

The Jewish Studies Scholar as Information User: Channels of Information and Information-Seeking Behavior/ Jenny

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the information seeking behavior of Jewish studies scholars. The research questions were designed to provide a comprehensive view of the issue, therefore they examine several elements in the information seeking behavior of these scholars. The first research question aims to identify which of the information-seeking strategies proposed by Elli's behavioral model of information behavior are used by the Jewish studies scholars in their academic work. In addition, the study wanted to identify if there is a relation between the information strategy used by the researcher and the stage of the research. The second research question examines several elements in the basic information behavior of Jewish studies scholars. Firstly, the study wanted to identify which are the main channels of information used by Jewish studies scholars. Secondly, in what ways does the information seeking behavior of the Jewish studies scholar emulate the information behavior other Humanities scholars. Thirdly, what obstacles researchers encounter in their routine information activities and how do these obstacles influence the users' choice of channel.

This study was performed in two phases, the first phase consisted of a quantitative study administered by a structured questionnaire and the second phase consisted of a qualitative study that included a series of semi-structured interviews. In the quantitative section of this study the structured questionnaire was sent to 305 faculty members from four universities in Israel and from departments that are classified as "Jewish Studies": Bible studies, Talmud, Jewish philosophy, Land of Israel studies, Hebrew language and Hebrew literature. Of the 305 faculty members that received the questionnaire 136 responded in total, 59 answered the questionnaire through the Internet web site and 77 responded to the printed version sent to them by regular mail; that represents a 44.6% response. The

