**Special Issue of Information Processing and Management on “Information Need”**

**Guest Editors**

Pia Borlund (Oslo Metropolitan University) and Ian Ruthven (University of Strathclyde)

Information Need is one the most significant and controversial concepts within Information Science. Information needs are fundamental to much research within Information Seeking and Retrieval and we have seen decades of research into how to classify information needs, how systems should respond to different types of information need and into the nature of information needs themselves. Information need has also proven to be a very accessible concept, one that appears widely across disciplines and appears extensively within both the research and practitioner literatures.

In spite of its strong place within many sub-fields of Information Science, Information Need is also a highly contentious concept. Many authors feel that it is a concept that lacks theoretical clarity or that other concepts, such as tasks or situations, better represent what users care about. Although information ‘need’ has an intuitive and common-sense feeling about it, this property may well mask serious problems with one of our most important theoretical constructs.

The Special Issue is intended to present a collection of significant contributions to our understanding of the concept of Information Need. Contributions to this issue will go beyond simply describing information needs in order to answer critical questions regarding the nature of information needs. Submissions may answer theoretical questions on how we conceptualise need or perform comparisons between information need and alternative concepts. They may empirically demonstrate new knowledge about information needs in new contexts or provide new ways to distinguish between information needs. They may also help us evaluate how to support information needs of different types or present new methodologies for understanding information needs.

This Special Issue is inspired by Robert Taylor’s 1968 classification of four levels of information need [1]. One of the most cited and influential works within Information Science, Taylor’s research was a major theoretical advance. Half a century later we wish to both honour this significant intellectual contribution and reflect on the status of Information Need within Information Science.

**Submissions should fall under at least one of these categories, if in doubt as to suitability, please contact the Guest Editors:**

* Definition and conceptualisation of Information Need
* Empirical investigations of Information Need
* Methodological innovation in studying Information Need
* Information Need in novel contexts

**Reviewing Committee:**

Contributions will be reviewed by an expert reviewing committee which includes:

Charles Cole, Colemining Inc.

Jacek Gwizdka, The University of Texas at Austin, US

Ina Fourie, Pretoria, South Africa

Luanne Freund, University of British Columbia, Canada

Gary Marchionini, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, US

Reijo Savoilanen, University of Tampere, Finland

Mette Skov, Aalborg University, Denmark

Pertti Vakkari, University of Tampere, Finland

**Submission Guidelines:**

Authors are invited to submit original and unpublished papers. All submissions will be peer-reviewed and judged on accuracy, originality, significance, quality, and relevance to the special issue topics of interest. Submitted papers should not have appeared in or be under consideration for another journal.

Full papers should be submitted before January 15 2019**.**

Paper submission via <https://www.evise.com/profile/#/IPM/login>

Instructions for authors: <https://www.elsevier.com/journals/information-processing-and-management/0306-4573/guide-for-authors>

Please select the correct issue to submit to: “Information Need”.

<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/information-processing-and-management/call-for-papers/special-issue-information-need>

**Important Dates**

Full papers submission deadline: January 15 2019

First round notification: April 15 2019

Revision due date: June 15 2019

Final notification: August 15 2019

Publication date: December 2019

**References**

[1] Taylor, R.S. (1968). Question-negotiation and information seeking in libraries. College and Research Libraries, (No. 29), 178-194.