Executive Summary

New immigrants have traditionally been identified as a social group with great information needs but also potentially face significant barriers in accessing useful, relevant information. Etc etc.. Our participant sample included a diverse set of individuals from a variety of cultures and varying degrees of English language ability.

We created and administered a guided paper surveys in-person to 17 participants in ESL classes at the Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) and the Seattle Public Library (SPL). Our survey consisted of multiple-choice questions with optional fill-in answers ('other' choices). We also conducted a focus group session at ReWA with 3 participants as well as an interview with a staff case worker at ReWA. We also conducted a focus group with 7 participants at SPL's Talk Time ESL program.

Our fieldwork results identified the following keypoints:

At ReWA
Survey
- Healthcare, jobs, and transportation are (not surprisingly) the most-sought-after topics of information.
- Nearly half the respondents (8 out of 17) use the Internet to look for job info.
- More than half (9 out of 17) use the library to find info about "entertainment or fun."
- As Abrahamson & Fisher would have predicted, more respondents considered their children an important information source (5) than they did adult family members (2).

Focus Group
- Jobs is the most mentioned topic in these conversations
- Flexibility of transportation: e.g. lack of driver licenses is a major problem for people getting jobs
- People have access to the computer and internet, but language/typing ability + time limits on computer use (e.g. at the library) is a barrier

According to the case worker interview
- The most shared topics are on ESL classes
- Cultural difference is the the #1 barrier, he puts examples in context of jobs
- His comment on immigrants not necessarily trusting their children for interpretation is very interesting

At SPL
- Comfort level and use of computers and technology is quite varied.
- Information overload was definitely a barrier for this group
- Language and cultural differences also seen as a barrier
- People were often cited as the "easiest" way to get information – friends, family, church members – and easiest was good.
- Participants were aware that they needed to filter both what they got from the internet and from people – and also to take several sources to decide on courses of action – this supports the berry picking theory.

Our findings confirmed our initial choices of models that we believed would be most relevant when applied to our social group: We based our predictions on immigrant inforamtion

behaviour on Wilson's Model (1971), Bates' Berrypicking model, LIM behavior, Zipf's Principle of Least Effort and ICM+Gatekeeper theory.

Bibliography

Adler, S. (1977). MASLOWS NEED HIERARCHY AND ADJUSTMENT OF IMMIGRANTS. [Article]. *International Migration Review, 11*(4), 444-451.

Caidi, N., & Allard, D. (2005). Social inclusion of newcomers to Canada: An information problem? [Article]. *Library & Information Science Research, 27*(3), 302-324. doi: 10.1016/j.lisr.2005.04.003

Chu, C. M. (1999). *Immigrant children mediators (ICM): Bridging the literacy gap in immigrant communities* (Vol. 5): Routledge.

Courtright, C. (2005). Health information-seeking among Latino newcomers: an exploratory study. [Article]. *Information Research, 10*(2), 1-1.

Fisher, K. E. (2004). Information behaviour of Migrant Hispanic Farm Workers and Their Families in the Pacific Northwest (Vol. 10): Information Research.

Fisher, K. E., Durrance, J. C., & Hinton, M. B. (2004). Information grounds and the use of need-based services by immigrants in Queens, New York: A context-based, outcome evaluation approach. [Article]. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 55*(8), 754-766. doi: 10.1002/asi.20019

Flythe, F. H. (2001). *Identification of the information needs of newly arrived Hispanic/Latino immigrants in Durham County, North Carolina, and how the public library may address those needs.* MS in LS. Retrieved from http://ils.unc.edu/MSpapers/2666.pdf

Hafford, C. (2010). Sibling caretaking in immigrant families: Understanding cultural practices to inform child welfare practice and evaluation. [Article]. *Evaluation & Program Planning, 33*(3), 294-302. doi: 10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2009.05.003

Mattessich, P. (2000). Speaking for Themselves: A Survey of Hispanic, Hmong, Russian, and Somali Immigrants in Minneapolis-Saint Paul. *Wilder Research Center*.

Metoyer-Duran, C. (1991). Information-Seeking Behavior of Gatekeepers in Ethnolinguistic Communities: Overview of a Taxonomy. *Journal of Library and Information Science, 13*(4), 28.

Orellana, M. F., Dorner, L., & Pulido, L. (2003). Accessing Assets: Immigrant Youth's Work as Family Translators or "Para-Phrasers". *Social Problems, 50*(4), 505-524.

Paulino, A. (1998). Dominican immigrant elders: Social service needs, utilization patterns, and challenges. [Article]. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work, 30*(1-2), 61-74.

Shoham, S., & Strauss, S. K. (2008). Immigrants' information needs: their role in the absorption process. [Article]. *Information Research-an International Electronic Journal, 13*(4), 12. doi: 359

Srinivasan, R., & Pyati, A. (2007). Diasporic information environments: Reframing immigrant-focused information research. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology, 58*(12), 1734-1744.

Su, S. S., & Conaway, C. W. (1995). Information and a Forgotten Minority : Elderly Chinese Immigrants. *Library & Information Science Research, 17*(1), 17.

To, T. (1995). Survey on the Library Needs of and Library Use by the Chinese Language Readers in Fairfield, New South Wales : Preliminary Report. *Public Library Quarterly, 14*(4), 23.

Tsai, J. H. C. (2006). Use of computer technology to enhance immigrant families' adaptation. [Article]. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship, 38*(1), 87-93.

Yum, J. O. (1982). Communication Diversity and Information Acquisition Among Korean Immigrants in Hawaii. *Human Communication Research, 8*(2), 15.