

What's New?

Selected Abstracts from *JASIST*

Editor's note: We invite *JASIST* authors to submit structured abstracts of their articles for possible inclusion in the *Bulletin*, particularly those that might be of interest to practitioners. *ASIST* would welcome reader feedback on the usefulness of this (or any other) *Bulletin* feature (bulletin@asis.org).

FROM *JASIST* V. 54 (9)

Bergman, O., Beyth-Marom, R., Nachmias R. (2003). The user-subjective approach to personal information management systems, pp. 872-878.

Study and Results: Personal computers often serve as personal information management (PIM) systems: they allow people to collect items of information and store them outside their cognitive system. Research has shown that users of these systems find it hard to remember where they placed their personal information and thus have difficulties in retrieving it whenever necessary. In the article we propose a user-subjective approach to PIM system design that advocates that PIM systems should relate to the subjective attributes that users give to the data stored in them. This will hopefully facilitate system use: help users find information items again, recall them when needed and use them effectively in subsequent interactions with them.

Whats New? Three generic principles for system design are suggested and discussed: (a) The *subjective classification*

principle stating that all information items related to the same subjective topic should be classified together regardless of their technological format; (b) the *subjective importance principle* proposing that the subjective importance of information should determine its degree of visual salience and accessibility; and (c) the *subjective context principle* suggesting that information should be retrieved and viewed by the user in the same context in which it was previously used. We claim that these principles are only sporadically implemented in operating systems currently available on personal computers and demonstrate alternatives for interface design.

Limitations: Empirical data are presently collected to support our claims, but are not yet reported in this article.

FROM *JASIST* V. 54 (10)

Borlund, P. (2003). The concept of relevance in IR, pp. 913-925.

Study and Results: The concept of relevance is introduced as viewed and

applied in the context of information retrieval (IR) evaluation and presented in accordance to the multidimensional and dynamic nature of the concept. The literature on relevance reveals how the concept is many-faceted. The multidimensionality of relevance does not refer only to the various relevance criteria users may apply in the process of judging relevance of retrieved information objects. The multidimensional aspect of relevance covers also classes, types and degrees of relevance. Further, special attention is paid to situational relevance, which is discussed with reference to its potential dynamic nature and as a requirement for interactive IR evaluation.

Whats New? It is often said that no consensus exists on the relevance concept. However, the outlining of the multidimensional and dynamic nature of relevance provides a framework, which demonstrates that a consistent and compatible understanding of the relevance concept has been reached at an overall level.

Limitations: The focus of the paper is limited to the application of relevance within the research area of IR.

Hara, N., Solomon, P., Kim, S., & Sonnenwald, D. H. (2003). An emerging view of scientific collaboration: Scientists' perspectives on collaboration and factors that impact collaboration, 952-965.

Study and Results: This paper describes collaboration among a group of scientists and considers how their experiences are socially shaped. The scientists were members of a newly formed distributed, multi-disciplinary academic research center. To investigate challenges that emerge in establishing scientific collaboration, data were collected about members' previous and current collaborative experiences, perceptions regarding collaboration and work practices during the center's first year of operation. The data for the study includes interviews with members of the center, observations of videoconferences and meetings, and a center-wide sociometric survey.

Whats New? Data analysis has led to the development of a framework that identifies forms of collaboration that emerged among scientists (e.g., complementary and integrative collabora-

tion) and associated factors, which influenced collaboration including personal compatibility, work connections, incentives and infrastructure. Practitioners can learn about possible issues to attend to in their own developing collaboration situations, especially collaboration in dispersed locations. These results may inform the specification of social and organizational practices, which are needed to establish collaboration in distributed, multi-disciplinary research centers.

Limitations: This study was of an emerging scientific collaboration. The purpose was to understand facilitators and barriers to collaboration as seen by participants in this collaboration. The findings may not apply to other settings. The resulting framework is offered to enable consideration of applicability in other settings as well as to inform other research on factors impacting on collaboration.