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How are self-assessed information literacy, satisfaction with online searches and navigational browser data connected and what does this mean for search task design

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Résumé

Introduction: Search engines, Wikipedia and social media are young people's preferred platforms to search for information (MPFS, 2018). But they require information literacy to be used to one's advantage. Despite the widely agreed upon importance of information literacy, little is known about young people's actual search behaviour. Our contribution is a first step to uncover the links between self-reported information literacy, satisfaction with a search task and navigation data.

Methodology: 220 participants ($M = 18.9$ years) were given four search tasks and their search behaviour was tracked via browser plugin. Beforehand, participants were asked about their information literacy self-efficacy, information credibility assessment and digital skills for which we derived and expanded scales from the literature (Madden et al., 2018; Kurbanoglu et al., 2006; Timmers & Glas, 2010). Afterwards participants were asked to judge their speed, confidence, satisfaction and the overall difficulty of the task. 152 participants completed the study and the data on one search tasks is presented here.

Results: We found good reliabilities for information literacy self-efficacy ($\alpha = 0.73$), superficial approach to assess credibility of information ($\alpha = 0.73$) and data protection skills ($\alpha = 0.80$). Correlations with the navigational data revealed that only data protection skills showed a significant negative correlation with the total duration of solving the search tasks ($r = -0.25^{**}$) and a significant positive correlation with the overall satisfaction ($r = .029^{***}$). No correlations between the scales and the number of search queries and search pages visited or the number of results pages visited were found. The predictors for a high satisfaction with the performed search were explored using multiple regression analysis. The results showed no predictive value for the navigational data, but revealed that participants satisfaction with their performance is higher when they perceive the information to be searched as more important reported a higher previous knowledge, perceived their search speed as higher and the task's difficulty as lower. We then differentiated users who reported high information literacy self-efficacy and also low superficial approach to assess information credibility, which we deemed the most conscious searchers. These users report significantly higher satisfaction with their search performance hence yielding a value of the scales, as long as they're used in combination with each other.

Discussion: As higher importance and prior knowledge and lower perceived difficulty increases the satisfaction with search tasks but self-assessed literacy does not, our results provide implications for task design for learners.

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