

## The Knowledge-Behavior Gap in the Online Information Seeking Process

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**Abstract :** The concept of a knowledge-behavior gap has been discussed for several years. It is addressed that an individual's knowledge does not sufficiently transfer to his or her actual actions. This concept is mostly focused on fields related to medicine or applied to health care issues to explain how people or patients connect their personal knowledge to actual health care behaviors. To our knowledge, seldomly has this research been applied to discuss people's online information seeking behavior. In the current study, the main purpose is to investigate the relationship between web users' personal values and their actual performances when seeking information on the Internet. The total number of twenty-eight participants, divided into one experienced group (n=14) and one novice group (n=14), were recruited and asked to complete a self-report questionnaire of fifty items related to information seeking actions and behaviors. During the execution, participants needed to rate the importance level (how important each item is) and the performance level (how often they actually do each item) from 1 to 10 points on each item. In this paper, the mean scores of the importance and the performance level are analyzed and discussed. The results show that there is a gap between web user's knowledge and their actual online seeking behaviors. Both experienced group and novice group have higher average scores of the importance level (experienced group = 7.57, novice group = 6.01) than the actual performance level (experienced group = 6.89, novice group = 5.00) in terms of the fifty online information seeking actions. On the other hand, the experienced group perceives more importance of the fifty online seeking actions and performs actual behaviors better than the novice group. Moreover, experienced participants express a consistent result between their concept knowledge and actual behaviors. For instance, they feel extending a seeking strategy is important and frequently perform this action when seeking online. However, novice participants do not have a consistency between their knowledge and behaviors. For example, though they perceive browsing and judging information are less important than they get lost in the online information seeking process. However, in the actual behavior rating, the scores show that novices do browsing and judge information more often than they get lost when seeking information online. These results, therefore, help scholars and educators have a better understanding of the difference between experienced and novice web users regarding their concept knowledge and actual behaviors. In future study, figuring out how to narrow down the knowledge-behavior gap and create practical guidance for novice users to increase their online seeking efficiency is crucial. Not only could it help experienced users be aware of their actual information seeking behaviors, but also help the novice become mastery to concisely obtain information on the Internet.

**Keywords :** experienced web user, information seeking behavior, knowledge-behavior gap, novice, online seeking efficiency

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