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Book hunting and bibliophilia as a type of serious leisure

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Introduction

- In my research, I try to understand how people engage with various forms of information as part of their *serious leisure* activities; and to what extent their leisure-related information experiences are meaningful and joyful.
- In this presentation, I reflect on book hunting and bibliophilia as a type of *serious leisure*.

Six criteria of serious leisure

- Perseverance and commitment
- Potentiality to turn into a career
- Significant personal effort
- Durable personal and social benefits
- Unique ethos within a social world
- Personal and social identity

(Stebbins, 1982)

Examples of serious leisure

- Coin collecting
- Stamp collecting
- Gourmet cooking
- Food blogging
- Volunteering fundraising
- Environmental activism
- Museum visiting
- Liberal arts
- Photography
- Birdwatching
- Gardening
- Urban exploration
- Genealogy
- Bonsai growing

Various kinds of serious leisure

- **Collecting** (e.g. art collecting, coin collecting)
- **Making** (e.g. knitting, wood carving)
- **Tinkering** (e.g. car restoration, repairing)
- **Performing** (e.g. swimming, dancing, bowling)
- **Competitive hobbies** (e.g. badminton, cricket)
- **Outdoor hobbies** (e.g. horse riding, fishing)
- **Observing** (e.g. bird watching, photography)
- **Learning** (e.g. liberal arts, genealogy)

Why serious leisure?

- During the past decades, research on human information behaviour has mainly focused on work-related, professional or educational settings.
- Some scholars realised we need to broaden our horizon and include other contexts such as serious leisure.
- Serious leisure is a very information rich and information intensive context.

Informational aspects of serious leisure

- Serious leisure is a productive topic in human information behaviour because it entails pursuit of knowledge and involves various information activities including seeking, searching, browsing, retrieving, saving, organising, sharing, evaluating, using, producing and disseminating.
- While work and study related information seeking and acquisition are sometimes considered as tedious tasks, in serious leisure these tasks are often reported as enjoyable experiences.

Book hunting as serious leisure



The Bibliophiles (1879), by Luis Jimenez Aranda, (1845-1928)

Image source: <https://master-painters.tumblr.com/image/169740523292>

Why do we collect?

- McIntosh and Schmeichel (2004) explored various aspects of the collecting process to describe the motivations that underlie collecting behaviour.
- They report that collecting is a means of personal fulfilment by setting up tangible and attainable goals and providing the collector with a sense of achievement.

The Collecting Process (Mcintosh and Schmeichel, 2004)

1. Goal Formation
2. Gathering Information
3. Planning and Courtship
4. The Hunt
5. Acquisition
6. Post-Acquisition
7. Manipulation/Display/Cataloguing
8. Return to Stage 3 or Stage 1

Conclusion

- This hobby creates possibilities for other intellectual activities such as joining book clubs, contacting publishers, social interactions with other collectors and attending cultural events.
- Like other serious leisure participants, they can enjoy a range of personal and social benefits, such as creating distinctive knowledge, creating a notion of career, and social connectedness.
- They also can build a lifestyle around their hobby, enjoy self-actualisation and a sense of accomplishment, and develop strong identification.

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Thank you for your attention!

Any questions or comments?



Photo by Yazdan Mansourian