

A qualitative study on rural residents' everyday-life information practices and the roles of rural libraries

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore people's information practices in rural communities and their uses of libraries in everyday life. A qualitative approach with individual interviews was conducted. In the interviews, the researchers worked with participants to draw two information maps to explore their ways of interacting with information. One map was Savolainen's Information Source Horizons Map, and the other map was the Information Trust Map that the researchers created similar to the horizon map. Preliminary findings revealed themes on sources and attitudes toward information depending on situations, ranging from not caring about information sources in monitoring everyday life information to verifying sources for schoolwork or health-related situations. Findings also showed participants commonly perceived libraries as book repositories, and compared libraries with Google in terms of information providers. Factors influencing people's trust in information were also identified, for example, whether or not online platforms afforded two-way communications. Additionally, a comparison between the Source Horizon Map and the Information Trust Map showed those sources that were frequently used were often the ones that were least trusted. This study is currently work-in-progress, with the plan of conducting additional interviews. This study will contribute to the gap in the literature on small and rural libraries. The findings of this study will have practical implications for developing public library services and programs in rural communities.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

public libraries; information seeking; information use;

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

rural libraries; everyday life information practices;