

Thematic issue n° 61 “Information practices: conceptual dynamics, methodological issues”

Coordination: Anne Cordier (Crem, Université de Lorraine)
and Gilles Sahut (Lerass, Université de Toulouse Jean Jaurès)

In 2010, the journal *Études de communication* published a dossier entitled “Information practices: Questions of models and methods”. In the introduction to this issue, the coordinators note the variety of fields used to analyse informational practices and invite us to go beyond this empirical scattering to “ask questions of a methodological, theoretical and epistemological nature” (Chaudiron & Ihadjadene, 2010). In fact, questioning the validity of informational theories and models has undoubtedly made it possible to jointly affirm a conceptual and analytical field.

A consensus seems to have emerged around the definition of the notion of informational practices posed in 2009, very often taken up in scientific very often taken up in information and communication sciences: In the framework of an anthropocentric approach, informational practices are understood as “the way in which all the devices [...] sources [...], cognitive competences and informational skills are effectively mobilised in the different situations of production, research and processing of information” (Ihadjadene & Chaudiron, 2009). However, it seems that little notice has been taken of a notable proposal to enrich the notion of 'information practices' by these same two researchers, precisely in issue 35 of the journal *Études de communication* the following year. The authors-coordinators add a collective dimension to informational practice, specifying that it can be the work of “an individual or a group of individuals” as well as a communicational dimension by integrating situations of “use, sharing and communication of information” (Chaudiron & Ihadjadene, 2010, p. 16). This definition enshrines the socially observed links between information and communication, but also between individual and social logics of information apprehension.

More than ten years after this issue of *Études de communication*, which we consider to be seminal, as researchers in Information and communication sciences engaged in research in the field of information and document cultures, we would like to extend the questioning with this special issue. Why is it relevant, today, to rework the concept of “information practices” from a theoretical and methodological point of view? In what way does a detailed knowledge of informational practices situated in socio-economic and cultural contexts, but also in professional contexts, allow us to affirm or, conversely, invalidate the relevance of conceptual models? In what way do the evolutions

experienced by the contemporary documentary order incite us to renew the questioning and the modes of scientific apprehension of information, of the document and of knowledge?

In the field of Library and information science, the use of phenomenological questions, concepts and methods has fostered a plurality of studies centred around the notion of information experience. In this framework, information is considered as a process with a social, cultural, sensitive, intellectual and emotional dimension that fully participates in the subject's apprehension of the world (Bruce *et al.*, 2014; Cordier, 2019; Gorichanaz, 2020). Furthermore, the changes in the information environment over the last decade have led to a reconfiguration of the modes of access to information through the use of mobile media, which constitutes a factor in the evolution of material, spatial and temporal conditions. The evolution of the information environment since the last decade leads to an increased porosity of the borders between scientific, professional, news and entertainment information that circulate via social media and digital social networks. This new information environment is also a source of concern, expressed both by users and by researchers who are keen to take a social view of information practices. This new informational environment generates questions about the phenomena of redistribution of cognitive authority and credibility of information (Sahut & Tricot, 2017), without forgetting the tensions between cognitive and cultural openness allowed by the ease of access to online resources (Cordier, 2019; Pasquier, 2018) and informational closure effects induced by the homophily of social network relationships and/or the personalization function of information classification algorithms (Cardon, 2015).

On the basis of these developments, which are so many issues and parameters to be taken into consideration, this dossier therefore invites us to renew the study of informational practices in their conceptual and methodological approaches, considering the wealth of reflections already conducted in the field and which have given rise to remarkable epistemological and empirical advances. Without this framework being exhaustive or limiting, we feel that we can point to a few main entries; any proposal is welcome, whether it fits into a specific entry, combines several entries or even proposes another one.

- The study of informational practices implies paying particular attention to the context in which they are embedded. Although the concept of context reflects the desire to consider all the factors that influence practices, it remains polysemous and often vague (Paganelli, 2016; Simonnot, 2012). We can then ask ourselves how it can be described, or even how the different elements that make it up (spatial, temporal, social, material, etc.) can be combined, in order to arrive at a precise characterisation of informational practices. This attention to the role of the context goes hand in hand with a desire to grasp the "situated" practices of social actors evolving within specific communities and environments. This raises the question of the

possibilities of 'scaling up' of studies adopting this approach. In other words, to what extent can models of informational practices emerge from studies that give so much weight to numerous and different contextual variables?

- In addition, the brief overview above has suggested the diversity of recent scientific research, both conceptually and methodologically. Are these approaches theoretically and empirically compatible? More importantly, to what extent do they challenge the foundations and achievements of the information sciences of previous decades?
- Moreover, access appears to be possible to both information knowledge and information news through the same info-communication devices (digital social networks, search engines, etc.). In this context, the questioning of the possible articulations between Information sciences (and Library and information science) and Communication sciences (Media studies) initiated ten years ago seems more topical than ever. We can thus wonder about the crossroads between concepts, models and methods from these two "disciplines" likely to favour an updated approach to information practices.
- Contemporary reconfigurations of informational objects, which are at once editorial, symbolic and cultural, raise issues of understanding/reception of editorial processes (Souchier et al., 2019), of updating the underlying logics (economic and political) of knowledge mediation, and of grasping the materiality of the activity involved. What do these reconfigurations and the emerging cultural forms of information do to the conceptual and analytical models that make it possible to grasp informational practices in this context?

Scientific Committee

Mickael Buckland (University of California, United States)

Stéphane Chaudiron (Université de Lille, France)

Viviane Clavier (Université Grenoble-Alpes, France)

Isto Huvila (Université de Uppsala, Suède)

Madjid Ihadjadene (Université Paris 8 Vincennes-Saint-Denis, France)

Jerry Jacques (Université catholique de Louvain, Belgique)

Susan Kovacs (Enssib, France)

Olivier Le Deuff (Université Bordeaux Montaigne, France)

Anne Lehmans (Université de Bordeaux, France)

Louise Limberg (Université de Borås, Suède)

Vincent Liquète (Université de Bordeaux, France)

Dominique Maurel (Université de Montréal, Canada)

Céline Paganelli (Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3, France)

Daniel Peraya (Université de Genève, Suisse)

Brigitte Simonnot (Université de Lorraine, France)

Angèle Stalder (Université Jean Moulin – Lyon 3, France)

Christian Vandendorpe (Université d'Ottawa, Canada)

Lise Verlaet (Université Paul Valéry – Montpellier 3, France)

Selection procedure for proposals

The selection of the contribution proposals will be done in two steps:

- First, the submission of an abstract (**1,500–2,000-words**) which will present the objectives, principle arguments and explain the originality of the paper as well as some key bibliographic references.
- Then, for selected abstracts, a second evaluation will be carried on completed articles.

Instructions for authors are available on the journal's website, please respect them scrupulously:

<https://journals.openedition.org/edc/668>.

The evaluation will be carried out anonymously by at least two readers of the committee.

Abstracts should be sent in .doc, .docx or .odt format by 30 June 2022 at the latest. They should be sent to both address :

- anne.cordier@univ-lorraine.fr
- gilles.sahut@univ-tlse2.fr

Proposals for papers and final papers of up to 35,000 characters (including spaces, footnotes and bibliography) may be submitted in French or English. The final articles are published in French for the paper version of the journal, and in French (and, if applicable, English) for the electronic version. No commitment to publication can be made until the full text has been read.

Important dates

- **30 June 2022**: submission of summaries for evaluation;
- **30 July 2022**: notification of acceptance or rejection;
- **15 December 2022**: submission of full papers;
- **1st June 2022**: receipt of final versions of articles;
- **15 December 2023**: publication of the dossier in issue 61 of *Études de communication*.

Bibliography

Bruce, C. et al. (2014). *Information Experience: Approaches to Theory and Practice*, Bradford, Emerald Group Publishing.

Cardon, D. (2015). *À quoi rêvent les algorithmes : Nos vies à l'heure des big data*, Paris, Éd. Le Seuil.

Chaudiron, S., Ihadjadene, M. (2010). « De la recherche de l'information aux pratiques informationnelles », *Études de communication*, 35, p. 13-30. Accès : <https://doi.org/10.4000/edc.2257>.

Cordier, A. (2019). « Recherche originale », *Vers une Poïétique de l'être-au-monde-informationnel*, Habilitation à diriger des recherches, Bordeaux, Université de Bordeaux Montaigne.

Gorichanaz, T. (2020). *Information Experience in Theory and Design*, Bradford, Emerald Group Publishing.

Ihadjadene, M., Chaudiron, S. (2009). « Des processus aux pratiques : Quels modèles informationnels pour analyser l'accès à l'information en contexte professionnel ? » *Colloque « Évolutions technologiques et information professionnelle : pratiques, acteurs et documents »*, p. 1-12. Accès : <https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-00468728>.

Paganelli, C. (2016). « Réflexions sur la pertinence de la notion de contexte dans les études relatives aux activités informationnelles ». *Études de communication*, 46, p. 165-188. Accès : <https://doi.org/10.4000/edc.6545>.

Pasquier, D. (2018). *L'Internet des familles modestes. Enquête dans la France rurale*, Paris, Presse des Mines.

Sahut, G., Tricot, A. (2017). « Wikipedia: An opportunity to rethink the links between sources' credibility, trust, and authority », *First Monday*, 22 (11). Accès : <https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v22i11.7108>.

Simonnot, B. (2012). *L'Accès à l'information en ligne. Moteurs, dispositifs et médiations*, Paris, Hermès-Lavoisier.

Souchier, E., Candel, É., Gomez-Mejia, G. (2019). *Le Numérique comme écriture. Théories et méthodes d'analyse*, Paris, A. Colin.