

# MISQ Archivist

## Sequentiality of Product Review Information Provision: An Information Foraging Perspective

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### Abstract

The literature has highlighted the importance of product review information to a consumer, but limited knowledge exists on the provision of such information in a shopping website. This research uses information foraging theory (IFT) to determine how to provide product reviews. Product reviews differ according to whether the content is mainly on product attributes (i.e., attribute-oriented product reviews) or usage experience (i.e., usage-oriented product reviews). Two empirical studies were conducted. Study 1 examined consumer information diet for product reviews using the think-aloud approach. Results showed that consumers use two different genres of product review information sequentially: (1) to follow product attribute-oriented review information during the screening phase and (2) to forage for product usage-oriented review information during the evaluation phase. Findings were extended to Study 2 through a field experiment, in which different patches of product reviews were purposefully and sequentially given in accordance with the consumer information diet for product reviews. Results revealed that an online shopping website could offer varying genres of product reviews at different junctures to enhance consumers' decision-making performance. This research presents empirical evidence on the effectiveness of embedding product review information on a shopping website. This work further contributes to IFT, which is traditionally descriptive and conceptual in nature, by theorizing information provision and information-foraging behaviors of online consumers.

**Keywords:** Product review, information foraging theory, information diet, information patch, information sequentiality