

# **Information consumption: Theory, method and evaluation**

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## **Abstract**

This work looks at three approaches for evaluating information consumption levels: practical, methodological and theoretical. The validity of this method is demonstrated through a case study analysis of data consumption in higher education institutions in Shanxi province.

## **I. Information consumption: related concepts**

Consumption, in the context of information consumption, refers to the consumption of usually intangible goods and services relating to information in order to satisfy a need.

The focus of this case study is on information-related goods and services. Consuming information by definition is consumption using the mind and is to satisfy an information need. Salient features are: incremental border effect, non income related, money spent can easily be wasted, the negative impact of information is not negligible, it requires a minimum general knowledge level on the part of the consumer.

## **II. Goods, services and the information market**

1. Information-related goods: quality of products, information revenue, increase in volume of data, their influence on the overall consumer process
2. Information related services: conventional information services: written information services, advisory services, information agency services. Digitalized information services: search engines, Internet data services, software upgrading services
3. Characteristics of the information market: asymmetricality, equilibrium, dysfunctionalities and interfaces. The role of politics in the market.

## **III. Consumer behaviour in the information market, their rights and protection**

1. Consumer behaviour may be described in terms of need, motivation, preference, choice, risk-taking etc..
2. Consumer rights: to health and safety, to freedom of choice, to be informed, to engage in fair transactions, to demand a refund, to obtain information, to be respect, to stay in control.
3. Typical consumer litigation involves: patents, domain names, compliance, copyright and legal disputes. Using proper contracts for Internet related information and mediation are two ways to better safeguard the rights and interests of consumers.

## **IV. Evaluating the consumption of information**

Studies usually involve discussion of theoretical systems for evaluating information consumption levels and suggesting alternatives. Case study analysis makes it possible to validate or invalidate these methods. The study in this book deals with the evaluation of information consumption: firstly by looking at the theoretical aspect of data consumption, then by looking at ways of evaluating this activity. In the final section, the book recommends a total of 20 evaluation methods.

## **V. Analysis of information consumption evaluation methods and recommendations**

1. The methodology of analysis: synthesis of contributing factors, structural method, questionnaire surveys.

2. Estimating the current information consumption situation in China's higher education institutions

Current software consumption: broad range of software types, predominantly pirate copies; the price of software is generally quite high.

Telecom consumption: high level of mobile phone ownership; land line and telephone card use is also fairly widespread.

Magazine and periodical consumption: relatively low level and quality of consumption, high prices of magazines and newspapers.

Consumption of information from the Internet: consumption is high, very varied and of low quality. Demand satisfaction levels are high.

3. Recommendations: (1) In order to increase consumer awareness of this new information culture, higher education institutions should introduce measures to improve the consumers' ability to search and utilize data. (2) Improve information retrieval skills at university to enable users to access a greater number of specialized publications. (3) Raise the number of open book exams to increase opportunities available to users to read specialized works, enabling them to gain deeper knowledge in these fields. (4) Provide more openings to obtain research grants. This would increase user participation in university research projects and production-related activities. (5) Stimulate consumer curiosity and interests away from low quality entertainment through e-learning. This would improve the quality of consumption.

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