

Change log for CSCW Submission #131

We appreciate the detailed reviews for this paper. Here, we document how our paper evolved with respect to the reviewer suggestions.

Comparisons across diverse populations (AC, R2)

Both the AC and R2 wondered whether it was reasonable to compare the findings of our survey to those of Morris's 2006 survey, due to audience differences (we report data from a diverse sample of adults, whereas Morris reported data from Microsoft employees). We intentionally recruited a diverse audience in order to obtain a more representative sample of how "typical" Americans engage in collaborative search, since Microsoft employees are not typical in many respects (educational status, socioeconomic status, attitudes toward and access to technology). However, we acknowledge explicitly in the paper that some of the differences we present in our paper may in fact be due to these audience differences. To address this concern, we have gathered new data – in July 2012, we issued the same survey to employees of a large technology company <name withheld for blind review>, randomly selected from this company's corporate email list. As our updates to the paper describe in more detail, the 2012 tech employee data is extremely similar to the 2012 diverse sample data; these new data increase confidence that audience differences are not the basis of the changes we report, and increase the legitimacy of using the prior Morris study as a benchmark for comparison. These updates are included in a paragraph added to the "Discussion -> Limitations" sub-section.

General limitations of self-report studies (AC, R1, R2, R3)

The AC and R2 both expressed concern with our acknowledgement that all self-report studies have inherent limitations. We included this statement to help readers interpret our findings more accurately; however, we did not mean this to imply that one cannot learn anything at all from survey or self-report data! Indeed, all methodologies have inherent limitations. We use the recent critical incident approach as one way to mitigate these limitations, a methodology used by past influential CSCW papers (e.g., citation #7 by Evans & Chi).

R1 expressed a related concern about making claims based on survey data alone (as opposed to combining with other methods like interviews, cognitive walkthroughs, etc.). R1 seemed particularly concerned about the use of quotations from a few survey respondents when introducing design suggestions in the Discussion section. Our original text may have given the mistaken impression that these design ideas were inspired by comments from a single (or small number of) survey respondent(s); we have updated the "Challenges for Collaborative Search Solutions" sub-section to make it more clear that our suggestions are based on a combination of the overall survey findings and findings from prior literature (e.g., citations 22, 24, and 40); the quotations are meant as illustrative examples to contextualize our suggestions, rather than as the sole motivators of the suggestions.

R3 specifically wondered whether self-report about feelings of satisfaction for a past search would be reliable (as this recollection of subjective experience may be quite different than the more objective components of the questionnaire). We refer R3 to the article “On the Accuracy of Retrospective Attitudinal Data” by Gutek, B.A. (*Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1978), which finds that the passage of time does not significantly impact the accuracy of attitudinal data.

To further address all of these concerns, we have also added a sentence at the end of the “Discussion -> Limitations” section indicating that studying collaborative search practices using other methodological approaches would be an important complement to this work, as well as a pointer to an additional reference (#19) that gives the reader more detail about the pros and cons of retrospective self-report methods.

Typos (R1, R3)

R1 and R3 each identified a few typos, which we have corrected.

R3 observed that we made a typographical error in the “Social Networking Sites” sub-section when describing the strength of the correlation between lurking rate and Q&A rate on SNSes – we incorrectly described the correlation as “mild” when we meant to say that it was “strong” (since $r=-.94$ is quite a strong correlation, indeed!). We have corrected that description!

R1 also pointed out that the values for group sizes in the “Group Configurations” sub-section add up to 100.1% -- we double-checked all these numbers, and this is just due to rounding error – all of the values reported are accurate according the standard rules of rounding -- if we expanded beyond a single decimal place, some of that rounding error would disappear, but that level of specificity doesn’t seem necessary for the data in question.

Smartphones (R1)

R1 noted that it would be interesting to learn additional details about smartphone use, particularly whether specific apps play a role in search on such devices. This is an interesting question, but it is beyond the scope of what our survey asked about. We have added a sentence to the end of the “Smartphones” section to indicate this is an interesting area for us or others to investigate in the future.

Defining “Collaborative Search” (R3)

R3 notes that the term “collaborative search” may encompass a variety of behaviors (synchronous, asynchronous, etc), that may involve different collaboration mechanisms. This is certainly true, and the notion of what constitutes a collaborative search is still an evolving concept, even within the academic community. Indeed, one of the contributions of this paper is to update/expand/reinforce our

understanding of what falls under the “collaborative search” umbrella, e.g., that searches using status quo tools rather than dedicated collaboration tools are often still collaborative, that question asking on social networks is a new form of collaborative search that didn’t exist a few years ago, etc. We have added a paragraph to the “Discussion -> Comparison with Prior Findings” section to reflect further on this point.

Expanded discussion of significance of findings (AC, R3)

The AC requested we make the contribution of our findings more clear, and R3 suggested calling out the finding about the appropriation of generic technologies more clearly. To address these suggestions, we have expanded the “Introduction” and “Conclusion” sections. Our updates to the “Discussion” section addressing some of the earlier suggestions also help clarify and emphasize our contributions more clearly.