The Process of information Quality Assessment in Web Information Behavior /

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Abstract

Modern society is an information consuming society and as such the question of information quality is of central importance. Initially, many users did not internalize the difference between the publication process of printed articles and those published on the internet, in the 'conventional' publishing process the information does not only go through quality assessment but it is also subject to the publication policy. On the other hand on, the Internet the publishing process allows almost anyone to quickly and easily publish his/her opinions and therefore the information retrieved by search engines does not always originate from recognized or qualified sources possessing different information qualities (Burbules, 2001; Rieh & Danielson, 2007) compelling the user himself to perform an independent assessment of the information each time he/she searches the internet.

Quality is an elusive concept whose definition is situational. In the context of this thesis the quality of information is solely dependent on whether the information is true, or in other words, whether the quality of information equals veracity. As truth can be subjective (Jacoby, 2002), for us to accept information as true is permissible only when it conforms to an accepted standard or a pattern (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2007) defined solely by the scientific community or by the searcher's community at large.

Since a person cannot possess knowledge on every conceivable subject, (Belkin, Oddy & Brooks, 1982; Kahneman & Tversky, 1982), the ability to claim that information is true is usually absent. Therefore, to assess the quality of the information, one has to rely on a surrogate mechanism that would enable to

answer the question "is the information true? Such mechanism is the assessment of credibility, defined as "the quality or power of inspiring

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