INFORMATION BEHAVIOUR: INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF LAW PRACTITIONERS

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Abstract

In this study, trainee solicitors have been selected for the purpose of investigation. Trainee solicitors are working under a training contract, the final stage of the process of qualification as a solicitor. The trainees are therefore ideal participants for research of this nature as they are by the very nature of their training contracts, learners, and through an exploration of the work that they are given to undertake this research can explore how the trainees develop their knowledge and how their information behaviour contributes to that learning. To this and a constructivist approach to inquiry was adopted utilising a narrative technique for the gathering of data. The form of this research was exploratory and descriptive suggesting the need for method that enabled the gathering of sufficient knowledge to present a detailed description of the trainees’ behaviour in context, and the interpretation of that description if this aim was to be achieved. To aid in the interpretation and understanding of the trainees’ narratives, information is the general term used in relation to need and to knowledge that has been expressed in the form of documents, published resources, files, cases, etc. information forms the basis for the development of know how surrounding tasks, in providing the means for interpreting and understanding what to do.
Introduction

1.1 The nature and role of the information behaviour of trainee solicitors in the context of knowledge development within a law firm environment. Within the context of law firms, Edward and Mashling (Gottschalk, 2000) categories the type of information involved in the practice of law as administrative data, declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge and analytical knowledge. Administrative data includes information about firm operations, for example, hourly billing rates for lawyers, and client names and matters. Declarative knowledge is knowledge of the law, the legal principles contained in statutes, court opinion and others sources of primary legal authority. Procedural knowledge is knowledge of the mechnanics of complying with the law's requirements in a particular situation, and analytical knowledge is the conclusion reached about the course of action a particular client should follow in a particular situation. This categorisation of practice within law firms clearly indicates that law firms are both intensive users of information and of knowledge and are well suited for knowledge and information and information behaviour investigation. Furthermore, law firms have always been pure knowledge businesses, always conscious of the fact that their sustainable advantage is the expertise and knowledge of their lawyers (Parsons, 2004), and therefore how developed their knowledge in practice is likely to be of interest.

In this study, trainee solicitors have been selected for the purpose of investigation. Trainee solicitors are working under a training contract, the final stage of the process of qualification as a solicitor. The purpose of the training contract is to give the trainees supervised experience in legal practice through which they can refine and develop their professional skills (Law Society, 2005). The trainees are therefore ideal participants for research of this nature as they are by the very nature of their training contracts, learners, and through an exploration of the work that they are given to undertake this research can explore how the trainees develop their knowledge and how their
information behaviour contributes to that learning. Through an investigation of the information behaviour of trainee solicitors and how this behaviour shape their knowledge development, a law firm could be better placed to consider enablers and inhibitors to learning, and to consider methods that better enable the trainees to develop their knowledge, knowledge being recognised as a law firm’s sustainable advantage.

2.1 Literature Review

There has been very little published research on the information behavior of solicitors (Leckie, et al 1996; Wilkinson 2001). This lack of research has directed this study towards models that have been found to consider the information seeking of lawyers and that were further considered to fit with the research paradigm of this study. Leckie et al (1996) analytic model of the information seeking behaviour of professionals was identified and selected as an initial framework base. This model has been used as an aid to research in relation to the information seeking behaviour of students studying law (Kerins, 2004), and has been brought into question by Wilkinson (2001), in relation to her empirical study of the information sources used by lawyers in problem-solving. Kuhlthau’s (1991) Information Search Process model was selected as it has not only been empirically tested with various groups of professionals, including a small group of lawyers, but also draws attention to affective factors, the feelings associated with each stage of the process, an element identified as missing from Leckie, Pettigrew and Sylvain’s model, but an element that emerged through the iterative process of analysis of the trainees narratives. In addition, whereas Leckie, Pettigrew and Sylvain provide a model of the broad elements identified as depicting the information seeking behaviour of professionals, such as roles, tasks, etc. Kuhlthau provides a more contextual and individual approach. Kuhlthau presents information seeking as a process of construction, with uncertainty decreasing as understanding increases, incorporating the cognitive with the affective experience common in the process of
information seeking and use (Kuhlthau and Tama, 2001), thereby adding contextual depth to this study's framework. Although these models are mainly concerned with information seeking as oppose to information behaviour, both models consider the influence of task on information needs, seeking and use, and therfore provide an information base from which to consider the findings of this research.

Leckie et al. (1996) developed the model based on an extensive meta-review of literature in Library and Information, as well as other professional fields such as health care, law, and engineering. Leckie et al. (1996) state that, the model can be applied to any profession. Reddy (2003) highlights four themes that underpin the model.

1. The broad context of any professional should be studied and understood
2. The details of the professional’s work should be carefully examined
3. The tasks and roles of the professional should be made explicit
4. Professional information seeking portrays unpredictability, which could cause frustration

The components of the model include professional’s roles and tasks, features of information needs, awareness of information, sources of information, and the results (outcomes) of the process of information seeking Du Preez (2008) and Reddy (2003). Figure 4 illustrates the relationship of the elements of the model.
Figure 1. Leckie et al. (1996) Models of Information Seeking for Professionals.

The model posits that the professionals’ roles and tasks results in information needs. Consequently, the needs lead the professionals to seek information (Reddy 2003). The information seeking process entails several intervening factors that can influence the outcomes. The two factors include the sources of information and the awareness of that information Du Preez (2008) and Reddy (2003). According to Leckie et al. (1996), “the professional’s awareness of information sources, and or information content can determine the path information-seeking will take.” The elements embedded in the awareness of information include the following.

1. Familiarity and previous success

2. Trustworthiness (belief that a source will offer credible information)

3. Timeliness of the search

4. Quality and relevance of the information in relation to the task

5. The costs associated with the search
6. Accessibility

Leckie et al. (1996) criticize other models because of the lack of a feedback loop that allows individuals to restart the information-seeking process if the initial search does not produce the intended outcomes. According to Du Preez (2008), the feedback loop indicates that information seeking is not a linear occurrence.

Cheuk Wai-Yi (1998; 1999) based the development of the model on Dervin’s Sense-making approach. According to Cheuk Wai-Yi (1998), humans seek and use information in response to the situations that instigate information needs. The model engrosses seven situations that individuals in workplaces expects: initiation of tasks, formulation of focus, assumption of ideas, confirmation of ideas, rejection of ideas, finalization of ideas, and dissemination of the ideas (Du Preez 2008). From the investigation, Cheuk Wai-Yi (1998) found a correlation between the aspects in terms of choice and use of information sources, information organization, relevance judgment criterion, information presentation strategies, definition of information, and feelings. Although individuals seek information from each other, they often revert to the use of authoritative sources during the confirmation and rejection of ideas. The model shows similarities with Elli’s model because it does not follow a sequential order in the search process. The information seeking process is a multi-directional process involving the seven situations. The non-linear model suggests that individuals can predict distinctive information behaviours in different ISU situations. Consequently, the model contends that the process of seeking and using information is systematic and predictable (Du Preez 2008). However, Cheuk Wai Yi (1999) observes that people of the same professional group portray different information needs but use similar channels and sources of information. Essentially, the model also shows a way through which individuals bridge information gaps.

Information foraging refers to the assessment, search, and handling of sources of information Du Preez (2008). Sandstorm (1994) developed the theory from
evolutionary ecology based on its potential in “clarifying and operationalizing studies in scholarly communication.” The theory assumes that self-interests while engaging in optimal foraging motivate people. According to Sandstorm (1999), scholars and academics use “core” of often-cited sources representing their area of specialization. Sandstorm (1994; 1999) and Jacob (2005) identified a continuum of two forms of foraging. First, specialists concentrate on a single collection of sources encountered from routine monitoring or informal communications. Specialists also draw information from their personal collections. Second, generalists gather information from a wide variety of information “patches”, which requires deliberate and intensive searching. The theory allows a systematic examination of the interaction between the information environment, strategies used in the retrieval of the information, and the individuals’ perceptions of the environment.

Choo et al.’s (1998) model is relevant to the field of library and information science because of the increasing use of online libraries. Choo et al. (1998) identified four modes of information seeking on the Web: formal search, informal search, conditioned viewing, and undirected viewing. Undirected viewing entails activities that aim at the identification of issues or developments that help in the generation of new information needs Choo et al. (1998). The mode applies to individuals with exposure to information but have no specified informational needs (Choo et al. 1998). Conditioned viewing entails browsing, monitoring, and differentiating. Differentiating involves the selection of pages or websites expected to have relevant information. The relevance of the information present in the websites or pages determines the emotional experiences of the user. Starting from undirected viewing, a user is likely to develop enthusiasm from the information acquired. Consequently, this may generate anxiety to conduct an informal search, which entails acquiring additional knowledge for the determination of the response of action Choo et al. (2000). Once a formal search is complete, an individual has optimism that further research can help in acquiring a response. The
optimism leads to a formal search, which entails the acquisition of information directed towards the course of action to take (Choo et al. 2000)

Bystrom and Jarvelin (1995) considered task-based information seeking as a process of problem solving. The authors modelled their theory based on processes such as needs analysis, action selection, implementation of seeking actions, and examination of results. The process is contingent on situational, organizational, and personal factors. The model illustrates the relationship between task complexities, type of information source, and the type of information sought (Bystrom and Jarvelin 1995).

Figure 3 summarizes the model.

Figure 2. Bystrom and Jarvelin's (1995) Task-based Information Seeking Model
According to Bystrom and Jarvelin (1995), the complexity of a task determines task performance. Task complexity relates to Kuhlthau’s conceptualization of uncertainty in terms of processes, inputs, and outcomes of information seeking. The model offers an opportunity to understand the relationship between task complexity, information needs, and the choice of information needs contingent to the emotions that arise during the retrieval of the information.

The models discussed above highlight the importance of uncertainty in the search process either directly or indirectly. The models show that the uncertainty at the beginning of the search process leads to the collection of both necessary and unnecessary information. However, a user formulates a focus as he or she collects more information, which increases confidence and expectations of positive results.

Blom (1983) developed the task performance model based on the needs and use of information among scientists. The model is based on four propositions (Blom 1983).

1. Information service should contribute to the successful performance of a task
2. Information is a crucial input in decision-making, problem-solving, and planning of activities aimed at increasing knowledge
3. Information needs entail the requirements for information necessary for the fulfilment of a task
4. The problem area, purpose, and methods of a scientific field, the environmental factors, and the personal attributes of the researcher interact during the performance of the task.

Kuhlthau (1991) faulted Elli’s model and extended it to develop another general model called Information Search Process (ISP). Kuhlthau (1991) describes the Information Search Process as a “process of construction, which involves the whole experience of a person, feelings, as well as thoughts and actions.” Kuhlthau drew inspiration from Kelly’s
personality construct theory that highlights the affective experiences in the construction of meaning from information. The model was developed through longitudinal study with high school students. The stages included in Kuhlthau’s model are associated with feelings, thoughts, and actions. The stages involved in the model are as follows, (Kuhlthau 1993).

1. Initiation: An individual becomes aware of the lack of understanding or knowledge, leading to feelings of uncertainty and apprehension

2. Selection: Identification of a general area, problem, or topic, which brings optimism and reduces uncertainty as the search for information begins

3. Exploration: An individual encounters incompatible and inconsistent information, which may increase uncertainty, doubt, and confusion

4. Formulation: An individual forms a focused perspective leading to diminished uncertainty and increased confidence

5. Collection: Information regarding the focused perspective is collected resulting in reduced uncertainty as involvement and interest increase

6. Presentation: An individual completes the search with a new understanding, which enables him or her to explain or use the learning

Table 1 summarizes Kuhlthau’s model highlighting the three experiences involved (Kalbach 2006).

While criticizing other models, Weiler (2005) lauds Kuhlthau’s model because it is based on actual research rather than practical experiences. Additionally, the inclusion of cognitive issues and feelings associated with the search for information has led to its popularity as a valid model.
According to Blom (1983) the demands emanating from information service in the performance of a task are more important that the users' demands. Figure 6 illustrates the model diagrammatically. Essentially, many social scientists follow the model consciously or unconsciously in the conduction and presentation of their searchers.

Figure 3. Blom’s task Performance Model

3.1 Methodology

This research was through the generation of theory grounded in the data, to characterise the information behaviour of trainee solicitors in the context of their work environment and through a consideration of their information behaviour provide an insight into any potential enablers and inhibitors to their knowledge development. This implied the need for a holistic approach to inquiry, an approach that catered for the differing potentials realities of individuals within the context of their work environment. In order to generate theory it was necessary to interpret and reconstruct their information behaviour. This in turn necessitated a thorough understanding of the behaviour of the trainees. To this and a
A constructivist approach to inquiry was adopted untilising a narrative technique for the gathering of data. As qualitative research is based on entirely different epistemological and ontological assumptions compared to quantitative research, many feel that validity criteria of the quantitative perspective are therefore inappropriate, (Lietz, et al 2006; Whittermore, 2001).

The constructivist paradigm is an interpretive paradigm and ‘assumes a relative ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjective epistemology (knower and subject create understandings) and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. Findings are usually presented in terms of the criteria of grounded theory and terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

The constructivist methodology question relates to how knowledge is gathered to answer the research question, (Appleton, 1997). The form of this research was exploratory and descriptive suggesting the need for method that enabled the gathering of sufficient knowledge to present a detailed description of the trainees' behavior in context, and the interpretation of that description if this aim was to be achieved.

Naturalistic (constructivist) inquiry is best learned through experience' and while’ some researchers may approach naturalistic inquiry with literature review and a carefully constructed framework, those who focus on understanding a phenomenon from the perspective of its participants generally do not’ (Mellon 1990) This research inquiry did indeed result in learning by experience and in line with the constructivist approach to inquiry its design emerged through the experience of doing.

The human as instrument was an essentials element of this inquiry, providing the flexibility to cope with the differing realities that could be encountered as each trainee was likely to bring with them their differing perceptions and experiences of the firm but
also that of their life outside of the firm. There was also no way of knowing in advance what the trainees would discuss in relation their work and as such a human instrument was required that was able to ‘adjust to the variety of realities that would be encountered’ and one that was capable of grasping and evaluating the meaning of that differential interaction’ (Lincoln and Guba 1985). The nature of constructivist inquiry is such that the research design emerges (Lincoln and Guba 1985) and it was through this emergent design that the author’s prior experience and resultant knowledge, tacit and explicit, was realised as being of importance to the research itself, in the role of human instrument, context and interpretation.

Only one firm participated in the interview and six participants. By purposively inviting all trainees who commenced their traineeship at the same time to participate in the research, it was hoped that this would increase the potentials for the discovery of the variety of realities that might exist. In the context of a particular research question, researcher may wish to use multiple data sources to provide views from different perspectives (Bradley, 1993). Purposive sampling was used to focus in on those trainee’s constructions to be used in the final presentation of the findings of this research. Using inductive analysis, respondents were identified that offered the opportunity to present the reader with rich data, and the resultant emerging theory was based not only on individual trainees across differing seats of training, but also on groups of individuals from within the same seat of training. ‘As insights and information accumulate and the investigator begins to develop working hypotheses about the situation, the sample may be refined to focus more particularly on those units that seem most relevant’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985)
4.1 Results and Discussion

Through an analysis of the trainees narrations the types of tasks the trainees found themselves involved in were shaped by the key emerging themes; nature of the work in the seat, situation and level of involvement and can be characterised in the following way.

a. The nature of the task and the level of involvement in a task can be dependent upon which seat a trainee is in and their situation within that seat, and the resultant level of involvement in tasks can be considered partial or more complete and subsequently their knowledge development can be suggested as being partial or more complete.

b. Level of involvement and the potential to move towards a more complete learning experience can be shaped by a range of factors including; range of tasks involved in over time; timing (being in the right place at the right time); time served, (time spent in the seat suggesting an increase in experience); size of task, (whether a complete task in itself or part of a larger file matter); approach of supervisors, (in encouraging involvement); nature of task, (perceived as being more challenging); and the required level of supervision, (influencing what tasks can be given to the trainee)

For instance, within the commercial litigation seat, where as highlighted by Trainee 1, ‘a lot of the litigation cases go on for longer than the six months’. As the trainees are undertaking small tasks on a larger file matter and as these matters often last longer than the seat of training, then this would suggest that it can be difficult for the trainees to come to know and understand the full history behind a case due to their partial level of involvement and suggests that the trainees will not necessary learn about the whole case but aspects of the case.
In contrast, the task discussed within the property seat were perceived as being ‘big or major, involving for example the sale of a property’ (P3), or the compulsory order of some land’ (1). Furthermore, Trainee 1 highlights having her own clients, but now I am dealing with my own clients and a lot of residential sales and purchases’ (P4). In the interview situation it is possible that the trainees will have opted to discuss the bigger tasks as these might stand out more in their minds because of their size and potentially be seen by them to be of more interest to themselves and to the interviewer. However, tasks involving the sale of a property’, or dealing with my own clients’ do suggest themselves as being more complete and larger than, for example, drafting or correspondence and indicate the potentials for learning about a matter more holistically. Furthermore, the sale of a property is suggested as being a typical task given over to trainees within the property seat was trainee 2 states, ‘when I first started they train you up on, they give you the residential staff just to get started and find your way round and get used to handling transactions on your own.’ (P5), and as such it is not unusual for trainees to be involved in such sizeable or complete tasks.

However, independent of which seat a trainee is situated in, the trainees will not be involved in only one task during their period in each seat and are likely to build up their experience and their learning as they progress through the seat. For example, within commercial litigation where initially tasks were identified as small, and therefore suggesting partial learning; timing, (being in the right place at the right time) (Client 4); size of task, (considered small enough to be given to the trainee) (client 4) time served, (time spent in the seat) (Client 4); and the approach of the supervisor, ( a willingness to let the trainee attempt a range of tasks) (Client 4), were identified as leading to an increased involvement in tasks, furthering the trainees’ potential for acquiring a more complete learning experience. For example, timing and size of task, led to an increased involvement for Trainee 1 and approach of supervisors for Trainee 2,
**Trainee 1** – *I was quite lucky because quite a few new cases came through the door that were small enough for me to handle, so I got control of those cases, obviously with supervision (Client 3).*

**Trainee 2** – *He (supervisor) has got me quite involved in lots of files whereby correspondence will go in the files but I get to do quite a lot of it. Any big documents he lets me have a stab at it and he will amend as necessary (Client 2).*

The situation of the trainee also emerged as being potentially linked to an increased involvement in tasks for trainees within commercial litigation. Where the trainees were found to be sitting in the same room as their supervisor all were found to indicate a more indepth involvement in the tasks as they progressed through the seat. In contrast, where the trainees does not sit with the supervisor, for example, as in the case of Trainee 3, ‘I am still physically in the employment department and I am not actually working in anyone’s team in litigation I just work for a lot of people, cause normally you are assigned to a bit of a team you know’ (Client 5), no indication of an increase in level of involvement was identified through her narration. Within the property seat, where tasks were identified as big or major, ‘time served’ is also suggested as leading to an increased involvement in tasks, but in relation to the different types of tasks allocated to the trainee as a result of their acquired experience (P6). These tasks although not specifically referred to as being more difficult in nature, are suggested as such by trainee 2’s narration, ‘slowly I have been given more commercial style leases (P6), indicating that perhaps commercial work is perceived as more challenging than residential work. As trainee 2 gain more experience as she progresses through the seat, she is given different, and what potentially appear to be more complex tasks to undertake. An increased involvement in tasks within property is therefore suggested
by the nature of the task and the experience of the trainee rather than purely an
increased in depth involvement with a range of tasks.

A further indication of why the tasks can differ between the two seats is the required
level of supervision. There is an apparent emphasis on the close supervision of work
within commercial litigation (Client 4) and this would appear to be indicative of the work
within that seat as Trainee 2’s reflection suggests that there is a need to ensure and
confirm accuracy in litigation work, ‘I can appreciate why in litigation you have to keep
things much more monitored because one wrong word in a letter will really affects
things but in property it is not quite as … not cut-through but there is less emphasis put
on that side of things. This need for the close monitoring or supervision of the work
undertaken by the trainees in commercial litigation is likely to influence what the
trainees are given to do and how the trainees go about performing tasks. This suggest
‘less emphasis’ in property however does not necessarily mean that property is less
rigorous in their work but that the nature of the working of the legal areas is different.
The trainees are also supervised within property but in contrast to commercial litigation,
they do not appear to be as closely supervised, with supervision appearing to be linked
more to the seeking of guidance and help when uncertain as to what to do or how to
do it. For example, Trainee I, when in property suggests approaching, when uncertain,
those responsible for giving her the work, ‘I have been given leases that have been
very complicated and I have gone through it and again done my my best and said I
don’t like this and I don’t like that, this is why and have gone through it with the person
who has given it to me’ (P5). Trainee 5 was also found to seek help as required when
uncertain as no how to proceed, ‘So I would say that I would check things with my
supervisor and get back to you.

‘The work of professionals is necessarily more task – oriented’ (Leckie, Pettigrew and
Sylvain, 1996) and it is the tasks undertaken as part of their traineeship that will enable
the trainees to develop and, or, further develop their knowledge in the different practice
area of law. From the above evidence it can be posited that the nature of a task and the trainees’ level of involvement in a task can suggest a ‘more complete’ or partial learning experience, thereby their potential knowledge development can be considered to be ‘more complete’ or partial as a result of the tasks they are involved in. Shaping factors found to contribute to an increased level of involvement, and therefore the opportunity for an increased learning experience, were found to very and included; range of tasks; timing; time served; size of task; approach of supervisor; nature of task; and required level of supervision.

Although it is likely that by undertaking tasks this should contribute to the knowledge development of the trainee; learning as a result of the experiences that these tasks afford the trainee. what is not evident at this point is what the trainees’ actual information behaviour is in relation to these tasks. There is only an awareness of the type of the tasks they have been given to undertake. However, these tasks are at least indicative of an initial need, for example, the need to find out and understand what is involved in the drafting leases, or to proceed with the sale of a property. This would suggest that the tasks indicate more than a need for information to meet the needs of the trainees in satisfying the tasks but the ‘know-how’ to perform the task. Hildreth and Kimble (2002) suggest that know how is a mixture of explicit knowledge, understood as information in the context of this study, in the form of procedures that guide people in how to perform a task and tacit know how. For example, in ‘Trainee 2’s narration when I first started they train you up on, they give you the residential stuff just to go get started and find your way round and get used to handling transactions on your own.’

To aid in the interpretation and understanding of the trainees’ narratives, information is the general term used in relation to need and to knowledge that has been expressed in the form of documents, published resources, files, cases, etc. information forms the basis for the development of know how surrounding tasks, in providing the means for interpreting and understanding what to do. Knowledge or know how is used to
suggest explicit knowledge (knowledge that can be expressed and therefore has the potential to become information) and tacit knowledge (inexpressible knowledge; that which is acquired over time through experience and practice).

By considering the role of the trainee in undertaking task in more depth, this suggested mutual need for information and know how when undertaking tasks is explored further.

5.1 Conclusion

This research has contributed to the field of library and information Science through the provision of an in depth characterization of the information behaviour of trainee solicitors in the context of their work environment. Trainee solicitors are a professional group not respected to any extent within current information behaviour research literature. Furthermore, whereas much of the existing research in this field has tended to focus on aspects of information behaviour, such as information seeking and need, this research provides a more holistic characterisation of the information behaviour of trainee solicitors, considering need, seeking, processing, transfer and use.

This research also contributes to the current thinking surrounding a need to take a more task based approach (Jarvelin and Ingwersen 2004) to the study of information behaviour. This research has identified that a range of influential factors can shape an individual’s behaviour, in addition to the behaviour that takes place between tasks and information sources.

The research also expands upon Leckie, Pettigrew and Sylvain’s (1996) model of the information seeking of professionals to present a new model of the knowledge behaviour of trainee solicitors. Furthermore, this research contextualises the factors identified as shaping information behaviour and also considers these in relation to knowledge behaviour and knowledge development.
The use of a constructivist approach to inquiry was considered to be highly successful in enabling the research aims and objectives to be achieved. The use of a narrative tool enabled fuller characterisation to emerge that focused on the work of the trainees and not just which resources they consulted in performing their work, typical of some current research.

The knowledge seeking process by implication should result in learning, not only in relation to learning skills surrounding identifying, accessing, evaluating and interpreting knowledge resources and the knowledge found, but cumulative learning as a result of knowledge seeking experience that further enables solution to be more readily considered for present and future tasks. But what shapes our knowledge seeking paths? Leckie, et al (1996) highlight a range of factors thought to influence lawyers’ information seeking and use, including attitude, organisational context, experience, education, and the resources available. This research has identified that knowledge seeking was influenced by time spent in education, experience in, and context of, the workplace, and the resources available. Leckie et al (1996) further suggest that the individual’s perceptions held of resources, and, or, their content, did indeed emerge as shaping the trainee’s approach to knowledge seeking with similar influential factors to that of previous research being identified in the shape of knowledge, familiarity, accessibility, trustworthiness and success. Furthermore, this research also identified some additional factors that emerged as shaping knowledge seeking in the form of time saved, currency, level of information, referential memory, ability to express need, manipulability and acceptability. Through the contextualisation of these factors within a legal environment this research further contributes to current thinking.
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