

Information Seeking Practices of Food Blog Readers

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ABSTRACT

This case study builds off previous research into the **serious leisure practices of home cooks** to understand what information blog readers seek, and share, in the comment section of a popular food blog.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Using the framework of **serious leisure**, how can we understand the **information seeking practices** of food blog readers?

METHODOLOGY

Content analysis of the comment section of a popular food blog using a grounded theory approach. Comments were **recorded**, **coded**, and **analyzed**.

FACTS & FIGURES

- **325** comments analyzed
- **71.4%** Questions about recipe, method, taste, and equipment
"Looks delicious! Could I sub whole milk for the heavy cream?"
- **65.5%** Statements about other recipes, suggested modification, and overall success of recipe
"Yum! I just made the Zahav hummus recipe from food52 and it was divine. Whipping the tahini with water and garlic infused. lemon juice is genius (and life changing!!)"
- **53.4%** Unrelated to recipe
"I never comment, but just FYI, you and I are on a pretend first-name basis in my house. I tell people I got recipes from ---, like we are friends."

FINDINGS

Serious Leisure

These are the qualities of Serious Leisure

- The need to persevere
- Finding a career in pursuing the serious leisure activity
- Significant personal effort to acquire knowledge, training, experience and skills
- Durable benefits
- Ethos and identity
- Participants identify strongly with their chosen pursuits

Information seeking practices

The information they look for and share is primary about **Ingredients**, **equipment** and **methods**. There is a tendency to what to show what they know and offer up suggestions for improvement.

What do commenters add?

A varied information source of ingredient substitutions and useful questions. This input may cause the author to change their recipe, or it may provide a separate, and new, food related information source for other readers.

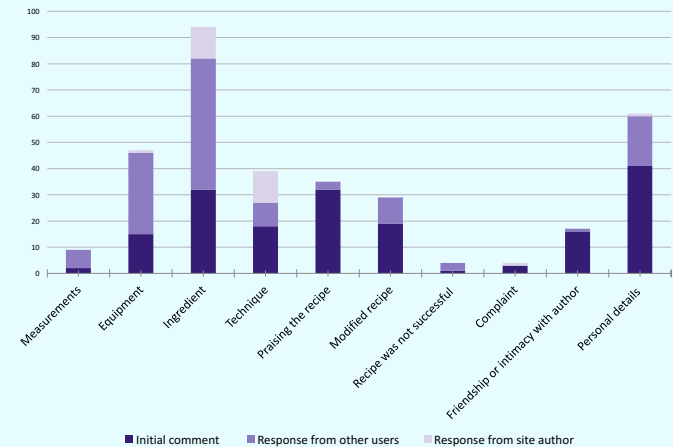
FUTURE RESEARCH

- Increase sample size to include **more blogs**
- Assessment of **specialty food blogs** (dietary restriction, dessert, regional, etc.)
- Content analysis of information shared in the **post** as related to the resulting comments
- **General purpose** cooking sites

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RELATED SUBJECTS



Serious leisure



Information seeking
behaviour



Home cooks



Blogging

RELEVANCE

"For librarians faced with questions about recipes and cooking, the internet has become the world's biggest recipe box"

(Forrest, 12, 2005)

More people look for food related information online than in cookbooks, and their information needs extend beyond recipes to include ingredients, equipment, and methods. Public libraries should address this growing **preferences for digital, community moderated resources**.