



Human Information Interaction: An Ecological Approach to Information Behavior (MIT Press)

By Raya Fidel

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Human information interaction (HII) is an emerging area of study that investigates how people interact with information; its subfield human information behavior (HIB) is a flourishing, active discipline. Yet despite their obvious relevance to the design of information systems, these research areas have had almost no impact on systems design. One issue may be the contextual complexity of human interaction with information; another may be the difficulty in translating real-life and unstructured HII complexity into formal, linear structures necessary for systems design. In this book, Raya Fidel proposes a research approach that bridges the study of human information interaction and the design of information systems: cognitive work analysis (CWA). Developed by Jens Rasmussen and his colleagues, CWA embraces complexity and provides a conceptual framework and analytical tools that can harness it to create design requirements. CWA offers an ecological approach to design, analyzing the forces in the environment that shape human interaction with information. Fidel reviews research in HIB, focusing on its contribution to systems design, and then presents the CWA framework. She shows that CWA, with its ecological approach, can be used to overcome design challenges and lead to the development of effective systems. Researchers and designers who use CWA can increase the diversity of their analytical tools, providing them with an alternative approach when they plan research and design projects. The CWA framework enables a collaboration between design and HII that can create information systems tailored to fit human lives.

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Editorial Review

Review

Human Information Interaction constructs an elegant argument for an ecological approach to information behavior. Professor Raya Fidel's cogent exposition of foundational theoretical concepts including cognitive work analysis delivers thoughtful guidance for future work in information interaction. Essential reading.

(Bonnie Nardi, Department of Informatics, University of California, Irvine)

Raya Fidel provides the human information interaction field with a manifesto for studying human information behavior from a holistic perspective, arguing that context dominates human action and we are obligated to study it. She provides a tutorial on cognitive work analysis as a technique for such study.

(Gary Marchionini, Cary C. Boshamer Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

This book is an important contribution to the Information field. Raya Fidel presents a nuanced picture of research on human information interaction, and advocates for Cognitive Work Analysis as the holistic approach to the study and evaluation of human information interaction.

(Pia Borlund, Royal School of Library and Information Science, Denmark)

About the Author

Raya Fidel is Professor Emerita in the University of Washington's Information School.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Kitterman:

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