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Searching for Culture—High and Low FREE

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Abstract

This article examines the link between finding out about cultural activities on the Web and finding out through other people. Using data from interviews with Torontonians, we show that people first obtain cultural information from interpersonal ties or other offline sources and only then turn to the Web to amplify this information. The decisions about what information to seek from which media can be evaluated in terms of a uses and gratifications approach; the main gratifications identified include efficiency and the availability of up-to-date information. Our findings also have implications for the model of the traditional two-step flow of communication. We suggest the existence of new steps, whereby people receive recommendations from their interpersonal ties, gather information about these recommendations online, take this information back to their ties, and go back to the Web to check the new information that their ties have provided them.

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