
The information behavior of a new generation is not just a book about the information behaviour (IB) of the Internet generation; it is also about the state of research into their IB. But how useful can such research be when the technology will not stay still to be studied? Will we ever have more than snapshots?

Containing 11 papers by 13 US and Canadian LIS and education researchers, the subject is the IB of the born-digital generation, those for whom the Internet with its multiple information sources and simple searching was always there. The papers summarise research up to 2012, usually conclude with a call for further research and, as a waypoint, include lengthy lists of references.

Chapters are a compelling mix of theory, practical studies and summation of what the North American experts know. Topics include IB concepts, cognitive development, information literacy among young people, information behaviour, social networking, game-based learning, everyday life information for young adults with intellectual disabilities, cyber-bullying, children and youth as IT users, and the future applicability of current analytical models.

‘Digital natives’, young people born in the US after 1989 (definitions differ), are the target group: ‘the twenty-first century child is growing up in a media-saturated world, where information is ubiquitous, multi-modal, interactive, and increasingly, designed to persuade’.

Apparently 95 per cent of 12-17 year-olds are online, 80 per cent use social networks, 75 per cent own mobile phones, 88 per cent are text messagers (half of them sending 50 or more texts a day), and smart phone usage is rising all the time. These people have not known a world without the web or a tried to answer a question without Google. But they still do not know it all:

> Despite their reputation as digital wizards, research shows that young people, for the most part, are merely adequate when it comes to information seeking and use and, in fact, could use some guidance.... The cognitive effort needed to synthesize information from multiple sources can be too difficult for many young people without proper scaffolding from the teacher or librarian.

This collection of papers is a valuable complement to studies of user behaviour in general. It successfully covers broad content in depth, charting progress through the comprehensive lists of references. For those interested in how the Internet is changing our professional domain this is a must-read. Just don’t expect much navigational assistance from the brief index, with its long strings of undifferentiated locators. And watch out for page 179: mine fell out.

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