Exploring everyday information practices:
Embodied mutual constitution of people's complex relationships with food

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Abstract

As a basic human need, food is a core element of everyday life. People's food lives are influenced by the entirety of their circumstances, including upbringing, culture, gender, geography, economy, and health. When it comes to information, there is more voluminous and contradictory food-related information than ever before. This shapes people's information practices and their food practices. There has been some research in library and information science on informational aspects of specific food-related experiences, such as gourmet cooking and grocery shopping. However, as food is such a complex and necessary part of life, there is a great deal yet to understand about the nature of information, and the experience of becoming and being informed, in relation to food.

This thesis reports on a qualitative study that uses ethnographic techniques to document and explore information practices within people's everyday food activities. The study involves participants who differ significantly from one another, across different demographic categories, including living in both urban and rural Canadian communities. Informed by sensory ethnography, this thesis asks participants from a wide variety of backgrounds and circumstances to share their food practices — such as planning, procuring, preparing, eating — through a sit-down interview in the home, followed by a video tour of a food-related place that is important to them. Analysis follows constructivist grounded theory in order to identify commonalities and differences among participants' practices. Data collection and analysis include attention to embodied and tacit aspects, which are important to thoroughly exploring people's practices.

This study finds that people's food lives are extremely rich, including the practices that people use to become and stay informed about food. While some aspects of food-related information practices are routine, they are also complex, and deeply meaningful. Through their interactions with food information, people express and construct who they are in relation to others and to the world around them. More specifically, this study finds four main elements to be evident in food information practices: people's ways of learning new things;

their approaches to being ethical; their places within their families and cultures; and, their ways of thinking about their own (and others') bodies. This study also proposes a new theoretical concept, embodied mutual constitution, to illuminate the intertwining of people's information practices with other parts of life. This study finds that people develop information practices as part of becoming and being who they are. By enabling better understanding of people's food-related information practices, this thesis advances information practices theory; it also adds to the body of research encouraging an increasingly holistic understanding of the nature and role of information in people's lives.

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Declaration

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where duly referenced in the text of the thesis.

Sarah Polkinghorne

30 June 2021

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Chapter One: Introduction

Consider several people: an undergraduate urban planning student; a busy working father of two children; a couple enjoying their retirement in a rural prairie community; and, a woman piecing together a living on social assistance and income from odd jobs. The student is living on her own for the first time. Her parents have taught her about cooking but she is new to having complete autonomy over, and responsibility for, her food choices. The father makes it a priority to cook fresh food from scratch and spends time researching recipes and nutrition, borrowing cookbooks from the public library, and shopping at a variety of markets. The retired couple fill their days with many activities including gardening and hunting, but their town has no grocery store, since the regional grocery co-operative closed its location there. The woman has a cozy basement apartment in a relatively central neighbourhood, which is affordable and well-connected to services, but the neighbourhood is also a food desert: there is no place within walking distance to buy groceries.

What these people have in common, and of interest to this study, are three things that most people share. First, on a daily basis, they will encounter, navigate, interpret, and use some form(s) of information, to decide how and what to feed themselves and their close circle of family members and friends. They will use information not just for planning activities but also to learn about and undertake whatever their food activities are, from cooking to hunting to rolling into a drive-thru for fast food. Second, these people must contend with more voluminous and contradictory food-related information than ever before, particularly if they have ready access to the internet. Facts abound. And facts do matter, of course; but, as journalism scholar Candis Callison (2014) finds in her work on how people come to care about climate change, facts are far from the only things that matter. Scholars of food choices make the same point: that facts about nutrition or health, on their own, do not dictate people's activities (Lupton, 1996). A belief that they do is deterministic and untrue. There are also abundant additional flavours of food information, including advice of all sorts, homespun wisdom, pseudoscientific health and weight loss regimens, news coverage of food

production and research, celebrity opinions and examples, and a constant flow of advertisements. How people experience and interact with food information directly influences their everyday well-being. Third, these individuals will continuously negotiate their inner lives, including their identities and expertise, and their external circumstances. They will consider their material surroundings and larger social forces, in the course of making decisions on their everyday food lives. The richness of the everyday practice of feeding ones' self and one's inner circle – something that may be assumed by many people to be a mundane activity – must be understood in more depth.

For researchers concerned with information practices, people's food lives provide an opportunity to better understand the richness and complexity of these practices. Doing so leads us to continue substantiating the concept of information practices and its applicability to our articulations and interpretations of the nature of information in people's lives. While information science (IS) researchers can make some evidence-based assumptions about what people's food-related information practices may be, there has been relatively little attention paid to these practices within the discipline. This exploratory qualitative study addresses this significant gap. It uses ethnographic techniques (Pink, 2015), paired with constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2017), to document and explore information practices within the everyday food lives of a diverse group of people (including the people described at the start of this chapter).

This study contributes to the ever-growing body of research examining people's information practices in everyday life. IS researchers have examined numerous activities that, while commonplace and highly personal, are not necessarily "everyday" experiences; examples include voting and coping with cancer (e.g., Baxter & Marcella, 2014; Djupe, 2014; Miller, 2014; Park & Park, 2014; Shih-chuan, 2014). There is less IS research that explores the complexities of how people make their way through daily life on an ongoing basis, informing themselves continually as they do so. What makes open-ended everyday activities intriguing, particularly those grounded in basic human necessities, is that they are undertaken, one way or another, by all people, regardless of demographic factors such as

socioeconomic status, race or ethnicity, gender, or location. Further, this study focuses particularly on embodiment, the involvement of the body, in how people inform themselves throughout their daily lives. This study identifies information practices that cut across these common demographic categorisations, with a particular focus on the ways that these practices draw on and involve the human body as a site for experiencing and understanding the world.

To introduce and situate this study, this chapter describes how it relates to three areas within IS: the study of food in everyday life; the study of information behaviours and information practices; and, the study of embodiment. This chapter concludes with a discussion of how this study will contribute to knowledge in IS and other disciplines, and to the work of practitioners in various settings.

1.1 Food, information, and everyday life

Food, including all the human activity around it, has been a meaningful site of study for researchers across disciplines for centuries. However, disciplinary perspectives under the food studies umbrella are not equally predominant. As sociologist Deborah Lupton (1996) observes, the nutritional perspective traditionally predominates in studies of people's food and eating preferences (p. 6). This perspective, she argues, takes "a highly instrumental view on food and eating, relating habits and preferences to the anatomical functioning of the human body" (p. 6). Other researchers, including anthropologists, sociologists, historians, philosophers, and artists, are generally more concerned with what food and food practices mean to people in context. Over time, these researchers have established that people's food practices are "far more complex than a simple nutritional or biological perspective would allow" (p. 7). Public health scholar Patricia Crotty (1993), writing about nutrition research, describes these two contrasting perspectives as "pre-swallowing" and "post-swallowing": "the act of swallowing divides nutrition's 'two cultures,' the post swallowing world of biology, physiology, biochemistry and pathology, and the pre-swallowing domain of behaviour, culture, society and experience' (p. 109). The nutritional perspective continues to

predominate today. This is discussed, for example, by Leer and Wistoff (2018), in a review of contemporary food education. They critique the "nutritionism" that underpins much nutrition education, causing food to be characterised as assemblages of nutrients that can be objectively categorised and controlled (p. 334). Critical perspectives and alternatives, such as those discussed by Leer and Wistoff, continue to work in resistance to nutritional hegemony.

Given the breadth of food studies, spanning both pre- and post-swallowing, in Crotty's terminology, it is noteworthy that information science has produced relatively little food-related scholarship. There is considerable potential for original exploration of the informational aspects of people's food practices. As this study demonstrates, the concept of practices, and more particularly information practices, enable rich exploration of how people come to be and feel informed about food, and how they act on food information.

This study documents and analyses the information practices involved in people's everyday process of feeding themselves and their family or friends. As such, it appears in conversation with the other IS studies that have centred on food. I will review these more thoroughly in Chapter 2. There is not an abundance of IS researchers who have focused on food. One key figure is Jenna Hartel (2003, 2006, 2007), whose doctoral research on the information activities of passionate hobby cooks is a significant contribution to the study of food within the discipline. In her dissertation, she collects four data types: ethnographic field notes compiled in cooks' homes; semi-structured interviews; home "tours" given by the cooks; and, photographic inventories of cooks' hobby-related spaces (2006). Using these varied data, Hartel creates a nine-step model of the information activities and resources involved in an "episode" of gourmet cooking. These include activities such as imagining and seeking, and information resources such as recipes and the senses (2006).

The current study, like Hartel's, uses an ethnographic approach that invites research participants to share their practices, routines, resources, thoughts, feelings, and choices as they go about their activities. Where this study diverges from Hartel's is in its focus on embodiment, on adhering to an interpretivist perspective, and, perhaps most importantly, on studying a diverse sampling of people whose only shared trait may be that they have

responsibility within their household for food-related activities and decisions. Hartel (2006) focuses on serious leisure, and she recruits her research participants based on their dedication to gourmet cooking. Hartel's work examines food with a close focus on a resource-, time-, and expertise-intensive leisure pursuit. By contrast, the present study brings an interpretivist perspective that instead focuses more broadly on people's accounts of their information experiences and everyday well-being throughout the course of life.

More recently, and also in the information behaviour space, Ocepek (2016a) also conducted a doctoral study focused on people's food lives from an information behaviour perspective. Where Hartel focuses on gourmet hobby cooks, Ocepek focuses on grocery shoppers. She finds a wide range of information behaviours within the activity of shopping, and she finds that the "personas" of shoppers as creative, or as nurturing, influence their shopping experiences. Ocepek argues that the study of everyday information behaviour will be enriched through greater integration of critical and cultural theory that explores the "everyday." While the present study shares some characteristics in common with Ocepek, her study is distinct in its focus on shopping, and in its theoretical concern with the everyday in everyday information behaviour. The current study takes as its impetus a desire to hear from participants about their food lives, holistically. Therefore, this study also focuses on practices (Reckwitz 2002), which include but are not limited to particular activities, such as shopping. While there are of course other studies, discussed in Chapter 2, Hartel and Ocepek are the most prominent examples. There is abundant space for unique information-oriented explorations of people's food lives, and many intriguing approaches through which to explore. This research adds to this growing, yet nascent, body of knowledge.

There is also a body of food-related IS research that focuses on how people choose what foods to consume. This research shares a tendency to define information relatively narrowly, as something people seek consciously and intentionally through activities such as Googling, or citation-swapping (cf. Niedźwiedzka et al., 2014; Phillips, 2011; Wikgren, 2003). Also, research in this area often reveals a specific assumption about how people make choices: namely, that people make choices by rationally weighing accurate and adequate

information. This assumption is worth challenging because it is reductive and does not reflect the complexities of people's choices and lives. It does not reflect the influence of factors present in people's surroundings and circumstances, or the role of the body as an informing factor. The present study provides a more holistic approach to understanding people's decision-making activities in relation to food consumption.

This study also uses and develops the concept of information practices (Cox, 2013, 2012; McKenzie, 2003; Savolainen, 2008). In Section 1.7 below, on terminology, I introduce this concept in more detail, and connect it to related terms such as "sensory embodied knowing" (Pink, 2015, p. 38). By using the concept of information practices, this study, from the outset, asserts that people's food information experiences are both situated and social, personal and shared, and not motivated exclusively by pragmatic information about health and nutrition; people's food choices are not directed deterministically by facts and reason. (Further, in setting this study apart from those grounded in an assumption of rational choice, I do not wish to assert that the ideal of rational choice is even possible.) An information practice approach hinges on acknowledgement that people's values, social ties, and geographies affect their food practices, including where they shop, and whether they eat meat, or local, or all-organic. Food practices are also influenced by personal, social, and cultural concerns such as media messages, food safety and security, transit and transportation, emotions, economic circumstances, bodily experiences, expertise, and family and health history. Maintaining awareness and analysis of these many influences has been one challenge in conducting this study.

1.2 Information behaviour and information practices

Examining how people interact with information remains important for numerous reasons. Not least of these reasons is that people are surrounded by more published information each year. Between 1986 and 2007, for example, information stored globally grew by 23% per year (Hilbert & López, 2011, p. 64). While there is no consensus approach to answering "how much information exists?," there is no question that people today are

surrounded by more information than ever before (Hilbert, 2015). Information influences all aspects of life, including basic needs, school, work, leisure, and active citizenship. As information proliferates, people's information practices evolve and change. The IS sub-discipline that examines how people need, seek, use, and experience information is known as "information behaviour" (IB), although more recently the term "information practices" (IP) has additionally come into use (Case & Given, 2016; Savolainen, 2007). This study uses the term "information practices," as defined in Section 1.6; but, "information behaviour" remains the predominant terminology, so this section refers to this broad body of research as IB/IP.

Over time, much IB/IP research has followed two paths worth noting here, because this study diverges from both. First, researchers have tended to focus on people within formal structured settings, particularly schools and workplaces. Studies of people's processes in such settings have produced influential models of human information behaviour. For example, Carol Kuhlthau's (1993) Information Search Process model was initially developed with secondary school students working on a structured assignment. David Ellis (1993) studied researchers in chemistry, physics, and the social sciences to develop his behavioural model of information seeking. Tom Wilson's model (1999), focusing on problem solving and uncertainty in information seeking, drew research participants from the University of Sheffield and the University of North Texas. Luanne Freund's model (2015), which works to describe the factors comprising context in the process of information source selection, is based on research with software engineers. There are many additional examples.

There are also exemplary IB/IP theories and models that centre on life outside schools and workplaces. Elfreda Chatman's (1996) Theory of Information Poverty, Reijo Savolainen's (1995, 2008) Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS), and Devon Greyson's Information Triangulation (2018) are three examples, again among many. Chatman developed the Theory of Information Poverty through "a series of studies that examines the information world of poor people," including single mothers and older women living in a retirement community (p. 193). Savolainen based the ELIS model on his work with a group of teachers and industrial workers, and went on to develop it further through studies of

activists, industrial workers, and people who are unemployed (2008). He identified "informational (both cognitive and expressive) elements which people employ to orient themselves in daily life or to solve problems not directly connected with the performance of occupational tasks" (1995, p.267). More recently, Greyson (2018) developed Information Triangulation by working with young parents aged 15-24 and interviewing them to discuss how they assess information in their daily lives. I mention Greyson, Chatman, and Savolainen's work together to highlight how unlikely it is that any single theory or model could account for all information behaviour and practices, applicable across all contexts. Behaviour and practices are situated in context, and IS researchers have studied some sites and contexts of IB/IP much more than others.

Another tendency that can be observed in IB/IP research is that researchers have often focused on intentional, linear individual information seeking, such as what students and researchers would commonly enact. This focus can be seen in recent research such as Watson's (2014) study of post-secondary students' information assessment strategies. Watson identifies how students' relevance and reliability judgements change as their information seeking progresses within their school tasks. Sbaff and Zhao (2020) model university students' selection of health information sources as a process in which the characteristics of the information and of the student interact to result in "channel selection," that is, information source selection (p. 198). Research that examines linear information seeking is valuable, as it involves close examination of complex real-life processes. However, as Pam McKenzie (2003) has observed, such research "reflect[s] analysis of one single focussed current need and therefore do[es] not attempt a holistic consideration of the variety of information behaviours individuals describe in their everyday lives related to several distinct and possibly inter-related current and future information needs" (p. 20). Chatman and Savolainen's models speak to this gap around "holistic consideration" of everyday information lives, as does McKenzie's work, and other more recent work on issues such as serendipity (Agarwal, 2015; Foster & Ellis, 2014), information sharing (Robinson & Yerbury,

2015; Almehmadi, Hepworth, & Maynard, 2014), and the possibility of paradigmatically holistic information research (Polkinghorne & Given, 2021).

Researchers continue to turn their attention to information in everyday life, in increasingly diverse contexts. As one example, we can take the topic of fanfiction, a hobby involving the creation of new stories based in existing fictional worlds. Hill and Pecoskie (2017) study online fanfiction communities such as Archive of Our Own, a large fanfiction repository, through a serious leisure lens, finding that informational activities such as collecting and organising are central to people's participation. Price and Robinson (2021) also study Archive of Our Own, as well as Tumblr and Etsy. They find that people use classification features, such as tagging, for personal and social purposes apart from classification. Floegel (2020) studies how queer writers reorient entertainment media through fanfiction, centring queer characters, relationships, and themes, and in doing so, creating new information worlds. These examples illustrate the broadening of inquiry into information in everyday life.

At the same time, overall there remains a legacy of the two tendencies mentioned above, that of a focus on formal contexts such as schools and workplaces, and that of a focus on intentional, individual information activities. This legacy is that relatively less is known about how people experience information in a holistic sense, outside formal settings and aside from intentional information-seeking. The researchers cited previously, plus others, such as Karen Fisher and colleagues (2005), William Aspray and Barbara Hayes (2011), and Annemaree Lloyd (2010), have certainly expanded our understanding. The concept of "information practices" itself emerged in the early twenty-first century as part of a shift away from the predominance of concern with "the behavior, action, motives, and skills of monological individuals," toward people "as members of various groups and communities that constitute the context of their mundane activities" (Savolainen, 2007, p. 120). This social, inescapably interrelated framing of people's information interactions underlies this study's use of "information practices." There are numerous aspects of everyday life that have

not yet been examined, and conceptual developments within IB/IP research correspond to the field's deepening understanding of the role of information in people's lives.

1.3 The food information context

Meanwhile, as IB/IP researchers continue to turn their attention to everyday life, the amount of published food-related information available to people via the internet has never been more voluminous, or more algorithmically tailored. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok are dense with food information and numerous ways to share and interact with it. The need to understand these vast information resources' influence on people's choices has led food education researchers Steils and Obaidalahe (2020) to coin the term "social food" to encompass "all online techniques for creating, sharing, commenting and evaluating food-related information using social media" (p. 1). People can interact with more information than ever before, and people can also create and publish their own information like never before. While these platforms are primarily visual, emphasising information in textual and visual formats, people also use them to share the sounds of food and to verbalise other sensory information such as smells and tastes (Polkinghorne, 2019). In turn, social media companies, understanding the draw of food as an opportunity to sell advertisements and mine user data, configure platform algorithms to maximise the time we want to spend online.

Food trends sparked by social information-sharing activities are commonplace. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its stay-at-home requirements and restaurant closures, has also been an accelerating factor in the circulation of food trends. This includes a heightened focus on making food, consuming food, and constraining food intake for the sake of desired body transformation, or for "health." In many countries, for example, the first food trend of the pandemic was baking sourdough bread from scratch at home. Sourdough became especially popular because many people were required to work from home, and so they were now available to pop into the kitchen and watch over their loaves throughout the day. They began sharing their efforts on Instagram and Twitter, leading to bakers being interviewed by

national broadcasters (“Sourdough,” 2020). In October 2020, Nathan Apodaca, a 37-year-old man of Arapaho and Mexican descent who rides his longboard to work in Idaho Falls, Idaho, caused a consumption trend by posting a TikTok video depicting his trip to work. In the video, he rides his longboard, listens to Fleetwood Mac, and drinks Ocean Spray cranberry juice straight from the jug (“Doggface,” 2020; Fiddler, 2020). The video launched a run on Ocean Spray by consumers, to the great enthusiasm of both the company and cranberry farmers (Hauer, 2020; Ioannou, 2020). A trend like this encourages consumption, but others encourage restriction; a current example is the #75Hard “mental toughness” program, whose popularity also began on TikTok. The #75Hard “program” requires participants, every day, to perform multiple workouts, read ten pages of non-fiction each day (no, audiobooks do not count), drink a gallon of water (4.54 litres), and “follow a diet. Any diet” (Longman, 2020). Food companies and organisations are closely attuned to such trends and the overall online food information landscape, as they affect their own creation of food information. Researchers are already publishing analyses of the impact of the pandemic on food advertising; the work of Rodrigues, Matos, and Horta (2021), for example, explore how food advertising shifted quickly in the weeks after the global pandemic was declared, toward messages of “support, empathy, and solidarity” (p. 321). Of course, not everyone uses social media, and not everyone has the ability or desire to partake in food trends. However, these online trends (and their impact on viewers) are important elements in understanding the circulation and material impacts of food information.

Even as people encounter algorithmically-honed food information that matches expressed interests, food information, in its abundance, can also seem more contradictory than ever. This is partly due to the participatory affordances of social media and the ease with which people can publish information. Although it is not a new phenomenon for certain foods to be debated as “good for you” or “bad for you,” with opinion oscillating between the two, online media can extend the reach of these debates around the globe. Navigating food information skillfully today requires media and information literacies grounded in as much personal expertise as possible. To give one brief example, in 2015 the World Health

Organization (WHO) released a report synthesising the evidence that eating red or processed meat increases the risk of some cancers (WHO, 2015). This resulted in simplifications appearing in headlines, such as "World Health Organization Condemns Red Meat" ("Agri View," 2015), and "World Health Organization Says Processed Meat Causes Cancer" (American Cancer Society, 2015). However, the actual WHO report outlined a range of factors that needed to be considered (e.g., the temperature at which red meat is cooked), beyond consuming red meat, along. Further, the report specified that the link only applied to a few types of cancer (colorectal, and possibly pancreatic and prostate) and that these connections were still not fully understood. WHO readers needed be able to engage with complex information in order to decipher and understand this report. Further, people needed to be able to apply skepticism to media reporting on food headlines. This is one small illustration of the unprecedented complexity of the food-related information provided to consumers. People discern among these messages and translate them into action in varying ways that do not necessarily, or solely, follow what they were taught in school or at the library. There are also many social, economic, and personal factors that influence how people access and use information throughout their lives. One such factor is the human body, which, as researchers have begun to understand, is inextricable from the cognitive or affective processes by which people make sense of the world and are informed by it. This study corroborates the current understanding that food's role in life is much more than functional; it is a highly complex social experience. People's food information practices are the same.

1.4 Embodiment

A growing number of IS researchers are investigating the role of people's bodies in their information practices. Early examples of these studies include Annemaree Lloyd's studies of firefighters and ambulance trainees (2007, 2009), Tiffany Veinot's study of a hydroelectric vault inspector (2007), and Michael Olsson's study of theatre professionals (2010). Qualitative researchers are increasingly identifying embodied information as

essential to people's information practices; there are now numerous recent studies, which are discussed in Chapter 2. Together, what these studies establish is that people rely upon their bodies to inform themselves in many ways, such as to keep them safe and to understand their surroundings. This study, in the process of operationalising the concept of embodiment to explore food-related information practices, undertakes a fulsome examination of the concept of embodiment in our discipline. Embodiment is discussed briefly here, to provide an introduction to the concept, and more fully in Chapter 2.

Researchers harnessing the concept of embodiment in IS do not always thoroughly describe their underlying theoretical or philosophical beliefs. Embodiment has been theorised, philosophised, and empirically described across decades and in multiple scholarly disciplines. In IS today, the conceptualisations of "embodiment" have roots mainly in two fields of study: philosophy and psychology. Embodiment scholarship in these two disciplines has a history of questioning where the mind ends and the body begins. If mind and body are separate, they ask, how so, and how do they relate to each other?

Before the early twentieth century, many canonical philosophers argued that knowing and thinking—activities of the mind—are processes inextricable from the world around us, and that the world becomes comprehensible through the body. Aristotle, Epicurus, Locke, Hume, and Kant, among others, acknowledged the connection between bodily experience and knowledge (Barsalou, 1999, p. 578). One descendent from these philosophers is "practice theory," a concept developed by scholars such as Theodore Schatzki (2002, 2003) and Andreas Reckwitz (2003). Practice theory has been used by researchers such as Lloyd and Veinot to introduce the concept of embodiment to IS. Practice theory calls for "a different way of seeing the body. Practices are routinized bodily activities [...] A practice can be understood as the regular, skilful 'performance' of (human) bodies" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 251). Embodiment, as viewed through a practice theory lens, is not solely an individual concern or experience. Instead, the body is theorised as a site through and on which people enact practices. This enables practices — and their inherent nature as recurring and "routinized" – to become the primary focus of study, rather than seen only as discrete

activities, such as “decision-making,” or inner experiences, such as “feeling.” This study is primarily influenced by practice theory, and particularly draws on the conception of practice detailed by Reckwitz (2002), but it is also influenced by embodiment as recently conceptualised in psychology.

In psychology, some researchers working in the mid-twentieth century posited that cognition could occur independent of the body. When psychologists examine embodiment, they frequently focus on perception — information received through the senses — and action. In the mid-twentieth century period, awash in fascination with computation and emerging technology, the notion of cognition independent of perception and action began to take hold. The circumstances of the time enabled the idea to thrive. As Glenberg (2015) describes, psychologists were turning away from predominant behaviourism and its emphasis on outward, observable human behaviour (p. 165). Eventually, in an evolution that IS scholars will find familiar, an information processing paradigm took hold, proposing “that thinking […] is the manipulation of abstract symbols, that is, symbols divorced from any perception and action” (p. 165). Glenberg (2015) observes that the separation of thought from the body also thrives because it corroborates human exceptionalism. That is, humans are distinct among animals because human thought, so the theory goes, can be separated from perception and action (p. 165).

An embodiment approach, holding that the body is an inextricable part of processes such as learning, has today gained standing in psychology through studies examining the connections between cognition, perception, and action. One striking example among these studies focuses on people who have received injections of Botulinum Toxin-A, commonly known as Botox. In the process of smoothing forehead wrinkles, Botox paralyzes a person’s corrugator muscles, which are involved in frowning and located near the eyebrows in the centre of the face. Researchers find that after receiving injections, participants “process,” or comprehend, angry or sad sentences slower than happy sentences (Havas, Glenberg, Gutowski, Lucarelli, & Davidson, 2010). In other words, because Botox impairs bodily

movement, including the ability to make involuntary emotional facial gestures, participants' cognition, or "meaning resolution," is impaired as well (p. 4).

Research such as the Botox study is highly relevant here because it resonates with IS concerns about how people use information. It invites consideration of how IS researchers could explore embodiment along similar lines, as an individual phenomenon with close links to the surrounding social and material environment. However, there are methodological challenges to doing so. When studying embodiment, psychologists frequently employ neuroscientific tests that are not widely used IS research. In IS, researchers rarely use transcranial magnetic stimulation, or functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), for example, both of which are used to show how the body responds to thoughts (e.g., Glenberg et al., 2008; Urrutia, Gennari, & de Vega, 2012). Psychologists, working with concepts of "inputs," "processing," and "stimulation," often study aspects of the mind and body that participants do not consciously perceive or control.

These experimental methods differ from the approaches predominantly used in IS, and more importantly, from the interpretivist paradigm being employed for this proposed study. In IS, qualitative researchers tend to examine people's own words, narratives, or representations of their experiences. For the study of embodiment, these methods carry inherent limitations because people may have only partial awareness of how they are informed by their bodies. Christopher Lueg (2014) and Patrick Keilty (2016) have begun to introduce a psychologically-informed exploration of embodiment to IS. As Lueg (2014) observes, for IS researchers,

> One of the challenges that come with recognizing the importance of embodiment is acknowledging that popular data collection methods including questionnaires, interviews and 'thinking aloud' sessions offer limited insights into what information a subject fails to notice (and the reasons for not noticing), unless there is considerable additional effort on behalf of the researcher to complement those data collection methods with ethnographic methods, such as participant observation. (p. 570)

The methods Lueg describes are the methods so far employed in IS studies that consider embodiment, including constructivist grounded theory (Lloyd, 2007, 2009), observation (Lloyd, 2009), interviews (Lloyd, 2007, 2009; Olsson, 2010; Veinot, 2007), and thematic document analysis (Veinot, 2007). Additionally, while these studies are original and important, the researchers do not define embodiment, even as it emerges as a finding. Is embodiment best understood as an aspect of practice, or as an internal phenomenon that occurs as people observe, think, feel, and act? This thesis argues, and demonstrates, that information practices must be understood as embodied in multiple ways, reflecting diverse conceptions of embodiment. This thesis also illustrates the benefits of continuing to develop theories of embodied information practices, which will in turn inform future theory development in the field.

1.5 Research purpose and questions

This study was designed to contribute to understanding around how people navigate their daily food lives, by documenting and articulating their information practices, with a particular focus on embodied experiences. The research questions explored in this study are:

1. How do people feed themselves and their families or friends?
    1.1. How do people describe the information practices they undertake in this process?
    1.2. How do people experience embodied information and knowledge as part of their everyday information practices?
2. How do people construct and sense the feeling of being informed or uninformed during the process of feeding themselves and those in their care?
    2.1. How do people describe the experience of feeling informed or uninformed during this process?
    2.2. Why do people adopt certain information sources and practices but not others?

These questions are addressed in depth throughout Chapter 4. I also summarise how the study speaks to these questions in Chapter 5, and explore areas of potential future research given the results of this study.

1.6 Research design

This qualitative study documents and describes the information practices of participants as they go about their ordinary food-related activities. The study was designed and conducted from a social constructionist, interpretive perspective. My data collection employed multiple ethnographic techniques with evidence drawn from multiple sources of data. The research methods included semi-structured interviews, resulting in voice recordings and photographs; video tours where I engaged in food-related activities alongside the participants; and, written field notes. Informed by Sarah Pink's sensory ethnography (2015), I paid particular attention to the embodied, multisensory, sometimes tacit, aspects of people's experiences. Data were examined iteratively using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) to build an understanding of food-related information practices and the role of the body within them.

The main criterion for invitation to participate in the study was participants' responsibility for feeding themselves and their families or friends, no matter what form these activities take. For example, people could be included if they bought their groceries at a discount supermarket, if they shopped at a farmers' market, or if they sustained themselves off their own land. As this research focuses on everyday practices, rather than a particular population or lifestyle group, all of these potential participants were eligible and included. This study was conducted on the Canadian prairies, and included participants from both a major urban centre and a rural hamlet. I intentionally recruited participants who differed from one another in a variety of ways, in order to build toward a qualitative design that embraced the principle of maximum variation sampling. Detailed discussion of study design appears in Chapter 3.

1.7 Terms and concepts used in this study

This thesis largely uses the terminology of information science. As such, it will come as no surprise that "information" is in continual use here. The definition of "information" I employ is Floridi's "general definition of information," in which information is understood as well-defined and meaningful data (2010). Floridi's concept of "data," in turn, defines data as differences. In doing so, he offers a definition of data that "matches our intuitions about them that are revealed by general uses of the word in IS practice" (Dinneen & Brauner, 2015, p. 384). Data that are well-formed and meaningful are apprehensible as parts of a language, or further, of any syntactical system. This definition is well-suited to this study because there is a need for an expansive understanding of the many forms of food information that are meaningful to people. A familiar example of food information would be a book such as *Food Justice* (Gottleib & Joshi, 2010), which participant Rachel[1] cites as central to her ethical approach to food (see Chapter 4, Figure 13). This book contains information in the form of words that have meaning in relation to one another and as part of the syntactic system that is the English language.

However, this study also documents sensory experiences, and these can also be understood as data. Participant Tanya, for example, recounts her experiments with gluten-free pasta, which can consist of corn, quinoa, rice, or other grains (see Chapter 4, Section 4.2.3). She describes the varying textures of gluten-free pasta in a way that demonstrates that texture (a feeling in the mouth of pasta being crunchy, for example) can be well-formed, meaningful data. The texture is meaningful in relation to Tanya's existing knowledge of pasta and the difference between how it tastes and how it "should taste" to her. In this study, food knowledge, gained through informative experiences, can be understood as a syntactic system through which participants determine meaning from the chemical and physical properties of food, which we interpret through our senses.

[1] Participants chose whether or not to be anonymised in this study. Some chose to be anonymised, and some did not. Please see Chapter 3 for a discussion of the ethics and procedure around this, and Appendix A for participant descriptions, including whether or not each participant is included with a pseudonym.

Readers from outside information science may be less accustomed to thinking about knowledge and experience in terms of information and data. Floridi's general definition of information is important here because it enables me to draw connections between different forms of information, such as the textual and the embodied, within people's practices. By better understanding these connections, we gain a more complete sense of people's complex navigation of all the information they encounter in daily life.

This study also employs the vocabulary of the information science sub-field concerned with information behaviour/information practices. Core terms in this vocabulary include "information needs," "information seeking," and "information use." I generally follow the senses outlined by Case and Given (2016) in my use of these terms. First, an "information need" is "a recognition that your knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal that you have" (p. 6). Indeed, an information need is a subjective perception that information is necessary or desirable. It does not necessarily emerge from a deficiency of knowledge, or any inadequacy on the part of someone with an information need. Second, "information seeking" is "a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in your knowledge" (p. 6). The element of conscious effort is central to the concept of information seeking. Information behaviour/practices researchers refer to forms of unintentional information experience with other terms, such as "serendipity," "information encountering," and "passive attention." Third, "information use" refers to "what you do with the information" (p. 6). This is an expansive term that includes all potential applications of information, regardless of context. It includes frequently-studied uses, such as incorporating information into decision-making and research, as well as less frequently-studied uses, such as withholding information (ie. keeping a secret).

More particularly, this study focuses on the concept of "information practices." "Practices" can be concisely understood at the outset as "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human action (or activities), centrally organized around shared understanding" (Savolainen, 2008, p. 24). Thus, the term "information practice" carries the conviction that people's interactions with information are social and embodied. Information practices are

activities and processes including seeking, creating, choosing, using, sharing, and managing information that are understood as inherently integrated with the social and cultural contexts where they occur (Savolainen, 2008), and also as nexuses of intertwining cognitive and emotional experiences, know-how, bodily routines, and interactions with the physical world (Reckwitz, 2002). While I have not adopted Cox's proposed terminology of "information in social practice" rather than "information practice," I do agree that information is ubiquitous to practices, as he explains:

> Information activities are woven through all social practices, and this is even more evident today through ubiquitous access to information resources through the internet. Thus we need to look at the information aspect of all social practices. Escaping a narrow preoccupation with goal-oriented information seeking, we need to first ask within any practice what, for social actors, constitutes information, and then how do they find, use, create and share it. (2012, p. 185)

This study takes up the same process. It relies on participants to determine what constitutes information for them, within their practices. I also use the term "food practices" throughout, which refers to food-centred practices such as cooking, eating, and feeding other people.

Because this thesis has a particular interest in embodied information practices, this concept is worth defining as well. Embodied information practices are socially-situated informational activities and processes that distinctly rely upon bodily routines, sensory experiences, and physical interactions with the world. It is the focus on information that distinguishes embodied information practices from related concepts, such as "sensory embodied knowing" and "sensory knowledge" (Pink, 2015, p. 38). In unpacking these ethnographic concepts, Pink (2015) discusses researchers' interest in how sensory knowledge is shared as an interest in "transmission," "flow," or "learning" (p. 38-39). This study frames that which is transmitted, that which flows and is learned, as information. This framing does not discount the existence of knowledge at all; rather, it distinguishes between information and knowledge in order to enable examination of that which is shared, used, and interpreted (information) as distinct from knowledge. This framing matters because it enables a focus on

what participants consider to be information, and how they consciously rely upon information sources, including their bodies.

Terminology around embodied experience is understandably diverse, and reflects varying theoretical concerns and disciplinary vocabularies (Cox, 2018). Information science's current and growing interest in embodied information practices reflects the discipline's evolution, as Cox observes:

> This [turn toward embodiment] is not altogether surprising given IS's starting point in the study of library users and the information behavior of academics and scientists and its deep engagement with the study of the supposedly disembodied "virtual" experiences of the internet. But as we enter a postdigital world, the timing for a reconsideration in IS may be right. As the digital comes to be ubiquitously woven into the fabric of the everyday material and embodied world, the value and meaning of an exclusive focus on the purely digital collapses. Everyday information gathering and use has become more central to IS. (Cox, 2018, p. 224)

In information science, our focus is on the nature of information and how it is experienced by people. This perspective represents a distinct contribution to discourses not only about information, but also about knowledge and how it is shared.

Finally, this study focuses on "how people feed themselves and their families or friends." Here, "families or friends" simply refers to participants' inner social circles. Who constitutes a participant's inner social circle is up to each participant. This study also uses relatively broad expressions such as "food information," and "food-related," as in "food-related activities." This language indicates that all information and activities are potentially of interest, so long as they relate to food in some way as suggested or determined by participants. This is not a study of gardening, in particular, or baking, or cooking. Rather, this study examines people's self-determined food-related activities, conceived broadly, and the information practices they enact in the process.

1.8 Significance of this study

This study contributes new knowledge relevant to a variety of areas, including IS. In IS, this study is part of the growing body of knowledge about information in everyday life circumstances. It contributes insights on little-examined issues, such as the role of the human body in relation to information practices. This study's results may also inform the future practices of information professionals, by increasing their understanding of how people inform themselves in everyday life. This may affect library programming, for example, such as the classes many librarians offer to help people learn how to find and evaluate nutrition or other health-related information. Such information professionals can use this study to enrich their already considerable knowledge of how people use information to navigate life. This can affect how public librarians design learning opportunities that reflect people's concerns, while academic librarians can develop richer learning opportunities that connect classroom time with postsecondary students' everyday challenges and pastimes.

Dieticians and other health practitioners have large bodies of research at their fingertips; however, this study, focusing on information practices, contributes a perspective that is not explored in depth in the health disciplines, particularly in relation to everyday life practices (rather than more momentous circumstances such as coping with a diagnosis). By better understanding people's information practices, dieticians and other health practitioners can better intervene to support people in making healthy choices, through critical evaluation of health information and increased resourcefulness. For example, today, celebrities such as Gwyneth Paltrow are extremely influential when they share health information, including food-related advice (Belluz, 2015). As health practitioners continue to consider how to respond to celebrity information, this study will offer insights into how people juggle the influences that surround them.

Policymakers working on public health and development issues will also find relevant insights within this study. It uses an information practices approach that recognises and documents the social aspects of people's everyday activities. This means it has particular relevance to policymakers responding to social phenomena such as food deserts within large

cities, the growth in popularity of eating away from home, and the role of emerging technologies in people's food choices. By better understanding how individual people navigate such phenomena, policymakers can better develop responsive programs, regulations, and messages to promote health. Initiatives such as the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (2015) consistently emphasise accessible high-quality information as a cornerstone for improving maternal and child health and combating disease and hunger. This study supports these goals by contributing further understanding of people's relationships with information as well as the social and embodied aspects of how information is created and shared. The implications of this study's findings for various practitioners and policy-makers are discussed further in Chapter 5.

1.9 Structure of the thesis

In this chapter, I have introduced the main concerns, overall purpose, and key details of this study. I have also begun contextualising it within information science and in relation to the broader context of food and food studies. Chapter 2 reviews literature in several areas that have informed the development of this study and its findings. I review literature around food within information science, multiple approaches to embodiment, and information in everyday life, all with the purpose of illustrating the need and space for this interpretive, exploratory study. This is the initial scholarly context for the study. I also review areas of literature that emerged as necessary during analysis, as befits a constructivist grounded theory approach. These areas include literature around the concept of trial and error, and secrecy and information withholding. These literatures enable this study's emergent themes to be better understood and properly contextualised.

Chapter 3 details the study design. In it, I clarify the epistemological and theoretical workings of the study, as well as the methods I employed and the resulting forms of data. I cover research ethics and the details of implementation, data collection, and analysis. In this chapter I also discuss the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 offers the thematic findings and a discussion of them. This chapter covers the four broad areas of information practice found in this study: *Trial and error: simple label, complex practice; Never completely alone: constant social connection; What's right and good: exercising moral reasoning and judgement;* and *Informing bod(ies): identifying bodily meanings*. In this chapter, I also introduce and discuss the overarching theoretical concept emerging from this study, embodied mutual constitution, as a new contribution to information practices theory. I also include a section of findings related to the research experience itself, and the practical and theoretical implications of using ethnographic techniques such as video tours in qualitative information research.

In Chapter 5 I conclude the thesis, beginning with a summary of how the research has spoken to the research questions that motivated it. I discuss implications of this research for information science, for practitioners such as information and health professionals, and for society. I suggest directions for future research, and connect this research to our present pandemic moment, whose influences will be long-lasting, including on our food lives and larger food systems.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the research in information science (IS) that most directly influenced the development of this study, as well as research that informed the study's emergent analytic process. A continual approach to reviewing the literature is common practice in grounded theory studies, where there is a commitment to analysing, contextualising, and theorising themes as they emerge. This necessitates multiple phases of literature reviewing, including an "*ongoing literature review* which takes place during the data collection and [...] is heavily informed by the raw data (e.g., qualitative interview data) which the researcher gathers" (Thornberg & Dunne, 2019, p. 211). The approach taken in this study, of incorporating focused literature reviewing conducted during analysis, perhaps most closely resembles the "informed grounded theory" approach advocated by education researcher Robert Thornberg (2011). Thornberg argues for a role for literature reviewing within grounded theory studies, in which "researchers use the literature as a possible source of inspiration, ideas, 'aha!' experiences, creative associations, critical reflections, and multiple lenses" (p. 249). I have relied on existing literature throughout the study. There has been a need for sufficient background knowledge in order to design a worthwhile study, and there has also been a need for additional contextualisation throughout analysis.

I reviewed three primary bodies of literature to inform the design of this study. First in this chapter is a review of the IS literature on food, including research that would be at home under the large transdisciplinary umbrella of food studies. Next is a review of the literature on information in everyday life, with a focus on practices. Third is a review of the IS literature around embodiment, a concept and object of analysis that is appearing with increasing frequency, particularly in research on people's information behaviours and practices.

The analysis process required that I review literature in additional areas, so that I might make sense of emergent findings and discuss them in light of existing knowledge. These areas are also covered in this chapter, although their full relevance will likely become

more clear to readers when placed alongside corresponding findings in Chapter 4. The first of these sections is a review of literature on the concept of "trial and error," a theoretical framework that originally explained learning through simple, rote repetition, but which this study finds is a complex, meaningful area of information practice. The second section covers IS research addressing information practices of secrecy and information-withholding. Several participants describe withholding information and/or having information withheld from them. Through focused examination of all these areas, including important literature from outside IS as necessary, this review chapter establishes the gap in understanding addressed by this study, and it illuminates the abundance of existing opportunities to better understand both everyday information practices and also significant concepts that are newer to IS.

2.1 Food and information

Research falling under "food studies" is a large transdisciplinary body of work featuring contributions from anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, the arts, and numerous health and science disciplines. It would not be feasible to comprehensively review all of this work. As the purpose of this thesis is to deepen understanding of food-related information experiences, this section focuses on the food literature within IS. This section also reviews selected literature from other disciplines that explore relevant IS concepts such as information needs, seeking, and use.

Despite playing such a significant role in human experience, food has not yet received a great deal of attention within IS. Food is simultaneously quotidian and immensely important, connecting as it does with every part of life, including health, security, knowledge, heritage, emotion, leisure, and work, among others. As this review section illustrates, these connections position food, and people's food information practices, as a site of great potential for meaningful IS inquiry.

At present, Jenna Hartel is one of the leading figures in IS to explore the concept of food. Her doctoral work documents the situated information practices of twenty people who

undertake gourmet cooking at home, as a hobby (2007, 2006). Hartel uses a combination of techniques to perform what she calls a "scientific ethnography," an approach that intentionally reaches back to ethnography's positivist origins, approaching research subjects with a "naturalist sensibility" combined "with equal emphasis on objective measurement of the material world" (2007, p. 58). Pursuing multiple lines of inquiry into people's information activities as well as their surroundings, Hartel crafts a cyclical model of the nine stages of an "episode" of gourmet cooking at home among her participants in Boston and Los Angeles: exploring, planning, provisioning, prepping, assembling, cooking, serving, eating, and evaluating (2007, p. 104; 2006; n.p.).

Hartel's work is foundational to the present study for several reasons. First, Hartel, along with Jarkko Kari, advocates for IS researchers to study "pleasurable or profound phenomena, experiences, or activities that transcend the daily grind" (Kari & Hartel 2007, p. 1131). Within the expanding sphere of everyday-life information research, studies of people's information practices in situations that involve a "problem" to be solved, such as illness, have left other areas of experience overlooked. "Beyond the spotlight of mainstream research," argue Hartel and Kari, "information processes often seem different and there may be significant dimensions of information phenomena that have been overlooked" (p. 1131). Hartel and Kari's argument highlights that studying everyday information practices, as this study does, carries potential for exploration of aspects of human experience that are untouched by IS research to date.

Hartel herself does not closely examine embodiment issues in her dissertation; however, she finds that her participants have divergent corporeal experiences during the cooking process. Some gourmets taste as they cook, with tasting framed as a technical skill, while others place their trust in the recipe and report not tasting the dishes they prepare (2007, pp. 88, 171-172). Hartel focuses largely on material arrangements and culinary information sources, but details such as these around taste suggest that there is more to understand about the sensory and embodied aspects of people's food-related information practices.

There is additional IS work that focuses on food-related experiences. Recent examples include Ocepek (2016a) on grocery shoppers' information behaviour, which is discussed at multiple points in this study. Ocepek brought multiple theoretical perspectives to the experiences of grocery shoppers. One of her major findings is that shoppers perceive themselves as having different personas, such as being nurturing, or being creative. These self-perceptions significantly influence how people think about and describe their shopping experiences. O'Brien, Greyson, Chabot, and Shoveller (2018) study young parents' (parents ages 15-24) experiences of feeding their children, including various forms of feeding such as breastfeeding and introducing solid food. They find that young parents often learn about feeding in atmospheres that can be described as "heavily surveilled" (p. 608). Young parents are often encouraged to receive information more passively, in the form of advice, rather than actively seek it out for themselves.

Some other food-related IS research exhibits the characteristics critiqued by Hartel and others, in that it often focuses on intentional, problem-solving information seeking. For example, Bar-Ilan and Shalom (2016) identify information sources that women seek out during weight management over time, including information about calories and nutrition, such as the food pyramid; and Szwajcer et al. (2005, 2008) find that women who are pregnant seek nutritional information more than women who are not yet pregnant but are trying to conceive. On the level of food policy, Renwick (2019) interviews and surveys food security decision-makers Trinidad and Tobago, Belize, and Barbados, determining that electronic information sources are used frequently, with email being used daily, and social media being widely distrusted.

In a study of information need, seeking, and use, Lioutas (2014) frames a review of "food consumer information behavior," finding a predominance of quantitative studies; the author notes more "qualitative studies and experiments are expected to render a more accurate and complete portrayal," particularly into "how a consumer processes, refines, and evaluates the information before adopting specific behaviors toward food products" (p. 95). Within IS, food-related research often focuses on technological mediation and affordances.

For example, Savolainen (2011) finds that "slimming blogs" are primarily used for conversational information sharing rather than information seeking. Cornelisse-Vermaat et al. (2008) present food industry professionals, representatives from regulatory bodies, and representatives of food allergy patient groups with numerous high-tech and low-tech approaches to communicating food allergen information, finding strong support for clear and standardised labelling. Wahlich, Gardner, and McGowan (2013) present similar findings in a qualitative study of nutritional information use among young British women. Gomez-Lopez et al. (2017) overlay multiple data types, including business listings, geographical information, and Yelp, a site that hosts user-contributed business reviews, in order to identify sources of healthy food within low-income urban neighbourhoods. Studies such as these are increasing our understanding of food-related information practices within IS, while emphasising technologically-mediated aspects of these practices.

Beyond studies focused on technological affordances, food is also acknowledged in studies such as Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, and Qayyum (2013), who identify food as one of the basic needs that drives refugees' engagements with new information landscapes. And McTavish's (2015) study of people's perceptions of healthy and unhealthy food in order to illustrate the value of better understanding people's "everyday life classification practices" (p. 972) notes that, while experts exhibit a high degree of consensus around what food is healthy, such consensus is not shared among laypersons who claim varying food-related identities such as vegan or locavore.

Food presents an immense range of opportunities for further study within IS. This review illustrates that there remains a need for studies that centre on participants' food information practices in a holistic, participant-centred fashion. This parallels the need for inquiry into people's information practices that attends to embodied, and potentially more tacit, aspects.

2.2 Information in everyday life

The earliest research into people's information behaviour and practices (IB/IP) outside the workplace predates the "ELIS" acronym, meaning "everyday life information seeking," that is in common circulation among scholars today. Reijo Savolainen (1995) points out that American studies of "nonwork information seeking" and "citizen information seeking" date back at least to the 1970s (p. 259). However, writing in 1995, Savolainen observes that everyday life remains a "little cultivated area of information-seeking studies" (p. 260). The amount of research documenting, analysing, and theorising people's information experiences in everyday life has grown steadily over the past 25+ years. Recently, Ocepek (2017) has delineated four broad and promising areas of exploration for IB/IP researchers, within the realm of the everyday. She argues that focusing on the everyday enables fresh exploration of expertise, non-traditional forms of information, variety in information practices, and use of robust, relatively new methods such as variations on ethnography. This study meets all four of Ocepek's calls. It resides within ELIS research while contributing to its knowledge base and helping it continue to advance.

This section selectively reviews the everyday-life IS literature in order to illuminate two aspects of this study: how it relates to prior findings, and how it addresses, with a sensory ethnographic approach new to IS, one of the elements of everyday life: food. Researchers of everyday life often integrate and apply theories and concepts from cognate social science disciplines, and this study furthers this practice.

While Savolainen is closely associated with ELIS, he is not the sole pioneer of studies of information in everyday life, as he details in his own work (1995). Another source of historical perspective on ELIS is Dervin and Nilan's influential review (1986) of information needs and uses research. Dervin and Nilan amplify a growing "rallying cry for research on information needs and uses" (p. 6). Although ELIS is not their primary focus, Dervin and Nilan discuss the need for greater focus on everyday life contexts in their call for a shift toward "alternative" paradigms that would address already-longstanding concerns with the "conceptual impoverishment in the information needs and uses literature" (p. 4). They assert that in order to "focus on the users themselves," researchers need to reorient both research

and practice away from the traditional IS focus on "objective" information systems and atomistic methodologies (p. 7). Dervin and Nilan explicate and recommend several crucial priorities that have been carried forward by researchers to this day, and that underpin this study. These priorities include recognising subjective information, observing user behaviour, contending with context, characterising information experiences holistically, uncovering users' internal experiences, and employing inductive, qualitative approaches to research (pp. 12-16). The authors identify bodies of scholarship that exemplify these emerging priorities, including Dervin's own sense-making research, which examines "how people make sense of their worlds and how they use information and other resources in the process" and which "has been used to describe information needs and uses of people in diverse contexts – e.g. blood donors, cancer patients, immigrants, developmentally disabled adults, library users, computer software users, and children using television" (p. 20). The sense-making approach uses a cognitivist framing of information needs, positioning them as "cognitive gaps," similar to Belkin's Anomalous States of Knowledge model (1980). The present study does not apply such a framing, as it does not centre on gaps as the core presumed motivation for people's information practices. The idea of cognitive gaps is less congruent with a practices perspective that attempts to treat motivation more broadly. Still, Dervin and Nilan's advocacy for a "user turn" in IS is foundational for this study, as it is for studies of information in everyday life, generally.

Savolainen (1995, 2004, 2008, 2009a, 2009b) drew on Dervin's sense-making in his early ELIS work. Savolainen (1995) broadly defines everyday-life information seeking as "the acquisition of various (both cognitive and expressive) elements which people employ to orient themselves in daily life or to solve problems not directly connected with the performance of occupational tasks" (p. 266-267). He frames ELIS in terms of "mastery" and "way of life"; that is, he argues that people's drive to lead meaningful, orderly lives is a central imperative for seeking and using information in everyday life (1995). He is noted for his commitment to exploring the breadth of everyday life. His later work demonstrates this commitment, with contexts ranging from homebuying (2011) to the use of blogs for weight

loss (2009b). This work was critical to shifting the field's focus from one that was focused primarily on work and/or school-related contexts, to one that embraced personal, daily experiences. As such, Savolainen's work helped to created space for the present study in information science.

Elfreda Chatman's research also influenced Savolainen (2009a). Her ethnographic research not only documents but also theorises the information practices of people who are marginalised in American society, such as low-income women, janitorial workers, and female prison inmates (1985, 1991, 1996, 1999; Thompson, 2009). Chatman's focus is not constrained to settings such as the workplace, even when she studies workers, such as janitors (1990). Chatman finds that living life in poverty, or in prison, shapes information practices in ways that are distinct from more bourgeois circumstances. For example, she finds that people who are information poor are cautious by necessity. They use deception and secrecy to protect themselves, in order to avoid risk from untrusted sources of information, and in order to avoid revealing their struggles to outsiders (1996, p. 197-198). This self-protection imperative was further confirmed in Chatman's study of women in a maximum-security prison, where she further observes the influence of social norms on the circulation of information. People who live "life in the round," such as women living in prison, "will not search for information if there is no need to do so" (1999, p. 214). Chatman's body of work demonstrates that people's circumstances must be examined holistically if their information practices are to be understood. Her work supports a key assumption underpinning this study: that by intentionally studying a heterogeneous group of participants, research can document a wider variety of practices and experiences than would be captured through a study of people living similar lives.

Other influential work arriving early in the scholarship of ELIS provides evidence for understandings taken as given in this study. For example, the work of Chatman and Savolainen establishes that people's everyday-life practices are inextricable from their personal and social circumstances. People tend to reach out to family members and friends they trust for information, first. This is reaffirmed by McKenzie's (2003) model of

information practices, drawn from a study of women pregnant with twins; Spink and Cole's (2001) study of African American people in low-income households; and Agosto and Hughes-Hassel's (2005) study of urban teens. McKenzie uses social constructionist discourse analysis to identify facets of information practices that have since received more attention in LIS, such as serendipity and "non-directed monitoring," such as when a person overhears information being shared by other people (2003, p. 34). Given's (2002) work with mature undergraduate students corroborates others, including Savolainen (1995), in documenting how people's everyday-life information practices are intertwined with their work or school information practices.

With studies of everyday life potentially encompassing all aspects of human information practices outside work or school, it is not surprising that researchers' range of inquiry continues to expand. There are two significant, but different, types of experiences that illustrate this increasingly broad and diverse reach: 1) there is a growing body of scholarship around personal life crises; and, 2) there is a growing body of scholarship around leisure and pleasure in people's lives. People's food-related experiences may fall into either or both of groups, so it is appropriate to provide some examples of these two growing points of focus in the IS research.

Finn, Westbrook, Chen, and Mensah (2011) study the information experiences of people involved with intimate partner violence (IPV), including survivors, abusers, and police. They analyse the information that members of law enforcement provide when handling IPV, and how their "authoritative" approach to controlling information may perpetuate abusers' disenfranchisement of victims (p. 951). These authors also developed a typology of questions and answers about IPV that people have discussed online. They find that questions and answers fall into four categories: advice ("what should I do?"), binary ("will I go to jail?"), explanation ("why did they let him out?"), and fact ("how long does a domestic violence charge stay on record?"). Additionally, they identify a fifth category, encouragement ("stop being a victim"), that appears among answers but not among questions (p. 608). The work of Given, Willson, Albrecht, and Scott (2016) on parents'

information behaviours in emergency departments partially reflects Finn, Westbrook, Chen, and Mensah's typology. For example, while acknowledging the challenges of studying IB/IP during a crisis, they find that parents need both medical facts and also explanatory information, such as guidance on how to speak with their children about the situation (2016). Other examples include studies of unemployment (Perttilä & Ek, 2010), the 2017 Manchester bombing (Mirbabaie & Marx, 2020), Hurricane Sandy (Lopatovska & Smiley, 2014), the refugee resettlement process (Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013), and even the COVID-19 pandemic (Ke, Du, & Ji, 2021; Lloyd & Hicks, 2021). These types of studies of crisis situations embed people's information needs and practices around basic needs for safety, security, connection, and health, and for this reason they are foundational for this study of another basic need, food.

Studies of leisure situations, such as athletics, are also appearing more frequently within IS. These studies often cite Kari and Hartel's call for IS researchers to study information in the context of the "pleasurable and profound," such as activities that are internally motivated, profound, positive, meaningful, and pleasant (2007, p. 1134-1135). The field now has studies on hobby collecting (Lee & Trace, 2009), queering fanfiction (Floegel, 2020), and online gaming (Harviainen & Rapp, 2018), to name just a few.

One methodological distinction between many of the "leisure and pleasure" studies and the crisis literature is that many of the former now also embed researchers directly as research instruments, research subjects, or both. Gorichanaz uses "self-interviews and freeform narratives" to study his ultramarathon running, an approach he characterises as "autophenomenography" (2015) and "auto-hermeneutics" (2017a). Harviainen (2014) draws on two decades of ethnographic work as a member of a sadomasochist group in order to identify the corporeal information literacies within that community of practice. Robinson and Yerbury (2015) also draw on insider experiences for their study of Australian historical re-enactors' information practices. These works were influential in the design of the present research, particularly related to the use of video tours, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Embodied, emplaced, multisensory information and knowledge are receiving growing attention in IS studies of everyday life information practices. A number of studies examine bodily experiences, such as athletic experience (Gorichanaz 2015), but there are many more personal, vulnerable bodily experiences that have not been examined in LIS. These experiences expand and complicate our understanding of everyday-life information practices. For example, Keilty and Leazer (2014) theorise people's experiences browsing online pornography; this is significant here because they argue that seeking out pornography is a type of information seeking that may drive people to the anonymity of the internet rather than to people they know. This contrasts with previous findings that people often prefer to meet their information needs socially, with trusted friends and family members, demonstrating that the typical trend of relying on close contacts may not extend to experiences that are private, emotionally-laden, taboo, or rarely verbalised. Studying people's experiences around food sheds light not only on social information practices, but also on tacit, rarely verbalised information practices and what makes them meaningful to people. People have information practices that they may have never drawn their attention to or attempted to verbalise before. There is great potential for IS research on these kinds of information practices. In this way, this study will contribute empirically to what Gorichanaz (2017b) calls "minting the obverse": building IS research in basic, humanist directions.

2.3 Embodiment

There is no straightforward consensus on the definition of embodiment (Violi, 2008, p. 53), but the concept generally refers to "the fundamental and integral connection between the mind and body" (Leigh, 2006, p. 1). By extension, in any discussion of embodiment, it is necessary to consider how the concepts of "mind" and "body" are socially constructed. As this section discusses, current embodiment scholarship contradicts constructions of the mind and body as entirely separate entities, a predominant perspective known as Cartesian dualism. As semiotician Violi (2008) observes, the "body is often taken as a 'natural' concept, and one which does not need any further elaboration. […] But this is not the case. The body

is not a self evident concept, but the result of the various discourses that construct it" (p. 54). This is a key understanding for IS researchers who engage with embodiment.

The concept of embodiment holds much potential to enrich how we go about understanding people's experiences with information. Calls for IS research to address embodiment are becoming increasingly abundant, particularly among researchers who have published recent studies of people's information behaviour and practices (e.g., Cox, Griffin, & Hartel, 2017; Keilty & Leazer, 2014; Leug, 2015; Lloyd, 2010; Olsson, 2009; Olsson & Lloyd, 2017). While embodiment, described variously using terms such as "embodied information," "embodied knowledge," and "corporeal information," is receiving growing attention within the IS literature, there has rarely been a close, comprehensive characterisation of the concept published in our field. Cox (2018) and Bates (2018) are among the few examples. As I do in this thesis, Cox (2018) incorporates discussion of phenomenology, practice theory, embodied cognition, and sensory approaches in disciplines such as anthropology. Bates (2018) casts an even wider net, reaching into disciplines such as biology. Such reviews are important, because embodiment has been theorised quite differently across disciplines. Despite this, within the IS embodiment literature, the influence of these varying disciplinary traditions, while often evident, is rarely explicated. This is demonstrated by a tendency for researchers to define embodiment in an ad-hoc fashion (or not at all), without necessarily contributing to a generative conversation about how IS researchers and practitioners can and should turn their attention toward the body.

This section explicates embodiment for the purposes of this study. It does so by exploring the concept as it has emerged in two sometimes intertwining disciplines, psychology and philosophy, within which embodiment has predominantly been examined. Today, the influence of both disciplines is evident in IS researchers' applications and investigations of embodiment. In order to proceed with this study, one of whose aims is to encourage the embodiment turn in IS, it has been necessary to clarify the differences between these antecedents as researchers have begun to circulate them within IS.

2.3.1 Embodied cognition

In psychology, decades of research have created a basis for the assertion that cognition—including learning, memory, decision-making, emotion, and other issues of interest to IS research—is not solely the domain of the brain, with the body acting mechanistically on the brain's commands (Glenberg, 2015; Lueg, 2014; Niedenthal, Barsalou, Winkielman, Krauth-Gruber, & Ric, 2005). Rather, cognition can be understood as being embodied, with perception, action, and the senses (ie., the sensorimotor system) all contributing to the process. Embodied cognition posits that the "mind" as a discrete phenomenon, separate from "the body," does not exist. Debate continues within psychology (Mahon, 2015), but there is a growing base of empirical evidence for embodied cognition, and some IS researchers have begun to work with the concept in our discipline (Lueg, 2015, 2014; Keity, 2016; Keilty & Leazer, 2014; Neill, 1990). Embodied cognition is reviewed here to illustrate that while some psychologists, particularly in the mid-twentieth century, have explored whether human thought can be understood as divorced from the body, a leading view today is that cognition is embodied in some ways. During the twentieth century, psychology's treatment of embodiment diverged from, and then rejoined, the phenomenological philosophical tradition, which I review in the next section. Psychology's advancing insight into embodied cognition is fuelled by technological advances that provide new insights into bodily processes (Glenberg, 2015). Embodiment's trajectory in psychology illustrates for IS, another traditionally "disembodied" discipline, that attempting to isolate cognition as separate from the body is not generally supported by current evidence.

In the middle of the twentieth century, some psychologists considered that it might be possible for human thought to occur in a disembodied fashion. Glenberg (2015) identifies several coexisting ideas that influenced psychologists such as Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968), Newell and Simon (1976), and Kintsch (1988) to pursue theories based on the assumption that cognition can occur independent of inputs from the world via the sensorimotor system. First, Glenberg (2015) highlights our "cherished" human exceptionalism: the belief that "our thinking is special" (p. 165), and that our aptitude for conceptual and abstract thinking is

part of what distinguishes humans from other animals. Glenberg also cites psychologists' mid-century fatigue with behaviourism, and, with the ascendancy of new technology, computer scientists' demonstration that computation, an activity reminiscent of cognition, can occur in a seemingly closed system (p. 165).

All of these factors influence the rise of systems such as Newell and Simon's (1976) Physical Symbol System Hypothesis (PSSH). The PSSH posits that intelligence resides in the computation of symbolic patterns and processes. Lecturing on the PSSH twenty years into its development, Newell and Simon argue that "information processing theory," by which they mean modelling human thought after mechanised information processing, "is the leading contemporary point of view in cognitive psychology. Especially in the areas of problem solving, concept attainment, and long-term memory, symbol manipulation models now dominate the scene" (p. 119). Newell and Simon theorise cognition as the manipulation of symbols within a closed system, and fluidly equate artificial and human intelligence.

Over the second half of the twentieth century, researchers began to find countervailing evidence to closed-system models such as the PSSH. By adopting new technologies such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), psychologists have been able to gain new insights into the body's role in cognition. There are numerous compelling experimental examples, including some of particular interest to IS. For example, Glenberg and Kaschak (2002) describe the action-sentence compatibility effect. When people attempt to complete an action, such as moving a pencil away from them across a table, while simultaneously listening to a sentence, they complete the action more quickly when the information in the sentence corresponds to the action than when it conflicts with the action. Kontra, Lyons, Fischer, and Beilock (2015) find that people learning about abstract concepts such as torque or momentum learn and understand best when, as part of the learning experience, they feel these forces with their bodies.

Within IS, Keilty (2012; 2016), Keilty and Leazer (2014), and Lueg (2015; 2014), building on precedents such as Neill (1990), draw from embodied cognition in their work. Lueg's recent work brings embodied cognition into conversation with IS research (2014,

2015). He critiques IS research's tendency to gloss over differences among people's bodies, differences that must affect their information practices. This glossing over, Lueg (2015) argues, is visible in three observable, recurring IS research "fallacies": that "every body is the same," that "the world looks the same to everyone," and that "your world is the same as mine" (pp. 2705-2706). How is it possible, Lueg asks, for IS researchers to "make statements about information behavior on the level of groups and even professions," unless they assume that people's bodies are "similar enough to treat them as if they were the same" (p. 2705)? Lueg explains unavoidable cognitive biases affecting perception, such as change blindness and inattention bias, and physiological impacts on cognition, illustrated by the perils of grocery shopping while hungry. With these examples, he illuminates the challenges of analysing people's information practices as either individual activities or as social practices (p. 2705-2706). However, Lueg argues an embodied information practices perspective is not incompatible with, and can enhance, both individual and social perspectives on information practices (p.2707). In his 2014 paper, Lueg identifies points of connection between human perception research and IB/IP research. He examines IS concepts such as information overload, and information seeking, searching, and use, in light of what is known about what people do and do not perceive, given their circumstances. By bringing concepts from the study of embodied cognition into conversation with significant IS concepts, Lueg exemplifies how IS theories and models can be enriched when they are brought into contact with theories and models from cognate disciplines.

Keilty and Leazer's (2014) work on online pornography is relevant to this study because these researchers lay theoretical groundwork for the study of information practices driven by emotional and embodied needs and desires. Browsing online pornography and browsing food information have this in common. Like Lueg, Keilty and Leazer problematise IS's history as a predominantly cognitivist discipline, particularly as the concept of "information need" has been conceptualised (Keilty, 2016, p. 64). Models such as Robert Taylor's (1968) four-part question negotiation process and Nicholas Belkin's (1980) theory of anomalous states of knowledge are examples of this historical cognitive leaning. Taylor and

Belkin's widely-cited models characterise information needs as cognitive gaps that people become aware of and then work to ameliorate. As Keilty (2016) observes, even when LIS researchers begin to examine affect substantially, some studies extend the cognitive tradition by positioning affect "as a carry-on component of a more traditionally conceived cognitive task," and the body still remains largely absent from the research (p. 64).

Echoing Hartel's (2007) finding that people often engage with information well beyond immediate satisfaction of their information needs, and Kari and Hartel's (2007) call for IS researchers to study pleasurable and profound human experiences, Keilty and Leazer further the study of emotional, and embodied, information seeking and use, showing how "embodiment and cognition operate concomitantly" (Keilty 2016, p. 65). As a discipline that prioritises exploration of people's online information use, they argue, IS must at some point examine phenomena such as pornography, not just for the sake of studying pornography, but also because "access to pornography may be a significant reason for many to adopt online information communication technologies" (Keilty & Leazer 2014, p. 3). This may also be true of access to information about food, nutrition, cooking, and related traditions in everyday life. While Keilty and Leazer's work is primarily theoretical rather than empirical, as is Lueg's, their work supplies arguments for the sensory ethnographic approach used in this thesis research:

> We cannot accomplish a holistic analysis [...] through a methodology that attends only to conscious experience at the expense of embodied experience. Such is embodiment's centrality to this particular kind of browsing activity. An analysis of our engagements with and activity around online pornography must synthesise cognitive reflection and embodied experience. (Lueg, 2014, p. 4)

This study answers Lueg's call for a synthesis of cognitive reflection and embodied experience empirically, through semi-structured interviews that enable reflection and participant-led video tours that afford insights into embodied experience. These methods are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

2.3.2 Philosophy

Psychologists have begun to empirically establish what philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty have long asserted: that mind and body are not discrete entities, but rather are unavoidably intertwined, or even inseparable. Broadly, this is the perspective that underpins most information science scholarship on embodiment today, stemming in part from Lloyd's influential work on this topic (e.g., 2007, 2009, 2010a). This section reviews relevant recent literature, while also reaching selectively outside the field, and back to the philosophers.

The belief in a clear division between a material "body" and a non-material "mind" is known as Cartesian dualism, after 17th-century mathematician and philosopher René Descartes, he of "Cogito ergo sum" *(I think therefore I am)*. Cartesian dualism is "the identification of the person with the mind and its separation from the body as the mind's unproblematic instrument" (Michel, 2015, p. S41). In other words, dualism asserts that the mind is the place where rational thinking and knowing happen. The body follows the mind mechanistically, as a machine obeys commands. The body is an instrument, and a container, of the mind. As scholars such as sensory anthropologists Classen, Howes, and Synott (1994) have pointed out, Cartesian dualism, intertwined with other social forces, has profoundly influenced the shape of Western science and society. This includes existing normative understandings that assume separation between body and mind.

Anthropologist Alexandra Michel (2015) provides a compelling example of Cartesian dualism as a theory that is evident in real-life practices, particularly, she argues, in today's information- and knowledge-oriented workplaces. She reports on more than a decade of ethnographic research conducted within Wall Street banks. Investment banks, she argues, "are the epitome of the modern knowledge-based organization, which is important to study because it is increasingly prevalent and economically important. [Banks] represent an extreme case of dualism in its valorization of the mind and neglect of the body" (p. S43). Banks powerfully incentivise bankers to "overwork indiscriminately" through "autonomously chosen hard work" (p. S48). Bankers ignore their bodies' needs by working long, stressful,

sedentary hours. As the ethnography enters its fourth year, Michel observes that these work practices are taking their toll, leading bankers to treat their bodies as "a hostile force that undermined the bankers' cherished goals" (p. S55). By the sixth year, bankers are no longer able to ignore their bodies' needs or force them to comply; many began to break down physically (p. S56).

Michel's study is important here because it illustrates that when a particular approach to embodiment is clearly defined and framed as generative, it can provide a compelling lens through which to understand ethnographic data. Michel critiques dualism by exposing the harms it causes people. Annemaree Lloyd (2010b) also describes dualism in this way, noting it "has long influenced theorists in the sciences and humanities and leads to cognitive and rationalist approaches — where corporeal information and embodied knowledge are considered secondary to codified and abstract knowledges" (n.p.). IS researchers who engage with philosophy and practice theory in their empirical embodiment research further establish the inextricability of the body from people's information practices.

Several IS researchers use similar ethnographic techniques, such as interviews and observation, to study people's information practices, amassing findings that establish that people's external contexts (e.g., workplaces) and their information practices are inherently embodied. For example, Lloyd studies firefighters (2007) and trainee ambulance drivers (2009), while Olsson studies theatre workers (2010) and archeologists (2016). Veinot (2007) conducts a case study of the information practices of a hydroelectric vault inspector. These researchers observe workers consciously using their bodies as a source of information and as an informative interface with their surroundings.

Outside workplace settings, Prigoda and McKenzie (2007) observe collaborative physical information-sharing among knitters, and Godbold (2013) documents how kidney patients advocate for themselves in care by learning how to verbalise information from their bodily experiences. Ocepek (2018) identifies how grocery shoppers navigate the richly sensory environment of the supermarket. Huttunen and Kortelainen (2021) provide a compelling portrait of the embodied experiences of transgender people. They write:

> At the early stage of a significant life change, the embodied experiences, such as strong discomfort toward one's body, triggered information seeking. These embodied experiences involved feelings of the body being odd or out of place. Sometimes information needs were caused by embodied feelings starting at the time of puberty, when changes in one's own body caused strong discomfort and even gender dysphoria. (p. 6)

Huttunen and Kortelainen (2021) identify how bodies can be sources of information at the same time as they can be prompts for additional information seeking. As others have also found, people often make sense of embodied experiences in an ongoing way over time, rather than in brief moments of insight where gaps in understanding are filled. The present study documents similar experiences, with participants often drawing conscious attention to physical sensations and using them as information to guide their food and health choices. These findings are discussed in Chapter 4.

Lloyd and Olsson have most persistently called for an embodiment "turn" in IS research. Recently, they argue that "if [information science] is to live up to its aspirational rhetoric of representing the totality of the human relationship with information, then it must do more, both theoretically and empirically, to address areas such as embodied information practices" (Olsson & Lloyd, 2017, n.p.) In her work, Lloyd uses constructivist grounded theory and interchangeably describes embodied information as "information from the corporeal modality," "situated embodied knowledge" (2007, p. 188), "physical information," "sensory information," (2009, p. 405), and "bodily information" (2009, p. 415). Lloyd's analyses rest on Merleau-Ponty's concept of the pre-reflective "lived body" as central to perception, understanding, and culture (Lloyd 2007, p. 189; Merleau-Ponty 1962).

Olsson uses Foucauldian discourse analysis as his lens. Describing issues of embodiment, affect, and intersubjectivity, he connects Foucault to Dervin's sense-making theory (2010, p. 274), and focuses on identifying the information practices used by his participants to make sense of their work and surroundings. Olsson observes theatre workers

undertaking "embodied sense-making" in rehearsal (p. 276) and archaeologists conducting "haptic [touch-based] analysis" such as licking artefacts (2016, p. 43).

While they do not often elaborate on their embodiment terminology in detail, Olsson and Lloyd contribute important insights into the role of embodied information in people's processes of becoming capable professionals and, crucially, the role of embodied information in the social co-construction of professional expertise and practices. In their 2017 paper, Olsson and Lloyd synthesise their research and theorise it using Theodore Schatzki's practice theory, characterising embodied information as "central to understanding practice as a social site, where bodies are viewed as referencing the nature of practice (social site), the performance of work and the demonstration of practical reasoning and know-how" (n.p.). While this observation captures a view of embodiment in relation to practices, it does not proffer a clear definition of embodied information.

Notably absent from the IS embodiment literature is Heidegger, who along with Merleau-Ponty is a highly-cited philosopher on bodily matters. Merleau-Ponty more clearly, or more accessibly, describes the role of the body in human experience. Heidegger's position is more elusive. In examining Heidegger's stance on embodiment, Overgaard (2004) wonders, "why is it that Heidegger dodges the issue of embodiment?" (p. 116). He argues that Heidegger's work does not exhibit a "dodge," or a lack of thought, as others have contended. Rather, Overgaard argues, Heidegger's general avoidance of "the terminology of the body" flows from his inability to reconcile a critique of dualism with any discussion that hives the body off as separate from the mind (p. 118). Overgaard continues:

> It is Heidegger's contention that the terminology of 'body' furthers conceptions of the human being as *composed* of a number of different types of entities; it furthers what we might term an 'analytic' conception of the human being. Notions such as 'body,' 'embodiment,' 'corporeality,' tend to bring other notions such as 'mind,' 'soul,' and 'the mental' with themselves. (p. 124)

In other words, Heidegger's commitment to examining human experience holistically, which is shared by Lloyd, Olsson, and others, leads him to avoid analysing bodily experience as

separate from the rest of experience. In this way, Heidegger predates embodied cognition researchers' contention that mind and body are inseparable.

When they emphasise cognitive information processing and a disembodied framing of information needs, seeking, and use, IS researchers perpetuate dualistic ways of thinking that position the body as the mind's obedient instrument. However, the IS embodiment research reviewed in this section often discusses the body as a tool, as an interface with the world, or as a source of signals interpreted by the mind. In this way, this research illustrates the significant challenge of excising dualism from the study of embodiment in the discipline. As Keilty (2016) argues: "it is important to remember that embodiment is fundamentally part of what it is to be human (we are bodies; we do not have bodies)." (p. 66). This study works to avoid reinforcing the dualistic binary by focusing on practices as the "unit of analysis." Articulating practices involves providing integrated description of bodily experiences such as interactions with surroundings, and intellectual experiences such as thinking, feeling and knowing. As such, this study does not attempt to isolate and focus solely on embodied experiences. This section has illustrated that analysing only cognitive, "mind-based" experiences can be atomistic and lead to insufficient understanding. Attempting to analyse only bodily experiences would also risk being reductive.

This review illustrates science philosopher Jerry Fodor's (1981) assertion that, "In intellectual history, everything happens twice, first as philosophy and then as cognitive science" (p. 298). I have reviewed selected work from psychology and philosophy in order to illuminate the complexity of embodiment as a research focus. This complexity is particularly pressing for researchers who wish to avoid perpetuating Cartesian dualism and arbitrarily drawing boundaries around experiences that are embodied, to exclude those that are presumably not embodied. In acknowledging the dominance of dualism and the challenges of studying embodied experiences, this study uses Sarah Pink's (2015) sensory ethnography to explore people's information practices holistically. The study does so not only by documenting people's observable practices in their social and material surroundings, but

also by uncovering embodied practices that may be difficult to expose because they are tacit, unintentional, or not verbalised.

In other words, both traditions discussed in this section influence this study. This research is grounded in embodied cognition through its assumption that people's conscious verbalisations of embodied practices, and our resulting understanding, are inherently partial. It is philosophically grounded through its focus on the enactment of meaningful practices, which are nexuses of several modalities of experience.

2.4 Trial and error

In the remaining sections in this chapter, I review literature whose necessity emerged through the inductive process of data analysis and theorisation. As such, this literature supports and illuminates the findings and discussion offered in Chapter 4. One of the main areas of embodied information practice found in this study is trial and error, which emerged as a sophisticated, iterative way in which participants would teach themselves about food, including by testing new information. Participants often described their ongoing efforts to improve and learn as "trial and error." However, trial and error is not consistently framed by researchers as a sophisticated, iterative practice. Within information science, it has rarely been addressed at all. This section reviews literature on trial and error as a precursor to Section 4.2, which details findings around participants' accounts of their own trial and error. These findings add to the body of research demonstrating that trial and error must be understood as a complex information practice, rather than as a rudimentary learning strategy.

2.4.1 Trial and error in studies of learning

The term "trial and error" originally signifies simple, incremental learning, within bounded experimental scenarios, such as being able to "Draw a 3-inch line" while blindfolded (Thorndike, 1927, p. 217). There is a discrepancy between the practices described by participants as "trial and error," and this concept's enduring association with repetitive

problem-solving situations with a single correct answer. This discrepancy matters because it challenges a persistent academic dichotomy between simple "trial and error" and purportedly more sophisticated ways of learning, such as "critical thinking."

The origin story of "trial and error" explains its longstanding association with simple tasks. As a mode of learning, trial and error has roots in the behavioural psychology of the early twentieth century. Numerous psychologists were conducting experimental research on learning processes at this time. Beginning with his doctoral dissertation, psychologist Edward Thorndike (1911) articulated what would become a predominant trial and error theory of learning by studying dogs, cats, and chicks. In experiments that would later influence behaviourist concepts such as operant conditioning (Skinner, 1938), Thorndike placed animals in homemade puzzle boxes, and observed how they went about escaping. He argued that the "law of effect" is the main phenomenon functioning within trial and error (p. 11). The law of effect holds that learning occurs in the moment immediately following any act. Thorndike's "effect," as Robert Woodworth (1950) explains, is "the success or failure of an act, the immediate satisfaction or dissatisfaction it gives its doer" (p. 250). Success is satisfying, and for this reason, successful actions are learned. Over time, unsuccessful actions cease.

The applicability of Thorndike's "law" would appear to be limited to constrained, unambiguous scenarios, since this law hinges on immediate clarity about an action's success or failure. Thorndike, however, brings trial and error to bear on whole swathes of human development. In the book based on his dissertation, *Animal Intelligence* (1911), he suggests that the "slow progress" of human society may be attributable to the reliance by "primitive man" on trial and error learning:

> If the method of trial and error, with accidental success, be the method of acquiring associations among the animals, the slow progress of primitive man, the long time between stone age and iron age, for instance, becomes suggestive. Primitive man probably acquired knowledge by just this process, aided possibly by imitation. At any

> rate, *progress was not by seeing through things, but by accidentally hitting upon them*. (p. 150, emphasis added)

Thorndike's framing here is important: he juxtaposes "seeing through things" with "accidentally hitting upon them;" that is, trial and error (p. 150). This juxtaposition is a striking early example of placing simple, repetitive learning, named "trial and error," in contrast with purportedly more sophisticated ways of learning.

Thorndike's work promptly came under critique. One lasting countertheory has been the concept of "error-free" learning. Error-free learning rests on the belief that repeated mistakes are not necessary for effective learning (Wilson & Evans, 1996), and may actually be a hindrance. Pedagogy scholar Almon Whitney Burr (1925), writing about spelling, is an early advocate for error-free learning. He observes that "poor spellers are such usually because they learn their mistakes first" (p. 551). What Burr and later error-free learning advocates argue is that, if possible, errors should be avoided, so that people can avoid becoming misinformed or, as he puts it, "form a bad habit" (p. 552). While scholars continue to amass evidence in favour of error-free learning, to this day, this approach remains focused on contexts where "errors" are clearly and immediately known (Roberts et al., 2018). The trial and error documented in this study illustrates the limited applicability of error-free learning. As discussed in Chapter 4, this is because when it comes to cooking and other food activities, the occurrence of an "error" is often wholly subjective, and not a straightforward matter of right and wrong.

More in line with the findings of the present study, researchers such as Trowbridge and Cason (1932) and Noble (1957), through their own experiments, provide a more fruitful critique of the original concept of "trial and error." They demonstrate that Thorndike oversimplifies the learning process. They find that there are a number of interacting factors, even within the simplest behavioural task, that determine whether a person recognises an error and makes a correction. These critiques of a limited, highly behaviourist idea of trial and error occur alongside the gradual spread of "trial and error" into popular parlance, along with a more flexible and expansive conception of the term. Sommer and Loch (2004),

writing recently in the field of management, exemplify today's broader usage: "trial and error learning involves a flexible (unplanned) adjustment of the considered actions and targets to new information about the relevant environment as it emerges" (p. 1344). While Thorndike formalised the concept through animal experimentation, his narrow conceptualisation, of "primitive" learning, has endured in select academic conversations—including within information science—but much less so in popular usage.

2.4.2 Trial and error in the information science literature

In information science (IS), researchers have yet to develop a close understanding of trial and error as participants in my study describe it; that is, as a complex information practice. Today, "trial and error" is such a commonplace expression that researchers sometimes do not define it at all, even when it is a finding, or a variable being investigated. For example, Bankole and Adio (2018) find that trial and error is a predominant learning strategy among university students. They find that students, in learning how to use the internet, report relying on trial and error nearly as often as they rely on university-provided internet training. They do not provide a definition or description of students' understanding of trial and error. Horne and Tritt (2017), in an example focused on library staff rather than students, describe the process of improving their information literacy programming through trial and error. Over time, this team of library staff were informed by the "errors," or weaknesses, in their existing model, such as providing time-consuming, rudimentary consultations in which librarians corrected students' citations for them (p. 192). In both of these papers, the process of trial and error can be inferred, but the authors do not define it. The terminology of "trial and error" is often a short-hand to describe processes of learning through repetition and mistakes.

Among recent IS research that does include definitions of trial and error, these definitions also reinforce an understanding of trial and error as simple, repetitive, and hinging on mistakes. Examples of such research include information literacy and information behaviour studies examining how people learn to find information. Diehm and

Lupton (2012), in a study of how Australian undergraduate education students learn to use library databases, do provide a definition of trial and error: "Learning by trial and error involves students experimenting and trying different information sources, tools, and keywords" (p. 219). They find that trial and error is a ubiquitous part of students' searching repertoires: "All students in the study mentioned trial and error as a strategy for learning to use library databases" (p. 219). Discussing students' various learning strategies, Diehm and Lupton frame trial and error as the only learning approach that involves "mistakes" (p. 221). Similarly, Mansourian (2008), also discussing strategies for finding information online, frames trial and error as a process of "overcoming" (p. 28). He constructs trial and error as a "coping strategy" that "end users employ to overcome their information seeking failures on the web" (p. 28). Mansourian emphasises that repetition is key to trial and error learning: "As users perform more searches they can learn more techniques because of their errors" (p. 37). The publications cited in this paragraph exemplify the conceptualisation of trial and error as a repetitive process that people use in response to knowable "mistakes," "failures," or "errors." Eventually, trial and error enables people to understand how to do something in a correct fashion, such as searching for information online. While some participants in this study describe using trial and error in this way – for instance, to determine a correct way to cook something – most participants who describe trial and error are describing a much more sophisticated practice.

There is some recent work that illustrates more nuanced perspectives on trial and error. Encheva (2016), having studied the information literacy learning of library school students, observes that trial and error can be thought of as either a mechanistic or a sophisticated process, able to be "characterized in two ways: on one hand, trying by chance different processes, keywords, information instruments, and sources, and on the other hand more planned and profound experimentation that includes evaluation of the results and actions and further modifications of the attempts" (p. 598). In other words, while trial and error can be relatively simple, it is also visible in more sophisticated, "planned and

profound," informational activities. This is primarily how it emerges as a finding in the present study.

Bringing a similar approach to Encheva to the topic of digital literacy, Matzat and Sadowski (2012) argue that trial and error is crucial to the independent learning that will accompany widespread digital literacy. However, because so much internet use occurs at home, they question whether trial and error works the same way for everyone, depending on age and other factors. They argue that trial and error needs more study, which the present study, largely conducted within people's homes, provides. And then Rothenfluh, Germeni, and Schulz (2016) document contextual considerations that affect whether people will use trial and error, such as how high they estimate the financial and personal costs of an error will be. Their study finds that people are more likely to use trial and error to choose a pediatrician than to choose a hotel. There are several reasons for this. A hotel stay costs money out of pocket, and more time, in comparison with a brief initial doctor visit, and it is easier to visit another doctor than to switch to another hotel. These considerations meant that participants felt less pressure for their initial choice of pediatrician to be ideal than they did for their choice of hotel to be satisfying. In other words, financial and time constraints affected participants' decision-making and information-seeking strategies. Participants were more likely to use trial and error to find a doctor, and more likely to use extensive online searching to find a good hotel. These studies highlight the need for greater insight into the practice of trial and error. The present study finds, similarly to Rothenfluh, Germeni, and Schulz (2016), that participants are more likely to rely on trial and error when they are in relatively low-stakes situations, such as wanting to learn how to bake an ideally delicious loaf of bread. When higher-stakes concerns are present, such as around health or finances, then trial and error is less predominant.

It is also necessary to acknowledge the IS researcher who has published most extensively on "trial and error," Don Swanson. In the 1980s, Swanson (1989) developed techniques for discovering new knowledge by linking previously unconnected pieces of medical research. He came to codify trial and error within information retrieval in an

approach called "explore/exclude" (p. 356). Earlier in his work, informed by Karl Popper's (1963) *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge,* Swanson (1977) proposed that:

> Theories are not synthesized from observations. Quite the contrary; one cannot gather data or make an observation without having a theory first. Thus new observations can lead to a theory only by correcting or modifying an earlier version of the theory. Theories are inventions or conjectures put forward and then subject to refutation. Knowledge grows by a process of trial and error. (p. 138)

Swanson may not have anticipated his information retrieval theories being interpellated into interpretivist qualitative research, but the participants in this study are enacting his process of conjecture and refutation. They conjecture and refute what will be best for them, whatever "best" may mean in any given moment. They conduct their own everyday-life theorising. These findings are discussed in Chapter 4.

2.5 Secrecy and information-withholding practices

In two sections in Chapter 4, Sections 4.3.4 and 4.4.3, I discuss participant information practices involving secrecy, withholding information, and the choice not to share information. Some participants also describe the experience of having food information withheld from them, primarily within their families. These participants cope not only with not having access to desired information, but also with knowing that their loved ones have chosen not to share it with them. As such, they are doubly affected. Secrecy was not a universal theme, but it emerged across several participants' accounts. For these participants, food-related secrecy sometimes included sensory concerns, such as potentially facing accusations of "you smell like [chicken] nuggets!" after having visited the McDonald's drive-thru (Participant Lisa J.). In this section, I will review IS literature on secrecy. I will also review selected food-related secrecy literature. There is a large body of sociology research on secrecy, with roots in work such as Simmel (1906) and Bok (1983). There is also a body of psychology research examining secrecy, such as Petronio (2000) and Kelly (2002).

It is not feasible to review these literatures comprehensively, but I have integrated selected studies. My focus remains on IS literature and other research that explicitly addresses food information, including information withholding.

2.5.1 Secrecy inside and outside the information science literature

Fulton (2019), who has conducted information research in this area, describes secrecy as a "non-sharing behaviour" that has received less attention than it deserves (p. 151). Secrecy has been addressed in some corners of IS research, and interest is growing, sufficient to support the establishment of a new journal, *Secrecy and Society,* in 2016. The journal is promoted as the "scholarly home" of "all things secrecy" (Maret, 2016, p. 1). The contents of this journal primarily cover concerns such as classified information, state secrets, trade secrets, and espionage. While this journal would not be considered the final word on how secrecy has been addressed in IS, the gap between its aspiration to cover "all things secrecy" and its centring of organizational, governmental, technological, and security contexts does suggest there is ample space for an information practices perspective. Secrecy has not primarily been addressed in IS with an information practices lens. As Fulton observes, "Secrecy is not the first thing that comes to mind when considering how individuals and groups interact with information and each other" (p. 151). In part because information behaviour and practices research emerged from information systems research, it continues to have a leaning toward situations where information is needed, desired, or plentiful, rather than where it is withheld. This may have positioned secrecy somewhat "under the radar," ironically, in comparison with other IB/IP concerns. The present study's focus on embodied information practices is distinctive in the secrecy discourse that does exist in our discipline.

Chatman's (1996) Theory of Information Poverty, developed through multiple empirical studies, is a major contribution to our understanding of secrecy in IS. Notably for the present study's findings, Chatman explains secrecy as a "self-protecting mechanism" sparked by "a sense of mistrust regarding the interest or ability of others to provide useful

information" (p. 197). With this explanation, Chatman connects people's past negative experiences, including of being marginalised and at risk, with their present information practices. Chatman summarises existing research on secrecy, in part, as such:

> The purpose of secrecy appears to be to protect ourselves from unwanted intrusion from *whatever* source. […] Secret information also includes the element of *control.* […] In everyday life, a secret might be viewed as that which, if disclosed, carries an enormous amount of risk. For example, with 'trusted' others, such as family members, we might hide financial problems. Why? We withhold information to preserve our autonomy and to give ourselves some fundamental say on our personal lives. (p. 195; emphases original)

This study also finds that secrecy can be motivated by self-protection, including through moral reasoning that leads to avoidance of painful feelings such as shame. This study also finds that secrecy is sometimes a manifestation of power dynamics and control within families. This is discussed in two sections in Chapter 4.

Appropriately, the more recent IS literature on secrecy commonly cites Chatman. Some literature reports on research set in similar contexts to those Chatman studied. For instance, Canning and Buchanan (2019), in a study of male prisoners in a Scottish maximum security prison, find that prisoners are reluctant to share information due to a sense of personal risk. One prisoner, they describe, recounts "wearing a 'mask' through fear of humiliation and/or violence" (p. 430). They find that the self-protection imperative is powerful, as Chatman found.

Fulton (2019, 2017) also cites Chatman. Like her, Fulton delves into the motivations for secrecy, as well as its implications for people who keep secrets. However, her work on secrecy focuses not as much on the "small world" contexts of Chatman's work (1991), but rather on the leisure contexts of urban exploration (2017) and gambling (2019). What distinguishes these activities is that while they are undertaken by many people for enjoyment, they also carry a degree of risk. Urban exploration "involves the exploration and photography of urban infrastructure often no longer used, including sewers, towers,

factories, and military instalments" (2017, p. 189). Fulton finds that urban explorers, referring to themselves as "urbexers," have a complex relationship with secrecy. Because their explorations can include activities such as trespassing, they often keep their identities a secret, even as they post photos and form communities online. Urbexers "view themselves more as heroes championing the abandoned and decayed parts of society, rather than criminals" (2017, p. 197). For the addicted gamblers she studies, gambling has progressed beyond a leisure activity and become a problem. Like the urbexers, these gamblers are motivated to keep their activities secret both for emotional reasons, and because of the potential for real consequences. Fulton observes that "The pull to gamble was deeply connected with emotions, such that the gambler felt they needed to gamble to alleviate feeling depressed or to overcome negative circumstances" (2019, p. 154). At the same time, secretive gambling generated more negative emotions, such as shame.

With both populations, Fulton explores the implications of secrecy, including what secrecy affords people. With urbexers, "the hidden elements of the hobby not only facilitated urban explorers' need for concealing the identities of individuals, but also enabled urban explorers to exert a degree of control over public observance of the hobby" (2017, p. 197). Secrecy is fundamental to the ability of urbexers to take part in explorations. For gamblers, Fulton finds that "gambling in secret profoundly affected the individual who was gambling, disrupting their lives and social relationships" (2019, p. 154). The need to protect their secrets would lead gamblers to extend their secretive behaviour, such as by enlisting their children to also keep their gambling secret. Secrecy compounded gamblers' feelings of shame. They felt shame for gambling, and further shame for their secrecy.

In the present study, none of the participants disclosed activities as risky as problem gambling. However, the secrets participants discussed, including secrets held by others that kept participants as outsiders, may be rooted in the need for control and some form of self-protection, whether it be from stress, anticipation of a negative or stigmatising social interaction, or a desire to keep certain information private. Fulton argues that "understanding the layers of secretive information behaviours is essential for understanding

how to help those affected to navigate risky and stressful contexts" (2019, p. 156). Greater understanding of secrets means greater understanding of what motivates information practices.

Fulton and Chatman's findings echo the findings in much of the secrecy literature within the wide-ranging, transdisciplinary scholarship of food. Here, much of the secrecy literature addresses harm, shame, and stigma. While this literature could not be comprehensively reviewed here, one predominant example is the secrecy practices of people with eating disorders. Dalzell (2000) argues from a clinical perspective that secrets proliferate in secretive environments, such that eating disorders are more often seen in families where secrets are kept. Writing from a psychoanalytic perspective about the long-term repercussions of the Holocaust, Orgad (2015) observes there can be prohibitions on open discussion of the reasoning behind family food strictures, such as a rule that food must never be wasted. The origins of such a stricture in the home can be painful and therefore avoided, deeply affecting the family dynamic around food. These brief examples illustrate that, somewhat parallel to information science's traditional focus on problems and uncertainty, the food secrecy literature may focus more on challenging or painful experiences.

As such, it is important to also observe that secrecy is an information control mechanism that may be experienced as empowering. It is a practice that enables people to navigate and manage the self-protection they find necessary. There is some recognition of the benefits, and potential pleasures, of secrecy, in areas of research such as advertising and consumption. Rodas and John (2020) note a recent increase in secrecy-oriented food advertising aimed at women, and they question what is motivating it. They argue that secrecy must hold appeal for it to be deployed in marketing messages. Secrecy's *appeals* as an information practice have not been closely examined in IS, either. These appeals include the fact that it can be pleasurable and profound to keep a secret, and that secrecy can enable people to partake in pleasurable and profound activities outside of normative social dictates.

This study enriches the secrecy discourse by presenting findings that emerge from a relatively commonplace context: that of everyday food life.

2.6 Conclusion

In addition to reviewing topics that have emerged in analysis, including trial and error and secrecy, this chapter has examined the three areas of IS literature that were central to the development of this study: food and information, information and everyday life, and embodiment. In doing so, this review has illustrated several tendencies in the IS literature that illustrate the need for this study. In IS, there is little research that focuses on people's food-related information experiences, particularly considering what a central role food plays in people's lives, and considering the notable proliferation of food-related information. Food information practices are inherently complex and as such they are also a site of great potential for everyday-life information research. For different people at different times, food information practices may be leisurely or not, collaborative or not, fraught or not. People may rely primarily on close friends and family for their food information, as with other sorts of everyday-life information, but at this time, this is an open question. Similarly, people's interactions with food information can be assumed to be embodied, but in IS there has yet to be an examination of practices demonstrating this embodiment. Food information practices are under-researched in IS. Ameliorating this research gap supports the "aspirational rhetoric" in IS "of representing the totality of the human relationship with information" (Olsson & Lloyd, 2017, n.p.). These are the exploratory circumstances in which this highly qualitative study takes place.

Chapter Three: Research Design

This chapter describes the design of this study, starting with the research questions and situating the study epistemologically. I then introduce the methodologies of sensory ethnography and constructivist grounded theory. I describe the data collection and analytical processes, and the techniques involved, including interviews, video tours, and multiple layers of coding and theorising of the data. I speak to ethics, and detail the approach I developed for enabling participants to choose whether or not they wish to be anonymised in the written accounts of the study. I include a discussion of the locations where the research was conducted, and how participants were recruited in these locations. I wrap up this chapter by addressing matters of quality and rigour, and presenting some limitations of this research.

3.1 Research questions

Given the lack of research, to date, on individuals' food-related information practices, as well as growing calls for research that embraces embodied experiences, the study explored the following research questions:

1. How do people feed themselves and their families or friends?
    1.1. How do people describe the information practices they undertake in this process?
    1.2. How do people experience embodied information and knowledge as part of their everyday information practices?
2. How do people construct and sense the feeling of being informed or uninformed during the process of feeding themselves and those in their care?
    2.1. How do people describe the experience of feeling informed or uninformed during this process?
    2.2. Why do people adopt certain information sources and practices but not others?

3.2 Epistemological and theoretical frameworks

This study is built on a social constructionist epistemology (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Gergen, 2015) and an interpretivist theoretical perspective (Bevir & Blakely, 2018). As a study that uses ethnographic techniques in data collection and constructivist grounded theory in data analysis, it aims to describe, analyse, and identify common themes and differences among people's inherently subjective information practices, rather than to reveal an objective truth.

3.2.1 Epistemology: social constructionism

Social constructionism is the epistemological position that our knowledge of the world is not neutral or objectively-occurring; rather, knowledge, and indeed what we consider to be reality, are jointly created by people, through our use of language in relation to one another. Social psychologist Kenneth Gergen (2015) describes the constructionist perspective as "We relate, and I interpret," or "We construct it for what it is" (p. 12). Sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) are widely credited with introducing the term "social constructionism," in *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967). Here, they argue that our ability to make sense of our realities and, by extension, to lead our lives, rests on socially-constructed concepts and arrangements that constitute the knowable fabric of society. As they explain:

> I apprehend the reality of everyday life as an ordered reality. Its phenomena are prearranged in patterns that seem to be independent of my apprehension of them [...] The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated *as* objects before my appearance on the scene. [...] I live in a place that is geographically designated; I employ tools, from can openers to sports cars, which are designated in the technical vocabulary of my society; I live within a web of human relationships, from my chess club to the United States of America, which are also ordered by means of my vocabulary. (pp. 21-22)

One of Berger and Luckmann's central observations here is that although we may take our realities for granted, noting that reality appears "already objectified," our apprehension of the world cannot exist outside the socially-determined arrangements, including language, that have been created, and are continuously created, in society. As Talja, Tuominen, and Savoleinen (2005) observe in their work on constructivism, collectivism, and constructionism in information science, "constructionism sees language as constitutive for the construction of selves and the formation of meanings" (p. 89). As this research demonstrates, the socially constructed nature of food knowledge and terminology can be observed in its seeming changeability, and in its dependency on our relationships and other social systems, such as gender. Even sensory experiences of food must be understood through language and the socially situated meanings encoded by it.

As with any epistemological paradigm, there are variations of social constructionism, and shades of nuance among social constructionists' perspectives. Perhaps the central topic of debate around social constructionism is the question of whether or not anything exists that we might refer to as "reality," outside our socially constructed awareness of it. The paradigm of "realism" is often situated in opposition to social constructionism, and there is a continuum of positions between the two. In arguing for a possible synthesis of realism and constructionism, Elder-Vass (2012) first clarifies that "*Realism* [...] may be taken as the belief that there are features of the world that are the way they are independently of how we think about them" (p. 6, emphasis original). He describes the social constructionist position that disavows this view – that is, that "there are features of the world that are the way they are independently of how we think about them" – as "*radical* or *extreme* constructionisms" (p. 5). Although I agree with Elder-Vass that there are features of the world that "are the way they are," it remains that people cannot step out of their socially-constructed understandings while interacting with the world, and this position is neither radical nor extreme. This study illustrates that food experiences are inherently socially constructed. There are many food-adjacent concepts, such as "healthy," whose constructions have changed dramatically over time.

Scholars working with social constructionist perspectives are able to unpack the implications of such concepts. The implications of concepts such as "healthy," such as strictures about what a healthy person must eat or how much they should weigh, are no less real for having been socially constructed. These implications are documented throughout this study. Social constructionist research, like all research, carries values, including value placed on deep understanding of people's experiences and their encounters with social norms and expectations. Accepting that identity and knowledge are socially constructed, we can then place the focus of inquiry on social experience. As Gergen (2015) explains:

> What we take to be knowledge does not begin with the lone individual observing and recording the world for what it is. Rather, as we confront the world, our descriptions and explanations emerge from our existence in relationships. It is out of relationships that we foster our vocabularies, assumptions, and theories about the nature of the world (including ourselves), and the way we go about studying or carrying out research. These relationships also favor certain values, either explicit or implicit. What we take to be knowledge of the world will always carry the values of those traditions that fashion our inquiry and our conclusions. (p. 13)

This study takes food as its focus, and more specifically, food information practices. A social constructionist lens encourages an approach in which such practices are not only described, but also examined in terms of how they are constituted and how they enable meaning in daily life.

3.2.2 Theoretical position: interpretivism

Social constructionism explains the orientation to knowledge that underpins this study. In terms of theoretical orientation, the broad position embodied in this study is interpretivism. An interpretivist stance holds that studying human experiences inextricably requires the navigation of subjective meaning-making and understanding (Bevir & Blakely, 2018). Rather than pursuing the testing and discovery of singular, universal "truths,"

interpretivist researchers focus on articulating and explaining closely-observed human understandings and experiences.

This sets interpretivism in opposition to positivism. Positivism is a "package of philosophical ideas" that generally includes "a distrust of abstraction, a preference for observation unencumbered by too much theory, a commitment to the idea of a social science that is not vastly different from natural science, and a profound respect for quantification" (Paley, 2008, p. 646). In the social sciences, positivism often accompanies naturalism, which is "the general philosophical view that the study of human behavior is analogous to the natural sciences—hence the name 'naturalism'" (Bevir & Blakely, 2018, p. 2). However, as interpretivists have pointed out, human experiences have always already been interpreted, by the people who have experienced them: "The study of social phenomena requires an understanding of the social worlds that people inhabit, which they have already interpreted by the meanings they produce and reproduce as a necessary part of their everyday activities together" (Blaikie, 2004, p. 509).

Human understanding requires interpretation. This makes interpretation, as Bevir and Blakely (2018) argue, "non-optional" (p. 1). The present study has enacted interpretivist principles throughout, from the construction of research questions that centre on participants' own descriptions and understandings, to the selection of methodologies that emphasise participant and researcher accounts of experience, to the identification and presentation of findings that point not to a singular truth, but rather to shared practices and the diverse experiences that explain them.

Interpretivism is often associated with qualitative research, but not all qualitative research rests on interpretivist beliefs. This is true in information science, where scholar John Budd (1995) describes positivism as "the governing epistemology" of our discipline, resulting "in both a philosophical stance and a mode of behavior" (p. 295). Budd's criticism of positivism within IS is a critique of reductionism, of simplifying complex human experiences down to deterministic, system-centred models of information retrieval and behaviour. He argues that "the thinking within [library and information science] should be

more skeptical of methods and practices that purport to offer suggestions of causality based on the examination of limited variables or aspects of a phenomenon" (p. 315). In other words, the prevailing paradigm of positivism encourages research that does not account as fully as possible for the complexity of phenomena, including their interrelations with larger social systems and structures. Bevir and Blakely (2018), although they are outside IS, would also identify the reductionism Budd describes as a function of the predominance of naturalism. They argue that naturalism "encourages social scientists to believe [...] their research must remain value-free, an instrumental repository of facts, and never engage in ethical, ideological, or political criticism" (p. 11). By contrast, they argue that interpretivism enables examination of "a range of empirical concerns that remain inaccessible to those making use of naturalist concepts. The empirical topics taken up by interpretive social scientists are not accidental or random, but reflect their philosophical commitments" (p. 11). This study rests on multiple philosophical commitments, including a commitment to documenting the richness of everyday practices as shared across a diverse participant group. An interpretivist stance pairs well with these commitments, leading to research that is coherent and transparent about its underlying beliefs.

Information science researchers who have called for more interpretivism in the discipline include Budd (1995), as well as Hjørland (2005). Polkinghorne and Given (2021) argue that greater utilisation of interpretivist approaches would address much of the rhetoric around *holistic* study design, which reflects a desire for approaches that better contend with the complexity of people's information experiences. Madsen (2016), in her analysis of "boundary talk" within information science, uses interpretivist discourse analysis to great effect, as she identifies how scholars position the discipline as "weak" when they emphasise a need for strong disciplinary boundaries (p. 2702). Chu (2015), studying the methodologies appearing in several top information science journals, finds that while methodological diversity continues to increase, the most common approaches, such as questionnaires, continue to reflect the predominance of positivism. The present study contributes to the

growth of interpretivist inquiry, and thereby to theoretical and methodological diversification, in information science.

In food studies, interpretivist approaches are more widespread, and they represent a variety of concerns and methods. A compelling recent example is the work of Thompson, Ponsford, Lewis, and Cummins (2018) on "chicken shops" in east London (UK). "Chicken shops" are small neighbourhood businesses that specialise in serving chips (fries) and deep-fried chicken. Thompson and colleagues, by speaking with local residents, find that chicken shops are understood as valuable neighbourhood resources and as "part of local neighbourhood life" (p. 13). The food served by chicken shops may not be considered "healthy" by local residents, but it emerges that the shops make the neighbourhood healthy in other ways, such as by providing space for social connection. Understanding participants' complex perceptions of health and the importance of chicken shops can lead to tailored health interventions and messages (p. 13). This study exemplifies the distinctive insight that is possible with an interpretive stance.

Last, just as qualitative methodologies do not automatically adhere to an interpretivist stance, an interpretivist stance does not automatically follow the adoption of a social constructionist epistemology. It is possible to hold social constructionist beliefs and still pursue research with positivist goals, in which results are presented as a singular discovered truth, and in which researchers' interpretive work goes unacknowledged. Witnessing this combination – social constructionism paired with positivism – at play in the first generation of grounded theory studies was a significant motivation for Kathy Charmaz (2014) to develop what she would term "constructivist grounded theory." As she recalls, in the 1980s and early 1990s:

> Sociologists who conducted social constructionist research often produced impressive analyses of the constructions of the worlds they studied. But they treated their analyses as accurate renderings of these worlds rather than as constructions of them. Nor did they take into account *their* processes of construction of the research and the structural and situational encroachments upon it. In keeping with the conventions of

> the times, researchers erased the subjectivity they brought to their studies rather than acknowledging it and engaging in reflexivity. (p. 14)

The present study does not erase the subjectivity of the researcher; rather, it acknowledges this subjectivity in multiple ways. It also strives to contribute insights grounded in the experiences and accounts of participants themselves, rather than to unearth external, objective truths. As such, key markers of interpretivism are present in this study.

3.3 Methodology

Built on a social constructionist view of knowledge, and proceeding from an interpretive stance, this study employs a sensory ethnographic methodology for data collection (Pink, 2015), paired with a constructivist grounded theory methodology for data analysis (Charmaz, 2017). This section outlines these approaches and situates them within their larger methodological contexts.

3.3.1 Sensory ethnography

The study design follows Pink's focus on sensitising ethnographic techniques, which she uses to enable deep understanding of complex daily experiences, such as how people experience contemporary domesticity (2005) or urban life (2007). In her study of contemporary laundry practices, for instance, she used a sensory ethnographic approach to document people's often tacit understandings on how they "construct and sense cleanliness" (2005, p. 275). By focusing on the senses, she was able to elicit people's verbalisations of how they employ vision, smell and touch to determine whether or not their laundry is clean.

In addition to Pink's work, there are multiple approaches to attuning ethnographic methods to the study of embodied experience, including sensory experience. For example, anthropologists David Howes and Constance Classen (2014) have also developed a sensory ethnography. Their approach is an evolution of more classical, descriptive ethnography, used to create sensory profiles of cultures. Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Ernst Karel lead the Sensory Ethnography Lab at Harvard University (2010) with yet another approach. Their

sensory ethnography emphasises aesthetic experimentation through media arts and technologies (Sensory Ethnography Lab, 2010). Since the present study focuses on the practices of people conducting their daily lives, Pink's was the most coherent match among these schools of sensory ethnographic practice.

Pink's sensory ethnography is more phenomenological in nature than classically-defined ethnographic practices. Following her approach, this study examines people's experiences, including their sensory experiences, *in order to* understand their information practices and knowledge. In this way, the senses act as "a route to forms of knowledge and knowing not normally spoken" (Pink, 2015, p. 53). In a 2012 review of the use of ethnographic methods in IS, Khoo, Rozaklis, and Hall (2012) find no existing IS studies applying sensory ethnography to information practices. Searches in June 2017 and January 2021 of two core IS databases, Library & Information Science Source and Library & Information Science Abstracts, confirm that there has not yet been a published English-language IS study explicitly informed by sensory ethnography.

A central tenet of sensory ethnography is the adaptation of common ethnographic techniques, including interviewing and observation, in a way that is attuned to embodied, emplaced, sensory aspects of experience. This includes processes of learning and of sharing knowledge, which information science researchers may refer to as information practices. Pink observes two core principles demonstrated by existing sensory ethnographic research that focuses on knowledge-sharing:

> The first is an emphasis on the social, material and sensorial practices and contexts of knowledge transmission, the second the question of the location of the individual, the 'self', 'intentionality' and 'agency' in the transmission process. […] To understand the relevance of sensory experiences, categories and meanings in people's lives ethnographers need to research how these are known in practice within contexts of specific socialities and materialities. (2015, p. 42)

In other words, a sensory ethnographic approach does not involve focusing solely on people's practices and processes, and their sensorial characteristics. It also calls attention to how

people find meaning in their practices within their social contexts and surroundings. As such, the priorities of sensory ethnography make it well-matched to a study of information practices as situated within people's food lives.

3.3.2 Constructivist grounded theory

While sensory ethnography informed the data collection for this study, constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) guided the analysis. Constructivist grounded theory is a development of grounded theory methodology as originated by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Charmaz points out that soon after it was published, Glaser and Strauss's book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967) "commanded immense symbolic and practical influence among North American qualitative researchers and graduate students with qualitative inclinations" (p. 7). Grounded theory, broadly, is a methodology for systematic qualitative analysis in which analytical codes and categories emerge inductively from the data, rather than from preconceived hypothesis, and in which theory is developed out of the data through techniques such as constant comparison during coding and memo-writing to track and develop theoretical categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This is an approach that enables systematic abductive analysis, resulting in theory that is grounded in the data.

Grounded theory emerged as an intervention at a point in the twentieth century when the social sciences, including Glaser and Strauss's field of sociology, were dominated by quantitative approaches. These approaches were underpinned by "mid-century positivistic conceptions of scientific method and knowledge [that] stressed objectivity, generality, replication of research, and falsification of competing hypotheses and theories" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 6). In this context, grounded theory gained a foothold as a rigorous, credible approach to qualitative research, so much so that Clarke (2019), writing on the legacy of grounded theory, refers to it as "the most popular form of qualitative analysis on the planet" due to its "profoundly *empirical* orientation" (p. 6, emphasis original). In other words, grounded theory's success is due in large part to its emphasis on close examination of the data.

Although Glaser and Strauss conceived of grounded theory as pushing back against the positivist paradigm of mid-century social inquiry, they were not able to shed their own positivist orientations (Charmaz, 2014, p. 12). As time passed, scholars such as Charmaz built on the work of the original grounded theorists, in order to reflect the growth of interpretivist approaches built on constructionist and constructivist beliefs. Such approaches not only acknowledge the researcher's subjectivity, but also frame it as a factor inherent to the construction of the research. Charmaz's choice of the term "constructivist" for her grounded theory approach is meaningful, as it carries her critique not only of Glaser and Strauss, but also of contemporary research describing itself as constructionist. Of this research, Charmaz (2014) observes that "in keeping with the conventions of the times, researchers erased the subjectivity they brought to their studies rather than acknowledging it and engaging in reflexivity" (p. 14). Charmaz emphasises that researchers:

> are part of the world we study, the data we collect, and the analyses we produce. We *construct* our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices. My approach explicitly assumes that any theoretical rendering offers an *interpretive* portrayal of the studied world, not an exact picture of it." (p. 17)

This study acknowledges its interpretive nature throughout, including in sections to come on data collection, ethics, and analysis, and in the thematic and theoretical categories that form the findings.

Like all grounded theory approaches, this one consists of guidelines for analysing qualitative data in order to build theories from the data themselves. Thus findings are expressed as theory "grounded" within the data. It is not unusual for grounded theory analysis to be paired with ethnographic data collection, as this study does. As Charmaz (2014) indicates, constructivist grounded theory pairs well with exploratory ethnomethodological studies that focus on practices:

> Grounded theory ethnography gives priority to the studied *phenomenon* or *process*—rather than to a description of a setting. Thus, from the beginnings of their fieldwork,

> grounded theory ethnographers study what is happening in the setting and make a *conceptual* rendering of these actions. (p. 38).

Constructivist grounded theory has been well-suited to this study because it enables structured, yet exploratory development of theory to describe the commonalities and differences that appear within the data. At the same time, being constructivist, Charmaz's grounded theory aligns with the interpretivist paradigm of this study.

3.4 Data collection

Researchers undertaking sensory ethnographic study must prepare themselves "to be open and attentive to the sensory ways of knowing, categories, meanings, moralities and practices of others" (Pink, 2015, p. 51). For this study, researcher preparation for data collection involved self-observation and structured reflective journaling around food-related places, activities, and information practices, particularly to become more aware of sensory biases and potential avenues of inquiry in participant encounters. Further details on the selection and implementation of the data collection methods used in this study, interviews and video tours, follow here.

3.4.1 Methods

Data were gathered with each participant individually. Multiple data types were collected, in order to create rich understanding of people's daily experiences. Data created with each participant resulted from semi-structured interviews and video tours, as well as researcher field notes. Data were collected between April 2018 and September 2019, encompassing all four seasons in northern Canada. As another preparatory step, the researcher piloted the data collection techniques with potential participants early in the data collection process. In a pilot phase, "researchers run through their study in an abbreviated form and make adjustments based upon the performance of the method" (Chenail, 2011, p. 257). This was to ensure familiarity with the methods and instruments, with the multiple recording technologies, and with the logistical challenges that can arise during field work.

Pilot instances were conducted after ethics review and as authentically as possible so that the resulting data could be incorporated into the study.

Interviews. Each participant first provided an initial semi-structured interview in their home or another location at their convenience. This interview lasted approximately 60-90 minutes and explored the participant's activities, processes, and practices around food. The interview guide (Appendix B) included both concrete, research-directed questions ("During a "typical food day," do you use any sources for planning or finding out about food or cooking (e.g. cookbooks, apps)?") and narrative, participant-driven questions ("Please tell me about what you might call a "typical food day" at your house.") (Ayres, 2008, p. 810). Participants were asked to speak about an ordinary day and about an extraordinary day, such as a day when their routine changes, or there is an event. Participants narrated their days and I asked prompting questions for clarity and to create a dialogue with participants. The most common prompting questions were about how participants came to have the knowledge, understanding, or process they were describing to me, as in, "How did you come to do [a food activity] in this way?" or "What's led you to think about [food] in that way?" However, I did not ask participants to recount their information seeking in a linear or procedural sense. Rather, the focus was placed on the course of ordinary and extraordinary days, not on what Savolainen calls "problematic situations," in which a person is working to solve a problem (1995, p. 291). As Savolainen points out, the limitations of interviews are particularly brought into focus when discussing problem-solving, since "most reconstructions given by informants in unique interviews tend to remain quite unspecified due to difficulties in the recollection of various phases of problem solving." (p. 291). With this study, my focus was on eliciting participants' accounts of their food lives and the attendant role of information. Participants' information practices emerged from analysis of their accounts. The interviews were not framed around problem-solving or information needs.

During this interview, participants were also asked to show and discuss information sources that they consider important to their food-related everyday practices. "Information sources" was broadly conceived, and included cookbooks, coupons, apps, recipe cards, magazines, elements of our physical surroundings, or any other sources that were significant to the participant. What made these interviews "sensory ethnographic interviews" was their sensitivity not only to the spoken word but also to observation of gesture and the material and sensorial aspects of the discussion. This reflects the assumption that an interview is not just about "talk"; rather, "it is a social encounter – an event – that is inevitably both emplaced and productive of place. It has material and sensorial components" (Pink, 2015, p. 74). Further, as Pink observes, "research participants themselves [...] use all resources available to communicate about their experiences, and spoken words only represent one of these strategies" (2015, p. 78). Further to this, the interviews often had an unanticipated sensory layer in the form of food and drink that some participants would offer if I interviewed them in their homes (Figure 1; Figure 2).

Figure 1. The buttermilk drop biscuits and prairie cherry jam that participant Kim offered during the interview

The interviews were audio-recorded, with still photographs taken of the information sources in the home to support the analysis and act as aides-mémoires. This interview approach gives participants an opportunity to reflect on their activities in a focused manner within a familiar setting. This interview also provided details that could be revisited during the video tour.

Figure 2. The cheese plate that participant Carrie offered during the interview

Video tours. Approximately one-to-four weeks following the interview, participants provided me with a video tour

of a place that they consider important to their food activities and routines. This study used video tours rather than other techniques such as still photography in order to capture participants' dynamic physicality, including gestures, movement, and sensory moments. Video tours invoke "not only the visual or verbal knowledge that might be produced through interviews or observations, but also implies that such research materials can provide a route into the more complex multisensorality of the experiences, activities, and events we might be investigating" (Pink, 2015, p. 125). That is, video tours capture verbal, conversational data, and simultaneously, they also capture people's interactions with their surroundings. In this way, like other "mobile methods" (Evans & Jones, 2011; Kusenbach, 2003; Polkinghorne, Given, & Carlson, 2017; Sheller & Urry, 2006), video tours create opportunities to observe embodied experiences, while also enabling observation of how people move and act in relation to what they are saying and doing.

Each participant led their video tour, with unstructured conversation ensuing throughout (see Appendix C, Draft Run Sheet). For each tour, I wore or carried a GoPro camera, to capture the tour, including the participant's actions and expressions. I verbalised observations and encountered facts as much as possible in order that they be captured in the recording. Ethical considerations are discussed below in Section 3.5, including considerations around videography in public places. Unfortunately I could not conduct two video tours, with participants Jeff and Carrie, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, by that point, and with video tours being so rich with information, I had collected enough video data to arrive at theoretical sufficiency (Dey, 1999).

Locations for video tours included mainly private residences, as well as one private business, and one public place. Because video tour data is very rich, and because each tour is a particularly intensive experience for both participant and researcher, tours generally ended in under ninety (90) minutes. Details such as the duration of interviews and tours, are contained in Table 1, at the beginning of Chapter 4. I did not conduct more than one video tour on a single day. Tours generally spanned a single activity, such as cooking a meal, visiting the farmer's market, or having a coffee and a cinnamon bun. A few participants

showed me around all the “food spaces” in their own homes. This was the case with married couple Cheryl and Todd, for example, whose home is filled with their numerous food hobbies, including brewing, putting up preserves (making food such as jams and pickles), gardening, tanning hides (transforming animal skin into leather), and keeping both quail and rabbits, which they also butcher at home. Most participants, however, invited me to cook with them, or to come to their homes for dinner. These meetings did have involve some degree of touring, as participants would show me parts of their home, but the camera would often be stationary, because we were situated in the kitchen and I was often participating. For instance, Rachel and I baked savoury muffins and apple crisp together on a Sunday afternoon; Lisa J. cooked us a weeknight dinner of spaghetti with moosemeat bolognese, garlic bread, and salad; Lisa M. invited me to help her process her fall apple crop; Megan cooked Chinese steamed egg; Kaelin and I baked vegan buffalo wings in her countertop toaster oven; and Wendy and I made chicken noodle soup for lunch. I did not request that participants feed me. They volunteered these options when I mentioned that one of the choices available for the video tour was to conduct it in their own home.

Two participants chose locations outside the home. One location was a private business, and one location was a public space. These participants chose not to be anonymised, so I will share details of the locations here. Participant Tanya chose Celebrate, Gluten Free, a family-run bakery and café on Stony Plain Road in Edmonton. She accepted my offer to pick her up at her home first thing on a weekday morning and visit the bakery on her way to work. We had coffee and baked treats (lemon squares and cinnamon buns). Because Celebrate, Gluten Free is a private business, I contacted the business owner by email well in advance, to request permission. The business owner requested that we visit on a weekday morning when the bakery would be quietest.

The other participant who chose to give me a tour of a place outside her home is Premee. She is a regular visitor to the Edmonton downtown farmer’s market, and she and I met at City Hall, where the market takes place. Because City Hall is a public building, no advance permission was required, but it was appropriate to be as inobtrusive as possible with

my GoPro camera. The solution was to affix the camera to the top of my bicycle helmet, which I then carried around under my arm as Premee toured me through the market (Figure 3; a still image from this tour is Figure 18, Chapter 4).

Figure 3. The GoPro camera (r) used in the video tours, affixed to my bicycle helmet.

The sensory experiences during these video tours were divergent and at times, challenging to me as the researcher. I discuss my observations about the experience of using this method, including its challenges, in Chapter 4, Section 4.8.

Field notes. The third data type is field notes. There are multiple approaches to creating field notes, including notes taken while observing participants, and a daily journaling approach in which a researcher records their ongoing impressions (Schwandt, 2007, p. 115). I kept field notes in the form of reflective observations written immediately as a field journal entry after each participant encounter. I captured my initial impressions, sensory experiences, and, after the interviews, follow-up questions that I wished to raise at the subsequent video tour. This post-hoc approach enabled me to be as fully present as possible during participant encounters. This was particularly important with the video tours, which required me to attend to multiple elements of the event at once. It was also important for me to be "hands free" in the video tours in order to participate as much as possible in participants' activities, such as cooking. Field notes form the primary basis of my observations about the use of video tours in qualitative information research, which I include in Chapter 4, Section 4.8.

3.5 Ethics and recruitment

This study presented a low risk of harm because it explored people's everyday food lives. At the same time, the use of video tours introduced less commonly-addressed

considerations for ethical data collection, handling, and sharing in research outcomes such as this thesis. The following section describes how this study was conducted ethically, and how recruitment proceeded in both its rural and urban locations.

3.5.1 The ethics process

Because it presented a low risk of harm for participants, this study was reviewed by a sub-committee of the Swinburne Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC). As food holds personal meaning for many people, there was a risk that participation in this study could raise upsetting or uncomfortable memories. Even acknowledging this, however, this study presented no greater risk to participants than they would encounter in their daily lives.

In order to fully inform participants and minimise any potential harm, I used several consent techniques. First, participants were repeatedly informed of the fact that data would be held securely (see Appendix D, Participant Information Letter, and Appendix E, Consent Form). Second and more distinctly, I offered participants the opportunity to be anonymised. Being anonymised was a choice, but not a requirement. Anonymisation is certainly a more common path in qualitative studies, but for this study there was a case to be made for offering participants the choice. As I mentioned while introducing this study in Chapter 1, many people enthusiastically share information about their food lives already, often identifiably on social media. It was reasonable to expect that some participants might not prefer to be anonymised. Equally importantly, everyday food life is not viewed by most people as inherently risky or harmful, and it should not be framed that way, even inadvertently, by the informed consent process. I did not wish to have reassurances of complete anonymity influence, or even pathologise, how my participants would consider describing their food lives to me. Of course, anonymisation still needed to be an option, as there was the possibility that emotional risk could be perceived by participants, for example by talking about a disorder that they may or may not have discussed publicly before. As well, when talking about social aspects of food information, participants also often discussed their personal relationships with people, which in a few cases led to discussion of uncomfortable

or harmful social interactions.

Food is both a topic of longstanding interest and also an area of labour that may tend to be underacknowledged, which would also incline participants to choose not to be anonymised. Other social researchers have similarly questioned the conventional assumption that all data must be anonymised, highlighting the arguments I have made here, as well as others, involving contexts such as living with cancer (e.g., Grinyer, 2002; Kaiser, 2009). Appendix A, which contains a synopsis of details about each participant, also indicates which participants are anonymised and which are not. Three participants chose to be anonymised, and they chose their pseudonyms. The other 11 chose not to be anonymised. These participants are included under their real first names, although potentially identifying details about friends or family members have been anonymised. These choices are summarised in Table 1 at the beginning of Chapter 4, as well as in Appendix A.

I offered participants this choice through the Anonymisation Choice Form (Appendix F). The Anonymisation Choice Form was the final step in the informed consent process that occurred at the beginning of each interview, the first meeting with each participant. I presented participants with the choice to be anonymised after we had discussed the study, following the detailed information letter (Appendix D) and the consent form (Appendix E), for which I used a visual consent approach that I discuss further below. The Anonymisation Choice Form is simple, consisting mainly of two square boxes in which participants can indicate their choice. The options are:

- *I prefer that my contributions to this study be anonymised. Remove all details that could potentially identify me, and give me a pseudonym,* or
- *I prefer to be identifiable in this research study. Use my real name and share any of my contributions, even if my face can be seen or my voice can be heard.*

After discussing this choice with a participant and giving them the form and a self-sealing envelope, I would step out of the room or turn my back to the participant for a moment to give them privacy as they made their choice. I asked them to select one option or the other and then to seal the form in the envelope provided. I would then set the form aside along

with my signed copy of the consent letter and begin the interview.

I asked participants to seal their Anonymisation Choice Form into the envelope before handing it to me, so that I would not know which choice they had made. I opened the envelope after the interview. If the participant had chosen to be anonymised, I would prepare a selection of potential pseudonyms to discuss with them at the video tour, in case they did not have a suggestion of their own at the ready. At the end of the video tour, my second meeting with each participant, I reminded participants that they had completed the form and that, based on their experiences in the interview and video tour, they could change their mind about whether or not they preferred to be anonymised. At that point, each participant affirmed the choice they had originally made.

Through the informed consent process (Appendices D, E, F), participants received additional detailed information about the purpose of the study and its risks and benefits. Participants could stop data collection at any point and withdraw their data from the study up to one month after the date of their video tour. For participants who chose to be anonymised, I removed potentially identifying details from the data, thereby minimising participants' risk of being associated with information they consider personal, sensitive, or embarrassing, or that they simply would prefer not to share under their real names.

The ethical approach for this study also includes specific considerations such as the implications of videography and photography in public and private places, including circumstances where non-participants' images may be inadvertently captured. Neither the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2018) nor the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2007) address these concerns precisely, but they do provide general principles, such as the importance of participants having sufficient information in order to give consent based in adequate understanding. One of the challenges with visual methods is "truly informed" consent. If participants have not been part of a study using video and photos, it can be difficult to ensure that they adequately understand the participation to which they are consenting

This study addressed the need to support participants in the informed consent

process through a "visual consent form," which combines small, full-colour photographs with text to guide participants through each detail of the study for which they must indicate agreement (Appendix E). For example, an image of a stop sign sits alongside the text, "You are free to pause or stop participating at any time. Up until one month after our video tour, you can withdraw all of your contributions from this study. You can do this by email or by calling me." Participants then signed their initials beside this point, and the others. Visual consent forms have been found to elicit a high degree of engagement with the consent process, resulting in many questions from potential participants (Mitchell, 2012, p. 310). In this study, I found that the visual consent form worked well in contrast with the conventional, detail-heavy information letter (Appendix D). After we talked through the information in the letter, participants often leaned forward to examine the consent letter.

When it comes to video tours, ethical consideration extends beyond participants, to people inadvertently captured in public and private spaces. Additionally, by depicting places, voices, and faces, videos make participant anonymity a challenge. Although only three participants chose anonymity, it was still necessary to understand how videos are and can be anonymised. It is more difficult to anonymise visual data than textual data (Mitchell, 2012, p. 315). Rather than aim to perfectly anonymise this study's visual data, care has been taken when selecting visuals for dissemination. See Figures 5, 6, 9, and 14 in Chapter 4 as examples; these are images from my video tour with anonymised participants Cheryl and Todd. Mitchell (2012) provides examples of how images without identifying features can be informative and illustrative: for example, an image of a hand holding a cookbook is more anonymous than an image of a face. An image of a supermarket shelf is more anonymous than an image of people shopping. To protect participants, and non-participants who were inadvertently captured on video, I have included video stills only as illustrative examples in this thesis. In presentations on this research, I have used video clips only including participants who chose not to be anonymised, such as Rachel and Tanya (Polkinghorne, 2018a; Polkinghorne, 2018b).

Additionally, this study has required not only procedural ethics—ie. clearance from

SUHREC—but also a situational ethic. Sarah Tracy (2010), delineating how quality is achieved in qualitative research, describes situational ethics as a mindset in which "we constantly reflect on our methods and the data worth exposing" (p. 847). In this study, situational ethical decisions have been informed by each participant's comfort, choices, and circumstances.

In terms of ethical data handling, this study's data are encrypted, as well as being securely and confidentially stored in a locked cabinet in my private office. Data from this study may be analysed in the future, beyond the duration of this study, and this long-term storage and potential re-use of the data was also incorporated into the informed consent process. Participants have consented to the use of their data for future research and teaching purposes. However, given the highly qualitative nature of this study, the data, uniquely constructed through interactions between researcher and participants, will not be made openly available.

3.5.2 Inclusion criteria

This study was designed to recruit adult participants who identified as having responsibility for food-related activities in their homes, whether each participant lives with their family or alone, and whether food-related activities consist of cooking from scratch, ordering takeout daily, hunting or fishing, or any combination of activities. Responsibility for food-related activities was the central inclusion criterion. Further details, about where and how participants were recruited, are included below in Section 3.5.2. Participant details are also summarised at the beginning of Chapter 4, with more fulsome synopses in Appendix A.

3.5.2 Two recruitment locations: one urban, one rural

Using varying recruitment strategies as the research progressed, I recruited participants (beginning April 2018) of different cultural backgrounds, genders, and socioeconomic circumstances, living in different types of communities. I recruited participants in two communities: an urban community (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada); and a

rural community (Marsden, Saskatchewan, Canada). Edmonton is a city of approximately one million inhabitants, the capital of the province of Alberta, the home of one of the country's largest universities, and my home for much of my adult life. While Alberta is often considered a homogenous, very white, place, due in part to its popular conception as "the Texas of Canada," Edmonton is a city with a diverse population. To take linguistic diversity as just one example, the 2016 Canadian federal census found that 30.9% of Edmontonians have a mother tongue that is not one of Canada's official languages of English and French (Statistics Canada, 2016). Edmonton has a burgeoning downtown core and an increasingly intriguing food scene, as well as sprawling suburbs made possible in a prairie context of flat land and laissez-faire municipal planning.

The rural setting is Marsden, Saskatchewan, a prairie hamlet of approximately 230 people. The nearest urban centre can be reached with approximately forty minutes of highway driving. Marsden is my hometown. I grew up on my family's farm just north of town, and my parents still live and farm there today. Agriculture and resource extraction are the primary local industries. People living in and near Marsden cope with a shrinking variety of amenities, including the loss of the Co-op grocery store that existed on Centre Street. People there must often drive some distance to access health care and other services, and high-speed internet cannot be assumed to be universally available.

While not all Marsden residents know me, most everyone knows my connection to the community through my family name, Polkinghorne. I do not believe this negatively affected recruitment, but overall it was more challenging to recruit participants in Marsden than it was in Edmonton. While I cannot explain this difference with certainty, I believe there were several factors at play, including the fact that the local population is much smaller than Edmonton's. There were also scheduling constraints. Although I made several data collection visits to Marsden, some potential participants were unfortunately not able to meet with me during those times.

I did not select Edmonton and Marsden in order to conduct a comparative case study on urban versus rural practices. Rather, it is assumed that people's food-related activities are

influenced by where they live, and studying people in two different areas captures a broader range of activities than could be found in one area alone.

3.5.3 The recruitment process

Recruitment began via social media by posting an online version of the recruitment poster (Appendix G) to the active Facebook groups frequented by people in each community. This method was effective for recruiting participants in Marsden. I posted a similar recruitment message via my Twitter account, and via an opt-in email mailing list, usually focused on social events, at my workplace. Each of my recruitment messages entreated people to email me to express their initial interest. These approaches proved effective for recruiting an initial selection of participants in the Edmonton area; within twenty minutes of tweeting about the study, the first email from a potential participant arrived in my inbox.

In order to recruit additional participants in the Marsden area, I also printed and posted copies of the recruitment poster and the recruitment flyer (Appendices G and H) in multiple locations on Centre Street, including the confectionary and liquor shop, the library, and the public bulletin board outside the post office. Unfortunately this strategy did not result in additional participants volunteering for the study. As another approach, to avoid excluding potential participants who do not have internet access or who may be socially isolated, I also recruited through snowballing and word-of-mouth (Eide, 2008, p. 744). These techniques succeeded in securing additional participants.

Maintaining an ongoing list of potential participants, I began conducting interviews. I selected the first participants based on details that they volunteered when they first emailed me to express interest. Several potential participants mentioned dietary preferences and food interests. Often, the enthusiasm for an opportunity to participate in food-related research shone through in these initial emails. Potential participants were sometimes keen to highlight their bona fides or particular food interests. For instance, one participant, Lisa J., initially mentioned that she was “gluten free, professionally trained and extremely poor,” and she pointed out that she “might be a different demographic than some of your other people

that are involved."[2] Some people volunteered information about their health concerns or sexual orientation. Based on freely-given details such as these, I was able to recruit toward maximum variation from the outset.

3.5.4. Theoretical sampling and sufficiency

Theoretical sampling. Participants were recruited purposefully, for diversity, using a theoretical sampling strategy. Glaser and Strauss, in their foundational work on grounded theory, name theoretical sampling as a qualitative technique in which ongoing recruitment is guided by emerging findings (1967). With theoretical sampling, "researchers are not seeking a perfect representation of a concrete situation under study," "nor can the sample be identified ahead of the research. Instead, the researcher is continuously guided by emerging theory as to where to go next in search of their sample" (Emmel, 2013, p. 13). This study has used theoretical sampling in order to maximise potential variation among practices, and from there, enable identification of commonalities and differences across participants' practices.

As analysis proceeded and themes began to emerge, the theoretical direction of my sampling also took shape. In November 2018 I began to identify experiences and qualities that would increase the theoretical diversity of the data and enable me to include a greater diversity of perspectives within the participant group. My initial recruitment efforts had prompted a wave of messages from potential participants. This meant that I was able to connect with multiple participants who were enthusiastic about food, and often quite expansive and all-embracing in their perspectives. When the time came to recruit additional participants, I emailed the remaining potential participants from that first wave, to invite them to participate if their experiences corresponded to my emerging thematic concerns. At that point, I was seeking participants with specific thematically-relevant qualities such as adhering to a relatively restrictive diet (for lifestyle, health, or religious reasons). I was also

[2] As this email communication occurred before Lisa J. had formally consented to participating in the study, I later sought her consent to include this quote.

seeking participants whose food experiences were not consistently positive; that is, I wanted to include people who would speak to having negative food experiences, or to feeling indifferent or ambivalent about food. By specifying these directions in my follow-up messages, I was able to recruit more participants who were willing to contribute these perspectives to the study.

Theoretical sufficiency. I conducted 12 interviews and 10 video tours with a total of 14 participants. More details are summarised in Table 1, Chapter 4. These participant meetings resulted in an extensive dataset, including 178.3 gigabytes of audio, visual, and textual data (this large size is due mainly to the use of video). As data collection progressed, concurrent with the analysis detailed in Section 3.6 below, I continued to find recurring themes and practices among participants, even as there was variety in the particulars of their activities and circumstances. This was the case even with the participants whom I had recruited with an intentional eye to certain experiences that I wished to have represented in the participant group, such as a participant with a troubled or ambivalent relationship with food. Thus, as my analysis progressed toward what Dey (1999) refers to as "theoretical sufficiency" (p. 257), it eventually became clear that I had recruited enough participants to be able to credibly speak to the study's exploratory research questions. Theoretical sufficiency is "the stage [of analysis] at which categories seem to cope adequately with new data without requiring continual extensions and modifications" (p. 117). As is typical of grounded theory studies, in which data collection and analysis occur concurrently, it was the development of the analysis that enabled me to determine when recruitment could end.

3.6 Data analysis

Data analysis for this study followed the processes of constructivist grounded theory. These included conducting data collection and analysis simultaneously; coding at multiple levels, first close to the data, in participants' own words, then with an eye to identifying emerging theoretical categories; memo-writing to track comparisons and the emergence of conceptual categories and themes; and ultimately, constructing "an imaginative theoretical

interpretation that makes sense of the studied phenomenon" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 231). This study adhered to these processes as far as possible.

Data analysis was continuous. It was concurrent with data collection, and it also carried on once I had decided to stop collecting additional data (see Section 3.5.4 on recruitment, above). The semi-structured interviews were transcribed in conventional verbatim fashion. Where I had taken photographs of participants' documents and information sources, in analysis these served primarily as "memory objects," reminders of the "sensoriality and sociality" of the interview encounter (Pink, 2015, p. 158). The video tours received more layered transcription customised to each tour, including participants' remarks and pieces of conversation, and multiple types of notes. The video from the tours is so rich with informative detail that transcribing and analysing them at times seemed overwhelming. There were always at least three layers of transcription and analysis possible: the participants' gestures, movement practices, and other embodied experiences; the physical surroundings; and the participant-led, generally unstructured conversation occurring between the participant and me. Very often, conversation that was simultaneous to activity did not concern the activity at all. One example of this, included in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.2, is peeling and slicing apples for pies, with participant Lisa M. Our conversation about the activity itself was relatively brief in comparison with the time spent doing it, and we spoke about many other matters as we stood in the kitchen and processed a large bag of apples from Lisa M.'s garden.

Given this kind of richness, it was not my intention to perform a comprehensive transcription and visual analysis of the video tours, but rather to focus on the embodied information practices that could be identified within them. This follows Pink's (2015) model for engaging with video recordings:

> I am interested in engaging with the video recording through the relationship between tacit, embodied and performed ways of knowing, and the ways that participants describe and verbalise these, or talk about their lives, environments and activities *in relation to* these actions. This approach does involve directly transcribing

> specific and pertinent comments made by participants, however these are contextualised in relation to activities and environments, which enables a different approach to that which would be focused on the verbal talk of transcripts. (p. 153)

It is conventional for transcripts to be framed as comprehensive representations of a research encounter. However, as qualitative psychology researchers Potter and Hepburn (2005) have noted, this is in part because there has also been a tendency for interviews to be conducted with positivist, transactional assumptions. When interviews are conducted within a positivist paradigm, they are more likely to be conceived of as truths that the researcher has been able to collect, which have been given by the participant. In this way, the interactional qualities of research encounters are often minimised or erased, including through the transcription process. This study, following an interpretivist rather than a positivist stance, has relied on Pink's approach to transcribing video data, as a process that is as much about documenting context in relation to action as it is about talk. Field notes were also reviewed, as reminders of sensory aspects of the tours, such as expressive movements, gestures, and moments of tasting and smelling, particularly when the informational aspect of these moments was evident.

Codes within each interview and video tour were identified inductively. Grounded theory coding is characterised by close attention to the data and openness to any theoretical direction, with both emerging data and prior data continuously being scrutinised for meaning. Coding for this study began at the line-by-line level, which "works particularly well with detailed data about fundamental empirical problems or processes [...] This type of coding can help you to identify implicit concerns as well as explicit statements" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 125). Line-by-line coding used gerunds, a heuristic technique for anchoring analysis in participants' own statements, experiences, and actions (Charmaz, 2014, p. 121). Coding with gerunds involves using participants' own words as far as possible, in combination with gerunds (verb forms that in English end in -ing) to capture the action being described or enacted. Examples of such initial codes include "Imagining what ingredients can become," "Observing my child's dietary sensitivity," and "Judging myself for avoiding help."

The analysis software NVIVO was used for coding. Coding is "the pivotal link between collecting data and developing and emergent theory to explain these data" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 113). Codes were added, refined, and reinforced using the constant comparison method: as I observed codes emerging, previously-examined data were re-examined for that code (Charmaz, 2014, p. 132). Over time, codes were combined into broader categories as themes addressing the research questions began to emerge. A theme that emerged early on, for instance, was "trial and error," which appeared in the accounts of numerous participants, often accompanying descriptions of sophisticated, ongoing, iterative information practices. "Trial and error," as conceived of by participants, is analysed and theorised along with other findings, in Chapter 4. Memos and a research diary were kept to track and manage interpretive decisions, to identify gaps in data analysis, and to document reflections on the analysis process (Charmaz, 2014, p. 162). I brought analysis to a close, again relying on Dey's (1999) articulation of theoretical sufficiency, which is that "stage [of analysis] at which categories seem to cope adequately with new data without requiring continual extensions and modifications" (p. 117). Performing a final process of theorising, I reconsidered my findings – the areas of embodied information practice that I had identified and constructed by working with the data – and proposed a theoretical concept, "embodied mutual constitution," in order to illuminate the intertwining of these practices with participants' identities and relationships within larger social systems.

As this study uses both ethnographic and grounded theory approaches, this combination is visible in the presentation of the findings. This study's findings interweave discussion of theory that emerges from the data, thick description featuring passages of participants' own voices, and rich description of settings and events from the participant encounters.

3.7 Quality and rigour

This research connects one approach to data collection (sensory ethnography) with another for data analysis (constructivist grounded theory). As such, my conduct of the study

adhered to practices of rigour and quality associated with each. In addition, this study takes Sarah Tracy's (2010) work on quality in qualitative research as a guide. Because it aims to articulate principles of quality that are legitimate and relevant across qualitative approaches, Tracy's work is particularly applicable to a study such as this one, incorporating multiple methodologies. In this section on quality and rigour, I speak to this study's observance of Tracy's "big tent" criteria for qualitative rigour, with reference to methodology-specific considerations where appropriate.

Tracy (2010) argues that high-quality qualitative research is undertaken with *sincerity*. With the term "sincerity," she is referring to "self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s)," and "transparency about the methods and challenges" (p. 840). Sincerity is evident in my application of sensory ethnography. Quality in sensory ethnography flows significantly from the researcher's presence in participant encounters. Such encounters, focused on sensory details and tacit knowledge, require the researcher to be present and self-aware, and to remain attuned (Pink, 2015). My background in theatre studies, which is rich with practices for presence, prepared me to remain focused, intentional, and responsive during data collection. Further, sensory ethnography "requires us to reflect on [participant] engagements, to conceptualise their meanings theoretically and to seek ways to communicate the relatedness of experiential and intellectual meanings to others" (Pink, 2015, p. 26). I practiced self-reflexivity by keeping field notes after participant encounters, including about my reactions and about sensory details, which were often plentiful. I have also been transparent about the challenges of using sensory ethnography (Section 3.9 and Chapter 4, Section 4.8).

Tracy (2010) argues that high-quality qualitative research exhibits *meaningful coherence*. Such research "uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals" and "meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other" (p. 840). Meaningful coherence is a characteristic that I have considered at every stage of the study. I have worked toward it in multiple ways, such as by pairing two methodologies in order to illuminate the research questions; by carefully integrating

literature from disciplines other than information science, in order to better contextualise findings; and by adhering to the process of constructivist grounded theory analysis, which requires the researcher to remain open to complexities, without foreclosing on theoretical possibilities (Charmaz, 2014).

Tracy (2010) refers to high-quality qualitative research as exhibiting *rich rigour,* meaning that the study design must "be *at least as* complex, flexible, and multifaceted as the phenomena being studied" (p. 841, emphasis original). This study accomplishes rich rigour in this regard. Pairing sensory ethnography with constructivist grounded theory increased the complexity of the study design, but this was appropriate for an exploratory study concerning people's embodied experiences, practices, and processes.

As Tracy (2010) observes, quality is composed of numerous practices that occur at different points in the research process. These practices are "the *means* to achieve rigor" (p. 841, emphasis original). The details I have delineated in this section demonstrate my work to use rigorous research practices throughout the course of the study.

3.8 Limitations

For this study, limitations primarily arise from the fact that it examines a topic that, while a matter of everyday life, is complex and often personal. Further, this study has followed an interpretive qualitative approach and as such it has attended to methodological expectations of coherence, trustworthiness, and the rich representation of participants' experiences (Tracy, 2010). The limitations of this study reflect its context-bound nature, as well as the partiality of any person's account of their life.

The participants themselves are not a limitation of this study. However, taken together, they form a uniquely diverse group, and this uniqueness can be understood as a limitation. This study relied on participants to volunteer, and I intentionally recruited participants with very different food-related experiences. This study's participants differ across every conventional demographic category, including age, race, gender, sexual orientation, family status, and socioeconomic status. This was an important strategy for a

study that focuses on widely-held practices rather than the characteristic practices of one particular demographic group or community. Participants are not suggested to be representative of any particular demographic category to which they belong. If another researcher were to repeat this study, it would be possible to recruit participants who as a group are similarly diverse, but who as individuals bring different specific experiences.

In the same vein, the core recruitment criterion for this study was *responsibility* for food in the home. This criterion had the effect of enticing participants with expertise and abiding interest in food. Recruiting participants who are not primarily responsible for their own food lives, or for whatever reason are indifferent to or uninterested in food, would result in a very different study. Because grounded theory analysis builds upwards from participants' descriptions of their own experiences, a different group of participants would lead to different findings.

As I mention, participants' contexts are widely divergent. This is a strength of the study but it does also introduce limitations. During data collection, I asked participants to describe themselves for me ("tell me a bit about yourself"), and I asked follow-up questions about aspects that were visible on location, such as cookbooks, tablets, and recipes collected in boxes and files. However, it was not my goal, nor would it have been possible, to create an exhaustive contextual portrait of each participant. I worked to create a rapport with each participant and they were enthusiastic to take part in the study. Even so, I do not claim that participants shared the entirety of their food lives with me. Such comprehensiveness was not a goal, nor would it be feasible to attain. With food being a lifelong concern, and with there being many tacit food experiences in additional to intentional ones, it would not be possible to articulate any person's complete context and experiences with food.

There are some limitations attendant upon the data collection techniques, interview and video tours, which were used in this study. A common limitation with interviews is that they gather participants' accounts. The interviews in this study frequently elicited participants' recollections, not only of recent events, activities, and perspectives, but also of childhood experiences and longstanding family traditions. Because this study proceeds on

social constructionist assumptions, it had no interest in "fact-checking" or in determining an objectively "true" version of the events relayed to me by participants. Having said that, I was often struck by the level of detail and precision with which participants could recount food experiences from much earlier in their lives. This level of detail reflects the centrality of food as a concern in participants' lives, as well as, in my opinion, the fact that the multisensory nature of activities such as eating can greatly strengthen their connection to memory (Saive, Royet, & Plailly, 2014). Interview data capture participants' own accounts of their experiences, not the experiences themselves.

The limitations with video tours are more technical. The video tours were more intensive than the interviews, as they always involved an activity, in which I often participated, as well as an unstructured conversation. They were challenging to conduct. This is a common observation of ethnographic techniques. The specific challenge with video tours is to remain attentive and present while attending to multiple necessities at once, including what the participant is saying and doing, observations arising for the researcher, sensitivity to the fact that I was usually in someone's home, sensory factors arising in our surroundings, and technical details such as camera operation and positioning. Given that video tours were generally no longer than ninety minutes, there remain many elements of participants' food lives that I did not document.

While this study, like any study, carries limitations that can be acknowledged, I worked to manage and minimise them to the extent possible. Maintaining a participant-centred approach meant asking many unplanned probing questions so that the interview was not confined only to my list of questions, and so that I could check my understanding and receive further elaborative detail from participants. Meeting with participants more than once provided opportunities for me to ask follow-up questions that would occur to me between the interview and the video tour. Offering participants the opportunity to decide whether or not to be anonymised, including a window of opportunity in which to change their minds, gave them control as befitted their own preferences. The limitations of this study are not uncommon to interpretivist research and do not detract from the study's rigour

or value.

3.9 Conclusion

This qualitative study pairs sensory ethnography with constructivist grounded theory. It is the first IS study to combine these approaches. By utilising wearable technology and a combination of interviews, video tours, and field notes, this study has enabled the collection of ample data for grounded theory coding. This study's rigor is demonstrated through practices such as selecting methods that fit the study's purpose, triangulating three data types, planning for sufficient time spent with participants, and applying thick description and memo-creation during analysis and writing (Tracy, 2010). Through coding, patterns in people's information practices, including embodied aspects and the processes through which people come to feel informed or uninformed, have emerged.

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion

This study included 14 participants. They, and their data, are summarised here (Table 1). I have included age in Table 1 to demonstrate just one type of variation among participants. Please see Appendix A for additional details about each participant, such as their living arrangements, food interests and hobbies, and demographic characteristics they mentioned during our encounters.

Table 1. Summary of participant details and data collected

Participant	**Location**	**Age** (as expressed by participant)	**Interview**[3] (minutes and seconds)	**Video tour** (minutes and seconds)	**Video tour location and activity**
Carrie*	Edmonton	40	67'49"	n/a[4]	n/a
Cheryl*	Edmonton	Early 30s	103'46"	63'33"	At home; a tour of relevant spaces
Jeff	Edmonton	47	67'23"	n/a	n/a
Kaelin	Edmonton	20	40'50"	104'31"	At home; making vegan buffalo wings
Kim	Edmonton	65	99'06"	99'16"	At home; making Chinese food
Larry	Marsden (in town)	70	78'22"	67'35"	At home; a tour of relevant indoor and outdoor spaces
Lisa J.	Edmonton	34	34'52"	48'16"	At home; making pasta with moosemeat bolognese
Lisa M.	Marsden (on a farm)	not mentioned	72'01"	104'05"	At home; tour of relevant spaces and processing the fall apple harvest
Megan	Edmonton	not mentioned	84'03"	59'59"	At home; making Chinese steamed egg
Premee	Edmonton	"elderly millennial"	104'22"	84'36"	At the Edmonton Farmer's Market; shopping
Rachel	Edmonton	40	39'50"	96'18"	At home; making muffins and apple crisp
Tanya	Edmonton	30	76'37"	47'33"	At the bakery Celebrate, Gluten Free; having coffee and a cinnamon bun
Todd*	Edmonton	Early 30s	103'46"	63'33"	At home; a tour of relevant indoor and outdoor spaces
Wendy	Marsden (in town)	69	78'22"	67'35"	At home; making chicken soup for lunch

**Carrie, Cheryl, and Todd chose to be anonymised. Other participants chose not to be anonymised.*

[3] Cheryl and Todd were interviewed together, and Larry and Wendy were interviewed together. This is the reason that the interview and video tour timings match for these pairs of participants.
[4] I was unable to conduct video tours with Carrie and Jeff, due to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This study finds multiple intersecting areas of information practice that are central within people's food lives. The participants acted within four broad, complex areas of information practice. These practices form the sections that follow in this chapter, namely:

- *Trial and error: simple label, complex practice;*
- *Never completely alone: constant social connection;*
- *What's right and good: exercising moral reasoning and judgement;* and
- *Informing bod(ies): identifying bodily meanings.*

It is important to note that documenting these information practices includes, but is not limited to, the listing or counting of informational activities, as can be found in other information research on food life, such as Ocepek (2016a). The participants in the current study undertake a huge variety of food-related informational activities, from identifying information needs, to seeking and selecting information, to using, sharing, and creating information. Participants also cite and rely on an array of information sources in multiple formats, including online mainstays such as the subscription-based *NYT Cooking* (*NYT Cooking*, 2021) favoured by Kim, and the popular YouTube pillar *Binging with Babish* (Rea, 2021) consulted by Megan; analog sources such as cookbooks checked out from the public library (Jeff) and lists hung on the refrigerator door (Carrie); and close interpersonal sources such as trusted friends and family members (multiple participants). This chapter integrates description and analysis of many of these activities and sources, and highlights participants' voices as they describe these in their own words. However, this study is not solely concerned with *activities* or *sources,* which are more traditional "units of analysis" in the field of human information behaviour. This study articulates a more holistic picture of the information *practices* that can be identified through the data.

As Reckwitz (2002) reiterates, activities are not equivalent to practices, but rather part of them:

> A 'practice' (*Praktik*) is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of

> understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. A practice – a way of cooking, of consuming, of working, of investigating, of taking care of oneself or of others, etc. – forms so to speak a 'block' whose existence necessarily depends on the existence and specific interconnectedness of these elements, and which cannot be reduced to any one of these single elements. (p. 249-250)

Following Reckwitz's concept of practices, this study's findings are articulated here as "blocks" within which we can see the interconnectedness of the constituent elements. Food is such a rich part of life that in an interpretivist, qualitative study, it would be difficult to discuss food only in terms of activities undertaken or sources consulted. The slightest exploration of why and how people have configured their food lives as they have reveals this richness, in both information practices and in the influences on these practices. As such, this study additionally illustrates how food is an ideal site for information researchers to continue developing the concept of information practices. I will discuss this implication more fully in Chapter 5.

4.1 Whither embodiment? Both integrated and standalone findings

As embodiment is a core concern in this study, it warrants a direct preamble to clarify its treatment in the findings sections that follow. Toward the end of this chapter, I identify information practices that centre directly on participants' conscious, articulatable observations of their own bodies and others' bodies. These practices are detailed in Section 4.5. At the same time, the other practices detailed in this chapter also have essential embodied elements, and my descriptions of these are integrated throughout the relevant sections. This structure is intentional, and at the same time, it illustrates the difficulty of analysing and theorising about embodiment, particularly given its nascent focus in the discipline.

It is not possible to document practices without identifying the embodied experiences that constitute practices. All practices have multiple embodied elements. Even the most sedentary or ostensibly intellectual practices involve interaction with, knowledge of,

reference to, or grounding in bodily experience and the physical environment. To illustrate this, once, Bruno Latour (2004) asked philosophy colleagues to participate in a thought experiment: to write down the antonym for the word "body." He observed that the most "arresting" responses were words such as "death," and then he reasoned that:

> If the opposite of being a body is dead, there is no life to expect apart from the body, especially not an after-life, nor a life of the mind: either you have, you are a body, or you are dead, you have become a corpse [...] *the opposite of embodied is dead*. (p. 205-209; emphasis added)

Latour's pithy observation that "the opposite of embodied is dead" captures the conundrum of trying to analyse and discuss embodied experiences. The articulation of this conundrum is often associated with Heidegger (Overgaard, 2004). On the one hand, the experience of being embodied is inherent. It cannot be hived off from the experience of being alive. As discussed in Section 2.3 of Chapter 2, the separation of "cognition," "affect," and "embodiment" for the purposes of analysis is pragmatic, but somewhat arbitrary, and it reflects enlightenment assumptions, rather than our growing understanding about the inseparability of these processes. Within information science, credit for an observation as pithy as Latour's goes to Keilty (2016): "We are bodies; we do not have bodies" (p. 66). Though this may appear to be an innocuous truism, Keilty's assertion is a contentious philosophical and theoretical claim. The debate surrounding this claim is fascinating but it would be a diversion from the findings at hand to explore further here. On the other hand, Latour and Keilty's observations about the inescapability of embodiment also serve as reminders that many bodily processes and experiences are little-understood, and many are either subjectively experienced, or imperceptible to our conscious minds. This means that no matter how careful our embodiment research may be, our insights are partial (Lueg, 2014).

I reiterate this conundrum because it has rarely been addressed substantively in our field. As discussed in Chapter 2, information science has a tradition of focusing on thinking and feeling and "brain-work," without devoting attention to corresponding, and inextricable, bodily experiences. Research in our discipline predominantly exhibits the common

tendencies of reductionism and atomism, as exemplified by the predominance of research that focuses on individual people's cognition and observable behaviour (Polkinghorne & Given, 2021). At the same time, we also have a significant and growing body of research that centres on new areas of knowledge, including: embodied information experiences (e.g., the work of Lloyd, Olsson, Lueg, Gorichanaz, Veinot, Keilty, Cox, Huttenen et al., and more), the relationships between bodies and information (e.g., Lueg, 2014), the role of bodies as information sources (Weissenberger, Budd, & Herold, 2018), and the nature of sensory information (Chen, 2016). In one way or another, all of this scholarship takes up the challenge of articulating areas of experience that we may be less acquainted with analytically, but which are inherent to being human.

For this study, it is the focus on the concept of practices, in combination with analytical techniques from constructivist grounded theory, that have motivated me to discuss embodied experiences both on their own, and as inherent parts of the other practices that emerged through analysis. Framing my findings in this way illustrates that while not all practices are primarily focused or reliant on physical or sensory elements, all practices are embodied to some extent. In information science, we will continue to get better at discussing these nuances without carving up human experiences.

4.2 Trial and error: simple label, complex practice

The first area of study findings related to information practice, *Trial and error: simple label, complex process,* focuses on how participants engage in long-term learning and strive to improve in relation to food, and what role and forms of information are involved in this learning. This practice speaks particularly to research questions 1.1 and 2.1, which are: *How do people describe the information practices they undertake in the process of feeding themselves and their families?* and *How do people describe the experience of feeling informed or uninformed during this process?*

The concept "trial and error" has long been generally understood as a way of learning that consists of repeated hands-on attempts over time, in order to arrive at a desired result,

such as performing an action correctly. I reviewed prior thinking on this concept in Chapter 2, Section 2.4, but to reiterate here, trial and error was originally conceptualised as a simple form of learning that hinged on repetition and correction and was considered well-suited for subjects such as mathematics (Thorndike, 1911). The participants in this study often chose the expression "trial and error" to describe their recurring, self-directed attempts to do something correctly, or more often, to achieve a goal, such as baking a satisfying loaf of bread. Participants' conceptions and descriptions of trial and error are much richer than the approach to learning originally coined as trial and error, particularly by Thorndike (1911). They are also more sophisticated than the framing of trial and error generally visible in the IS scholarship that focuses on it, which tends to emphasise a finite process of overcoming failure, rather than an open-ended process of information exploration and expertise development (Diehm & Lupton, 2012; Mansourian, 2008). The activities that participants often label "trial and error" reflect a sophisticated, generative, idiosyncratic, often continual, information practice. Although "trial and error," as a common expression, appears in IS research, its nature as an information practice has not been explored before.

4.2.1 Everyday trial and error: a sophisticated, generative information practice

Participants describe "trial and error" as a cyclical practice that generates new information: the results of each attempt inform future attempts. Framed in this way, trial and error is a predominant practice through which participants describe becoming informed about food. Through trial and error, they have come to understand, for example, how to eat so that their bodies feel healthy, how to cook a dish that tastes delicious, how to manage stress through meal planning, or how to decide which sources of published food information are trustworthy. In the following sections, I will detail participants' everyday trial and error practices by analysing a number of circumstances in which they occur. Viewed qualitatively across time, the process that people ordinarily call "trial and error" is sophisticated and generative.

4.2.2 "A cool process of discovering": trial and error helps us figure out what we want

Sometimes participants use "trial and error" to inform themselves throughout a food-related transformation, such as developing or maintaining new practices. Kaelin, a university student, aged twenty, had been eating a vegan diet for about one year when we met. Veganism is a fully plant-based diet that involves avoiding all animal-based foods, including dairy and meats. Kaelin describes using trial and error in the process of becoming vegan. She chose a one-month transition period to go fully vegan. This was Kaelin's way of avoiding the gastrointestinal issues that can arise when a person takes what she calls a "cold turkey" approach, going vegan suddenly, which can put uncomfortable stress on the body. For Kaelin, the transition, including swapping animal-based foods for plant-based foods, has been a "cool process of discovering":

> With milk, you just switch to almond milk rather than dairy. But then, you know, when you're looking to cook recipes, it'll be like, 'oh, eggs, can't have that now, what else can we have?' But it was also a cool process of discovering what you actually can eat.

Kaelin brings a spirit of experimentation to determining which ingredient substitutions and new foods are preferable for her. She has the ability to shop at multiple grocery stores in pursuit of the ingredients she prefers. By "experimenting with what I have," Kaelin brings the same approach to her vegan diet as she has brought to cooking all her life:

> Often I'll find a recipe that has something I don't like in it, or I have different things in my fridge. So rather than going out to buy everything to follow it exactly, I'll just, you know, experiment with what I have. And [...] if a recipe has mushrooms, I will *not have them!* And then replace it with something else. That kind of thing. And sometimes I'll just *not* use a recipe, and just cook whatever I have.

Kaelin's ethic, summarised as "connect with food & live authentically," is posted on a hand-lettered note by her kitchen sink (Figure 4). Kaelin credits her parents, with whom she

Figure 4. Kaelin's hand-lettered note, in her kitchen

cooked with when she was a child, for giving her a knowledge foundation and comfort in the kitchen; this enabled her to adopt a vegan diet she considers sustainable, ethical, and energising.

Similarly, participants Cheryl and Todd, young married professionals living in an affluent suburban neighbourhood, cite family members such as Cheryl's mother as trial and error role models. One of Cheryl and Todd's regular practices is to cook large quantities of food, which they freeze in individually-sized portions. They "batch cook," as large-quantity cooking is known, every second weekend. For them, batch cooking means making twenty workday lunches at a time, enough for ten workdays each. Cheryl explains that each batch cooking session "can take anywhere between two and six hours, depending on what the heck we're trying to accomplish here, and how many steps there are, how many side dishes we decide we need to include." Through "trial and error," Cheryl and Todd have figured out how to create dishes that are both feasible to prepare in large batches, and also palatable to eat for ten days in a row.

One of Cheryl and Todd's priorities with their large-batch trial and error is seasoning. Todd emphasises that they "mix it up with flavours and that sort of thing, and make something interesting enough that you can eat it for two weeks." Cheryl and Todd credit Cheryl's mother as an influence on their approach to batch cooking, which combines pragmatism, frugality, and flavour. Cheryl explains, noting that she had a largely rural childhood with multiple moves:

> I come from a family of five kids with a single parent. So home cooking was, like, *de rigueur*. My mom has some *really* weird food hacks, which horrify me to this day, including a chocolate cake made with mayonnaise. She put Miracle Whip in it once,

and I'm like, 'ah, god, Mom, really!' But when you don't have a choice, you get creative. And she's not bad at it. She makes a mean turkey. She knows how to cook.

Cheryl and Todd have parlayed this creativity into a wide-ranging, trial-and-error-enabled, repertoire of food practices. In addition to batch-cooking their work lunches, Cheryl and Todd are also juggling multiple ambitious projects at any given moment. When they toured me through their home and backyard, food projects were visible in nearly every space, and sometimes able to be heard, as with their basement quail operation I describe in Section 4.4.3 below, or smelled, as in the backyard shed in which they keep angora rabbits. In an image from their dining room (Figure 5), you can see Todd's handmade beer taps (right). You can also see their fall tomato crop laid out on the dining table (bottom right), where Cheryl and Todd can monitor the tomatoes by appearance, smell, and feel as they ripen. (It is a common practice in Canada to bring fall tomatoes inside to finish ripening and to avoid frost.) On Cheryl and Todd's project whiteboard, three distinct informational activities are visible. You can see them brainstorming beer names for Todd's future brewing projects ("Berried Alive"; "Lambic Pentameter"), keeping track of the current beverages they have on

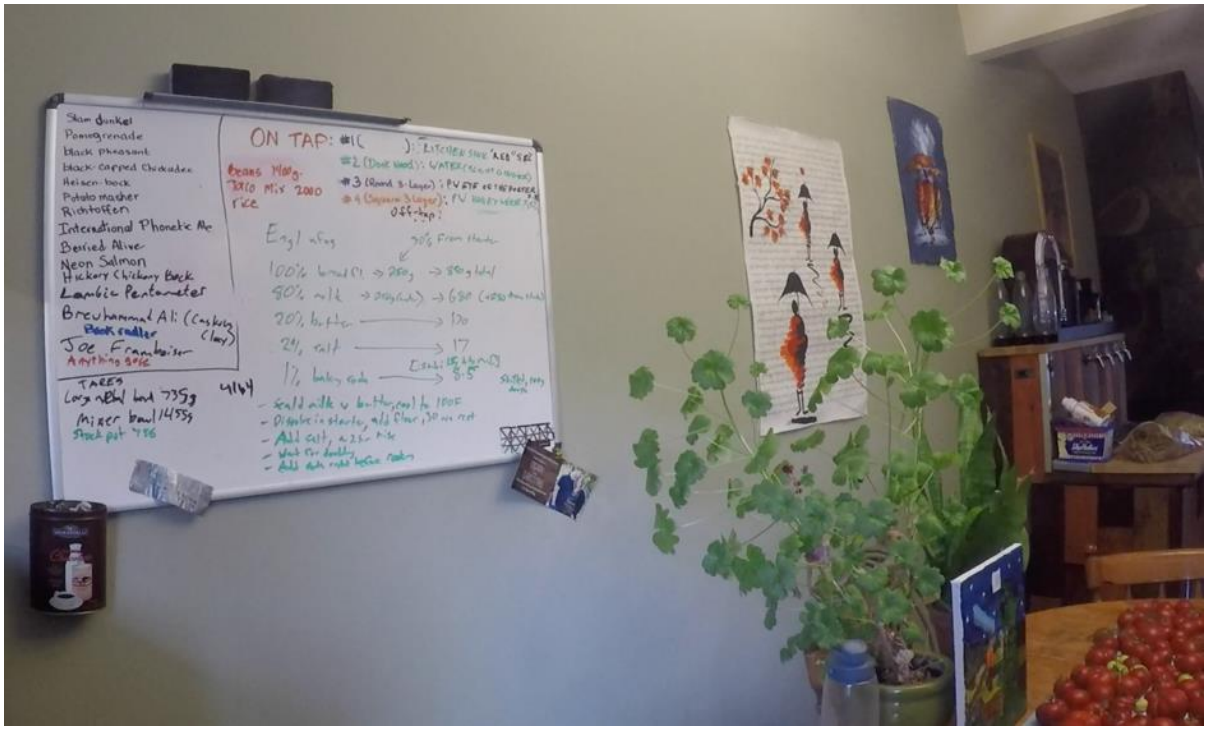

Figure 5. Cheryl and Todd's dining room, with several food and information activities visible, including baker's percentages listed on the whiteboard

tap (“ON TAP”), and last, under the heading “Engl mfns,” tracking ingredient percentages in Todd’s English muffin recipe (bread flour, milk, butter, salt, baking soda).

Cheryl and Todd also keep multiple iterations of foods such as pickles in their basement storage area (Figure 6). Picking up a jar of “2015 Dill Cucumber” pickles to show me during our video tour, Todd cites his mother as an additional source of food information in their household. “My mom,” Todd points out, “always claims they taste better after a couple years.” Cheryl and Todd’s trial and error extends over years at a time, as they grow their own crops, raise their own livestock, brew their own drinks, and test how their pickles improve with age. What Kaelin and Cheryl and Todd share, although their constraints and priorities differ, is a “trial and error” approach characterised by open-endedness, enjoyment, and a spirit of experimentation. Their goals, and their information practices, revolve around eating in a certain way, rather than perfecting specific dishes in comparison with an ideal.

Figure 6. Todd tours me through the pickles and preserves section of their storage room

Although Kaelin and Cheryl have enjoyable trial and error practices now, their accounts of their childhood food circumstances are different. Kaelin describes a home environment where food was a playful topic; for example, she shares memories of pretending in the kitchen, along with her father, at being contestants on reality television programs such as the Food Network competition *Chopped*. When she needs ingredients, she shops around, which she also enjoys. Cheryl speaks openly about a childhood marked by periods of hunger and food insecurity. Today, her predominant food information practices revolve around the expertise of self-sufficiency, such as putting up preserves, raising her own livestock, and, as in the present example, cooking and freezing large batches.

Kaelin and Cheryl's contrasting childhoods confirm findings from public health researchers Wills, Backett-Milburn, Roberts, and Lawton (2011), who employ Bourdieu's theory of habitus to illuminate "how class-based identities are constructed, displayed and reproduced by families through their everyday food and eating practices" (p. 725). The authors detail how food beliefs and practices are representations of social, economic, and cultural capital. What Kaelin and Cheryl's present use of trial and error illustrates, as an expression of the control they have now, in their adult lives (MacDonald, 2018), is the changing nature of such capital across people's lives, as well as the persistent and evolving influence of life experiences on information practices.

4.2.3 "Not supposed to taste like this!": trial and error helps us make food as it should be

At times, participants inform themselves, through trial and error, in order to cook something that tastes how it is "supposed to" taste. Tanya was diagnosed with Celiac disease when she was 13 years old. Now, speaking with me at the age of thirty, she reflects on foods that she has not eaten since her diagnosis. Referring to her lunchtime pasta salad (Figure 7),

Tanya describes her process of determining how best to cook pasta. She recounts her partner's comments on her early efforts to cook pasta, which have yielded less than ideal results: "When I started living with my partner, he's like 'pasta's not supposed to taste like this!' because I would always overcook it, but I had no idea, because I didn't remember what pasta even tasted like!" Having lived some time without a sense of how cooked pasta is "supposed to" taste, and because gluten-free pasta comes in many varieties with different taste and textural qualities, Tanya uses trial and error to evaluate the options. In addition to taste, Tanya's contextual priorities, such as needing to cook enough to have leftovers for her next day's lunch, influence her assessments of different gluten-free pasta options. She breaks down the options by ingredient:

Figure 7. Tanya's workday lunch of gluten-free pasta salad

> Corn pasta tastes really good, but on the second day, it doesn't, so much, because it gets that crunchy kind of taste to it. Whereas quinoa pasta's pretty tasty, and it holds up in the fridge, which is nice. Usually if I'm at a grocery store now, there are so many brands, that I just try one.

Tanya's quest for pasta illustrates how the trial and error process of finding the best ingredients is contextually situated, open-ended, and embodied: the "bite" matters, both when freshly cooked and as leftovers. Tanya observes that there are more gluten-free options than ever before, and there are always new products to try. She engages in a continual process of information seeking and experimentation with this particular ingredient. She surveys her options at the grocery store and selects new varieties of gluten-free pasta, rather than settling on varieties she has used previously. With food-related trial and error, there is not often a fixed point of success, or perfection, as in more simple trial and error contexts. Rather, the goal of finding an improvement or a better option, such as a tastier ingredient,

can be open-ended, continual, and curiosity-driven. Tanya's pasta experimentation exemplifies how embodied information practices and food practices can, and do, intertwine.

Premee, who works full-time in government and is also a professional novelist, describes a process of trying to determine which ingredients are best, in this case for a favourite baked good that is difficult to recreate. Premee tells me about *tennis rolls,* traditional citrus-flavoured Guyanese sweet rolls. For reasons that she notes are not entirely known, making excellent tennis rolls proves challenging for home bakers. When it comes to Guyanese baked treats, Premee observes, "there's something that's secret about them that nobody seems to know." Tennis rolls are unavailable to purchase in Edmonton because, as of the time of our interview, the city has no Caribbean bakery that makes them.

Premee's efforts to make tennis rolls at home begins with the commonplace process of seeking out and selecting a recipe from an online source. The resulting rolls "tasted approximately right, I found a recipe online, because *everybody loves tennis rolls,* but the texture was all wrong, even though I followed everything." Asked whether the variety of flour might be a factor, Premee agrees: "I thought about that too, and I was like, they're more likely to have American flour down there [Guyana]. They import practically everything, because, well…except the sugar, because sugar plantations." Premee's current theory is that her rolls may need more kneading. She adds, "Now that I have a stand mixer that can knead for a really long time without getting tired, or bored, and wandering off, I might try it again." Premee's tennis roll trial and error involves consideration of both ingredients and techniques, such as kneading.

Tanya and Premee's descriptions at first appear to represent a narrower concept of trial and error, of the more strictly behaviourist sort that I contextualised in Chapter 2, Section 2.4. After all, they are describing their recurring efforts to cook and bake food "correctly," a mindset that corresponds to the earliest thinking on trial and error (Thorndike, 1911). Again, however, the social nature of their efforts are key to understanding how they perceive, navigate, and frame their information practices. In contrast with Cheryl and Kaelin's accounts in the previous section, Premee and Tanya both emphasise the challenges

in cooking and baking projects where the goal is to make something the way it is "supposed" to be. In this way, Premee and Tanya evoke Bissell et al.'s "assumed shared food narratives," or "ASFNs" (2018). In a study of women's food narratives, Bissell et al. (2018) identify ASFNs as "a means of accounting for and managing discursively 'untoward' food practices which maintain a 'good enough' identity and in particular, a 'good enough' maternal identity within a networked context" (p. 1151). Bissell et al.'s participants primarily employ ASFNs to signal that they are "good enough" at caring for the health needs of themselves and their families, even when describing food habits that are not widely accepted as "healthy." For example, one participant's ASFN encourages a sense of perspective around "comfort eating": "It's a little bit of comfort, what you were brought up on, isn't it" (p. 1151).

Premee and Tanya, by contrast, use ASFNs to encourage appreciation of, and perspective on, the complexity of seemingly quotidian challenges. "There's something that's secret about them that nobody seems to know," Premee says of tennis rolls. Tanya asserts, "I had no idea, because I didn't remember what pasta even tasted like!" Through their descriptions, they illustrate that trial and error can hinge on specific information, such as a conception of how a food "should be," which people experience as both potentially burdensome and highly motivating. This information motivates continual trial and error efforts to create something at home that lives up to a sensory, gustatory ideal that lives in memory.

The relatively younger participants in this study often described similar, ongoing trial and error experiences, of being "in the midst" of a process of getting something right. On the other hand, the relatively older participants more commonly relayed a sense of being settled in their information practices, grounded in their knowledge of the "right" way. For instance, Larry is an avid, lifelong hunter. He was seventy years old at the time we spoke and lives in rural Saskatchewan. He is forthright with his views on important principles for hunting, and on specific emplaced information practices that hunters need to enact. He looks at "the hunting world today," current popular ideas about how to hunt, as having become detached

from these principles. As he explains, he encounters information online that represents "the mainstream hunting world," which makes him feel "pissed off":

> The truth is what goes on in the hunting world today mostly appalls me. […] Hunting now is driving around bushes and…You know, I don't like what is going on in the mainstream hunting world. If I go on a hunting forum, or a shooting forum, and stuff like that, I'm mostly pissed off. Ask Wendy [his wife]! 'Supper's ready.' I say, 'Just a minute. Somebody on the internet is wrong.'

Hunting is a tradition that goes back generations in Larry's family. He has a history of hunting in the same places, particularly an expanse of prairie known to most people locally as The Big Pasture. His hunting-related information practices are not predominantly reliant on trial and error because he is confident in his existing know-how: "I'm seventy years old. There's not a whole lot that I'm going to learn about how to move through the bush without, you know, scaring everything away." The embodied, emplaced information practices of Larry's hunting group integrate methods that they have "evolved" together over time. Their practices involve keeping track of each other's positions, and coordinating their movements even though they are "never together." Larry says:

> Hunting is a very personal thing for me, and the people that I've gathered around me that I hunt with, it's a very personal thing for them. And so – it's almost spiritual, really. […] And we have evolved methods of working individually. Although we hunt together we are never together when we're hunting. Like we'll go to a place and we'll make our 'pincer' move. 'Okay, you go that way, I'll go this way.' And we'll very carefully, slowly move, and we do move things between each other and sort of help each other in that way.

We can imagine the generative experiences that over time have led Larry's group to establish this coordinated, choreographed approach. These experiences would have included trial and error based on the land itself, combined with the knowledge that Larry and others carry from the past and have inherited from their families. As Reckwitz (2002) points out, practices integrate pragmatic know-how, and Larry's description of hunting also exemplifies this. His

group includes younger people, in part, so that they can more easily deal with the physical requirements of handling an animal that they have shot:

> But mostly it [hunting carefully in a group] is so if you actually shoot anything – as my brother-in-law says, 'Nothing ruins a moose hunt quite as much as actually shooting one.' Because now you need – now you got work to do and you need help. And [...] that's why we like having young people along. They can drag stuff and everything.

Larry's hunting practices are embodied, and like other practices documented in this study, they are clearly emplaced; that is, they centre on dynamic ties to the physical environment (Howes, 2005) and illustrate "how bodily knowing is formed as part of a moving world" (Bäckström, 2014, p. 752). However, his account of longstanding practices does not centre on an information practice of trial and error, as do Premee and Tanya's more representative accounts from earlier in this section. As such, while trial and error is widespread among student participants, we can also see, in Larry's account of how his group works together during a hunt, an example of a time-tested practice grounded in the confidence that it is the correct approach. It has become stable and well-established, to the point of being described as traditional. I discuss the interplay between information practices and tradition further in Section 4.3.1, below.

4.2.4. "It immediately goes up like two notches in my mind": trial and error helps us determine how to trust information

Given the availability of published food information, it is not surprising that participants describe using trial and error in part to determine which information sources they will trust. With food information being so voluminous, and with participants' priorities and interests being so varied, they have developed strategies that enable them to cut through the overwhelming number of results in a Google search, or to browse trusted sources rather than searching among less familiar publications.

Cheryl and Todd share multiple intensive food hobbies ranging from urban livestock production to growing their own hops for their homebrewed beer. Todd is the resident bread baker. He relies on information shared within an online bread-baking community, in triangulation with his own "Googling," in order to teach himself:

> Actually, probably a lot of [new information] comes from the Breadit sub-Reddit. Lots of people post on there. I mean, you get kind of the general idea, and they start using these terms that you're unfamiliar with, like *poolish* and *biga,* and you start Googling them, and then you learn that your *sourdough* might actually be a *levain.*

Through extended experimentation with techniques, recipes, and ingredients, Todd has developed ways to assess, in advance, how well a new recipe may work. As a result, he actively seeks recipes that offer the qualities he prefers. The central quality he has come to look for in a trustworthy recipe are *baker's percentages,* a way of listing ingredient quantities by weight, as percentages relative to the weight of the flour in a recipe. Todd explains:

> Any recipe that has weight, it immediately goes up like two notches in my mind. For bread baking, like, baker's percentages. […] The last time I was looking for a recipe or something that was really, kind of, out of my element, was the Hokkaido milk bread I did a while ago. […] I started off by searching, 'Hokkaido milk bread baker's percentages' 'cause I'm kind of familiar with that and hopefully anybody using baker's percentages kind of understands how to write a bread baking procedure.

Todd's procedural expertise as a scientist has in part enabled him to grasp the technical vocabulary of bread. You can see his keeping track of baker's percentages for English muffins on a whiteboard hung in his dining room, in Figure 5, above. Through trial and error, he has expanded his knowledge into a strategy for identifying expertly-crafted recipes.

Other participants describe a similar process of translating their preferences into search and selection criteria. Wendy is 69 years old, and worked as a programmer analyst in the Saskatchewan government, working "in computers when they were brand new." She and her husband Larry wanted to raise their family in a small town, so they moved to Marsden 36

years ago, and, as Wendy puts it, “my computer career went down the tubes.” Wendy keeps a folder of recipes that she has printed from the internet (Figure 8).

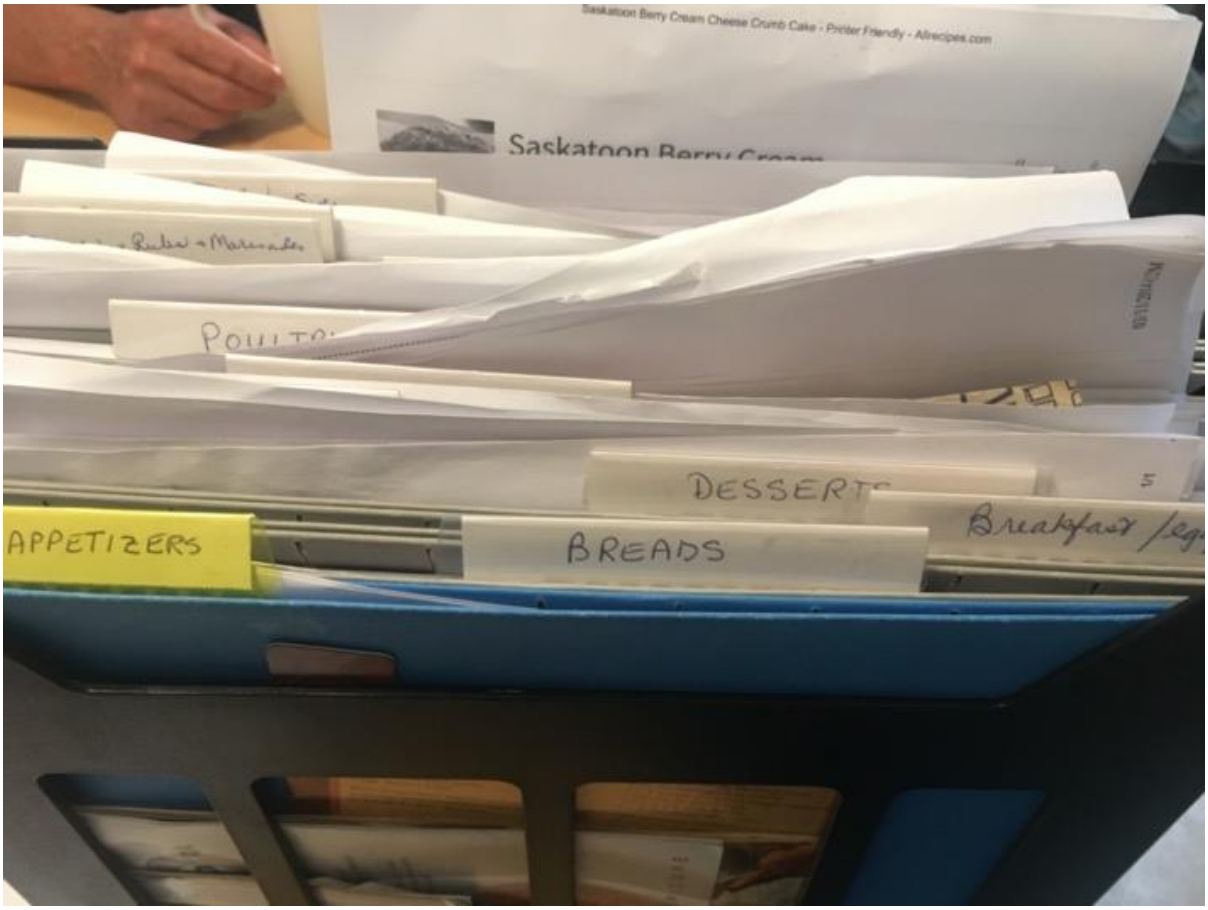

Figure 8. Wendy’s recipe files

Wendy relies on Google, and particularly sites such as Allrecipes.com, to find new recipes. When she chooses a recipe that she anticipates will be good, she bases this choice on past learning experiences. For example, Wendy has sometimes brought home a novel ingredient, and then selected a good recipe from among “thousands”:

> I went to the farmer’s market here a few weeks ago and got an eggplant. And I’d never cooked with an eggplant. So I went on the internet and found Eggplant Parmesan. Made sure I had all the ingredients, and I went ahead and made Eggplant Parmesan for the first time. And then a week later I made it again. I went and bought another eggplant. […] I try to find [recipes with] ingredients that I have. I try to find more from-scratch ingredients. And I try to find, not always the lightest, but I am aware of, I am conscious of fat, sugar, you know. I try to be aware of that sort of thing. But

> having said that, at my age, I want flavour. I've made recipes that were the healthiest ones there, and I was disappointed.

Wendy's experience with Eggplant Parmesan illustrates how people's relationship to the idea of healthy eating can evolve over time. People's larger ideas and priorities, such as "health," directly influence their use of trial and error. People define "healthy" differently across their lives. Additionally, the importance that people place on health can change. Before moving to Marsden in the 1970s, Wendy and Larry were partners in a subsistence farming operation, partaking in the "back to the land movement" as self-described "hippies." They studied the ideas of prominent figures of the time, such as nutritionist Adelle Davis, author of books such as *Let's Have Healthy Children* (1951), *Let's Eat Right to Get Fit* (1954), and *Let's Get Well* (1965). Earlier in her life, Wendy felt that "what we did to our body would affect how our future was." However, reflecting on being a cancer survivor today, Wendy adds, "That didn't work out so well for me." As she has grown older she has adjusted her priorities, and therefore her trial and error experimentation, to emphasise flavour and enjoyment. As she adds, "we have a happy hour [partaking in a drink such as a glass of wine or beer in the late afternoon], a lot of days."

Wendy's experiences echo sociologist Julie Ellis's findings on family food practices during serious illness (2018). Ellis finds that, in families, "food — symbolically and materially — becomes a way of thinking about, monitoring and making sense of illness, representing an interlacing of the day-to-day with the relational negotiation of life-threatening illness" (p. 358). Wendy's narration demonstrates how, with her illness in the past, her experiences have left her with expertise and self-insight, as she evaluates potentially delicious recipes. There is much literature on how people develop a sense of trust around information sources (e.g., Greyson, 2018; Koltay, 2017; Papen, 2013). However, this literature often focuses on external factors such as authorial authority, and characteristics of potentially trustworthy information. Wendy and Todd's experiences illuminate that people are not isolated, empty vessels who can become skilled at determining how to trust. Rather,

choices to trust information flow from confidence in our own expertise and ability to discern trustworthiness in potential information sources.

4.2.5 The "error" is the information: locating "information" in everyday accounts

Trial and error, as this study's participants have described it, is an iterative, information-generating cycle. The result of each effort—each seasoning-to-taste, ingredient substitution, recipe selection, or dietary adjustment—is information for the next effort. This information emerges in a variety of types, including sensory information such as taste and smell, as well as other information such as time and cost. This richness of information types exists whether a person's food-related goal is frugality, health, energy, living in accordance with ethics, good taste and pleasure, or any combination of these.

Sometimes, participants identify errors as errors. For instance, take Cheryl and Todd's attempt to grow oyster mushrooms on a purpose-made "log" beside their garage (Figure 9). This log is approximately the size of a small microwave, and it completely lacks oyster mushrooms. By their own description, this attempt failed, its failure hinging on an error. Cheryl says, "I think they died off due to contamination. I basically made a wood and oat brick for them, and I think the green mold beat out what I was planting in there." Cheryl and Todd are prolific food growers, and this account of being informed by their mushroom failure helps to explain how they have become so prolific through conscious effort over time. However, predominantly, the "errors" described in this study are not so clear-cut as failures or "mistakes" (Diehm & Lupton, 2012). Rather, the findings in this section illustrate that the "error" in participants' food-related trial and error is more often a point in the process of being informed by one's creations and choices, and

Figure 9. Cheryl and Todd's mushroom log, which yielded no mushrooms

observing that some aspect could be improved, such as fitting a new diet into one's life, or cooking an ideal loaf of bread. These finding parallel how Swanson (1977) theorises trial and error, as I discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2. To reiterate, Swanson frames trial and error, within the context of information retrieval, not as a process of "success" versus "failure," but rather as an iterative process of conjecture and refutation. The trial and error documented in this study is a practice that continually generates information.

Trial and error is also an inextricably embodied information practice. Participants' whole bodies are involved in determining whether an "error" has occurred, and if so, what the nature of that "error" may be. Participants are informed by how foods taste, feel, sound, smell, and look. How their bodies feel before, during, and after eating is also information: do they feel sick or well; sluggish or energised? Trial and error cannot be discussed as disembodied, because it always involves active, tactile engagement with the world.

4.2.6 Time for new terminology?

In this section, I have analysed participants' accounts of an area of information practice that they often refer to as "trial and error." I have established that this practice includes information creation, as well as information needs, seeking, sharing, and use. While trial and error has been discussed within IS, most notably in information literacy and information retrieval studies, the concept is often left undefined, and rarely conceptualised in depth. In prior studies of people's everyday information practices, there does not appear to have been extensive discussion of trial and error, or exploration of participants' use of this expression to describe a type of information practice. The most-cited food study in information science, Hartel (2007), does not touch on trial and error, perhaps because it focuses on episodes of gourmet cooking. The present study's focus on everyday practices over time brings trial and error to light. However, a terminological puzzle remains. The label "trial and error," originally conceived as a description of a simple, repetitive form of learning, refers back to a time when, in both scholarship and wider society, people were constructed as rational actors, and whose individual, observable actions were of highest concern.

Meanwhile, as this section has illustrated, the label "trial and error" is now freely used to refer expansively to an area of information practice that combines new information with participants' know-how, bodily experiences, feelings, and interactions with their environments (Reckwitz, 2002). This disparity in the meaning of the expression "trial and error" matters, because Enlightenment-tinged assumptions continue to lead many people to isolate "critical thinking" as an elevated, separate process from "trial and error." This binary underpins the privileging of some processes and activities as more worthy of study than others. It is only within the last generation that information science has begun to make space in earnest for examination of everyday life matters, including food matters. Recognizing information practices such as trial and error, through people's own accounts, is an important part of this process of making space. Perhaps new terminology for "trial and error" would help to mend these entrenched dichotomies? Kaelin's phrase, "cool process of discovery," seems like a good initial proposal.

4.3 Never completely alone: constant social connection

The second area of information practice, *Never completely alone: Food and constant social connection,* relates to how participants become informed about food through their connections to others, and how these social information experiences influence people's perceptions of food and their information practices, often across the lifespan. As such, it speaks especially to research questions 1.1 and 2.2, which are *How do people describe the information practices they undertake in the process of feeding themselves and their families?* and *Why do people adopt certain information sources and practice but not others?*

Connections with other people are a ubiquitous element of people's information practices. As discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.2, key scholarship in the evolution of our understanding of information practices, such as Chatman (1992) and McKenzie (2003), establishes their inherently social nature. This nature extends to people's food-related information practices. The participants in this study discuss three main types of

relationships that are central in their food lives: family, friends, and health professionals. Of these three, the predominant influence on participants' food lives, including their related information practices, is family. Participants describe their childhoods, their parents, and their current family configurations as central to their food lives and therefore to their food information practices. Even for participants who live alone, discussions about food are dense with social connection.

This study documents how families factor into people's information practices, and into their sense of being informed, because families are sites within which three important elements of practice are shared: tradition, expertise, and routine. This study also finds that, because familial relationships sometimes involve a controlling orientation toward information, they also factor memorably into people's sense of being denied information or being prevented from becoming informed. The following section discusses the family dynamics of participants' food information practices.

4.3.1. Everything begins at home: family traditions leave their mark

Food-related information practices often reflect longstanding family traditions. Situating information practices research within people's food lives enables an exploration of traditions as information practices. These traditions stir a range of emotional recollections in participants and motivate a variety of food activities.

Cherished, positive food-related information-sharing traditions leave people more open to new experiences and information. Kim, a 65-year old retired professor and theatre director with grown children, describes the impact of his mother having taught him to cook, and of having two grandmothers who were both "sensational" cooks. He discusses his mother's cooking lessons, and her distinctive willingness to share cooking information with her young son in the 1950s. Kim recounts:

> My mother loved food, and I enjoyed food, and I learned a lot about food preparation even as a kid. […] I guess I was just surrounded by these people who really enjoyed preparing food, and I guess I just got interested in it. […] I just found myself saying

> 'how do you do that?,' and my mother was nice enough to say, 'well, here' [and she would show me what she was doing].

Kim consistently describes his affinity and affection for cooking, including a lifelong practice of exploring unfamiliar cuisines such as Chinese food, as could be found in Chinatowns and Chinese restaurants across Canada, and as he could teach himself at home. When I joined Kim as he cooked a meal at his home, he cooked a savoury egg dish for me from *The cooking of China* (Hahn, 1968), a Time-Life book (Figure 10), including steamed lettuce with oyster sauce, from an old Chinese cookbook. While Kim's mother may not have cooked Chinese food for him in his Saskatchewan childhood, her openness and enthusiasm for food, and that of his grandmothers, sparked his interest in cooking.

Figure 10. Kim's copy of The Cooking of China *(1968), from the Time-Life* Foods of the World *series*

For others, there is contrast between information-sharing within families, and information-seeking outside family structures, based on different levels of trust and openness. Tanya, a Métis woman in her 30s, describes the importance of her family's

traditions specifically in contrast with how she was raised to exercise caution around outsiders. Tanya attributes this caution to:

> My Indigenous heritage. Because that's how we were raised, right. Like just to be cautious of other people. When I was younger there was no chance in hell that I would go to a library and ask a librarian for help.

Within the family, Tanya describes the influence of watching her mother make bannock. Through trial and error experimentation and time spent cooking together, Tanya was able to learn her mother's recipe and techniques for bannock:

> You know what? She had been making bannock for her whole life. But she actually never wrote it down. Until she was much older. And then she wrote it down and then she – and if you see this recipe it's so funny. It's basically like: Lard. Flour. Water. And it doesn't have any, sort of, measurements or whatever. […] So she taught me. And she's like okay, let's experiment with these flours and see what happens.

Tanya's family traditions have influenced how she assesses information she receives from people. She prioritises her own appraisal of whether a person is familiar, trustworthy, and willing to listen. "So you have to find someone that you know and you trust that will listen. So that's, I don't know, that's really valuable – to me, and to us as a culture, I guess!"

At times, Tanya found it challenging to understand her mother's recipe because, as information that had never been written down before, its tacit, embodied parts were a struggle to discuss and understand:

> I told her, like, 'how are you supposed to know how much to put in?' And she's like 'I don't know, I just feel it. I feel it in my hands. I just know it. I don't need to know the measurements.'

The sharing of family food traditions often involves this form of what could be described as information *translation* out of and into embodied forms. Tanya's mother must work to convey the embodied knowledge she possesses, the ability to interpret the tactile development of the dough and understand when its ingredients are sufficiently combined and in the correct proportions. This work illustrates the challenge of transforming tacit

knowledge into information that can be shared with and understood by another person to guide them through their own trial and error experience.

Unlike Kim and Tanya, other participants describe their formative food experiences as characterised by control of information inside their families, rather than openness and generosity. Participants describe these experiences as challenging or even painful, and as causing lasting repercussions, including distortions in people's relationships with information.

Megan, a woman in her late 20s and a first-generation Canadian, describes how she has worked intentionally to teach herself traditional Chinese dishes in order to reclaim her heritage. She teaches herself, often following along with YouTube videos, because when she was growing up her family refused to teach her these dishes. Although she did not offer a direct reason why her family withheld this knowledge from her, this refusal has had long-term implications for Megan. She describes an example of exploring YouTube and choosing a video about Chinese steamed eggs:

> One way that I try to stay connected with my heritage, since I can't really do that with my family, is through food. So I go back to memories of what I ate in my parents' home, what they made very often, and one of the things that my Mom did was this steamed egg. And of course she did it perfectly. With this silky, smooth, custard-like egg, and just with some vegetable oil on top and some soy sauce, and then you eat it with rice.

Megan connects her parents' refusal to share the traditional knowledge she powerfully remembers seeking with her anorexia struggle and her vulnerability to an abusive romantic relationship as an undergraduate student. She attributes her participation in this relationship to her distorted childhood experiences with food information, dominated by her parents' refusal to share information and tradition with her. The abusive relationship was with someone who coerced her into adhering to highly restrictive norms, which Megan describes as "standards." One example of such a norm is the belief that women should have a

thigh gap, a widely known fixation of people with eating disorders (Arseniev-Koehler, Lee, McCormick, & Moreno, 2016). As she recounts:

> Megan: During my childhood, I had a very complicated, maybe negative relationship with food. And when I reached my undergrad years, of university, I entered kind of a toxic relationship that, sort of, reinforced those habits from my past, during my childhood. It could be classified as anorexia. […] During that time, [my boyfriend] constantly tried to enforce, like, standards? Yeah, yeah, it was not good. Like body image standards and things like that. So it was easy for me to relapse, because he would stop bothering me about those things if I ate less, or if I didn't eat, or if I exercised more, or if I didn't eat certain things. Um, I was with that person for three years, and during those three years, I did not ever have bacon.
>
> Researcher: I'm sorry!
>
> Megan: Yeah, I know. I'm sorry for me too! Since then I have eaten *a lot* of bacon.

Megan directly credits her information practices, in the form of blogging, as well as collecting and studying online information sources to teach herself traditional dishes, for enabling her recovery from her eating disorder and her abusive relationship. As she describes:

> During that toxic relationship, I was still staying in it, but I decided to have the food blog as a way for me to food journal, and just keep track of my meals, 'cause I knew it wasn't healthy, what I was doing to myself. And when I started food blogging, I actually felt inspired to try making things for myself, instead of spending money on food. And then, as a student, you don't have a lot of money, generally. […] Yeah, so the food blog was something that I started while I was still in that relationship. […] It was like my mini-rebellion.

Megan continues to reconnect with cultural knowledge that was withheld from her, creating her own traditions, including her routines for consulting YouTube videos and Instagram posts, in the process.

The information science literature has not yet delved deeply into family traditions as information practices. To begin, the concept of "tradition" itself is not straightforward.

Sociologist Joseph Soares (1997) argues that tradition can be seen as baggage-laden: "To be traditional today is to be suspect, at best it makes one antiquarian, at worst it conjures up images of white-male supremacists" (p. 9). In information science, which is as focused on progress and discovery as much as any other discipline, it is perhaps not surprising that tradition has not seen extensive scholarly focus. Soares (1997) reviews multiple conceptualizations of "tradition" and offers a definition that is applicable to this analysis. It particularly emphasises concern for collective memory and continuity, which are not inherently "antiquarian" or reactionary:

> A living social tradition [...] must engage a group of practitioners who have a sense of community based on a shared identification with a particular past. They must feel linked by collective memories [...] which are transmitted by a variety of means, including written and oral narratives, rituals, commemorative objects, architecture, and particular physical environments. And the group must value continuity. They must feel a custodianship for the tradition's present and future prospects. (p. 14)

Soares defines tradition as a practice, and as having practitioners. His conception of tradition is consistent with the practice theory of Reckwitz (2002), in the sense that tradition, like other practices, consist of activities (sharing memories; preserving and recreating elements of the physical environment) intertwined with knowledge (of a shared past) and emotion (a sense of identification and custodianship). There has been a small amount of information science research on aspects of tradition, such as the nature of family stories as folk objects (Sloan, 1999), the role of social media in mourning (Brubaker, Hayes, & Dourish, 2013), and the role of cookbooks in keeping memories and culture alive (Feinberg & Crosetto, 2011). The findings discussed in this section illuminate how traditions can be understood as information practices. Unlike other information practices emerging from this study, the ones discussed in this section emphasise the continuation, and implications, of memories.

Intergenerational tension over health expertise. In Section 4.2.2, I describe how often people use trial and error as an information practice in order to determine the "best" recipe or technique. Family information practices are another means through which participants develop their sense of "know-how" (Reckwitz, 2002).

Family information practices can also be characterised by ongoing disagreement about the correct way to eat, cook, or otherwise relate to food. Disputes about expertise and information use affect family dynamics around food. Premee, who describes herself as an "elderly millennial," meaning that she is toward the older end of the millennial generation (between Generation X and Generation Z), provides an example. She is in regular contact with her parents. She describes how, after her father had a heart attack, health care workers provided her parents with information about reducing salt in their diets. Her parents reacted to this information by cutting all salt from their diets. Premee describes how their reaction to this information has corroded their relationship. It has added to the pressure that Premee already experiences from her parents to lose weight. Premee tells the story of a particularly tortuous Christmas dinner that was completely salt-free, in which she and her brother suffered through helpings of salt-free mashed potatoes at their parents' behest. Her family is not Christian, but she explains, "we do all the cultural stuff." This Christmas dinner involved a "terrible turkey," and further:

> [N]o gravy. And no butter. And no salt. And so of course – potatoes need salt. Potatoes don't taste good without salt. So there's my brother just shoveling them in quietly, not talking, and I'm like, 'Say something!' And he's like, *[grumbling sound effect]*.

This unpleasant physical and emotional experience of the bland potatoes, of "shoveling them in quietly" and of observing this scene play out, is not caused solely by the arrival of new health information. Rather, it can be more fully understood as having been caused by how this information has been put to use within the family, how it has created divergent understandings of what a Christmas dinner must resemble from now on, and how established family dynamics make "shoveling them in quietly" one way to cope.

Premee's parents are concerned for their children's health, while simultaneously, Premee and her brother are concerned for their parents' health. An information practice of absorbing health information and then rehashing it socially to negotiate their worries affects both generations. Medical images from their father's triple-bypass surgery are cited when Premee tries to discourage her brother from being so susceptible to their parents' health-related comments about losing weight and being healthier:

> He just takes these things [their parents' sharp comments] into him, and they just – they hit him, like, like a meteor hitting the moon. You know that crater's gonna be there forever because there is nothing to disturb it. And I've tried to kind of talk him out of this and he's like, 'But we remember when Dad was in the hospital, and he had to have a Triple Bypass, and they showed us the photographs afterwards.' You know, that kind of heart picture they do where they show what's clogged, and they're like, 'This one's the widow-maker – that's what your Dad had. That was 90% clogged.' And we both kind of looked at it, and we looked at each other, and it was like, 'Well I suppose we better do something…' But I haven't and I feel bad about that.

Not surprisingly, the meaning of information can be disputed within families, along with the actions that should flow from information. As such, Premee's family's example illustrates the friction arising among and within people when competing senses of "know-how" exist within a family.

4.3.2 Longstanding routines for planning and keeping track

As this study documents people's descriptions of why and how they have come to engage in certain food activities, it illuminates their information practices over time and as part of everyday routines. Participants' food routines are often grounded in family needs, and evident in their information practices around planning and keeping track. For instance, in response to my question about an "ordinary food day," Kim showed me a grocery list pinned to his refrigerator with a magnet (Figure 11). It was sleeved in protective plastic, because it was printed in the 1980s, and had clearly made many trips to the store. It bears

the types of food stains often seen on printed pages that are kept, and actively used, in the kitchen.

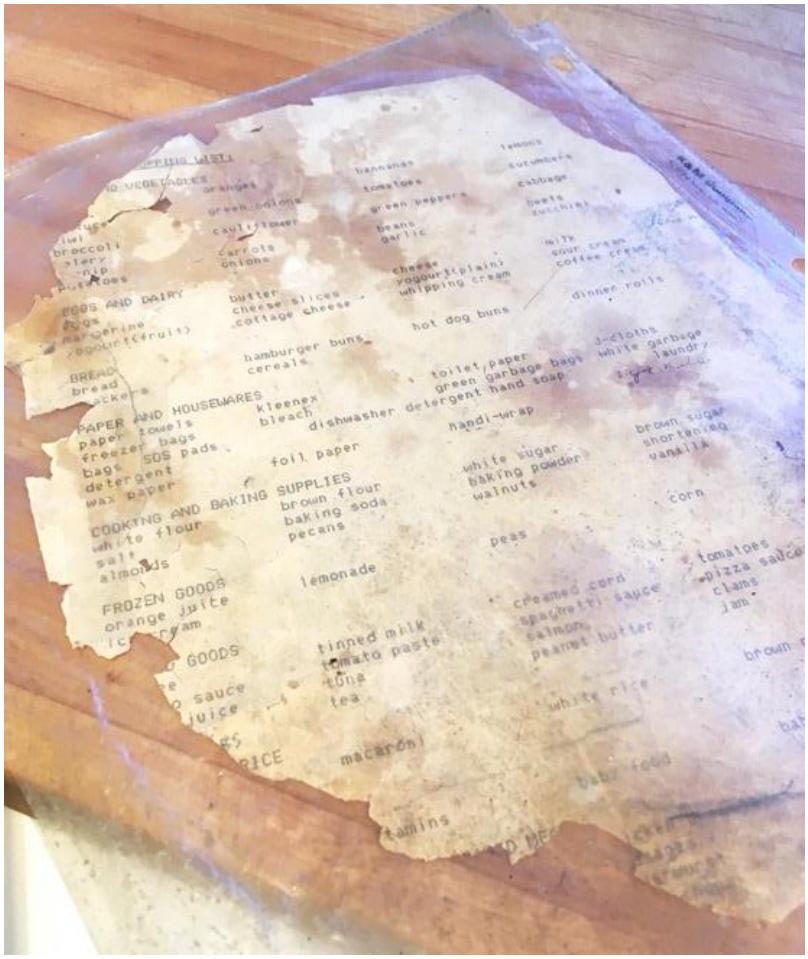

Figure 11. Kim's grocery list

Kim elaborates on the origins and enduring role of the list:

> The kids were really young. And I was working at the theatre. So I put together this list, which was categories, right. […] And now, quite literally, every week, when [my wife], she makes the grocery lists, she now always puts this down and uses that to make her grocery lists.

Kim's enduring grocery list template emerged out of a general need to take care of family necessities during a particularly busy period in life. Kim mentions not only that his children were young, but also that he was working at the theatre, meaning that he was having to work the very long days that theatre professionals work, particularly in the days immediately prior to the opening of a new production.

In one sense, as Kalms (2008) puts it in his study of household information management, this list is a "useful information object" (para. 31). However, to understand the list only as "useful" would be to overlook its substantial meaning within Kim's family's information practices over a full generation. Kim's list exemplifies his longstanding affinity for categories, which also manifested in our interview as an extended discourse on whether or not a hot dog is a sandwich. In a bigger sense, the list, and Kim's description of it, illustrates how a "useful information object" reflects the practice of which it is a part. As Reckwitz articulates, a practice is "a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood" (2002, p. 250). Kim's description of the list reveals that it was part of a routine created out of necessity; it helped his family manage more efficiently with "really young" kids while he was working long hours. His use of categories, such as "COOKING AND BAKING SUPPLIES" and "FROZEN GOODS," reveals his understanding of the organisation of a grocery store, the environment to which the list corresponds. Although Kim created this list, his wife is now the one who makes their weekly lists, using the original as a template. Over time, the role of this list in the family's information practices has become that of a traditional ceremonial object, in the sense that they no longer carry it with them, but rather keep it in a protected, reverential place on the front of their refrigerator.

Carrie offers a similar example of an information practice, meal planning, which was adopted at her house during a more stressful time. It has endured because it is beneficial, and relies on a "useful information object" to facilitate. Carrie describes herself as "classic middle management" within a higher education setting, and "not quite middle-aged." She lives with her spouse of 14 years in a spacious and beautiful home in an older Edmonton neighbourhood. Her food life includes regular dinner parties with a large group of friends who take turns hosting. She and her spouse also practice meal planning. Broadly, meal planning is the practice of gathering information and making decisions about what to cook in the future. Carrie and her spouse plan one week at a time. Often, meal planning relies on a

structured document, like Kim's list. Meal planning documentation usually maps menus to the days of the week, enabling people to organise their grocery lists and to integrate the same foods into different meals, reducing cost, waste, and effort. Carrie showed me a blank page from her meal planning notepad (Figure 12), and described to me how it is used: "On Sunday, here, we had steak, corn, peppers, and asparagus. It was cooked on the barbeque. But it was with enough for steak, corn, peppers, and asparagus for lunch. So the lunch menu follows the dinner menu." Carrie and her spouse began meal planning during a period in their lives when they needed, in her words, to "balance the time":

Figure 12. Carrie's meal planning notepad

> We started meal planning a few years ago. I'm going to say it's four years ago now. Aligned with the time when my spouse's mom got cancer for the second time. And we were doing a lot more care for her, and so we thought, to balance the time, we would begin meal planning, for us, and for her, and for trying to help with that. But we've carried on, because it was actually good for us.

Carrie's meal planning practice, like Kim and his wife's practice of making shopping lists, demonstrates how stressful situations can spark new family information practices. These practices begin as coping strategies, but become routines that outlast the stressful times.

Some form of planning, motivated by numerous factors, was a predominant practice described by participants. However, not all participants have extensive planning practices, or see themselves as planners. Premee, who lives alone, admires meal planning but does not identify with it as a practice. She describes having received a meal planning pad from close friends while staying with them on a visit to Vancouver. The friends, like Carrie and her

spouse, are devoted meal planners. Premee was impressed, but she has not used the pad, finding "it's not me":

> Premee: I was so impressed I thought I was gonna die. I was like, 'You're an adult now! You're adulting! Like, you're my age, but I think you grew up and I didn't.' [...] Umm, so that was April. Now you may notice that it's July. The pad is actually completely unused, and I've concluded that some people just don't have the personality type for planning. First of all--
>
> Researcher: It's just not you.
>
> Premee: It's not me. I don't, I don't plan, I come home and I eat what's around, or what seems to go together, and I hate grocery shopping which I think doesn't help. [...] I keep a freezer full of, like, it's kind of ready-to-go stuff, like from the Farmer's Market, like those frozen pies and stuff? And that's something that Current Premee does, so that when Future Premee comes home and is so tired that she can't move, she can still have a hot supper. [...] You stock up when you've got the energy, because when you come home you might actually not have any oxygen in your blood.

Premee does not consider herself a meal planner because she does not document her planning as Carrie and Kim do. However, she does take care of herself through planning ahead: Current Premee takes care of Future Premee. Her example is noteable because she verbalises the kind of bodily experience that often informs and motivates participants' planning. She knows that she will be so tired she can't move, as though she has no oxygen in her blood. Because the main inclusion criterion for participants in this study was that they are primarily responsible for food matters within their homes, it is not surprising that participants consistently articulate some form of planning routine. However, they construct different senses of what it means to plan, and they rely on different information management strategies, including primarily embodied strategies, to inform their planning.

4.3.3 Families and their secrets

Secrecy, which can be understood as intentional withholding of information from some or all people, is not an uncommon information practice in relation to food. This is certainly the case within families, as described by some study participants. I reviewed IS literature on secrecy in Chapter 2, Section 2.5. To reiterate, secrecy is an important information practice, although underexamined in information science. As Chatman (1996) and Fulton (2019) have revealed through their research, secrecy arises as people negotiate risk, protect themselves, and exercise their agency.

Several participants describe the experience and repercussions of having information withheld from them within their families. In turn, this experience influences their food information practices as adults. Megan's narrative in Section 4.3.1 illustrates this, as she recounts the reverberations of not having received the food knowledge she wished for as a child. Her information practices today, including her information-seeking on YouTube and Instagram, revolve not insignificantly around learning to cook dishes that she recalls from childhood, but whose recipes her parents withheld from her. Megan's experience corroborates Fulton's finding, from her study of gamblers, that "Not sharing information can lead to negative outcomes in some circumstances, where the act of hiding information supports negative behaviours that may cause social damage" (2019, p. 151).

Megan is not the only participant to note the "social damage" that can result from intergenerational secrecy. Premee's parents each have their own curry spice blend. Although she jokes about it, the fact that each spice blend is a complete secret further exasperates her relationship with them:

> I don't think Dad knows what's in Mom's [curry blend]. I don't know what's in Mom's. Like, I just get a jar of it every now and then. Like, I couldn't remake it – like I said, I've got a very sensitive palate, I don't know what all is in it. They're strange people. […] I'm like, 'You guys better tell me, you know, soon. I'm not saying you're getting old…' But Dad had a heart attack about three years ago and we're like 'If you had anything you felt like telling us…now would be a good time.'

Navigating family information-sharing tensions also has an embodied factor: the element of sensory memory. Both Premee and Megan have memories of enjoying the foods created with important family recipes to which they do not today have access. They are motivated and guided by their memories of the Chinese steamed egg, and the curry blend, in striving to recreate these important foods. Their memories, combined with trial-and-error experimentation and ample information available from the internet, enable their attempts at recreating that which has been kept secret from them.

4.3.4 Families: much space for exploration in information research

Considering their obvious richness as sites where information circulates, families, particularly understood as sites of complex practices, have not received a preponderance of attention within information science research. However, information researchers have focused on relevant family practices undertaken by specific people, such as parents feeding children, along with the information behaviour or information practices within them. O'Brien, Greyson, Chabot, and Shoveller (2018) draw on McKenzie's early work for a study of young parents' experiences feeding their children. In her study of women pregnant with twins, McKenzie (2002a, 2002b) finds that participants' information practices are visible in their accounts of how they communicate, and connect with, information. McKenzie's (2006) participants do encounter barriers while seeking information, such as the difficulty of finding other mothers with twins (p. 225). However, McKenzie does not document more profound barriers, such as marginalization, on their information practices. More recently, O'Brien, Greyson, Chabot, and Shoveller (2018), working with a relatively more vulnerable participant group, find that young parents have distinctive information experiences while learning about and undertaking feeding activities, including breastfeeding, formula feeding, and the introduction of solid food. These young parents differ from McKenzie's participants in that they experience a "heavily surveilled atmosphere," and are often discouraged from active information-seeking, in favour of "more passive practices of information encountering and receipt of information from proxies," as expectations dictate (p. 608).

Walker (2012) highlights a central piece of contemporary context, which is that "social change" in recent decades means that "parents today, arguably, face far greater pressure in terms of sifting and weighing the wide range of messages, opinions, and information targeted at them" (p. 546). In his study of information literacy and information use among parents of young children, Walker documents "feeding" as one topic of concern, of many, for parents (p. 555). Significantly, he finds that parents "from the higher socioeconomic backgrounds" are more likely to view parenting as an "information grounds" populated by neighbours and other social connections (p. 554). While more marginalised families are more likely to experience isolation, more privileged parents have access to "school playground, mothers groups, church groups, and coffee mornings," and by extension, more information (p. 554). Walker and O'Brien et al.'s studies of parents exemplify how information practices research must be as sensitive as possible to context, and explicit in acknowledging the role of contextual elements such as privilege and social position on people's information practices. Having said that, these studies all focus on parents and their immediate routine responsibilities, rather than families as a whole or food practices beyond the pragmatics of "feeding."

There are two recent doctoral studies that bring contrasting approaches to food and family: Kalms (2009) and Ocepek (2016a). Kalms' study approaches the "household" as a unit of analysis and takes households as information systems. Kalms' data collection rests on participants' own definitions of information, which leads him to report that people predominately perceive information as "useful information objects" (para. 31), in alignment with Buckland's "information-as-thing" theory (1991). "For all householders," Kalms writes, "information in the form of information objects was the centre of their information processing and management; as one householder commented '*…I have four filing cabinets in this household and they are jammed full cause I keep records of all this stuff*" (para. 28, emphasis original). Kalms' study focuses on households as information organizations, within which information objects are received, stored, exchanged, maintained, and discarded. As

such, while this study is extensive, it does not delve into less tangible forms of information, or how household information practices come to be.

Ocepek (2016a), in her dissertation study on one particular food activity—grocery shopping—provides corroboration for one of the foundational findings of the present study: family members frequently inform one another. Ocepek enumerates all the sources used by her study participants in grocery shopping and finds that as a frequently-mentioned information source, "friend/family" comes second only to personal experience (2016b, p. 3). She frames family members as "human information sources," invoking Savolainen and Kari's definition of such sources as including information "received directly from individuals via face-to-face contacts, telephone calls, or letters" (2004b, p. 422). Ocepek's analysis is descriptive and detailed. However, although she focuses on people's activities, her study does not emphasise the concept of practices in the same way as this one does.

In focusing on practices, the present study illuminates another way in which information within families can be approached and discussed. I have focused on the ongoing, generative, open-ended information practices through which people are constantly encountering and sharing information, and being informed by their past and present family circumstances. In doing so, I have demonstrated a more holistic perspective on the nature and role of information within families.

4.4 What's right and good: exercising judgement and moral reasoning

The third area of information practices concerns how participants enact moral reasoning and judgement. This study finds that morality is a core influence on people's food-related information practices. As such, the findings in this section speak most directly to research questions 1.1 and 2.2, which are *How do people describe the information practices they undertake in the process of feeding themselves and their families?* and *Why do people adopt certain information source and practices but not others?*

Morality can be broadly understood as a code of conduct upon which people rely as they act upon their ethical beliefs, particularly relating to what is right and what is good

(Gibbs, 2019, p. 8). For the most part, people try to be ethical, and our moral development begins in early childhood (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969). We make moral assessments, and we develop moral reasoning through which we try to act in alignment with our beliefs. Examining people's food practices illuminates the breadth of moral considerations navigated in daily life: people express concern about animal welfare, environmental destruction, cultural appropriation, cultural preservation, weight management, good parenting, and healthy relationships, to name only a few examples. As this study finds, there are connections between people's information practices and their everyday moral reasoning. However, these connections have rarely been explicitly addressed in examinations of information experiences, such as information overload, or information practices, such as information encountering, monitoring, and blunting (Bawden & Robinson, 2009; Erdelez, 1999; Miller, 1980). This section illuminates these connections by unpacking the information practices that people employ in their food-related moral reasoning.

4.4.1 Moral choices and information practices are co-constitutive

Making moral choices in relation to larger concerns, such as animal welfare and the environment, is a recurring concern for some participants. While this was not a predominant theme, it is a distinctive addition to this section on the complexities of participants' moral reasoning. The participant who most extensively discusses making moral choices is Rachel. She speaks in detail about the intentional information seeking that she undertakes in order to ensure that the meat and dairy she buys come from animals that have been allowed to live in pastures, rather than in more industrialised confinement. Rachel cares deeply about the well-being of animals, but she also says, "I like eating animals." She routinely seeks information to guide her toward what she sees as positive choices that satisfy her food ethics. She describes her approach:

> I'll pretty much only buy, if I can help it, meat, eggs, and dairy products that come from pastured animals. Like, it's not even about organic or not organic. […] The most important thing to me is the pastured aspect. […] I'll buy a huge piece of pork, like a

> giant thing, and come home and cut it up and freeze it. 'Cause I feel confident that that pig lived a piggy life.

She details her efforts to determine whether a pig had "lived a piggy life": "You can talk to the farmers – like for example at the Farmers' Market, the Strathcona Farmers' Market – there's Four Whistle Farm. […] The farmers are there. You can ask them." In this quote, it is clear that Rachel's information seeking can be understood as moral behaviour. Rachel also tracks different brands and studies how they treat animals, such as by searching for information about a local creamery:

> I was curious, so I went and looked them up and based on the information on their website, I feel – I'm pretty sure that the milk comes from pastured animals. Again, they're not necessarily, you know – it's not necessarily organic farming but the cows are pastured, and so I feel like I can, I will buy that product.

Rachel cares deeply about the well-being of animals, but her concern has not led her to disavow the enjoyment her family gains from eating meat, or, as she points out, to prioritise organic options. Rather, she seeks information so that she can avoid supporting industrialised meat production: "I think it's tragic the way industrial agriculture treats animals. It's really tragic, and it's very upsetting to me, so I just don't want to participate in that. But I do want to eat meat and animal products. I like them! My family likes them."

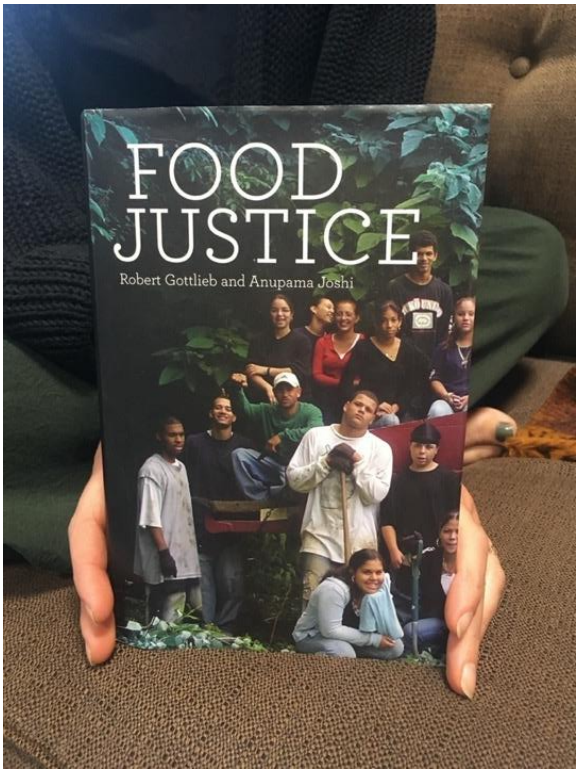

Figure 13. The book Food Justice (2010)*, an influence on Rachel's food ethics*

Rachel's food-related ethical code is inseparable from her food-related information practices. The two are mutually constitutive. For example, Gottlieb and Joshi's (2010) *Food Justice,* about the emergence of the movement for equity and justice

throughout the American food system, is the first book Rachel referred to in our interview (Figure 13). Rachel describes serendipitously finding this book on a shelf in a used bookstore in California. Reading it helped clarify her emergent moral reasoning. As she explains:

> This book articulated the reason food is one of my favourite topics to think about, and talk about, and live – you know, my beliefs? That it's kind of at the intersection of social justice, the environment, and, sort of, anti-capitalism. You know, this idea of food justice? It's the idea that [...] how, where, by whom, and for whom, food is produced, transported – or: produced, harvested, transported, prepared, and eaten – matters.

Rachel also expresses other ethical positions on food, beyond the question of whether animals have been pastured. For example, she avoids single-use plastic wherever possible. She expresses willingness to pay more for groceries, observing that "it's reasonable to spend a larger percentage of our income than people have become accustomed to, because prices are artificially low." And she tries to reduce the amount of sugar in her diet, having concluded through her own information-gathering that sugar is bad: "I'm convinced by research, and reports based on it, that it's just bad for you. It's just bad for you, and it's also bad for the environment, and for the people who raise it – who raise sugarcane. [...] Nothing good comes out of sugar." Rachel stands out as a person who is easily able to articulate both her beliefs and the information that has influenced the formation of these beliefs. She routinely seeks information to guide her toward what she sees as positive choices that satisfy her food ethics. As a case study, she exemplifies the complexity of a person's moral code of conduct, and the information practices supporting it.

Kaelin also expresses concern for animal welfare and the environment. For her, these issues motivated a different path from Rachel; she decided to go vegan:

> There's a lot of factors that went into it. So part of it is that ethical element that I just- I saw no reason why animal cruelty should be part of our food system if we can live perfectly healthy lives without it. [...] And then environmentally as well there is a lot coming out now about the impacts of meat production on our environment, and so I

> figured that going vegan just kind of met all of those things that I had been thinking about.

Where Rachel focuses her information seeking on food producers, in order to understand animals' living conditions, Kaelin, having decided on a vegan diet, focuses her information seeking on collecting vegan recipes and ingredient substitutions. Kaelin observes that there is much more of this information available now:

> Being vegan now, a lot of that information is different than what I grew up with. So it'll come from cookbooks, or mostly the internet – just looking up random things. Starting with Google, and – maybe I'll be like, 'Vegan Stew' and just see what's out there.

In different ways, Rachel and Kaelin illustrate how information practices influence their moral choices, and vice versa, at the same time. There is little existing IS research focused on the interplay between how people exercise their ethical values and their everyday life information practices. There is some research that explores the social construction of norms for virtuous, or appropriate, behaviour, which I discuss further in Section 4.4.3 (e.g., Tuominen, 2004; McKenzie, 2002a). However, it does not appear that there is published research in relation to food, or food-related concerns such as animal welfare. As such, this finding points toward potential future research.

Moral encounters with other people. Participants sometimes describe the information practices enacted when they are evaluating other people's food choices as good or bad, right or wrong. These information practices are often embedded in people's accounts of interpersonal moments of information sharing, for example with children. These moments are often memorable because they are emotional. They frequently involve heightened feelings which people judge themselves for experiencing. This emotionality very often comes through in the telling.

Rachel describes her children as "picky eaters." She maintains a rational, non-judgemental perspective on this pickiness. At the same time, it exasperates her. She describes her line of thinking:

> The vast majority of children I know are [picky], in one way or another, and I try not to make too big a deal about it, but at the same time I'm like 'You won't eat polenta?! What is the matter with you? This is like creamy, buttery, cheesy, salty corn! Like pudding! Why are you not eating this? What is the matter with you?!

Moral reasoning does not always concern what is good and bad; it also concerns what is right and wrong. Here, Rachel is narrating an attempt to make sense of her children's pickiness. She does not consider them to be *bad,* but she may consider them *wrong* for refusing "creamy, buttery, cheesy" polenta. Rachel's anecdote illustrates that parents must maintain an information practice of synthesising multiple sources of information in order to make sense of their children's eating preferences.

When children are too young to verbalise their reactions to foods, parents must rely on non-verbal, embodied cues such as a child pushing a food away. Once children can assert themselves with language, however, parents find themselves navigating a new stream of information: their children's views on food. These views can be an ongoing site of moral reasoning about right and wrong, both about food, and about healthy communication. Participant Jeff provides an example. He is a busy, working father of two who is the main cook and meal planner at home, with an affinity for Japanese cuisine. He recounts a recurring conversation with his son:

> One of the things that happens when I go to pick up my son, first thing he says is 'what's for dinner?' And [...] it rankles me a little bit because I know that if I give him an answer of something that's not, like, in his top tier, you know, I'll notice that he's already like 'hmmmmmm,' you know? Maybe he's gonna bargain – for something? So I don't like to show my hand. Because rarely do I change what I'm gonna cook. [...] It is a *huge* topic in our household about, you know, who eats what, and under what circumstances you might be excused from it. (emphasis original)

Parents are the primary influences on their children's moral reasoning and their food choices, so in that sense, these examples are perhaps unsurprising. As examples of information practices, these examples are valuable because they illustrate the complex and subjective work of exerting influence, including by sharing or withholding information.

The preceding paragraphs concern parents' reasoning around their children's food preferences and the attendant negotiations. These findings do not extend to suggesting that parents' sense-making around their children's eating habits is clinically precise or comprehensive. Children's food preferences are rooted in a variety of influences, and can sometimes be rooted in allergies or other medical concerns. Around "picky eating," for example, there is a large research literature establishing that factors such as personality, social influences, and feeding styles can have an influence (Dovey, Staples, Gibson, & Halford, 2008). Picky eating is not characterised so much by children's reluctance to eat (referred to as "food neophobia"), but by consuming "an inadequate variety of foods through rejection of a substantial amount of foods that are familiar (as well as unfamiliar)" (Dovey, Staples, Gibson, & Halford, 2008, p. 181). Picky eating and food neophobia can also be experienced by those on the autism spectrum (Stafford, Tsang, López, Severini, & Iacomini, 2017). The present study does not make any observations about the children being discussed by their parents. What the present study does illustrate are examples of how parents perceive and interpret information from and about their children. Parents engage their own knowledge and preferences in sharing information about foods as they introduce them to their children; and parents are informed by their children's reactions to new foods.

People also morally evaluate others' food choices outside the family. Tanya, who in the past worked at a boutique supermarket called Planet Organic, describes the practice of deriving information about customers from the contents of their cart. While working at Planet Organic, Tanya says,

> I always love to play *what is this person making?* […] You see people come in and they're like 'I'm eating organic! I'm so healthy!' and you see what they're buying and

> it's just like kettle chips, going through. And you're like, okay, it's a start. But I don't know if this is really healthy for you. (emphasis original)

Tanya's thought experiment of *what is this person making* has influenced her to make her own shopping cart into an act of "virtue repertoire" (Tuominen, 2004, para. 2).

> It's things like that, and listening to people, and comments that they make about food, and – so sometimes when I'm at the grocery store, I make decisions of, like, filling my cart, and having a grocery cart as something I could be proud of. You know? Because I've been on the other end, like ringing through people's groceries and you're like, ohhkay, what are you buying here, what are you buying here, which is so bad! I know, I was much younger then. But now I'm kind of like, okay, most of the stuff in my cart is like fruits and vegetables and outside aisles. This is a shopping thing that I can be proud of.

Information practices are continuously intertwined with the everyday moral judgements and ethical adjustments that people make in relation to food.

4.4.2 Information practices are influenced by self-protection and self-judgement

In terms of moral reasoning, and determining what is right and/or good, people often reserve the harshest judgement for themselves. This self-judgement can prompt specific information practices. These information practices are often evident in the self-narratives people share about food, including self-narratives grounded in comparison with other people, or in a sense of deviance from a general norm. "Self-narratives" are:

> The ways individuals construct private and personal stories linking diverse events of their lives into unified and understandable wholes. These are stories about the self. They are the basis of personal identity and self-understanding and they provide answers to the question 'Who am I?' (D. E. Polkinghorne, 1991, p. 15)

An example of a judgemental self-narrative captured in this study is Premee's recounting of how she eats the same work lunch she's packed since her school days:

> I'm still, basically, taking the same lunch that I took for all of elementary school, junior high, high school, and university, which is like: sandwich, orange, yogurt. Maybe a fruit snack. *Like, I got older but I didn't grow up"* (emphasis added).

Of particular interest for this study are the judgemental self-narratives that reveal the information practices people have developed, and often adhered to for years, in relation to this judgement.

For example, Tanya, does not ask for help finding wanted items when grocery shopping. She prefers to search on her own. It is this information practice, the practice of searching independently and getting to know the organization of a supermarket rather than seek assistance from staff, for which she judges herself. Like many information professionals frustrated by the classification choices found in supermarkets, she can recount bafflingly elusive grocery items at the drop of a hat:

> Bacon bits are the hardest thing to find, I think, in the grocery story, because sometimes it's in with the salad stuff, sometimes in with the spices. *What the hell were these people thinking? This is weird.* [...] That, and breadcrumbs. Sometimes it's in the bakery aisle, sometimes it's in a gluten-free aisle, sometimes it's in that Shake-n-Bake kind of section. *What the hell?"* (emphasis added)

Simultaneously, Tanya judges herself for spending time searching independently, rather than asking for directional help. She says, "I never want to ask anyone. I never, ever ask anybody where things are. So I will wander around for an hour trying to find something, without asking someone. *Which is stupid: why don't I do that?"* (emphasis added). Tanya agrees that her "librarian brain" is attuned to, and fascinated by, how groceries are organised. At the same time, she describes herself as "stupid" for not asking for information.

At times, as with Tanya, self-narratives involve judgement of an information practice. Other times, the causality is reversed, with information practices functioning to soothe self-judgement, including the internalised judgement of other people. Participant Lisa J., a person who is highly knowledgeable about food and undertakes diverse food-related activities including hunting, has an affinity for McDonald's that she withholds from everyone

in her life. Her secrecy helps her cope with a longstanding family food dynamic. As she describes:

> I have this secret thing [...] where I have a secret love with McDonald's. It's, um, bad, but it's *so* good. And so, often I'll fall back to McDonald's. And that feels like a treat to me. Ever since I was a kid I've loved McDonald's. Because it wasn't something that was norm as a kid. [...] There's a lot of shame in our family around foods. [...] Our father was, um – shamed women specifically for their weight. So being skinny was a very important thing. So my sisters, some of them have maintained that. And see some foods as absolutely off-limits and criminal. One of which being McDonald's of any variety. [...] If I come in the house, and I'll hide the bag in the car, people are like *[sniffs]* 'you smell like nuggets!' You know. Never get away with it. But it is one of those things where I feel secretive about, because I know there's judgement and shame around. (Lisa J.)

As people construct their sense of themselves, through self-narratives, they are constructing their qualities and actions as good or bad. People's food-related self-narratives can rest on judgement of their information practices. At the same time, these self-narratives can also convey subtle and longstanding information practices that arise in response to moral self-judgement.

This self-judgement that sometimes makes secretive behaviour make sense also enables self-preservation. Chatman (1992; 1996) is most closely associated with our understanding that withholding information is a means for people to protect themselves. In her study of women living in a retirement community, Chatman documented the importance of "face-saving" for these women, and the difficulty of discussing any information that might compromise their safety, status, or dignity:

> A factor that influences residents' inability to freely share this information is the phenomenon of face-saving; that is, because the respondents are concerned about maintaining their social position, items that might compromise their self-protection are not easy to discuss. (1992, p. 126)

Bringing the perspective of a new generation, Gibson and Martin (2019) build on Chatman's work and shift the focus from people's motivations and actions to the larger structures that put them in the position of having to consider self-protection in information sharing. They propose "information marginalization" as the evolution of "information poverty. As they explain:

> Resituating the concept of information poverty, and re-conceptualizing it as an array of self-protective responses to information marginalization refocuses blame away from individuals experiencing marginalization, and toward the contextual conditions that create information poverty. This shift in focus is more than 'political correctness.' The data demonstrated that mothers exhibited a range of defensive behaviors and practices commonly associated with information poverty in response to persistent structural problems (contextual conditions) in face-to-face information environments and online information systems. (p. 10)

Lisa J.'s experience illuminates that families can also exhibit structural problems leading to self-protective information practices such as secrecy. Lisa J.'s anecdote about McDonald's is also an account of information marginalisation. What is further distinctive in her account, and in Tanya's, is the prominence of self-judgement alongside the self-protective act of keeping some actions and thoughts to themselves.

More anomalously, Cheryl and Todd were willing to share with me food activities that they withhold from their neighbours, due to the real possibility of being judged disapprovingly. Cheryl and Todd maintain both a basement quail operation, from which they harvest eggs and birds (Figure 14), and a backyard shed where they keep rabbits, whose fur supports some of Cheryl's fibre crafts. It transpires that both are good choices for urban livestock enthusiasts who wish to keep their activities private. The quail give off very little livestock aroma, certainly when compared with a more conventional barnyard chicken coop. And they are also quiet; only the roosters can occasionally be heard from upstairs in the house. Cheryl and Todd have come to know the sounds that the quail do make, as these sounds are informative. For instance, Cheryl describes the "cricket-like" sound that the

female quails make when they are about to lay an egg, calling it a distinctive "whistley thing they do."

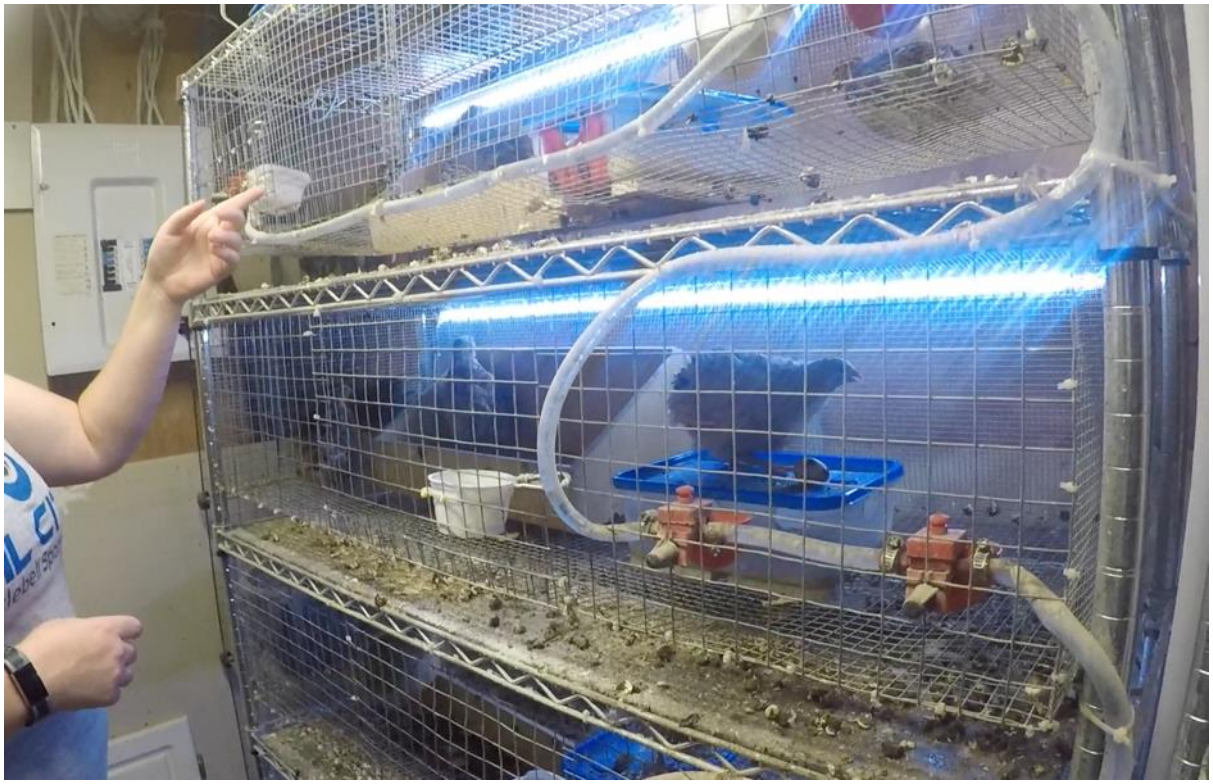

Figure 14. Cheryl gestures while describing the sounds and activities of the basement quail operation she shares with husband Todd

4.4.3 Class in food-related moral reasoning

Of all the areas of information practice documented in this study, this one is the most clearly influenced by participants' socioeconomic statuses. Analyses of information practices as shaped by, or as manifestations of, larger structures such as class are not plentiful in information science. In part, this underexamination of class is an implication of the larger trends that I discussed in Chapter 1, Section 1.2. With its historical concern with formal settings, such as libraries and universities, and on individual information-seeking, information science scholarship with a class lens has been rare. Chatman (1985, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1996) is an important exception.

In one example of class-oriented information science research, Tuominen (2004) finds that the moral choices signifying "virtue" do not happen in a vacuum. Writing about

surgery patients, he observes that conforming to conventionally recognizable virtue, understood as highly moral behaviour, hinges in part on class:

> To act properly in the world of health, the individual should be physically, mentally and *economically self-sufficient*. Because of this kind of normative or ideological demand, the ill person and his or her significant others have to continuously prove to potentially critical or sceptical spectators—relatives and friends as well as formal authorities—their will to get better and to live as normally and independently as possible. (para. 19, emphasis added)

In other words, material resources are required in order to meet the demands of appearing to be a "good" and "normal" person recovering from illness. This includes access to the kinds of information resources that enable a person to be "mentally [...] self-sufficient." Gibson and Martin (2019) make the same point in their research on information marginalisation and parents of people with disabilities: "class distinctions are inherently statements about community structure and values" (p. 6). Similarly, in the present study, it is evident that grounding food choices in conscious, intentional moral reasoning is a practice influenced by participants' socioeconomic status. Nuances of class are apprehensible in participants' descriptions of their range of food options, and in their narration of what guides their choices.

This does not mean that people with less means have less capacity for, or less interest in, moral reasoning. While I have not directly asked participants how affluent they are, some participants have shared details with me as part of verbalising their practices. Lisa J. is a participant who discloses that she receives social assistance. She describes herself as being "extremely poor." She describes her need to plan meals for an entire month at a time in order to ensure that she can sufficiently stretch her funds. Financial anxiety is a constant concern; as she relays, "my worst nightmare of food is going to the store and not having enough money for it." Lisa J. goes hunting with her father partly as a family tradition, but also as a means of keeping her freezer stocked with meat in a way that, to her, is economical and ethically sourced (Figure 15). She also possesses the necessary know-how, including how to

navigate the regulatory procedure through which permission to hunt is granted in Alberta, and how to judge whether the weather and terrain are right for hunting. Lisa J. may not have the same range of options as more affluent participants do, but informed moral reasoning is still part of her daily food life.

Figure 15. Lisa J. explains the moose hunt (and her mis en place) as she cooks. "My Dad's a hunter, so this is from last year's hunt"

When people are under relatively less pressure financially, they have more privilege, and often more resources including time, to be able to seek and act on information that helps them weigh the moral dimensions of their food choices. Rachel's extensive practice of determining that the meat her family eats comes from well-treated animals is a good example of this capacity to gather information to satisfy ethical concern.

As we know, however, people's information activities are not deterministic. People in possession of the same information will make different decisions about what to do with it and how to act on it. In this study, this non-determinism is evident in how some participants expressed similar ethical concerns that motivated their information-seeking, but then made different choices about how to enact their ethics through food choices, and vice versa. Kaelin's decision to go vegan was informed in part by the fact that "I never really liked meat

anyway," but more predominantly, she describes concerns similar to Rachel's. Of her decision, Kaelin explains:

> I saw no reason why animal cruelty should be part of our food system if we can live perfectly healthy lives without it [eating meat]. […] And then environmentally as well there is a lot coming out now about the impacts of meat production on our environment, and so I figured that going vegan just kind of met all of those things that I had been thinking about.

Kaelin, Rachel, and Lisa J. are all well-informed not only about food but about food systems, and about how food arrives at the table. Kaelin and Rachel share similar ethical concerns about the treatment of animals and the harms of industrialised farming. But it is Rachel and Lisa J., in deciding to eat meat from known, well-researched sources, who share similar moral behaviour, while Kaelin chooses to foreswear all foods derived from animals.

4.4.4 Expanding beyond concern for the ethical treatment of information

In information science, concern with morality is present, but perhaps not surprisingly, this concern has conventionally revolved around information itself, rather than people's experiences. The topics taken up in the subfield of information ethics exemplify information-centrism, with predominant examples including privacy, intellectual freedom, intellectual property, censorship, and regulation (cf. Himma, 2007; Moore, 2005). Information ethics often frames information as a thing, as it considers how information should be handled, by institutions and individuals. To date, information science scholars have predominately been concerned with morality in the process of how information is treated. This study illuminates the information practices within a person's process of "being moral."

Information science scholars and practitioners also explore the morality *of* information. This concern is central to another subfield, information literacy. Today, the conversation about librarians' role in helping people identify mis-, dis-, and mal-information is a particularly urgent manifestation of the concern with distinguishing "good" information

from “bad” (Cooke, 2019). However, this concern predates the current moment and contemporary, weaponised concepts such as “fake news.” Information professionals such as librarians have a long history of casting information sources in moral terms. For example, the early days of social media led to widespread debate about whether or not Wikipedia, as an information source, was “evil” (Polkinghorne & Hoffman, 2009). Well before that, it was commonplace, particularly in the English-speaking world, for librarians to restrict access to books, believing that “good reading would lead to good behavior,” for example by suppressing the availability of series such as Nancy Drew in public and school libraries because they were considered mere entertainment, devoid of moral or educational value (Hamilton-Honey, 2012, p. 783; Kinloch, 1935).

Such restrictions on leisure reading materials have largely been discontinued with the passage of time. However, in the health context, many librarians assert their role as expert assessors of information, who advise on what information is good, and what information is less than good. This role has been promoted in the context of public libraries, which have been positioned by librarians as supporters of health literacy (Popoola, 2019). It has also been asserted in the context of health libraries, whose librarians often work to measure their impact on “direct patient care,” “more informed decision making,” “[gaining] new knowledge,” and “improve[d] confidence” through the provision of high-quality information and advice (Ayre et al., 2018, p. 235). These examples are not to minimise the expertise of librarians who support health information needs, nor to equate them with the Nancy Drew naysayers of the past. Rather I wish to observe that the deliberations of library users themselves, on what makes for high-quality information, are not predominantly centred in library-oriented discourses.

There is some history among information scholars of exploring the moral dimensions of information seeking and use. Such exploration is most commonly undertaken by scholars working within a constructivist paradigm, often drawing on Potter and Wetherell’s concept of interpretive repertoires (1987). For example, Talja (2009) unpacks participants’ self-contradictory appraisals of libraries in order to demonstrate the power of approaching

interview data as "a cultural and collective phenomenon" that is continuously being renegotiated (p. 461). McKenzie, reporting on pregnant women's accounts of encounters with health practitioners, highlights how people's information seeking "is discursively bound up in descriptions of appropriate or inappropriate behaviour" (2002a, p. 44). Notably, McKenzie finds that participants often direct their judgements inward at themselves, a finding reiterated by this study. She writes, "Several women suggested that either asking questions at all or asking their specific question might be inappropriate" (2002a, p. 36).

Perhaps most correspondingly to the present study, Tuominen (2004) identifies "virtue repertoires" in accounts of information seeking by people awaiting heart surgery, and their spouses. A virtue repertoire is enacted when "individuals seeking information have to relate their talk and other activities to existing moral presuppositions on how rational and self-controlling individuals should behave" (para. 2). Tuominen finds that surgery patients focus on enacting a virtue repertoire to demonstrate that they are "reasonable" people (para. 10). "Virtuous" qualities include optimism and self-mastery, closely tied to behaviours such as persisting in the fight to be healthy, complying with all demands of the medical system, and maintaining healthy eating habits (paras. 11-12). People enact their virtue repertoires in part through their information seeking, such as how they assess different sources of information. People generally seek and use information that aligns with and reinforces their own ethical views and moral actions. Studies like Tuominen's, which centre on people's information practices in moral reasoning, remain relatively rare.

However, information science is not the only discipline in which there is space for more complex and diverse examinations of the moral dimensions of people's experiences. Across the social sciences, and particularly for scholars working in quantitative, positivist traditions, studying morality presents persistent challenges. In discussing "measuring morality," health researcher Remo Ostini (2010) raises two central difficulties. First, morality is not easy to define: "everyone knows what morality is when they see it but describing it in a sufficiently concrete manner" is difficult, "without ending up with a check-list of more or less badness" (p. 338). The second difficulty is that, "even if it were possible to

identify a conceptualisation of morality with which the researcher was satisfied and which could be clearly specified, it is still difficult to put in place a process by which behavioural responses or observations can be obtained" (p. 339). In other words, morality is difficult both to define and to observe.

The present study circumvents these challenges because it is grounded in a constructivist paradigm. As such, it does not aim to identify measurable, or even shared, conceptualisations of morality. Instead, it identifies common experiences and practices among participants, which they describe in their own words. It relies on participants' own framings and expressions of morality.

4.5 Informing bod(ies): identifying bodily meanings

In this fourth area of food-related information practice, participants pay close, conscious attention to bodies and bodily experience, often but not always as part of understanding their health, and the connections between food and feeling well. Participants engage in three main practices that centre on paying attention to bodies. First, participants intentionally, consciously attend to informative sensations they feel from their bodies. This practice is often, though not always, signified in conversation with phrases such as "listening to my body" or "paying attention to my body." Second, participants enact informative movement practices, such as cooking techniques in which they interact with ingredients. Third, participants observe the bodies and bodily experiences of other people and are informed by these observations. The findings in this section most directly address research question 1.2, which is *How do people experience embodied information and knowledge as part of their everyday information practices?*

4.5.1 Paying attention to bodies: conscious study of the informing body

A significant number of participants describe their bodies as they would describe an information source, which they consult intentionally. They gather information from their bodies through frequent attention, awareness, and at times, experimentation. Often a degree

of self-scrutiny is prompted by, or heightened by, a new health circumstance such as pregnancy or surgery recovery. The information that participants gather from their bodies can be at odds with the information they have received from health care workers, in which case the practice of "listening to my body" helps participants navigate conflicting health advice, and make sense of lessons learned from memorable experiences. This may be one reason why stories of "paying attention to my body" tend to be recounted with detail and vigor.

Participant Rachel, for example, gained weight after surgery to remove her gall bladder. This was a new experience for someone whose weight had been stable. The dietary advice she received was not helpful. She received information advising that she should cut out foods conventionally associated with weight gain, such as fat and carbs. When she put this advice into action, however, she found that it did not help. Enacting the informing practice of trial and error, Rachel set out to eliminate the foods that were causing this post-surgery weight gain. Eventually, she found that it was not elimination she needed to focus on, but rather rebalancing. She focused on eating more bread, and her weight stabilised. Telling this story, Rachel is aware of how noteworthy it may seem: "I ask you, who loses weight from eating bread? No one."

Not all participants offer stories of such intentional self-experimentation, but several participants describe how they interpret bodily sensations such as cravings, energy level, strength, and general well-being. Cravings, for example for sugar or salt, are noticeable pieces of embodied information, and they trigger interpretation based on experience and existing knowledge. Tanya, who must remain gluten-free due to celiac disease, experiences frequent cravings and attributes these, with varying degrees of certainty, to what her body is "saying" to her. When she craves pasta, she thinks:

> I bet that there's something neurological going on, like oh I'm hungry for pasta – maybe my body's like saying I need some weird carbohydrates or something like that. But I have no idea. I usually crave meat when I'm feeling low on iron, 'cause I'm anemic.

Similarly, Premee, who also described her health challenges, thinks about the cycle of her workday, and her energy level, in terms of how she will experience the consequences of not eating enough. Her body, and how it feels when her blood sugar is low, have served as information for her over time, and she knows now that letting herself get "hangry" is not a good idea. As she says:

> It's not so much the work itself, physically, it's more just – lunch was at noon, it's now eight o'clock and I'm leaving – I shouldn't have done that, my blood sugar is low – I can feel that my blood sugar is low. I feel draggy, I feel hangry. If someone tries to talk to me on the train there will be an incident.

Premee's ongoing effort to prioritise feeding herself adequately is worth quoting at length because it captures how sensations such as hunger are "read" as information, and through interpretation, become know-how. Through trial and error, in turn, this know-how can intentionally be applied to mitigating or preventing future unpleasant sensations or unhealthy situations. As Premee explains:

> If my entire routine has gone to pot, or if I have a sudden time crunch, or an asthma attack or something – I can usually still manage to feed myself, and I often still will. But, yeah, there have been also plenty of times when if I'm just feeling TOO overwhelmed, or too tired – I just won't eat. Which is probably not super healthy. But, it seems like I respond to being sad by eating more, and to being stressed by not eating at all, so *at least I figured out the pattern*. And so that way when I am feeling super super stressed, I often have to physically, like, stop myself, sit down and go- 'Okaaaay, I am freaking out. But odds are decent that if I have a snack I will feel better, and then either I will freak out less, or I will have some energy to freak out with.' [emphasis added]

Premee did not explain how she "figured out the pattern" of when she needed to eat before doing anything else. But as with similar observations from participants, Premee's account reflects long-term self-observation, being informed by bodily sensations and by the associated consequences of ignoring them. Premee's words reiterate the findings of

important studies reviewed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2, such as Godbold (2013), Lloyd (2007), and Olsson (2010). These studies similarly document people's accounts of how they have come to interpret embodied information, and the stakes involved in acting on this information.

Where Premee's example revolves around self-monitoring and managing her hunger throughout the workday, Carrie describes how she adjusted what she eats first thing in the morning before her daily workout. When she began working out seriously in her 20s, inspired by a graduate school friend who was seriously involved in fitness, she would eat before a morning workout, "usually half a banana or a little bit of grapefruit juice or something like that, and going to work out, and then coming home and having a protein smoothie." More recently, she has observed that if she is hungry when she wakes up in the morning and only eats half a banana before going to the gym, the effectiveness of her workout suffers: "the reason I integrated that [a tiny protein smoothie] is I realised, if I was hungry, like actually woke up and felt significantly hungry, that it was going to be harder to have a more strenuous workout." Carrie searched online for information about what to eat in the morning before a workout. As a result, she now prepares and drinks a "tiny baby protein shake." She showed me the small container she uses, in order to demonstrate how "tiny" her shakes are (Figure 16). She explains:

Figure 16. Carrie's container for her "tiny" morning protein shake

> And the *internet* told me that it would be valuable to have a little bit of protein, and I was familiar with the experience of having protein shakes. So rather than having a really elaborate protein shake, I would make a little – I *do* make – a little tiny one in like, a Tupperware container. Tiny, not a whole serving. […] Had the internet, in recent years, not intervened, I probably would still have been – if I woke up hungry and feeling like I wasn't going to be able to do a workout – I

> probably would have gravitated toward fruit, or a bit of grapefruit juice or something like that. [emphasis original]

Over time, Carrie observed that her morning half-banana or grapefruit juice were not enough for her. In this sense she identifies a bodily experience, which had been informing her that she might benefit from changing what she ate in the morning before working out. However, in Carrie's case, she describes consulting the internet, rather than undertaking extended trial and error to determine what morning meal would make for more effective workouts.

Lisa J., like the other participants in this section, also engages in routine, reflective self-monitoring, including well-established interpretive practices around cravings and other bodily sensations:

> If you're hungry for chocolate, eating three bowls of cereal is not going to get you over being hungry for chocolate. Eat the bloody chocolate. [But] if I'm hungry for chocolate, but I've already eaten chocolate today, what am I really hungry for? Am I looking for calcium? What is my body really asking for? Can I eat a handful of almonds to be good enough? That kind of thing.

The "informing body," then, requires interpretation in order to become knowable. Such interpretation is sometimes informed by published information or by health information dispensed by a professional. More predominantly in this study, however, participants have used trial and error, in the form of frequent, often systematic self-observation over time, in order to make sense of bodily sensations and to respond accordingly.

Other People's Bodies. Participants sometimes observe, interpret, and are also informed by the bodily experiences of other people. Sometimes these experiences are verbalised, and sometimes they are tacit or non-verbally expressed. For instance, Tanya knew that her son was lactose-intolerant before he had been formally diagnosed. With her son a very young toddler, she arrived at this knowledge not by talking with him about it, but by observing his behaviour. Unlike many if not most toddlers, Tanya's son refuses dairy

consistently, such as by repeatedly pushing away a glass of milk at the dinner table. She came to suspect through his body language and gestures that dairy made him feel ill.

> He'll [her 3-year-old son] eat anything. I've never seen him turn away – actually, that's a lie. He won't eat milk. But I think that that's largely because he can't tolerate it. And he doesn't even know this yet. But it's just something that you kind of notice. Like, he was formula fed, but he was, like, up until he was about 6 months he just screamed. For the first six months of his life. And that's because we were giving him, like, we were trying all these different formulas – the sensitive one, and then we finally got up onto a non-dairy kinda one, and then he was finally calming down. So I think that he's lactose intolerant. He's lactose intolerant. I never, ever see him drink a glass of milk. Ever. Whereas my daughter, she'll drink milk, and that's all she wants to drink.

Tanya is able to make this observation in part because she has reflected on her own childhood experiences of having certain foods make her ill, before she had her diagnosis of celiac disease:

> That's the thing, too, right, like, I never liked pasta as a kid. And I could never really pinpoint why until I was like okay, well, it's my body's way of telling me that it makes me sick. So, I don't know, I feel like your body naturally tells you. *You just have to listen*. [emphasis added]

Tanya's account illustrates how a personal body-monitoring information practice can be extended to underpin the interpretation of other people's bodies as information sources. She draws on existing know-how about her interactions with the physical world and applies this know-how to her son's refusal to eat or drink dairy foods.

This practice can be illuminated to some extent with literature on self-diagnosis. Self-diagnosis "describes the skill of introspection to develop awareness of inner bodily states and emotions" (Charleton, 2005, p. 823). Tanya is a formally diagnosed celiac, not a self-diagnosed one, but researchers today do look to celiac disease as a site for studying self-diagnosis. There are several reasons for this, including that until recently, obtaining a

diagnosis of celiac has required relatively invasive testing, and because the change required to cope with celiac – eliminating gluten from the diet – can be undertaken without the need to access the health care system. Celiac self-diagnosis often hinges on a person feeling better when they stop eating foods containing gluten, such as bread. Sociologists Copelton and Valle (2009) refer to these ways of thinking as "practical epistemologies," referring to knowledge based in the reasoning that if eliminating gluten improves the feeling of health, and eliminating gluten is the primary mechanism for managing celiac, then I must have celiac (p. 626). Studying celiac support groups, Copelton and Valle find that "self-diagnosis and the creation of practical epistemologies are likely when medical diagnosis offers no concrete cure or when remedies involve non-medical lifestyle changes" (p. 626). A parent's monitoring of a child's body language, and their comfort with different foods, is also a practical epistemology. Psychiatrist Charlton (2005), writing about self-diagnosis of mental health concerns, affirms the importance of such epistemologies, which he refers to as "introspection":

> The results of introspection should therefore be regarded as a working hypothesis, and open to revision on the basis of experience. On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that consciousness evolved because it was adaptive, so the results of introspection are worthy of consideration. (p. 825)

Tanya's observations of her son's bodily responses to specific foods illustrate the overlap between the idea of "listening to my body" and the act of self-diagnosis, or in this case, parental diagnosis of a child. Self-diagnosis must not be assumed to be always incorrect or underinformed. As Lewis (2016) has found in studying self-diagnosis by adults on the autism spectrum disorder, the self-diagnosis process can be quite similar to the formal diagnosis process. Tanya was correct about her son's lactose intolerance. However, for information researchers interested in how people use bodies as information sources, her story illuminates some important implications. In the context of potential illness, gesture and body language constitute a form of information, and in response, people enact practical epistemologies that researchers could further unpack. Doing so would contribute to the work of both health

professionals and information professionals, who should be equipped to help people navigate all forms of health information, including embodied health information.

4.5.2 Informative movement and sensory practices

Participants possess and can articulate embodied information practices that would usually not be verbalised (in the absence of a researcher), and that may be tacit. These practices do not centre on self-monitoring or self-management, as with the previous finding, but rather on participants' surroundings, including ingredients and equipment.

Cooking and eating processes involve many forms of testing and measuring, and participants often use their bodies to inform this process. Cooking rice is one example.

Figure 17. Megan demonstrates how to add the right amount of water when cooking rice

Participants Megan and Kim both use a traditional technique for measuring how much water to include in the pot when cooking rice. In her video tour, in which she cooked Chinese steamed eggs, Megan explained and demonstrated how to determine when there is enough water in the pot (Figure 17). As Megan explains in the section of the video tour depicted above:

> A rule that my mom taught me, well, and my dad, for how much water to put, is you level out the rice, and then you stick your finger in, and use your thumb to gauge where the surface of the rice is, and then you want *that* much on top of the rice. […] You just want your thumb to be touching the surface of the water.

This technique is sometimes referred to (in English) as the "knuckle method," and it is an evocative example of the intertwining of embodied information practices and food practices. The knuckle method is an example of a technique that does not rely on the sense of sight and could be used without it, and which does not require any equipment. Of course, there are also embodied techniques that primarily rely on the predominant sense of sight. When participants are judging whether a dish is "finished," for example, they make use of sensory information from all senses, including but not limited to sight. Megan's Chinese steamed eggs are a good example of a dish whose "doneness" is judged largely by sight, and also by "texture," meaning how the eggs feel in the mouth:

> It's supposed to be a really smooth, creamy, custardy egg, and then you get a hint of salt from the soy sauce. […] It'll be opaque, and it's…just…done! It'll be cooked all the way through, but, if I did it right, then there shouldn't be any opaque cooked bubbles around the side, 'cause that's when it's, like, overdone. […] It's a textural thing [preventing all bubbles on top]. It's a really basic dish. There's not a lot going on – it's just eggs and water. So I think it's just the texture of it, it's more enjoyable.

Before cooking, Megan also strains the eggs as another way of removing all bubbles. In other words, Megan monitors the bubbles (and hopefully, the absence thereof) by sight and through intentional physical movements, but not just for visually aesthetic reasons, or to demonstrate that she can execute the traditional technique of steaming eggs. Rather, ideal texture is the motivation to avoid the bubbles.

Premee, on our video tour at the Edmonton farmer's market, picks up different bunches of kale in order to choose which one to buy (Figure 18). She brings a bunch close to her face in order to examine it, and turns it over with her hand. The kale leaves are remarkably large, much larger than her hand, and they are piled up chest-high on the table before us. Both green kale and purple kale are available, but Premee expresses uncertainty about what she might make with the purple variety. Of the green kale bunch she selects, she simply says, "this one feels a bit better." Premee offers an example of a gesture that is commonplace, recurring, and directly informational: that of handling produce in order to make a selection.

Figure 18. Premee examining different types of kale at the Farmer's Market

Where Megan and Premee exemplify how participants often verbalise their informative gestures, with their words matching their actions, Participant Lisa M. exemplifies informative movement practices grounded more in tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is personal and implicit (Polanyi, 1962), in contrast with the explicit knowledge demonstrated by Megan. Lisa M. is a teacher and graduate student. She and her family keep an enormous garden on the family farm outside Marsden, covering approximately 0.18 hectares (1794 m^2). The garden contains prolific apple trees (Figure 19). I visited her in August for a video tour, in the late-summer period when most prairie gardens are lush and nearly past their prime, and with many perennial

Figure 19. Lisa M. reaches for a ripe apple in in her family's garden

plants, such as dill, going to seed. Lisa M. gave me a tour of her garden and then we headed inside to "process some apples" from her trees. In relation to food, the term "processing" describes activities that transform crops (or livestock) into other foods. At Lisa M.'s house, the purpose of processing these apples is to preserve them until winter, when they could be baked into pies. She explains her ordinary process, all while setting out a large glass bowl and a compost pail, offering me a choice between a small knife and a large knife (I chose small), and starting to cut, core, peel, and slice the apples:

> Usually all I do is chop them [the apples] into a bowl. If they go brown, they go brown, that's okay. I'm going to make them into apple pie anyway – and freeze them. […] I just cut them and core them and…I don't have that fancy little corer. And then if there's bad spots, that's basically all I cut off. And then I just chop it so that when I bring them out, thaw them out, they're all I gotta do is throw them in a colander to drain, and I can make pies.

Once we begin to process the apples, it is apparent that Lisa M. is much faster at this task than I am. Her movements are practiced. She slices each apple into quarters, cores and peels each piece, and then slices them into the bowl. The tacit knowledge apparent in her movements includes her knowledge of how thick to slice the apple pieces for suitable pie filling and how to move quickly and safely, with a gesture of moving the knife upwards with one hand toward the thumb in her other hand, which is holding the fruit. This allows each slice to fall into the bowl (Figure 20).

Figure 20. Lisa M. (right) and I (left) core and slice apples to be frozen and used later in pies

Tacit knowledge, also known as personal knowledge, is attributable to Michael Polanyi (1962), who questioned the positivist supremacy of scientific objectivity by arguing that much human knowledge is unspoken and implicit. Tacit

knowledge can be understood as "having an awareness of certain things in a way that is quite different than focusing our attention on them. In contrast with explicit knowledge, in which a knower is self-aware of the state of having knowledge, tacit knowledge is implicit. It is genuine knowledge one can have without being self-consciously aware of having it" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 285). Lisa's skill with the knife is very much an embodied information practice, through which she is not only continuously responding to sensory information about the state of the apples, which were ripe, and often marked where wasps had bitten into them. She is also acting on her tacit know-how and longstanding expertise.

It is not surprising that food practices involve all of the senses. However, in IS we are still developing ways to identify and discuss the interconnectedness of different embodied experiences, and the inseparability of embodied experience from other forms of information experience. This section illustrates the complexity of such experiences and demonstrates a way for them to be described in terms of information practices.

4.6 Overarching theoretical concept: *embodied mutual constitution*

I propose the concept of *embodied mutual constitution* as a theoretical construct that explains the workings of the practices documented in this study, and their interconnections with each other and with larger structures. Embodied mutual constitution expresses the co-constructive nature of people's information practices with other practices and with larger social structures, all of which are navigated through sensory interactions with the physical world. In coding the hugely varied data created in this study, and the themes emerging from analysis, the theme of mutual constitution arose again and again. Participants are continually constructing their information practices through their food practices, and in turn, their food practices are constructed through their information practices. (I introduced the concepts of information practices and food practices in Chapter 1, Section 1.7.) As an example, I would revisit Tanya's description of cooking gluten-free pasta from Section 4.2.3. Tanya's food practices here involve finding, cooking, eating, and feeding her family the best gluten-free foods she can find. The main embodied information practice intertwining with

these food practices is trial and error, which leads her to cook and taste various gluten-free pastas in a quest to determine which option — corn, quinoa, rice — is best.

Further, through their information practices, participants also enact their identities, and how they negotiate life within larger social systems such as class, health, and the family. Participants rarely set out to develop information practices for their own sake; rather, participants develop information practices as part of doing, being, or accomplishing something. At the same time, information practices are not solely functional or supportive, but are *co-constitutive* with other everyday practices (feeding ourselves, learning, decision-making, relating to others, being in our bodies). I am not the first to observe that information practices are intertwined with other practices, nor have I originated the terminology of "mutual constitution." However, embodied mutual constitution is a development that can substantiate and extend our current understanding of information practices. This is an emerging finding that requires more research. In this section, I make an initial characterisation of the concept within information science, and indicate how it may be explored in future research.

The expression *mutual constitution* has been used in other disciplines, for instance to express the perspective that people's internal experiences are structured by their surroundings, and vice versa. Psychologists Markus and Kitayama (2003) argue for the "mutual constitution of culture and psyche," asserting a cultural psychological perspective that "cultural practices and meanings structure psychological processes, which in turn generate, perpetuate, and transform these cultural practices and meanings" (p. 6). The expression has also been applied to analyses of co-constructing relationships between larger social structures, such as between the market and the nation-state. Political scientists Copley and Moraitis (2020), writing about "the mutual constitution thesis" within their discipline, observe that "a kind of critical consensus has emerged around the concept of the *mutual constitution of states and markets"* (p. 2, emphasis original). In political science, mutual constitution "highlights the state's role in underpinning market developments by demonstrating the entwinement of markets in domestic institutional, ideational, and

politico-legal structures" (p. 2). In both of these disciplines, the concept of mutual constitution has been employed to emphasise the co-constructive nature of experiences or structures that have often been isolated within predominantly positivist, methodologically individualist, social science research, as interpretivist methodologists Bevir and Blakely (2018) and others have analysed in detail. I argue that the specific explanatory power of the idea of mutual constitution should be applied to information practices as well.

Mutual constitution among embodied information practices can be articulated as follows. Throughout this study, I have found information practices intertwined with other practices, such as routine-but-complex food, household, family, and health practices. The social production of identity has a large body of scholarship surrounding it, which scope prevents me from recounting comprehensively here. However, I would point to landmark theoretical work such as West and Zimmerman's "Doing gender" (1987) as an example of how elements of identity can and do benefit from being understood as practices. West and Zimmerman explain gender as a "routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment" (p. 126). Gender is "the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities" (p. 127). This aligns with practice theorist Reckwitz (2002), whose work has been an underlying influence throughout the present study, writing that "practices are routinized bodily activities [...] A practice can be understood as the regular, skilful 'performance' of (human) bodies" (p. 251). In other words, an element of identity such as gender is a *practice* requiring bodily arrangements with reference to socially-constructed norms. This study has documented a range of identity-centred practices, such as the practice of parenting or being parented and the practice of being an ethical person, not to mention the gendered practice of bodily monitoring, which is a routinised bodily activity in service of health concerns or "normative conceptions" such as the "ideal" female body.

Given that elements of identity are produced through practices, what I have found in this study is that people develop information practices as part of becoming and being who they are. Embodied information practices are co-constitutive with identity practices such as being a family member, being independent, being someone who has moral priorities, being a

first-generation Canadian, being healthy. All of these practices rely upon the information practices through which people come to feel that they are able to make decisions, take action, and understand themselves in relation to others. To extend the above example, Tanya constructs her identity as a person with celiac in large part through the information practices she uses to keep informed about gluten-free food options. Embodied information practices are inseparable from the production of identity in everyday activities. One implication of this is that information researchers should question any tendency to consider information practices in isolation, or solely through behavioural indicators.

This study also finds co-construction between people's embodied information practices and the larger social structures that shape people's lives, and which, in turn, they shape. Information practices are complex and diverse, but like all other practices, they are also influenced and bound by social norms and institutions. Participants' information practices are influenced by, and integrated with, their experiences early in life, which are influenced by family structures. They are influenced by their experiences with health and health care systems, their normative and ethical concerns, their family traditions and routines, their social lives, and their concepts of themselves, including their self-narratives and self-observation. In turn, through their information practices, participants act upon these larger systems and concerns. For example, participant Rachel's information practices include studying where her food originates, and making inquiries with food producers to ensure that when she buys meat, it comes from animals that have been well-treated. Through these practices, Rachel helps to normalise ethical concern within food production. Embodied mutual constitution emphasises these interrelations and can help future information practices research make progress toward the complexity to which it often aspires. Polkinghorne & Given (2021) recently analysed these aspirations toward complexity by examining how information science researchers use the rhetorical term "holistic." By examining the rhetorical meanings of a single term, they demonstrate the longstanding desire expressed within the field for new approaches that better contend with the richness of

people's experiences. Embodied mutual constitution is a concept relevant to this ongoing conversation and evolution in information science.

The concept of mutual constitution has come under critique for what could be described as "fuzziness." Educational researcher Haggis (2009), discussing the complexity of context as it affects learning, argues the following:

> Another challenge to current sociocultural framings is the difficulty of articulating the way that the complexities of the social work together. Many attempts to do this suggest that different elements are 'mutually constitutive', but the desire to express mutual co-specification can result in an extremely generalized articulation of 'things working together' [...] The attempt to create a sense of interrelatedness, dynamic construction and change through time arguably works to fragment each unit of analysis at the same time as it tries to create it, leaving only a vague sense of mutual co-specification. In one sense, context becomes expanded to incorporate everything, and could thus be said to refer to nothing. (pp. 47-48)

The current predominant discourses in information science are not the same as they are in education, and this difference lends specific value to embodied mutual constitution for our discipline. Because information researchers are focused on the "invisible substrate of information," the ubiquitous "red thread of information in the social texture of people's lives," in Bates' oft-quoted metaphor (2010, p. 1048), we need concepts that enable us to express the interactions not only between people and information, but also between information experiences and larger structures.

Researchers often create beneficial models to make information experiences more apprehensible, and to communicate the role of context and the flow of problem solving. What this study finds is that information practices are constructed across a lifetime and in ways that are difficult to capture with a model. As information researchers increasingly explore experiences where the "red thread" is subtle rather than predominant, or where the red thread is tangled or knitted, rather than woven into flat cloth, it is beneficial for us to

develop explanatory constructs that support a substantially holistic paradigm (Polkinghorne & Given, 2021).

It is in support of this development that I propose *embodied mutual constitution*. Researchers can apply embodied mutual constitution by articulating specific practices within a given life context, and then analysing how these practices intertwine and influence one another. They can also analyse the role of larger structures within a context under study, and how people's embodied information practices are influenced by, and influence in turn, these structures. In these ways, information science researchers can move away from "fuzziness," which in our discipline often involves assertions about the ubiquity of information, toward more precise and meaningfully holistic understandings of people's information practices in context.

4.7 Observations about the research experience

Having introduced embodied mutual constitution, this section shifts gears to share observations about bringing a sensory ethnographic approach, paired with a constructivist grounded theory approach, to a study of information practices. This study invited participants to share their food lives through interviews, a more conventional sedentary technique, and through video tours, a more active, often participatory technique enabling closer attention to embodied parts of experience and a more comprehensive portrait of our interactions. Each of these methods required a meeting with participants. In recruitment conversations, I would often refer to these two techniques as "talking about food" and "doing something related to food." These techniques resulted in the creation of wide-ranging, significantly participant-led data in which participants shared hugely varied practices: from raising quail (Cheryl and Todd), to visiting the McDonald's drive-thru surreptitiously (Lisa J.), to meal planning (Carrie), to reloading bullets in the basement, for hunting (Larry). This study took on the challenge of tugging on the "red thread of information" across the lives of a widely divergent group of participants, whose only universally shared characteristic was being responsible for the food decisions in their home. As such, in addition to its findings,

this study also offers insights into the challenges and benefits of taking this approach to interpretivist, qualitative information research.

First, there are, of course, added technical challenges to conducting data collection in public places and on video (Polkinghorne, 2018b). While video tours are distinguished by their emphasis on visual data, sound quality is still crucial for analysis. Tanya's video tour, which took place at a bakery and café, yielded video in which there are moments when our conversation is inaudible, due to background noise from a coffee grinder. Similarly, Premee's video tour, which took place at the Farmer's Market in Edmonton City Hall, includes a passage in which an amplified singer-songwriter, set up by the front entrance, is by far the loudest sound on the recording. Information researchers do not often use methods that take them into such spaces, so it is important to note these challenges. They can be ameliorated with good equipment, and also through good practices such as reviewing recordings very soon after they have been created, when the experience is freshest in the researcher's mind.

Second, video tours also hinge on the researcher's ability to frame the encounter on camera. This is challenging when both the participant and the wider environment (a kitchen, a garden) are of interest, as was the case in this study. There is also a need to try to minimise the visible presence of the camera so as to reduce any distractions it might cause. This was the case with Premee's video tour at City Hall, which occurred on a busy Saturday morning.

Third, in this study, there was always a strong possibility that the video tours would become participatory; that is, I would become involved in whatever food activity we were undertaking, such as slicing fruit or vegetables. Indeed, I was often asked to participate as a sous-chef. These additional considerations illuminate why, as Thomson (2018) has pointed out, for "researchers interested in studying situated, embodied information [...] video cameras are the best tools for collecting this sort of data, but likely the most complex to gain access to and to handle" (p. 528). Video cameras are notably more challenging than digital voice recorders to operate in such a way that the results are as clear as possible. There are also attendant data handling and management challenges, which I summarise in Polkinghorne (2018b).

Information research conducted from a sensory ethnographic perspective must also attend to the fact that, as Thomson (2018) mentions, the researcher is "an embodied research instrument" (p. 529). This means that employing mobile visual methods draws attention to the researcher's own bodily experience, which is another layer of the research experience that must at least be managed, and should be scrutinised. Thomson argues that "researchers must attempt to scrutinize their own epistemic practices in addition to the phenomena with which they are concerned" (p. 529). In the case of food-focused video tours conducted in kitchens, cafés, gardens, and markets, the researcher's epistemic practices are unavoidably connected to bodily experiences. Partway through one video tour, for example, I found myself becoming light-headed. I realised that this must be because the participant's kitchen was a small, enclosed space, and she had several pots on the stove, pushing aromas, steam, and heat into the air. I paused the recording for a few minutes and excused myself to get some air. In that moment, as I composed myself, my mind was focused on the participant's words, movements, and kitchen arrangements, and I began reflecting on what I had learned in the video tour so far. As I began to feel better, I formulated follow-up questions, and then re-entered the kitchen to resume the video tour. In a sense, my data collection benefited from my becoming light-headed, because that experience prompted me to take a short break. At the same time, becoming light-headed in a participant's home is not without risk and I was fortunate to be able to recover quickly.

Using ethnographic techniques with a sensory ethnographic perspective requires intense presence and focus. Even now, re-watching the video tours, there are gestures, movements, comments, and elements of the physical space that I could have asked participants about, but did not. This despite having conducted each video interview with as much presence as I could, and having studied the practice of being present in the moment during my undergraduate and graduate theatre studies. The realisation that I "missed" opportunities to ask potentially meaningful follow-up questions has been challenging to accept. However, the limits of perception are inherent to the research process, as Lueg (2104) points out in his work on perceptual considerations for information researchers. A

growing number of information researchers are working from an interpretivist paradigm and acknowledging the constructed nature of research knowledge. This evolution is to be applauded. At the same time, sensory ethnography requires acknowledging not only subjectivity, but also the partiality of the researcher's perceptions. The richness of video data is challenging not only during analysis, but also in the moment of data collection. This fact reiterates the importance of researcher reflexivity and careful planning.

4.8 Wrapping up

In this chapter, I have described the four main areas of information practice identified in this study, which are expressed as:

- *Trial and error: simple label, complex practice;*
- *Never completely alone: constant social connection;*
- *What's right and good: exercising moral reasoning and judgement;* and
- *Informing bod(ies): identifying bodily meanings.*

I have described and discussed how what participants describe as "trial and error" is a generative, sophisticated information practice, which stands in contrast with the traditional framings of trial and error as a simple, repetitive way of learning, characterised by clear and definite failures. I have focused on family experiences as a predominant area of information practice in relation to food. Family experiences are a site for the negotiation of traditions, expertise, and routines, including both the sharing and the withholding of information. I have detailed how participants' moral reasoning, and their judgement of themselves and others, are inextricable from the information practices that enable this reasoning. Finally, I have foregrounded the embodied qualities of all these areas of practice, and I have articulated predominately embodied areas of information practice, including being informed by other people's bodies, being informed by our own bodies, and actively monitoring our bodies as information sources. Together, these findings create a picture of people's food information lives as rich manifestations of their multi-faceted identities and relationships. I have referred to embodied mutual constitution as an overarching theoretical explanation for

these practices, and brought the concept of mutual constitution into conversation with the concept of embodied information practices. The next chapter concludes the write-up of this study by detailing its contributions to information science, to the development of information practices theory, to the work of information professionals, and to society. Chapter 5 also points to areas for future research.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This interpretivist study has documented and articulated several broad areas of embodied information practice in everyday food life. Through these practices, people construct and express their identities, and navigate and maintain their relationships. It has proposed the theoretical construct of embodied mutual constitution as an overarching theme explaining the complexity and interconnection of these information practices with other practices. This study contributes to better understanding of people's food-related information practices, which have received relatively little attention. It also contributes to understanding of how information practices are continuously intertwined with elements of identity and social connection. Having taken a sensory ethnographic approach to data collection (Pink, 2015), coupled with a constructivist grounded theory approach to data analysis (Charmaz, 2017), this study also represents a contribution to research design and methods, particularly in information science where such approaches could be more widely utilised.

In this final chapter, after reviewing how the study's findings speak to the original research questions, I will situate the findings in the context of existing information science research. I will describe the implications of this study for knowledge, for society, and for professional practice. I will point to areas for future research. To conclude, I will touch on the present moment, COVID-19 in particular, in order to identify connections between this study and an urgent issue of our day.

5.1 How the research speaks to the questions

As I have mentioned, considering the necessity of food, the ubiquity of food information, and the growing interest in everyday life within our discipline, there remains relatively little food-focused research in the information behaviour and practices space. With that in mind, I asked broad exploratory research questions at the outset of this study, as is

common with grounded theory studies. There were two broad questions, each with two additional sub-questions.

This study finds, in response to its first large question (RQ1), *How do people feed themselves and their families or friends?,* that participants embody a range of approaches. Participants cook, bake, barbeque, shop, dine out, order in, forage, garden, brew, raise livestock, butcher, hunt, fish, forage, process, and preserve. Their activities are strikingly varied. They illustrate how a large question can be substantively addressed by an exploratory study including a small but diverse group of participants. Participants share three common approaches to feeding themselves and their families or friends. First, all participants describe home cooking as one of their primary approaches to feeding themselves and the people in their lives. Second, all participants in this study describe grocery shopping to some extent. And third, all participants in this study describe some form of food-related planning and information management, from meal planning covering a full month at a time (Lisa J.) to planning for special occasions such as dinner parties (Premee) to planning around food hobbies (multiple participants). Beyond these three shared approaches – home cooking, grocery shopping, and some form of planning – participants' additional food activities are as diverse as they are.

Beyond that, this study took Reckwitz's (2002) definition of practices as a central conceptual framework. This enabled the study to explore how people feed themselves and their families not solely in terms of discrete activities, but in richer ways, as interrelated nexuses of activity, existing know-how, engagements with the physical world, and bodily, mental, and emotional experiences. The study finds that people feed themselves and their families and friends through the practices that enable them to do so, but people are never only feeding themselves and others, just as they are never only seeking and using information. People are always also enacting their identities, their social relations, and their positions within larger social structures. This study demonstrates the importance of methodologically and ontologically holistic approaches to understanding the nature and role of information in everyday life (Polkinghorne & Given, 2021). In furthering such approaches,

this study proposes the overarching concept of *embodied mutual constitution,* described in Chapter 4, Section 4.6. Embodied mutual constitution is a key emerging finding from this study, that will benefit from more work in the future.

As detailed throughout Chapter 4, this study has addressed the two sub-questions to RQ1: *How do people describe the information practices they undertake in this process?* (RQ 1.1) and *How do people experience embodied information and knowledge as part of their everyday information practices?* (RQ 1.2). Participants describe their information practices in divergent, unique ways, shaped by their backgrounds and circumstances. This study has highlighted the practices that they share in common. Participants often adapt everyday expressions, such as "trial and error," to describe practices that are actually complex and personally meaningful. Some participants, though not all, describe their information practices in self-judgemental ways, or couched with hopes of improvement. Most participants describe specific informational activities, such as selecting a recipe, not as discrete, isolated moments, but as parts of a continual practice of incorporating new information into their expertise. Participants describe information practices through which they act on their judgement and, sometimes, protect themselves from judgement. Participants partake in information practices that reflect family traditions and routines new and old.

Answers to RQ1.2, *How do people experience embodied information and knowledge as part of their everyday information practices?,* appear like a thread stretching across this study's findings. I have emphasised the continuing challenge in focusing on one element of experience, such as embodiment, while acknowledging that experience cannot actually be carved up into constituent parts, like a puzzle that can be disassembled into its pieces. Participants describe experiencing embodied information in several key ways. Some participants intentionally monitor how their bodies feel as part of a process of determining what they should eat to address a health concern or desired dietary change. Most enact an information practice of body monitoring in which they interpret physical sensations and changes (interoception), as informed by their existing knowledge, feelings, and

surroundings. On a more widespread basis, participants describes how their sensory and bodily experiences inform them throughout their daily food lives. Participants are informed by how their bodies feel, even if they do not adopt a fully-developed monitoring practice. Participants are constantly using their senses as they interact with food, while cooking, eating, shopping, or as part of any other activity. Even when they are not in contact with food, such as when they are reading about it, participants engage with their memories and past experiences of food, which inform them. Participants are also informed by the bodily experiences of other people, another part of our everyday surroundings.

This study's second large question (RQ2) was *How do people construct and sense the feeling of being informed or uninformed during the process of feeding themselves and those in their care?* The two sub-questions for RQ2 were: *How do people describe the experience of feeling informed or uninformed during this process?* and *Why do people adopt certain information sources and practices but not others?* Chapter 4 details this study's findings in light of these questions. Participants describe the experience of feeling informed as they describe their successes, the information practices through which they exercise mastery (Savolainen, 1995) in everyday life, and how they use "errors," very broadly conceived, in order to inform future iterations of their practices. People adopt certain information sources and practices, but not others, stemming from their personal relationships to food, which include health experiences and bodily sensations, and which are inextricable from their social and family context around food, as well as larger factors such as socioeconomic and cultural concerns. Further, this study illuminates how feeling informed or uninformed about food, and choosing to adopt certain information sources and practices, are always connected to the food itself; that is, food information practices are embodied, emplaced, and materially situated.

5.2 Implications for information science

This research contributes to the ongoing development of information science (IS) as an expansive, inclusive discipline. Madsen (2016), in her discourse analysis of "the myth of

the weak discipline," argues that we in IS should work toward "demythologizing" the idea of a single "disciplinary identity," which fixates on unity and strong boundaries (p. 2707). Instead, she argues that our discipline is better understood as "heterogenous, permeable, and hospitable" (p. 2699). She argues that the integration of theories and concerns from other disciplines is not a sign of weakness, but of strength. Methodologically, this study illustrates Madsen's arguments. It uses a holistic design that brings theory and knowledge from other disciplines into conversation with IS concepts. In doing so, I have been able to document the complexity of the mutually constitutive nature of information practices with other parts of everyday life.

Information science scholars continue to work toward developing traditions and theories around the concept of information practices in everyday life. This study contributes to the theory of information practices by building on a specific framework for understanding practices, that of Reckwitz (2002), and by focusing on it as a way to build the idea of information practices. This study has demonstrated a concept of information practices as "blocks" or "nexuses" of activities, know-how, bodily experiences, and interactions with the material world (Reckwitz, 2002). The application of this concept illustrates that it is possible to articulate characteristics of practices that distinguish them from behaviour. This concept of practices also supports the apprehensibility of information practices as coherent but complex wholes. There is an ongoing need in information science for more theory development and more methodological sophistication for centring practices in research, and this study contributes to this development.

In information science, there has been a great deal of "boundary work" (Madsen 2016, p. 2697), meaning debate and argumentation about what constitutes information science. There is also boundary scholarship within IS (Huvila, Anderson, Jansen, McKenzie, & Worrall, 2017). This study confirms that boundaries implied and enforced by discussions of different "contexts" in which information practices take place, such as "work," "health," and the "everyday," should be used with caution. People's information practices are rarely bound to single contexts.

This study has provided an account of the emerging framings of embodiment in information science, and their philosophical, theoretical, and empirical roots. Further, this study illustrates the challenges of studying embodied information experiences in a fashion that captures its complexity and avoids introducing arbitrary boundaries between "units of analysis" such as thinking and feeling. This study reiterates the importance of IS embodiment researchers closely examining, and explicating, the traditions that enable us to discuss embodied aspects of experience.

This study has shed light on the conventional dichotomy between the "unnoticed" or "unreflective" on the one hand, and the "special" or "symbolic" on the other hand (Neuman, 2019). This dichotomy was originally articulated by Neuman (2019) in relation to food, and studies of food life, but it can also be applied to information science. This study illustrates that practices can be unnoticed and special, or routinised and specifically meaningful, at the same time. A discourse has evolved in IS that highlights research into pleasure-oriented, leisure-based information seeking as way of balancing our discipline's historical concern with problem-solving, information-needs-driven contexts. This study complicates distinctions between pleasure-oriented and problem-oriented information practices, as it finds that information practices are multipurposed and complex in their emotional and embodied qualities. As such, this study promotes further research that wrestles with this complexity while centring on the expertise, practices, and traditions of everyday life.

This study has lessons for less obviously connected spheres of our discipline, such as knowledge organisation and information retrieval. It contributes greater understanding of the ongoing, open-ended, iterative nature of people's information practices. As such, there are implications for those who design information systems such as library catalogues and online digital collections. Researchers and practitioners focused on information systems and interfaces can reflect on the sophisticated practices articulated in this study, such as trial and error, and consider how systems could better support these forms of practice.

Throughout the course of this study, it became apparent that there were themes emerging that either did not confirm, or that complicate, findings from extant research. For

example, Hartel (2006) and Ocepek (2016a), in their studies of hobby gourmet cooks and grocery shoppers, found planning to be a central component of their participants' informational activities. While planning also emerged as a theme in this study, there was a great deal of variability among participants in terms of the nature and extent of their planning, and the information-seeking and information-management elements of it. For some participants, such as Cheryl and Todd, with their many food hobbies, and Carrie, with her established meal planning practice, planning and documentation were very important. However, for others, such as Premee, planning was a nominal concern. This study uncovered these varied perspectives on planning because it focused on the course of people's everyday food lives, rather than specific activities or hobbies.

5.3 Implications for professional practice, policy, and society

As Section 5.2 illustrates, there are multiple ways in which this study contributes to information science. After asking how information science benefits from this food-focused study, it makes sense to ask how a study situated in information science benefits broader understandings and discussions around food. This research contributes knowledge that is relevant for professional practice contexts, and for society at large. For information professionals, one of the main lessons offered by this study is the remarkable diversity among people in their food lives, and the resulting necessity of truly person-centred, flexible, responsive services. This study also offers examples of how people's food lives are affected by social systems, such as class and gender. The work of information professionals continues to require awareness of people's needs not only as expressions of individual preferences, but also as expressions that are shaped, constrained, and enabled (or thwarted) by larger structural influences. People hold many food interests and practices in common, but these interests and practices do not always flow from the same motivations, or serve the same needs and desires. Awareness of this fact can motivate the adoption of a service stance based in cultural humility, which normalises the idea that expertise is partial, and emphasises being "other oriented" and committed to redressing "power imbalances and other structural

issues" (Hurley, Kostelecky, & Townsend, 2019, p. 549). In other words, by illuminating the complexity of people's food information practices, this study offers information professionals ways to reconsider approaches to information service, both in one-to-one settings and on a larger programmatic scale.

To other professionals, particularly those such as dieticians and nutritionists who provide food advice, this study offers accounts of the complexity of people's relationships with food. Its insights include the fact that, broadly, people's food practices are influenced by both longstanding and immediate circumstances, from family history to everyday, routine stresses. These insights, in turn, fruitfully complicate traditional conceptions of ideas such as "healthy." Participants discussed their perceptions of what it means to be healthy, with several participants describing how their health beliefs have evolved over time. In this way, this study adds to the growing literature questioning the predominance of a "nutritionist" approach to food advice, in which food is primarily discussed in terms of qualities such as nutrients, and health is framed as loyal adherence to a particular set of nutritional strictures (Leer & Wistoft, 2018). This study also illustrates people's sophistication around food information, and their strategies for finding, encountering, and engaging with it. In these ways, this study supports health professionals in providing advice that is expansive and generous in its assumptions about people's health and expertise.

For policymakers working on issues of public health and development, this study offers similar insights. The connections between policy and the experiences documented in this study are often evident, meaning that this study illuminates the implications of policy. One participant describes how she seeks food information not only about nutrition, as typically found on food labels, but also about animal welfare and environmental concerns. One participant describes how she undertakes meal planning for an entire month at a time, in order to stretch her income from social assistance. One participant describes how she dislikes and avoids grocery shopping in part because the layout of her neighbourhood makes it difficult to get to the supermarket. Because food connects with all parts of life, insights into people's food lives are insights into how people navigate life overall. By sharing people's

experiences and identifying shared and divergent practices, this study can help policymakers of various specialisations to develop sensitive, responsive, and adequate messages, services, and structures ranging from assistance programs to city planning.

To society, this study offers any reader an opportunity to encounter people's food experiences. Individually, people's accounts of their food experiences are interesting, but taken together, they form a fascinating portrait of how people navigate life. Encountering these experiences encourages awareness of the diversity of people's food lives. It also encourages reflection on one's own food practices, and perhaps the possibility of new approaches. The daily-life practices documented in this study are not ones that people always pause to consider in all their richness and meaning. For many people, food practices can seem mundane because they are so familiar, and because they are often laborious. However, food practices, and food-related information practices, are not mundane at all, on closer inspection. They reflect our distinctive lives, histories, and connections. People's lives are unique, but we also share food practices, and information practices, in common. Food is never just nutrition; it always carries opportunities for exchange and understanding, and the potential for unexpected learning and connection.

5.4 Additional areas for future research

In addition to describing potential future research in Section 5.2, I would like to conclude by briefly bringing this study into conversation with the current global health crisis. The data in this thesis were collected before the COVID-19 pandemic. Because much of the analysis occurred during the pandemic, it was natural to make connections between the data and the evolving circumstances changing life around the world. Among relatively privileged people, afforded flexibility at work and relieved of time-consuming commutes, there were several prominent food trends that emerged. These trends began immediately after people began working from home on a wider scale. In North America, one of the first such trends was kaltona coffee, also known as whipped coffee (Vreeland, 2020). Many people, finding themselves at home with more time and flexibility than usual, also embraced the multi-step

process of making sourdough bread (Santiago Cortés, 2020). Canning, including pickling and putting up preserves, made a resurgence, leading to mason jar shortages in some parts of Canada (Ross, 2020). Some people even revived the concept of the "victory garden," a wartime necessity originally borne of real food shortages, unlike the supply chain instability that occurred temporarily in March and April of 2020 (largely due to hoarding) in the locations represented in this study (Nair, 2020). This study illustrates the extensive and diverse ways in which people derive pleasure, joy, comfort, and satisfaction from their food lives, even under sometimes challenges circumstances. As such, its applicability to the present moment suggests that future studies on additional contexts, such as pandemic life, would find people enacting, and enjoying, similarly meaningful embodied information practices.

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Appendix A: Participant Synopses

Carrie* is 40, a white-collar professional and doctoral student, living with her partner in a stately Edmonton neighbourhood. Significant food events in her life include learning how to power lift as an undergraduate student, which involved making a friend who shared with her how to change her diet to support her fitness regimen; and caring for her ill mother-in-law, which led her partner and her to adopt a meal-planning habit in order to bring calm and order in a stressful period. Carrie has a beautifully renovated, capacious kitchen. Carrie offered me wine and a platter with cheeses, crackers, and fresh fruit.

Cheryl*, a scientist in her early 30s, lives in a bright and spacious house in suburban Edmonton with her husband, Todd*. Significant food experiences in Cheryl's life stem from childhood food insecurity, including periods of hunger, growing up in a single-parent family with frequent moves. Cheryl now grows a large garden, puts up ample preserves, fishes, and forages. She also tans leather and spins yarn. Cheryl and Todd keep unregistered livestock on their property. They raise quail in their basement utility room, and rabbits in their backyard shed. The livestock is a secret that they keep from their neighbours. Cheryl butchers the animals when the time comes.

Jeff** is 47, a busy father of two who has lived in Edmonton all his life. He works in a library. Significant events in Jeff's food life include a fondly-remembered period of being young and broke, playing a band, and subsisting on Kentucky Fried Chicken sandwiches from the gas station; and more recently, a kitchen renovation that, after many years, enabled a dishwasher to be installed in the family home. Jeff has an affinity for Japanese cuisine and a

* This name is a pseudonym agreed upon with the participant.
** This participant has chosen to be identifiable within the study.

decisive preference for printed cookbooks, which he checks out from the library before deciding whether to add to his personal collection.

Kaelin** is 20, and an undergraduate student at university. Significant events in Kaelin's food life include going vegan about a year ago, for health and ethical reasons, around the time she moved into her own apartment. She credits her parents with influencing her enjoyment of food and her openness to experimenting with ingredients. Kaelin and I made vegan buffalo cauliflower wings, which were messy, and delicious.

Kim** is 65, a retired professor, living with his wife and their grown son in suburban Edmonton. Significant food events in Kim's life include wanting to, and being, taught to cook by his mother, an unusual opportunity for a boy in his time; living with university housemates in Victoria, British Columbia and Montreal, Québec, which informed him about cooking large amounts of food with little money; and becoming a self-described Chinatown expert, by learning about every Chinatown he has encountered, and frequenting Asian markets and restaurants. Kim offered me his fresh buttermilk drop biscuits with butter, tea, and his wife's prairie cherry jam, made of berries from their backyard bush.

Larry** is 70 and a retired teacher. He lives in Marsden, Saskatchewan with his wife, Wendy**. Significant food events in Larry's life include learning how to hunt as young man, and living in an intentional subsistence farming community as a self-described "hippie" with Wendy, when the two were newly married. Larry's passion for hunting continues today. He toured me through the basement room where he makes his own bullets, called "reloading," as well as the internet forums where he discusses this practice with fellow aficionados.

** This participant has chosen to be identifiable within the study.

Lisa J** is 34 and describes herself as "gluten free, professionally trained and extremely poor." She has had many jobs over the years but currently provides childcare for a family member, and also works in a greenhouse. Significant food events in Lisa's life include growing up in the Canadian Arctic, which required meal planning for three months at a time to ensure survival; witnessing her father's heart attacks and her mother's eating disorder and multiple bouts of cancer, which reshaped her family's eating to focus on health; leaving home at 15; surviving her own eating disorder; managing her mental health; and living with a partner who was a chef, sparking her own interest in professional cooking and leading her to cook in northern work camps. Lisa offered me spaghetti with meat sauce she'd made of moose meat harvested on a hunting trip with her father, along with salad and garlic bread.

Lisa M** is an elementary school teacher and graduate student who lives on a farm near Marsden, Saskatchewan. Every year, Lisa M. plans how to approach the year's teaching, including the subjects of health and nutrition. A significant food event in Lisa M's life was moving to her husband's family homestead, where she and her husband assumed responsibility for the produce garden and fruit trees that her parents-in-law had begun. The garden is a large part of her life, growing over the years to its present size of approximately five hundred square metres (more than five thousand square feet). Lisa M made me multiple cups of coffee with her Keurig. Together, we processed kilos of homegrown apples so that she could freeze them for pies.

Megan** is a young professional who lives in a highrise apartment in central Edmonton. Megan responded to my call for participants willing to speak about less positive experiences with food. Megan grew up in a strict immigrant household, where her parents often did not permit her in the kitchen, where she very much wanted to be. When she left home to attend university, she became involved with a controlling boyfriend who demanded that she restrict

** This participant has chosen to be identifiable within the study.

her eating and forego certain foods, such as bacon, in order to conform to the beauty myth that women should make themselves as small as possible. After that relationship ended, Megan started a blog, where she has documented her process of repairing her relationship with food. One of her main food activities now is teaching herself how to make beloved traditional dishes, such as Chinese steamed eggs, that her parents would not teach her. YouTube is her main source of information for this process.

Premee[**] describes herself as an "elderly millennial." She responded to my recruitment tweet asking for people who do not identify as foodies. Premee lives alone in an apartment on the far north side of Edmonton. She does not own a car, and takes the train downtown to her job developing environmental policy for the provincial government. She has just signed a book deal to publish a novel. Significant food events in Premee's life include growing up with an observant Hindu mother (ie., she lives as a vegetarian), and a non-observant Muslim father (ie., he enjoys a ham sandwich); being diagnosed with a heart condition; adapting to life after her father's heart attack, which led her parents to cut all salt and fat from their diets; and trying to recreate favourite foods, such as Guyanese treats that are impossible to buy here. Premee offered me a glass of water.

Rachel[**] is 40, a university administrator and a married mother of two. Significant food events in Rachel's life include relishing the tranquility she experiences when "getting [her] hands in stuff" she's cooking or baking; raising two sons who are picky eaters; striving to rid her house of single-use plastic and in doing so, becoming "the crazy jar lady"; and developing a constant need to know about the quality of life of the animals she eats. Rachel offered me a fresh cup of tea.

[**] This participant has chosen to be identifiable within the study.

Tanya** is 30, Métis[5], a mom of two, and an academic librarian. Significant food events in Tanya's life include being sheltered from, and then reclaiming, her Métis identity; being diagnosed with celiac disease at 13[6]; living with obsessive-compulsive personality disorder[7]; working at Planet Organic, an organic supermarket in Edmonton; receiving questionable nutritional advice during her first pregnancy; coping throughout the process of her daughter being diagnosed with epilepsy; and developing a research program through which she connects with other Indigenous scholars, frequently on topics relating to food, health, and culture. Tanya and I met in a campus conference room, to which she brought her coffee and her workday lunch of gluten-free pasta salad.

Todd*, a scientist in his early 30s, lives in a bright and spacious house in suburban Edmonton with his wife, Cheryl*. Significant food events in Todd's life include building his own home bar with taps, where he can dispense up to four varieties of his home-brewed beer at once. The hops for Todd's beers grow in the couple's back yard, climbing up one side of their house. Todd also has a serious bread-baking hobby. He built the pristine habitat that occupies a portion of the utility room, where their quail are fed, watered, and separated when (not if) they gang up on one another.

Wendy**, 69, lives in Marsden, Saskatchewan with her husband, Larry**. Wendy studied computing science in its infancy, but gave up her career when she and Larry moved to Marsden for his work. She has held different jobs over the years, including an extended

* This name is a pseudonym agreed upon with the participant.
** This participant has chosen to be identifiable within the study.

[5] The Métis are a people of European and Indigenous ancestry with distinct language, culture, and traditions. Métis is one of the three large Indigenous groups widely recognd in Canada, along with First Nations and Inuit peoples, each of which includes numerous individual communities.

[6] Celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder that leaves those who experience it unable to digest gluten.

[7] Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder is not obsessive-compulsive disorder. Rather, people experiencing OCPD are characterised by a powerful need for routine and order. Participant Tanya describes it as "the perfectionist's disease."

period working in a hardware store. Raising their children, Wendy studied nutrition closely, and she believed that optimum nutrition was the key to ensuring health. Now, as a multiple cancer survivor, she prioritises taste and enjoyment as highly as nutrition. She maintains extensive paper files of the recipes that she prints from the internet. Wendy offered me a delicious cup of coffee, and we made chicken noodle soup, from scratch.

Appendix B: Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews

Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews
Food and Information: Embodied Practices in Everyday Life
Researcher: Sarah Polkinghorne, 1-780-xxx-xxxx

Approximate time for interviews: 60-90 minutes each.

Location:
Participant's home, e.g., at kitchen table.

Preamble:
Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. As you know, I'm here to explore your views about food and how food fits in to your life. First we need to discuss this study and be sure that I've answered all of your questions about what I'm asking you to participate in. [Go through informed consent process]

Now, I do have some questions in mind here, but this is really meant to be a conversation. Do you have any questions for me before we start?

Questions:

1. Please tell me a little about yourself. (Questions for context.)
    a. How long have you been living here?
    b. How would you describe your age?
    c. Do you live by yourself here, or with whom?
    d. Do you work outside the home?

2. Please tell me about what you might call a "typical food day" at your house.
    a. How do you [and people you live with] usually do your meals?
    b. Snacks?

3. During a "typical food day," do you use any sources for planning or finding out about food or cooking (e.g. cookbooks, apps)?
    a. Could we look at the main ones you use?

4. Do you plan activities relating to food (e.g. grocery lists, recipes; speaking with others), or do you tend to "go with the flow" each day?
    a. How would you describe how you plan around food?
    b. What is your routine around food planning?
    c. How do you keep track of your plans?

5. What kinds of circumstances might change a day from a typical food day (e.g., working late; throwing a party)?
    a. Do circumstances change how you do shopping, meals, and so on?
    b. Tell me about a time that was not an ordinary food day but an extraordinary one. Could you tell me about how you deal with an "extraordinary food day"?
    c. Do you use any particular sources or resources (including people)?

6. Tell me a bit about your priorities, what you find most important, about food in your home.
    a. Possible prompts: Nutrition? Weight loss? Great taste? Variety? Keeping to a particular diet (e.g., vegan)? Sitting the family down together to eat? Just making it through the day with everybody fed?

7. Is there anything about your food life that you wish you did differently? Would you please tell me about that?

8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your food life?

Closing

Thank you very much for your time today! This has been very interesting. What I would like us to do next is go on a tour of a place that relates to food that is important to you. Do you have a place already in mind? Shall we set a day and time right now, or would you like to think about it more first? [Make plans.]

Appendix C: Draft Run Sheet for Video Tours

Activity	Time (minutes)
1. Meet participant at their home (or location convenient for them) at time of their choosing. Install camera and mic with participant and test-record for a couple of minutes. Test researcher mic.	15
2. Recording begins. Drive to tour location (if necessary). Researcher drives. • Possible questions: Tell me about this place we're heading to today. Why is it important to you?	15-30
3. Participant leads tour. • Conversation is unstructured and participant-driven. • Researcher encourages participant to engage with surroundings (e.g., pointing, interacting, picking things up, drawing closer to things, bringing things closer to the camera). • Researcher participates (e.g., picking up produce, cooking/tasting alongside participant). • Researcher may raise questions stemming from participant's previous interview (e.g., "Are these the fresh baguettes you mentioned earlier? How do you figure out they're fresh?").	30-60
4. Return to participant's home (or other agreed-upon end point). Recording ends. Equipment and recording stored.	15-30
5. Researcher makes field notes (e.g., observations, reflections) • Field notes will be written at a café immediately following each tour, after the participant has been dropped off at home.	30
Approximate total time for video tour	105-165

Appendix D: Participant Information Letter (for Consent Process)

Participant Information Letter
Food and Information: Embodied Practices in Everyday Life
Researcher: Sarah Polkinghorne, 1-780-xxx-xxxx

Dear participant,

Thank you for meeting with me today about participating in my study. The purpose of this letter is to tell you more about the research so that you understand your involvement, and so that you can ask questions before we start.

ABOUT THIS STUDY
The purpose of this research is to better understand how people feed themselves and their families. More specifically, I am asking what role food information plays in people's lives. A premise of my research is that there is more food information, and more conflicting food information, than ever before. While there are studies that examine particular groups of people (such as people living with diabetes), or particular kinds of food information (such as nutrition labels), there have not been many studies that explore how a wide variety of people feed themselves and their families, and the sorts of information they use. "Food information" is an extremely broad idea that includes anything you consider information in relation to food.

BENEFITS
The main benefit of this study is to understand better how people live their lives in relation to food and information. If we understand people's lives better, then there can be better-informed programs and services that are better at responding to what people may need. For example, dieticians can better understand the lives of the people they support, or librarians can better plan the sessions they offer to help people learn about finding information for daily life. If you participate in this study, you will be contributing, by sharing your knowledge and experiences.

You may also benefit personally from having an opportunity to pass along your knowledge and experiences to a researcher. The work involved in feeding yourself and your family (or friends) is often done without much conversation, recognition, or acknowledgement. This study offers you an opportunity to reflect on an important part of everyday life, and you may find this beneficial.

RISK
If you choose to participate, there is a risk that you may experience discomfort. Remembering difficult memories would be an example of discomfort. However, you are free to pause or stop participating at any time when we are meeting.

WHAT PARTICIPATION MEANS
By agreeing to participate, you will be agreeing to meet with me twice over the course of this year. We are meeting today and I will interview you and ask you to share information sources with me. (An information source is anything you consider a source of information in relation to food in your life.) This will take about 60-90 minutes. I will audio record our interview, and I may take photos of information sources that you mention, such as an app or a cookbook.

We will also meet again for a video tour. For the video tour, I will ask you to choose a place that is important to you that relates to food, and take me on a visit of that place. Examples of places include (but are not limited to): a grocery store, a farmer's market, a convenience

store, your garden. I will record the tour on video. This will take up to 165 minutes (2.75 hours), including travel time. I will pick you up and drop you off at a location you choose, such as your home.

It is entirely voluntary (ie., your choice) to participate. When we are meeting, you may discontinue your participation at any time for any reason. You can withdraw your contributions (also known as your data) entirely, by contacting me with your decision up to one month after our video tour. After this point, it will not be possible to withdraw your contributions. The purpose of this one-month withdrawal limit is to give you an opportunity to opt out of the study if you wish. At the same time, the one-month limit allows me to go ahead with data analysis knowing whether you have agreed or not agreed to have your data included.

Because I may re-examine your contributions in the future as part of other studies or as part of teaching work, I am going to keep your contributions indefinitely. However, aside from selections I choose to share through research (e.g., published articles) or teaching, your contributions will be kept secure and private. Your contributions will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my (locked) University office, with a copy also kept in Dataverse, a secure online site for research data storage.

ANONYMITY: YOUR CHOICE
If you participate, it is your choice whether or not I make your contributions anonymous, which means to keep your identity confidential when I share the results of this study. I will ask you to fill in a simple form and seal it in an envelope. Later on, before I share any results publicly, I will open your envelope and know whether or not you to keep your identity confidential.

If you choose anonymity, this means that I will never share your true identity with anyone. I will give you a pseudonym and mask or leave out any details that could potentially make you identifiable. This means that I would not share images of your face or voice, such as in a video clip.

If you choose to be identified, this means that I will describe you using your real name. I may share clips of video or audio, of photographs from our interview, with your name associated.

At the end of the video tour, you will have an opportunity to change your mind about anonymity. After the video tour, you will no longer be able to change your mind.

RAISING CONCERNS
This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the Australian *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact:

Professor Lisa Given (my supervisor)
Faculty of Health, Arts and Design, Swinburne University of Technology
Tel +61 3 9214 5611 or lgiven@swin.edu.au

Research Ethics Officer, Swinburne Research (H68),
Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122 Australia.
Tel +61 3 9214 3845 or resethics@swin.edu.au

Thank you for stepping forward to participate in my research!

Sincerely,

Sarah Polkinghorne

Appendix E: Consent Form

Consent Form
Food and Information: Embodied Practices in Everyday Life
Researcher: Sarah Polkinghorne, 1-780-xxx-xxxx

Your name: Your phone number:

Your email address:

How you prefer to be contacted (mark one): □ phone □ email

Signing this form means that you agree to the following.	Initial here
We discussed all the details in the Participant Information Letter.	
You consent to being interviewed at a time and place of your choosing for approximately 60-90 minutes, at a time convenient for you. I will audio record our interview. As part of this interview, I may take photos of information sources that you mention, such as an app or a cookbook.	
You consent to giving me a tour of a food-related place that is important to you. This will take up to 165 minutes, including travel time. This will be a video tour in which I record you giving the tour, and our conversation during the tour.	

I have explained the anonymisation process. It is your choice whether or not to remain anonymous in this study. Whether or not you choose anonymisation, your contributions will be kept secure at all times.	

You are free to pause or stop participating at any time. Up until one month after our video tour, you can withdraw all of your contributions from this study. You can do this by email or by calling me.	

I will keep your contributions, also known as your data, indefinitely. This is because I may reuse the data beyond the end of this study, such as to analyse the data again using another approach, or to use examples from the data when I am teaching.	

Signed on _____ (date), at _____ (location).

Participant's Signature: _____

Participant's Name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact:

Professor Lisa Given (Sarah Polkinghorne's supervisor)
Faculty of Health, Arts and Design, Swinburne University of Technology
Tel +61 3 9214 5611 or lgiven@swin.edu.au

OR

Research Ethics Officer, Swinburne Research (H68),
Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122 Australia.
Tel (03) 9214 3845 or +61 3 9214 3845 or resethics@swin.edu.au

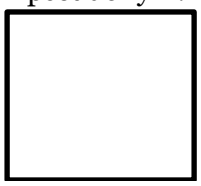
Appendix F: Participant Anonymisation Choice Form (for Consent Process)

Participant Anonymisation Choice Form
Food and Information: Embodied Practices in Everyday Life
Researcher: Sarah Polkinghorne, 1-780-xxx-xxxx

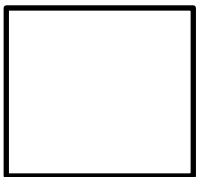
Today's date:

Please choose one of the following two options by making a mark in one box below. Next, fold this paper and seal it in the envelope.

I prefer that my contributions to this study be anonymised. Remove all details that could potentially identify me, and give me a pseudonym.



I prefer to be identifiable in this research study. Use my real name and share any of my contributions, even if my face can be seen or my voice can be heard.



Appendix G: Sample Recruitment Material (Poster)

Seeking Volunteers

You are warmly invited to be involved in a study of how people feed themselves and their families. The purpose of this study is to understand better how different people go through their daily lives in relation to food.

This study will be helpful to people such as parents, nutritionists, teachers, and librarians — people who help others to learn about food and to understand different kinds of information about food.

Being a participant involves meeting with me for two interviews. You can participate anonymously, with your contributions kept strictly anonymous.

Please contact me (Sarah Polkinghorne) for more information:
text or call: 1-780-xxx-xxxx
email: spolkinghorne@swin.edu.au

Thank you!

Appendix H: Sample Recruitment Materials (Flyer/Info Sheet)

Seeking Volunteers for Food Information Study

You are warmly invited to be involved in a study of how people feed themselves and their families. This page describes what will be involved if you choose to volunteer. Please read it through and then contact me (details below) if you would like to participate.

PURPOSE. The purpose of this study is to understand better how people feed themselves and their families. More specifically, I am studying the role of food information in daily life. There is more food-related information in the world than ever before. This study will be helpful to people such as parents, nutritionists, teachers, and librarians — people who help others to learn about food and to understand different kinds of information about food.

WHAT PARTICIPATION MEANS. We will meet twice over the next few weeks. First, I will interview you. This takes 40-90 minutes. I will audio record our interview, and I may take photos of information sources that you mention, such as cookbooks, index cards, or apps. We will meet again for a video tour. For the video tour, I will ask you to choose a place that is important to you that relates to food, and take me on a visit of that place. Examples of places include (but are not limited to): your kitchen, a market, a café. I will record the tour on video. This takes about 60-120 minutes, including travel time. I will offer to pick you up and drop you off at a location you choose.

ANONYMITY IS YOUR CHOICE. If you participate, it is your choice whether or not I make your contributions anonymous, which means to keep your identity confidential. Anonymity means that I will never share your true identity with anyone. I will mask or leave out any details that could possibly be used to identify you. If you choose to participate and be identifiable, this means that I will use your real name, and I may share clips of video or audio, or photographs from our interview, with your name associated.

Please contact me (Sarah Polkinghorne) for more information or to volunteer.
Thank you!
text or call: 1-780-xxx-xxxx | email: spolkinghorne@swin.edu.au

Appendix I: Scholarly Activity During Candidature

Journal articles (refereed)

Greenshields, M., & Polkinghorne, S. (in press). Love is a lens: Finding love in library and information studies. For *Library Trends*.

Polkinghorne, S., & Given, L. M. (2021). Holistic approaches to research: From rhetoric to paradigm. For *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24450

Polkinghorne, S., & Julien, H. (2018.) Treading water: Results from the longitudinal study of information literacy instruction in Canadian academic libraries, 1995-2017. *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science, 42*(1/2), 69-93. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/717388

Polkinghorne, S. (2015, September 9). Unpacking and overcoming "edutainment" in library instruction. *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*. [Open access, open-reviewed journal] http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2015/edutainment

Conference proceedings (refereed)

Greenshields, M., & Polkinghorne, S. (2020). What the world needs now? Love as a lens on library and information work today. *Diverging Trajectories in Information Science: The 48th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science*. https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ojs.cais-acsi.ca/index.php/cais-asci/article/view/1171

Julien, H., McKechnie, L. E. F., Polkinghorne, S., & Chabot, R. (2018.) The "user turn" in practice: information behaviour researchers' constructions of information users. [Special supplement: Proceedings of ISIC: the Information Behaviour Conference, Krakow, Poland, 9-11 October, 2018: Part 1]. *Information Research,* 23(4). http://www.informationr.net/ir/23-4/isic2018/isic1804.html

Polkinghorne, S. (2018, November). Going GoPro: Integrating a wearable camera into qualitative information research. *Building an Ethical and Sustainable Information Future with Emerging Technology: the 81st Annual Meeting of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. Vancouver, Canada. [Poster] https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.2018.14505501158

Ocepek, M., Bullard, J., Hartel, J., Forcier, E., Polkinghorne, S., & Price, L. (2018, November). Fandom, food, and folksonomies: The methodological realities of studying fun life-contexts. *Building an Ethical and Sustainable Information Future with Emerging Technology: the 81st Annual Meeting of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. Vancouver, Canada. [Panel] https://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.2018.14505501089

Conference presentations (refereed)

Greenshields, M., & Polkinghorne, S. (2020, October). What the world needs now? Love as a lens on library and information work today. *Diverging Trajectories in Information Science: The 48th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science*. [Presented online due to COVID-19]

Polkinghorne, S. (2019, October). Interdisciplinary concept development as a path to impact: "Vicarious sensory engagement" and YouTube food videos. *Re-envisioning the Impact and Engagement of Information Behavior Research: the 2019 ASIS&T SIG-USE Symposium*. Melbourne, Australia. [visual presentation/poster]

Polkinghorne, S., & Given, L.M. (2019, June). Holistic approaches to research: From rhetoric to paradigm. Presented at the *Conceptions of Library and Information Science 10th International Conference*. Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Polkinghorne, S. (2017). Coming to our senses: considerations for studying sensory information. *The Warp and Weft of Knowledge: Information Threads Connecting Disciplines, Identities and Perspectives – the 45th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science*. Toronto, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S., Given, L., & Carlson, L. (2017). Interviews that attend to emplacement: the "walk-through" method. *The Warp and Weft of Knowledge: Information Threads Connecting Disciplines, Identities and Perspectives – the 45th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science*. Toronto, Canada. Winner of the 2017 Overall Award for Best Paper.

Polkinghorne, S., & Julien, H. (2017). Against the wind: Challenges and barriers to Canadian academic librarians' instructional practices. *The Warp and Weft of Knowledge: Information Threads Connecting Disciplines, Identities and Perspectives – the 45th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science*. Toronto, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S., & Julien, H. (2017). A picture of practices: Recent results from a national longitudinal study of information literacy instruction in Canadian academic libraries. *Engage, Expand, Explore – the 46th Annual Workshop on Instruction in Library Use*. Edmonton, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S., & Chambers, T. (2016, October). Embodied information in workplace contexts. *Symposium of the Special Interest Group for Information Needs, Seeking, and Use (SIG-USE), Annual Meeting of the Association of Information Science and Technology*. Copenhagen, Denmark. https://doi.org/10.7939/R3KK94Q4D

Keynote

Polkinghorne, S. (2018, March). Bodies of knowledge: What studying embodiment can teach us about teaching. Keynote, *Ashton Endowment for Excellence in Library Instruction Speaker Series*. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

Talks and workshops (invited)

Greenshields, M., & Polkinghorne, S. (2020, December). What the world needs now? Love as a lens on library and information work today. Guest lecture, *The Information Experience*. Faculty of Information, University of Toronto.

Polkinghorne, S. (2020, September). My theoretical journey. Guest lecture, *Theories of Information Science*. Department of Information Science, University at Buffalo.

Polkinghorne, S. (2020, July). Making budget cuts: Analysis, assessment, decision-making, and communications. Guest lecture, *Library Collections Management*. School of Information Studies, University of Ottawa.

Polkinghorne, S. (2020, May; cancelled due to COVID-19). Learn, create, support: New media activities to enrich student engagement with readings. Workshop, *Learning by Doing: Augustana Conference on Undergraduate Research and Innovative Teaching*. University of Alberta, Camrose, AB, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S., Carpan, C., & Pow, V. (2019, October). Finding information at the intersections of gender. Workshop, *Working at the Intersections of Gender: the 1st Annual Intersections of Gender Fall Conference*, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S. (2019, March). Things nobody taught me: Influences that shape a researcher. Inaugural lecture*, Online Lecture Series, Canadian Association for Professional Academic Librarians, Research and Scholarship Committee*.

Polkinghorne, S. (2019, February). Institutions, ways of knowing, and critical information literacy. Guest lecture for *LIS 598, Knowledge Production, Diffusion, and Reception*. School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S. (2019, January). Learning, believing, feeling, acting: People's everyday experiences of food information. Lecture, *Research and Scholarship Series 2018-2019*. School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Polkinghorne (2018, November). Food and information: Embodied practices in everyday life. Invited presentation at *Building an Ethical and Sustainable Information Future with Emerging Technology: the 81st Annual Meeting of the Association for Information Science and Technology*. Vancouver, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S. (2018, November). Helping your writing reach people: Abstracts and titles. Guest lecture, *LIS 597, Advanced Research Methods.* School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S. (2018, November). Connecting information behaviour with the senses. Guest lecture, *LIS 508, Information Users and Uses.* Department of Library and Information Studies, University at Buffalo, USA.

Laforest, C., & Polkinghorne, S. (2018, October). Centralised e-resource usage data for easy collection assessment. *Netspeed Library Technology Conference*. Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S. (2018, April). Engaging student bodies: Ideas for embodied information literacy learning. Invited talk, *IL Palooza* [an information literacy symposium], MacEwan University, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S. (2018, March). Research fundamentals: Crafting questions, choosing methods. Workshop, *Ashton Endowment for Excellence in Library Instruction Speaker Series*. University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

Polkinghorne, S. (2018, March). Research in practice: Making it happen. Workshop, *Ashton Endowment for Excellence in Library Instruction Speaker Series.* University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

Polkinghorne, S. (2017, November). Connecting information behaviour with the senses. Guest lecture for course: Information Users and Uses. Department of Library and Information Studies, University at Buffalo. Recorded with Camtasia for presentation in this online course.

Polkinghorne, S. (2017, November). Helping your writing reach people: Abstracts and titles. Guest lecture for course: Advanced Research Methods. School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Polkinghorne, S. (2016, September). Embodiment and information practices in everyday life. Presentation for Charles Sturt University School of Information Studies Research Retreat, Wagga Wagga, Australia.

Book chapters

Montoya, L., & Polkinghorne, S. (in press). Getting past 'approachability': What cultural humility brings to library and information education. In S. Kostelecky, L. Townsend, & D. Hurley (Eds.), *Libraries & cultural humility.* American Library Association.

Polkinghorne, S. (2016). Critical consciousness and search: an introductory visualization. In N. Pagowsky & K. McElroy (Eds.), *Critical library pedagogy handbook*. Chicago: American Library Association. This book is the winner of the 2017 Ilene F. Rockman Instruction Publication of the Year Award, Association of College & Research Libraries. https://doi.org/10.7939/R3FX7454P

Awards

- Tuition Fee Scholarship, Swinburne University of Technology. Value: waived tuition and fees for the duration of studies
- Doctoral Fellowship, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). Value: $40,000 (CAD) [national award]
- Clarivate Analytics Doctoral Dissertation Proposal Award, Association for Information Science and Technology. Value: $2,000 (USD) [international award]
- New Leader Award, Association for Information Science and Technology. Value: $1,630 (USD) [international award]

Service

- Conference Co-chair, *Diversities on the data landscape: connecting information science with data studies: the 46th annual conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science*. Held during the Canadian Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan, 30 May – 1 June, 2018.
- Webmaster and Board Member, Canadian Association for Information Science, 2015-2018
- Reviews for journals:
    - *Evidence-Based Library and Information Practice* (16 papers)
    - *Canadian Journal of Academic Librarianship* (3 reviews)
    - *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* (2 papers)
    - *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* (1 paper)
    - *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education* (1 paper)
    - *Journal of Creative Library Practice* (1 review)
    - *Library Trends* (1 paper)
    - *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* (2 papers)
- Reviews for conferences:
    - *Association for Information Science and Technology* (ASIS&T) annual conference (20 reviews)
    - *ASIS&T Special Interest Group for Information Needs, Seeking, and Use* (SIG-USE) annual symposium & awards (3 reviews)
    - *Association for Library and Information Science Education* (ALISE) annual conference (1 review)
    - *Canadian Association for Information Science* annual conference (5 reviews)
    - *Information Seeking in Context* conference (3 reviews)

Teaching

- Taught Human Information Interaction for the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta, twice: May-August 2019 and January-April 2021
- Taught Information Resource Discovery for the School of Information Studies at the University of Ottawa, September-December 2020

Additional development activities

- June 2019: Doctoral forum, *Conceptions of Library and Information Science 10th International Conference*. Ljubljana, Slovenia. Mentored by Dr. Jack Andersen, Dr. Tomaž Bartol, and Dr. Jutta Haider.
- November 2018: Doctoral colloquium, ASIS&T 2018. Mentored by Dr. Marie Radford.
- May 2018: Doctoral forum, Canadian Association for Information Science annual conference, Regina, Saskatchewan. Mentored by Dr. Julia Bullard.
- June 2018: Workshop with Dr. Louanne Keenan, *Don't let the theory in grounded theory scare you: You can do it!* at the 18th Thinking Qualitatively Workshop Series, International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, University of Alberta, Edmonton
- June 2018: Workshop with Dr. Jude Spiers, *Writing your dissertation* at the 18th Thinking Qualitatively workshop series, International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, University of Alberta, Edmonton

Additional applications

- Accepted but declined to attend: Doctoral workshop, Information Seeking In Context conference, Krakow

Media appearance

- Polkinghorne, S. (2019). Research reveals complexity of how we make decisions. *Folio.ca*. Available at https://www.folio.ca/research-reveals-complexity-of-how-we-make-decisions