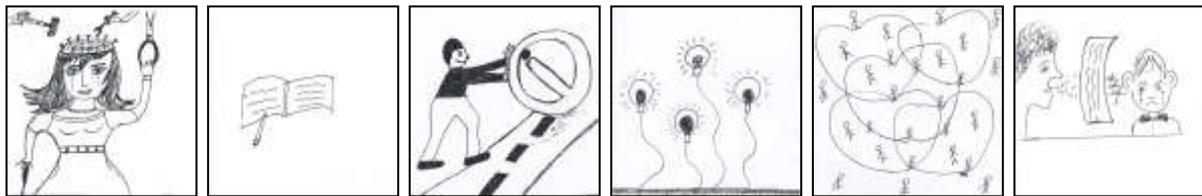


INF1300: FOUNDATIONS OF
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

Visual Research Project

OVERVIEW

This assignment is an opportunity for you to conduct original research exploring one of three concepts in library and information science: information, the Internet, or librarian. Your research will replicate and extend the iSquare Research Program (www.iSquares.info), an arts-informed, visual research project which utilizes the draw-and-write technique. The project requires student-researchers to ask people to visually render one of the aforementioned fundamental concepts of library and information science in the form of a drawing, as shown for the concept of “information” below. The collected drawings then serve as a resource to analyze and reflect upon the nature of information, the Internet, and librarianship today.



Drawings of “information” by students of information science in Iran. Data collected by Ms. Zohre Delgani.

RESEARCH PROJECT PERSONNEL

INF1300 Students.....Research Assistants
Rebecca Noone.....Research Project Manager and Artist-in-Residence
Dr. Jenna Hartel.....Principal Investigator

TEAMS

The class will be divided into three teams: Team Information, Team Internet, and Team Librarian (each Team will be in charge of its concept). You may join a Team based on your interest; if you have an equal interest in all the concepts, please allow yourself to be assigned to a Team that will ensure an even distribution of students across the three groups. Teams will be assembled at the first Visual Research Workshop. Teams will need to collaborate and coordinate their efforts (e.g. data management), but data collection and analysis will be done individually.

IMPORTANT IN-CLASS EVENTS

Session 1: Workshop 1 - Research activity, iSquare background, assignment launch, concept selection, and group formation
Session 2: Workshop 2 - Research ethics, data gathering, and recruitment
Session 4: Workshop 3 - Data management and getting to know the data [bring visual data to class]
Session 5: Workshop 4 - Analysis, final deliverable, and student panel [bring visual data to class]
Session 8: Student presentations and deliverable due

MATERIALS FOR DATA COLLECTION

You will each be given 6 blank squares for data gathering, and 2 black pens. We ask that you use the materials provided for data collection to ensure “reliability” (consistency) across the research project and data set. The black pens will be re-collected when the data gathering is done.

DATA GATHERING PROTOCOL

Sample Population

You are to collect 6 squares from your family friends, co-workers and/or neighbors. Participants must be at least 18 years of age. It is recommended that participants *not* be employed in the information professions (e.g. librarians, archivists, information technology managers, website designers, etc.). Remember that the research population must be low-risk, that is, *non-vulnerable*, per the *Guidelines and Practices Manual for Research Involving Human Subjects*.

Ethical Principles

This study has been approved by the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto. When implemented as outlined below, the research process is in compliance with ethical principles for the conduct of research on human subjects. As a research assistant on the project you should be aware of the following ethical guidelines while collecting data from your family and friends.

- Concern for welfare. Welfare consists of the impact on individuals of factors such as their physical, mental and spiritual health, as well as their economic and social circumstances. Remain mindful of the participant’s welfare throughout data collection, and take immediate steps to alleviate any discomfort that might arise.
- Consent. Consent is an indication of agreement by an individual to become a participant in a research project. Verbal consent is requested when reciting the iSquare Protocol instructions. Be certain the participants understand the drawing activity is *not* mandatory; they are not required to give their consent and participate.
- Freedom to Withdraw. Everyone has the right to drop out (withdraw) from the project at any time, without repercussions. Freedom to withdraw is conveyed when reading the instructions. Any person who wishes to stop the activity midway should be treated in a friendly and unproblematic manner.
- Personal Information. Personal information is any information that can be linked to a specific individual. This study has been designed to contain no personal information about individuals. Be certain people do not put their names on the back side of the iSquares. Participants can be reassured that they will remain anonymous contributors to the research.

Setting and Timing

The iSquare Protocol entails a carefully controlled, 10-minute data gathering outing in which participants are given oral instructions by the researcher and then the activity is supervised until completion. This creates a stable environment that is conducive to reflection and creativity. It is imperative that all participants have a chair and desk (or table) to use and distractions should be eliminated if possible. Ideally, data gathering occurs when the attention of research participants is fresh. Another important feature is that the activity is not described to participants in advance, so that responses are uniformly spontaneous. The entire data collection episode takes 10 minutes, which includes a 2-minute introduction, 7 minutes to do the exercise, and 1 minute to wrap-up (collect pens and drawings; thank participants).

Data Collection

- Distribute 1 square and 1 black pen to each participant.
- In a clear voice, read or recite from memory the instructional script in Appendix 1.
- Monitor the time; allow the participant to draw for 7 minutes exactly.
- After your participant begins to draw, stay quietly to the side; answer questions as needed.
- Take field notes in order to help your Team understand the immediate context of the research setting.
- After 5 minutes have passed, remind participants to respond to the questions on the back side of the paper, in writing.
- After 7 minutes of drawing or when the subject is finished, collect the drawing and pen; then say thank you.

Data Management

- Note that the six blank squares you are given in class have identification numbers on the reverse side; these numbers are important for tracking your drawings and should not be altered. When you select a Team, you will be linked to a numerical sequence of 6 drawings.
- Scan the front-side of the square (the image) to create an individual digital JPEG files of each one. The images should be scanned as colour at standard print resolution (300 or 330 dpi) to ensure that the image does not lose visual integrity. (Scanning in colour shows subtle variations in the paper each square was printed on and the pressure exerted by the drawer.) Please do not photograph your squares as a quick alternative to scanning! Name and save each individual image file using its unique identification number (from the back side of the drawing). Place your six image files in the shared online folder of Google Drive. Make sure they are placed in the right Team folder (information, Internet, librarian).
- Next, type the back side demographic data and text statement into the designated spreadsheet in the Team's Google Drive folder. Record the responses exactly—including any typos. Each drawing will be indicated by its identification number. The spreadsheet will be shared by the Team during the analysis stage of the project; it is in your best interest to do this data entry carefully so that the quality and integrity of your data is high.
- Finally, submit the original drawings to the TA/Research Project Manager for safekeeping; the corpus will be archived for your use and public display (details about preservation will be discussed in class).

VISUAL DATA ANALYSIS

INF1300 is not a research methods course, therefore, we will treat the matter of “data analysis” lightly and will report discoveries from the study somewhat informally. A few visual analysis methods, from social scientific and arts paradigms, will be presented in class. You may also consult the book *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*, by Gillian Rose, which is on reserve at the Inforum, if you are curious about visual analytical techniques used by scholars.

FINAL DELIVERABLE

A final deliverable related to this project is due at the start of Session 8. It is to be a culmination of your effort across the entire visual research project and will be inspired by the data set collected by your Team. The key question to answer in the deliverable is: *With your data set as a springboard, and in the context of the existing literature about information/the Internet/librarian, what new insights or inspiration can you bring to your central concept?* Whereas most graduate assignments result in papers in a traditional essay style, this one may take a wider range of creative formats, though firm criteria for evaluation will be used for assessment (see below: *Evaluation Criteria*). You should aim to be original in your deliverable, but for inspiration prior examples can be viewed [here](#). All student projects will be presented to the class in an art

salon style during Session 8. Two options for the final deliverable are described below.

Option 1. A (Conventional) Graduate School Paper [2,000 words excluding references]

Select a peer-reviewed article from the literature of information studies that is centered on your concept. Use that article as a theoretical framework or lens to examine your data set. Is the published conception of information/the Internet/librarian well illustrated in your drawings or not? And/Or, do the drawings generate any challenges or extensions to the idea in the peer-reviewed article? Generally speaking, your assignment should include an *Introduction* that outlines a thesis; a succinct *Research Methods* section that describes the research process; *Findings* (your new insights/inspiration); a *Discussion* of implications; and a *Conclusion*. In addition to the article that is a focus, cite at least 3 scholarly works about visual research and/or your central concept. Additional submission details are below:

- The word limit is 2,000 (excluding references).
- Format your margins to 2.54cm (1") and your font to Times New Roman 12pts. Use double-space.
- Follow the APA citation style for your text and for captioning your images.
- Your visual data should appear in the text (not as an Appendix item).
- Paginate your document on the top right corner.
- Provide a cover page with your name, a title for your paper, the date, the course title and number, your course section, the name of the Professor, Faculty, and University.
- Have your paper printed and stapled for submission. No electronic papers will be accepted.

Option 2. A Creative Deliverable with an Artist's Statement [250 words]

If you choose this option, you must have your idea approved by Artist-in-Residence, Rebecca Noone, who will be available for consultation before or after class at Session 4. You will utilize your visual data set as the foundation for an artwork or performance in a format such as a/an: painting, illustration, sculpture, installation, musical composition and performance, poetry, short story, graphic novel, or video. Proposals for other artistic mediums are welcome. There are two crucial elements to this option: 1) the visual data set must serve as the foundation of your artistic endeavor and 2) the artwork/performance must speak to substantive issues about the concept that appear in the scholarly literature. You must also submit a 250-word *Artist's Statement* that makes the relationship to the literature, the data set, and your artwork/performance explicit. As a gauge of effort, 6-8 hours of time should be invested in the conception and production of your deliverable. Additional submission details are below:

Your artist's statement is limited to 250 words and must follow these guidelines:

- Format your margins to 2.54cm (1") and your font to Times New Roman 12pts. Use double-space.
- Follow the APA citation style for your text.
- Provide a cover page with your name, a title for your paper, the date, the course title and number, your course section, the name of the Professor, Faculty, and University.
- Have your artist's statement printed for submission. No electronic statements will be accepted.

About your creative deliverable:

- It cannot exceed 45.72 cm x 45.72 cm (18"x18") and must not weigh more than 1.36 kg (3 pounds).
- It must be attached to your artist's statement (Tip: Place your artwork and statement in a bag!).
- If you are creating a digital artwork, place your work on a USB drive and insert it in an envelope with your artist's statement. Write your name and course section on the envelope.
- If your artwork contains multiple pieces, submit them in a box or a bag with your artist's statement. Identify the box or bag with your name and course section.

- Performance related outputs are to last 5-7 minutes and be shared with the class during Session 8.
- If you are creating a performance (e.g. dance, presentation), please send an email to Rebecca Noone with your name, the title of your work, and your course section. We will be creating an agenda for the presentation day. For submission, please hand in a hard copy of your artist's statement.

Evaluation Criteria for the Final Deliverable (paper and creative)

- Penetrating and novel insights into your concept
- Effective use of the literature
- Effective use of visual data
- Well-supported insights and analyses
- Writing Style (Paper) or Artistic Technique (Creative)
- Creativity and originality
- Evidence of time invested

Important: Late submissions will be deducted one grade letter per day it is late. An A submission will become A- for one day late, B+ for two days late, and so on. Items submitted after the start of class will be considered one day late.

APPENDIX 1: INSTRUCTIONAL SCRIPT

Good morning/afternoon/evening.

To start, I'd like to thank you for being here today. I am [introduce yourself]. During the next 10 minutes I will gather data for a research project. I am trying to (choose one of the following): [(1) better understand the nature of information (if Team Information); OR (2) explore the understanding of the Internet (if Team Internet); OR (3) explore the understanding of a librarian (if Team Librarian)] through a simple drawing exercise involving a 4.25" by 4.25" inch piece of paper and a black pen. Essentially, I want you to: [(1) answer the question: "What is information?" in the form of a drawing (if Team Information); OR (2) respond to the directive: "Please draw the Internet" (if Team Internet); OR (3) respond to the directive: "Please draw a librarian" (if Team Librarian)]. Then, on the back side of the same piece of paper, complete the prompts in writing. My intent is to analyze the drawings and sentences to explore understandings of: *information* OR *the Internet* OR *a librarian*.

This research project is managed by Dr. Jenna Hartel, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Information, University of Toronto, and is approved by the University of Toronto's Office of Research Ethics. You may have Dr. Hartel's contact information, if you wish.

To begin, we need your consent and participation. If you do not wish to participate, you may decline. Please note, no personally identifiable information will be collected that links you to this study. Put another way, you will remain an anonymous contributor to this research. You might find that the activity stimulates your imagination and is fun. Also, at any point you may withdraw from the activity; that is not a problem. The drawing you create may be used in research presentations that are shared with students, scholars, and the general public.

I will be distributing the paper and pen now, and I ask that you please use only these materials.

On the blank side of the square, please: *draw information* OR *draw the Internet* OR *draw a librarian* (<- Choose one, according to your Team affiliation). Then, on the reverse side, say a few words about your drawing. Please also answer the demographic questions that are on the back of the square. You will have 7 minutes to complete the activity, until [state time]. Are there any questions?

APPENDIX 2: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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