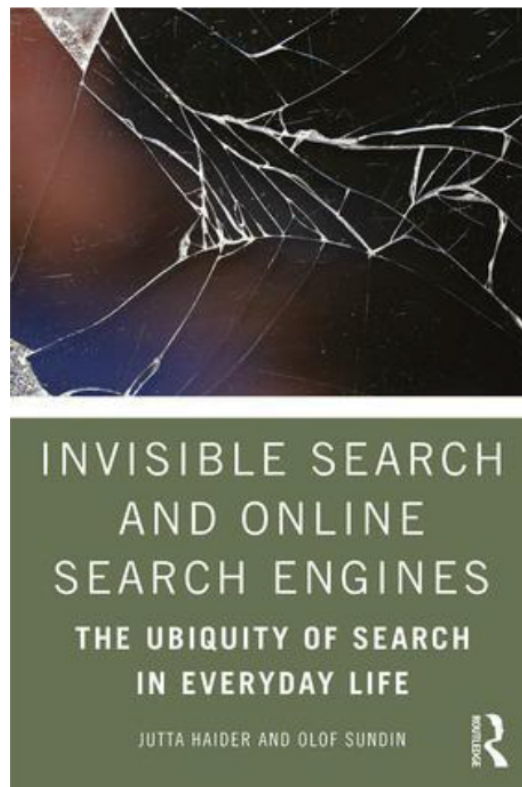


Searching, Searching, Every Where, How to Find My Bit?: The New Paradigm



Invisible Search and Online Search Engines: The Ubiquity of Search in Everyday Life.
by Jutta Haider and Olof Sundin; Routledge, London, 2019. ISBN: 9781138328600 (hardback),
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In Beckett's^[1] *Waiting for Godot*, Estragon and Vladimir waits for the arrival of a stranger named Godot who never arrived. During waiting they were engaged in so many discussions and faced three other characters. This waiting perhaps conveys the crux spirit of optimism aroused out of hope to meet Godot, which is sparkled at times through the apertures of countless despairs of the two characters, Estragon and Vladimir. Just like Beckett's *Godot*, Haider and Sundin's *searching* emerged as a ubiquitous, but apparently indiscernible, entity which is all-pervading in current era radiating continuously ray of hope in people's mind. Whenever anybody starts a search, the first thing s/he probably bears in mind is hope or optimism.

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Even any searching of information with deep frustration or depression probably anticipates a near silver-line of hope. People are always searching bit(s) of information either consciously or unconsciously at every moment of life. This book tells the tale of search over temporal canvas with the nomenclatures of the classical epochs as village paradigm and library paradigm that was shifted with the advent of search engine. The impact of search engine on individuals as well as on the society reveals the multifaceted role of search today that is discussed here. As the search engines become society's key infrastructures for knowing and becoming informed, their use is dispersed across myriads of social practices. Not only socio-cultural contexts, search engines play as vigorous catalyst in economy and development of society through e-commerce and marketing management.

The omnipresence of searching is pointed out in the title in tune of Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*^[2] resembling information as the sea water, the omnipresent entity to a sailor.

The search process is not new, but as old as the age of civilization. But the tools and techniques of searching are changing over time continuously outreaching newer fronts, which is forming consequences of new waves of paradigms. The search process prevailed in primitive agrarian society to industrial and early post-industrial society involved human components only. The social network played the role of search engines then, which was replaced by communication and networking technologies in information and knowledge society. The new entity gradually become dominant in life, i.e. the search engine. This book outlines different transitional phases from search without engine to search with engine. The search with the aid of search engines in everyday life and its consequences for media, society, culture and information literacy. The day-to-day information frequently searched today online are intervened by the various tools and devices that people carry with them like smart phone, tab, i-phone etc. Due to the continuous attachment, search engines today play significant impact on the structure of our lives, and personal and public memories.

The book is presented in seven chapters. The Chapter 1 introduces us with the objectives and scope of the book. A brief outline of search, search engine, content vs. document searching consequences are given here. The Chapter 2 essentially presents the consequences of search process from socio-cultural context. The technological interventions are indicated where necessary. The genesis of the search concept is rooted in the subject library and information science. The authors mentioned Paul Otlet and H.G. Wells in the context of organizing global knowledge, but Otlet's (also Henri La Fontaine) contribution in developing an artificial language (known as Universal Decimal Classification) for searching deserves special mention. The absence of the names of Melvil Dewey, founder of Decimal Classification and S. R. Ranganathan (founder of Colon Classification based on faceted technique or analytico-synthetic mechanism) leaves the literature review incomplete. The authors perhaps missed an interesting paper of 1998, entitled "Was Ranganathan a Yahoo!?" by Aimee Glassel^[3] who discussed about the Colon Classification, as well as his principles of facet analysis as applied to the organization of digital information organization from semantic concern. This Chapter precludes that "The library paradigm stands in contrast to the village paradigm for finding information. The village paradigm builds on an older tradition of oral information culture where the only way to find out something, aside from your own experiences, was to ask someone who knows." The contextual evidence of this generalization is not provided here either in terms of geographical location or socio-cultural framework or else. For instance, in the context of South Asia and particularly India, village paradigm is not at all contrasting to library paradigm, but complements each other. It is also debatable

whether the oral information culture is old or still existing. The literature review on information behaviour research and information research are extensively done. Starting from Salton's work, Belkin's ASK or TREC, the recent developments are covered here.

The Chapter 3 entitled "The materialities of search", begins with the issues of infrastructure, which is the precursor of search as a process in today's Google age. How the socio-economic base and socio-political environment of a country shapes her infrastructure for information searching, is well described here with appropriate literature review. Although, the technical points are not covered, the relevant reviews of literature are presented, still some important literature like Hanseth's^[4] (2010) or Pironti's^[5] (2006) viewpoints about infrastructure are missed here. The question of 'Platformization' of information infrastructure is very interesting point discussed here. The role of data and algorithm as the component of 'Materialities' of search are extensively covered with suitable literature review. But while discussing an important part of searching, that is 'Relevance' the authors remained silent about its precursor that is 'Browsing'. According to Bates, "Browsing involves successive acts of glimpsing, fixing on a target to examine visually or manually more closely, examining, then moving on to start the cycle over again." Bates also gave another definition of 'Browsing', that is cognitive definition, according to which, *browsing* is defined as whatever one does in the course of an undirected, active search. *Active* is behavioral; *undirected* is a characteristic of the need, not of the method or behavior: "Here we have no special information need or interest, but actively expose ourselves to possibly novel information." The act of browsing indicates scanning over a broad spectrum of pages, while searching refers to looking for a particular bit of information. The cognitive definition of browsing is clearly the predecessor of the concept of searching. The classic paper by Bodoff is highly relevant in this context. The role of search engine, particularly Google and little bit others like Yandex, Baidu *et al*, are described here in socio-cultural and behavioural context, which had been perhaps more significant if a comparative layout with database was presented. Besides search engine, the database plays an important role in searching today. As the database is a collection of information organized and stored to be accessed for later use, while search engines maintain inverted index files to connect the links with the queries. The overall social contexts of search from different levels are very lucidly described, that is the ubiquity of search everywhere consciously or unconsciously at any time.

The Chapter 4 entitled 'Search in everyday life', starts with a pathetic story of a Chinese resident. Actually this story tells us the limitations of search due to rapid commercialization of the same. Whether the commercialization is good or bad that

is different story. But the dangerous point to be kept in mind that such practice may create acute misguidance to the people who are searching. After reading this Chapter the basic question arises that to what extent one should rely on the results presented by the search engine. The mechanism of prioritization of items by search engines is a big question. Should we then keep faith on classical perspectives like village paradigm or library paradigm for our requisite pieces of information? The information need is a significant concept that precursors search is discussed here in the light of Taylor's work, a classic piece in this topic. The needs are presented here in the forms of conversations that added value. This Chapter discussed on the ubiquity of search in the context of search engines (mainly Google), social networking (Facebook), commercial platform (Amazon) etc. These networks and platforms continuously mould the thought, culture, taste of people today. How GAFAM (Google-Amazon-Facebook-Apple-Microsoft) or BAT (Baidu-Alibaba-Tencent) in China trespasses our personal bedroom and makes our emotion and sentiment public, that needs active research coverage today.

The Chapter 5 entitled 'Search and media and information literacy' focuses on searching in relation to media. The information literacy is a wide area of study having very limited scope of discussions here, however here it is discussed as the absence of a contextual understanding of searching. As a search may has many perspectives, that is it does not always orient towards finding information but for just looking up facts, or it may be leisure or time-pass, even may be aimless. But whatever orientation a search has, there definitely exists a cause that initiated the search. The attempt to discovery of such causes probably may open new contexts and interpretations of search. The Chapter 6 entitled "Researching search and search as research" outlines the possibilities and scope of search as an emerging research topic. The search process has already been strongly recognized as a dynamic research domain in the context of number of subject areas. The Chapter 7 concludes the entire work.

The extensive literature review in the book from different fields enhances the value of the book for the research

community, young researchers and students. It presents search as an integral part of everyday life. The topic of 'Search' is an old and classical subject domain under the umbrella of library and information science dates back to 1876 CE. The book is contemporary in scope as it examines the topic of 'Search' in the context of search engine and other online platforms. The classical subject domain 'Search' thus got another new facet today, which is highly interdisciplinary in nature. This book presents the interdisciplinary aspects of this subject. The classical library and information science-based studies on search covered trifle about technological know-how, while the logical concepts were emphasized on the basis of mathematical models. Here the technological gaps are bridged. The authors pointed out Google's source preferences that strongly support mainstream corporate is a threat to cultural pluralism and social diversity. The new concepts such as algorithmic censorship, search-fication of everyday life and mudane-ification of search unveils new arena of research on search in contemporary society. Different paradigms of search are well discussed and this book tells that as searching process is an inseparable part of daily life, the search engines therefore should be formed from the raw materials to be culled out from everyday life and practice. The concept of information retrieval and information behaviour are integral parts of search. Therefore, this work should not end here, but we are eagerly waiting for next books on information behaviour and information retrieval in today's search engine context. It should be must-read for academics, researchers and students in the areas of information science, library and information science (LIS), social science, media studies, *et al.*

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