What Every Body Knows Panel

Andrew Cox
Brian Griffin, *Faculty of Information*
Jenna Hartel
Title: What every body knows: The body in information behaviour and information practices

Short abstract:
The study of information behaviour has traditionally focussed on written sources of information and to some degree sharing information through spoken interaction. Such an emphasis partly reflects the origins of the whole field in studies of user needs for libraries and other information services, and their focus on providing access to encoded knowledge. Yet the centrality of embodied experience to all aspects of human life makes the relative neglect of the body in information behaviour studies surprising and potentially problematic, as a number of authors have suggested (Lueg 2013, 2014; Keilty 2012, 2016; Lloyd 2008, 2010, 2014; Olsson, 2010).

An increasing focus on information practices in the field offers a useful starting point for such an endeavour (Lloyd, 2008). From Bourdieu’s habitus to Schatzki’s “bodily doings and sayings” practice theory is concerned with the body and with materiality. Practices have a role in defining our sense of our own bodies, thus the theory’s concern with “the socialized, inscribed, trained, habituated, and conditioned sentient human body” (Niciolini et al. 2003, p.13). However, practice theory is by no means the only perspective that may be of relevance. For example, Lueg (2013) has drawn on notions around embodied cognition.

The need to recognise the importance of the body in information theory may be prompted further by developments at the level of practice. Haptic interfaces that allow the user to interact with a computer in rich sensory ways or self-tracking of bodily functions using apps and wearables, are just two of many trends that signal the end of the myth of disembodied virtuality. Heightened interest in the library world in the importance of physical space and its design also implies a concern with the body and the material. Interest in information phenomena within contexts that are centered on the body, such as medicine, sport, music and gourmet cooking (Hartel, 2007, 2008) likewise demand new approaches – but it has already been shown to be relevant in everyday workplace contexts too. This suggests that LIS curricula will increasingly need to encompass relevant theory and practice.

In many other disciplines, such as education, history, geography and sociology, the body and materiality have been of central interest for several decades. A corresponding methodological debate about how to study embodied experience has also occurred (Pink, 2015). This typically points to the value of ethnographic and auto-ethnographic work, as well as visual and arts based methods. Relatively few connections have been made to date between information behaviour to these wider methodological developments.
The panel brings together an international group of scholars to discuss their theoretical, empirical and methodological work around the body and information. The presenters have been selected to represent different theoretical positions, empirical interests and career stages, enabling a wide-ranging and exciting discussion.

The panel discussion will be organised around five (interlinked) questions, namely:

1. Which theoretical perspectives provide suitable resources for theorising information and behaviour?
2. What are the findings of empirical studies that have already been undertaken to investigate this topic?
3. Which methodologies and methods are most suitable for exploring this area?
4. What practical aspects of LIS are likely to be reshaped through such research?
5. How should these issues appear in the LIS curriculum?

**Organizer(s): Names and affiliations of the organizers or participants (if known)**

**Organizers:**

Andrew Cox (University of Sheffield)
Brian Griffin (University of Toronto)
Jenna Hartel (University of Toronto)

**Other speakers:**

Annamaree Lloyd (University of Boras)
Michael Olsson (University of Technology Sydney)

**Moderator:**

Pamela McKenzie (The University of Western Ontario)

Length: 90 minutes

**Participants: Expected 50 participants**

**Proposed format: Including draft schedule, explanation of how it will engage with the audience**

After a short introduction by the moderator, each panellist will give a three minute-long presentation, followed by a plenary discussion guided by the five questions, and the session is concluded by a 1 minute closing statements from each panellist.

Introduction and welcome – 5 minutes.
Panelist opening statements, maximum 3 minutes each – total c20 minutes (Lueg, Lloyd, Cox, Hartel, Griffin, Olsson). This will be an opportunity to summarise their current work.

Plenary discussion. 50 minutes, with roughly ten minutes devoted to each of the panel questions and supplemented by specific questions from the floor.

Closing statements from panellists, 1 minute each, in which they address the question “Where next for the topic”.

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<tr>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Running Time</th>
<th>Contributor(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>0-5 minutes</td>
<td>Moderator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panelist Presentations</td>
<td>5-25 minutes (3 minutes each)</td>
<td>Lloyd, Cox, Griffin, Hartel, Olsson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>23-35 minutes</td>
<td>Panellists [&amp; audience?]</td>
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<td>Question 2</td>
<td>34-45 minutes</td>
<td>Panellists</td>
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<td>Question 3</td>
<td>45-55 minutes</td>
<td>Panellists</td>
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<td>Question 4</td>
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<td>Panellists</td>
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<td>Question 5</td>
<td>65-75 minutes</td>
<td>Panellists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open Discussion/Q &amp; A</td>
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<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>87-90 minutes</td>
<td>Moderator</td>
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**Engaging the audience**
If the group is small, all participants will be invited to introduce themselves and say a few words about their interest in the topic. For larger groups this would not be practical, but the audience will be polled with a few warm up questions during the introduction, to gauge their positions on key issues.

The moderator will play a key role in ensuring a vigorous and interactive debate, and letting voices from the floor be heard. They will establish a lively, questioning character to the discussions, ensure that panellists keep to allotted timings and maximise audience participation.

**Purpose, goals and expected outcomes**
The purpose is to stimulate debate around the place of the body in information theory and research.

The fundamental nature of the topic will make it of interest to many researchers in the field. The scope of the discussion from theory and method through to practice and the curriculum, will ensure participation from a wide range of perspectives.

Expected outcomes:

- Participants will gain an insight into current theoretical, empirical, methodological, practical and pedagogic work in this area.
- Potential new collaborations will be created, eg between those working on theory, and educators and practitioners.
Special requests/equipment needs
None.
References


http://dl.acm.org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/citation.cfm?id=2132182.


