ReSearch

Researching the transforming landscape of information seeking – AI technologies and learning in Swedish schools

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1. Introduction

The aim of this poster is to present and discuss the newly started four-year research project "ReSearch: Researching the transforming landscape of information seeking – AI technologies and learning in Swedish schools". ReSearch investigates the challenges when generative AI technologies increasingly are used in schools for information-seeking (e.g. Corbin & Walton, 2025; Efimova & Nygren, 2024; see also Shah & Bender, 2022, 2024). 'Generative AI technologies for information-seeking' is in the project used as a generic description of technologies that utilises large-scale language models and machine learning to generate information objects based on users' prompts. Furthermore, search engines have in different ways incorporated generative AI functions through Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG). The project is a continuation of many years of research concerning information seeking, search engines and the evaluation of sources (e.g. Haider & Sundin, 2019; Haider & Sundin, 2022), as well as research on educational policy (e.g. Godhe, 2019; Godhe et al., 2023).

The project aims to make two contributions: A) expand the empirical understanding of seeking for and evaluating information as a basis for learning in school, in a situation of rapid technological transformation and B) develop conceptual tools for understanding evaluation of information in relation to an information infrastructure increasingly pervaded by AI technologies.

(A) In the project, the use of generative AI technologies for information-seeking is examined in three empirical sub-studies named the public discourse, the classroom and the teachers' room. These sub-studies are interlinked in different ways, each with its own logic and rules, and different research questions. The public discourse: What are AI technologies used for information-seeking imagined to be doing in schools? The classroom: How are generative AI technologies used for information-seeking employed, with what outcomes, and how is this reflected upon in grade 7 to 9 classroom settings? The teachers' room: How are AI technologies used for information-seeking imagined as tools for learning by teaching staff, and what roles are they assigned with regard to how teaching staff formulate learning tasks?

B) The project makes conceptual contributions by addressing three interrelated questions: In a situation of reconfigured relationships between human and non-human actors, how can the changing distribution of responsibility in the information infrastructure be described and understood? In these emerging configurations, how can meaningful opportunities for pupils' and teachers' accountability and control of information be conceptualised? In what ways can pupils be given opportunities to evaluate information responsibly and integrate such opportunities into learning tasks that address the presence of AI technologies for information-seeking?

The project includes three interconnected empirical sub-studies: Sub-study 1: The public discourse, Sub-study 2: The classroom and sub-study 3: The teachers' room. A combination of different methods will be used for data production, e.g. media analysis, interviews, observations, focus groups. The analysis focuses on the configuration (Suchman, 2012) of the different entities that contribute to the performance of chatbots and similar information-seeking technologies in each sub-study, as well as on how agency is distributed within these configurations.

2. Acknowledgements

3. References

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