

Thesis summary for Doctoral Workshop Application

ISIC: Information Behavior Conference, Information Seeking in Context
20th of September 2016, Zadar, Croatia

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New health information literacies – information creation and transforming authority in young people’s multimodal health discourses on social media

The aim of this study is to investigate new types of health related literacies of young people in the context social media. The study focuses on the health related discourses and literacy practices of young people on social media especially from the perspectives of cognitive authority (See Wilson, 1984) and information creation. The aims of the study are both theoretical and practical. The theoretical aim is to further develop the concept of everyday health information literacy (EHIL) presented by Niemelä, Ek, Eriksson-Backa & Huotari (2012) from the viewpoint of new literacies (See e.g. Knobel & Lankshear, 2014). The practical contribution relates to increased understanding of young people’s discourses and literacy practices on the Web, which can be utilized in preventive health care and health promotion. The interdisciplinary approach of my doctoral study draws on the research and theoretical understanding from the fields of information studies, communication studies, educational sciences and social linguistics. The study consists of four sub-studies. The objectives are to:

- 1) Review the current research on health associated literacies in the context of online information environments (Sub-study 1).
- 2) Identify what kind of health related discourses emerge in young people’s multimodal contents of social media and how cognitive authority is constructed and assessed in this context (Sub-study 2).
- 3) Examine what kinds of health related new literacies young people generate when creating health information on social media (Sub-study 3).
- 4) Contribute to the development of the concept of everyday health information literacy (EHIL) from the perspective of new literacies (Sub-study 4).

The research methods of the study are systematic literature review, discourse analysis, content analysis and theme interview. The research material consists of scientific articles (Sub-study 1), multimodal content on social media (Sub-study 2) and theme interview data (Sub-study 3). The research participants for Sub-studies 2 and 3 will be boys and girls aged 14 to 19 years old who are actively creating health related multimodal content in social media (blogs, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube). Sub-study 4 compares the research of sub-studies 2 and 3 to sub-study 1 to understand and identify those elements of everyday health information literacy that are overlooked in previous research.

Working plan

The study builds on my Master’s thesis on discourses of a low-carb discussion forum (Huhta, 2013), which was assessed as outstanding and awarded the diploma for the best Master’s thesis in 2013 by the Faculty of Humanities in University of Oulu, Finland. I started my doctoral studies in January 2016 with the four-year grant I received from the

Eudaimonia Doctoral Program at the University of Oulu (<http://www.oulu.fi/eudaimonia/>). I am currently outlining the research questions and planning a research strategy for sub-study 1 (systematic literature review). For detailed working plan of my studies, see table 1 below.

Table 1. Working plan of my doctoral studies.

Date	Research phase
Spring 2016	Collecting data for Sub-study 1 (research strategy and information retrieval) Presentation at Media and communication research days in Helsinki, Finland, April 8th. Doctoral forum at CoLIS 9 in Uppsala, Sweden, June 26-29.
Autumn 2016	Systematic literature review (Sub-study 1) Recruiting the participants (Sub-studies 2 and 3) Doctoral Workshop at ISIC conference in Zadar, Croatia, September 20-23.
Spring 2017	First article (Sub-study 1) Collecting data and discourse analysis (Sub-study 2)
Autumn 2017	Theme interviews (Sub-study 3) Second article (Sub-study 2)
2018	Content analysis of the interviews (Sub-study 3) Third article (Sub-study 3) Analysis of the data from Sub-studies 1-3 (Sub-study 4)
2019	Fourth article (Sub-study 4) The dissertation is completed

Discussion at 2016 ISIC Doctoral Workshop

In ISIC 2016 Doctoral Workshop I would like to raise discussion about health related literacies and how the different conceptions are transforming in the context of contemporary digital information environment and how the topic adjusts to the field of information studies. Also, discussion on the concept of cognitive authority and its applicability to the research of health related literacies is welcome and appreciated. As the aims of this study are relatively challenging, the discussion especially on the theoretical perspectives of these topics in the doctoral workshop would benefit my work and help me develop the objectives.

References

Huhta, A-M. (2013) ”ÄLÄ KIRJOITA TÄNNE VIRALLISTERVEELLISTÄ PROPAGANDAA! Karppaus.info -keskusteluryhmä virallisten ravitsemussuosittelusten haastajana”. (Eng. ”Do not write officially healthy propaganda here! Karppaus.info – discussion group challenging the official dietary guidelines”). Master’s thesis for the Master’s Degree Program in Science Communication. Oulu: University of Oulu.

Knobel, M. & Lankshear, C. (2014) Studying new literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 58(2): 97-101.

Niemelä, R., Ek, S., Eriksson-Backa, K. & Huotari, M-L. (2012). A screening tool for assessing everyday health information literacy. *Libri* 62(2): 125-134.

Wilson, P. (1983) *Second-hand Knowledge: an Inquiry into Cognitive Authority*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

CV for the Doctoral Workshop Application

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Curriculum Vitae

Full name and Date of birth:

Anna-Maija Erika Huhta
27th of May 1984

Education:

Master of Arts, Humanities, University of Oulu 2013
Master's Degree Program in Science Communication
Major subject: Science communication

Bachelor of Arts, Humanities, University of Oulu 2010
Major subject: Information Studies
Minor subjects: Communication, Film studies, Marketing

Acknowledgments:

Diploma for the Best Master's Thesis 2013 in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Oulu. Huhta, A-M. (2013) "ÄLÄ KIRJOITA TÄNNE VIRALLISTERVEELLISTÄ PROPAGANDAA! Karppaus.info –keskusteluryhmä virallisten ravitsemussuosittelusten haastajana". (Eng. "Do not write officially healthy propaganda here! Karppaus.info – discussion group challenging the official dietary guidelines"). Master's thesis for the Master's Degree Program in Science Communication. Oulu: University of Oulu. <http://herkules.oulu.fi/thesis/nbnfioulu-201304251208.pdf> (retrieved 2016/2/26)

Work/teaching experience:

Research assistant, HIBA research project 2015/10 – 2015/11

Taking Health Information Behaviour into Account: implications of a neglected element for successful implementation of consumer health technologies on older adults (HIBA) is an Academy of Finland funded research project at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. It is funded from 2015 to 2019.

Lecturer, Introduction to Information Studies 2015/9 – 2015/11

A web-based course at the Open University of the University of Oulu, Finland

Assistant Lecturer, PR communication 2015/5

A web-based course at the Open University of the University of Oulu, Finland

Lecturer, Information Literacy and Social media course, 2015/1 – 2015/4

Information Studies, University of Oulu

Communication Planning Officer, 2014/11 – 2014/12

INSPIRES research community, University of Oulu

Assistant Lecturer, PR communication 2014/4 – 2014/5

A web-based course at the Open University of the University of Oulu, Finland

Language skills:

Finnish – native

English – excellent command

Swedish – basic communication skills

Scientific publications:

Huhta, A-M (2014) Internetin karppauskeskustelut virallisia ravitsemussuosituksia haastamassa (Eng. Low carb discussions on the Web challenging official dietary guidelines). The abstract of the presentation held at the Information Science Days 2014/11/6 in University of Oulu. Informaatitutkimus 33(3).

<http://ojs.tsv.fi/index.php/inf/article/view/48050/13883> (retrieved 2016/2/26)

Popularized articles

Huhta A-M (2015) Terveystiedon lukutaito tukee hyvinvointia (Eng. Health information literacy supports well-being). Popularized article on University of Oulu web page, in Finnish. Published 2015/3. <http://www.oulu.fi/yliopisto/tutkimus/tutkimuksen-esittely/tutkimusartikkelit/inspires> (retrieved 2016/2/26)

Huhta, A-M (2014) Tiede käden ulottuville: Oululainen tutkimusryhmä etsi kumppaneita Singaporesta (Eng. Science within reach: A research community from Oulu looking for collaborators in Singapore). Kaleva newspaper, 2014/12/15.

Huhta, A-M (2012) Tutkijan työ vaatii luovuutta: Oululainen Noora Hirvonen päätyi tiedeuralle sattumalta (engl. Researchers job requires creativity: Noora Hirvonen from Oulu ended up doing research by chance). Kaleva newspaper, 2012/5/15.