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The Invisible Library: Engaging Information Literacy for Students Who Avoid the Library at All Costs

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**The Invisible Library:
Engaging Information Literacy
for Students Who Avoid the Library at All Costs**

ANN MATSUSHIMA CHIU

PURPOSE

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graph TD; PURPOSE --> P1[Use theories of Dresang, Kuhlthau, Zipf, and Chatman to explain students information-seeking behavior]; PURPOSE --> P2[Highlight differences between information behavior of traditional and non-traditional students]; PURPOSE --> P3[Explain students' consumer behavior of online library resources];
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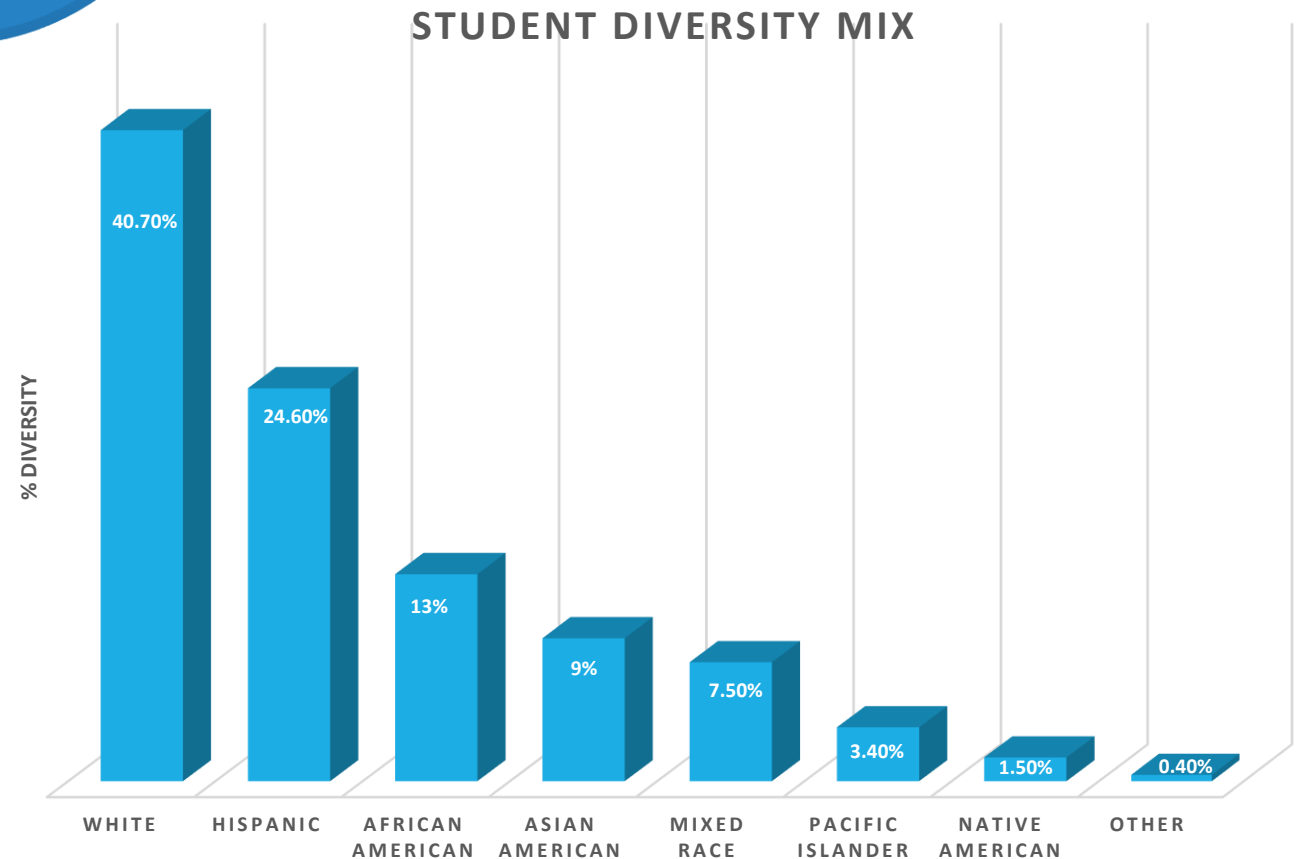
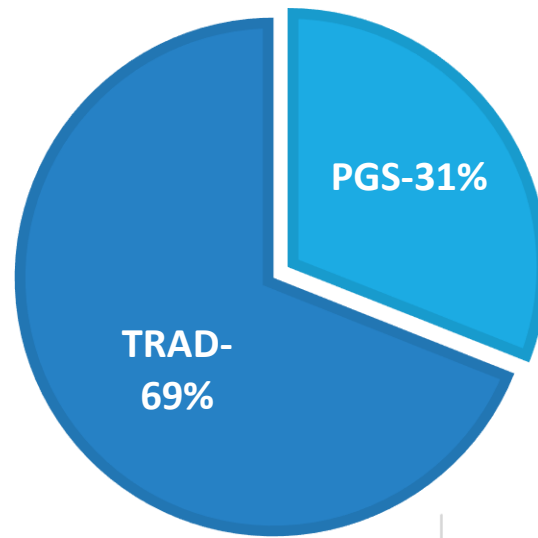
Use theories of Dresang, Kuhlthau, Zipf, and Chatman to explain students information-seeking behavior

Highlight differences between information behavior of traditional and non-traditional students

Explain students' consumer behavior of online library resources

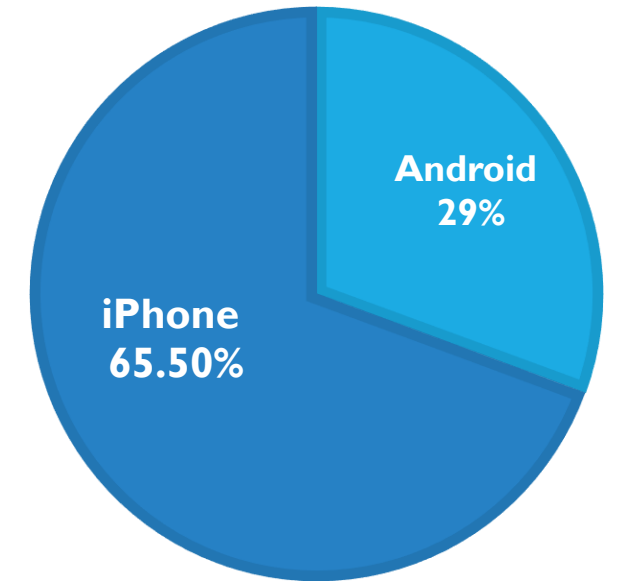
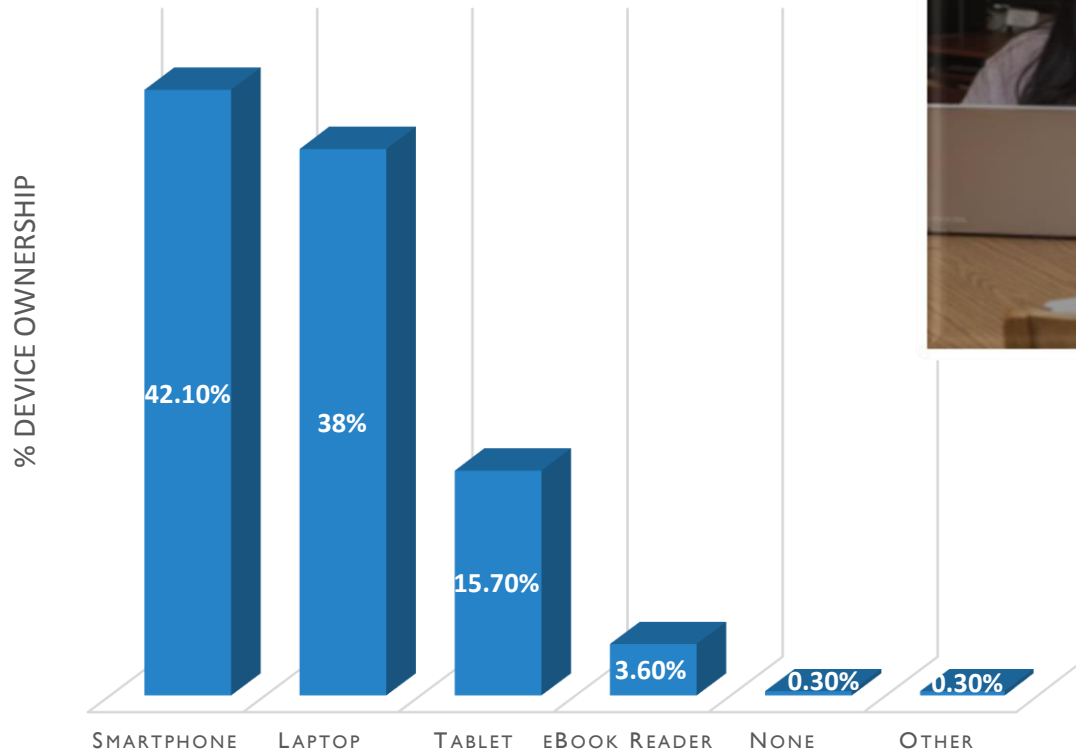
Research Context

- Online and printed survey questionnaires distributed to a 1,000+ student population
- Core themes of the university:
 - Cultivating a Christ-centered learning community
 - Collaborating with and for Portland's urban environment
 - Fostering a liberal arts education
 - Investing in the formation and success of students from diverse backgrounds
- Respondents are
 - 60% Racially and Ethnically Diverse Backgrounds
 - 40% White
- Respondents are
 - 69% Traditional undergraduate students
 - 31% Professional and graduate studies students
- Respondents are 57% First Generation College students.
- 31% Survey response rate



Universal Device Ownership Profile

SPECIFIC DEVICE OWNERSHIP



99.7% respondents own at least one electronic device

97.3% respondents enjoy home Internet access

57% respondents favor Chrome Browser

Popular Device Usage Models

Mobile device usage is a lifestyle

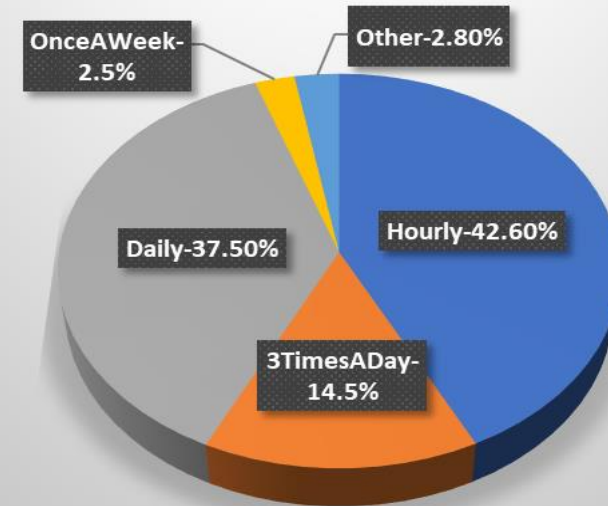
Students can't do without their gadgets

Students are constantly connected online

Device Usage Models



Device Usage Frequency



Major Findings: Ceaseless Networking

Popular
social
networking
platforms



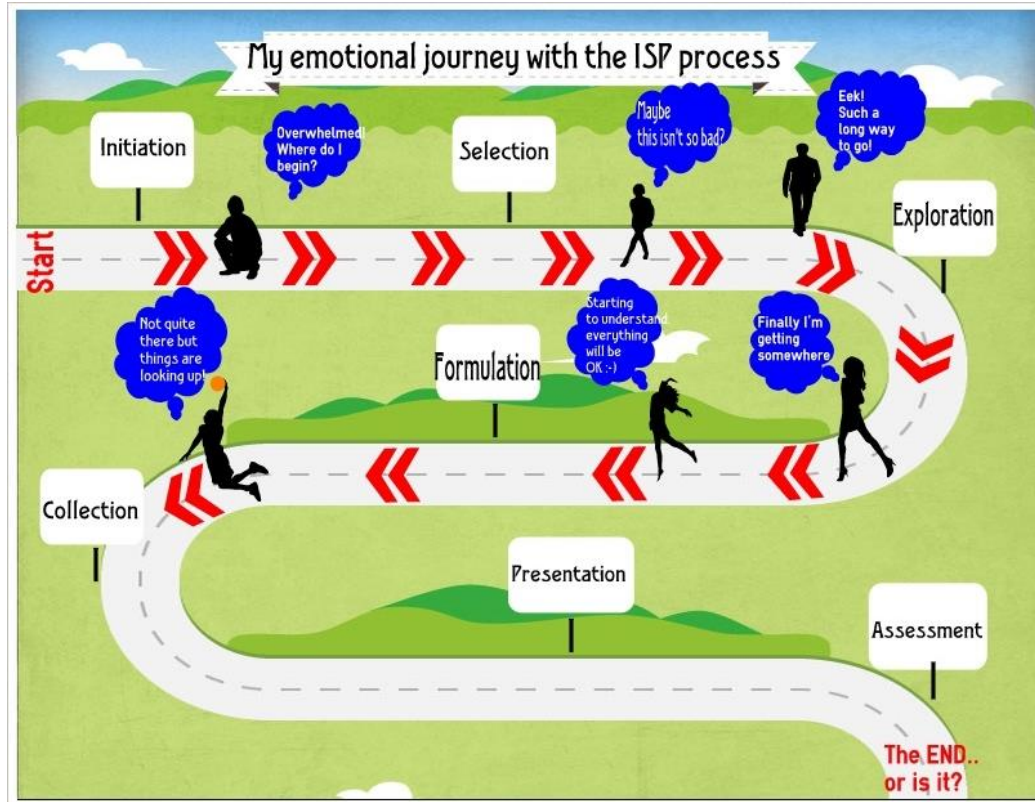
Findings validate Dresang's theory of accessibility, connectivity and interactivity¹

Students are constantly connecting with friends/classmates, chatting and looking for information

Students are actively building communities from the dorms, cafes, classrooms, gyms and virtually wherever they are & in real time.

¹Dresang, E. T. (2008). Radical change revisited: Dynamic digital age books for youth. Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education, 8(3). Retrieved from <http://www.citejournal.org/volume-8/issue-3-08/seminar-articles/article2-html-2>

Major Finding: Differences With Kuhlthau's Information Search Process

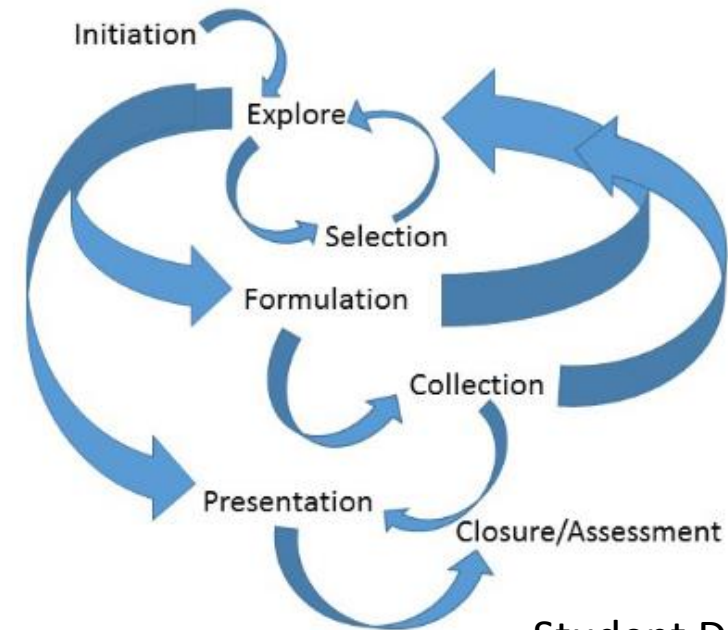


Kuhlthau, C. C. Seeking Meaning: A Process Approach to Library and Information Services, 2nd edition, Libraries Unlimited, Westport, CT., 2004. See also: [Kuhlthau, C.C. Information Search Process, 2004.](#)

Typical information triggers are assignments, term papers, research projects.

Do educators impose a process that may inhibit a natural (student-developed) process of information searching?

Information search processes are cyclical and repetitive.



Student Designed ISP

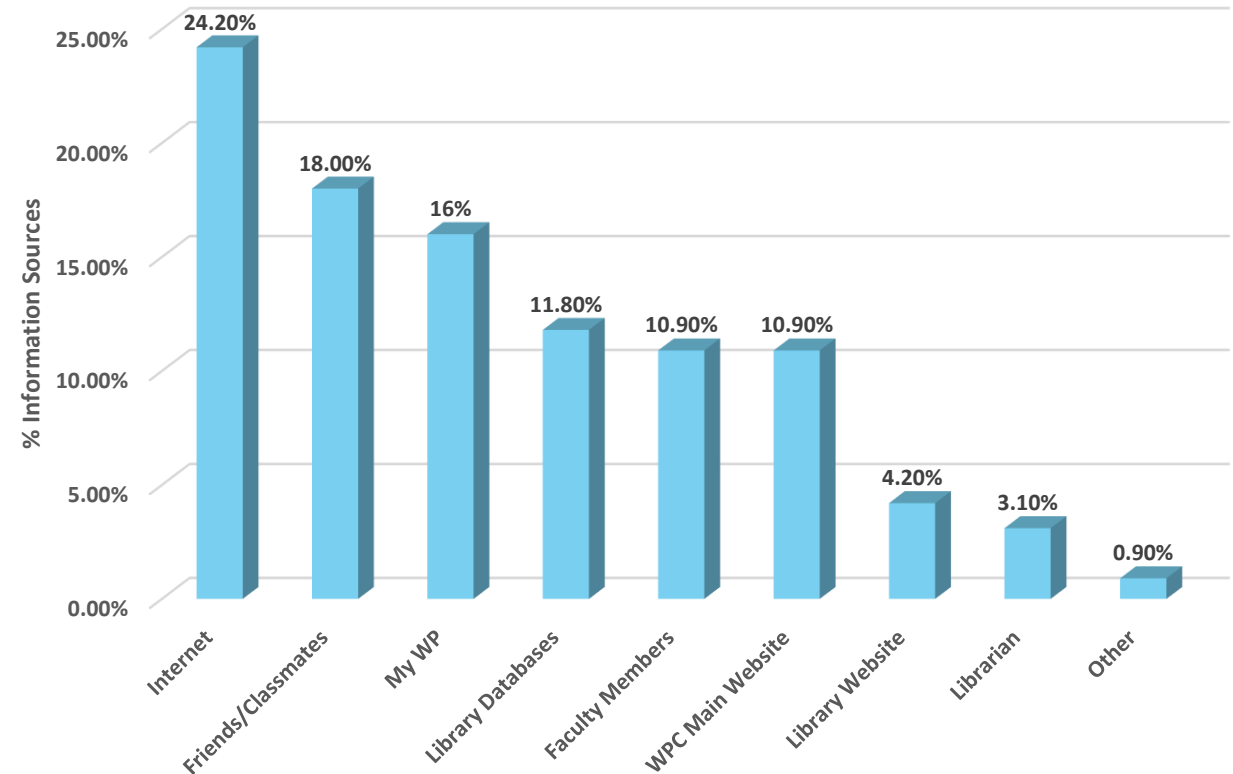
Major Finding: Validation Of Zipf's Theory Of Least Effort

"Every individual when considering a course of action, will choose the action that requires the least amount of effort.". George Zipf¹



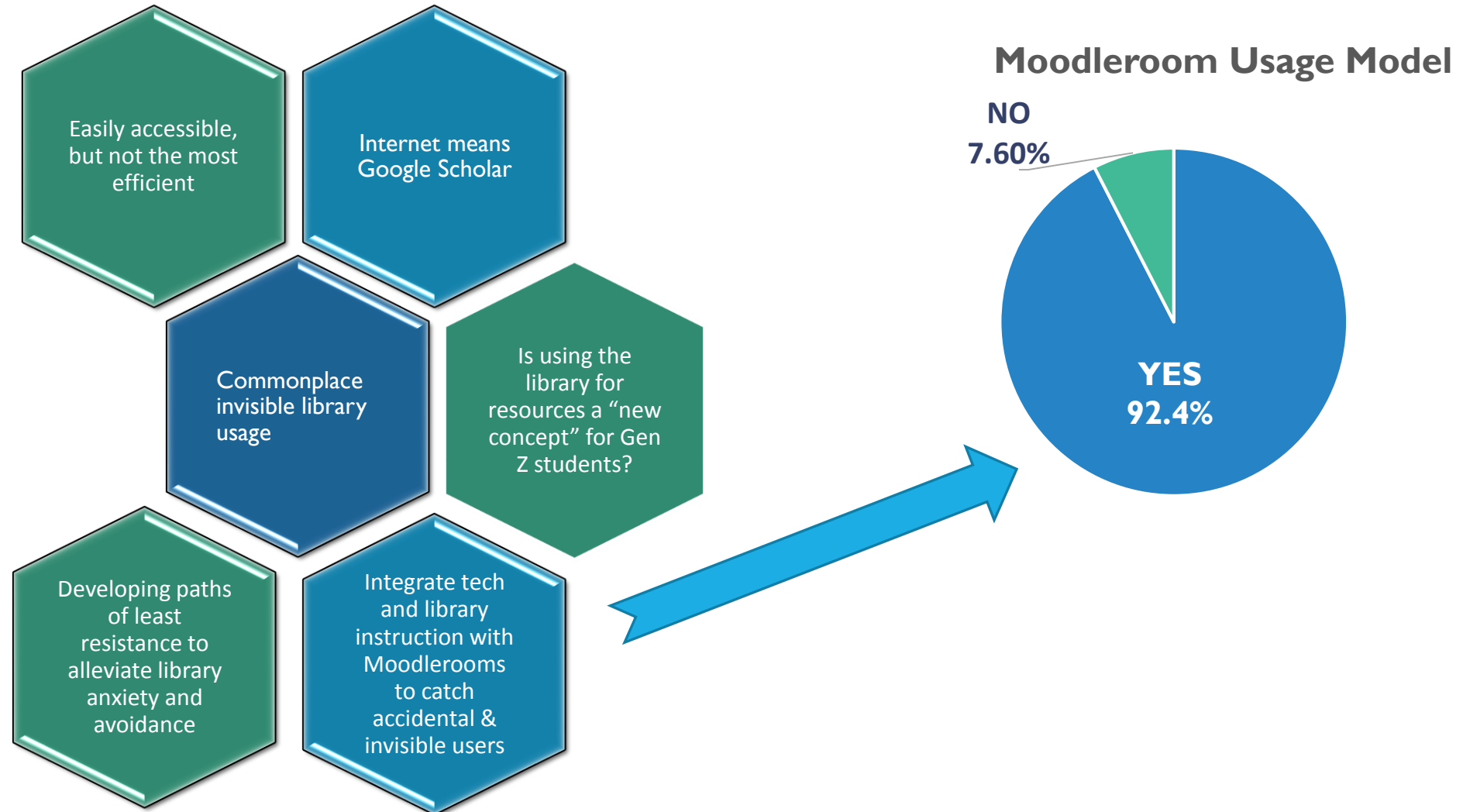
Adapted from J. Coulter's image

School Information-Related Sources



¹ Zipf, G.K. *Human Behavior and the Principle of Least Effort: An Introduction to Human Ecology*. (Addison-Wesley Press, 1949)

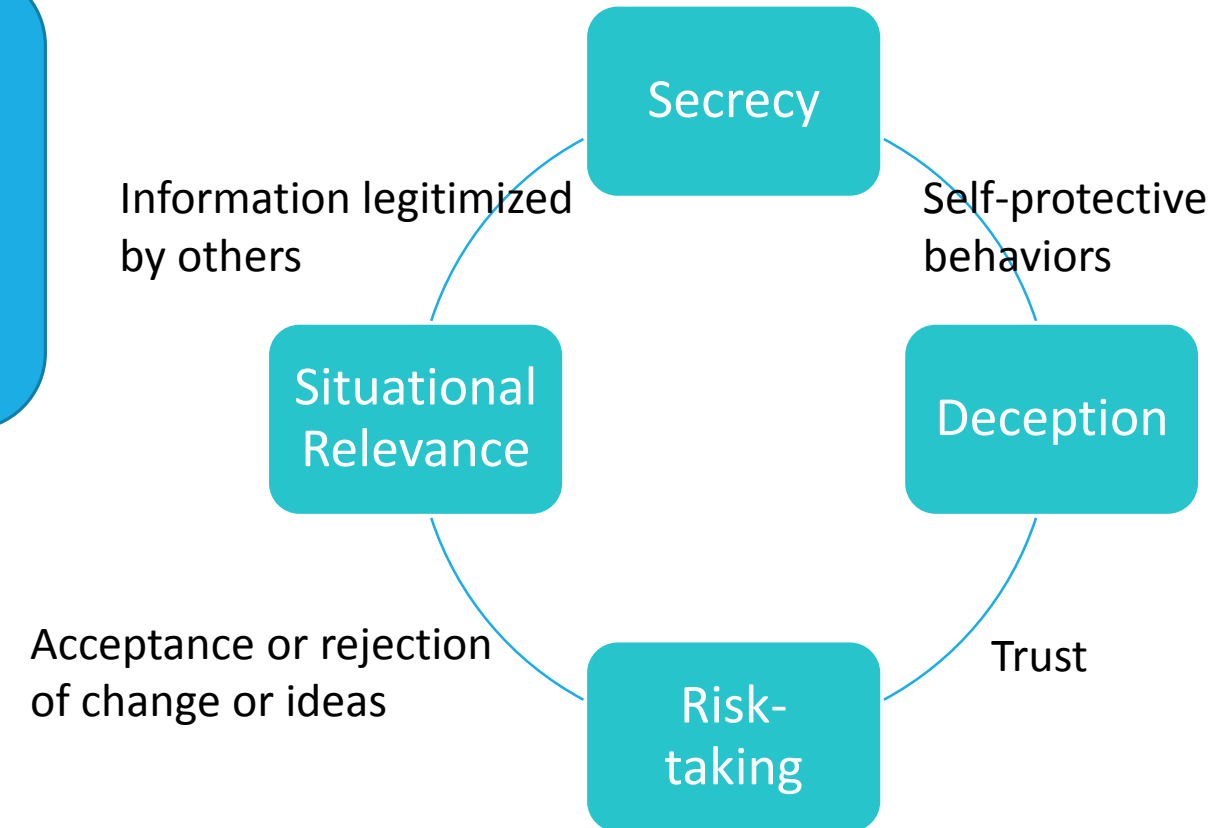
Major Finding: Validation Of Zipf's Theory Of Least Effort



Major Finding: Validation of Chatman's theory of Information Poverty

"...We can experience a need for information but are hindered from seeking it. Thus, we engage in self-protective behaviors to keep others from sensing our need. These behaviors are meant to hide our true crisis in an effort to appear normal and to exhibit acceptable coping behaviors."

---Elfreda Chatman ¹



¹Chatman, E. A. (1996). The impoverished life-world of outsiders. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 47, 193-206.

Major Finding: Validation of Chatman's theory of Information Poverty

Students have difficulty articulating their own information needs

Getting help must an information lifestyle

Students buying journal articles; They do not want to be viewed as less capable.

Marginalized identities:
Selective of who to trust for information or advice

Student don't want go to the library or to talk librarian for fear of being seen as dumb or weak

Students have difficulty knowing when information needs are met

If the Information source is not accepted by community or requires too much effort, then it is not used.

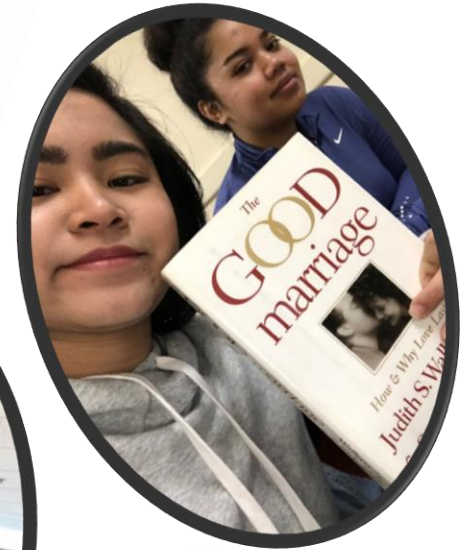
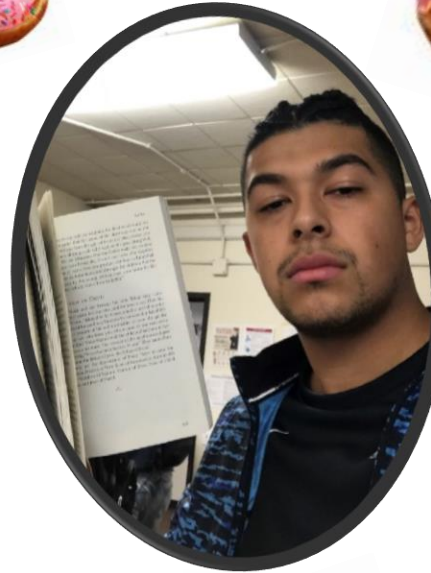
The accessibility of Google Scholar vs. Difficulty of Library databases

Digital Learning Opportunities

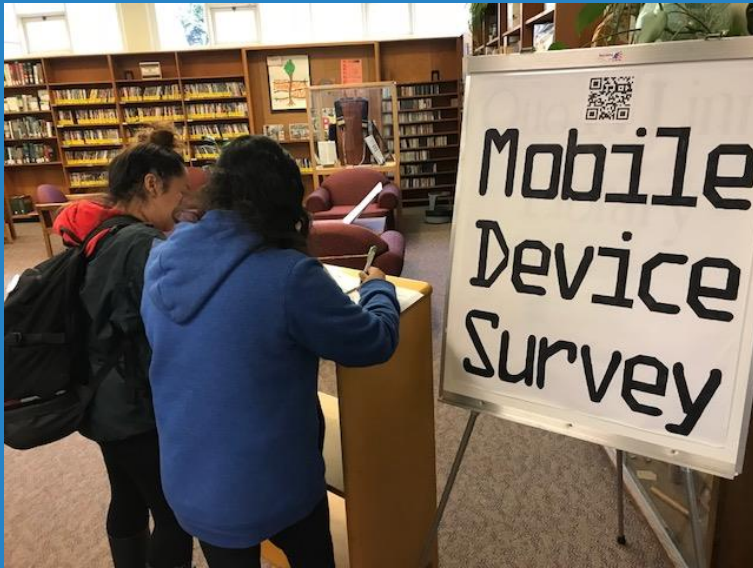
Access to
Library on
the
smartphone
24x7

Database
usage
proficiency
in matter of
minutes

Donuts
boosts
library
usage



Summary



The findings lend strong support to Radical Change Theory's core principles

WPU students suffer from scarcity mentality

Librarians can no longer afford to remain invisible

Questions/ Discussion

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