



Studying User Interest in Social Media Sites

Saila Ovaska, Juha Leino, Kari-Jouko Rähkä
University of Tampere



Case Amazon: Ratings and Reviews as Part of Recommendations

What is the process by which users find books in Amazon?

How are recommenders used in actual use situations?



Juha Leino

ethnographic study with 6 participants

Customers who viewed this item also viewed

- [The Digital Photography Handbook: An Illustrated Step-by-step Guide](#) by Doug Harman
 - [Digital SLR Cameras & Photography for Dummies \(For Dummies\)](#) by David D. Busch
 - [The Book of Digital Photography](#) by Chris George
 - [Canon EOS Digital Rebel XTi/400D Digital Field Guide](#) by Charlotte K. Lowrie
 - [The Digital SLR Bible: A Complete Guide for the 21st Century Photographer](#) by Nigel Hicks
- ▶ [Explore similar items](#) : [Books](#) (41) [Electronics & Photo](#) (4)

Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought

| Book Title | Author | Rating | Price |
|---|--------------------|-------------|---------|
| The Digital Photography Book, Volume 1 | by Scott Kelby | ★★★★★ (414) | \$13.59 |
| Perfect Digital Photography | by Jay Dickman | ★★★★★ (32) | \$14.99 |
| Mastering Digital SLR Photography 2E | by David D. Busch | ★★★★★ (44) | \$26.39 |
| The Betterphoto Guide to Digital Photograp... | by Jim Miotke | ★★★★★ (55) | \$16.47 |
| Exposure and Lighting for Digital Photogra... | by Michael Meadhra | ★★★★★ (15) | \$23.09 |

- Any Category
- Adobe Photoshop
- Amazon Upgrade
- Arts & Photography
- Digital Image Processing
- Digital Printing
- How-to
- Illustrated
- Lighting
- Nature & Wildlife
- Photography
- Reference
- Software
- Web Design



Case Amazon: Ratings and Reviews as Part of Recommendations

"I'll just peak at the customer reviews quickly. You know, to see what they've said about it. It's not that it's so expensive but it does take time to read it. That's more expensive." - Participant 4

"Let's see what they've got here. Do they have any recommendations for me?" - Participant 3

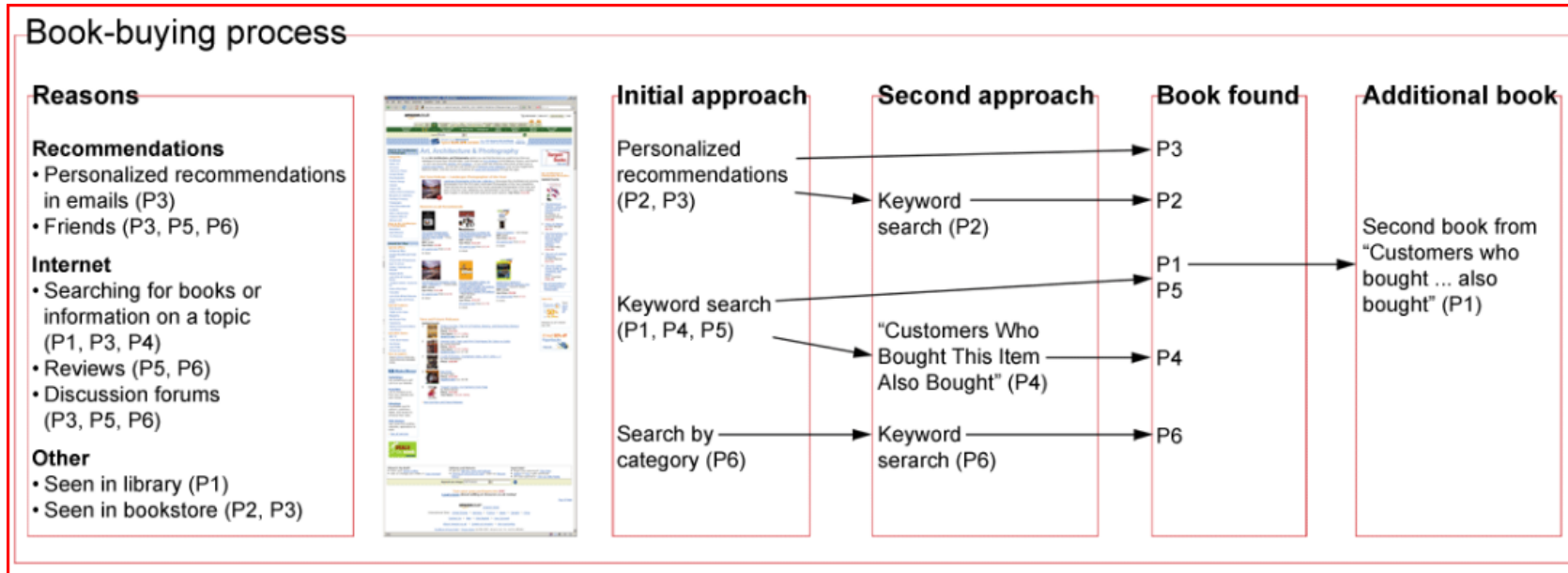
Personalized recommendations

Recommendations made transparent

A screenshot of the Amazon.co.uk website. The browser address bar shows 'http://www.amazon.co.uk - Amazon.co.uk: Why is this recommended f...'. The page features the Amazon logo and a 'Help | Close window' link. A yellow banner reads 'Recommended for you'. Below this, a book recommendation is shown: 'Assignment, Shanghai: Photographs on the Eve of the Revolution (Series in Contemporary Photography): Photographs on the Eve of the Revolution (Series in Contemporary Photography)' by J Bims (Author). The price is listed as 'Our Price: £15.80' and 'Used & new from £15.00'. There are buttons for 'Add to Basket' and 'Add to Wish List'. To the right of the book title, there is a star rating 'x|☆☆☆☆' and two checkboxes: 'I own it' and 'Not interested'. Below this, another yellow banner reads 'Because you purchased...'. A second book recommendation is shown: 'Empire Made Me: An Englishman Adrift in Shanghai' by Robert A. Bickers (Author). It has a star rating 'x|☆☆☆☆' and a checked checkbox 'Use to make recommendations'.



Findings from Leino's study



- All participants had bought from Amazon earlier
- Observation session in the participant's home
- Data collection methods
 - Observation
 - Think-aloud
 - Interviews
- The participant was given 15 € towards selecting and buying a book



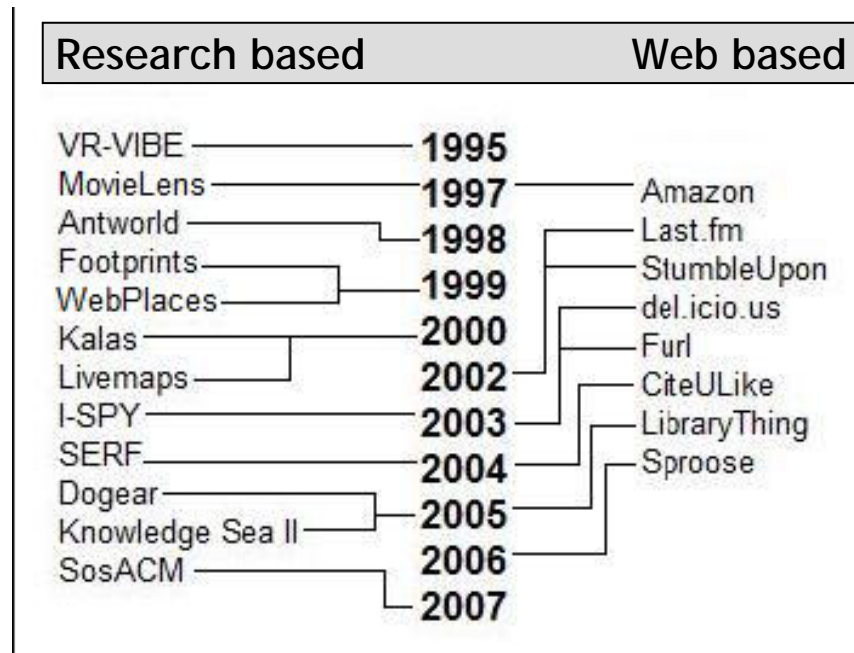
Motivation to Contribute?

- Would the participants be motivated to contribute, e.g. to write own reviews?
 - Only P1 had contributed in Amazon
 - P4 tried to contribute during the book buying process but gave up when asked to sign in
- Language issues, Cultural issues, ...
- Feelings of social presence of others in the environment might affect willingness to contribute
 - Three participants (P3, P4, P6) expressed feelings of social presence
- Three participants (P1, P2 and P5) did not consider online shopping a social activity, in spite of the social texture



Various Research Approaches Exist

- Lindfors: longitudinal trials of social navigation systems
 - CiteULike
 - Del.icio.us
 - FURL
 - I-SPY
 - Last.fm
 - Sproose
 - MovieLens
 - StumbleUpon
 - ...



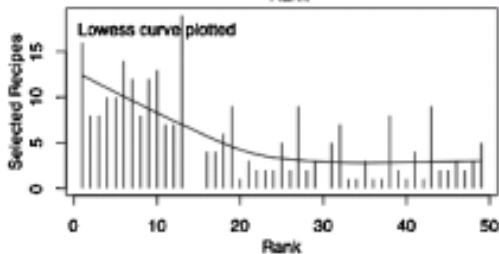
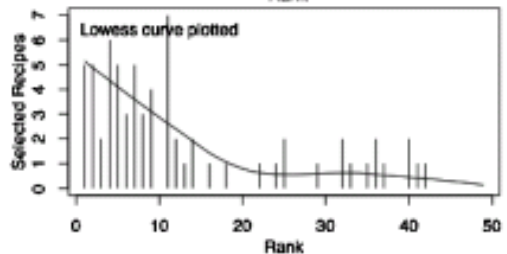
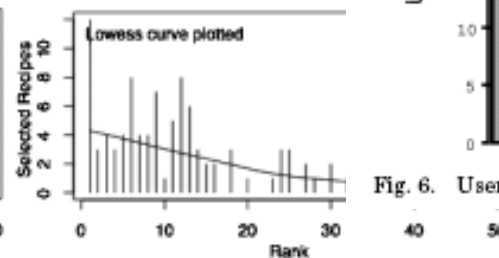
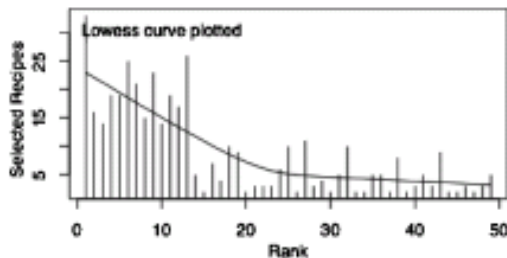
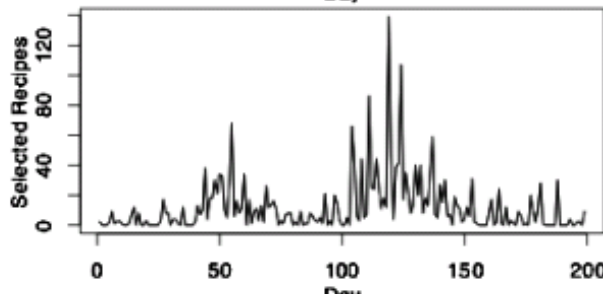
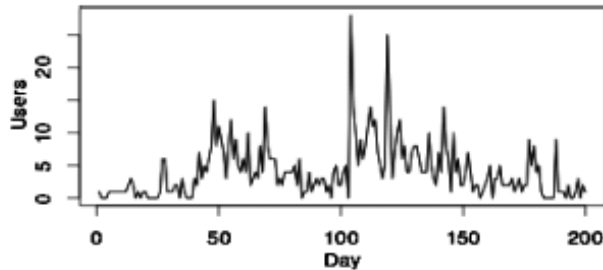


Related Research: Kalas

The screenshot displays the Kalas website interface. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with categories: alla recept, dryckar, fisk, recept, itaion, frysman, vego, amerik, vit, vitt, vitt, and min lista. The main content area features a recipe for 'våsterbottensill' (pickled herring) with a title 'recept i havet'. The recipe includes a list of ingredients, a list of instructions, and a 'Faktaruta' (fact box) with nutritional information. Below the recipe are buttons for 'Skicka ut', 'Spara', 'Gott recept', and 'Lägg till lista'. At the bottom, there is a 'chat i havet' window and an 'inköpslista' (shopping list) window.



Evaluation of Kalas



Users understood the icons representing social presence and the voting by others fairly well. Of the 73 subjects,

- 49 recognized the symbol for an online user;
- 67 were aware of the chatting facility;
- 70 knew that it was possible to comment on recipes;
- 63 understood how to vote on recipes.

How do you think Kalas chooses recipes for you?

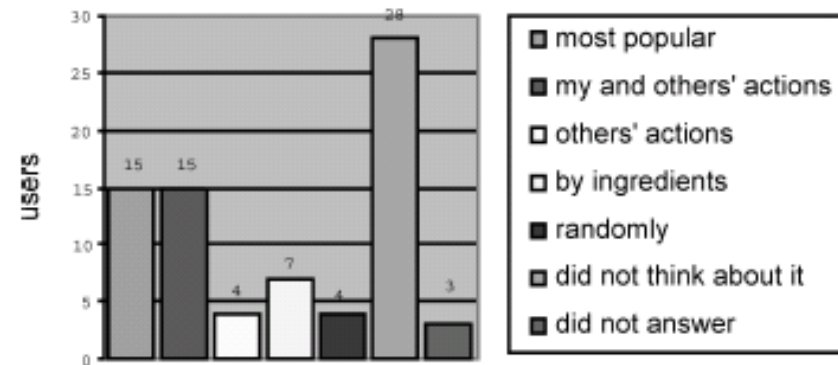
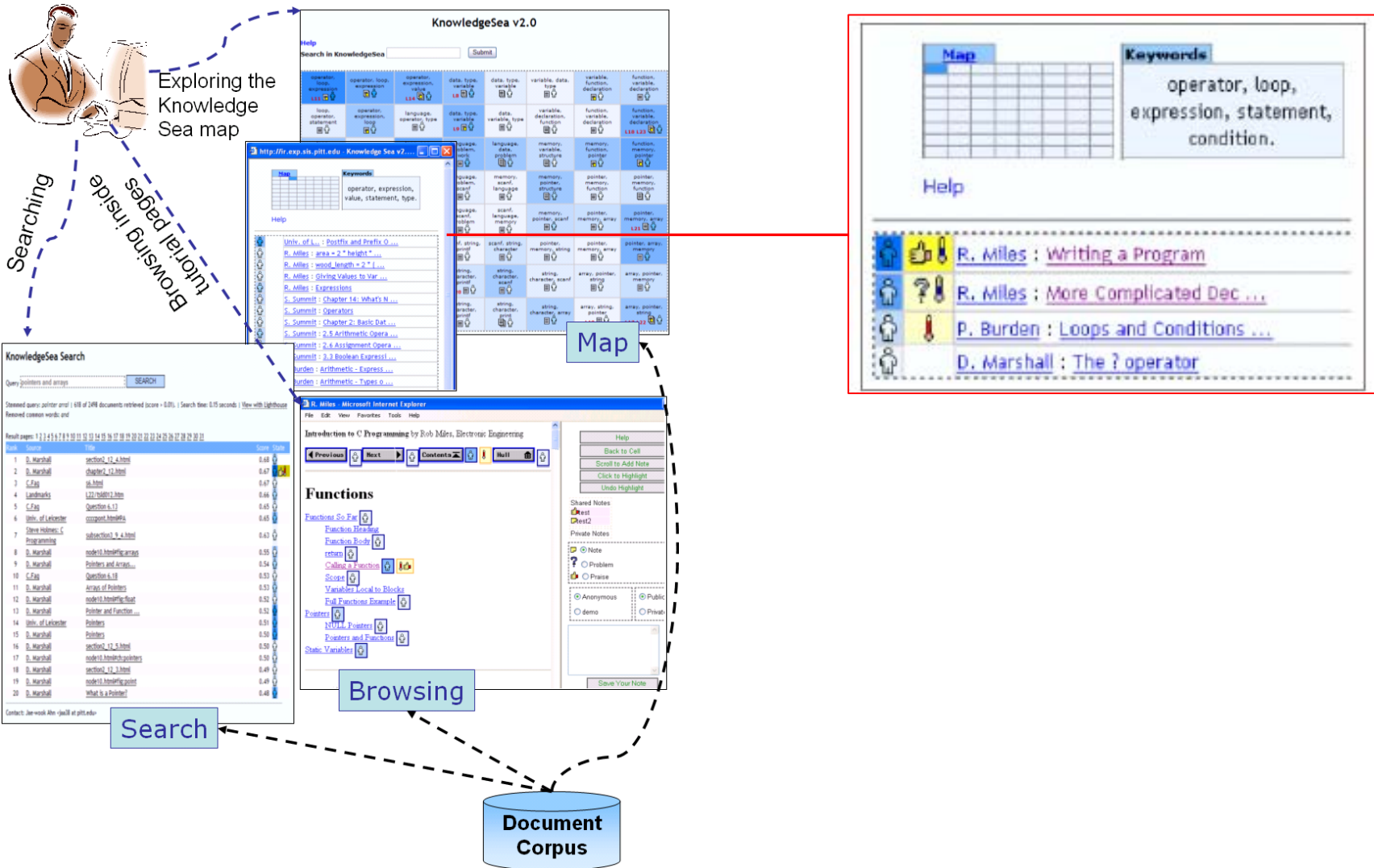


Fig. 6. User replies to the question "How do you think Kalas chooses recipes for you?"

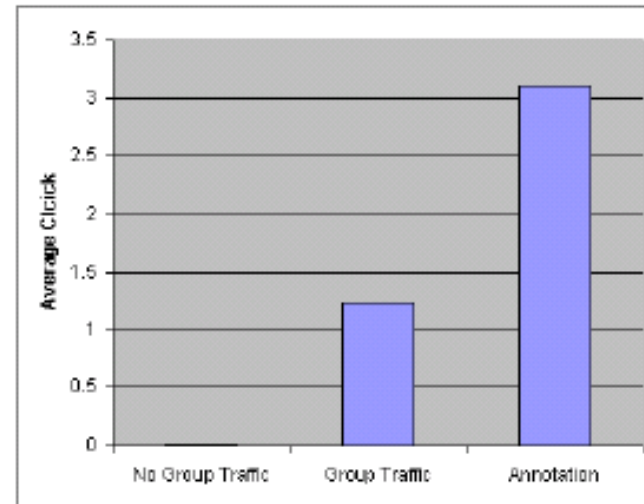
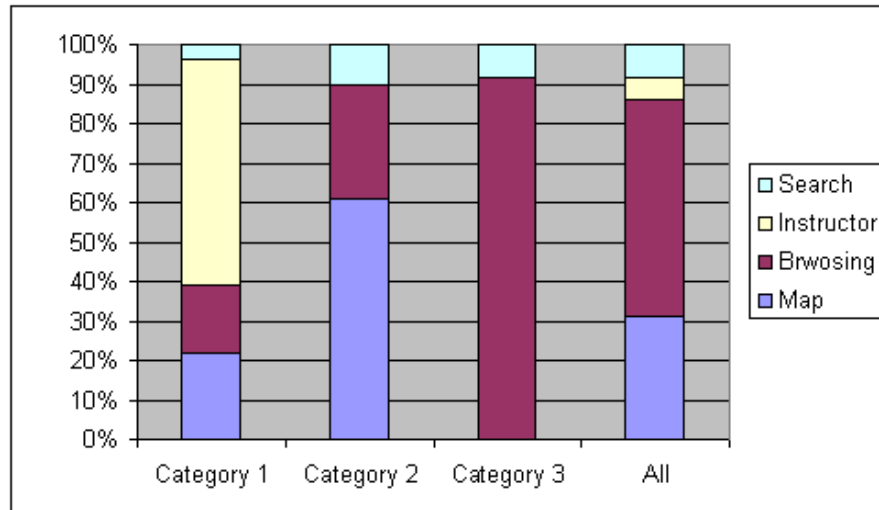


Field Test of Knowledge Sea





Field Test of Knowledge Sea: Results



Navigational strategies in content categories:

1. Recommended by instructor
2. Available in the map
3. Not available in the map

Comparing average click number in pages with No group traffic, Group traffic and Annotations

... but it did not matter if the annotation was positive or not



Need More Research

- Users' participation and motivation to contribute are essential for site success
- Social texture brings added complexity in the user interface
- What kind of social cues make people perceive social presence
- Are there methods of capturing motivational aspects already for systems under development?

| System | Study method |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| I-SPY | Field test |
| Antworld | Comparative field test |
| Knowledge Sea | Field test |
| Livemaps | Field test and user test |
| Social ACM DL | Comparative field test |
| Kalas | Field test and interviews |
| Amazon | Applied ethnography |
| Various | Subjective evaluation |