Psychosemiotics and Information Literacy Instruction: Identifying Signways in Library Tutorials

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Psychosemiotics and libraries: Identifying signways in library informational guides, games, and tutorials

Barbara Laster, Towson University & Barbara Blummer, Center for Computing Sciences
Methodology & research question

- Examined academic libraries’ tutorials & informational guides for evidence of semiotics & instruction through multiple signways
- Research question: What are the multiple communication channels used for instructional or informational delivery?
- Chose tutorials; two independent raters; findings in chart form
Peirce (1912)

- Founder of semiotics, or the science of signs
- Icons - represent the object
- Indexes - “connected” to an object
- Symbols - interpreted meaning
Related Literature

- Wagner (1992) - literature review of the topic
- Ma & Diodata (1999) - users’ meaning-making in interpretation of the icons as index pointers
- Newell (2005) - images of librarian-user reference interactions on library web pages
- Wells (2007) - users’ meaning-making with library catalog signs
Smith (2005)

- Triadic sign
  - 1st part: “unceasing process of semiosis”
  - 2nd part: Psychosemiotics--the study of how we learn, understand, and use the signs of culture
    - Various ways of knowing through signways in internal personal and external sociocultural-environmental worlds
    - Signways represent semiotic processes that contain meaning-making
Smith’s Seven Signways

2nd Part continued
- Linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, social-personal, and naturalistic
- Similar to Howard Gardner’s multiple intelligences theory

3rd Part
- pragmatic realm of formal education
- a learning environment that recognizes various signways to support students’ meaning making
Smith’s Seven Signways

- **Linguistic** - all types of written or spoken verbal language
- **Musical** - conventions, sounds, rhythms, and skills of music
- **Logical/mathematical** - linear and sequential knowledge & operations
- **Spatial** - visual-spatial arrays
- **Bodily-kinesthetic** - use of the body & its parts
- **Social-personal** - signs of knowing about others & oneself
- **Naturalistic** - recognition of patterns in the natural & cultural worlds & classification of objects and events
Cardiff University’s
When to cite exercise

- Linguistic, logical mathematical, spatial, and bodily kinetic skills

- “Boolean search OR & AND” which offers many signways (linguistic, logical mathematical, spatial, and bodily kinetic), including music
Stuff you can find at Owens library game

Northwest Missouri’s Owens Library
Stuff you can find at Owens library game

Northwest Missouri’s Owens Library

Scoring

Match three or more identical symbols when they fall, in any of the following shapes:

- Vertical Line
- Horizontal Line
- Diagonal Line
- Rectangle

Set up cascading combos for huge bonus points!

[Back] [Start]
Ohio State Libraries Net.tutor Head hunt: The game

Share Your Opinions: Head Hunt Orientation Game

Thank you for providing your evaluation of this project. Your answers will be anonymous, not linked to your name or game results in any way.

1. Who are you?
- First quarter freshman
- Family of first quarter freshman
- Guest/Other

2. What games did you play and what do you think of them?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Rating: Call Number Order</th>
<th>Very interesting</th>
<th>Somewhat interesting</th>
<th>Not at all interesting</th>
<th>Did not play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>05</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The library’s **Social Networks** tutorial

**Social Networks > Overview - Key Ideas**

Begin the tutorial by clicking the first link, or select any page to review.

1. **Discuss**: Mailing lists, Web forums and online groups all facilitate discussion between members. Various search engines allow others to find useful postings.

2. **Collaborate**: Wikis are tools for sharing information and collaborative writing. Social bookmarking sites allow users to save and identify content with unique tags or use those developed by others.

3. **Share**: Blogs are created by individuals to share news, ideas and opinions. Many have a comment feature. A variety of other applications allow you to share photos, personal content.

4. **Find Answers**: Specialized search engines and other tools help you locate useful information.
Introduction

Welcome to our online library research course! This tutorial was created through a collaborative effort of the Libraries of the University of Colorado. It focuses on publishing in scholarly journals. In this course, you will learn to:

- Describe the role of scholarly publishing in an academic career
- List the essential steps of planning and writing a scholarly paper
- Develop a personal publication plan
- Compare and contrast the different publishing models currently in use
- Describe the types of articles you can write
- List the pros and cons of collaborative authoring
- Describe the tools and resources a scholarly writer needs to have on hand

Click Module 1 in the right column to get started.
The WISPR workshop will guide you through these phases of the Information search Process. Each of the phases is represented by a different colour in the workshop. Each section will explain the task of the phase, give you some actions and strategies to move you along to the next phase, and outline some of the thoughts and feelings researchers normally experience at that point of the Information Search Process.

This diagram represents the information search process.
California State University’s

- Fullerton Library’s Streaming Video Tour

- the library is “place to get information and get it fast”

- disputes the stereotype of libraries as boring places
Findings/Limitations

- Achieved 96% agreement in assessment
- Disagreed over the mathematical-linear channel
- Small number of tutorials examined
- Lack of users’ input; future research should interview users
Implications

- Receiving instruction and information from diverse channels expands the meaning-making experience.

- Librarians should attempt to utilize as many signways as possible to maximize students’ ability to make meaning.

- Using the open source materials from PRIMO allows librarians to adopt tools to enhance their service to users.
Thank You

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