Internet "Gatekeepers" in Online Content Consumption

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Outline

- The Policy Issue
- Research Questions
- Project Description
- Findings
- Policy Implications
The Policy Issue

- Does the apparent abundance of content diversity online eliminate the need to regulate traditional media?
The Policy Issue

- Billions of online documents
- Millions added daily

= available information

Frees us from the constraints imposed by the structures of the physical world
The Policy Issue

- Billions of online documents
- Millions added daily

= available information = ? accessible information
Research Questions

• How does content organization online influence what material people see?
• Does content organization limit people’s ability to view diverse types of material online?
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How do people surf the Web?
Project Description

• Random sample of Internet users from a New Jersey county: 100 participants

• Response rate: 54%

• Diverse set of respondents

Age: 18-81  Men/Women: 49/51

Education: < High school - Ph.D.

Internet experience: 0-16 years

Web use/week: few mins-70 hrs
Project Description

• Study in university research setting

• Survey data
  Demographics, past experience

• Observed online information-seeking behavior

Health info
Job search
Gov’t documents
Findings

- Are movie listings easier to find than information about theaters or orchestra performances?
Findings

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Findings
Findings

Auditions Listings Guide to tryouts throughout the state compiled by Bette Spark and updated every Monday for the Star-Ledger.


Community Theater Groups Site for community theaters in your area like SummerFun Theater, Trilogy Repertory and more.

Theater Forum Reviews shows you have seen, recommend restaurants near theaters or talk shop with other budding thespians.

"1999 Perry Awards" Click in and see who was awarded for Excellence in Community Theater in New Jersey.
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Findings
Findings

- Are movie listings easier to find than information about theaters or orchestra performances? **Yes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Looked for movies</th>
<th>Successful</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

• Are movie listings easier to find than information about theaters or orchestra performances?  **Yes**

Statistical analyses suggest that finding movie information online is easier than other types of local cultural content.
Findings

• How do users look for music to listen to online?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music portal</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online store</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOL Music</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

• Is local information always accessible?

Example: looking for local cultural events using AOL
Findings

Percentage of tasks completed successfully

Female
Age
Education
Black
Family income
Child in household
High speed access
Social support
Net advice support
Free to use Net at work
# Locations of Access
Time on Web/week
Use years
# of tasks w/AOL
Time into study
Intercept
Findings

Percentage of tasks completed successfully

Female                  -1.320    (3.481)
Age                     -0.491*** (0.125)
Education                1.193#   (0.677)
Black                  -12.788#  (6.739)
Family income            1.231    (2.811)
Child in household      -5.098    (3.770)
High speed access       -6.172    (3.889)
Social support           0.024    (0.252)
Net advice support      -0.554    (0.944)
Free to use Net at work  4.296    (4.062)
# Locations of Access   3.699    (4.679)
Time on Web/week        4.223#   (2.136)
Use years               2.130    (4.099)
# of tasks w/AOL        -2.300*  (0.877)
Time into study         0.034*   (0.016)
Intercept               60.111#  (34.299)

N 100
R2 0.496
Adjusted R2 0.406

*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05;
# p<0.1; two tailed
Findings

• Does the browsing environment influence users’ ability to locate content online?

Yes

AOL has an independent effect on users’ ability to locate content on the Web (net of age, education, income, gender, etc.)
Policy Implications

- Content organization online does influence what material is most easily accessible to users
- The Internet should not be used as grounds for deregulating traditional media given that offline media concentration is mirrored online
For more information:

http://www.eszter.com
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (female=1)</td>
<td>-2.792</td>
<td>(3.552)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.570***</td>
<td>(0.126)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>1.637*</td>
<td>(0.678)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American (=1)</td>
<td>-10.779</td>
<td>(6.923)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fam Income (logged)</td>
<td>1.132</td>
<td>(2.906)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child in HH</td>
<td>-5.200</td>
<td>(3.898)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Speed Connection</td>
<td>-5.209</td>
<td>(4.003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
<td>-0.068</td>
<td>(0.258)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People for net help</td>
<td>-0.696</td>
<td>(0.975)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very free to Use Net @ Work</td>
<td>3.600</td>
<td>(4.191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Access Locations (logged)</td>
<td>2.793</td>
<td>(4.825)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time on Web/week (logged)</td>
<td>5.106*</td>
<td>(2.181)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yrs online (logged)</td>
<td>6.366#</td>
<td>(3.896)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Days since 1st interview</td>
<td>0.038*</td>
<td>(0.017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>51.614</td>
<td>(35.307)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N 100
R² 0.455
Adjusted R² 0.365

*** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05; # p<0.1; two tailed

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