Between information seeking and sharing – use of social media in a young learner context

Jette Hyldegård, Ph.D.
Royal School of Library and Information Science
Copenhagen University
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Web 2.0 and social media no longer hype!

- The social media landscape is growing – > 5 million FB users are under the age of ten (Socialmedia.com)

- Social media for course work is increasing (Dahlstrom, 2012)

- New opportunities and challenges for information access and learning

- Myths about digital natives and their naturally born it skills

➡ More research on young learners' use of social media for is needed

Research questions for exploration

1. Which activities are associated with social media as information source?

2. What are the motivations, outcome and constraints for using social media as information source?

3. How is use of social media integrated in a study context?

Methodology I – data collection and documentation

Systematic review of core LIS journals and conference proceedings from 2010 to early 2013:

Strategies: searching, citation pearl growing and manual examinations

Journals
- Journal of Documentation
- Information Research
- Information Processing and Management
- Annual Review of Information Science and Technology (ARIST)
- Journal of the American Society for Information Science Research

Proceedings
- Information Seeking in Context (ISIC)
- American Society of Information Science and Technology (ASIST)
- Information, Interaction and Impacts (i3)
- European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL)
- Conference on Information Science and Social Media (ISSOME).

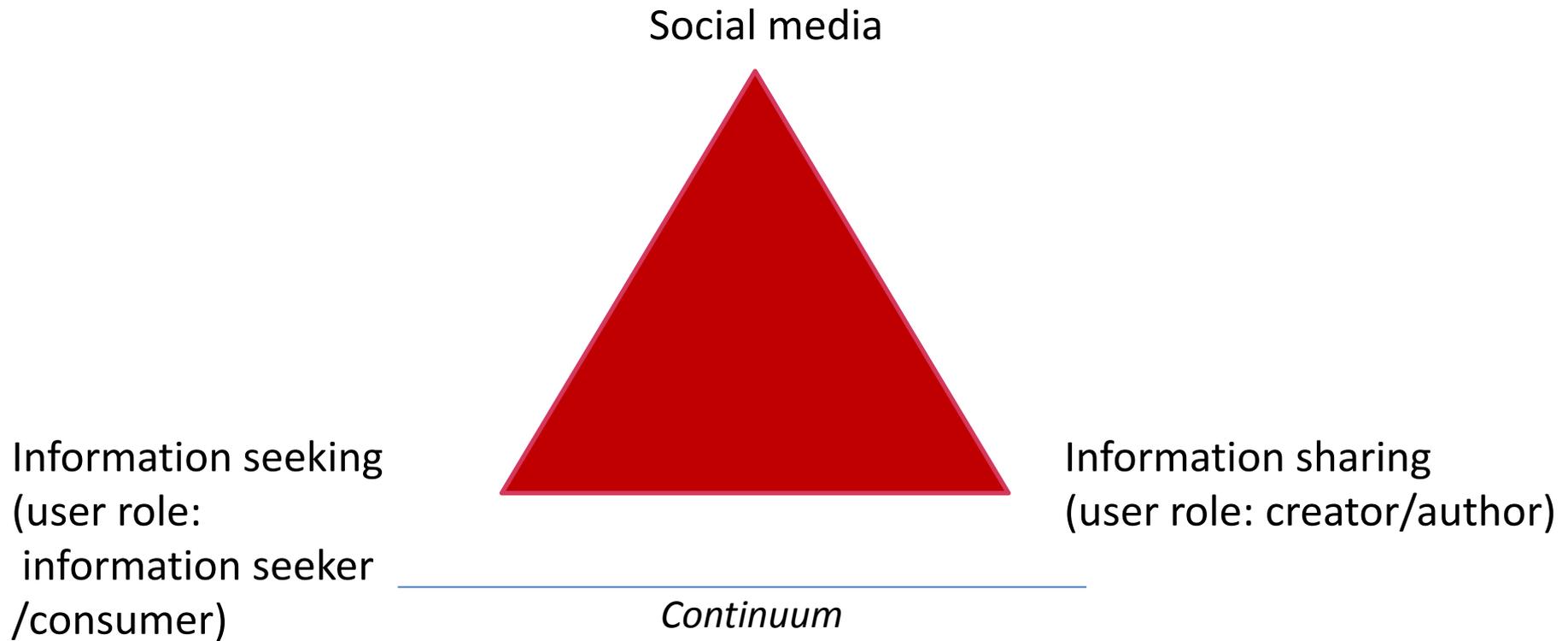+ report data from recent research projects on students' and young peoples' information behavior

Methodology II - Conceptions and definitions framing the research

- Context (Kari & Savolainen, 2007)

- Information behaviour – seeking and sharing (Wilson, 1999; Pilerot, 2012)

- Social media as information source (Fisher & Julien, 2009; Joosten, 2012)

- Information literacy (Godwin, 2009; Spiranec & Zorica, 2010; Sundin, 2008) .

Conceptual model:
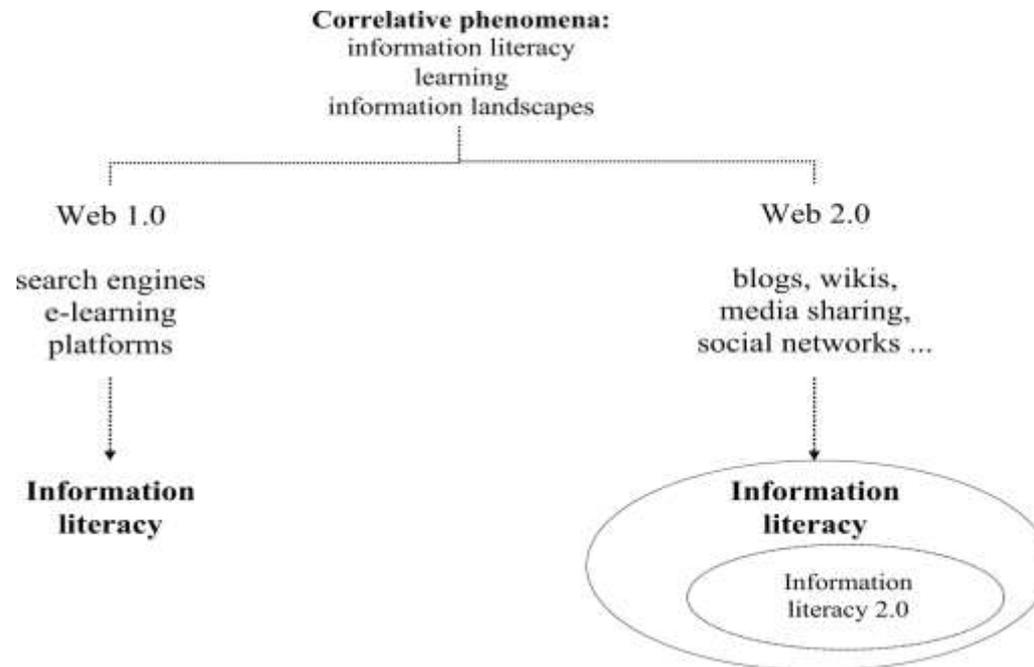# Information behaviour activities and social media

Social media

Information seeking
(user role:
 information seeker
/consumer)

Information sharing
(user role: creator/author)

Continuum

Methodology II - Conceptions and definitions framing the research

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Social media and information literacy (IL)

Correlative phenomena:
information literacy
learning
information landscapes

Web 1.0

search engines
e-learning
platforms

**Information
literacy**

Web 2.0

blogs, wikis,
media sharing,
social networks ...

**Information
literacy**

Information
literacy 2.0

(Correlative phenomena influencing the development of Information Literacy 2.0. From Spiranic & Zorica, 2010, p. 145.)

Young learners I – Modes of behaviour (the V&R Framework)

Visitors (V)

- Se the web as an untidy garden tool
- Are guided by a defined goal or task
- Are guided by an effective and efficient use of technology
- See no value in 'belonging' online or having a digital identity
- Online social networking is banal and a potential time waster

Residents (R)

- See the web as a place for meeting friends and colleagues
- It is a place for expressing opinions to form and extend relationships
- Are comfortable about expressing and maintaining their identity online
- Live out a proportion of their life there

(David White and Alison Le Cornu, 2011)

Young Learners II – students' digital information behaviour

Students (*visitor mode*)
- Functional use of technology often linked to formal needs
- Less visible/more passive online presence
- More likely to favor face- to- face interactions
- Fewer than 6 hours a week were spent online

Students (*resident mode*)
- Significant online presence and usage
- High level of collaborative activity online
- Contribute to the online environment High dependence on mobile devices
- Spend more than 10 hours a week online

(Connaway et al., 2013)

Five studies 2010- 2013

Author(s)	Research focus	Method(s)	Participants/ respondents
Hrastinski & Aghaee (2012)	Campus students' perception of social media for study support	Interviews	N=20
Kyung-Sun, EunYoung & Sei-Ching (2011)	Undergraduates' use and evaluation behaviour of social media as information sources	Online survey	N=446
Evans, Kairam & Pirolli (2009)	The potentials of social media in helping information seekers complete complex search tasks	Talk-aloud-search protocols, video captures	N=8
Dantonio, Makri & Blanford (2012)	Post graduates' experiences of serendipity when coming across valuable social media content for academic work	Interviews	N=15
Heinrichs, Lim & Lim (2011)	Influence from social networking sites, access form and 5 quality dimensions on users' evaluation of social media (academic discussion forum)	Online survey	N=226

Activities

Social media affords certain types of behaviour

- Quick questions and answers
- Information searching
- Document and content sharing
- Group work planning

Different search strategies, tactics and criteria are employed

- Targeted asking
- Network asking
- Unplanned browsing
- Checking consistency of reviews, links and 'likes' or author information

Motivations and outcome

Motivations

- Convenience

- Least effort

- Speed

Outcome

- Get background information and overviews

- Use friends and peers as cognitive aids and 'reflection drivers'

- Find valuable information

- Frequency of use affect experiences of quality in use

Constraints

- Digital dissonance (Clark et al., 2009) - social media for information seeking and learning is associated primarily with leisure, relaxation and users' private information landscape

- Tends to be a 'taboo'

- Integration of social media in a study context is only limited
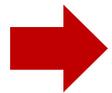
➡️ How can social media skills can be transferred and used to support formal education?

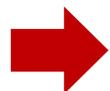# Discussion I – implications for young learners

- No system is better than its content – the nature of social media
- Improve the quality of students' social media skills and use

As creator
- e.g. learning the art and ethics of creating text in different social media, tagging and writing good reviews or generate other evaluation cues

As information seeker
- e.g. learning the act of need formulation in certain types of social media, the strategies and tactics in different social media and critical information evaluation

Information empowerment is needed

Discussion II - Implications for teaching and IL

- Build upon old skills and educational practice but adjust to new challenges in the information environment

- Learn the pedagogical and didactical benefits of social media

- Explore the intervention potentials of social media

- Support learners' move from quick question and answers to collaborative learning

- Help students navigate competently across collections and platforms and across professional and private information landscapes

Conclusions

- Social media has potential to support learning and add value

- A mismatch seems to exist between students' use of social media for course work and their perceptions of using these media in a formal educational context.

Thank You!

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