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Information seeking research in Library and Information Science has grown to encompass not only occupational situations, but also non-work and leisure activities. This paper investigates the everyday life information seeking (ELIS) behaviors of quilters, and the Information Channels they prefer to use. The context of quilters' information seeking behaviors involves interaction with a number of formal and informal information channels. Anecdotal evidence suggests that quilters are beginning to show a preference for web-based resources; however, no known studies to-date have explored this phenomenon. Through semi-structured interviews, analysis of this study focused on emerging themes of information source preference, as well as information seeking processes. Specifically, results showed that participants did engage with quilting as a form of serious leisure, and exhibited ELIS behaviors to satisfy their information needs. In particular, participants identified four main Information Channels through which they accessed quilt-related information and demonstrated a strong preference for Internet-based sources.

Headings:

Information Needs/Evaluation

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Recreation/Leisure

SERIOUS LEISURE:
UNDERSTANDING THE INFORMATION NEEDS OF QUILTERS

by
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Introduction

Understanding the information needs and information seeking behaviors of patrons is a vital component to library research, and has been the topic of academic discourse for several decades. This study examined the informational needs and information seeking behaviors of quilters, including which information channels quilters preferred.

According to the *Quilting in America* survey (2006), there are currently more than 27 million active quilters in the United States, a number that represents nearly a 100% increase from the 13.8 million quilters reported in 1997. Over the past several decades, the role of quilting has transformed significantly from being a pragmatic task to one of leisure, pursued primarily for pleasure. This shift in purpose of quilting to that of a hobby has enabled quilters to explore a new range of artistic techniques, many of which require ongoing informational resources from which to draw inspiration and technical knowledge. The way in which quilters found and used this information was the primary focus of this study.

Despite the rapidly growing number of quilters across the United States, the body of library and information science (LIS) research regarding their needs is sparse. However, there are several lines of research that can inform the investigation of information seeking behaviors and needs of quilters: those of serious leisure and

everyday life information searching (ELIS) practices; and an investigation of the information seeking behaviors of visual artists.

A review of scholarly literature reveals that there are still many gaps in LIS research literature related to the informational needs of specific communities, including quilters. In order to assess the information seeking needs of this group, it is helpful to place it within the context of the larger discourse of information seeking behaviors. Several fields other than LIS - such as leisure studies and art history - have investigated the topics of serious leisure and the needs of artists, but neither of these disciplines is as uniquely suited to study information seeking behaviors and needs as LIS, nor have they addressed the unique needs of quilters.

Serious leisure, a concept developed by Stebbins (1982), is defined as the "systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that captivates the participant with its challenges and complexity" (p. 255). Additionally, an activity qualifying as serious leisure is highly substantial, interesting, and fulfilling, and requires a combination of special skills, knowledge, and experience (Stebbins, 2009). Due to this requirement of specialized knowledge, people who pursue serious leisure often seek information in very specific ways. This intersection of serious leisure and information seeking can be seen in Fulton's (2006) study of Irish lace makers, Hartel's (2007) examination of the specific informational needs of gourmet cooks, and Chang's (2009) study of backpackers.

Serious leisure activities can have significant impacts on the everyday lives of their participants; therefore, to study serious leisure within a context of everyday life information seeking (ELIS) practices is appropriate. This concept, put forth by

Savolanien (1995), is defined as "the acquisition of various informational (both cognitive and expressive) elements which people employ to orient themselves in daily life or solve problems not directly connected with the performance of occupational tasks…which are determined by an individual's "values, attitudes, and interests characteristic of their way of life" (p. 266-267). Rieh (2004) who concluded that information seeking on the Internet has become a substantial portion of everyday life search strategies, and is rapidly becoming the preferred information channel for ELIS behaviors.

The work of Stebbins, Savolanien and Rieh reveal that studies of non-occupational information seeking are vital to a holistic understanding of information seeking behaviors. Quilting, which is for most people a form of leisure and not an occupation, requires significant knowledge to perform properly and necessitates continual research. Belkin (1980) describes information seeking as a dynamic process, in which a user's information need could be defined as the gap between his or her existing knowledge about a topic and information the user desired to know. The search process used to close this gap is constantly evolving, and the user's information needs can be expected to change according to his or her changing level of understanding of the problem. This model can be applied to the quilting process. There are many types of quilt construction, each of which requires varying levels of knowledge and skill to complete. As quilters create quilts of increasing complexity, their information needs progress to suit the project at-hand. This situation requires a new set of information seeking strategies, which may incorporate fresh information channels. Viewed in this light, quilting is an ideal topic to research within an ELIS context, and a descriptive study

of quilters may indicate their information needs and their attitudes towards web-based resources.

Currently, the state of research reveals only a limited number of studies related to the information seeking behaviors of quilters, and none were evident as to their use of online resources. This study aimed to investigate these topics, and was focused on answering three central questions:

1. What are the information needs of quilters?

2. What information channels do quilters prefer?

3. What motivates quilters to use web-based resources?

Based on the findings of prior researchers, I expected to discover that quilters required a variety of technical and artistic information to remain active in their hobby. Furthermore, I wished to uncover whether or not they engaged in ELIS behaviors to find that information, and how quilters were prioritizing the Internet as an information channel.

The information gained from this study may further our general knowledge of ELIS behaviors, information seeking in context, and the information search process, while simultaneously providing specific information regarding the research needs and behaviors of the crafting and quilting communities. It can also broaden our understanding as to how online resources are utilized by the general public, and especially by those engaged in quilting as a form of serious leisure.

Literature Review

Serious Leisure is very appropriate framework for a study of quilters. There has been a growing body of research conducted on this topic recently, which Stebbins (1982) identified as the "systematic pursuit of an activity by an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer, and that demands specialized knowledge, training and skill, and captivates the participant with its challenges and complexity" (p. 255). While the fields of Sociology and Leisure Studies have excelled in examining the information needs of hobbyists, the same investigation is particularly applicable in LIS, as the perspective "offers a distinctive approach both to research and to practice in this discipline" (Stebbins, 2009, p. 618); in short, it provides a framework for LIS through which leisure activities can be understood, which can then aid LIS professionals to help participants identify and retrieve desired information. Furthermore, the concepts of information literacy, user-centered needs, e-environments, and information seeking behaviors are all integral components to serious leisure activities and ELIS behaviors (Fulton and Vondracek, 2009; Stebbins 2009). By using serious leisure as a lens through which to view the needs of patrons and quilters, LIS professionals can provide the appropriate services necessary to meet their informational needs.

The notion that libraries should be responsible for meeting the various recreational needs of their patrons has been a developing argument for the last several decades, especially in regards to the role of public libraries. More frequently, libraries are adopting policies to support the ongoing educational needs of their patrons, especially in regards to creative or leisurely endeavors. In 1994, IFLA and UNESCO published a

joint 'Public Library Manifesto', which encouraged local public libraries to incorporate the following mission statement into their own objectives. The Manifesto stated:

> The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.
>
> This Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.
>
> The following key missions, which relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of public library services:
>
> • **supporting** both individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;
>
> • **providing** opportunities for personal creative development;
>
> • **stimulating** the imagination and creativity of children and young people;
>
> • **promoting** awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations;
>
> • **providing** access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;
>
> • **fostering** inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;
>
> • **providing** adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups

This manifesto emphasizes several issues highly relevant to the relationship between libraries and leisure: that libraries are places where opportunities for lifelong learning take place, including recreational or creative development; that awareness of the arts and cultural heritage should be prioritized; and that services related to gaining information, education, or culture should be at the core of library objectives.

These same goals are now reflected in the mission statements of many local libraries, including the Chapel Hill Public Library, the library that supports the region in which this study took place. In their mission, the CHPL aims to:

- **aid** the individual's pursuit of self-education and research, pleasure, and the creative use of leisure time, while employing the most efficient library technology available

- **serve** as a center of reliable, up-to-date information, endeavoring continually to identify and meet the general and informational needs of all the people of the community the library serves

- **support** educational, civic, cultural, and recreational activities of the community

Again, this mission statement written at the level of the local library emphasizes the importance of leisurely activities in the pursuit of self-education, the ability to meet the informational needs of all groups of community users, and the obligation to support recreational groups in the area.

Based on the mission statements of these organizations - whose goals are repeated in public libraries across the nation - supporting the recreational, leisurely, and creative activities of patrons is a priority service for many libraries. Therefore, it is not unexpected that having a working knowledge of the concepts behind serious leisure and ELIS strategies would aid librarians in developing appropriate reference services, outreach programs, and exhibits for patrons, or in developing educational tools and increased points of access to library materials appropriate to the needs of the recreational community. This study of the informational needs of quilters can help inform librarians as to the types of needs hobbyists have, how they search for information, and what channels they would prefer to use when accessing information. This data could be

invaluable for helping librarians create more detailed collection development policies, aggregated website resources, in-house programming for creative activities, outreach programs into the community, and ongoing educational opportunities. The ways in which quilters, as a representative group of individuals involved in serious leisure and ELIS behaviors, seek and access information could have far-reaching implications for the ways in which libraries understand the needs of their patrons, and create and administer appropriate services.

In becoming familiar with the concepts behind serious leisure, it is best to identify what separates serious leisure from other recreational pursuits. Stebbins identifies three types of leisure activities: serious, casual, and project-based (Stebbins, 2005 in Stebbins, 2009). As has been mentioned previously, serious leisure is a complex and engaging activity which requires a combination of specialized skills, knowledge, and ongoing training. Casual leisure is "an immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity, requiring little or no special training to enjoy it" (Stebbins, 2009, p. 622). Project-based leisure is a "one-shot or occasional…creative undertaking carried out in free time. It requires considerable planning" (Stebbins, 2009, p. 622), but the participant is not expected to develop considerable skills or knowledge to execute it. In this study, I investigated quilting only within the context of serious leisure, as the other two categories do not require the same specialized ongoing knowledge as serious leisure.

In a 2006 study of quilters, Marybeth Stalp definitively established quilting as a form of serious leisure. Working with Stebbins' concept (1996, in Stalp, 2006), Stalp demonstrated how quilters embody the Stebbins's six characteristics of the serious leisure participant. The six characteristics essential to serious leisure include: the need to

persevere at the activity, despite adversity that the participant may encounter; the tendency for participants to develop careers in their activity; significant personal effort put forth by the participant, based on special knowledge, training, and skill they have gained; feelings of self-actualization, accomplishment, self-expression, and social interaction participants gain through completing their chosen activity; participation in a unique ethos that grows up around the chosen activity, such as a development of activity-related beliefs, values and standards; and the strong identification of participants with their chosen activity, which they demonstrate by frequently speaking of it or displaying their work to others.

Using this list, Stalp argued that quilters require ongoing technical and inspirational needs; take their craft seriously enough to devote their time and space to the activity; develop advanced skills in quilting; derive personal and social satisfaction from the activity; participate heavily in social networks devoted to quilting; and identify quilting as an avocation (Stalp, 2006, p. 106f).

Studying pursuits of serious leisure is vital to LIS research, as it allows researchers to investigate the non-work activities of individuals. Until recently, many attempts made by LIS researchers to investigate information seeking behaviors have centered around job-related tasks (Savolainen, 1995), rather than how individuals search information while at home or when pursuing non-work activities. It should be noted that serious leisure is a relatively new concept to LIS, and the body of research currently available does not contain any journals dedicated to the topic and only a few relevant articles.

Research pertaining to leisure dates back to the early 1980s, with investigations into particular leisure activities conducted by Chatman (1983 and 1985), who examined individuals' interactions with media; Ross' (1997) exploration of reading for pleasure; Hartel's (2007) analysis of gourmet cooking; and Chang's (2009) survey of backpackers. While these studies considered information needs pertaining to particular leisure activities, Richard Stebbins' (1982, 1996, 2005, 2009) work has provided the field with a framework through which to view these inquiries.

Stebbins asks: "how is information retrieved and disseminated in serious leisure?" (2009, p. 627). This question serves as the focus of Stebbins's investigations. He categorizes serious leisure participants into three categories: amateurs, hobbyists, and volunteers; with amateurs engaging with their leisure activity in the most complex manner, and volunteers in the least (1982). Leisure itself is then broken into a "distinctive set of interrelated actions or steps that must be followed to achieve the outcome or product that the participant seeks" (2009, p. 620). It is within the context of these tasks that a serious leisure participant is confronted with an information need. This structure has allowed other researchers (Chatman, Hartel, Chang) to investigate the specific information seeking behaviors and needs of particular serious leisure groups.

Participants involved in serious leisure have varied information needs, requiring ongoing learning and knowledge acquisition. Minimally, they need access to books, articles, websites, networking groups, and ongoing learning opportunities. The opportunity for the libraries to identify and provide for these needs is considerable. Furthermore, a study of quilting as a form of serious leisure identifies the non-work

information seeking strategies of a specific community, including how they interact with information technology and various information channels.

The impact serious leisure has on the everyday lives of its participants is significant; therefore, to study serious leisure within a context of everyday life information seeking (ELIS) practices is appropriate. This concept, put forth by Savolanien (1995), is defined as "the acquisition of various informational (both cognitive and expressive) elements which people employ to orient themselves in daily life or solve problems not directly connected with the performance of occupational tasks" (p. 266-267), which are determined by an individual's "values, attitudes, and interests characteristic of their way of life" (p. 267).

This model revealed that studies of non-occupational information seeking are vital to a holistic understanding of information seeking behaviors. Quilting, which is for most people a form of leisure and not an occupation, requires significant knowledge to perform properly and necessitates continual research. Viewed in this light, quilting is an ideal topic to research within an ELIS context.

Reijo Savolainen's article "Everyday Life Information Seeking; Approaching Information Seeking in the Context of 'Way of Life'" (1995) was critical to developing the framework of ELIS studies. The author conducted an empirical study of 22 Finnish participants, interviewing them in a structured method regarding a critical incident that required them to seek information on a topic. The results continue to shape of ELIS studies.

Savolainen found that there are two basic concepts that affect ELIS: 'way of life' and 'mastery of life' (1995). Way of life is described as a "system of socially and

culturally determined dispositions" (p. 262) that help an individual order or prioritize the activities he or she is presented with daily. Mastery of life is the maintenance of a person's way of life, i.e. the way a person orients himself/herself in "typical problem situation and seeks information to facilitate problem solving" (p. 265). Way of life, in conjunction with mastery of life, is the basic context an individual uses to seek information regarding tasks associated with everyday life.

A 2007 study, by Kari and Hartel, investigated the contexts inherent to ELIS practices. In their article, the authors described two contexts for information searching: lower contexts and higher contexts. Lower contexts include mundane everyday life activities, which typically have a neutral or negative connotation associated with them. Higher contexts include "things in life that are usually positive human phenomena, experiences, or activities that transcend the daily grind" (p. 1133). These experiences may include things that are pleasurable or profound, such as art, hobbies, leisure, and creativity. According to this model, quilting would qualify as a higher context, and something that is both pleasurable (something enjoyable or satisfying) and profound (Something regarded as deep and sublime, anything that objectively reflects humanity's possibilities for reaching its full potential, including creativity, emotion, and positive thinking, p. 1133).

Kari and Hartel contend that LIS literature has largely ignored the informational facets of the higher context, and that "as it is almost certain that higher things interact with people's information needs and seeking" (p. 1140), that it would be a fruitful avenue of research for the discipline.

A recent study by Chang (2009) of the information needs of backpackers is an excellent intersection of the investigation of both ELIS practices and serious leisure. Chang begins by noting that "among leisure form of travel and tourism, backpacking has quickly become a popular option" (Cohen, 2003 in Chang, 2009). She also asserts that the ongoing specialized knowledge required to plan and execute a backpacking trip qualifies it as serious leisure, in accord with Stebbins' (1982) research. Additionally, backpacking is contextualized within the framework of ELIS as a pleasurable and satisfying activity that takes place outside of the work environment. Furthermore, some consider backpacking as "a way of life – a habitual behavior in an ELIS context" (p. 724).

In her study, Chang reveals that backpackers search for and acquire information during three distinct stages: before, during, and after a trip, with each phase composed of discrete information search tasks. Additionally, the backpackers turned to different information sources and channels at each stage of the searching process. For example, many backpackers consulted books, magazines, and social networks while planning a trip; maps, pamphlets, and tour guides during a trip; and Internet sources after a trip, in order to publish their experiences online or research a topic they discovered during their trip.

This model may be most applicable to quilting. Quilting, which is a form of serious leisure and an activity that take place during the course of everyday life, shares the same three information gathering stages as in Chang's model. A quilter will require information before, during, and after creating a quilt. Furthermore, the informational sources and channels utilized will be similar: quilters will refer to books and magazines

when planning a quilt; social networks while working on a quilt; and then will desire to publish information about their finished quilt on the Internet.

The use of web-based resources by quilters or other individuals is also a newer topic to LIS research. In a 2008 study of the source preferences individuals employ when engaging in ELIS practices, Savolainen suggests that "human sources were preferred most strongly, followed by networked sources (the Internet)" (p. 283). These findings are supported by Rieh (2004), who notes that the Internet has become "more integrated into everyday life" (p. 743), significantly impacting ELIS practices. She posited that web-based resources were the preferred source in the home environment, since homes (as opposed to the work place) "have no one to whom questions can be directed" (p. 748). Since many serious leisure participants practice their chosen activity at home, the impact of the Internet as an information channel in ELIS by quilters or other individuals requires further investigation, and will result in a better understanding of how specific communities of patrons use technology and a variety of information channels outside of the bounds of the library.

In addition to examining quilting within the context of serious leisure and ELIS, an investigation of quilters as a community of artist should be considered as well. The concept of 'quilting as an art form' has grown significantly over the past several decades (King, 2001; Stalp, 2006; McMorris 1986, in Stalp, 2006). Quilts are now featured in the textile collections of such notable museums as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and The Smithsonian Institution. Additionally, quilts have become the sole focus of some museums, including the International Quilt Study Center and Museum, The National Quilt Museum, and the New England Quilt Museum.

Subsequently, quilters themselves have been labeled as artists. In a study of the information seeking behaviors of artists, Susie Cobbledick (1996) defined them as "any person who manipulates physical media for the purpose of communication with an audience or with him- or herself. This definition encompasses painters, quiltmakers, graphic designers, and so forth" (p. 346). Using this framework, the relationship between quilters (as practicing artists) and the LIS community will be explored.

Cobbledick (1996) noted that there are more practicing artists in the United States than there are lawyers or social scientists. With a population this large, it would seem likely that libraries and LIS professionals would closely examine the information needs of artists and provide appropriate services to them. However, few empirical studies have been conducted by LIS researchers as to the information needs of practicing artists, leaving many gaps in the field's understanding of how artists seek and use information in their creative processes.

The first examination of the information needs of artists was conducted in 1975 by an art librarian observing students at his institution (Toyne, 1975 in Hemmig, 2007). This study, in conjunction with several others published over the next twenty years (Pacey, 1982; Day & McDowell, 1985; Nilsen, 1986; Dane, 1987; all in Hemmig, 2007), were all useful in that they identified some of the ways in which artists gather and use information. These studies found, in general, that artists have discrete inspirational, visual, and technical needs, and that they draw upon a variety of information channels to meet those needs. Pacey's and Danes' investigations exposed a desire by practicing artists to seek information across a variety of disciplines, and not simply within the field of art history. Day's and McDowell's study revealed that creative artists and art

historians research and find information in entirely different ways: art historians view the library as repositories of visual information, while practicing artists choose to engage in serendipitous browsing to meet their informational needs.

Although this early body of literature is important to establishing a foundation on which to base more contemporary studies, it is very limited in methodology and subject matter. The majority of these studies were anecdotal in nature, and used as their subjects art history students, studio art faculty, and librarians. At no point were the needs of practicing artists evaluated, nor were any empirical studies performed.

The first empirical research focusing on the needs of practicing artists did not appear until 1996, when Susie Cobbledick sought to determine a framework for the information seeking behavior of artists in the creation of their work. To accomplish this goal she interviewed four practicing artists who were also faculty members at a large university. During the interviews, Cobbledick attempted to ascertain the technical, visual, and inspirational needs of artists, as well as the sources used to fulfill these needs. Although Cobbledick did uncover some of the research activities of professional artists, the primary focus of her study was not to determine how artists seek information, but to develop a questionnaire to "establish a framework on which future research can be built" (p. 343).

The only other published empirical research focusing on practicing artists was produced by Cowan in 2004. Her examination centered on the information needs present in the creative process of artists, and sought to remove the needs of the artist from within the confines of the art library. After interviewing one non-academically affiliated practicing artist, Cowan identified five information sources central to an artist's creative

process (p. 17). Using this information as a framework, she proposed divesting LIS assumptions from studies of artists and focus alternatively on creating user-centered instruments of study. She advocated the investigation of the needs of practicing artists independent of the context of library use, and encouraged the development of "information environments for specific artist communities" (Hemmig, 2007, p. 355) by LIS professionals.

The implications of studying quilters in a LIS context would be many-fold. To this researcher's knowledge, no studies of quilters have ever been conducted by an LIS professional. Studying quilters as a 'specific artist community', many of the gaps present in the body of LIS research can be explored. As most quilters are not affiliated with academic institutions, studying their information needs would greatly enhance our knowledge of the ways in which practicing artists seek and retrieve information. Since Hemmig (2007) noted that most LIS research on artists has been conducted with "almost no direct study of practicing artists without academic affiliations" (p. 344) this study would potentially identify the information sources used by a specific community of practicing artists.

LIS professionals, in studying the needs of quilters, can also "contribute to the creation of ideal information environments for specific artist communities" (Hemmig, 2007, p. 355). Current LIS research aimed at modifying the information-searching model in terms of the creative process (Lee, 2005 in Hemmig, 2007) could be utilized to create user-centered services for artists that exist both within and outside of the library.

Lastly, the impact of the Internet on communities of artists could be investigated. Due to the early nature of the majority of the studies cited in this review, most of the

information channels identified have been print resources. Cobbledick (1996), who

performed her study in the mid-1990s when use of the Web was much less ubiquitous

than it is now, questioned the impact of web-based resources on the information seeking

behaviors of artists; this gap in LIS knowledge has also been recognized by Hemmig

(2007) and Rieh (2004). An examination of how quilters use Internet resources as they

search for information would begin to address this issue.

An investigation of the information needs of quilters is an excellent opportunity to

study theories related to serious leisure, ELIS, and the needs of artists. Information

gained in these areas will contribute to the scholarly discourse in LIS pertaining to the

ways in which patrons make sense of their information needs and choose appropriate

information channels to satisfy those needs, both within and external to library

infrastructures.

Methodology

Description of Method

The purpose of this study was to investigate the information seeking needs and

behaviors of quilters, and the information channels they preferred. The study used semi-

structured interviews as the primary means of gathering data for analysis. This particular

form of field research was particularly applicable to studying the sources, processes,

activities, and tasks of information seeking performed by quilters, as well as their

perceptions and attitudes, towards those tasks. According to Wildemuth (2009), careful

preparation on the part of interviewers, in conjunction with their ability to fill any gaps in

the interview guide with follow up questions, makes the semi-structured interview "one

of the most useful data collection methods for studying a wide range of information behaviors" (p. 240). Although this technique does provide the flexibility necessary to uncover a deep understanding of the quilter's process, it still maintains uniformity across interviews.

Beveridge's (1975, in Millar, et al, 1992) definition of the interviewing technique as "a conversation within a specific context and having a specific purpose, the pattern of which is directed by the interviewer" (p. 2) takes into account the goal-oriented nature of the interviewing technique, as well as the differentiated roles of the interviewer and interviewee. Babbie (1999) added to this definition, noting that a semi-structured interview allows the interviewer the freedom of having a general plan of inquiry, without being restricted to asking predetermined questions in a specific order. This adaptability allows the interviewer to act as a "'miner' or 'traveller'" (Kvale, 1996 in Babbie, 1999) in the participants thoughts, extracting a comprehensive perspective of the phenomena under investigation.

The information needs and searching behaviors of quilters were, as of the time of this study, an unexamined phenomenon. Therefore it was essential that a comprehensive picture was gained not only of the information sources quilters use, but also of their perceptions of those sources. Since semi-structured interviews are "especially effective for studying the subtle nuances of attitudes and behaviors" (Babbie, 2009, p. 280), this method of research accorded the study a depth of understanding unavailable through other methods of research.

Sonnenwald, et al. (2001) recommend using a variety of data collection methods in order to gain a more complete understanding of participants' information behaviors.

Therefore, the semi-structured interview was augmented with a participant-generated

information horizon map. The concept, as developed by Sonnenwald, et al., consisted of

participants developing a subjective map of their source preferences according to the

importance participants assigned to the source; the more important the source, the more

centrally located it appeared on the map. Savolainen and Kari (2004) adapted this

method to represent three specific zones of relevance, rather than an open map. In this

model, participants were presented with a series of three concentric circles. Zone 1, the

innermost circle, represented the area in which participants were asked to mark their most

strongly preferred information sources. Zones 2 and 3, which radiated outwards from

Zone 1, were used to mark participants secondary and tertiary source preferences. This

model presented by Savolainen and Kari was used in this study to help quilters identify

their preferred information sources.

Population and Sampling Techniques

The population for this study was quilters in the Chapel Hill area. Because

quilters require a particular skill-set and depth of content-specific knowledge, the

participants of this study were targeted directly by the interviewer. The quilters eligible

for participation in the study could have any amount of quilting experience, and could

come from any educational, cultural, or regional background. The only requirements for

participation were that the individual had started at least one quilting project within six

months prior to the beginning of the study, and was over the age of 18.

Quilters who frequented local quilt shops, such as Thimble Pleasures and

Mulberry Silks, were asked to participate in the study. Additionally, members of local

Quilter's Guilds, such as the Triangle Modern Quilt Guild and the Durham-Orange

Quilter's Guild were approached. Lastly, quilters known to the interviewer were asked to participate.

This population of convenience was augmented through snowball sampling. This technique, which is often appropriate to use when members of a particular population are hard to locate, consists of known participants identifying other individuals who may wish to participate in the study. Participants were entered into a raffle to win one of three $35 gift certificates to the fabric store of their choice as an inducement to participate.

To recruit participants, the interviewer gave a presentation to each of the quilt guild sessions, and asked the individuals present to participate in the study. Flyers advertising the study were displayed at local quilt stores and on community bulletin boards asking interested participants to contact the interviewer. Quilters known by the interviewer were asked to participate directly.

Ethics Issues

All possible precautions were taken during this process to maintain the highest ethical standards of research. In order to maintain ethical integrity throughout the study, participants were required to read and sign an informed consent sheet outlining the purpose of the study and the way the results will be used. All identifying information tying participants to their interview responses was eliminated from the process, and the interview transcripts were destroyed after the final analysis of data was complete.

A secondary ethical consideration was the subjectivity of the researcher. As a member of the quilting community, the author of this study was invested in the topic and was known to some of the participants. As a precaution to avoid biased results, rigorous pre-testing of the interview instrument was conducted to facilitate impartiality in the way

questions were worded, and all measures will be taken to adhere to the interview schedule.

Procedure

Once participants agreed to partake in the study, a time for the researcher to interview the participant was scheduled. Each interview took approximately 30 – 45 minutes, and took place at a public location mutually convenient to the researcher and participant, such as a coffee shop. Once settled, the interviewer explained the purpose of the study to the participant, gave them on overview of what would happen, and had them sign any appropriate consent forms. The interviewer then began the interview. During this process, the interviewer asked the participant questions related to the information needs quilters have, and asked the participant to mark their preferred information sources on the information horizon map. Once the interview was complete, the interviewer thanked the participant for their time, and contacted them at a later date to inform them of the gift card drawing results. Transcripts of each interview were prepared after the conclusion of each session.

Description of Instruments

During the interview, the researcher was guided by a set of questions to ask participants. Though the semi-structured interview allowed a certain amount of freedom in the way questions were asked, this prepared guide provided the interview process with structure and continuity. The questions were clustered around the three principal research questions guiding this study, and were intended to elicit responses from participants that would be useful in determining what quilters' information needs were,

what information channels quilters preferred, and what motivated quilters to use Internet-based resources. At a more detailed level, this instrument established participants' experience with quilting, their motivations for engaging in the activity, the information they required to begin new projects, the sources they preferred to use to find that information, if their preferred information channels have changed over time, and if/how quilters used Internet resources.

In addition to being asked interview questions, an information horizon map was given to participants, and they were asked to mark down their preferred information sources on the form throughout the course of the interview. This acted as a visual aid to help participants identify their most used information channels, and helped validate the verbal information they supplied during the interview. An example of this map can be seen in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Once the appropriate data was collected, it was analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. Transcripts of each of the interviews were compared in order to discover emerging patterns, and the data extrapolated from each transcript was coded into categories. Since data gathered during interviews can be open-ended and unpredictable, a coding scheme was developed only after all the interviews had been conducted and transcribed. Analysis of this type is inductive, and allows coding categories to emerge flexibly through a close examination of the content. This method is particularly useful, as it can be used to identify the values and attitudes of study participants.   Due to the subjective nature of qualitative analysis, the information coded from interview transcripts was compared to the externally documented information horizon maps. These maps,

which have undergone a similar comparative coding process, reinforced the validity of the interview results.

Method Advantages and Limitations

Semi-structured interviews are ideal for investigating the information needs and preferred information channels of quilters, as they permit for a wide variety of participant response and are able to elicit first-hand accounts. Additionally, semi-structured interviews allow for the thoughts, perceptions, and motivations of each quilter to be recorded. According to Babbie (1999), gaining access to these kinds of measurements points to "the superior validity of field research" (p. 281) compared to other methodological instruments.

The interview technique does have some drawbacks, however. It will not allow for data capture in a natural or unobtrusive environment, and - since interviewing is a qualitative method, rather than quantitative - it is often difficult to extrapolate statistically meaningful descriptions of target populations from the data gathered. Additionally, since semi-structured interviews do not rely on a fixed set of questions, but instead encourage guided conversation, it is difficult to repeat the process precisely, diminishing its reliability. This unreliability can be compounded by the subjective nature of the data gathered.

Results

<u>Overview</u>

Ten quilters participated in this study. Nine were female and one was male; they ranged in ages from mid-twenties to mid-forties. As stated in the methodology section, all of the quilters interviewed had worked on a quilting project within the last six months. Additionally, they all lived near the Chapel Hill area, and had used the Internet to varying degrees to satisfy their quilt-related information needs. The information gained from interview sessions, in addition to the Information Horizon Map completed by each participant, was used to answer the three main research questions of this study.

Results from interview responses, coupled with data harvested from the Information Horizon Maps, showed the emergence of several clear trends. The predominant findings demonstrated that quilters have a variety of inspirational and technical information needs, and that they utilize four main Information Channels to satisfy their information needs: print-based resources, the Internet, other individuals, and quilt related organizations. Interestingly, participants chose to use different Information Channels depending on if they were browsing for information, or searching with a specific goal in mind. Additionally, results showed that participants did engage with quilting as a form of serious leisure, exhibited ELIS behaviors to satisfy their information needs, and demonstrated a strong preference for using Internet-based resources.

Before addressing those questions, however, a brief profile of each of the participants and their motivations for quilting is warranted.

<u>Profiles</u>

Quilter A: Female, early thirties, Graduate Student

This participant has been quilting for 2 years, and typically completes 1-2 quilts per year. She enjoys quilting because it is an "artistic outlet", and because the detailed work is "meditative…you can lose yourself in it". She enjoys taking quilting classes, as they are a good way to learn new techniques from experienced quilters who can offer guidance. Thus far, each of her completed quilts has been "more technically difficult than the last".

Quilter B: Female, early-forties, Quilt Shop Manager

This participant has been quilting for 16 years, and begins an average of 5 quilts per year. She likes to quilt because the process "focuses your mind" and is "an escape from other things going on in your life". She enjoys the mechanical interaction with the sewing machine, and finds it satisfying to create "something beautiful" that other people will like. Although an experienced quilter, Quilter B still relies on patterns to help her complete her quilt tops.

Quilter C: Female, late twenties, Librarian

This participant has been quilting seriously for the past 5 years, though she has completed some hand quilting from the age of 8. She starts 2-3 quilting projects per month, with a goal of completing 1 of those quilts each month. She enjoys quilting because she likes to "make things", and finds that seeing the final result of her work is creatively satisfying. Quilter C does not buy patterns, but tries to construct them on her own. She engages in a lot of 'Block of the Month' and 'Quilt-Along' challenges online.

Quilter D: Female, mid-twenties, Graduate Student

This participant has been quilting seriously for the last 8 years, and sewing for the 5 years prior to that. On average, she completes 2 projects per year. Quilter D has always "enjoyed crafts" and "working with her hands", and so finds those aspects of quilting to be very satisfying. She was taught to quilt by her grandmother, and enjoyed the experience since it was a way for the two of them to share an activity and time together.

Quilter E: Female, mid-thirties, High School Teacher

This participant has been quilting for 1.5 years, and has completed 3 quilts thus far. She enjoys quilting because "it is a way to incorporate textiles into art", and because "every quilt tells a story". She finds the repetitive nature of cutting and sewing to be relaxing, and likes working with the colors – it is "like putting the pieces of a puzzle together". Quilter E always needs to work from a pattern, and ensures that each project is more difficult than the last.

Quilter F: Female, late forties, Artist

This participant has been quilting for 19 years. On average, she completes 8 – 10 quilts a year, depending on their size. As an artist, Quilter F finds quilting a satisfying way to use color and textiles creatively. She finds the quilting process to be "stimulating", and enjoys the "social aspects" of quilting with others. Quilter F is a 'scrap' quilter, and enjoys the complexity of combining 75 - 200 fabrics in each quilt. She does not typically work from patterns, but instead prefers to improvise her design.

Quilter G: Female, early thirties, Graduate Student

This participant has been quilting for 7 years. She typically completes 4 quilts per year. Quilter G enjoys the creativity in quilting, and particularly changing the suggested fabrics or design of a pattern to "make a quilt your own". Like many of the other study participants, she finds the repetitive work of quilting to be "Zen" and relaxing. She has recently turned to repurposing fabric to use as material for her quilts, and is working towards making larger-sized quilts than previously before.

Quilter H: Female, mid-thirties, currently a stay-at-home mother, though recently worked for a large corporation

This participant has been quilting for 9 years. On average, she completes 6 quilts per year. She finds quilting to be a very interactive experience, and enjoys how the "color, texture, and scale" of a quilt can be changed, and she like work from patterns she has modified. Quilter H finds she can "zone out" to the sound of the sewing machine, and uses quilting as a way to relax from other parts of her life.

Quilter I: Male, mid-thirties, Brand Manager for Corporate Marketing

This participant has been quilting for 2.5 years. He starts almost 20 quilting projects per year, though estimates he only completes about 60% of them. Quilter I has "always needed creative outlets" in his life, and finds the design and color of modern fabrics to be appealing. He is deeply involved in participating in online swaps, and runs his own quilt-related blog.

Quilter J: Female, late thirties, currently a stay-at-home mother, though recently worked for a museum

This participant has been quilting for 7 years. She typically completes 6-7 quilts per year, of varying sizes. As a stay-at-home mother, quilting provides her with the opportunity to engage in a "fulfilling hobby, while still making useful household decorations and bedding". Quilter J appreciates that the construction of quilt tops "can be worked in steps – you only have to dedicate as much time as you have available to each sitting, and can pick up where you left off next time". She tries to learn a new construction technique with each quilt that she makes, and almost always works from a pattern.

Research Question 1: What Are the Information Needs of Quilters?

The first research question pertained to the quilters' overall informational requirements, including their creative, inspirational, and technical needs. Current quilting projects, use of materials and patterns, technical information for quilt construction, and inspirational motives are discussed in this section. Use of the Internet fits within this context, though these connections will be discussed in greater detail later in the study.

Careful coding of the participants' interview responses and Information Horizon Maps identified eight information needs held by the participants of this study.

Table 1. Quilters' Information Needs

Information Need	Participant
Inspiration	A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
Supply List	A, B, C, D, E, H, I, J
Pattern	A, B, D, E, G, H, J
Technical Information on Construction	A, D, E, F, I, J
Inventory of Personal Fabric Supply	B, F
Audience (Who will receive the quilt)	I
Color Theory/Interaction	E
Information of materials used (fiber content, fabric texture, if a fabric is organic or know to cause allergies)	I

The need for creative inspiration was identified by all ten of the quilters involved, and was frequently noted as the most critical element needed before beginning a quilting project.

> **Quilter B:** *I can not start a project until I have some sort of visual inspiration – usually it is a sample quilt or something another quilter has made.*

> **Quilter E:** *Quilting ties us to history, and each quilt has a story to tell. If I have not been inspired to develop and tell a story, it is hard for me to get started on a project.*

> **Quilter F:** *I am always inspired by an image first. From there I am able to work out block sizes, setting, and color.*

> **Quilter J:** *Quilting is art. You have to feel it inside of you. If you start a project without inspiration, you are simply copying a pattern, you are not creating art.*

In looking for inspiration, participants noted twelve sources they most frequently use to find inspiration. Among the top ranked were: the visual appeal of fabric, quilting blogs, personal notebooks or files the participants had created to track pictures and ideas that inspired them, books on quilting, and other individuals known to the quilter.

Table 2. Sources Quilters use to find Inspiration

Source	Participant
Fabric	A, B, C, D, G, H, I, J
Blogs	B, C, E, F, G, H, I, J
Personal 'Inspiration Notebook'	C, E, F, G, H, I, J
Books	B, D, E, F, G, H
Other People	A, G, H, I
Sample Quilts	B, E, I, J
Magazines	B, D, E, F
Serendipitous Finds	D, E, F, I
Flickr	F, I
Patterns	B, C, D
Retail Stores (online and physical)	F
Classes	A
Catalogs and Non-quilting Books	G

When referring to fabric, the participants specifically noted that the color, texture, and print of fabrics helped to inspire them, in addition to the process of finding fabrics that work well together in a single quilt. Several quilters specifically used fabrics created by a particular designer, or within the same fabric collection, while others tried to blend unexpected or non-traditional fabric prints.

Quilter A*: I mostly draw my inspiration from the fabric. First I choose the focus fabric, and then the complementary fabrics. Fabric choice is what allows you to personalize a quilt.*

Quilter B*: I am often inspired by the fabrics in my stash. I chose the project I am working on right now so that I could use up some of my batiks.*

Quilter E*: I am really drawn in by the colors of fabric. It is almost overwhelming to walk into a fabric store – there are so many choices. Once I find a fabric or two that I like, though, I can really start to see a design for a quilt come together in my mind. Although I will usually choose most of the fabrics I use for a quilt from the same collection, I usually like to throw in an unexpected choice or two to make the design really 'pop'. Seeing the way fabrics are used in sample quilts is also very inspiring, too. The same pattern can look completely different depending on your color palate and combinations.*

Quilter G: *Colorists use color as the primary focus of their work rather than design, composition, tension, etc. Like many quilters, I was attracted to quilting because of the brilliant possibilities of color use and over time, my quilts have come to be color studies. I have challenged myself to work with a wide variety of palettes, especially ones that I don't particularly like so that I could learn how to make use of them. I learned a lot about the use and value of muddy colors - the ones that don't appeal to most people. Most of my quilts use lots of fabrics so that I can build up a more complex color story.*

Quilter J: *I make a lot of decorative wall quilts, so the way that the color and texture of the fabric interplays with the colors of a room is really*

stimulating for me. Right now I am really inspired by fabrics designed by Amy Butler, Patty Young, Sandi Henderson, and Kate Spain. Their designs are just scrumptious.

After fabric choice, participants frequently relied on quilting blogs for inspiration.

Quilter B*: I like to look at blogs because you can see the imperfection in other people's quilts – they are a realistic view of what people are accomplishing.*

Quilter E: *I read far too many quilt blogs. There are so many great ones out there. I like them so much because you can really get a feel for current trends in quilting, like modern quilting or munki quilts, and they are full of pictures of completed projects or blocks. I find it much easier to work on my own projects if I can see a finished product of something similar someone else has done.*

Quilter I: *Blogs are a good way to become engaged in a network of quilters, to be inspired by the work others are doing.*

Quilter J: *I read quilting blogs every day. It is really helpful to me to see the color combinations other people are using. I sometimes feel weak in that area, and looking at other people's color perspective really helps. Also on blogs, bloggers tend to post pictures of their work while it is in progress, and not just the finished product. That is helpful because it reminds me that I can work in steps and don't need to complete my quilts on any sort of schedule.*

Quilting blogs were useful to the participants in a variety of ways. Not only did they provide pictures of completed quilts for the quilters to use as models for pattern or color choice, but they also presented a realistic view of how other people work through the quilting process. These attributes served to inspire participants both creatively and in their time management expectations. Many of the quilters also noted the ease with which they could access blogs, and the found round-the-clock content comforting for when they needed advice during hours when they couldn't contact friends or quilting professionals.

After blogs, participants most relied upon notebooks or files of their own construction for inspiration. Several of the participants (Quilters E, F, G, H) created physical notebooks, in which they kept pictures of quilts cut from magazines or catalogs, drawings, illustrations, notes, or serendipitous finds (pretty napkins, a nicely colored flower, etc). Other participants (Quilters C, I, J) kept online inspiration files, and used either Flickr, delicious, or Google Docs to keep track of items they felt might contribute to future projects.

Books also played a large role for quilters seeking inspiration. Although the majority of participants found books most useful when seeking technical information, they are full of well-photographed quilts. These photographs usually show quilts in their entirety, and are typically accompanied by images of details in each quilt, highlighting fabric choice, a particular construction technique, or a quilting design. All of these elements were noted by participants as having motivated them to try new techniques in their own quilts. Similarly, participants were also influenced by other quilters to try new quilting concepts.

Quilter E: *Sometimes I'm a chicken about trying new block construction, but I am always motivated by my quilting friends, who produce such beautiful – and varied – quilts.*

Quilter I: *Collaborative creation is what really inspires me. Connecting with others and making things together, that's what I find to be satisfying.*

Beyond finding inspiration, the majority of participants were most challenged by the need to find information relating to the supplies they would need to complete the quilt, finding an appropriate pattern, and identifying the technical skills needed to construct the quilt design. A few of the participants also felt it necessary to research the inventory of their personal stash, the preferences of the person who might receive the quilt, assistance with color theory and selection, and information regarding the materials used in the quilt's construction (fiber content, fabric texture, if a fabric is organic or known to cause allergies). The ways in which participants identified appropriate resources and information channels to meet these information needs will be discussed in the next section.

Research Question 2: What Information Channels do Quilters Prefer?

      The results of this study revealed that the participants searched for information in a variety of ways, using multiple Information Channels. Utilizing these channels to access information, participants demonstrated a variety of searching strategies depending on the purpose of their search, and displayed obvious preferences for certain information sources in particular contexts.

      For the specific purpose of quilting, participants identified four main Information Channels that they utilized to fill their information gaps: printed materials, personal interactions with other quilters, organizations and associations, and a variety of Internet sources. Within each of these Information Channels, a number of individual sources were listed. Notably, although Internet sources comprise only one of the four Information Channels, its individual sources contain 53% of the total sources mentioned.

Table 3. Information Channels Identified by Quilters

Information Channel	Sources Cited in that Channel
Printed Materials	Books
	Magazines
	Patterns
	Inspiration Files
	Catalogs
	Books
Personal Interactions	Classes
	Interactions with Other People
Organizations	Quilt Shows
	Quilt Associations
	Quilt Guilds
	Retail Stores
	Museums

Internet Sources	General Internet searches
	YouTube
	Blogs
	Flickr
	Amazon/Google Books preview
	Social Networks
	Yahoo Groups
	Inspiration Files
	Triangle Modern Quilt Guild networking website
	Online forums
	Online swaps
	Email and other direct online communication
	Online Retail Stores
	Twitter
	Craftster
	Google Reader
Miscellaneous	Sample quilts
	Serendipitous finds

It is important to note that all ten participants completed the forms, recording anywhere from 6 – 21 sources each. The average number of sources listed per participant was 11. Across the Information Horizon Maps, 16 sources were listed in the Inner Circle, 18 sources were listed in the Middle Circle, and 18 sources were listed in the Outer Circle. An overview of the ways in which participants prioritized their information sources is warranted before an analysis of the data is presented.

Table 4. Sources that participants placed in the Inner Circle

Information Source Mentioned	Participant
Blogs	C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J
General Web Searches	D, F, G, H, I, J
Books	A, D, H, J
Flickr	C, F, I
Google Reader	E, G, I
Magazines	B, E
Patterns	B, J
Classes	A
Direct online communication with others	I
Inspiration file	H
Online swaps	I
Other people	B
Sample Quilts	B
Social networks	F
Yahoo groups	F
YouTube	B

The Inner Circle, which indicated sources participants used most frequently in filling their information needs, was dominated by Internet sources, followed by print-based Information Channels. Eight of the participants noted that blogs were their preferred source for finding information (both technical and inspirational), and six favored general keyword searches on the Internet. Books ranked third with a total of four participants quoting the source as a primary means of research, but the fourth and fifth ranked spots belonged to the Internet sources Flickr and Google Reader. It is notable, and warrants further discussion in the next sections, that out of the five sources used most by participants to meet their quilt-related information needs, four of them are found on the Internet.

Table 5. Sources that participants placed in the Middle Circle

Information Source Mentioned	Participant
Books	B, C, E, F, G
Magazines	C, F, H, I, J
Other people	A, D, E, F, G
General Web Searches	A, B, C, E,
Retail stores	E, F, I
Patterns	D, E
Sample Quilts	F, J
Quilt Shows	E, F
YouTube	A, J
Amazon/Google Book previews	E
Blogs	B
Catalogs	G
Classes	G
Flickr	E
Museums	F
Quilt Associations	E
Quilt Guilds	E
Twitter	I

In the Middle Circle, which indicated the sources participants used with moderate frequently in filling their information needs, print-based sources and personal interactions were the more prevalent Information Channels noted. Books, magazines, and interactions with others were the three most recommended sources, with five listings each. Only one reference to an Internet source was mentioned in the top five rankings, which is an interesting contrast to the data collected from the Inner Circle.

Table 6. Sources that participants placed in the Outer Circle

Information Source Mentioned	Participant
Classes	E, F, I, J
Patterns	A, G, H
Serendipitous Finds	E, F, I
Triangle Modern Quilt Guild networking website	E, G, I
YouTube	C, E, H
Inspiration File	E, F
Magazines	A, G
Museums	E, J
Other people	I, J
TV shows	D, E
Blogs	A
Craftster	I
Books	I
Online Forums	H
Quilt Guilds	I
Retail stores	G
Sample Quilts	E
Yahoo Groups	I

In the Outer Circle, which indicated the sources participants used least frequently in filling their information needs, a variety of Information Channels were noted, including interactions with other quilters, print-based sources, and a miscellaneous sources. None of the five top-ranked sources in this category overlap with the top five of the Inner or Middle Circles, though there is an overlap in Information Channels. With only four Information Channels concretely identified, however, this is not unexpected.

The data collected from the Information Horizon Maps revealed one noteworthy trend: the majority of participants indicated they turned to Internet-based resources most frequently (Inner Circle) for their information needs, and consulted printed materials, interactions with other quilters, and information from organizations less frequently. This

tendency may have some correlation with the ways in which quilters search for information, which will be discussed at this point.

As part of the interview process, participants were asked to consider times when they browsed for information, and times when they searched with a specific purpose or goal in mind. In reviewing the information provided by the participants, several emerging themes became clear. First, the participants turned to different sets of sources depending on whether they were browsing or searching for something specific. Second, the ways in which the participants interacted with the Information Channels also differed depending on the purpose of their search. Last, participants were able to articulate quite clearly as to how they evaluated the purpose and effectiveness of the resources they used.

A discussion of participants' searching habits when browsing for information will be discussed first.

Table 7. Sources Quilters use when Browsing for Information

Source	Participant
Blogs	B, C, D, E, F, G, I, J
Flickr	C, E, F, I
Magazines	E, H, J
Internet Searches	A, D
YouTube	A, B,
Online Retail Stores	C

As can be seen from Table 7, of the six sources participants indicated they used when browsing for information, all were Internet-based with the exception of magazines. Contrastingly, of the top 6 sources the participants used when searching for specific information, only 2 were Internet-based (see Table 8). An examination of anecdotes and

information provided by the participants during their interviews revealed why such a difference may exist

Table 8. Sources Quilters use when Searching for Specific Information

Source	Participant
Internet Searches	A, C, D, E, F, G, H, J
Other People	B, C, D, E, F, J
Books	A, C, D, E, J
Blogs	E, H
Classes	A, J
Magazines	F
Physical Retail Stores	D, I
YouTube	B, E
Flickr	I
Twitter	I
Online Message Boards	D
Yahoo Groups	F

When simply browsing for information, rather than searching for an explicit purpose, participants indicated that they were primarily looking to find inspiration, enjoy leisure time, and interact with other quilters. For many of the participants, this was most easily accomplished through Internet sources, as they are easily accessible and offer a variety of free content.

> **Quilter A**: *I find I browse a lot on YouTube. Once you watch one video, there is a list of other videos you may like on the right. It is easy to start clicking through them all. I also spend time on the Thimble Pleasures website [a retail store] for pattern ideas.*

> **Quilter C:** *Most of my browsing is done online. I read blogs through Google Reader and look at Flickr groups, too. I like them because users post images of their works-in-progress online. It is nice to see what other*

people are doing, and the steps they take to get there. I also look at retail stores, like the Moda Bakeshop, for inspiration.

Quilter E: *When I'm just trying to kill a little time I usually look at quilting blogs. I currently subscribe to about 40 of them in my Google Reader account, so I am alerted whenever new content is posted. I find it stimulating just to pop up online a few times a day and look at the beautiful things people have posted – it keeps me refreshed when I am bogged down in work or something stressful. I also get a change to see beautiful designs other quilters are creating, and the colors they are putting together. It gives me lots of ideas for quilts of my own. I also browse photo-sharing sites like Flickr for the same reason.*

Quilter I: *Mostly I turn to blogs and Flickr. A lot of new information gets posted to them, and it is quick to browse through.*

Quilter J: *I'm inspired by pictures of other quilts, and I really enjoy looking at them. They are pieces of art, and they make me feel nice. Books usually and magazines usually have great photos, but they are expensive to buy and the content is static. Browsing blogs and photo sharing sites gives me a limitless quantity of images to look at, and is free.*

Several of the participants also indicated an interest in magazines as a source of browsing, though no other print materials were mentioned as an information source when browsing by any of the quilters:

Quilter E: *I know this is silly, but I really like getting magazines in the mail. It is always exciting to get to the mailbox and find a quilting magazine inside. They are really fun because they have lots of colorful content and new items every month. And to be honest, I get as much info looking at the ads as I do the articles.*

Quilter F: *I like the act of flipping through the pages of a magazine. It's relaxing.*

Quilter J: *Magazines are fun because they can be so specialized. You can get a magazine just on making Japanese quilts, or on Fiber Art. It's really fun to browse through those for ideas, since they typically aren't the types of things I make.*

Additionally, the majority of participants noted that when they browsed for information using the 6 sources listed in Table 7, that the went directly to bookmarked sites, blogs or Flickr groups that they belonged to, or magazines they were already familiar with. When searching to fill specific information needs, however, participants relied mostly on keyword searches in Google or other search engines, and then turned to Information Channels other than the Internet for their needs.

Quilter B*: Being around other quilters all day, I tend to ask them when I have a specific question or need advice. After that, I search for demonstrations on YouTube.*

Quilter C: *I ask my mom. She's been quilting a long time, and usually has the answer I need. If not that, then I will look at "The Art of Classic*

Quilt Making" [a book]. If I can't find the answer I need in under 20 minutes, then I will do a keyword search online.

Quilter D: *Definitely books and people, and the Internet. I used to quilt with my grandmother, and could ask her. Now I use the books she left me and check on the Internet.*

Quilter E: *I buy books that have a lot of foundational information in them – construction techniques, bed sizes, how to miter a corner – stuff like that. So when I have a construction question, I usually look in books. If I am looking for a pattern or need a demonstration of a technique, I definitely Google it. Other than that, I ask advice from the ladies at the quilt shop or take a class.*

Quilter F: *I get a lot of information from the Yahoo Groups I belong to, and recently I have done a lot of keyword searches to find information on how other people have set up their longarm studios.*

Quilter I: *I have found Flickr and twitter to be really useful for getting information. If you put a question out there, a lot of people will give you feedback. Flickr is more conversational, while you get a lot of quick responses from Twitter.*

Quilter J: *Books are the best when you need solid construction information. People have been building blocks the same way for hundreds of years, so the quilting reference books have it down by now. Usually I talk to other people, though, if I need help modifying a pattern or picking out colors.*

In response to identifying information needs for which the Internet might be unsatisfying as and Information Channel, Quilters A, E, F, and J stated that getting other quilter's opinions on their works in progress was important, and that they preferred in-person contact for that, while Quilters B, E, G, I, and J noted that they would not purchase fabric from the Internet without having seen it in-person first.

In investigating the Information Channels preferred by quilters, several patterns have emerged. Participants identified four main Information Channels they used to fill their inspirational and technical information gaps: printed materials, personal interactions with other quilters, organizations and associations, and a variety of Internet sources. Notably, the sources that quilters tended to use most frequently were found on the Internet (see Table 4). Blogs, photo-sharing sites, YouTube, and general keyword searches were the sources used with most regularity, and all 10 participants noted that they now use quilt-related Internet sources more frequently than they did within the last 2-5 years. However, participants did note that they incorporated Information Channels other than the Internet into their search strategies with more regularity when searching with a specific goal in mind. The reasons why participants are demonstrating a preference for Internet-based sources will be addressed in the next section.

Research Question 3: What are Quilters' Motivations for Internet Use?

The data gathered from interviews and Information Horizon Maps indicated that the study participants were regularly using the Internet as an Information Channel. The motivations for selecting the Internet as a resource will be discussed in this section. Of

the 31 information sources identified by participants (Table 3), 53% of them were

Internet-based. Among these, 100% of participants acknowledged using blogs and

general keyword searches, while more than 40% of participants utilized YouTube, Flickr,

and online retail stores.

In assessing the nature of the identified Internet sources, 69% had a social

networking aspect to them, meaning that the websites allowed (or encouraged) the

posting of original content or messages by the owner of the site and of his or her readers.

19% of the sites were for informational purposes only, and included general keyword

searches, retail stores, and Amazon or Google Book previews. Lastly, 12% of the sites

helped participants to organize their quilt-related Internet content.

Table 9. Percent of Participants using each Internet Source

Information Source	% of Participants
Social Sites	
Blogs	100%
YouTube	60%
Flickr	40%
Triangle Modern Quilt Guild networking website	30%
Yahoo Groups	20%
Craftster	10%
Direct online communication with others	10%
Online swaps	10%
Social networks	10%
Twitter	10%
Online Forums	10%
Informational Sites	
General Web Searches	100%
Online Retail stores	40%
Amazon/Google Book previews	10%
Organizational Sites	
Google Reader	30%
Online Inspiration File	30%

The motivations for why participants used the Internet in general, and specifically for these purposes, was explained in their interview responses. In terms of using the Internet in general, participants identified the following as appealing qualities: ease in accessing the Internet any time of day, the variety and quality of content available, the diverse types of resources offered, the ability to integrate quilt-related Internet browsing and searching into existing daily activities, and cost.

> **Quilter A:** *I'm already on the Internet 2-3 hours a day, so it is easy to incorporate quilting sites into that. I mostly use the web because it is convenient.*

> **Quilter C:** *The Internet is free and bountiful, and...it is easier to search for something online than it is to spend time flipping through books for the same information.*

> **Quilter E:** *The Internet offers such a wide variety of quilting information, from traditional methods to really current trends. You can also get all sorts of things, from video tutorials to pdfs and pictures. Besides, books cost money and the Internet is free. Who could beat that, especially if you know where to find the good sites?*

> **Quilter J:** *I am a night person, so using the Internet to find information is much better for my schedule than trying to attend classes. Plus, classes can be pretty expensive, and I already pay for Internet access.*

Most of the participants in this study indicated that the Internet was their preferred Information Channel when they needed to solve a quilt-related problem or find new

quilting information. This was due, in part, to the ability of the Internet to link users

easily and quickly from one website to another. 70% of the participants involved

(Quilters B, D, E, F, G, I, and J) all admitted that one of the primary ways they found

new quilt-related websites was by linking from one blog to another. As a feature on

many blogs, the author of the blog will display a list of additional blogs he or she likes.

This list is hyperlinked, so that visitors to the blog may also visit the recommended blogs.

This process was prevalent among the participants of this study, and was even listed as

being an enjoyable and engaging task. During the interview process, Quilter E professed

to following over 40 blogs, most of which were found by linking from others, while

Quilter I professed to following more than 400 blogs.

Participants also appreciated the ability of various websites to help them organize

their quilt-related Internet content, such as blog subscriptions, and cited them as a

primary motivating factor behind their Internet use. 30% of participants utilized

delicious to bookmark their favorite quilting websites, 30% used Google Reader to

manage their blog subscriptions, 20% used Flickr to track pictures of quilts they liked,

20% maintained their own blogs to organize their quilting content, and 10% used Google

Docs to organize their information.

> **Quilter E:** *delicious is the best. I can bookmark all of my favorite*
>
> *websites, and then access them from anywhere, I used to use the regular*
>
> *bookmarking function on my laptop, but then I could never remember all*
>
> *the sites I had in there when I was at work or on vacation. Using delicious*
>
> *has made it so much easier for me to get access to my websites at any*
>
> *time…I would also die without Google Reader. I subscribe to so many*

blogs now that it was getting really hard to check in on them every day. Now all of the new posts are listed in my Reader account, so I don't have to go out searching for them. It saves me a lot of time.

Quilter J: *Flickr really works well for me. I can post or tag all of the quilt pictures that I like there, and they are all in one spot for me to see. That way, when I need a new idea, I can just browse through my Flickr account and see what looks inspiring at the moment. It also means I don't have to keep a paper notebook anymore. I sued to clip out pictures of quilts I liked and paste them into a notebook, but I hated doing it and never really looked at it much. Flicker is really easy, and it is fun to see what other people have in their photostreams too.*

Quilter H: *I used to have my own blog. Mostly I kept it so that I could post my quilting goals for each month, and then list which ones I had accomplished.*

Quilter C: *I use a Google Docs spreadsheet to organize all of my quilting projects. I list the quilt I am interested in, the url to the picture of it, my fabric choices for the project, and my timeline for when I want to complete it. It keeps me organized, and I can access it from anywhere.*

Quilter D: *I maintain my own private blog. I keep links to my favorite websites on it so they are easy for me to find.*

In addition to organizing content, these web-based programs were enjoyable for participants to use, saved them time, and made it easy to access information from any

computer, at any time. These were all motivating factors that influenced participants

decision to prioritize the Internet as an Information Channel over other sources.

Lastly, participants valued the social aspect of many quilting, social networking, or photo-sharing websites, and cited the ability to share their work, comment on the work of others, and learn new skills through posted tutorials and swaps as reasons for preferring the Internet as an Information Channel. 40% of participants noted that they comment on the blog posts of others, 30 % communicated with others through quilt-related social networking sites, 30% used Flickr to converse with other quilters, 30% participated in online challenges or swaps, and 10% participated in online forums such as Yahoo Groups.

> **Quilter E:** *I have found Flickr to be really useful, lately. You can tag someone's photo and post a comment on it. Usually, within a few hours other people have responded. You can also use it to set up groups or quilt-alongs, or to just ask a general question. The people on it are really friendly and always try to give good advice or suggestions.*
>
> **Quilter I:** *I interact with other quilters online in two main ways: in an informational way, and for collaborative creation. The first way is mostly for me to gain knowledge and inspiration. I look at what others have made, follow tutorials, and participate in quilt-alongs. It is self-guided learning. The thing that I really enjoy, though, is connecting with others in a creative way and making things together. I participate in a lot of swaps and bees. They are great because for your end result, each block*

has been made by someone different. You have to give to get – it makes

the community stronger.

Quilter J: *Commenting on blog posts is a great way to start a dialog. It*

seems like there are a ton of blogs or other quilting website out there, but

once you start communicating with other quilters, you realize that it is a

pretty small and dedicated network. You can really get to know people.

Unlike work professionals, who may prefer to search for information through

specific Information Channels, the quilters in this study utilized a variety of Information

Channels to help meet their information needs. Although they identified four

Information Channels through which they regularly accessed quilt-related information,

the Internet ranked highest among their preferences, encompassing 53% of the total

information sources listed by the participants, due mainly to its flexibility as an access

point, the variety of updated content it provided, its usefulness in helping participants to

organize their quilt-related Internet content, and its ability to connect quilters virtually to

one another. These attributes helped participants satisfy their quilt-related information

needs and discover new quilt-related content in ways unique from the other three

Information Channels.

Discussion

The findings of this study directly tie in to the research conducted by Stebbins, Savolanien, Kari and Hartel, Chang, and Rieh, situating quilting firmly within the contexts of serious leisure and ELIS. The participants involved in this study all demonstrated an ongoing interest in quilting over time, accompanied by a desire for continuing education of quilting techniques, both in a self-guided fashion and through more formal avenues. All participants found quilting to be a satisfying endeavor, even though it was often difficult to complete and required specialized knowledge and repeated practice of construction techniques. These activities directly correlated to Stebbins' (1982) identification of serious leisure as a "systematic pursuit of an …activity that captivates the participant with its challenges and complexity" (p. 255), and which is highly substantial, interesting, and fulfilling, and requires a combination of special skills, knowledge, and experience.

Additionally, Stebbins' (2009) notation that serious leisure activities are broken into a "distinctive set of interrelated actions or steps that must be followed to achieve the outcome or product that the participant seeks" (p. 620) is reflected in the steps quilters take to complete a quilt. It is within the context of finding inspiration, a pattern to follow, knowledge of the necessary construction techniques, and the identification of the appropriate supplies that quilters are confronted with information needs. The ways in which the study participants satisfied their informational needs revealed a proclivity by quilters to engage in ELIS behaviors.

According to Savolanien (1995), ELIS' fundamental undertaking is the acquisition of information by individuals who need to solve everyday problems not

associated with their occupational tasks. Consequently, the search for information regarding leisurely activities is a prime example of that premise. As has been demonstrated by this study, quilters have a variety of informational and inspirational needs, for which they need to find solutions outside of the work environment. Additionally, study participants were quite adept at incorporating their quilting needs into their 'way of life' and 'mastery of life'.

Way of life, or the "system of socially and culturally determined dispositions" (Savolainen, 1995, p. 262) that helps an individual order or prioritize the activities he or she is presented with daily, was exhibited by quilters in several ways. First, study participants were able to incorporate their information searching – especially when utilizing the Internet as an Information Channel – into their existing schedules without undue burden. Many of the participants noted that they already spent time searching the Internet everyday, and that incorporating their quilt-based information needs into that process was an easy process. This notion is supported by Rieh, who hypothesized that the integration of the Internet into the daily lives of most people has significantly impacted the way ELIS behaviors are practiced in the home, which, incidentally, is where most quilters conduct their activities.

Second, the feeling of self-satisfaction participants felt upon engaging in quilting meant that many of them devoted a good portion of their free time to pursuing this activity. Because of the enjoyment gained from this creative outlet, many of the participants ranked quilting as a priority in their lives. For many, this feeling was enhanced by engaging in the social network that developed around their quilting activities. In addition, these feelings of engaging in activities that are positive and

"transcend the daily grind" (Kari and Hartel, 2007, p. 1133) reinforce the notion that quilters are searching for information within the higher context of ELIS.

Mastery of life, or the way a person orients himself or herself in a "typical problem situation and seeks information to facilitate problem solving" (Savolainen, 1995, p. 265), was reflected through the ways in which study participants sought to satisfy their information needs. The development of distinct Information Channels, the ability to prioritize information sources, and the discrete search strategies utilized in differing problem solving contexts highlighted participants mastery of life in ELIS situations.

Chang's investigation of backpackers further enhances the argument that the behaviors associated with quilting are useful to investigations of serious leisure and ELIS. Chang's description of the ongoing specialized knowledge necessary to planning and executing a successful backpacking trip can be equated to the process of quilting. Her depiction of the information searching procedure as a three-pronged process is similar to the actions taken by quilters. Chang contends that backpackers have information needs before, during, and after their backpacking trips, and that each of the phases of this process is composed of discrete information search tasks. Based on the data acquired during this study, an argument can be made that quilters use a similar process; they often require distinct types of information before beginning a quilt, during the process of constructing the quilt, and after the completion of their quilts, and are skilled at using a variety of Information Channels to obtain the appropriate information for each context. Though this is a preliminary argument and requires data on a larger scale for full supported, the similarities between Chang's description of backpackers ELIS behaviors and those of the participants of this study are noticeable.

The data obtained during the course of this study clearly demonstrates the relationship between quilting, serious leisure, ELIS, and prioritization of Information Channels. The impact these relationships may have on the field of LIS will be discussed in the next section.

Summary

This study had several purposes. It aimed to (1) identify the information needs of quilters, (2) determine which information channels quilters preferred, and (3) ascertain what motivated quilters to use web-based resources. These areas of research are significant to the field of LIS, as they target a population unexplored by LIS researchers, draw attention to the value of the serious leisure perspective in LIS, highlight the need of libraries to cater to specific art communities, and provide an additional model of ELIS strategies. As has been demonstrated in the literature review, there are still many remaining gaps of knowledge within the body of LIS research. This study, by examining the information needs of quilters, has contributed to forming a more accurate framework to understand leisure and ELIS activities, thereby providing LIS researchers and practitioners with the appropriate knowledge to better provide necessary services.

In general, the field of LIS could profit from this study, as it can further enhance our knowledge about the way in which users gather information and structure their queries, how they incorporate information needs about leisure activities into their everyday lives, and how they utilized the Internet as an information channel within the framework of visual artistry, serious leisure, and ELIS practices. It can also reveal how individuals are searching for information outside of the library, and possibly begin to

assess the impact that the Internet is having on ELIS strategies.

Specifically, this study has shown that quilting is a rich activity informed by data received through multiple Information Channels. Quilters must seek, find, select, and synthesize information with the same persistence as any other researcher or occupational personnel. Due to the limited size of this study, however, many lines of research were raised that could not be fully addressed within the scope of this investigation. First the issue of search type and preference of Information Channels was raised. Preliminary data harvested from this study indicated that participants chose to use different Information Channels depending on if they were browsing for information, or searching with a specific goal in mind. According to the data retrieved, quilters who were browsing for information chose to use the Internet as their preferred Information Channel, and typically proceeded directly to bookmarked websites. Contrastingly, quilters searching for a specific piece of information turned to print-based Information Channels and other individuals first, and general keyword Internet searches second. This data, while far from conclusive, does raise the possibility that there is a correlation between information needs, preferred Information Channels, and search techniques.

Additionally, this is the first investigation to examine how quilters are using the Internet as an Information Channel. This study reported that the Internet was quilters' preferred Information Channel. Although this finding is substantiated other studies of Internet use and ELIS behaviors, the population of this study was too small and geographically homogeneous to yield substantive results. A study similar in nature to this one, yet conducted on a larger and more divers scale, could serve to answer both of these questions more satisfactorily.

     In conclusion, by using serious leisure as a lens through which to view the needs of patrons in general - and quilters specifically - LIS professionals can provide the appropriate services necessary to meet their informational needs. This study has yielded many avenues of investigation for LIS professional wishing to enhance the services they offer patrons. In using quilters as a model constituency, it is apparent that they rely on a variety of Information Channels, including printed materials, Internet sources, other individuals, and quilt-related organizations. Knowledge of this information could influence the items libraries add to their collections, the amount of computers they make available, and the public programming they develop. Additionally, knowledge about the way quilters seek information when they are simply browsing vs. searching on a specific topic could prompt different responses by librarians during a reference interview. Furthermore, many quilters indicated that they were involved with other quilters online through blogs and other forums. They also expressed a desire for a social networking website dedicated solely to quilters. This information might engender libraries to offer information literacy classes on blog development or social networking.

     This study of the information needs of quilters could have a valuable impact on the field of Library and Information Science. A review of the literature reveals that studies of non-occupational information seeking behaviors are a vital component to understanding library patron needs, yet this topic has only recently gained critical attention. This study has enhanced the current, if limited, body of existing ELIS research, while investigating an as-of-yet unstudied community of information seekers.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

1. Greet participant and make small talk, ease them into the interview.

2. Have participant read the information sheet and sign the consent form.

3. Have participant fill out a raffle ticket.

4. Begin audio recording the interview.

5. Provide participant with general information about the study: why it is being conducted and what the participant expectations are.

6. Inform participant about the Information Horizon Form (see Appendix C) and instruct them as to how to fill it out.

7. Use the interview guide to ask the participant questions about their quilting habits and information needs (see Appendix B).

8. Wind down the interview and thank the participant for their time.

9. Contact the participant if he/she won one of the raffle prizes.

Appendix B: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Research Question 1: What are the Information Needs of Quilters?

- o On average, how many quilting projects do you start per year?
- o How many of those projects do you finish?
- o Why do you like to quilt?
- o Tell me about a project you are working on right now, or one you finished recently.
  - What kind of quilt was it?
  - From where did you draw you inspiration?
  - How does this quilt compare to other quilts you have made?
- o What information did you need to start this new quilting project?
  - Do you have the same information needs for every quilt, or do they differ for each project? How so?
  - Are there particular sources you consult regularly?
  - Are their certain types of information you need again and again?
  - How do you gather information when you are about to start a new quilting project?
  - Is it ever frustrating or difficult to find the information you need?
  - Do you prefer images or text or both in your information sources?
- o When searching for quilting information, do you always search with a goal in mind, or do you sometimes 'browse'?
  - Can you describe a time when you searched for information with a specific goal in mind?
  - What sources did you turn to?
  - How did you know when your search had been successful?
- o Can you tell me about a time you browsed for information?
  - What sources did you turn to?
  - How did you know when your search had been successful?
- o Do you often find quilting information serendipitously?
  - Can you tell me about a time that that happened?
  - What source were you using?
- o Is there information you would like to know about, but have difficulty finding?

Research Question 2: What Information Channels do Quilters Prefer?

- o You mentioned X (refer to notes taken during interview) types of information sources during our conversation. Can you elaborate on why you use those types of sources when looking for quilt-related information?
- o Are there other kinds of sources you use as well?
- o Do you prefer to use one type of source over another?
- o Are certain types of sources more useful than others when approaching certain projects or information needs?
- o Are there sources you use now that you didn't use several years ago?

Research Question 3: What are Quilters' Motivations for Web Use?

- o Do you use the Internet?
    - o How often?
    - o Do you have a computer at home?
        - ▪ Where is it located?
    - o Do you use the Internet in places other than your home?
- o Why do you use the Internet to search for quilt-related information (if applicable)
- o Are there any quilt-related information needs you have that you wouldn't search for on the Internet?
    - o Please describe a situation in which this happened (if applicable)
- o Do you prefer to use the Internet to search for quilt-related information, instead of turning to other sources?
- o Do you find the information you find on the Internet useful? To what degree?
- o How do you search for quilt-related information on the Internet?
    - o Do you use a search engine, or another method?
- o What kind of Internet sites do you turn to for quilt-related information (blogs, video tutorials, etc)
- o Are there any specific sites you return to regularly?
    - o Please describe why you prefer these sites.
- o How do you find new quilt-related websites?
- o How do you keep track of quilt-related sites you find in the Internet?
- o Do you interact with other quilters online?
    - o Why?
    - o How often?
    - o In what capacity?
- o What percentage of resources you use to find quilting information are found on the Internet?
    - o Has this ratio changed over the past 5 years?

Appendix C: Information Horizon Form

YOU