

Information Seeking Behaviors in Different Study Settings

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ABSTRACT

Empirical studies of information seeking and retrieval (IS&R) behaviors that invite real users are generally conducted in two types of settings: laboratory setting and remote setting. In lab studies, participants are usually invited to a computer lab and perform search tasks on a device provided by the researcher. In remote studies, participants are instructed to work at their own work or home environment using their devices. Their information seeking behavior and experience are often captured by browser plugin and (sometimes) coupled with online diaries (e.g., He & Yilmaz, 2017). While the lab setting gives researchers a great amount of control, it is often criticized for being too artificial which may potentially lead participants to behave unnaturally. However, there has not been clear evidence that if study settings affect how participants look for information online. This poster reports on a work in progress investigating the influence of study settings on users' online information seeking behavior. Thirty-six college students finished four search tasks individually in a 1-2-week period. Two tasks were completed in a computer lab while the other two were completed at a location of their choice. They were also interviewed about their experiences in two different settings. This study will provide implications to both future IS&R study design and results interpretation. Preliminary results showed that participants spent more time on web sources when they worked remotely. They felt more relaxed in the remote setting while were also frequently distracted by text/SNS messages or other things at school or home.

REFERENCE

He, J. and Yilmaz, E. (2017). User behavior and task characteristics: A field study of daily information behavior. In proceedings of the ACM Conference on Human Information Interaction and Retrieval, 2, 67-76.

TOPICS

interactive information retrieval; information seeking; research methods