The Serious Leisure Frontier in Library and Information Science: Hobby Domains

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ABSTRACT: The library and information studies (LIS) field conducts a minority of research into leisure realms while favoring scholarly and professional contexts as subjects. Such is the case despite compelling evidence of the desirability and profundity of leisure in human life. This article introduces one popular form of leisure, hobbies, as a potentially provocative topic for LIS scholarship. To facilitate research on information within hobbies, the article discusses two conceptual devices: Serious leisure (Stebbins, 1982) describes essential characteristics of leisure, establishes that some types are information-rich, and provides a framework to study leisure systematically; The collectivist theory of domain analysis (Hjørland and Albrechtsen, 1995) orients research to the hobby milieu and its objective information forms, recasting them as "hobby domains." As an example of the application of both devices, a case study is reviewed of the information resources in the hobby of cooking. The article closes with a call to action and suggested research program for the study of hobbies in LIS.

Introduction

Mirroring the diversity of life, an infinite number of environments are possible for examining information, yet the LIS field favors academic contexts as research subjects. A review of the 93 PhD dissertations in LIS awarded since 2000, shows a majority of attention to information within such settings. Skimming the tables of contents of one dozen top research journals in the discipline reveals the same scholastic bias. Reflecting this orientation, White and McCain's 1998 co-citation study of information science concludes that the field's primary concern is *literatures*, establishing an implicit academic epicenter to scholarship.

Since academic settings are only one area of life where information exists, it seems fair to ask: why are these settings favored? Bates (1996) and Case (2002) point out that during the middle of the 20th century, the social, political, and economic importance of the sciences generated funds for LIS investigations. As a result, pioneering work in bibliometrics and retrieval emerged in the context of the scientific process of knowledge production and communication, grounding LIS research in these arenas. Later in the century such inquiries were extended to the social sciences and humanities, and recently into professions. As research subjects, academic and professional realms may seem appealingly structured and accessible compared to the nebulous and varied happenings in everyday life. What is more, such situations may appear most information intensive and, correspondingly, the highest priority for LIS.

Bucking this tradition, the information seeking behavior (ISB) community of LIS has become increasingly curious about information outside of academic and work contexts. In the past decade, this substantive area has been coined "everyday life information seeking," or ELIS, (Savolainen, 1995) and its champions herald it as an important frontier (Tuominen and Savolainen, 1997). Advocates of ELIS research assert that the traditional focus of LIS is too narrow and overlooks the informational issues within the mainstream of human experience.

Though young, the emergent ELIS research project already has a personality, which could be described as somber. Investigations tend to focus on situations in which access to information is perceived as compromised or there is a major life challenge like an illness. In this spirit Chatman reported the "information poverty" of elderly women in a retirement community (1996) and the "small-worldness" of female prisoners (1999). Research on life challenges includes that on transitions (McKenzie, 2001), breast cancer (Manaszewicz, Williamson, McKemmis, 2003), lupus (Carey, 2003), and multiple sclerosis (Baker, 1994). These studies generate insights of high value because the findings can palliate difficult situations. A drawback is that on account of focusing on experiences that are troubling, little is known about information in the predominant parts of everyday life that are ordinary or pleasant.

One of life's great joys is leisure and it has received little attention across LIS. To my knowledge, only two studies of information seeking during leisure exist. Ross (1999) looked at the information encounter during pleasure reading and Kari (2001) probed information seeking activities in the context of the paranormal. Both are groundbreaking and suggest that the experience of information during pastimes differs markedly from other contexts. For example, Ross explained how readers encounter information without any expressed need for it, while Kari established that some people experience supernormal information sources that they consider helpful.

Presently, barriers limit the proliferation of LIS scholarship into leisure. Foremost, since information is not known to be critical to leisure, there is no mandate to take up leisure as a research subject. Second, since the essential features and forms of leisure are vague and undifferentiated, leisure is a challenging empirical research topic. Likewise, LIS has few theories or methodologies tested within leisure contexts.

This article aims to encourage and facilitate inquiry into leisure in general, and specifically, one manifestation: hobbies. To that end, an argument is made for the importance of leisure for LIS scholarship. To enable research design, two conceptual devices, serious leisure and domain analysis, are discussed. A case study of information resources in the hobby of cooking exemplifies this approach. The article concludes with a call to action and research program to widen the scope of subjects in LIS to include leisure realms, beginning with hobbies.

The Case for Leisure

First, what is leisure? For most people, a typical day involves four types of activity: paid work, unpaid work, self-care, and free time (Robinson and Godbey, 1997, p. 11). Leisure occurs in the last category and is defined as the, "uncoerced activity undertaken in free time" (Stebbins, 2002). The concept of having *choice* underlies the notion of leisure, which is pleasurable in part because it is what we *want* to do. In Stebbins' carefully worded definition, the term *uncoerced* accounts for the reality that leisure feels unrestricted but is never carte blanche. Some boundaries always exist within leisure, such as physical limitations, financial restraints, or social and cultural norms.

The relative lack of consideration of leisure within LIS disregards evidence of its historical, personal, social, and economic significance. More than a century ago, Thorstein Veblen's landmark, *The theory of the leisure class* (1899), introduced the notion of "conspicuous consumption" and legitimized leisure as a scholarly subject. Over the course of a thirty year research program, psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (1975, 1997) has illuminated that play, a variety of leisure, is what makes people truly happy. In surveys, many individuals value leisure above all else in life, on par with the well being of family and home. As contrast, work ranks as a first priority for only a quarter of adults. On a social level, leisure creates fraternity and vitality. It is the, "... space of friendship, of much parenting and nurture, of community interaction and of the family itself." (Kelly, 1983, p. 23) The importance afforded leisure is likewise mirrored in economic data. Leisure spending has been calculated in the neighborhood of one trillion dollars in the United States (Academy of Leisure Sciences, 2004).

Leisure may be important, but is it informational and an appropriate subject for LIS? The concept of *serious leisure* suggests it is both. Serious leisure was first described in 1982 by sociologist Robert A. Stebbins. It is based upon the insight that leisure is not homogenous in character and that some forms

are particularly intense and enduring. Such experience Stebbins coined *serious leisure* and defined as, "the systematic pursuit of an ... activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a leisure career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience." (2001, p. 3) To quickly grasp the essence of serious leisure it helps to reflect upon one's own favorite non-work activities that have been cultivated over a lifetime and which generate feelings of pleasure, challenge, and accomplishment. These experiences may involve performing in community theater, being an unpaid docent in an art museum, or climbing mountains. There are three general forms of serious leisure: amateurism, volunteering, and hobbies.

The obverse of serious leisure is *casual leisure*, activity that is done passively and requires no expertise, such as daydreaming, chatting with friends, or being a couch potato. It is the more ubiquitous and common type of leisure. Watching television is the most familiar experience of casual leisure, but there are six varieties: play, relaxation, passive entertainment, active entertainment, sociable conversation, and sensory stimulation (Stebbins, 1997, p. 17). Casual leisure may not be a fruitful subject[1] for LIS inquiry, but is mentioned to bring the distinct nature of serious leisure into sharper focus.

Of greatest significance to LIS, participants in serious leisure must make significant personal effort based on specially acquired knowledge, training, or skill. Hence, information and the proactive seeking and use of it are central to serious leisure. The pursuit of expertise is lasting and intense enough to have the qualities of a career. The course of the serious leisure career typically follows a sequence: *beginning, development, establishment, maintenance,* and *decline*. The first two stages are focused on learning, the middle is a heyday marked by mastery; decline involves a deterioration of interest or a loss of the physical ability to continue. Doing a serious leisure activity outside of the commitment of a career is called *dabbling*. Participants in serious leisure identify strongly with their activity, as expressed, for example, in myriad bumper stickers ("I Love Dalmatians!") or clever vanity license plates ("10SNE1"). Finally, there is a unique ethos to serious leisure. The activities happen in cultures with histories, values, and performance standards, among other social forces (Stebbins, 2001, pp. 6-10). Information resources and shared representations like discourses, vocabularies, and classification systems, are elements of this ethos.

Several long-standing tenets within LIS fail to conform to serious leisure contexts[2]. For example, the "principle of least effort" (Zipf, 1949; Mann, 1993, pp. 91-101), is invoked in LIS to explain a lack of perseverance during information seeking. Yet serious leisure participants, by definition, willingly make *significant effort* acquiring knowledge. Various conceptions of the experience of information as "gappy" (Dervin, 1983), "uncertain" (Kuhlthau, 1993), or "anomalous" (Belkin, 1980) seem alien to the upbeat and confident knowledge acquisition process within serious leisure. In library contexts, serious leisure participants likely have more expertise than reference staff, a reversal of standard authority. The scientific tradition encourages the study of exceptions to the rule, making serious leisure an important, even required, site for inquiry.

Hobbies

Hobbies are the most popular of the three forms of serious leisure and are the focus of this paper. Other forms of serious leisure, amateurism and volunteering, are put aside for others to take up. A hobby is the systematic and enduring pursuit of a reasonably evolved and specialized free-time activity (Stebbins, 2003, forthcoming). In America, popular hobbies are reading, fishing, gardening, and team sports (Taylor, 2002). Surfing the Internet or visiting any bookstore provides convincing evidence that hobby-related information is plenteous. There is an inestimable number of hobbies, but Stebbins' research has generated a taxonomy of five kinds: *collectors, makers and tinkerers, activity participants, players of sports and games,* and *liberal arts enthusiasts* (2003, forthcoming). The classes and popular examples are reviewed in Figure 1.

The hobby classes are self-explanatory, with the exception of the liberal arts enthusiast, who performs, "the systematic and fervent pursuit during free time of knowledge for its own sake" (Stebbins, 1994, p. 174). Such hobbyists enjoy the process of developing expertise but do not further implement their knowledge. An example would be someone who reads about orchids but does not grow them; or a lay-expert on World War II airplanes, baseball history, or Eastern religions. The liberal arts enthusiasts may be of particular interest to LIS, for they have turned information seeking and use into a hobby.

The boundaries of the hobby classes are sometimes blurry and may overlap. For instance, an activity participant might also collect items related to the pastime; such as when a birdwatcher owns many

Figure 1: Hobby classes and examples of types

Hobby Classes	Examples of Popular Hobby Types
Collectors	Collecting of objects such as: stamps, coins, dolls, cameras, buttons, antiques, license plates, postcards, rubber duckies…
Makers and Tinkerers	Gardening, breeding or raising animals, knitting, model building, leather crafts, cooking, home brewing…
Activity Participants	Birdwatching, hiking, bellydancing, skateboarding, scuba diving, aerobics, camping, fishing, boating, sightseeing/traveling…
Players of Sports and Games	Chess, basketball, golf, card games, gambling, soccer, softball, darts, Scrabble®, Monopoly®...
Liberal Arts Enthusiasts	Developing knowledge of: languages, politics, history, cultures, cuisines, poetry, music, genealogy...

pairs of binoculars. Or, a sportswoman may also tinker regularly with the equipment of her game. This hybridization is especially possible in the liberal arts pursuit, which may serve as the intellectual complement to the other four classes of hobbies.

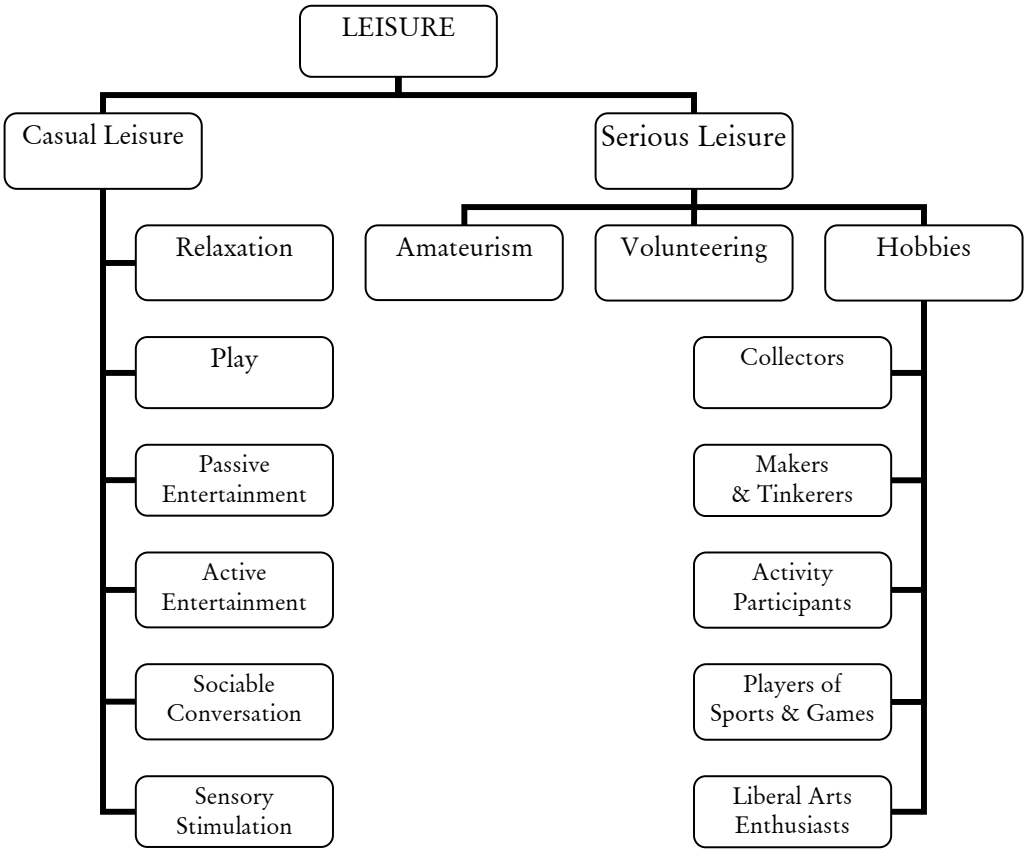
Hobbies exhibit social organization and according to Stebbins, are *social worlds*, a concept which supplies additional precision to describe information phenomena. A social world is a "...constellation of actors, organizations, events and practices which have coalesced into a perceived sphere of interest and involvement for participants" (Unruh, 1979, p. 115). Social worlds are voluntary, have no formal boundaries, and people often enjoy more than one in their lives. An example that will be revisited later in this paper is the social world of hobby cooking, which includes hobby cooks, their dinner guests, kitchens, cooking equipment, grocers, cookbooks, cooking websites, and holiday feasts among other elements. Of interest to LIS, information plays a critical role in hobby social worlds. The lack of any centralized bureaucracy causes a dependence on *mediated communication*, namely: books, magazines, chat rooms, newsgroups, and various other information forms. Unruh (1979, 1980) proposes four roles for participants within social worlds: *strangers, tourists, regulars,* and *insiders*. Librarians, oddly enough, are *strangers*, who perform an intermediary role to resources. The information seekers and users within social worlds are the *regulars* and *insiders*. The roles and other elements of social worlds cannot be fully explained here but are introduced to convey their potential as analytic tools and to point out the foundation that has already been laid for information research.

Outside of LIS, scholarship on hobbies has thus far aimed to explicate the meaning and nature of various types, without sustained attention to the role of information. Yet findings provide a glimpse of how information is central in shaping hobbies. To illustrate, Stebbins has proposed that the difference between the maker and tinkerer and the liberal arts enthusiast is the nature of knowledge acquisition. The former pursue specific and technical knowledge, while the latter seek broad and humanizing knowledge (Stebbins, 1994, p. 175). Research into the hobby of genealogy has established the breadth of information resources used, and that the favored genre is stories (Lambert, 1996). It seems likely that each class and individual type of hobby involves distinct information phenomena, which could be chronicled and serve as useful insights for library reference. It is equally likely that some common ground exists among sets of hobbies such that generalizations concerning information forms and activities will be possible.

What does the constellation of ideas around serious leisure provide for LIS scholarship? Foremost, it demarks a segment of everyday life that is information-rich, where people happily make significant effort to be informed. Multiple well established tenets of LIS may be disaffirmed in serious leisure contexts. This produces a mandate for research. Second, it lays out the central elements of leisure, serious leisure, and hobbies, such that they are no longer vague happenings. Key features are presented in Figure 2: A model and summary of the serious leisure concept. Researchers within LIS can now navigate leisure realms, adopt hobby classes or individual types as subjects, and explicate informational phenomena therein.

Thus far, serious leisure and hobbies have been presented outside of an explicit metatheory or theory. Both are required for empirical work and are discussed next.

Figure 2: A model and summary[3] *of the serious leisure concept*



- *Leisure* is, "uncoerced activity undertaken in free time." It includes casual leisure and serious leisure.
- *Casual leisure* is, "the immediately intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it." It has 6 forms: *play, relaxation, passive entertainment, active entertainment, sociable conversation*, and *sensory stimulation*.
- *Serious leisure* is "the systematic pursuit of an ... activity that participants find so substantial and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centered on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge, and experience." It has 3 forms: *amateurism, career volunteering*, and *hobbies*.
- All serious leisure has six specific characteristics: proactive knowledge and skill acquisition, a career, a need to persevere, durable benefits, a strong identification with the community, and a unique ethos
- Doing a serious leisure activity outside of the commitment of a career is *dabbling* and is done by *dabblers*.
- The serious leisure career typically progresses through five stages: *beginning, development, establishment, maintenance,* and *decline*.
- A *hobby* is one of the three forms of serious leisure and is, "the systematic and enduring pursuit of a reasonably evolved and specialized free-time activity." (Stebbins, 2003, forthcoming).
- Hobbies have five classes: *collectors, makers and tinkerers, activity participants, players of sports and games*, and *liberal arts enthusiasts*.
- Hobbies are *social worlds*, "...constellation of actors, organizations, events and practices which have coalesced into a perceived sphere of interest and involvement for participants."

An approach to hobbies: Collectivism and Domain Analysis

In empirical research, metatheory provides, "suppositions of a very general nature...not so much about processes of information seeking ... [but] ... about ways of thinking and speaking about these processes" (Vakkari, 1997, p. 452). Hobbies can be approached from any metatheoretical perspective. Talja, Tuominen, and Savolainen (2004, in press) name three main metatheories in LIS: constructivism, collectivism (elsewhere called sociocognitivism), and constructionism. Including also the traditional information systems perspective, provides researchers with at least four metatheoretical options for considering hobbies. When employed in a research project, each metatheory would bring a different aspect of hobbies into view. Here, the metatheory of collectivism and the allied theory of domain analysis are recommended.

Detailed coverage of the collectivist metatheory is beyond the scope of this article, but is available in Talja et. al (2004, in press) or Jacob and Shaw (1998). The core belief of collectivism is that the human experience of reality is shaped by the social and cultural forces manifest within communities. As a result, like its name suggests, the unit of analysis in collectivism is always a group, not an individual. Attention during the research process is focused externally onto the characteristics of the environment.

Domain analysis is one collectivist theory in LIS that has thus far been applied to the study of information within academic disciplines or professions, which are referred to as domains. Domain analytic inquiry aims to describe what constitutes knowledge and information within a domain and who produces, distributes, and consumes it. The genres, documents, mediums, and information channels within the domain are mapped. Knowledge bearing structures such as practices, vocabulary, and classification systems are articulated and analyzed. The social, cultural, and historical dynamics that influence these information phenomena are identified and explicated.

Serious leisure establishes that hobbyists, much like scholars, have a career in knowledge acquisition and operate within collectives known as social worlds. Even cursory reflection on any hobby brings to mind a body of practices, knowledge, roles, and resources that are not unlike the substance and sociality of an academic field. Consequently, nothing prevents the extension of domain analysis from academic discourse communities to hobbies, in which case they are cast as "hobby domains." Conveniently, serious leisure divides myriad hobbies into domains of various sizes from which a researcher can pick and choose her subject. The unit of analysis could be a whole hobby class (i.e., makers and tinkerers) or a specific type (i.e., home brewers).

My exploratory study of the hobby of cooking has convinced me that accounts of objective hobby information resources are the logical starting point for LIS scholarship on hobbies. A question of the first order is: what are a hobby's information resources and forms? To that end, one strength of domain analysis is that it directs inquiry to objective, not subjective, features. This is apropos because much of the essence and capital of hobbies is found in the setting and paraphernalia. Hobby sailing, for instance, is purely a daydream without a boat, the sea, and a strong wind. Of concern to LIS and domain analysts, sailing requires maps, navigation systems, and documented knowledge of sailing. Domain analysis focuses analytical attention on these latter items, as an alternative to popular theoretical options that explore cognition, affect, or technologies.

The research program of domain analysis has been stated by its architect, Birger Hjørland, in the form of eleven approaches:

Figure 3: Eleven Approaches to Domain Analysis

1. producing literature guides and subject gateways
2. producing special classifications and thesauri
3. research on indexing and retrieving specialties
4. empirical user studies
5. bibliometrical studies
6. historical studies
7. document and genre studies
8. epistemological and critical studies
9. terminological studies, LSP (language for special purposes)
10. studies of structures and institutions in scientific communication
11. domain analysis in professional cognition and artifical intelligence

(Hjørland, 2002)

Domain analytic research on hobbies means applying one, a series (in any order), or a combination of the eleven lines of inquiry. What unifies the eleven approaches is a steadfast focus on information forms or

conceptual structures within the chosen domain, with the exception of #4 that examines human use of information. This provides a way to do systematic research through a single hobby (by application in a concatenated, or chaining, fashion). Alternatively, any single approach can be done in a series of *different* hobby domains, to discover similarities and differences per domain. Two brief, illustrative, hypothetical examples of individual approaches are sketched next, both set within the domain of hobby cooking. The proceeding section then chronicles the author's broader domain analytic study of hobby cooking that amalgamates several of the eleven approaches.

Approach #7 analyzes documents or genres within a domain. This could be manifested in a sweeping survey of extant documents and genres used in a hobby, or deeper analysis of any single entity. An example of the latter within hobby cooking would be a study of its central genre, the *recipe*, asking: What is a recipe and why is it that way? In the contextual terms of domain analysis: What are the cultural, social, and historical shapers of recipes? To execute this investigation, recipes from circa 1900, 1950, and 2000 may be compared for their distinctions. It is immediately apparent that earlier recipes were short narratives that often lacked precision whereas nowadays the recipe contains an exact ingredients list and detailed, consecutive, instructions. Literature on the social history of cooking would explain how household cooking routines at the turn of the 19th century generated tacit cooking knowledge in children and obviated the need for detailed recipes. Yet today, cooking knowledge is not always transmitted during upbringing and has been relocated into the genre of the modern, highly technical recipe. This investigation produces a statement on the evolving features of recipes and a social and historical explanation for these qualities. To recap, key design aspects of approach #7 are, that the subject is a genre (the *recipe*) and that the research methods are comparative historical analysis of recipes and readings in the social history of cooking.

Approach #2 explores classification systems within a domain. This means analysis of knowledge organization within subject areas of major systems such as the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress, taking either a comparative or historical tack. Concerning hobby cooking, a domain analyst may harbor an interest in culture and explore the extent to which major national cuisines (i.e., French, Italian, or Asian) have influenced the classification systems used in U.S. libraries. To that end, the conceptual structure of each cuisine may be mapped, utilizing seminal cookbooks or treatises from each cuisine. This reveals how French cuisine turns on *classic sauces* (such as Béarnaise); while Italian cuisine is organized by *local specialties* (like the famous Parmigiano Reggiano cheese). Evidence of such characteristics (i.e., highly standardized versus regionally varied) would be sought in major classification schemes. This could generate a culturally informed, and potentially critical, explication of the culinary classes of the major classification systems. To recap, the key design aspects of approach #2 are that the subject is the *classification systems* (specifically their culinary areas) and that the research method is an analysis of those systems against various national cuisines (as drawn from their seminal works).

It should be clear that while Hjørland's eleven approaches encourage paths of inquiry, whether into genre (#7) or classification (#2), there is freedom to explore a wide range of questions, based upon the researcher's fancy. Investigators can also proceed in the *general domain analytic spirit*, with a commitment to explore the informational features of a hobby, as done in the case study described next.

The Hobby of Cooking

Cooking is a prominent hobby within post-industrial nations, with an estimated 5.6 million participants in the U.S. alone (Taylor, 2002). Characteristics of hobby cooking make it potentially fascinating to LIS. This activity involves vivid genres such as the recipe, menu, and cookbook. Such materials tend to accumulate over the years, or even generations, into home collections that pose unique classification, retrieval, and use challenges. The information resources of hobbyist cooking are abundant, cut across all media channels, and stimulate every sense. The first culinary-minded information scientist may have been Paul Otlet, who held that "the gustatory" (i.e., a taste of something) was a document (Otlet, 1934). More recently, though ten million cookbooks are sold per year in the U.S., the LIS literature contains few mentions of the informational issues surrounding food and cooking. As one curious exception, Chatman (2000) looked at geophagy (i.e., the surreptitious consumption of dirt) as a means to understanding information secrecy. The most sustained work on cooking-related information comes from the Culinary Indexing special interest group of the American Society of Indexers.

In 2001-2003 the author conducted an exploratory study into the nature of information in the hobby of cooking. General questions guided the project: What information resources exist in hobby cooking? What qualities do these resources have? How are they used? Returning to Hjørland's eleven approaches for domain analysis, the project amalgamated approach #1 (literature guides), #4 (user studies), #7 (document and genre studies), and #10 (studies of structures and institutions). The subject was defined as the serious leisure activity of hobby cooking and the unit of analysis was the "domain" of hobby cooking, technically a social world. Drawing upon these concepts, the related tasks of professional cooking and subsistence meal preparation were ruled out. Data gathering was multimethod and included secondary research, interviews (with hobbyists and information providers), and the unobtrusive analysis of sites (i.e. homes, bookstores, markets, cooking clubs, cookware stores, libraries). The project also tapped the author's fifteen years of experience as a hobbyist cook.

Early in the exploratory research process, cookbook and recipe collections kept in the home jumped out as important components of the hobby. These resources could contain thousands of items per household and were maintained by the hobbyist. Exploratory research allows for refocusing, and the home collections were isolated and prioritized as a distinct segment of the larger project. Due to space limitations, only this part of the research will be described here. Fitting with the concerns of collectivism and domain analysis, the questions about the collections were: What subjects, media, and genres make up these collections? How are they created, used, and managed? What physical (storage equipment) and conceptual (classification systems) devices exist?

To answer these questions, the researcher conducted a "tour" of the homes, kitchens, and information resources of twelve hobby cooks. Following a warm-up discussion of the hobby, the tour began with the researcher saying, "Now I'd like you to take me on a tour, pointing out and describing items that are used in the hobby of cooking." This proved a bountiful technique; subjects became ebullient and authoritative as they moved through their houses describing the infrastructure of the hobby. The researcher managed the pace of the tour, directing attention to information forms, such as a shelf of cooking magazines or a refrigerator door covered with recipes. At these highly informational points, details were elicited through probes, such as: what is this? how is this used? is this organized in some way? During the tour, photographs were taken; some were shot close-up, to capture the titles of books or file tabs with subject headings. The interviews and tours were audio taped and transcribed.

Figure 4. This hobbyist cooks explains how she places favorite recipes into files and folders in the kitchen cupboard. The recipes are parsed from a collection of more than 1,000 cookbooks.

Figure 5. A closer look at the classification system.

The twelve household tours generated a data set of 70 single spaced pages of narrative and 125 photographs (see Figures 4 and 5). These materials shed light on the substantive content of hobby cooking;

its genres; the process of information acquisition, storage, organization, management, and use; the integration of multi-media resources; lay classification systems; and the role of information within the hobby. Analysis and synthesis will occur in 2004.

Preliminary but striking observations from the tours can be briefly reported. The information resources that cooks keep in their homes are more than functional in nature. Cookbooks and recipes represent family legacies, important occasions, aspirations, and past experiences. Such collections can be distributed throughout the home so that the house itself functions as the central hub of an information system. Libraries, bookstores, restaurants, and markets make up wider-area nodes of this information system. The practice of the hobby and engagement with the information resources varies widely and appears shaped by personal experiences, family traditions, situational factors (i.e. seasons, holidays), popular cooking trends, professional cooking standards, and cuisines. Of these historical and contextual elements, cuisines (i.e. French, Italian, Asian) seem to bring the most unity to the discourse, techniques, folk classification, and information forms of hobby cooking, and may function akin to the paradigms of academe.

Conclusion

A research program into hobbies would expand LIS scholarship beyond its present stronghold of academic and professional contexts. This raises two questions: How should a research program into hobbies proceed? And what are the benefits of exploring this new territory?

Research into leisure should be efficiently orchestrated, not scattershot, drawing upon the conceptual devices presented here. Serious leisure explains the cardinal elements of leisure and divides it into realms that can be prioritized and approached systematically. The most fruitful starting point is serious, not casual leisure, because it is information-rich and poses direct challenges to LIS orthodoxy. Of the three forms of serious leisure, hobbies are the most popular and familiar, making them a sensible entree and base.. Although all hobby classes are of interest to LIS, liberal arts hobbyists seem of greatest interest on account of their pure love for knowledge acquisition. Empirical research can proceed concurrently on hobby classes and individual types. One integrated strategy would be for academics in LIS to focus on synthesis at the class level, while their students conduct fieldwork on individual types of hobbies. The collectivist approach of domain analysis synchronizes with serious leisure and advantageously places attention on the objective information forms in hobby domains. Description of these resources and their use is the logical first order in any unchartered space.

The primary reward of such a research enterprise is new knowledge. Since all empirical research should deliver that same return, what makes serious leisure better than other subjects? Simply put, research in such settings is *fun*. It allows the study of dynamic information forms in a wide range of private and public environments. It enables engagement with human subjects who are more often than not passionate, skilled, and thoughtful about their chosen pursuits. More practically speaking, a serious leisure research program may benefit LIS information provision, education, and public identity.

Significant public library traffic is tied to leisure and hobby purists (Collins and Chandler, 1997). Increased understanding of information phenomena within a diversity of leisure and hobby domains enables better information provision to these communities. Rather then providing resources based upon universals, hobby classes or types can be precisely served. As a result, frequency of library use and satisfaction levels may increase.

Inquiry into leisure and hobbies is a boon to LIS education, for it provides students with friendly settings to engage the difficult conceptual material of the discipline. Drawing on 30 years of teaching, Marcia Bates has remarked that it takes students a semester to adjust to the "orthogonal" orientation that LIS takes to patterns of information (Bates, 1999). Leisure and hobby settings are informational, familiar, and engaging, and make ideal introductory contexts. As evidence of this, Jonathan Furner of UCLA begins his course on *Subject Classification* with a lively discussion of the facets of a recipe for a British "pasty." In a variety of other courses, a prime assignment would be to survey the information resources of a hobby. These are apt tactics to indoctrinate newcomers and to animate LIS pedagogy.

A final reward of this extension could be an improved public identity for the LIS field. Today, the discipline bemoans the reputation it has of being dowdy (see Adams, 2000 for a review of the issue). This status may be because the nexus of our expertise is in academic settings and topics of limited public understanding or enthusiasm. Building authority in everyday life experiences like leisure relocates LIS

acumen to the epicenter of personal and social life. With this shift, public perception may change also.

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Notes

1 Alternatively, casual leisure may a valuable subject for LIS for its *un*-informational quality or as a site of information *avoidance*. Stebbins has described casual leisure as doing what comes instinctively, with no special knowledge acquisition. LIS may want to study casual leisure to better understand these distinct features.
2 These observations are based upon two years of research into information within serious leisure contexts, including fieldwork with hobbyist cooks.
3 Except where noted, summary is drawn from Stebbins, 2001, which provides an overview of serious leisure and references to related writings.

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