

Everyday Life Information Practice
Affordances and Strategies within a Facebook Group

Ameera Mansour

Academic doctoral thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Library and Information Science at the University of Borås to be publicly defended on
Friday, April 5, 2024 at 13:00 in lecture room C203, University of Borås, Allégatan 1, Borås,
Sweden.

Swedish School of Library and Information Science
Faculty of Librarianship, Information, Education and IT
University of Borås



THE SWEDISH SCHOOL OF LIBRARY
AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF BORÅS

Everyday Life Information Practice

Affordances and Strategies within a Facebook Group

Abstract

Social networking sites are integral in reshaping how we access and interact with information and others. This doctoral thesis aims to offer an in-depth understanding of engagement in an everyday life information practice within a private Facebook group. To achieve this aim, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 20 members of a private Facebook group for foreign mothers situated in Sweden.

The thesis consists of a framing essay and four research articles exploring different aspects of how the group has formed, managed, and navigated engagement in information activities within the Facebook group. Grounded in a sociocultural perspective of mediated action, the research draws on specialised concepts and theories to further unpack key themes in the study. These include affordances, cognitive authority, situated learning, community of practice, communication privacy management, the imagined audience, and context collapse. These concepts and theories form the theoretical framework for the thesis, enabling interpretations of members' accounts of opportunities and challenges entailed with engagement in information activities within the Facebook group and the ways these were managed and navigated by the group.

The findings show that the Facebook group offers a distinctive online space providing affordances that simultaneously facilitate and constrain joint information activities. The study highlights six key affordances offered by the group: visibility, persistence, associations, accessibility, invisibility, and inaccessibility. Negotiation of mutual and shared goals and rules is found to be essential for sustaining a space that facilitates members' engagement in information activities. However, three complex phenomena within the Facebook group are highlighted as limiting and complicating this engagement: context collapse, time collapse, and spatial collapse. These phenomena relate to issues concerning lack of anonymity; control over information quality, flow, and privacy boundaries; and the presence of large, diverse, and evolving audiences. Several challenges and risks are identified as a result, relating to the assessment of information credibility, management of privacy, and management of conflicts. The study discusses strategic ways the group manages and navigates these opportunities and challenges. Overall, the study offers an understanding of the complex formation, engagement, and management of an everyday life information practice within a Facebook group. This understanding contributes theoretical and practical insights into broader discussions on the use of Facebook groups for informational purposes in everyday life.

Keywords: social media, social networking sites, Facebook groups, information practices, sociocultural theory, affordances, cognitive authority, situated learning, community of practice, communication privacy management, imagined audience, context collapse, everyday life, parents, mothers.

Title: Everyday Life Information Practice: Affordances and Strategies within a Facebook Group

Language: English

Available: <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hb.diva-31276>

ISBN 978-91-987634-5-4 (Print)

ISBN 978-91-987634-4-7 (Digital PDF)

ISSN 1103-6990, skrifter från Valfrid no 78