



Human Information Retrieval (History and Foundations of Information Science)

Julian Warner

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Information retrieval in the age of Internet search engines has become part of ordinary discourse and everyday practice: "Google" is a verb in common usage. Thus far, more attention has been given to practical understanding of information retrieval than to a full theoretical account. In *Human Information Retrieval*, Julian Warner offers a comprehensive overview of information retrieval, synthesizing theories from different disciplines (information and computer science, librarianship and indexing, and information society discourse) and incorporating such disparate systems as WorldCat and Google into a single, robust theoretical framework. There is a need for such a theoretical treatment, he argues, one that reveals the structure and underlying patterns of this complex field while remaining congruent with everyday practice. Warner presents a labor theoretic approach to information retrieval, building on his previously formulated distinction between semantic and syntactic mental labor, arguing that the description and search labor of information retrieval can be understood as both semantic and syntactic in character. Warner's information science approach is rooted in the humanities and the social sciences but informed by an understanding of information technology and information theory. The chapters offer a progressive exposition of the topic, with illustrative examples to explain the concepts presented. Neither narrowly practical nor largely speculative, *Human Information Retrieval* meets the contemporary need for a broader treatment of information and information systems.

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