STUDIES IN INFORMATION

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

EXAMINING RESEARCH ON HOW PEOPLE ENGAGE WITH INFORMATION

FIFTH EDITION

LISA M. GIVEN
DONALD O. CASE
REBEKAH WILLSON

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

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FIFTH EDITION

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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PREFACE

We are thrilled to introduce the fifth edition of *Looking for Information* – and with a revised subtitle: *Examining Research on How People Engage with Information*. This change in title reflects the overall broadening of focus across information behavior studies; just as the field has moved on from a primary focus on information *seeking* and *needs* to embrace concepts such as *use, creation,* and *embodiment*, so have we.

The book's first edition was published in 2002 and it was awarded the *Best Information Science Book* at that time by the Association for Information Science and Technology. New editions followed in 2007, 2012 and 2016, including translation of the fourth edition into Chinese and Greek. We are very proud of the large and loyal following we have gained, around the world, over these 20 years. For those of you reading this book for the first time – welcome! We are sure you will find some interesting insights within these pages and that you will be intrigued to learn more about the evolution of research on people's engagement with information. For returning readers – thank you! We have enjoyed discussing this book with you over the years and hope you enjoy the new approach we have taken with this new edition.

With this edition, we very purposely welcome readers from outside of information science who will benefit from reviewing key outcomes and trends in information behavior research. There is an increasing focus on interdisciplinarity as researchers (and society) grapple with the world's complex issues, including climate change, geopolitics, and adoption of new technologies. The COVID-19 pandemic provides a powerful case example in the need for health researchers to partner with experts in human information behavior, as misinformation and disinformation continue to shape global uptake of vaccinations and other public health interventions. There has never been a better, or more pressing, time for us to work together to address such complex questions in contemporary society.

THE BOOK'S SCOPE

Looking for Information provides an in-depth look at international research on people's engagement with information. It reviews a century of scholarship, providing examples of research approaches, models, and theories used in information behavior studies. The book is intended for researchers at all levels, from senior academics looking for an overview of key issues or theories, to graduate and undergraduate students who need an introduction to topics and approaches. The book is primarily focused on research conducted in the disciplinary *home* of information behavior

research – information science. As information science is inherently interdisciplinary, the book also includes relevant citations from related fields, such as media and communication, sociology, psychology, digital humanities, education, business, management, medicine, nursing, and public health, among others. The studies cited in the book include a mix of quantitative, qualitative, and textual approaches used to investigate a wide variety of research problems.

Information behavior researchers have expanded their epistemological, methodological, and technological repertoires over the past 25 years. Since the previous (fourth) edition, the adoption of arts-based and mixed methods studies has continued, and with interdisciplinary projects expanding, globally. In this book, we present a detailed overview of the current state of information behavior research, including the new trends we see on the horizon. We cover the core topics explored in the discipline, including the populations, settings, contexts, and activities that researchers explore. We discuss key historic works alongside new innovations, providing readers with a solid overview of both landmark studies and cutting-edge trends. As with previous editions, we retain the book's core purpose – i.e., to outline the common and essential aspects of people's information behaviors by presenting robust examples of publications that demonstrate the contribution of this research area to information science and other disciplines.

A NEW LOOK AND FEEL

Readers familiar with the fourth edition of this book will note that the number of chapters is now reduced (to six) and the content is streamlined. The literature continues to grow at a fast pace, which makes the task of reviewing *all* new works published between editions that much more challenging! With this fifth edition, we include more than 1,200 publications, with the newest additions published in the last seven years (November 2015–2022). We removed at least 100 older references, replacing them with newer, contemporary examples. We also expanded our scope to include commentary on emergent areas (e.g., information creation) and those that received less attention, previously (e.g., information use).

Given the vast amount of literature published to date, we knew the book would either need to expand into two volumes or be refreshed as a single volume. We chose the latter, resulting in a significant remastering of the book's design. With this edition, we introduce new design features (such as sidebars and tables) that enable us to retain content within a smaller textual footprint. We carefully reviewed our use of appendices, tables, figures, and bulleted lists, to balance quick access to summaries and highlights, alongside long-form narratives. The result is a reformulated and streamlined approach to the layout of the book, while retaining the content and focus that our readers expect.

We constructed each chapter to serve as a stand-alone piece of writing, to make it easier to include select chapters on course syllabi, and to facilitate downloading of chapters on e-readers. Each chapter now has its own, complete reference list, as well as *Our Top 3 Must Read Recommendations*. We retained the full reference list to collate references from the entire book, and we have also

retained detailed author and subject indices. We have also added DOIs to citations, where these were available. As a result of the streamlined chapter structure, we no longer group the chapters; however, we do retain a detailed table of contents for the chapters. All these features support findability of key concepts and cited authors, and we hope these will enhance your reading experience.

OUR APPROACH TO CITING EXAMPLES AND RELEVANT LITERATURE

As with previous editions, we portray both the depth and breadth of the information behavior literature by presenting selected studies that illustrate key topics. Choosing which studies to highlight for this volume has been challenging, and we have employed a few different approaches to make our selections. First, we retained the previous framework, which gathered studies by *roles* and *occupations* as part of our detailed overview of historic approaches to information behavior research. We then extended this framework to examine more *holistic* approaches to research, which account for *situations* and *contexts* that shape people's experiences. We have exercised judgment in choosing studies that we see as unique, well done or illustrative of a particular population or approach. We have also highlighted studies using innovative methodological or theoretical approaches, or those that reflect the ongoing shift towards interdisciplinarity.

Second, we omitted investigations focused exclusively on information retrieval and people's searching practices from channels, sources, or systems. Most of these excluded studies concern the use of the internet, social media, online databases, and library catalogs, and together these constitute a huge literature. The focus of these excluded works is on the *system or source*, rather than the *person* who is searching; for this reason, they fall outside the boundaries of our review.

Third, we focus primarily on recent publications, especially those from 2000 to 2022. In some cases, older items are portrayed to highlight the shifts in assumptions, methods, and findings that have taken place over several decades. We also cite earlier, landmark discussions and definitions of core concepts, to ensure proper credit and to provide a historical perspective. By focusing on works from recent decades, we aim to provide an efficient means for reviewing developments in the field, while keeping the book to a manageable size.

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

Chapter 1 Information Behavior: An Introduction provides an overview of foundational concepts and key terms and definitions, including *information behavior, information practice, information experience, seeking, sharing, needs, use, creation,* and *encountering,* among others. The nature of *information* is also explored, including such topics as *truth* and *intentionality* in the information people seek, as well as common myths related to information use. The chapter examines the

scope of information behavior research, including its focus on people's holistic and complex relationships with information.

Chapter 2 The Evolution of Information Behavior Research presents a brief, historical overview of information behavior research. The chapter discusses the traditional research focus on people's *roles* (e.g., academics; managers) and *activities* (e.g., seeking), as well as issues related to *motivation* and *gatekeeping* practices. This chapter introduces the history of information behavior research, expanding on the concepts introduced in Chapter 1, and setting the stage to explore contemporary, holistic studies in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 The Complex Nature of Information Behavior examines contemporary approaches to information behavior research, focusing primarily on people's holistic experiences of information. This includes the shift towards approaches that embrace socio-cultural contexts, affect, and embodiment, among other topics. Misinformation and disinformation are explored in depth, and the chapter also provides a detailed snapshot of research on COVID-19.

Chapter 4 Metatheories, Theories, and Models examines the paradigmatic and theoretical influences that have shaped information behavior research, alongside detailed discussions of methodologies and methods. This chapter mentions the approaches used in empirical studies, but also explores conceptual and philosophical publications that address the critical concepts shaping information behavior, overall.

Chapter 5 Research Design, Methodologies, and Methods discusses how information behavior researchers have designed their studies, collected and analyzed data, and written about their findings, over time. This chapter maps the evolution from primarily descriptive, quantitative studies, through the adoption of qualitative and mixed methods approaches, to the use of arts-based and creative designs. The chapter also highlights the increasing shift towards the societal impact of research, globally.

Chapter 6 Reviewing, Critiquing, Concluding, and Futuring highlights critical reviews of information behavior research and explores emerging trends. The chapter examines global *megatrends* (e.g., climate change, sustainable development) and what the future may hold for information behavior scholars.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the last 20 years, countless individuals have provided advice, ideas and reflections on what to include in *Looking for Information*. We are grateful for the many people who have engaged with this book over the years, including those who have added it on course reading lists. We thank you for your ongoing support! This fifth edition has benefited greatly from the help of Dr Linus Tan, who assisted with graphics and referencing. Thanks also to the editors at Emerald, for their continued guidance and support.

Lisa M. Given
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Chapter 1

INFORMATION BEHAVIOR: AN INTRODUCTION

> Information has become like the air we breathe, so pervasive that we scarcely notice its existence and yet so essential that we cannot live without it. (Jean Tague-Sutcliffe, 1995, p. 1)

Chapter Outline

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Information behavior research has a long history within the discipline of information science. Although some would identify the publication of Dervin and Nilan's (1986) work as a turning point to a focus on people's information needs, and the uses they made of the information they found, the precursors of this focus date back over several decades. One of the complicating factors in this discussion is that the discipline of information science continues to debate what to call this area of research – whether information behavior, information practice, information experience, or similar terms. However, our research is connected by a common thread; our focus is on *people* and how their lives *intersect* with the information world. We care, for example, about how people perceive the world, how they locate and apply information in decision-making, and how technologies facilitate finding and using information. We explore the contexts, situations, feelings, physicality, and meanings of people's information landscapes, from *their* points of view. We are interested in people's active information seeking processes,

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their serendipitous encountering of useful information, as well as their decisions not to look for information or to ignore the information they find. Information behavior researchers document, describe, explain, critique, and unravel the complexities of people's engagement with information. We follow people into all corners of their lives, to learn about preschoolers' use of mobile devices, to understand how pregnant women make vaccination decisions, and to document small business owners' social media practices. In short, we care about how people engage with information in all corners of their lives. We use "information behavior" as a broad overarching term that encompasses all types of information experiences, in diverse circumstances and settings, and across various personal activities and outcomes.

The sections that follow outline, briefly, the key concepts and research foci of studies that explore information behavior, and why this topic has attracted so much attention across several disciplines. We make the case that the nature of this research has changed over several decades, away from an emphasis on institutional sources of information and search strategies, toward a focus on how people encounter and make sense of their environment. This view considers people's information engagements as parts of broad, holistic ecosystems (Polkinghorne & Given, 2021). Information behaviors are intertwined with a person's culture, history, and situation and shaped by geography, gender, and numerous other contextual elements. Current approaches to information behavior research embrace these contexts and seek to represent people's information worlds *within* this complexity, rather than studying people, information sources, and tools in isolation.

In thinking about this holistic view of people's worlds, the internet itself serves as a microcosm of information behavior and the ways our research approaches have changed. If we think back to a time before the internet existed, information was available in individual books, journals, radio and TV programs, offices, filing cabinets, people's minds, and computers. However, because it was divided by source, by location, by person, and by channel, it was not always easily located or examined. Before the internet, when you wanted to plan a trip you would read about a destination in a travel guide, call hotels to make reservations, telephone an airline to learn departure times and fares, visit a travel agent to pick up a ticket, and so on. In terms of research, each of those needs and transactions needed to be conducted (and studied) separately. Now, it is possible to satisfy all travel-related requests on a single website, often with no direct interaction with other people. The many different sources of information, channels of communication, and interactions have merged.

Not only have many different information sources and channels of communication collapsed down to one, but less goal-oriented behaviors, such as browsing and monitoring various news feeds, also now play a larger role than ever before. Looking for information becomes more holistic, with more available choices and greater control on the part of the individual looking for information. At the same time, the contexts that shape that information are more complex; online hotel ads that are posted on an airline's site may not be comprehensive or complete but may be the result of formal sponsorship agreements between

companies. The top sites listed in Google may be a mix of paid advertisements, companies who have paid to have their websites appear near the top of the page, or options that appear due to the previous browsing habits or geography of the person's computer, based on their cookies or IP address. These behind-the-scenes (often unseen) activities are part of the complex landscape people must navigate to find the information they need in today's world.

Today's information world is far more complex than it was 20 – or even 5 – years ago due to the rise in misinformation and disinformation, globally. The internet continues to be the go-to place to find the text of a government regulation, the date of an event, the author of a document; yet conflicting information, outdated information, and incorrect information remain prevalent. When combined with information created solely to mislead (such as deep fakes), people must now navigate information minefields in their quest for helpful, reliable information. As people have embraced information technologies to enable them to work and study from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also faced a crisis of trustworthiness in the information presented in the mainstream media. While social media and videoconferencing enabled us to connect with family and friends under lockdown and despite border closures, these same technologies channeled "fake news" on the virus and vaccines into our living rooms. The need for information behavior research that embraces people's holistic experiences has never been greater.

1.2 THE LANGUAGE OF INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

Given the complexities of the various concepts and terms that are used in information science and other disciplines to represent the intersection of people and information, we start with a brief overview of the key concepts that identify the boundaries of information behavior. Although Section 1.3 explores and defines the concept of "information" in depth, let's first presume that there *are* such phenomena as "information sources" to be found and "information needs" that can be satisfied by "browsing" or "seeking," and that have some "use" or purpose in people's lives. All these concepts fall under an overarching concept that we call "information behavior." Over the past decade, many other terms have been used to represent overarching concepts that are similar to information behavior. Although some researchers may see these as equivalent terms, representing the same "umbrella" concept, others will argue each is unique. The diversity of language and scope of terms can be confusing for novice researchers in the field, and for scholars from other disciplines. However, there is a richness to these debates and explorations that speaks to the complexities of human experience. Rather than attempting to settle on a single term, with clear boundaries and inclusion/exclusion criteria for this domain, information behavior researchers engage in ongoing debate and exploration of what it means to study people's engagements with information across various life contexts. This is a strength of our research, as we continue to strive for inclusive and holistic approaches to how we understand information through a people-focused lens. While not an exhaustive list, Table 1.1 presents many of the key concepts that have

Table 1.1. Key Concepts Referred to in Information Behavior Research.

	Definition
Overarching Concepts	**These are top-level or "umbrella" concepts that are intended to encompass a broad range of actions, activities, feelings, experiences, etc.**
Information behavior	Encompasses information seeking and discovery, as well as the totality of *unintentional* or *serendipitous* behaviors (such as encountering information or sharing information with others). The concept includes purposive behaviors that do not involve seeking, such as actively *avoiding or ignoring* information. Information behavior also includes the broader context of how individuals *use* information in their lives, so accounts for situation, time, affect, culture, geography, and other contextual elements in understanding people's engagement with information
Information practice	Socially and culturally established sets of actions to identify, seek, encounter, use, and share information from a range of sources, which are often habitual, and that emphasize the social and situated nature of interacting with information
Information experience	Refers to engagement with information that is both complex and multidimensional, concerned with holistic experiences and deriving meaning from interacting with information during day-to-day life. The emphasis is on everyday learning, and what could be done to improve and support education and learning tools
Specific Elements	**These are specific examples or types that fall underneath or within the overarching concepts**
Seeking	A conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in one's knowledge, through reading, conversation, observing, or various other ways to locate information
Sharing	Exchanging information between people. It includes the giving and receiving of information that can be active and explicit or passive, implicit giving. Sharing involves communicating with others and is necessary for collaboration
Needs	A recognition that one's knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you have; there are also unconscious precursors to needs, such as curiosity
Use	How one engages with the information acquired through seeking, sharing, encountering, or other means. The concept of use includes applying – or ignoring – information to suit one's goals or personal context, as well as the effects or outcomes of information engagement on (for example) how one thinks or feels
Creation	Applying information to form or generate new information, which may include reuse and/or adaptation of existing information. Creation is related to information use but also includes the production of new information
Encountering	Serendipitous acquisition of information through unexpected discovery, which may be through unrelated information seeking, receiving information, or nongoal-oriented activities such as monitoring
Monitoring	Maintaining awareness by regularly observing what is happening with a particular source of information or at a particular geographic location
Browsing	Semi-directed information seeking or the casual examination of a source which is of potential interest
Avoidance	Deciding not to look for information or actively ignoring potential sources of information

informed these discussions and debates over many decades, which readers will encounter as they review research in the area.

Historically, the term *information seeking* was widely discussed in the literature and was used to represent the range of human experiences that we now call information behavior (or another of the overarching concepts listed in Table 1.1). Although the phrase "information seeking" continues to be used in other disciplines, information science researchers specializing in information behavior recognize that "seeking" is only one of many specific elements of a vast array of activities and other concepts. Information seeking is a behavior so commonplace that it is generally not an object of concern until time pressure makes it so. If we are making a major decision (e.g., buying a house) or completing a task by a deadline (e.g., writing a report), we might find ourselves in an earnest information seeking mode: talking to others, searching the internet, reading books and magazines, scrolling through social media, watching the news, and so on. We may do everything we can to satisfy our desire for input, until either our need is satisfied or we run out of time. More commonly, it is the latter, as the demand for "information" is usually elastic – there is always more information that one could gather. After our need is met (or we give up) we return to a more passive state of interest, at least as regards the object of our earlier curiosity.

However, this type of seeking (as an active state of looking for information) is only one part of an individual's approach to dealing with the information in their lives. They may choose *not* to seek, or information may simply find them (when they hear something on the news, or see something on Facebook), before a person even realizes they want to learn more. For this reason, the broader umbrella term of "information behavior" is often preferred by researchers, as it alerts us to the fact that there are many and varied behaviors and contexts that shape how we work with information in our lives.

We can also consider cases in which the acquisition of information does *not* concern an immediate task like purchasing something or writing. Our daily life is peppered with instances in which we become interested in learning more about a topic after accidently encountering some bit of information about it. This sort of curiosity, unmotivated by an immediate goal, is a common aspect of life – and of information behavior.

The situations described previously, no matter how familiar to all of us, are much more complex than they may appear on the surface. Information behavior often escapes observation. It is difficult to generalize about behaviors that vary so much across people, situations, and objects of interest, and which often take place inside a person's head. This book is about the many ways in which information behaviors have been defined, explicated, observed, described, and measured in studies of human thought and experience.

1.3 EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF "INFORMATION"

Entire books have been written about the concept of "information," which remains a contested term in information science. "Information" is an old English word, making an early appearance in one of Chaucer's tales sometime between

1372 and 1386, where it was used to refer to an instruction or piece of advice (Schement, 1993a, p. 177). Capurro and Hjørland (2002) take its origins back to Latin and Greek terms of the pre-Christian era. Ordinarily, we both use and hear the word "information" without much concern for its definition; we know what we mean when we use the word. At first glance, the *Oxford Dictionary of English* definition of the term "information" seems adequate: "(1) facts provided or learned about something or someone: *a vital piece of information*; (2) what is conveyed or represented by a particular arrangement or sequence of things: *genetically transmitted information*" (Stevenson, 2015). Summarizing 30 years of commentary, Levitan (1980) declared that 29 different concepts had been associated with the term information. A review by Schement (1993b) includes a selection of 22 definitions written between 1968 and 1989. Frické (2009, p. 139) points out a dozen characterizations of information, while allowing that there are "many more." An essay by Mai (2013) addresses information quality, and in the process contrasts disagreements among various authors and viewpoints concerning definitions of information. The empirical work of Shenton and Hayter (2006) and Badia (2014) demonstrate that both scholars and laypeople exhibit diverse meanings for the term. How has the concept of information been used such that so many definitions have resulted?

Must information be useful? If information does not have an effect (e.g., improving a task), why would we talk about it? One of the most cited definitions of information is "that which reduces uncertainty" (Bouazza, 1989, p. 145). Yet, some information *increases* uncertainty (e.g., a medical diagnosis). People claim *information is power*, but most information (e.g., the date Krakatoa exploded) gives us little or no power. If we knew what stocks would increase in value tomorrow, we could make money and use it in powerful ways. But, while having such specialized, *formal* knowledge may grant privileges, its power involves performance, competence, institutions and social relations. Some scholars consider all stimuli to be *informative*, including sounds (e.g., music), sights (e.g., videos), or touch (e.g., warm sunshine on skin). Each sensation *tells us* something, may impart useful information, and lead to knowledge; but knowledge must have agency to create power.

One would think that hundreds of years of usage would tend to settle a word and result in a consensus on its meaning. This has not been the case with the term "information." Especially in the last 70 years, as the various phenomena that people call information began to be objects of empirical study, meanings of the word have proliferated. Schrader (1983, p. 99), for example, complains about "the multiplicity of vague, contradictory, and sometimes bizarre notions of the nature of the term 'information'." There continue to be widespread disagreements about what would constitute a general definition of information, due to issues related to utility, intentionality, truth, physicality, and structure. The most common definitions that have emerged assume that information is something that either reduces uncertainty or changes one's image of reality. One of the classic definitions of "information" is where the term refers to any difference that makes a difference to a conscious, human mind (Bateson, 1972, p. 453). In other words, information is whatever appears significant to a human being, whether

originating from an external environment or a (psychologically) internal world. Michael Buckland's (1991) widely cited article portrays uses of the term "information" as falling into one of three categories: information-as-process (referring to the act of informing, the communication of information, and how a person's state of knowledge is changed); information-as-knowledge (what is perceived or the knowledge communicated); and information-as-thing ("objects, such as data and documents … are referred to as 'information' because they are regarded as being informative)" (p. 351). Other authors view the concept of information as linked to social context, noting that information cannot be easily separated from the practices, meanings, and actions that shape social activity (see Bates, 2010 for a discussion of key thinkers in this area, and Wilson, 2022, for examples of the social nature of information). In a recent review, Bosancic and Matijevic (2019) note, "It is entirely possible that we will never come to a satisfactory definition of information that would be acceptable to every scientist, and information will continue to be discussed in a metaphorical sense" (p. 622).

Does information require intentions? Must information be *intentional* to communicate something? Must we explain information-related activities as *purposeful* activities that occurred *because* we needed to know something, or *to do* something else? When we think of *informing* others, we may think of *information exchange* (whether between people or via a system). Yet, we also can be informed by our environment. Whether we view nature (e.g., trees, animals) or human-made signs (e.g., what people are wearing), we take in stimuli that have *meaning*. A glance at dark storm clouds informs us rain is coming, but nature has no intentions. While some people may need to *intend to receive* to take in information, others will encounter information *serendipitously*, without expectation.

Over the decades there have been many arguments about distinctions between the words *data*, *information*, and *knowledge* (and sometimes *wisdom*), including the continued use of terminological hierarchies to represent these concepts. Frické (2009) and Rowley (2007) both criticize the commonly used DIKW (data-information-knowledge-wisdom) pyramid, in which wisdom appears at the top, with knowledge beneath, supported by information, and then data lying at the base. Frické (p. 140) favors making "… knowledge and information synonymous. Knowledge and information collapse into each other." Saab and Riss (2011) also demonstrate that different levels in the hierarchy are intertwined in the process of making meaning (or sense) of patterns of stimuli. Many information behavior scholars use the terms data, information, and knowledge synonymously, and with little attention paid to exploring wisdom. Knowledge and wisdom are strictly phenomena of the human mind, whereas data and information are often represented by tangible, physical objects. The idea that information usually has a physical manifestation has often been the key consideration in early studies of information seeking. The way that information behavior studies are typically approached now, is in the sense of knowledge gained – as something in someone's mind – and not primarily as a physical object.

In discussing constructivist views within information science, Bosancic and Matijevic (2019) map the evolution of constructivist answers to the question "What is Information?" from the 1940s to the present. They note the most prevalent view sees "information as a subjective, socially constructed entity which informs users' behaviour" (p. 626). We can see information as "an internal change of state, a self-produced aspect of communicative events" (Luhmann, 1990, p. 10), as "a plastic substance that can be shaped in many ways" (Talja et al., 2005, p. 83) or as "an invisible 'communication tool' between data and knowledge" (Bosancic, 2016, p. 952). As this means there is no single, universal definition of "information," it opens the possibility of variable interpretations that can satisfy different needs across disciplines, contexts, and experiences. As Belkin (1978) states, "we are not concerned with definitions of information, but rather with concepts of information. The distinction is that a definition presumably says what the phenomenon defined is, whereas a concept is a way of looking at, or interpreting, the phenomenon (p. 58)." A broad conceptualization of the concept of "information" is in keeping with the way the term has been employed in studies of information needs, uses, seeking, and sense-making. Understanding the variability in how we view "information" is a useful starting point for understanding the diversity of approaches to studying people's information behaviors.

Must information be true? Must we consider something *true* to call it *information*? If it is inaccurate, incomplete, or lacks evidence is it still information? If it is intended to deceive, demonstrably false, or untrue, is it *misinformation*? In distinguishing misinformation, information, and knowledge, some philosophers point to the idea of a *justified true belief* (or *strong knowledge*). Here, *justified* means there is sufficient, relevant evidence to call something *true*. Critiques of this idea refer to *weak knowledge*, or beliefs that are true but lack justification (Frické, 2009). Yet, we cannot always be sure something is true; even a *fact*, shown to be true now, may be proven false later. Buckland (1991) claims "the process of becoming informed is a matter of changing beliefs. Whether these beliefs are held or denied by others... need not detain us" (p. 43). Others claim a true–false distinction is essential, with false information and misinformation seen as distinct concepts.

1.4 THE SCOPE OF "INFORMATION BEHAVIOR"

Information behavior has been written about in thousands of documents from several distinct disciplines. Information behavior research explores active information seeking, unintentional or serendipitous activities, information avoidance, and other phenomena that focus on *people* and the *contexts* in which they use information. This research also examines people's affective responses to their information worlds, their embodied experiences of information, and how they process and consider information (in whatever form) to make decisions in their daily lives. Increasingly, it is almost impossible to separate people's information behaviors from the digital contexts that shape our worlds. We look for