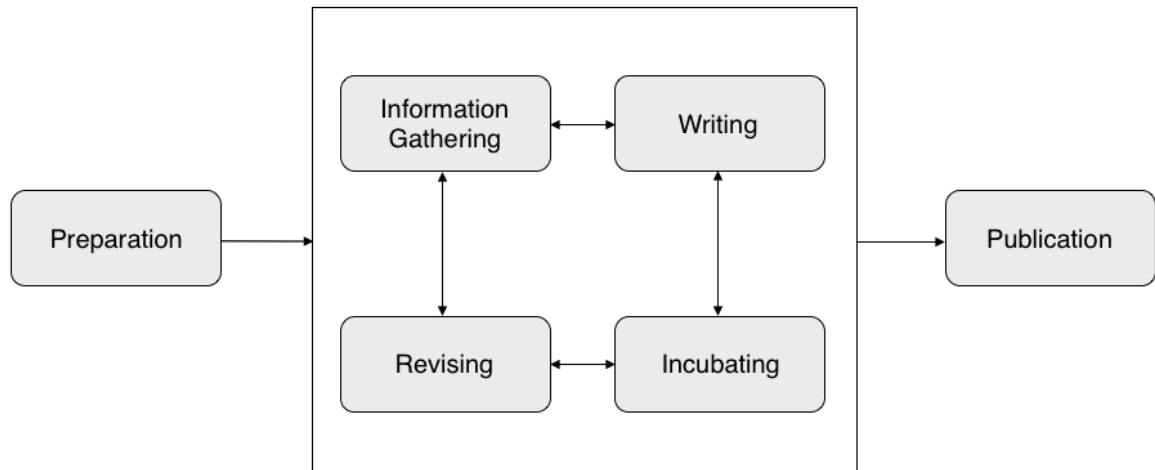


Figure 8.1 The Non-Linear Writing Process

This non-linear writing process has much in common with Lee et al.'s (2007) revised Creative Information Seeking Model, discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Each of these models demonstrate stages through which the information seeker (or writer) proceeds, though the order in which these stages are undertaken is non-linear with any number of looping iterations. The aspects of *preparation* and *incubation* are also present in both models, though the writer may dip in or out of each of these steps at any point in time, and some of these tasks can occur simultaneously.

There is a solid end point to a writer's process (publication), which highlights a difference between this illustration of a writer's behaviour and Foster's (2004) Non-Linear Model. As Foster (2004) suggest, information seekers have various starting and ending points, but in the case of a writer's strategy, publication is a universal end point to both the writing and the information seeking, according to that particular project.

This also reflects the findings of Leckie et al. (1996), who stated that "any of the components of the model can occur simultaneously, thus representing the true complexity of a professional's life" (Leckie et al., 1996, p. 180). Leckie et al. (1996) also highlighted the relationship of work roles and tasks to information behaviour. In that context, a writer's tasks would include preparing, writing, revising,

incubating, and publishing. These tasks influence what information is needed, how the information is obtained, and even how it is then used (Leckie et al., 1996). Once the information seeking has taken place, the *outcome* is either publication (when the need has been satisfied) or the writer proceeds through the creative process once again in any number of additional iterations (when the need has not yet been satisfied).

Contrasting these findings, not all authors in this study consider themselves to be plotters. Some match a profile that they themselves call *pantsers*. This refers to writing a book without an outline, by “the seat of your pants”. In most cases, these are authors of picture books or authors who are newer to the writing profession. In general, many authors stated that they started out as *pantsers* but have changed their process over the course of their career to more of a detailed plotting approach. Sometimes this change had to do with the aspect of having deadlines or the need for fewer rounds of revision before sending the book to their editor. Other times, authors stated that the more experience they had writing, the more important outlines had become.

Despite these differences in strategy, the writing model presented above still applies to the more flexible writers. They still engage in preparation activities, just not to the same extent as the more structured writers. These findings have implications on the search strategy of authors, as an ongoing non-linear writing strategy suggests that the search strategy would have similar characteristics. If writers are continuously referencing outside information while writing their novels, their search strategy may reflect that as well.

### **8.2.2 Search Strategy**

When discussing the search strategy of authors, responses did vary. However, there were several similarities that can be highlighted for this group as a whole.

While various methods are employed to find the information needed for their works, in general, authors utilise a non-linear process for their search strategy, which does reflect their writing strategy as expected. Some authors perform a large amount of in-depth information seeking at the beginning of the process, but in most cases, writers appear to seek information on an ongoing basis, the completion of which only occurs once the book has been published.

Authors often pause in their work to perform quick searches online, seeking a word or a small fact to place within the story, before going back to the writing. Sometimes, authors will write in placeholders to prevent an interruption in the flow of the writing, in order to go seek the information once the draft has been completed, for incorporation in the second or third draft of the story. These findings suggest that information seeking is an essential part of the larger writing process as a whole, one that is ongoing, non-linear, and is affected by the revisions needed, the plot questions, and the number of years spent in the industry.

Because of this, the information seeking strategy of authors of children's and young adult literature reflects much of what was found in the literature regarding the process for many other user groups. It confirms the viewpoint that information behaviour is "analogous to an information seeker holding a palette of information behaviour opportunities, with the whole palette available at any given moment" (Foster, 2004, p. 235). In addition, it follows the approach given in the Ellis (1989) model in which any of the information seeking stages could be undertaken in varying sequences.

The revised version of the Creative Information Seeking Model developed by Lee et al. (2007) also portrays these stages as a non-linear process, highlighting the idea that the more creative the task, the more iterative the process would become. In this model, Lee et al. (2007) also posits that years of experience affects the information seeking process, finding that the more experienced the individual, the more in-depth



the search. The results of this study confirmed the nature of experience in regards to information seeking, as the authors with more published works tend to have more in-depth search behaviour.

### 8.2.3 Amount of Information

The amount of information required for a writing project varies based on individual preferences. Some of these preferences can be traced back to genre, as well as intrinsic and extrinsic variables. Authors of picture books seem to require less information than authors of young adult novels. Authors of middle grade novels fall somewhere in the middle.

A diagram of the relationship between 'need for information' and target age group has been illustrated as Figure 8.2 below.

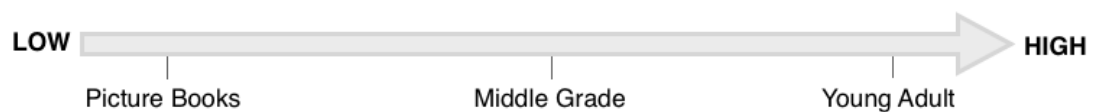


Figure 8.2 The relationship between the need for information and target age group

Also of note, science fiction and historical writers require more information than authors of fantasy, mysteries, and contemporary. This lower need for information by fantasy and contemporary writers is not unexpected. Contemporary authors are writing grounded novels set in present-day situations and are much more focused on emotional truths than factual information, and fantasy authors are creating a magical world from their own imagination.

Surprisingly, horror writers show a tendency to gather large amounts of information, much more so than authors of dystopian and adventure novels. Some of this could be explained by the authors interviewed for the study. In all cases, horror was not the only literary sub-genre they wrote, and two had written historical novels in the past. The previous need for more information when writing historical fiction may have influenced their current search strategies.

A diagram of the relationship between 'need for information' and literature genre has been illustrated as Figure 8.3 below.

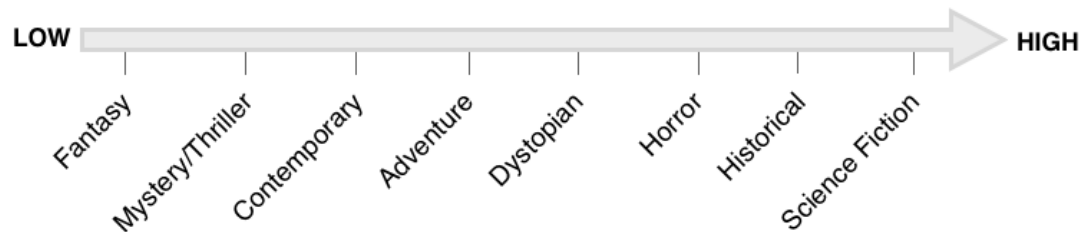


Figure 8.3 The relationship between the need for information and literary genre

The relationship between genre and need for information confirms Zach's (2005) findings on the 'stopping criteria' during a search, referencing how an individual determines that enough information has been obtained. Different genres reflect different levels of complexity due to the subject matter, and books targeted toward older readers also require more complex information. Therefore, the amount of information required when writing a novel in each these genres reflects a higher level of complexity. In addition, writers who did not seek a large amount of information often cited '*it's fiction*' as a reason for their approach, suggesting they viewed their work as less complex than other types of work. They found the amount of information they perceived as sufficient rather than perfect based on this lack of topic complexity, reflecting Simon's (1971) satisficing principles.

The authors who did tend toward gathering larger amounts of information referred to this process as *immersion*, seeking a rich variety of sources to get an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of the topic. This type of immersion and need for a large number of sources has been shown in creative scientists (Taylor & Barron, 1963; DeCiantis, 1987; Kasperson, 1978a, 1978b), which suggests that creative individuals who approach their writing projects more analytically are more likely to seek out this strategy toward information gathering.

## 8.2.4 Accuracy

Participants views on accuracy of information are varied, although there is some agreement on certain aspects of this theme. In general, authors share a viewpoint that accuracy is most important when viewed from within the confines of the story. For example, a detail may not be accurate in “the real world” but as long as it maintains itself throughout the story, then it can be considered accurate. This viewpoint was framed by regarding these stories as fiction, many participants claiming that there are some liberties that can be taken in fiction, intersecting imagination with truth.

As with the ‘need for information’ the level of accuracy required of the information sources seems to differ across genres. Authors of historical fiction, science fiction, and dystopian seem more concerned with the accuracy of the details they place in their stories. When framing a story around an event from the past or around an emerging piece of technology, authors prefer to provide the readers with as true a reading of these aspects as possible and feel satisfied with the process when they are able to do so. However, there is still room to weave fact with fiction. These results reflect the statements from Manning (2016) and Collingwood (1946) as discussed in Chapter 2.

However, authors of contemporary fiction do focus on the importance of accuracy to some degree, especially in relation to issues of psychology and emotions. They feel it is most important to maintain *audience integrity*, by keeping the feelings and thoughts relating to life as a young person true to actual experience. Authors do receive emails from their readers, commenting both positively and negatively about the reading experience, often in terms of the research they have undertaken and the details they have placed within the story. More emphasis is placed on this element of accuracy than on the accuracy of factual information, such as street names or scientific data.

These views on accuracy reflect Buckland's (1983) contexts of relevance: knowledge, experience, and situation. Authors are more likely to view certain information, such as unconfirmed details found on a Wikipedia article, as accurate enough, because they are writing fiction. If the information fits within the confines of the story, then they are satisfied the information is relevant for their purposes and fulfils both topical and affective relevance, according to Cosijn and Ingwersen (2000).

### **8.2.5 Serendipity**

While authors perform purposeful searches in relation to their work on a regular basis, serendipity plays as much as, if not more, of a role in their information seeking process. Authors find the serendipitous experience to be valuable in their writing process, some participants even stating that it's the only way to develop ideas. Writers of children's and young adult fiction can therefore be considered super-encounterers (Erdelez, 1997, 1999, 2004, 2005) due to their frequency of information encountering, though they were not hesitant to admit so.

These viewpoints reflect the literature in regards to studies on the information behaviour of other types of artists. Serendipitous browsing is one of the main ways in which creative individuals find information and is considered highly valuable (Toyne, 1977; Pacey, 1982; Day & McDowell, 1985; Ferguson, 1986; Hemmig, 2009; Littrell, 2001; Mason & Robinson, 2011; LeClerc, 2010). In addition, serendipity often plays a supporting role in creativity (Bawden & Robinson, 2011; Eaglestone et al., 2007; Foster & Ford, 2003) and writing fiction involves a great deal of creative thinking.

For authors, serendipity occurs most often during the idea generation stage and often when seeking 'inspiration' for their projects, which reflects Cobbedick's (1996) findings on the positive relationship between serendipity and artistic inspiration. Additionally, authors find it important to encourage serendipitous information retrieval by keeping a 'prepared and open mind', a viewpoint that is reminiscent of

the scientific approach to creativity (Roberts, 1989).

Finally, authors often encounter serendipitous information when out exploring the world, whether on a walk in Manhattan, sitting on the beach, or stepping outside into their own garden. These experiences reflect the studies on information encountering that show that this type of information retrieval can happen at any time, even when individuals are “performing some routine activity, e.g., waiting at a bus stop or doing laundry, and not consciously involved in looking for information” (Erdelez, 1999, p. 26). Often, these routine tasks are completed when an author is subconsciously working through an idea so that when serendipity occurs, it is due to “insight coupled with unplanned events” (Fine & Deegan, 1996, p. 9).

There is much focus in these instances on the physically moving into a new space in order to facilitate chance encounters. This ties in with authors’ use of environmental sources and browsing for sensory details, such as sight, smell, and sound. The type of information authors often need - *what does a city street smell like?* - is different to the type of information other professionals tend to seek. Therefore, the actual act of moving into a new and different place reflects these different needs. Their experiences of places and situations help shape their work, so they feel the need to get out and explore, which is again highlighted by their use of their own personal experiences as an information source, as discussed further below.

### **8.2.6 Unconscious Information Seeking**

Unconscious and subconscious information seeking was present in the group being studied. While this aspect of information seeking relates to serendipity in a way, there are aspects that make it unique in its influence. As stated above, authors are often subconsciously working through ideas for their novels, sometimes without their realisation, and during this phase, they often discover an information need they were unaware of having until they encountered the information to fulfil that need. Taylor (1968) termed this a visceral need, a need which is situated within the

subconscious or unconscious mind. Tapping into the need often provides the author with insight, inspiration, and new ideas related to the project, findings that reflect those found in Harmon and Ballesteros's (1997) study into unconscious cognition. Harmon and Ballesteros (1997) also found that information can be unconsciously known within an individual's mind, a phenomenon that is experienced by the participants of this study as they absorb the world around them and file away the information for later use, which they then discover unexpectedly when the need presents itself.

This presents an interesting distinction between serendipity and unconscious information seeking. Rather than viewing these accidental discoveries under one umbrella term, serendipity in this instance refers to the process of encountering useful information while unconscious cognition includes the process of realising the information has already been discovered some time ago and opening the mind to this hidden knowledge. Both of these elements of information behaviour are essential to authors' creative process, but they hold very different characteristics and yield different results.

### **8.2.7 Affect**

Self efficacy is "concerned with judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (Bandura, 1982, p.122), and the results of this study demonstrated several instances of this particular form of affect in authors. Authors with a high level of self efficacy have a tendency to perform more in-depth and more academic type searches than those authors who do not have the knowledge or the confidence to do so. Authors with a high degree of self-efficacy seek out historical archives and complex databases and feel more strongly about the accuracy of their information, which reflects the literature that presents the notion that self-efficacy has an effect on information behaviour (Wilson, 1999; Barling & Beattie, 1983; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011). Self-efficacy and enjoyment also

demonstrated a positive relationship, suggesting that those authors with more confidence tend to not only seek more information but they also enjoy the process more.

Furthermore, enjoyment in the process itself appears to have an influence on authors' information behaviour. The participants who do not enjoy the process and would rather focus on the writing aspect of their project tend to perform fewer searches and seek fewer sources. On the other hand, the authors who find the process enjoyable and rewarding are more likely to dive into the research. Attitude has been linked to search engagement, strategy, search efficiency, and depth of retrieved documents (Ford, 1986; Ford et al., 2001).

Some authors also expressed negative feelings toward information gathering due to past experiences. These feelings feed into their current situation, and they are less likely to perform in-depth searches for information. In several cases, authors put a degree of effort into their research, but found it to be unrewarding due to various conflicts that arose, which led to feelings of dissatisfaction about the search process. Some past experiences also involved information anxiety and frustration about not being able to find the sources or information they needed, and they did not have the motivation to do so again. Information anxiety has been shown to affect an individual's information behaviour (Wurman, 2001), as has motivation (Foster et al., 2008), and emotions and feelings about the search process (Kuhlthau, 1991).

In conclusion, attitudes, motivation, information anxiety, confidence, and self-efficacy are all demonstrated to have a relationship with an author's approach to the information seeking process.

### **8.2.8 Information Sources**

The internet is, by and large, the most important and most often used information source for the participants of this study. There were various internet sources named,

the most prominent being Google. In fact, when participants were asked to name their “go-to” resource, almost all participants stated the search engine. Other studies on the information behaviour of artists show that the Internet was an essential component of the search process (Van Zijl & Gericke, 1998; Visick et al, 2006).

Networking was also demonstrated to be an important component of authors’ information seeking behaviour. In most cases, authors utilise at least some amount of connecting with others in order to expand their knowledge base on a particular subject related to their works in progress. This includes speaking to friends, colleagues, experts in the field, and members of the target audience. A combination of internet and networking sources was also shown to be used, in the incorporation of social media websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr into the search strategy. This social approach to information gathering has also been found in other types of artists (Hemmig, 2009; Toyne, 1975; Dane, 1987; Cobbledick, 1996; Oddos, 1998; Visick et al., 2006), as well as writers in particular (Russell, 1995; Deroshers & Pecoskie, 2014).

Physical sources of information, such as books and newspapers, are used by some authors, but much less often than digital and networking sources. Some participants who used physical sources in the past no longer use them due to the proliferation of the internet and other newer technologies. Those who do still use physical sources do so because of the greater depth of information available and the ability to rely on the accuracy presented in the texts. In some cases, authors use physical sources as a way to study the market and read works written by other authors in the industry. Studies into other artistic groups have also shown that creative professionals seek information about the market and other artists (Toyne, 1975; Cobbledick, 1996; Hemmig, 2009; Medaille, 2010).

Authors find images and videos to be valuable sources of information and inspiration for their works, findings that are consistent with most of the current



literature on artistic information seeking behaviour (Medaille, 2010; Toyne, 1975; Pacey, 1982; Day & McDowell, 1985; Layne, 1994; Cobbledick, 1996). However, despite the similarities found between the use of images by authors and the use of images by artists, they are likely not used in the same manner. Visual artists are referencing other artwork similar to that which they are creating. Authors, on the other hand, are seeking images of people, places, and things to serve as inspiration and reference points for the actual details and descriptions they are writing into their stories.

One source of information to note is the use of the surrounding environment, such as gardens, the beach, subway stops, and other various locations. As found in other studies (Hemmig, 2009; Cowan, 2004), artistic individuals use the world around them for inspirational information for their projects. In the case of authors, they use the environment for even more factual details, using first-hand experiences of a place to inform the setting details they put into their stories. From this, they create rich descriptions involving sensory details they found during their environmental browsing, such as smells, sights, and sounds.

Entertainment is seen as a source of information to this particular group of creative professionals. Watching movies, television shows, reading books, or listening to music are all seen to aide in the writing process. Many authors derive inspiration from these other works, often in an accidental way. This confirms the views of others in the literature (Wilson, 1983; Cermack, 1996) that entertainment can be seen as a potential source of information.

Personal experiences have been shown to provide information for other groups of creative people (Hemmig, 2009; Cowan, 2004), and this was reflected here. Authors of all genres and target age groups tap into the knowledge they have from their own life experiences, though this technique is more used by authors of picture books. Using past experiences not only provides inspiration but knowledge about the world

around them, including places they have been and people they have known.

Authors also included the use of libraries in their information seeking process, though not to the extent of internet or networking sources. Affect, self-efficacy, and resource access was discussed in relation to this source. Those authors who enjoy visiting the library used it as an information source, and those who did not enjoy it chose not to use libraries. In addition, libraries were discussed in relation to browsing strategies as a way to seek inspiration for story ideas.

An interesting technique for library use occurred in one of the UK participants. This author stated that not only did he use the library for a source of information, he used it as a place for him to complete his work. In addition, lack of access was stated as an issue by participants who wished to utilise their resources more often, especially specialist collections. This is a potentially valuable insight for information providers. By focusing on developing more creative workspaces, libraries could attract authors who seek to write outside of the home environment, and providing easier access for these creative professionals would assist in bringing them through the doors as well.

A summary of the sources used by these participants is included as Figure 8.4 below, displayed on two scales, one ranging from factual to sensory details and the other ranging from high veracity to low veracity.

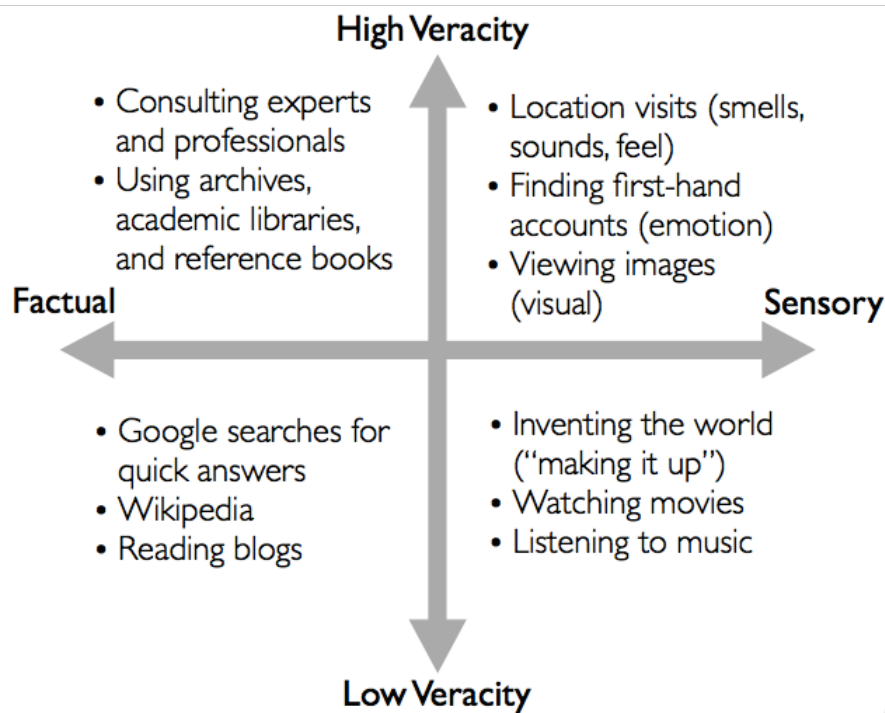


Figure 8.4 Summary of sources used by authors of children's and young adult fiction

In general the information sources used by authors reflects sources used by other artistic groups. They seek an idiosyncratic and diverse range of sources, as reflected in other studies of creative people (Ferguson, 1986; Layne, 1994; Hemmig, 2008, 2009), often relying on less traditional sources, such as sensory information, their own personal experiences, and entertainment. For authors, almost anything can be considered information, as also found in Layne's (1994) study on the information behaviour of artists and art historians.

In Larkin's (2010b) model, the information sources used most often by visual artists are highlighted. These include a wide range of traditional sources, electronic sources, and social contacts. There are similarities that can be seen, such as in the case of the Internet, digital books, colleagues, family and friends, and other artists. However, authors demonstrated the use of unique resources, including the target audience, agents, editors, and the need for sensory details. For both groups, a wide and diverse range of sources were used.

These findings on how authors utilise various information sources reflect the theme

of eclecticism found during the literature review in Chapter 4. Eclecticism involves “a determination to obtain information from as many channels as possible and to absorb as many pieces of information as possible to reveal new concepts and ideas” (Foster, 2005, p. 7), a strategy that authors display through their various passive and directed information behaviour.

### **8.2.9 Ease of Use**

The Internet is the most often used information source of authors of children’s and young adult literature, and when participants discussed their perceived value of Google and Wikipedia, the majority of authors consider it their go-to resource due to convenience and ease of use. As found in many previous studies (Griffiths & King, 2008; Connaway et al., 2011; Griffiths & Brophy, 2005; Head & Eisenberg, 2010; Jamali & Asadi, 2010; Haglund & Olsson, 2008; De Groot, Shultz, & Blečić, 2014), ease of use and convenience of access are the major factors behind the growing use of the Internet by information seekers.

As suggested in Chapter 7, the author’s working environment may play a role in the preference for instantaneous access to information. Environment is considered an extrinsic context of an individual’s situation and may influence the way in which the information seeker performs a search (Wilson, 1981; Williamson, 1997; Foster, 2004). While authors may communicate with others, such as their editor, their agent, or other authors, on a regular basis, being a professional novelist is generally considered to be a solitary endeavour. As stated by several of the participants of this study, most of the work they do is completed at home or in a cafe, alone, typing on a laptop.

Because of this, the internet is seen as the easiest and most accessible resource for finding information relating to a current work in progress. Many authors describe the drafting and information seeking process as a stint of writing interspersed with quick Google searches before then returning to their draft, in order to prevent

interruption and disruption to the work flow. Therefore, in the case of authors, their environmental factors directly influence the type of sources they prefer when they need a quick answer to a question as they are in the process of writing their books, which also ties in with the perceived value of ease of use and convenience.

### **8.2.10 Problems Encountered**

As with an individual's environment, time is an external context that influences information behaviour (Foster, 2004) and has been shown to be a situational constraint in many previous studies (Julien & Michels, 2004; Fisher, Naumer, Durrance, Stromski, & Christiansen, 2005; Agosto, 2002; Savolainen, 1995). In the case of authors, lack of time (due to deadlines) sometimes prevents these creative professionals from doing more in-depth searches and causes them to seek out quicker and easier solutions, such as the Internet, as discussed above.

In addition to time, authors cited several issues with information in general: information overload, lack of information, and information inconsistency. For authors, information overload is an issue not just in terms of encountering too much information but having too much of the wrong information blocking the way. Authors find it difficult to engage in Savolainen's (2007) filtering strategies in order to get to the information they need. Lack of information, on the other hand, is more of an issue for historical fiction authors, who find it difficult to gather information about the time periods in which their stories are set. This lack of information may be due to an actual nonexistence of data recorded during the historical time period or it may be due to the resources used by the authors during their search.

Both of these information-related issues can often be traced back to the use of the Internet as a major source of information, as found in previous studies (Edmunds & Morris, 2000) and the limited use of libraries due to resource access, affect, and self-efficacy. In many of these situations, authors have the desire and the need for more in-depth and applicable information, but the barriers of time and preference for

conveniency prevent them from accessing more robust sources. These findings related to those found by Larkin (2010b) as well, who noted that the information behaviour of visual artists was influenced by training (which can relate to self-efficacy), access to resources, and information overload.

However, the issue of information inconsistency has connections with not only Internet sources but expert and professional sources as well. Authors seek out more comprehensive information and receive conflicting facts. This leads to frustration with the process, and they dismiss the information, choosing to approach the problem in a different way. Therefore, information inconsistency can be considered just as much of a constraint surrounding information behaviour as it increases information anxiety, which has been shown to have an affect on the search process (Kuhlthau, 1993).

### **8.2.11 Comparison to other creative groups**

The authors in this study portrayed both similarities and differences to other creative groups that have been researched previously, identified in Chapter 4. Visual artists and art students have been studied in an information behaviour context far more than any other creative group thus far. They have been found to have a preference for visual information (Pacey, 1982; Frank 1999; Layne, 1994; Larkin, 2010b). While authors did demonstrate the use of visual information, they did not show a heavy preference for it over other types of sources. Visual artists and authors are creating different types of media (image-oriented versus language-oriented), and their level of need for photographs and paintings as sources of information reflects this difference.

Artist students have shown a heavy reliance on libraries (Pacey, 1982; Day & McDowell, 1985) while authors only showed a moderate use. However, this reliance on libraries has not been reflected in studies in visual artists in general or other groups of creatives, such as theatre artists. This could perhaps be explained by the

focus of the two studies on art *students* rather than artists overall. There is some use of libraries by authors, however, though this is limited by affect, resource access, and self-efficacy.

Artists (Cobbledick, 1996; Hemmig, 2008), art students (Day & McDowell, 1985), emerging artists (Macon & Robinson, 2011), theatre artists (Medaille, 2010), and writers (Russell, 1995; Deroshers & Pecoskie, 2014) have all demonstrated networking as a strategy for information gathering. The participants of this study have reflected these findings as well. Authors network with other authors, with other publishing professionals, with friends and family, with experts, and with members of the target audience.

Other studies into creative groups have found serendipity to be a large part of the information seeking process. This has been found in art students (Day & McDowell, 1985), visual artists (Ferguson, 1986; LeClerc, 2010), and emerging artists (Mason & Robinson, 2010). In the previous studies done on writers, serendipity was not identified as a part of their information behaviour. However, this could be explained by the nature of the research. Deroshers and Pecoskie (2014) based their findings solely on the Acknowledgements sections of authors' novels, and it is unlikely that information behaviour themes, such as serendipity, could be identified in this manner.

Ferguson (1986) noted that artists have diverse needs and habits, Layne (1994) found that artists consider anything to be a source of information, Cowan (2004) identified the need for sensory information, and LeClerc (2010) discovered artists seek to cultivate serendipity. All of these findings have been reflected in the results found in this study on authors of children's and young adult literature.

Other studies (Hemmig, 2009; Cowan, 2004) have found that artists use the world around them as a source of information, but this study highlighted ways in which authors approach environmental browsing in a much more in-depth way than other

studies noted here. They seek out places for settings and locations, take photos, and note the sensory details around them to file away for later use. They physically moved to new places in order to gather this information as well as to cultivate serendipity.

While the Internet was identified as a source of information in other studies of creative groups (Medaille, 2010; Larkin, 2010b), this study found that it is the most-used source of information for authors. Authors rely heavily on search engines, Wikipedia, and other websites as a way to find information quickly and easily, behaviour which has, so far, not been found in other creative groups. This could be due to the nature of their working environment as they spend most of their working time at their laptop or desktop computer.

Larkin (2010b) found several contextual factors that affected the way in which visual artists approached the information seeking process. These included training, access, information overload, academic department, and years of experience. These contextual factors were found for authors of children's and young adult literature as well with the exception of academic department. In addition to these, the researcher found that target age group, genre, affect, and time were contextual factors that influenced their behaviour.

Some additional highlights of the research that have so far not been found in other studies on the information behaviour of creative groups should be noted. In fact, accuracy does not seem to be addressed by any other studies into the information behaviour of creative groups. The importance of audience integrity and use of the target audience as a source of information was unique to authors of children's and young adult literature. While accuracy appeared to be more important to some authors than others (often related to genre or target age group), the importance of accuracy in regards to how their target audience feels and experiences things spanned across all target age groups and genres. In order to enhance audience



integrity, authors often turned to members of their audience as a source of information.

Ease of use has also not been noted in other studies of creative professionals, though this was a theme that emerged from the findings of this study, as well as the issue of Time. These two issues were reflected in the heavy use of the Internet as an information source. Authors often have full-time jobs in addition to their work as an author. They require quick and easy methods to obtaining information in most cases. Even those authors who expressed a more in-depth and expansive approach to information gathering also stated they preferred the internet due to its ease of use for some searching situations.

Overall, authors have expressed many similarities to art students, artists, emerging artists, theatre artists, and other writers studied. However, many additional insights into their particular behaviour has been demonstrated by the results of this study.

## 8.3 Quantitative Element

The quantitative questionnaires measured the personality traits and the cognitive styles of authors of children's and young adult literature.

- What are the personality traits and cognitive styles of authors of children's and young adult literature?
- Are there observable patterns between these personality traits and cognitive styles?

### 8.3.1 Personality

Average scores for the five personality traits across target age groups and literary sub-genres showed only slight differences in regards to Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to experience (Tables 7.1 and 7.2). In the case of Extraversion, authors of young adult fiction scored significantly higher than authors of books for younger readers. These results suggest that authors of picture books and middle grade novels may be more introverted than authors of books for teenagers, which suggests they may be more quiet, reserved, and shy (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 49) or they may simply report themselves as such.

When the scores for Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism were compared to the general population norms, there were no statistically significant differences to be found for the group as a whole. However, the mean score for Extraversion was slightly lower than that for the general population, suggesting that authors may demonstrate more introverted tendencies, reflecting the studies of other creative groups (Feist, 1998; Cross et al., 1967; Mohan & Tiwana, 1987). Writers in particular have been found to be more introverted than extroverted (Barron, 1968). Other studies into the personality of creative individuals has shown higher scores in Neuroticism (Gotz & Gotz, 1979; Feist, 1998; Cross et al., 1967) and lower scores in Conscientiousness (Kaufman, 2002; Feist, 1998), but these

findings were not reflected here.

The group as a whole scored significantly higher on Openness to experience than the general population. Individuals with a high Openness to experience are open to new ideas, have cultural interests, are creative, and have an interest in varied sensory and cognitive experiences (Heinström, 2002), as well as being flexible, risk-takers, and putting value in freedom (Dacey & Lennon, 1998). In addition, individuals with a high score on Openness to experience have been connected to activities involving writing, science, and art (Wallach & Wing, 1969). Similar studies into the personality of creative individuals has shown significant links with this particular trait (Wolfradt & Pretz, 2001; King et al., 1996; Matthews & Deary, 1998; Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2005). More specifically, other groups of writers have also been found to have high openness to experience (Drevdahl & Cattell, 1958), and one study that compared the personality of writers versus non-writers only found significant differences with this trait (Maslej et al., 2014). This suggests that this group of authors are creative, imaginative, and interested in varied ideas and experiences, traits that feed back into their professional work.

In conclusion, authors of children's and young adult literature have demonstrated a significantly higher openness to experience, results which reflect the findings of similar studies. However, no other significant findings were found for the group as a whole, and only young adult authors portrayed a higher extraversion than the other two target age groups studied.

### **8.3.2 Cognitive Styles**

As with personality, cognitive styles has been linked to creativity (Kirton, 1994; Honey & Mumford, 1992), and the results of this study demonstrate similar findings. In this study, most authors were found to have a mixed approach (a combination of deep and strategic) or a deep approach (see tables 6.5, 6.6, and 6.7), and a smaller number were found to have a strategic approach only. These results were consistent

across all target age groups and literary sub-genres. Individuals with a deep and/or strategic style can be said to approach their projects by being actively interested, looking for interesting patterns, relating ideas, and having specific goals and strong organisational skills (Entwistle et al., 2001).

Most notably, questionnaire results revealed no authors with a surface cognitive style, which relates to lack of purpose and confidence, low amounts of effort, and feelings of pressure (Entwistle et al., 2001). This suggests that authors, in general, do not experience low levels of motivation in regards to their creative work. However, there were a small number of authors who displayed an all-rounder approach, which refers to a cognitive profile of those who scored high on all three cognitive style types. When the raw scores were examined, the data showed that the average score on surface approach elements was significantly lower than those on the other elements. Therefore, while authors may display some inclinations toward some surface approach elements, this group of professionals can be considered much more thorough in their approaches to their work and are most likely to display a combination of deep and strategic styles.

Similar research that used the short version of the ASSIST (Heinström, 2006b; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011) found a much larger percentage of participants who scored with a surface or all-rounder approach than found here. These differences could be explained by the group under study. Professional authors may be more driven with less fear of failure than the university students typically studied in conjunction with the ASSIST, as well as more actively interested in their work and more driven to succeed.

In addition to examining the group as a whole, the study sought to highlight any differences across target age groups and literary sub-genres. However, there were no statistically significant differences to be found for either measure, much like the results from the personality questionnaire. When comparing the means, it could be

seen that authors of historical fiction demonstrated the highest score on the deep approach scale and the lowest on the surface approach scale, which was not surprising. Historical fiction tends to require more in-depth knowledge, requiring the author to recreate a certain time period, more so than other literary genres. Authors of dystopian fiction scored the highest on the strategic approach scale, suggesting they may be the most organised and driven when writing their science-based stories. However, these results can not be deemed significant, and a study involving a larger sample size might yield more insight into any differences between these sub-groups.

### **8.3.2.1 Deep Approach Elements**

The elements measured on the deep approach scale include Relating Meaning, Seeking Ideas, and Use of Evidence. Those with a deep approach have intrinsic motivation and seek personal comprehension of the topic (Entwistle et al., 2001). They seek to understand a deeper meaning behind what they're working on, and are critical, logical, relating new ideas to previous knowledge (Heinström, 2002).

Authors scored high on these elements across the board, including those whose cognitive style result was not a deep approach. The Relating Ideas metric was the highest scoring item across the entire test, suggesting that authors approach their work by often relating their current ideas to their previous knowledge and experience, including those ideas they encounter in the information they seek (Entwistle & McCune, 2004).

Seeking Meaning was the second highest scoring metric across the test, which suggests that authors seek to understand their work on a deeper reflective level rather than just approach the process from a purely objective and fact-based standpoint. These results are not surprising. Individuals who create fictional worlds utilise imagination and innovation (Welleck & Warren, 1956; Diakidoy & Kanari, 1999; Runco, 2004; Plesk, 1997), requiring them to seek meaning in the world around

them.

### **8.3.2.2 Strategic Approach Elements**

Strategic approach elements include Time Management, Achieving, and Organising. Individuals with this approach have intrinsic motivation and a positive work attitude (Entwistle & Tait, 2004). They work hard at their project and organise their time well (Heinström, 2002). As with the deep approach elements, participants scored high on these items across all target age groups and literary sub-genres, including those who did not receive a strategic approach result as their cognitive style.

Achieving, in particular, was the highest scoring item under the strategic umbrella and was the third highest scoring item across the entire questionnaire, yielding a higher score than one of the deep approach elements, Use of Evidence. These results suggest that authors are highly motivated and put a lot of effort into their work and have clear goals for their projects (Entwistle & Tait, 1995), which corresponds with research that has shown that creativity is linked with motivation (Runco, 2004; Amabile, 2012).

The results also showed that the majority of authors have strong time management skills, as well as good organisational skills. As these two elements were significantly linked to one another, it suggests that these two skills often go hand in hand. These results do not reflect much of what the literature reveals about creative individuals, most groups under study scoring low in conscientiousness, the personality trait that relates to efficiency and organisation (Kaufman, 2002; Feist, 1998).

### **8.3.2.3 Surface Approach Elements**

The elements included on the surface approach scale are Fear of Failure, Unrelated Memorising, and Lack of Purpose. Individuals with a surface approach are most concerned with getting the project completed as easily as possible and are not

particularly interested in the topic. They focus their efforts on memorising the required information without being concerned about what it really means (Entwistle & Tait, 1996; Heinström, 2002). Therefore, it is not particularly surprising the participants of this study do not display a surface approach to their work.

In this group, there was a moderate display of Fear of Failure, though only in a small number of participants. Participants scoring high on this metric were the all-rounders, also scoring high on the deep and strategic elements. This suggests that there may be some fear of failure in the background as they work, which can be explained by their strong desire to succeed.

The most illuminating aspect was the very weak display, if any at all, of Lack of Purpose. The majority of participants gave the lowest possible score on the Lack of Purpose aspect (which was 1) while only one participant gave a 3 (which is in the middle of the scale for that element). This corresponds well to the results from the Achieving scale, further confirming that authors, in general, are driven to complete their work and motivated to succeed.

### **8.3.3 Personality and Cognitive Styles**

Many past studies have found relationships between personality and cognitive / learning styles (Heinström, 2002; Diseth, 2003; Duff et al., 2004; Zhang, 2003; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011), which reflects the findings of this study. Several significant correlations were found between several of the BFI personality traits (Openness to experience, Neuroticism, and Conscientiousness) and the ASSIST learning styles.

Openness to experience showed a positive relationship with a deep approach, which corresponds with the findings of many related studies (Heinström, 2002; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011; Diseth, 2003; Duff et al., 2004). A link between these two traits is not surprising. Openness to experience relates to a high level of creativity and an interest in engaging in new ideas while a deep approach signifies an individual who is

interested in seeking meaning and relating ideas. This relationship suggests that those with higher levels of creativity and imagination tend to put more effort into their work, seeking to understand their tasks on a more reflective level.

Surprisingly, openness to experience also demonstrated a positive relationship with a surface approach, which does not correspond with the findings of other studies. For example, Heinström (2002) found a negative relationship between a surface approach and openness to experience. These conflicting results could be explained by the personality traits of this particular group as a whole, as the authors studied portray a significantly higher than average openness to experience. In addition, authors scored low on the surface trait elements across the board, suggesting that while there may be a correlation, a high openness to experience does not necessarily suggest an author approaches their work on a surface level, especially as openness to experience also demonstrated a positive relationship with a deep approach.

The researcher was interested in digging deeper into these findings and examined the scores of openness to experience in combination with neuroticism, which will be called open neuroticism. Not surprisingly, the results then yielded a very significant positive relationship between open neuroticism and a surface approach over the other two cognitive styles. This suggests that openness to experience alone does not result in a surface approach. Rather, it suggests that openness to experience combined with a high level of neuroticism tends to result in higher scores on the surface approach elements. Previous research has linked high levels of anxiety and worry with a surface approach (Marton & Saljo, 1984; Heinström, 2003; De Fruyt & Mervielde, 1996; Schouwenburg, 1995), suggesting that while these authors have a higher openness to experience than the general population, being susceptible to worry and anxiety can influence their cognitive style and their information behaviour in turn, resulting in the addition of more surface approach tendencies and not necessarily abandoning the deeper approach to their work. Heinström explained this phenomenon by saying that “if psychological energy is consumed by negative



feelings, it is likely that not much energy remain for other engagements” (Heinström, 2010, p. 95). This link between openness to experience (which is strongly related to creativity) and neuroticism reflects the findings of Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2005) that suggested that both openness to experience and neuroticism were related to creative thought.

The researcher sought to examine this even further by correlating the scores on the individual surface elements with the new open neuroticism trait. The results of this test showed that the combination of these personality traits positively correlates with a high level of Fear of Failure as well as higher levels of Unrelated Memorising. These correlations suggest that while individuals may have artistic and creative tendencies, when combined with emotional instability and anxiety (Crozier, 1997, p. 124), they are more likely to encounter feelings of frustration and worry during the writing process.

Neuroticism alone also positively linked to a surface approach and negatively linked to a strategic approach. In addition, those individuals with an all-rounder cognitive style demonstrated the highest level of neuroticism. These results reflect the findings of similar studies (Heinström, 2002; Duff et al., 2004; Zhang, 2003; Diseth, 2003) where a surface approach and neuroticism were found to be positively correlated, suggesting that individuals with a higher level of neuroticism tend not to utilise a strategic approach to their work. In essence, they are less likely to be organised with good time management skills and more likely to approach the work with less enthusiasm.

Conscientiousness was positively linked to a strategic approach, which is line with the results found in other studies (Heinström, 2002; Duff et al., 2004; Diseth, 2003; Swanberg & Martinsen, 2010). Again, these results are not surprising. In the BFI, conscientiousness is a measure of goal-directed behaviour (Pervin & John, 2001, p. 258). The higher the score on conscientiousness, the much more likely an individual

is competent, dutiful, orderly, responsible, and thorough (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 49). This matches well with individuals who scored high on the strategic approach scale, as they are said to be efficient, organised, hard-working, and focused on high levels of achievement (Entwistle & Tait, 1996).

Two traits did not demonstrate any correlations with cognitive styles: agreeableness and extraversion. Findings in related studies found a negative relationship between a surface approach and extraversion (Duff et al., 2004; Zhang, 2003; Diseth, 2003), a negative relationship between a surface approach and agreeableness, and a positive link between a strategic approach and extraversion (Heinström, 2002). While there were no significant correlations, results found when comparing the means across the cognitive style profiles suggested that individuals with a strategic approach show the highest level of extraversion, which demonstrates some similarities with Heinström's (2002) findings.

When examining the elements of the cognitive styles questionnaire in more detail, several correlations emerged from the data to further detail the differences between personality traits and authors' cognitive approaches to their work. Neuroticism demonstrated a negative link with both organising and time management to further confirm that individuals with a higher level of anxiety are less likely to handle work tasks in an efficient and structured manner. In addition, neuroticism alone demonstrated a positive link with Unrelated Memorising, just as it did when combined with Openness to experience, as explained previously.

Agreeableness demonstrated a significant relationship to Relating Ideas, one of the items on the deep scale. According to the BFI, agreeableness is a personality trait that is linked to individuals who are gentle, kind, warm, and sympathetic (Costa & McCrae, 1992, p. 49). Relating ideas concerns itself with referencing previous knowledge and past experiences in order to understand a present situation, which could be a trait of an empathetic individual.

Overall, the quantitative results have demonstrated that authors of children's and young adult literature have a high openness to experience, they tend to approach their work in a deep or strategic way, and those authors with higher levels of neuroticism demonstrate a tendency toward a surface approach, but only in combination with a deep and/or strategic style as well. The group as a whole seeks deeper meaning for their ideas, seeks achievement, has good time management skills, and puts a great deal of effort into their work.

### **8.3.4 Individual Styles**

In related studies, the research into personality and/or cognitive styles, as well as information behaviour, has yielded various patterns of behaviour in relation to information seeking (Pálsdóttir, 2010; Kernan & Mojena, 1973; Bellardo, 1985; Palmer, 1991a; Palmer, 1991b; Hannell, 2001; Heinström, 2010). For example, Heinström (2002) developed three distinctive profiles, including Fast surfers, Broad scanners, and Deep divers, based on the combination of learning style, information seeking behaviour, and personality traits from a study of postgraduate students. During the current study, five cognitive profiles for authors of children's and young adult literature emerged from the data, incorporating the combination of personality traits and cognitive styles.

The first profile to be found for this group is the *Deep Explorer*. These authors employ a deep approach to their work, showing high levels of relating ideas and seeking meaning. They are also emotionally stable and have a high openness to experience, suggesting they are creative and innovative. In regards to number of books published, Eminent, Emergent, and Established authors fell into the Deep Explorer profile. No Debut authors were found to be in this category.

The second of these profiles is the *Strategic Planner*. Authors who fit into this profile approach their work strategically. They are emotionally stable and conscientious. They have very strong time management skills and organise their work carefully. In

addition, they have a strong drive to seek achievement. The authors of this profile, while still having a high openness to experience in comparison to the BFI norms, scored lower on that metric than all other authors in this study. This profile included Eminent authors only.

Third, the *Sensitive Innovator* profile includes those authors who have a high openness to experience and are highly neurotic. They are creative and innovative, and approach their work in a deep manner, but they also experience moderate to high levels of fear of failure, which can sometimes cause anxiety in relation to their work. This profile contained authors with varying levels of experience, from Debut authors through to Eminent authors.

The fourth profile is the *Organised Creative*. This profile includes those authors who incorporate a combination of deep and strategic approaches to their work and are emotionally stable, conscientious, with a high openness to experience. This combination of traits suggests that while this group is very open and in search of new ideas and experiences, these authors still approach their work in a very organised and efficient way. Again, this profile contained authors at all levels of experience.

The fifth, and final, profile is the *Inventive Extrovert*, the smallest group found within these authors. Authors with an inventive extrovert profile have a high openness to experience combined with high neuroticism, high agreeableness, and high extraversion. They also employ a combination of surface, strategic and deep approaches to their work, and their level of experience was Eminent only.

## **8.4 Mixed Element**

As part of the study, the researcher sought to understand participants' information seeking behaviour in relation to their personality and cognitive style.

- Can individual differences be considered influential on the information

behaviour of authors?

While the quantitative data and qualitative data collection answered different sets of research questions, the study sought to determine if any insight into the information behaviour of authors could be gleaned from the results of the individual differences questionnaires. Due to the exploratory, semi-structured nature of the interviews, the researcher determined it was most feasible to transform the quantitative data into the qualitative in order to keep the richness of the data, according to the mixed methods research done by Teddlie and Tashakorri (2003). The researcher imported the individual profiles generated above (Deep Explorer, Strategic Planner, Sensitive Innovator, Organised Creative, Inventive Extrovert) to examine the information behaviour of each sub-group individually. Findings of the mixed element and a discussion is presented below.

#### **8.4.1 Deep Explorer**

In the interviews, deep explorers often mentioned being open to new ideas and interested in brainstorming potential new projects, as demonstrated in the quote below:

*“There’s a point in between projects where I consider myself open for ideas, so to speak. And I realize I need a new project and I’ll need to pitch those projects to my agent, so I start trying to generate story ideas. When I do this, it’s usually through an X meets Y approach to see if that sparks any potential ideas.” [Katie]*

They also discussed many instances of encountering information accidentally:

*“Ideas come from all over the place. It might be something that happens to me in my life. I might be sitting...One story I had came to me when I was sitting on a beach in Cornwall. And I noticed there was one of those fissures covered in huge rocks. It was a huge rock shaped like a figure crouching on the beach. And I said, “What if a sea monster crawled up out of the sea and sat beside him?” And it just suddenly occurred to me, that’s a story. And then the*

*whole story sort of came out and I wrote it down, just from seeing this strange rock.” [Wilson]*

They also tend to use networking sources as the first point of information, sometimes demonstrating a high level of effort in doing so:

*“If I absolutely know a human being that’s an expert in whatever that area is, that’s the first place I go, is a human being.” [Amy]*

*“Usually I would try to go to an expert. And that’s the only thing I can tell you about [In the Dark]. I knew I wanted to have a serial murderer, and I wasn’t sure if it was possible that a person who had a multiple personality could be a killer and not know it. So, I actually contacted an author who I knew made the specialisation out of writing about psychology for authors.” [Lily]*

These results coincide with some of the findings from Heinström’s (2002) study in relation to deep divers, in which individuals with that profile were interested in new ideas, put much effort into the search process, and experienced serendipity on a regular bases. Stokes and Urquhart (2011) found individuals with a deep approach and openness to experience tend to utilise networking, also reflected here.

#### **8.4.2 Strategic Planner**

Strategic planners showed very specific processes related to their writing and researching strategies, as shown in the quote below:

*“Well. I have a laptop. And did it on my laptop because I have the Kindle Readers. I have all the different E-Readers’ applications on my laptop. It’s a MacBook Pro connected into a big video screen. So, I usually have one screen open where I’m writing and then on the actual laptop, which is over here, I have what I’m researching.” [Denny]*

In addition, accuracy of information was important to these authors, and they were concerned with putting the correct details in place in order to best reach the reader:

*"I want it to be based firmly in reality and then have a story spun from there. So, I think that's probably the reason why I think it's important is because, you know, just if it does pique...you know, what if this book does pique a kid's interest in politics or in legislation, and they find out that the way I said, you know, a bill is presented is completely the opposite, then it could take some of the magic away from it." [Whitney]*

This reflects the conscientious personalities of strategic planners. Heinström (2002) found that strategic individuals are concerned with planning and do not have difficulties with determining the relevance of information, which suggests that relevance is indeed something they consider important. Stokes and Urquhart (2011) found that individuals with a strategic approach engage in refining and verifying search activities, which further suggests accuracy and relevance are important to this type of user.

### **8.4.3 Sensitive Innovator**

Sensitive Innovators showed a tendency to focus on emotional and personal experiences rather than factual information, as can be see in the quote below:

*"Most of my books come from personal, very intimate, personal experiences. So, they all start with an emotional experience that I'm having. And then I may, you know, branch out and look at my experiences with my children, other children...you know sort of, my books tend to be about more universal emotional experience." [Millie]*

In addition, authors with this particular profile demonstrated some frustration and anxiety about the information seeking process due to conflicting information or information overload:

*"If I were doing a story on Indians and Vikings, I would contact Viking experts and talk to them about what dates and da, da, da. And this was about ten years ago, so maybe eight years ago, and what I found as a writer was that like, no one cares. First of all, the experts all disagree with each other in most cases. And then secondly, I did all this wonderful research*

*on the books, and that's not really brought up. You know, it doesn't come up in reviews. It doesn't come up with...like, I wasn't being rewarded for this wonderful research. So, I've gotten a little more mercenary, I think, with...I'm sort of justifying why I don't do any of that anymore, but I did used to do that, and just the payoff wasn't there." [Byron]*

Similarly, another author with this profile expressed some relief at discovering there was not too much information on the topic she was researching:

*"So, I had looked some things up, and there really isn't that much information about it, which I actually kind of liked that because that meant I had more freedom to play around with it." [Ava]*

Overall, sensitive innovators focus on emotional experiences, experience frustration, information overload, and prefer to find information that is somewhat less in-depth. These results somewhat reflected Heinström's (2002) fast surfer profile. Those individuals did not seek information thoroughly, had difficulties judging relevance, experienced time pressure, and preferred overview material to in-depth (Heinström, 2002).

#### **8.4.4 Organised Creative**

Organised creatives included those authors who scored high on both the strategic and deep cognitive styles. In the interviews, these individuals showed a tendency toward using archives and databased information:

*"I also go to a website called Archive.org, which has a bajillion scanned in primary documents. It's set in 1876, so I find guidebooks from 1876 for the area that my book is set on that website. I find diaries. I find whatever I can find that's like from that era." [May]*

They had a tendency to use more formal sources than some of the other authors in the study, such as the National Institute of Health's databases, as can be seen in the following quote:



*“Mostly, as I’m working on a project, anything I read that’s interesting to me, I’ll email to myself. And that’s a lot of, I read a lot in the New York Times Science section. Science and Technology. So, I’m constantly emailing myself articles. And then I do a lot of research through the National Institute of Health’s databases. I’ll look up, you know, medical...for this book especially with brain injuries, I looked up a lot at, you know, what neuroscience is looking at current studies. So, I actually read the medical studies as well or what I can make, you know...I’m reading a lot of abstracts and conclusions or press about them, because I don’t always understand the medical terminology.” [Linda]*

These authors also had a structured method of writing and incorporating the information they sought for their stories. Plotting and planning were highlighted in these interviews, along with creative ways of looking at ideas and generating new solutions:

*“I’ve started using notecards with the idea that it’s easier to shuffle them around. And so I’m creating scenes and I’m creating ideas, and I’m getting facts that will be the basis of the scenes and the things that I’m doing...I’m doing more shuffling the ideas as I go along and do notecards. But I mean, I really like to just kind of fill up with facts and information and then go back as other things come along and weave it together.” [Chelsie]*

Organised creatives brought together two types of information seekers, those with a deeper and more creative approach and those with strategic and conscientious organisation.

#### **8.4.5 Inventive Extrovert**

Similar to the deep explorers, the inventive extroverts commented on keeping an open mind and discovering information in a serendipitous manner, particularly going out into the world to experience new things:

*“The thing is to always have an open mind and always have the receiver turned to on. Always trying to think of ideas and it can even be sparked off by seeing an image. Wandering*

*around bookshops is great for that because you...In the picture book section, you'll see new illustrations you've never seen before. Or wandering down the science section, you'll see interesting themes that coincide with some of my interests. Because I'm very interested in science and also science fiction. And science fiction has fed into my books." [Hudson]*

These authors also employed networking to a great extent, often using networking connections and informal/formal groups in order to discuss plot problems or seek out the answer to a specific question, as can be seen in the following quote:

*"More minds are better than one. You know, and you never know who has connections with whom, and yeah. So, it's just almost always helpful. And also, I think with kidlit people, too, there's, like, I'm never going to feel dumb asking them a question." [Rosanna]*

Extraversion and networking were linked by Stokes and Urquhart (2011), as well as spontaneity and social activities by Heinström (2002). In addition to high openness to experience and extraversion scores, these authors demonstrated fear of failure on the cognitive styles questionnaire, however, the interviews did not provide any additional insight into this aspect of their personality.

Based on this analysis, the five individual profiles have been updated to incorporate the various information seeking activities discussed during the interviews. A summary of these information styles are included as Table 8.1 below.

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Personality Traits</b>	<b>Cognitive Style</b>	<b>Information Behaviour</b>
Deep Explorer	Open to experience, Emotionally stable	Deep	Open to new ideas, serendipity, networking
Strategic Planner	Conscientious, Emotionally stable	Strategic	Structured process, interested in accuracy
Sensitive Innovator	Neurotic, Open to experiences	Deep	Interested in emotions and personal experiences, experiences information anxiety
Organised Creative	Conscientious, Emotionally stable, Open to experiences	Deep & Strategic	Preference for archives and databases, structured process, open to new ideas
Inventive Extrovert	Extroverted, Open to experience, agreeable, neurotic	All-rounder	Open to new ideas, networking

Table 8.1 Five Information Styles of Authors

In Chapter 5, the researcher presented a visualisation of information styles as Figure 5.7. This figure has been updated to reflect the findings of this study with the “Information Style” element populated with the information styles that emerged from this study. This can be seen as Figure 8.5 below.

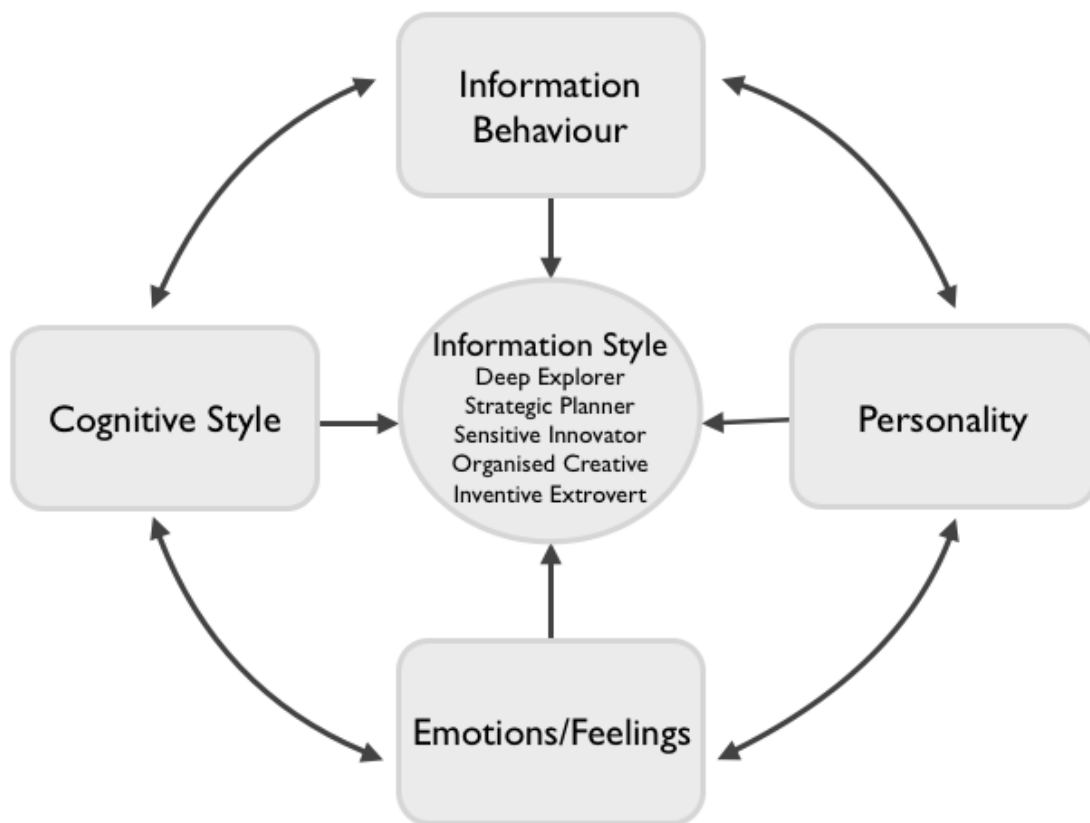


Figure 8.5 The components of an information style for authors of children’s and young adult literature

## 8.5 A Model of Authors’ Creative Information Seeking Behaviour

When examining the information behaviour of authors of children’s and young adult literature as a whole, five main characteristics emerged from the data to provide a model of their information seeking behaviour. These characteristics include: 1) meaning making, 2) relating ideas, 3) exploratory behaviour, 4) sensory-focused experience, and 5) highly creative. Each of these five characteristics is discussed in further detail in the following sections.

### 8.5.1 Meaning Making

One characteristic that was highlighted in both the interviews and in the cognitive styles questionnaire was authors’ preferences to create their own meanings from the information they obtain for their projects. While accuracy is considered important by

some of these individuals and not as important by others, all authors did agree on the importance of accuracy within the textual meaning itself. This is true across the board for picture book, middle grade, and young adult novelists. Even when performing in-depth information searches, authors often employ some amount of intertwining fact with fiction, reimagining the information they obtain, making connections between various pieces of information, and assigning their own meaning to the text, according to what works best for the story.

### **8.5.2 Relating Ideas**

Authors approach the writing process by often referring to their own previous knowledge and past experiences. Their first-hand situations often provide information about settings, emotions, and characters. When gathering new information, they relate their new ideas to their previous experiences as well, providing an additional layer of deeper meaning to the information they input into their works in progress, in order to reach the audience in a genuine way.

### **8.5.3 Exploratory Behaviour**

Authors have a significantly higher openness to experience when compared to the general population, and they rely on serendipity as a major method of generating new ideas for their books. These findings are in line with the research stating that some individuals are more prone to experience serendipity (Merton & Barber, 2004). Roberts (1989) posits that these individuals tend to have characteristics of curiosity, flexible thinking, awareness, and sagacity, which are all traits relating to openness to experience. When seeking new information, authors use a diverse range of sources, including networking sources, electronic sources, physical sources, and environmental sources, seeking new directions and ideas in an open and exploratory manner.

#### **8.5.4 Sensory-Focused Experience**

One major, and unanticipated, characteristic that emerged from the data was the importance of sensory information. Smells, sounds, sensations, as well as emotions and psychological truths, are a heavy focus of the participants' writing and searching processes. Authors visit places in person in order to experience these sensory details for themselves, as well as interview relevant individuals in order to gather sufficient first-hand accounts that can feed into the sensory descriptions authors write into their novels.

#### **8.5.5 Highly Creative**

Based on both the questionnaires and the interviews, the results of this study demonstrated that authors are a highly creative group of professionals. They scored high on openness to experience, on all elements of a deep approach to their work, and they utilise imagination and inspiration when developing their stories. In addition, they have a tendency to use creative resources when seeking ideas or information for their works in progress, such as images, videos, movies, and television shows.

### **8.5.6 An Ecological Model of Information Behaviour**

Bringing all of the findings together, the researcher developed a model of information behaviour for authors of children's and young adult literature, based on Williamson's (1997) Ecological Model of Information Seeking and Use and Larkin's (2010b) Ecological Model of Information Seeking in the Visual Arts.

While a few models in the literature demonstrated some resemblance to the findings of this study, none provided a perfect representation of the information behaviour of authors of children's and young adult literature. The Revised Creative Information Seeking Model (Lee et al., 2007) identified various stages in the information seeking process of creative individuals. However, while the revised model took into account the non-linear nature of information behaviour, it still focused on the stages rather than the more dynamic process that was found here, nor did it incorporate the various individual differences that can affect information behaviour, such as personality and cognitive styles.

The Larkin (2010b) Ecological Model of Information Seeking in the Visual Arts built upon the Williamson (1997) Ecological Model of Information Seeking and Use. It highlighted this more dynamic process and the idiosyncratic needs of creative individuals. However, the focus of Larkin's (2010b) model was on visual artists only. While they have demonstrated many similarities to authors, there are some clear differences that have been found in this study. They are both creating works of art, but they working in very different mediums. Their works are developed in different ways, and they require different types of information, even if the differences are not substantial. In addition, Larkin's (2010b) model, like the Lee et al. (2007) model did not incorporate individual differences as components of a creative individual's information behaviour.

Therefore, the researcher felt that a new model was needed to illustrate the needs and behaviours of authors of children's and young adult literature. The information

behaviours that were identified in this study were non-linear, hence a stage-driven, linear model was not appropriate. Rather than develop a stage-driven model, due to the diverse and idiosyncratic process authors undergo to find information, the researcher deemed a nested model that portrayed the various layers of influences and contexts would provide the most applicable diagram for this group of creative professionals. The Ecological Model of the Information Behaviour of Authors of Children’s and Young Adult Literature is displayed as Figure 8.6 below.

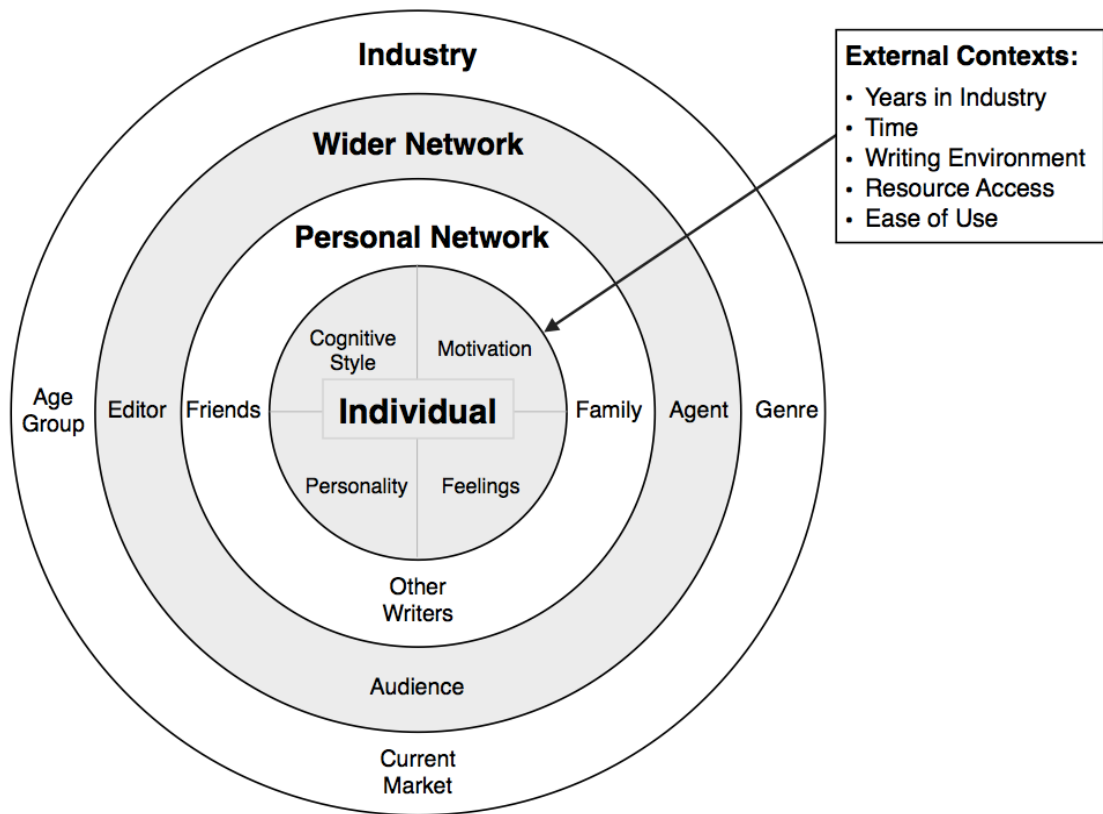


Figure 8.6 An Ecological Model of the Information Behaviour of Authors of Children’s and Young Adult Literature

In this model, the external contexts include years spent working in the industry, time constraints, the actual writing environment, resource access, and ease of use, all of which have been discussed in detail in this chapter. Individual internal contexts include cognitive style, personality, motivation, and feelings, and each layer of the



model demonstrates influences on an author's information behaviour, including their personal network of family, friends, and other writers. The following layer includes their wider network of publishing professionals, such as editors and agents, as well as their audience members. Finally, the outer layer includes market-related influences, such as the current market trends, genre conventions, and target age group constraints.

To further provide an overall picture of the information behaviour of authors of children's and young adult literature, the researcher examined the models and information styles developed thus far in this chapter. From this, the researcher developed an integrative, holistic model to fully illustrated the behaviours of this particular group of users, including authors' writing strategies as well as their identified information styles. The final integrated model can be seen as Figure 8.7 below.

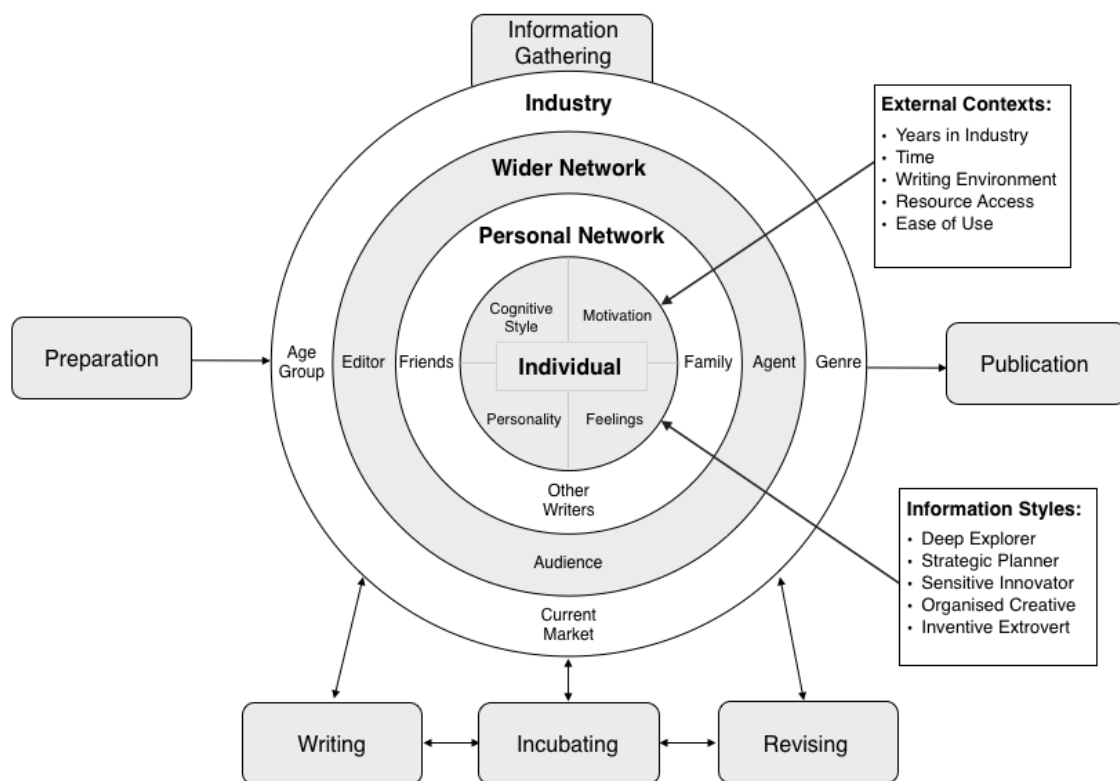


Figure 8.7 An Integrated Ecological Model of the Information Behaviour of Authors of Children's and Young Adult Literature

## 8.6 Summary

In order to determine the information seeking behaviour of authors of children's and young adult literature, the quantitative and qualitative data were analysed and discussed. Some key points from this chapter include:

- Authors use a diverse range of information sources, though they place an emphasis on digital and networking sources.
- Authors employ a non-linear searching strategy, continually seeking information from the beginning of the project until the publication of their work.
- Authors encourage serendipitous discovery of information by keeping their minds open to new ideas and “refilling the creative well”.
- Authors differ in the need for information across target age groups and literary sub-genres, but not significantly in cognitive style or personality.
- They have a high openness to experience, suggesting they are imaginative, innovative, and interested in new ideas and experiences.
- Authors approach their work with a deep and/or strategic cognitive style in most cases.
- Participants can be assigned one of five information profiles: 1) Deep Explorer, 2) Strategic Planner, 3) Sensitive Innovator, 4) Organised Creative, or 5) Inventive Extrovert.
- Overall characteristics of authors' information behaviour include meaning making, relating ideas, exploratory behaviour, sensory-focused experience, and highly creative.

In addition, this chapter compared and contrasted the emerging theory and findings with the theories, concepts, and findings from previous studies reviewed in Chapters

4 and 5, grounding the discussion within the current body of literature. Once discussing the five information profiles that emerged from the data, this chapter presented An Integrated Ecological Model of the Information Behaviour of Author's of Children's and Young Adult Literature, providing a nested model that highlights the information seeking contexts of this group of creative professionals.

# 9. CONCLUSION

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## 9.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have contributed to the exploration and development of the information behaviour of authors of children's and young adult literature. In the sections of this conclusion chapter, the following will be provided: a review of the aims and objectives of the study that were presented in Chapter 1, a brief summary of the major findings of the literature review, an overview of the methodology and instruments chosen for this study, summaries of the key findings, a discussion of the contributions and limitations of the study, recommendations for industry professionals and information providers, as well as recommendations for future research related to the findings presented in this thesis.

## 9.2 Aims and objectives

Over the past two decades, the market for children's and young adult literature has demonstrated enormous growth. Juvenile fiction sales are growing while sales of adult titles are decreasing, and many studies have shown the positive affect reading fiction has on young people. Therefore, authors of these titles can be considered influential individuals and examining their information behaviour can provide information professionals with a better understanding of how to aide these professional writers in the development of their stories.

When reviewing the literature, the researcher found that few artistic groups have been studied, and authors of children's and young adult literature have not been under focus at all. Motivated by this gap in the literature, the researcher aimed to examine the information needs and information seeking behaviour of authors of children's and young adult fiction. It investigated how authors perform information seeking activities that relate to their current works in progress and how much of an

impact these activities have on their ideas and their creative processes as a whole, as well as determined how much of a role serendipity and personality play throughout this process.

### **9.2.1 Research questions**

The research questions were:

- How do authors of children's and young adult fiction seek and obtain information relating to their creative works?
- What is the relationship between genre differences, target age groups and information seeking behaviour?
- What information resources do these authors value and why?
- Does serendipity play a role in the generation and cultivation of creative ideas?
- What are the personality traits and cognitive styles of authors of children's and young adult literature?
- Are there observable patterns between these personality traits and cognitive styles?
- Can individual differences be considered influential on the information behaviour of authors?

### **9.2.2 Objectives**

The objectives of the research were:

- To establish, through a combination of quantitative questionnaires and follow-up in-depth interviews, authors' information styles.
- To examine any potential discernible patterns of behaviour in relation to genre, target age group, gender, and location differences.

- To explore the use of serendipity, browsing, and scanning, and any potential relationship between this type of information seeking and the cultivation of creative ideas.
- To measure any distinguishable patterns of personality and cognitive styles in this user group.
- To investigate how the information seeking process as a whole influences the generation and cultivation of creative ideas.

### **9.3 Literature Review**

Three aspects of the research were discussed in detail separately, including the history and developments in the field of children's literature in Chapter 3, the information behaviour literature in Chapter 4, and the individual differences literature in Chapter 5. Each of these investigations provided a context that informed the nature of the study and that could be applied to the findings.

Children's literature has a rich and varied history, which has developed into a thriving market with a variety of sub-genres and target age groups. The most prominent of these target age groups include picture books, middle grade, and young adult novels while the most prominent sub-genres include adventure, contemporary, historical, horror, mystery / thriller, science fiction, fantasy, and dystopian. These target age groups and literary sub-genres provide a context in which to view the different groups in the study.

When reviewing the information behaviour literature, the researcher found that other artistic groups have been studied (Cobbledick, 1996; Toyne, 1975, 1977; Pacey, 1982; Day & McDowell, 1985; Frank, 1999; Ferguson, 1986; Layne, 1994; Cowan, 2004; Hemmig, 2009; LeClerc, 2010; Mason & Robinson, 2011; Medaille, 2010), finding common themes throughout the various research, including a reliance on visual information, serendipity, browsing, networking, as well as a tendency to have

diverse and idiosyncratic needs. The information studies that have focused on authors (Paling & Martin, 2011; Desroshers & Pecoskie, 2014) have not explored their specific information seeking activities and influences in relation to their works in progress. Other internal and external contexts may have an influence, such as self-efficacy, motivation, source quality, ease of use, and information anxiety.

Personality and creativity have been studied in many contexts, finding links between the creation of art and openness to experience (Costa, McCrae & Holland, 1984; De Fruyt & Mervielde, 1996; Gottfredson, Jones & Holland, 1993; Schinka, Dye & Curtiss, 1997; Tokar, Fisher & Subich, 1998). The personality of writers has been studied in particular (Drevdahl & Cattell, 1958; Barron, 1966, 1968; Mohan & Tiwana, 1987), findings which suggest that authors have a high openness to experience, are more introverted than extroverted, and more neurotic than stable and controlled.

The combination of personality traits, cognitive styles, and information behaviour has been examined in several other studies (Palmer, 1991b; Heinstrom, 2002; Malliari et al., 2011; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011), which have found various relationships between the three elements. Bawden and Robinson (2011) called for more studies into the 'information styles' of various groups, suggesting that understanding individual differences can better aide in examining information behaviour.

## **9.4 Methodology**

The methodological approach of this study followed a pragmatic philosophical viewpoint, using an embedded concurrent mixed methods research design with a dominant qualitative component and a supporting quantitative component. This chosen approach was justified in Chapter 6 as being flexible and able to incorporate varying research questions under one study.

The quantitative instruments chosen were based on a comprehensive view of the current measures available. In the end, the BFI personality questionnaire and the

short version of the ASSIST were chosen, due to the ease of use, the brief time needed for the measurement, and the proven validity from other similar research studies. Data was analysed through SPSS, using correlation analysis and ANOVA to determine any positive or negative relationships between the variables.

The researcher chose semi-structured interviews as the qualitative data instrument. These interviews took place in the work setting of the participants through conferences, book fairs, and publishing conventions. Each interview was recorded and transcribed before being imported to NVIVO where they were then analysed through grounded theory and inductive coding, allowing for constant comparison and emergent themes and theories. Memos were kept throughout the course of the study, as well as an emergent code book, in order for the researcher to track the developments of categories and themes.

Once the quantitative data had revealed distinct patterns of personality and cognitive styles, each individual was assigned an information style. These styles were then imported into NVIVO where they could be analysed in conjunction with the interview responses, in order to highlight the information seeking activities, preferences, and issues that accompanied these emerging patterns of behaviour.

## **9.5 Findings**

Key findings of this study will be summarised here, including the results of the personality and cognitive styles questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. In addition, a summary will be provided of the five information styles that were developed during the course of the study, as well as the emerging model of authors' information behaviour in relation to their works in progress.

### **9.5.1 Personality**

Authors of children's and young adult literature have a significantly higher openness to experience when compared to the BFI norms of the general population.



They are creative, imaginative, and innovative, and are interested in new ideas. Picture book and middle grade authors are more introverted than young adult novelists, though all three groups demonstrated average scores on extraversion.

### **9.5.2 Cognitive Styles**

Notably, no participants of this study displayed a surface approach to their work. Scores were low on the individual surface approach elements across the board. Instead, these authors demonstrated varying degrees of deep and/or strategic approaches, suggesting they are highly engaged and put effort into their work. Some authors have better time management and organisational skills than others. The only time surface approach elements have any influence on their work is through fear of failure, which can be explained by their drive to succeed. This was reflected in a cognitive style result of 'allrounder' in which the individual demonstrated a combination of a strategic, surface, and deep approach to their work.

### **9.5.3 Personality and Cognitive Styles**

The results suggested some relationship between personality traits and cognitive styles. Openness to experience demonstrated a link with a deep approach, reflecting the results of many previous studies. However, openness to experience also displayed a relationship with a surface approach for individuals who also scored high on the neuroticism trait. Conscientiousness linked to a strategic approach, suggesting authors who were organised and efficient. Neuroticism demonstrated a positive relationship with a surface approach and a negative relationship with a strategic approach, results which confirmed the findings of similar studies. No significant relationships were found between any of the cognitive styles and the traits of extraversion and agreeableness.

### **9.5.4 Information Behaviour**

Authors' information search strategy was influenced by their approach to writing

projects. Those who did more plotting and planning tended to gather information in a more structured way, though most authors found the information seeking process to be continuous and looping. Working on their laptops in most cases, authors often conduct quick searches when confronting an issue or question in the text, often preferring this to more upfront searches.

The amount of information needed by these authors often depended the target age group and literary sub-genre. Authors of young adult fiction require more information than authors of books for younger readers, and genres that require historical and scientific information tend to need more factual detail than fantastical or contemporary novels. Accuracy of information ties into this element of information behaviour, authors often taking liberties with fiction as long as the details are accurate within the confines of the story. Emotional truths and audience integrity are often considered more important than facts.

Most authors stated that accidental information encountering led to the generation of new ideas, feeding into inspiration, and enhancing their imagination. Often, authors will encourage serendipitous information seeking by keeping an open mind and engaging in the outside world, such as going to the museum or going for a walk on the beach.

Emotions and feelings influence information seeking activities. As found in previous studies, self-efficacy leads to more in-depth information seeking, and a lower self-efficacy leads to doubt and uncertainty which can prevent authors from seeking out more robust sources. In addition, authors who genuinely enjoy research tend to look forward to the process and spend more time gathering information than those authors who do not.

A wide range of sources are used by authors of children's and young adult literature, including but not limited to Google, social media, YouTube, books, movies, music, images, the environment around them, friends, experts, agents, and editors. They

also use their own personal experiences to inform characters, settings, and emotions, and seek out sources that can provide essential sensory details. This diverse range of sources suggests a very eclectic and dynamic process.

Out of these, the Internet was overall considered the most utilised and most valuable due to ease of use. It provides a quick and easy solution that will not interrupt the writing process, as well as having available a large amount of information. However, some issues were highlighted in regards the Internet, including both information overload and lack of information. Some authors felt as if there was too much information to filter through, while others (historical authors most notably) found the information they need was not available online. Conflicting information, while not specific to the Internet, is also seen as an issue that can cause information anxiety and later lead to fewer information seeking activities.

These findings reflected the behaviour of other groups of artists in several ways. Networking was found to be a useful strategy for artists (Cobbledick, 1996; Hemmig, 2008 , art students (Day & McDowell, 1985), emerging artists (Macon & Robinson, 2011), theatre artists (Medaille, 2010), and writers (Russell, 1995; Deroshers & Pecoskie, 2014), and this has been found in authors as well. Serendipity has also been highlighted in previous studies into creative groups (Day & McDowell, 1985; Ferguson, 1986; LeClerc, 2010; Mason & Robinson, 2010), a theme that was reflected in this study. Other artists have also demonstrated diverse needs and idiosyncratic needs (Ferguson, 1986; Hemmig, 2008), and the need for sensory information, which has also been found for the participants of this study.

However, some differences have also been noted. Authors do not use libraries as heavily as art students (Pacey, 1982; Day & McDowell, 1985), and while they do utilise images, they do not rely on them as heavily as visual artists (Larkin, 2010b; Pacey, 1982; Layne, 1994). Authors rely much more heavily on the internet as an information source, and they turn to their target audience for information, trends

that were not highlighted for other creative groups thus far. Ease of use and time are issues that authors encounter that have also not been demonstrated in other studies into artists. Finally, accuracy, or specifically accuracy in regards to audience integrity, is a unique theme that has emerged in this study for authors of children's and young adult literature.

### **9.5.5 Information Styles**

Five information styles of authors were developed based on a combination of their personality traits, cognitive styles, and information seeking activities and preferences. These five styles include the Deep Explorers (high openness/ deep approach), the Strategic Planners (high conscientiousness/ strategic approach), the Inventive Extroverts (high openness/high extraversion/ all-rounder approach), the Sensitive Innovators (high neuroticism/high openness/ deep approach), and the Organised Creatives (high openness/ strategic approach). Each of these information styles describes how authors may prefer to search for information.

Due to the influence of genre, target age group, affect, and experience in the industry on how authors seek information, authors could demonstrate different information styles at different stages in their career or during different projects (such as shifting from a YA contemporary to a MG fantasy). Indeed, an author could even demonstrate different information styles across a single project as traditional publishing most often take a year or more from first draft to publication. During this time, an author's approach to a project could change, including their feelings, their motivation, and their self-efficacy about performing information searches. A longitudinal study that focused on the changes in authors' information styles across a single project or across several years could highlight these potential shifts in the approaches to their work.

### 9.5.6 An Integrated Ecological Model for Information Behaviour

Based on Williamson’s (1997) Ecological Model of Information Seeking and Use, and Larkin’s (2010b) Ecological Model of Information Seeking in the Visual Arts, a model of authors’ information seeking was developed to highlight the various internal and external factors that influence their activity, as well as demonstrate how their writing process relates to their information gathering. The nature of authors’ information seeking as exploratory and idiosyncratic suggested that an ecological model would be most applicable for portraying this behaviour rather than a stage-driven model as suggested by Lee et al. (2005, 2007). Networks were deemed important (personal networks and wider networks), as well as industry standards and market considerations. These layers influence the needs and the behaviour of author in relation to their information seeking.

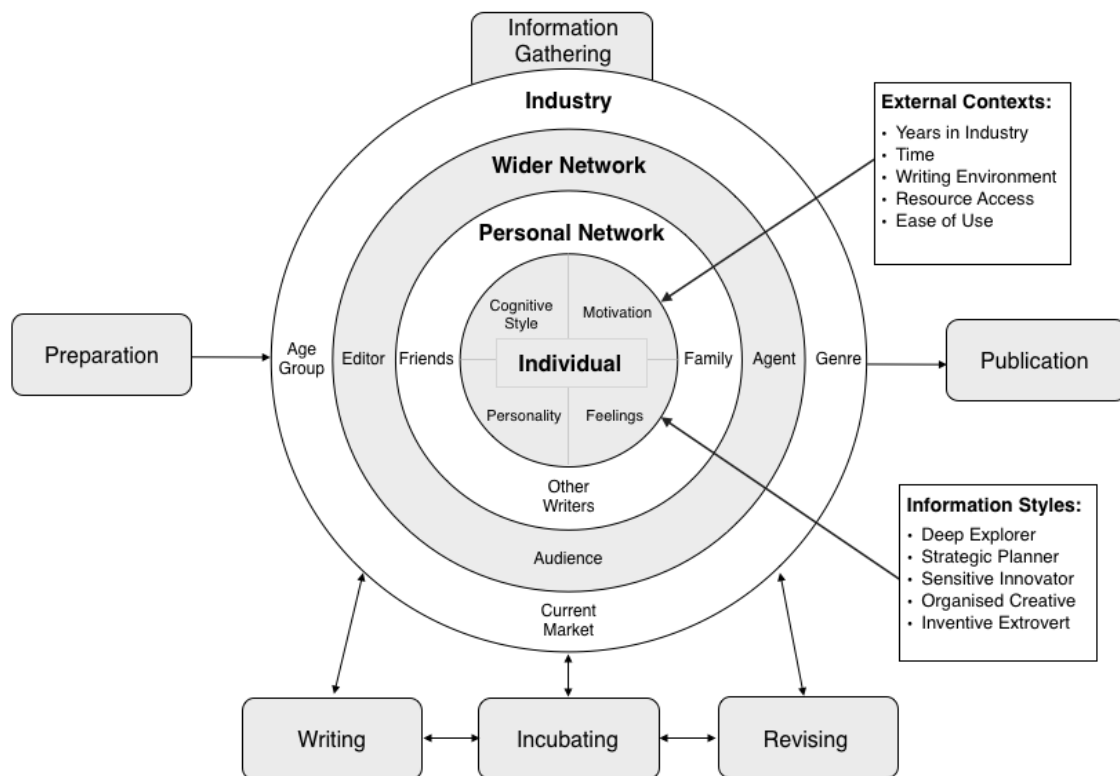


Figure 9.1 An Integrated Ecological Model of the Information Behaviour of Authors of Children’s and Young Adult Literature

## 9.6 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study can be summarised as the following:

- The nature of the exploratory interviews provided limitations on the integration of the qualitative and quantitative data. While the semi-structured interviews allowed for probing questions and gathering a rich set of qualitative data, more structured questioning may have yielded more specific measurements of authors' information behaviour to be used in combination with the results of the personality and cognitive styles questionnaires, as interview data is often highly subjective and prone to bias.
- The study was conducted on a small scale due to time and cost constraints with only 38 participants interviewed. Out of these 38, one participant requested to refrain from being recorded, which prevented a full analysis of the responses given during that interview. In addition, technical difficulties with the Mp3 recorder prevented the full transcription of another interview. This resulted in only 36 full interview transcripts that could be analysed in depth.
- Due to the grounded theory nature of the research, the need for a cognitive styles questionnaire only emerged until after the main segments of the data collection had been completed. This yielded in a total of 29 (76% of the total interviewed) who completed the questionnaire for this element of the research. A 100% completion rate would have provided a more comprehensive set of results.
- The personality questionnaire and cognitive styles questionnaire provided insight into authors' personalities as well as how they approach their work. However, self-reporting questionnaires are limited in that they only reflect how the participant interprets the questions, what the participant is willing to state about themselves, and how the participant perceives themselves, which

may be different than how others perceive them.

- The sample is not representative of the population due to the nature of the theoretical sampling, so the results cannot be generalised to the wider population. However, further studies into this area could provide a more generalisable sample to further expand upon the results found here.
- The majority of authors interviewed were residents of the United States (74%) due to the researcher's own nationality and contacts within the industry. Attempts were made to balance these interviews with more UK-based authors, but the researcher found authors based in the US more accessible for this particular study.

## **9.7 Contributions to the research base**

This study contributes to the current base of information behaviour literature in the following ways:

- While several studies have explored the information behaviour of artistic groups, including visual artists and theatre artists, no other study has performed an in-depth investigation into the information seeking processes of authors of children's and young adult literature.
- It has provided five distinct information styles of authors of children's and young adult literature based on the combination of personality traits, cognitive styles, and information seeking activities and preferences that can be applied to future studies into the information behaviour of similar groups of creative professionals.
- While not an initial aim of the research, this study has produced a modified version of the ASSIST questionnaire to be used outside of formal educational context. Specifically, this modified version relates to authors only, but it suggests that further implementation outside of an educational context may

be possible.

- It has produced an ecological model of authors' information behaviour that shows the importance of internal and external context in relation to an individual's current situation and environment. It highlights a more holistic process than the Revised Creative Information Seeking Model (Lee et al., 2007) which better reflects the information behaviour of authors. In addition, it incorporates the array of sources used specifically by authors of children's and young adult literature and integrates their writing process as well as the information styles developed in this study. Therefore, the developed model is distinct when compared to the ecological models presented in Chapter 4. Williamson's (1997) Model of Information Seeking and Use highlights the information behaviour of everyday life, and Larkin's (2010b) Ecological Model of Information Seeking in the Visual Arts focuses merely on visual artists, which suggests it cannot be fully applicable to other creative professionals. This model fills that gap for authors by providing a specific framework to demonstrate their information behaviour.

## **9.8 Suggestions for further research**

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher identified several areas in which further research could continue the exploration of the information behaviour of professional authors:

- This study focused on the information behaviour of authors of children's and young adult literature only. Studies into authors of fiction for adults across various genres such as science fiction and thrillers could further illuminate any differences and similarities in regards to target age group and literary sub-genres, as well as further studies of UK based authors. These other groups of authors may yield different results.
- Due to time constraints, the number of participants of this study was limited.



A much larger sample size could enhance and expand upon the findings found here, especially in regards to the cognitive styles questionnaire. Results could then be generalised to the population as a whole.

- A longitudinal study exploring how authors' information seeking patterns change over time could provide more insight into the way in which years in the industry and technological advances have an effect on their behaviour.
- A study that focuses specifically on authors' serendipitous information behaviour could determine various patterns of activity that lead to the generation of new ideas. These profiles could then be used to assist and enhance their processes of inspiration and imagination.
- Further validation of the findings could be provided through replication studies. In addition to qualitative interviews, the incorporation of a quantitative questionnaire that focuses on the information seeking activities and preferences of authors could confirm the information profiles developed here and determine the statistical significances of any correlations.

## **9.9 Recommendations for industry professionals and information providers**

This study highlights both the writing strategies and searching strategies of authors of children's and young adult literature, as well as demonstrates their information needs and the problems they encounter during this process. These insights can provide assistance to editors, agents, and other publishing professionals who work closely with authors. By understanding how they approach their work, colleagues in the industry can better understand how to provide support and guidance.

For example, authors make use of networking sources. Publishing professionals could work to create more contacts, both expert and non-expert, for authors to reach out to when they need various bits of information for their stories. They could set up

networking events where authors can meet each other as well as others in the industry. They could also provide authors with more insight into the target audience, through data they gather themselves, as the results of this study suggest that the nature of the target audience does influence how authors develop their stories.

Authors have also taken courses, online and in person, to develop more knowledge of particular subjects related to their work. Again, publishing professionals could provide support in this manner by connecting authors to appropriate courses or by developing their own knowledge courses for various subjects.

Information providers in the library sector could also enhance provision for authors. Resource access is an issue identified in this study, as well as self-efficacy. Academic libraries could develop a specialist access to allow authors to check out materials needed. They could develop an educational programme to demonstrate how creative professionals could make use of their resources, as well as create knowledge courses for subjects, as suggested above for industry professionals. In addition, libraries could develop creative workspaces to encourage authors to use a library “office” environment outside of their homes.

By providing authors with more support for their information seeking, as well as their overall writing, industry and information professionals can assist in enhancing their creativity, their motivation, and their entire production process.

## **9.10 Summary**

Children’s and young adult literature is a booming industry in both the United States and the United Kingdom with thousands of creative writers developing stories for this particular segment of the fiction market. With these works having a positive influence on young readers, understanding how they gather, use, and share information should be of importance to information professionals. However, while other creative groups have been studied, little is known about the information

behaviour of authors. This study has sought to fill this gap in the literature by contributing information profiles and An Ecological Model of the Information Behaviour of Authors of Children's and Young Adult Literature.

These profiles and models present the information behaviour of authors as being linked to their personality traits, their cognitive style, as well as external contexts, such as years spent in the industry, time, writing environment, resource access, and ease of use. They use diverse sources and have idiosyncratic needs, utilising the Internet and networking sources at a high level, and encouraging serendipitous encounters for inspiration and creative new ideas, activities that link with their high openness to experience, and their efforts to understand their work on a deeper level.

Understanding information behaviour of various groups has been a focus in the literature for many years. Many have called for more research into the needs of creative groups, in order to better provide applicable and accessible resources and support during the search process. Therefore, this thesis contributes knowledge into the information seeking behaviour of a unique group of creative professionals, filling a gap within the current body of literature.

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# Appendix A: Invitation to Participate

Dear [Name],

I am currently studying a PhD in Librarianship at Aberystwyth University in Wales. For my thesis, I have chosen to investigate the information seeking behaviour of authors of children's and young adult fiction and analyse whether individual personality has any measurable relationship to this process.

To obtain the necessary data, I am asking current authors in these genres to participate in an interview, as well as complete a very short personality questionnaire during the interview process.

Therefore, I am writing to invite you to contribute to my study. If you are interested in participating, the interview will take place during the [Conference]. The interview can be completed on the conference grounds and scheduled around any previous engagements and obligations.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the duration of the study and only those who agree to be interviewed will be identified by the researcher. Results of interviews will not be traceable to the participants, and the full results of the study will be freely available upon completion.

Approval of this study has been sought and granted from Aberystwyth University.

Thank you for your co-operation. If you have any further questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jes19@aber.ac.uk](mailto:jes19@aber.ac.uk).

Yours faithfully,

Jennifer Smith, BSc, MBA, MScEcon  
PhD Student  
Department of Information Studies  
Aberystwyth University, Wales

# Appendix B: Interview Guide

**Author code:**

**Genre:**

In this interview, I am trying to gain an understanding of how you might go about researching information or generating ideas for your creative works. Your answers may depend on the particular creative stage you are in at the time, whether it be first drafting, editing, copy editing, whether you're on tour, traveling for research or working from home. This interview should provide some insight into what exactly it is you do to find information that helps you generate ideas for your creative works, write, edit and complete them.

1. Please think about one entire project of yours, starting from a title or a spark of an idea through to completion.

A. In the beginning, what did you think about, where did you start, and who did you speak to about it?

B. Once you had begun writing it, what did you do to find information relating to it?

C. Were there any problems you encountered?

2. How does the research process unfold? Do you seek information at the beginning when you first begin writing, do you seek information all throughout the course of writing, or do you seek information at the end of your drafting process and during the editing/revision stage?

3. Who do you talk to when you're searching for information relating to your work? Why?

4. How do you research the settings/locations in which your work is set?

5. If you have a very specific question, do you have any go-to information resources?

6. When you are doing a broad, browsing search, where do you go for information?

7. Which resources do you find most valuable? Do you use a library? Do you use a bookstore? If so, how do you find the titles in these locations? Why do you find your chosen resources valuable?

8. How do you determine if an information resource is reputable?

9. How do you decide when you've obtained enough information? Do you ever find that you have to go back to your search to find more?

10. How many of your searches are quick, simple searches as opposed to more in-depth and extensive?

11. Have you ever had a reader comment positively or negatively on the research you've done for your creative works?

12. How often do you accidentally discover information that leads to a new creative idea or that assists in the development of a current work in progress? If so, how valuable do you find this accidental discovery? If so, are there any particular sources that most often lead to accidental discovery?

13. How often do you research a topic, an interest, or a place, for a reason completely unrelated to your writing, and then later realize you would like to incorporate this previously discovered information into a work-in-progress? If so, how valuable have you found these discoveries in relation to information you have purposely sought out for your novels? If so, can you give an example?

14. From your start as a writer, have you made any changes in the way you search for information? Has your level of confidence changed?

15. Can you share an example of a particular piece of work and the steps you took in order to find the information needed to complete it?

16. Are there any information tools you wish existed that don't? Are there any tools you'd like to use but don't have access to? Are there any changes you wish could be made to current tools that would make them more valuable to you?

17. Please share how you find information relating to the field instead of for creative purposes?

18. Is there anything else you would like to add?

# Appendix C: Personality Questionnaire

## How I am in general

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who *likes to spend time with others*? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which **you agree or disagree with that statement**.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree Strongly	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree strongly

### I am someone who...

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is talkative                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Tends to be lazy                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tends to find fault with others        | <input type="checkbox"/> Is emotionally stable, not easily upset       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Does a thorough job                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Is inventive                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is depressed, blue                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Has an assertive personality                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is original, comes up with new ideas   | <input type="checkbox"/> Can be cold and aloof                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is reserved                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Perseveres until the task is finished         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is helpful and unselfish with others   | <input type="checkbox"/> Can be moody                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can be somewhat careless               | <input type="checkbox"/> Values artistic, aesthetic experiences        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is relaxed, handles stress well.       | <input type="checkbox"/> Is sometimes shy, inhibited                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is curious about many different things | <input type="checkbox"/> Is considerate and kind to almost everyone    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is full of energy                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Does things efficiently                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Starts quarrels with others            | <input type="checkbox"/> Remains calm in tense situations              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is a reliable worker                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefers work that is routine                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can be tense                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Is outgoing, sociable                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is ingenious, a deep thinker           | <input type="checkbox"/> Is sometimes rude to others                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Generates a lot of enthusiasm          | <input type="checkbox"/> Makes plans and follows through with them     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has a forgiving nature                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Gets nervous easily                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tends to be disorganized               | <input type="checkbox"/> Likes to reflect, play with ideas             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worries a lot                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Has few artistic interests                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has an active imagination              | <input type="checkbox"/> Likes to cooperate with others                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tends to be quiet                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Is easily distracted                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is generally trusting                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature |

## Appendix D: Original ASSIST Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been designed to allow you to describe, in a systematic way, how you go about learning and studying. The technique involves asking you a substantial number of questions which overlap to some extent to provide good overall coverage of different ways of studying. Please respond truthfully, so that your answers accurately describe your actual ways of studying, and work your way through the questionnaire quite **quickly**, making sure that you give a response to **every item**.

In deciding your answers, think how these questions relate in terms of **this particular course** (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). It is also very important that you answer **all** the questions: check you have.

1. I often have trouble in making sense of the things I have to remember.
2. When I'm reading an article or book, I try to find out for myself exactly what the author means.
3. I organise my study time carefully to make the best use of it.
4. There's not much of the work that I find interesting or relevant.
5. I work steadily through the term or semester, rather than leave it all until the last minute
6. Before tackling a problem or assignment, I first try to work out what lies behind it.
7. I'm pretty good at getting down to work whenever I need to.
8. Much of what I'm studying makes little sense, it's like unrelated bits and pieces.
9. I put a lot of effort into studying because I'm determined to do well.
10. When I'm working on a new topic, I try to see in my own mind how all the ideas fit together.
11. I don't find it at all difficult to motivate myself.
12. Often I find myself questioning things I hear in lectures or read in books.
13. I think I'm quite systematic and organised when it comes to revising for exams.
14. Often I feel I'm drowning in the sheer amount of material we're having to cope with.
15. Ideas in course books or articles often set me off on long chains of thought of my own.
16. I'm not really sure what's important in lectures, so I try to get down all I can.
17. When I read, I examine the details carefully to see how they fit in with what's being said.
18. I often worry about whether I'll ever be able to cope with the work properly.

## Appendix E: Cognitive Styles Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been designed to allow you to describe, in a systematic way, how you go about writing. The technique involves asking you a substantial number of questions which overlap to some extent to provide good overall coverage of different ways of working. Please respond truthfully, so that your answers accurately describe your actual ways of writing, and work your way through the questionnaire quite **quickly**, making sure that you give a response to **every item**.

In deciding your answers, think how these questions relate in terms of **this particular manuscript** (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). It is also very important that you answer **all** the questions: check you have.

1. I often have trouble in making sense of the things I have to remember.
2. When I'm reading an article or book related to my work, I try to find out for myself exactly what the author means.
3. I organise my writing time carefully to make the best use of it.
4. There's not much of the work that I find interesting or relevant.
5. I work steadily, rather than leave it all until the last minute
6. Before tackling a writing problem, I first try to work out what lies behind it.
7. I'm pretty good at getting down to work whenever I need to.
8. Much of what I'm writing makes little sense, it's unrelated bits and pieces that will hopefully string together in revisions.
9. I put a lot of effort into writing because I'm determined to do well.
10. When I'm working on a new topic, I try to see in my own mind how all the ideas fit together.
11. I don't find it at all difficult to motivate myself.
12. Often I find myself questioning things I hear from others or read in books.
13. I think I'm quite systematic and organised.
14. Often I feel I'm drowning in the sheer amount of material writers have to cope with.
15. Ideas in related books or articles often set me off on long chains of thought of my own.
16. I'm not really sure what's important when I write, so I try to get down all I can.
17. When I read, I examine the details carefully to see how they fit in with what's being said.
18. I often worry about whether I'll ever be able to cope with the work properly.



## Appendix F: Coding Excerpts

### *Audience Integrity* Excerpts:

[Internals\\P37 - Rosanna](#)

2 references coded, 8.08% coverage

*Reference 1: 4.21% coverage*

So, accuracy about emotion is crucial. You know, I mean, especially for kids. Like kids will not work any bullshit. You know what I mean? Like, if you... With the exception of like, you know, romance and that sort of thing, but they know going in, you know going in what sort of book you're reading. You know, but the kinds that I like to write are...really need to feel, at least for me, accurate feelings-wise. Like, is this how someone would actually react? Is this how someone would talk? Like what is, you know, is this... Am I actually speaking to my audience? Cause you know, I'm writing across age, right? And so, that's really important to me to make sure that that's accurate.

*Reference 2: 3.87% coverage*

So, teens speak a different language than we speak, too, and so I guess some of the after-research that you do is making sure that your dialogue makes sense, and it's not like so trendy that it's going to, you know, by the time it even gets published, it's obsolete. But that you speak in that same cadence, and you're still hitting those emotions that teens are, you know... And frankly, I think everybody still feels... It's just, teens, they're newer, and so that's why I think we all love young adult, or most of us love young adult lit, because we get to explore emotions that are always there in a much more raw way, you know.

### *Lack of Time* Excerpts:

[Internals\\P30 - Olivia](#)

1 reference coded, 0.83% coverage

*Reference 1: 0.83% coverage*

Also, lack of time. If I didn't teach full-time, I would probably be a much more careful and thorough researcher.

[Internals\\P05 - Fred](#)

1 reference coded, 2.39% coverage

*Reference 1: 2.39% coverage*

A lot of times I'll buy them online because there's only...they're out of print. And so I have to buy used copies, and I love supporting my indie booksellers, but at the end of the day, I don't have time to track down every book in person, right? So, if I can go online and do a Google search and track it down.

# Appendix G: Screenshots of Memos in NVIVO

Below are some of the memos documented in NVIVO throughout the data analysis.

## •Environmental sources

**07-12-2013**

The theme of *environmental sources* has emerged from the data. Environmental sources, in this context, refers to sources of information that authors seek in order to provide *setting* or *location* or *world-building* details for their works in progress. Often, authors discuss behaviour that involves walking through physical spaces to obtain sensory details, such as scent, sight, and sound. Therefore, the code *environmental sources* has been added to the coding framework.

## •Sensory Details

**08-12-2013**

The first round of interviews has highlighted the need for sensory details, which has been unexpected. These sensory details include sight, smell, sound, touch, and taste. Authors have noted the need to experience these first-hand or speak to others who have personal accounts and can explain the various senses that apply to a character or setting.

## •Networking code splits

**20-06-2014**

The theme of *Networking*, as found in the literature, has emerged from the data. This theme includes codes currently labeled *interacting with experts*, *interacting with other authors*, *interacting with publishing professionals*, and *interacting with the target audience*. While these descriptive codes are useful, the *Networking* category provides an additional overarching theme for all relevant sub-codes.

# Appendix H: Consent Form

## Participant Consent Form

**Title of Project:**

The Information needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Authors of Children's and Young Adult Fiction

**Name of researcher:**

Jennifer Smith, PhD Student

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [DATE] for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected.
3. I agree to take part in the interviewing phase of the above study.
4. I agree to take part in the personality questionnaire phase of the above study.

**Name of Participant:**

**Date:**

**Signature:**

**Name of researcher:**

**Date:**

**Signature:**

1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher

# Appendix I: Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to take part in a postgraduate research study. Before you decide to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask if there is anything that is unclear or if you would like more information on the study.

## **What is the title of the study?**

The Information Needs and Information Seeking Behaviour of Authors of Children's and Young Adult Fiction

## **What is the purpose of the study?**

This research aims to examine the information needs and information seeking behaviour of authors of children's and young adult fiction. It investigates how authors perform information seeking activities that relate to their current works in progress and how much of an impact these activities have on their ideas and their creative processes as a whole, as well as determine how much of a role serendipity and personality play throughout this process.

## **Why have I been chosen?**

Participants for this study have been chosen on the basis of being current authors of children's or young adult fiction within the United States or the United Kingdom.

## **Do I have to take part in this study?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not you want to take part in this study. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep for your own records, and you will also be asked to sign a consent form. You will also be free to withdraw from the study at any time, including after completion of the interview, and without giving a reason.

## **What will happen to me if I take part in this study?**

If you choose to take part, you will be participating in a semi-structured interview to discuss your information needs and information seeking behaviour. In addition, you will be asked to fill in a short personality questionnaire as part of the interview process.

## **What about confidentiality and anonymity?**

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. If the data is subsequently published, no personal information will be used. This information is not relevant to any analysis of the data.

## **What will happen to the results of the study?**

The results of the study will form the thesis for a PhD. A copy of this document will be housed at the Thomas Parry site library of Aberystwyth University and at the National Library of Wales. This will be freely available to be viewed. It is also likely that it will be published in a condensed form before the end of 2015 in an academic journal.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

The Aberystwyth University Ethics Committee and representatives at the Department of Information Studies at Aberystwyth University have reviewed the proposal and have given approval for the research.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. I hope it provides a clear outline of the study, which will help you decide whether you wish you to take part. Please keep copies of this participant information sheet and the consent form for your own records.

If you have any further questions or queries, please contact me at [jes19@aber.ac.uk](mailto:jes19@aber.ac.uk).