ISIC Poster Proposal

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Statement of topic: *The impact of networking supported by social media during job search: an information science perspective*

Significance and relevance of the topic

This is a contemporarily relevant and timely PhD topic, which exemplifies the "unifying characteristic" of the conference. It focuses on the information needs and behaviours of young Scottish jobseekers, and how they satisfy these needs by engaging with their networks of social contacts, in both offline and online environments. To achieve this, Tom Wilson's (1997) general model of information is used as a framework to explore the cognitive, social, and circumstantial barriers young people face to networking during job search, as a means of information seeking. It is of particular significance given the lack of attention in the academic literature afforded to jobseekers' use of social media tools. Additionally, job search is an area which has yet to be fully explored from an information behaviour theory perspective, and could provide a fruitful future area of research for information scientists.

The research is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (grant no. ES/J500136/1) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS). As such, it is also expected that the findings from the research project can be incorporated into SDS's career management skills framework, wherein the ability of individuals to develop their relationships and networks of support during career development is cited as a key competency (SDS, 2012, p.7). In doing so, the topic has demonstrates how the study of information behaviour within specific contexts (i.e. during job search, in both real-life and digital environments) can be of benefit to organisations in the careers and information guidance sector.

Content

The poster includes the following features:

- An overview of the research topic.
- An outline of the key background themes from the relevant literature.
- Graphic portraying Wilson's model of general information behaviour
- Outline of multi-method approach.
- Display of preliminary findings
- A brief conclusion/future directions

Abstract

The poster is broken into clear sections organised into columns reading from left to right, under the topic title. The structure and content of the poster is similar to that of an academic paper, and includes the following sections:

Topic introduction: Exemplification of why the topic is contemporarily significant. This focuses primarily on the networking behaviours of young Scottish jobseekers, and the potential of social media tools to proffer job information and support. Statistics relating to

youth unemployment levels and social media adoption are used to underline the relevance of the study to careers practitioners.

Research questions: Statement the research questions which are being addressed by the research project.

Themes from the literature: A brief description of the key themes identified from the literature. These are, (1) Social network theory, and the use of informal channels of information during job search; (2) The role of networking behaviours in job search; and, (3) The adoption and use of social media tools.

Methods and sample: A brief outline of the multi-method approach which is being adopted for the research. This includes qualitative interviews and focus groups with jobseekers and careers advisors, and a quantitative questionnaire aimed at targeted populations of young jobseekers (i.e. business school graduates and school leavers).

Preliminary findings: Headline figures from ongoing statistical analysis of quantitative data, and key quotations derived from the qualitative data.

Conclusion and future directions: Brief summation of findings, including key insights. An indication of work to be undertaken in final year of PhD process.

References

SDS (2012). *Career management skills framework for Scotland.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/752669/career_management_skills_framework_scotland.pdf [Accessed 17th March 2016].

Wilson, T. D. (1997). Information behaviour: an interdisciplinary perspective. *Information Processing & Management*, *33*(4), 551-572.