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**Dossier temático: Comportamiento humano informativo**

**Thomas Daniel Wilson: building a pathway in Information Science moving towards creating and accessing inclusive information and knowledge growth**

**Thomas Daniel Wilson: construyendo un camino en la ciencia de la información que avanza hacia la creación y el acceso a información inclusiva y al crecimiento del conocimiento**

**Thomas Daniel Wilson: construindo um caminho na Ciência da Informação caminhando para a criação e acesso à informação inclusiva e ao crescimento do conhecimento**

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**Abstract**

The dossier dedicated to Professor Emeritus Thomas Daniel Wilson is preceded by a short biography, based on some identified sources, in particular, a recent interview conducted by Naresh Agarwal PhD at Simmons University and included in the archive, updated in 2003. Data was also collected from other sources (articles, books, websites), especially for the period 2004-2022.

**Keywords:** Wilson, T.D.; Biography; Awards; Publications; Information behaviour models

**Resumen**

El dossier dedicado al profesor emérito Thomas Daniel Wilson está precedido por una breve biografía, basada en algunas fuentes identificadas, en particular, una entrevista reciente realizada por Naresh Agarwal PhD en Simmons University y el archivo incluido en sitio web de T.D. Wilson, actualizado en el 2003. También se recolectaron datos en otras fuentes (artículos, libros, sitios webs), especialmente para el período 2004-2022.

**Palabras clave:** Wilson, T.D.; Biografía, Premios, Publicaciones, modelos de Comportamiento Informativo



## Resumo

O dossiê dedicado ao Professor Emérito Thomas Daniel Wilson é precedido por uma breve biografia, baseada em algumas fontes identificadas, em particular, uma entrevista recente conduzida por Naresh Agarwal PhD na Simmons University e o arquivo incluído no T.D. Wilson, atualizado em 2003. Também foram coletados dados de outras fontes (artigos, livros, sites), especialmente para o período 2004-2022.

**Palavras-chave:** Wilson, T.D.; Biografia, Prêmios, Publicações, Modelos de comportamento informativo

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*“(...) don't follow in my footsteps, find your own,  
find your own route and pursue it” (1:51)*

*Tom Wilson,*

answer to Naresh Agarwal's question:

“What mentoring advice would you have for people who might follow your footsteps?”

The long and fruitful path of T. D. Wilson is a great challenge to give a brief and illustrative vision of his personal and academic life, even more so when the main referents have commented on him in events and publications. There is unanimity as Cronin, B. (2001) says in an issue of the *Journal of Documentation* honouring Wilson on the occasion of his retirement in 2000, “Tom has always been highly active and visible on both the national and international stages, giving generously of his time and advice to colleagues within the profession, tyros and tired old hands alike.”

Our presentation considers different stages: childhood and youth (the 1950s and 1960s); University of Sheffield period (1972 - 1980); 1980s and 1990s; 2000s; 2019-2022. It incorporates professional activities, awards received, and a brief description of his bibliographical production.

Besides his publications, the main sources for the biography are the recent

interview conducted by Professor Naresh Agarwal, as part of the Oneness World Project at Simmons University, and the website *Professor Tom Wilson - A (Mainly) Professional Biography*.

## **Childhood and youth, the beginning of his education, professional work, and academic career (the 1950s and 1960s)**

He was born in 1935 at a little railway station, Shincliffe Station, about three miles south of Durham, in County Durham in the northeast of England. As he says, he “wasn’t born in the Waiting Room as some have suggested, but in the railway ‘cottage’ occupied by my mother and father” (04:53). His father was a platelayer, that is, “one of a group of men who worked a length of line to maintain it in proper order, and became a ‘track-walker’ - another, more solitary, maintenance job involving walking about twelve miles of track every day - up one day, down the next. He was killed at work in 1953, which was quite a significant event in my life at the age of 18” (05:53). Later in the interview, he returns to his childhood, especially to the figure of his father, who marked his life. (56:48)

He went to school in the neighbouring mining village of Bowburn and subsequently to the Johnston Grammar School in Durham. He left school at 16 to work as a library assistant at Durham County Library from 1951 to 1956.

Wilson highlights the personality of his father, who was able to have a commercial education, unlike his six siblings. “He was a great reader, we had plenty of books in the house and he allowed reading to become one of my main occupations. In the mining town where I went to elementary school (...) boxes of books were given out for loan (by the County Library service), a kind of magical seventh heaven, the idea of these boxes and books to read and find out things” (56:48, 57:48).

In the interview (57:48), from this stage of his childhood and adolescence, Wilson highlights being able to learn the violin and be a member of Durham County Youth Orchestra and expressing a fascinating comment about music and orchestras: “Like being a member of an orchestra and collectively producing

sound, it's quite magical the power of music, but I think it's also the power of connection because collectively working on something common as a group, then magic happens, the thing about being in an orchestra. It's absolutely intense because everyone has to play the notes at the same time, and it's achieved through the process that it provokes". (57:48)

Two years of national military service in the Royal Air Force interrupted his professional career. After National Service, he returned to Durham County Library and, after a year, went off to what was called 'library school', in Newcastle College of Commerce, to prepare for the professional examinations of the Library Association to qualify as a librarian. After library school, he returned to the County Library but moved on quickly to take charge of a college library.

Nevertheless, as Wilson says on his website, there was a further abrupt transition. From 1959, he began to work at the Nuclear Research Centre of C.A. Parsons and Company in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He worked as Librarian and Information Officer until 1961 and became interested in the use of new technology in information science. Parsons were partners in The Nuclear Power Group, which built the U.K.'s first nuclear power generating station. He did the usual 'special librarian' things and spent much time out and about in the laboratories. He describes his experiences when "I visited the computer services division and talked to them about a possible replacement for the optical coincidence card system I was using. The computer manager came along to my office to see the system in use and, after a demonstration, looked thoughtfully into the big box containing the cards, shook his head and said, 'No, we couldn't do any better than that!'" (Wilson, 2010, p.27)

In the interview, he refers to how the special librarians were valued for helping the researchers and even recalled gratitude for their work.

Wilson comments on his website regarding these changes, "I think it may have been at Newcastle that I acquired my liking for change - although I suspect that it is something genetic."

While at C.A. Parsons, he completed the examinations for Fellowship of the Library Association and, in 1961, moved on to teach at the School of

Librarianship, College of Commerce, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. When the College became part of the newly established Polytechnic, he worked on the development of a bachelor's degree in Information Science, which was the first in the field to be approved by the Council for National Academic Awards. He worked at Newcastle Library School until January 1972, when he moved to Sheffield.

While working at the Polytechnic, in the early 1970s, he obtained his first degree, an external BSc in Economics and Sociology from the University of London.

Wilson reiterates one of his episodes of serendipity, "almost by chance," he received an invitation from Professor Paul Wasserman, the founding Dean of the Library School, to teach at the University of Maryland as Visiting Lecturer from 1971 to 1972. In the interview, he explains the need for classification teaching in the USA, and the invitations received by English teachers in the years late 60s and early 70s, because Wasserman "had the notion that classification was understood better and taught better in the U.K. than in the USA and every year he imported a British teacher." (18:53).

### **Period University of Sheffield 1972 - 1980**

Shortly after his return from the USA, in late 1971, Professor Wilfred Saunders, Head of the Postgraduate School of Librarianship and Information Science at the University of Sheffield, called him and asked if he would like to work on a research project for a couple of years. In January 1972, he was established in Sheffield as 'Principal Investigator' for the Local Library Cooperation project, supported by the Government's Department of Education and Science (DES), and in late 1973 was appointed to the post of Lecturer to teach the new M.A. in Information Studies (Social Sciences).

Wilson's view on the difference between academic work and today is very pertinent and is under debate today. In the interview (31:56), he refers to the lack of pressure to research and publish in the university setting and, therefore, his approach to the academic career. However, that pressure was present when he was Head of the Department.

Toward the end of the Local Library Cooperation Project, he was appointed to a

full-time position on the school's academic staff; from Principal Lecturer at the Polytechnic, he became Lecturer at the University. Once in that position he applied to complete the Ph.D., he was awarded a Ph.D. in library and information studies by the University of Sheffield in 1975.

He had begun while managing the project and then became involved in the proposal to establish a Centre for Research in User Studies (CRUS) at Sheffield. As Wilson points out on his website, “this Centre was the brainchild of Professor Saunders of the School and Dr Peter Mann of the Department of Sociological Studies. CRUS was an extremely successful Centre, gaining many projects and remained in existence until 1989, when the British Library Research and Development Department ended its core funding.”

From 1974 onwards, Wilson obtained a succession of research grants, mainly from the British Library Research and Development Department, but also from the Department of Health and Social Security and the Economic and Social Research Council. The major project at this time was Project INISS - Information Needs in Local Authority Social Services Departments. This was a groundbreaking project in several ways, not least in its use of ‘structured observation’ as one of the leading research methods. The research team (four other people and him) carried out a total of twenty-two person-weeks of observation before surveying 150 people in an interview survey. During this period, he began to be more involved in international activities. The School ran courses for the British Council, and these were sometimes followed by requests to travel to advise on various aspects of professional education. He had trips to Turkey, Poland, Tunisia, and Morocco and the beginning of a long association with Portugal.

His first visit to Portugal was with a group of colleagues who were undertaking a survey of public libraries in Portugal. Wilson comments on his website, “at that time, the public library service was very under-developed, and in some places, the only collection of books was in the local fire station. Our recommendations led to no immediate government action, but some years later a development programme was started, and Portugal now has many more public libraries, often associated with cultural centres.” The relationship with Portugal continued for 14 years, initially at what is now the Instituto Nacional de Engenharia, Tecnologia e

Inovação in Lisbon, as a consultant and then preparing courses for ‘information intermediaries’ to work in the Portuguese equivalents of Chambers of Commerce, and finally, delivering the MSc in Information Management.

Subsequently, from 1998 to 2012 as Professor Catedratico Convidado at the Faculty of Engineering, University of Porto, he supervised student research projects and taught on the information management programme.

Another connection arising from interest in the INISS Project was with the Nordic countries, particularly Sweden and Finland. David Streatfield (the Principal Investigator on Project INISS) and Wilson made several visits over several years to various parts of Sweden - Luleå, Umeå, Linköping, Gothenburg, and Borås. They also made individual visits to Finland, mainly to the Universities of Tampere and Åbo Akademi University. These connections with Borås continues to the present day.

## **The 80’s and 90’s**

In 1982, Wilson replaced Wilfred Saunders as Head of what is now the Information School, having changed its name to Department of Information Studies in 1981. He initially took on the position temporarily and started an unexpected fifteen-year career as Head (the equivalent of Dean in the USA). Thus, he ended up doing the job until 1997.

As Wilson notes on his website,

over these fifteen years, the Department changed enormously. We started the academic year 1982-83 with, I believe, an establishment of 8.5 full-time academic staff with a freeze on new appointments or even replacement of people who had retired or moved. These years of the Thatcher regime were years of extraordinary difficulty for universities and Sheffield was no exception. We managed to resist pressure to merge with other departments and, at 8.5 people, were deemed not to be a ‘small’ department ripe for closure - other departments were succumbing to these strategies. Somehow, we survived and even prospered in these hard times and when I retired in 1997, the establishment was 15 academic staff, with three positions open for appointment when the new Head of Department took up the position and decided how they were to be used. Along with this increase in staff came a major increase in student numbers and changes in the teaching programmes. The present status of the Department (now the Information School) was established in these hard times.

In those difficult times, they undertook the development of new masters' degrees, in conjunction with Computer Science, the Management School, and the Medical School, and upgraded existing ones (36:52) that helped sustain the Department's programmes.

It is relevant how Wilson was able to both promote and perform in essential endeavours for the development of the discipline and the profession. In 1992, in converting the Association of British Library and Information Science Schools (ABLISS), which was simply a committee of the Heads of Departments, into BAILER (British Association for Information and Library Education and Research), which was an Association open to all teaching staff in the U.K. departments (plus the Republic of Ireland), he was the first Chair of its Heads of Department Committee. He was also instrumental in establishing EUCLID (an Acronym that used to stand for European Association for Library and Information Education and Research). Also, he served on Committees of the Economic and Social Research Council and various other bodies at various times. Overseas connections continued with his academic visits and teaching at McGill University in Montreal, Curtin University in Western Australia, and the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Towards the end of his time as Head of the Department, his association with Poland was renewed through becoming involved in the development of the International Centre for Information Management, Systems, and Services, initially at the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Torun.

### **Years 2000s: a second career**

In 2000, Wilson retired, but as he says, "Since retiring, my workload appears to have declined hardly at all, although the most onerous load that of being responsible for others has gone. I no longer have to negotiate for more staff, or defend staff against the depredations of the University, or ensure that they 'perform' as the University wishes. So, the sleepless nights are fewer."

In these years, we have seen a significant insertion of Wilson in two projects developed from valuable antecedents already mentioned: on the one hand, as Visiting Professor at Leeds University Business School and Associate Director of the AIMTech (Adaptation Information Management and Technology) research



group at Leeds University Business School with Dr David Allen. They worked in mobile information systems, particularly in the emergency services, i.e., police forces, ambulance services, and fire brigades (Allen & Wilson, 2005); Streatfield, 2008, 2010; Vardaxoglou, 2008.

On the other hand, he had another appointment as Senior Professor at the Swedish School at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science in the University of Borås (Högskolan i Borås) where he served from September 1, 1999, to September 30, 2020.

Wilson recalls the important background to this relationship

I retired from Sheffield in 2000, and, a couple of years earlier I was approached by Lars Höglund and Staffan Lööf (the Prefect at the time) about the possibility of becoming a visiting professor in Borås. I had known Lars for some years, as, during the INISS Project, David Streatfield and I had visited the University of Umeå for talks with Lars and Olle Persson, and they had visited Sheffield (...) In my visiting professor role I gave occasional lectures on things such as research methods, questionnaire design, interview techniques (Wilson, 2022b)

He worked with Ph.D. students, giving occasional lectures on information management courses, and helping to develop research proposals. He also spent a couple of years as an advisor to the Rector on topics such as ‘Professional PhDs,’ the Bologna Accord, and strategic planning. He helped Gunnel Hessler on the preparation of a new Master’s degree in Information Management, as he comments:

For two or three years from 2002 I was seconded from the School to work as one of a number of advisors to the then Rektor, Dr. Said Irandoust. My work chiefly concerned the transition from the existing Swedish degree structures to those of the Bologna Process, i.e., to bring the structure into agreement with the three-cycle (bachelor's, master's and doctoral studies) structure agreed by members of the European Union (European Commission, n.d.). Dr. Irandoust also became interested in the notion of the “professional doctorate” (see, e.g., Fenge, 2010), in which structures and timeframes are adjusted to enable practising professionals to undertake research associated with their work on a part-time basis. (Wilson, 2022b)

He jointly supervised Ph.D. students and research projects. The latter have included a European-funded project, EURIDICE, and others. The University of Borås has been involved in many research projects, either funded by the University, the E.U., the Swedish Library Association (Svesks Biblioteksförening),

or, in the most recent instance, the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet). Some publications are: Eklund, et al.(2006) Maceviciute and Wilson (2008), Maceviciute, et al. (2009), Maceviciute and Wilson (2009a) Maceviciute and Wilson (2009b).

One of these, within the framework of the group at the Swedish School, was SHAMAN: Sustaining Heritage Access through Multivalent Archiving, *ArchiviNg* part of the EU's 7th Framework Programme, funded by the European Union, which provided considerable insight into the problems and prospects for digital preservation. These initiatives were led by Dr. Sandor Daranyi, whose existing network of European colleagues made collaboration possible. Another was PERICLES (an acronym for 'Promoting and Enhancing Reuse of Information throughout the Content Lifecycle taking account of Evolving Semantics') which explored the potential use in academia of the resources of the oldest photographic library in Europe. Both projects were concerned with the preservation of digital data. The case studies, however, differ widely: one is based in the Tate Gallery in London and relates to the preservation of digital video art; the other in Space Applications Services NV in Belgium, where the data relates to solar observations. Following SHAMAN and PERICLES they got involved in the Leonardo da Vinci programme to participate in a project on *Effective training tools application to qualification improvement in the library sector* (ETQI), the aim was to produce training materials, specifically for use by national libraries (Wilson, 2022b).

Among the publications produced by these projects are: Innocenti et al. (2009); Innocenti, et al. (2010); Macevičiūtė & Wilson (2010a ); Macevičiūtė & Wilson (2010b); Birrell, et al. (2011); Eklund et al. (2011); Macevičiūtė et al. (2011); Macevičiūtė & Wilson (2011); Darányi, et al. (2012).

In 2012, with colleagues at the University of Borås and Gothenburg University, he was awarded a grant of 11.8 million Swedish kronor (\$1.7 million) by Vetenskapsrådet (Swedish Research Council) for a research programme on the production, distribution, and use of e-books in Sweden. Therefore, they achieved a "big" project, from 2013 to 2017, to examine the impact of the e-book phenomenon in a 'small language' culture (where the economics of everything to do with book publishing are radically different from the English language book

market) and to explore the impact from authorship, through publishing, bookselling, and libraries, to the ultimate reader.

Among the publications produced by these projects are Macevičiūtė & Wilson (2013); Maceviciute & Wilson, 2014; Maceviciute, et al. (2014); Wilson (2014); Maceviciute & Wilson (2015); Nilsson, et al. (2015); Wilson (2015); Wilson (2016a); Wilson (2016b); Wilson & Maceviciute (2016); Bergström, et al. (2017); Maceviciute, et al. (2017).

In addition to the research collaborations, there was also activity on the teaching front. Wilson and Elena Maceviciute initiated a proposal for an online Master's degree in Digital Library Management.

Most recently (2017-2018), Wilson also participated in a two-year Lithuanian research project on the relationship between digital reading, social inclusion, and digital inequality. As in previous projects, joint research with Elena Maceviciute, Maceviciute & Wilson (2018); Maceviciute, et al. (2019); Wilson & Maceviciute (2019).

Wilson's words (2022b) are illustrative of this second career

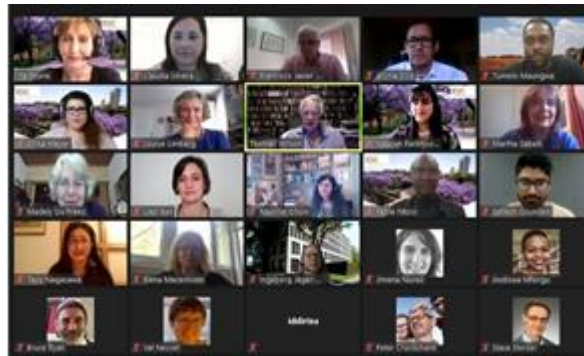
I have described my association with the University of Borås as constituting a second career. I spent 28 years at the University of Sheffield, pursuing the main part of my academic career, and I have spent almost the same amount of time working at the University of Borås (albeit part-time), instead of quietly retiring and disappearing from the academic world. The Covid-19 pandemic has prevented me from travelling to Borås since 2019, but I hope to return at some point, to continue my second career and to meet again colleagues who have provided an intellectually stimulating environment

### **2019-2022, the third career?**

In recent years, he has continued to manifest an enormous capacity for work, creativity, wisdom, and an unsurpassed talent in Information Science, by presenting a reformulation of his model in Information Behaviour at ISIC2020, Pretoria, disseminated in a paper (Wilson, 2020a), and the publication of a book (Wilson, 2022). We believe that scholars in the field were surprised by, and admired, both masterful products; Wilson was still working with the rigour and wisdom that characterizes him and also at an accelerated pace as at all stages of

his life. Let us briefly look at both highly significant creations where Wilson's genius is exhibited in all its fullness.

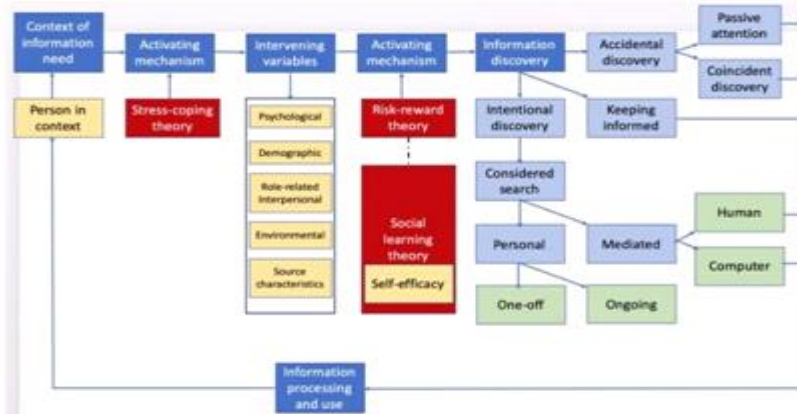
### **Remodelling the model - 2020**



The reformulation of the 1990s model was presented at ISIC 2020 in Pretoria, mainly developed in virtual form due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are some pictures and diagrams of Professor Wilson in his presentation. They are explained in Chapter 4 of the book *Information Behaviour: a general model* (Wilson, 2022, 32-52), where the diagrams are included and, in particular, the process of their elaboration and the relation with other theoretical references and their models. In this sense, the parts of the book where they are explained are cited.

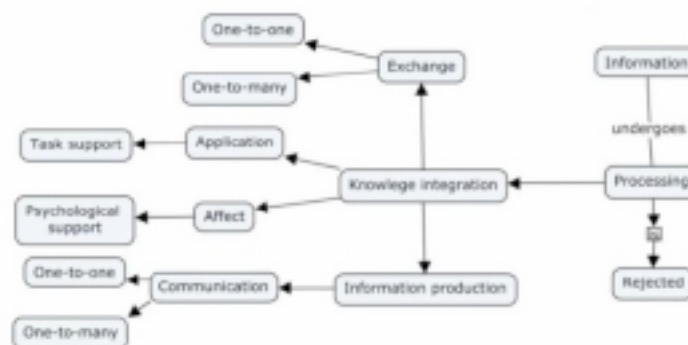
Wilson's revised model, shown in Figure 1 below, appears in his open access book (Wilson, 2022, Ch.4). "Information discovery" replaces "information seeking behaviour" and is expanded to show modes of discovery.

*Figure 1: The revised general model*



Other diagrams in the chapter expanded specific areas of the general model, e.g. the area of information use is expanded, as in Figure 2 below.

*Figure 2: Expansion of “information use”*



The rationales for the changes and developments are set out in Chapter 4 of the book.

The first publication on the model was in *Anales de documentación* (Wilson, 2020 a ). The description of the model is part of Chapter 4 of the book above, to be discussed below. As Reijo Savolainen points out in his review (Savolainen, 2021) “this section forms one of the best parts of the book. Wilson elaborates the above framework by introducing the construct of information discovery (...) replaces the concept of information seeking behaviour because the latter is mainly indicative of purposive information seeking.”

**The book *Exploring Information Behaviour: an introduction, an unexpected offering to the academic community (researchers, teachers, students) and the general public***

Wilson's recent book is truly a rewarding and meaningful legacy for future generations. It is an open-access book and available free of charge as an EPUB or a PDF file. It combines qualities and characteristics difficult to achieve in an introductory text aimed at a diverse readership. It is conceptually rigorous but, at the same time, entertaining and, from the didactic point of view, highly remarkable. Its structure is intelligently achieved and facilitates the integration of knowledge and even the use by professors as a manual in both undergraduate and graduate teaching.

As Wilson (2022, p.3) says in the Foreword:

This book is an introduction to researching human information behaviour. It is not a book about the rich diversity of such behaviour as reported in thousands of research papers, PhD theses and reports to funding agencies. That job has already been done by Donald Case in his book *Looking for information*. It is, rather, very much a personal account, based to a significant extent on my own research and my own theoretical frameworks (...) The book is aimed at the beginning researcher, perhaps preparing a master's degree thesis, or beginning to think about doctoral research. By the time you reach the end of the book I hope that it will have achieved three things for you: first, you should understand what is meant by information behaviour; secondly, you should be more aware of the theories and models that guide our approach to research; and finally, you should have a sound understanding of the various research methods employed in information behaviour research and how to use them. The book may also have some relevance for information managers in helping them to understand the complex circumstances that underlie the information needs and behaviour of their clients.

The book begins with an *Introduction*, chapter 1, focusing on the concept of *information* with a clear and engaging narrative. As he repeats in all the chapters, he invites the readers to reflect, exhibiting his teaching skills, with the last items: "Tell me about it" and "What's next?". *Information Behaviour* and its conceptualization occupy Chapter 2 (Behaviour, Behavioural and behaviourist, constituents of behaviour, types of information behaviour, information need). Chapter 3 presents *Modelling behaviour* (what is a model, modelling behaviour, modelling information behaviour, the affective dimension). As already mentioned,

chapter 4 *Information behaviour: a general model* is the most relevant chapter as it includes the description and analysis of the 2020 model. The relationship between models and theory building is addressed in Chapter 5 *Models and theories*, where this construction is explored and proposed. Chapter 6 *Researching information behaviour* focuses on research methods and Chapter 7 *Using information behaviour research* refers to the investigation of the use of information, in short, how the results of research in information behaviour can be applied. The *Conclusion* shows a sensitive Wilson, as he expresses throughout the book, facing the current crisis, the present and future challenges, and his firm commitment to disciplinary diversification.

We await translations into Spanish and Portuguese, which are currently in preparation, and invite the community of colleagues and friends to collaborate in its elaboration. It is an essential manual to be used in the teaching of information behaviour in Ibero-America.

### **The academic trajectory from the vision of Tom Wilson, the reformulation of the models in five decades, and how to approach the professional and academic paths of the disciplinary field**

When Wilson is asked about key situations in his career (1:08), he mentions first the University of Maryland as Visiting Lecturer, the second is the move to Sheffield to take on that research project; the third would be getting the Project money for INISS project and doing the research for five years, becoming Head of the Department; fourth, establishing Social Science Information Studies and its conversion to the International Journal of Information Management, and getting involved in academic scholarly publishing. “These would probably be the key things in my career.”

Undoubtedly, the conceptualization and design of the Information Behaviour model since the three exposed in 1981 (Wilson, 1981) gradually impacted the specialists in the field, including us. Through this emblematic article, we started our self-training in the so-called User Studies in the '80s, and we agree with



Wilson in our preference for the one represented in Fig. 2, p.6, and we are surprised by its short dissemination. The validity of the model is relevant, and all the actors are present: user, embodiments of knowledge, mediator, technology, and information system inserted in the universe of knowledge, interrelated with four categories of 11 paths

The base model, Fig. 3, p.8, is the most cited in the literature of the field. It brings together fundamental concepts, the holistic view of the information user, the information needs in a context, and the individual in his or her social role. It also advocates qualitative methodologies for research as well as interdisciplinary relationships. The recognition of the INISS project for the definition of the model is the affirmation of the relationship between research and theoretical formulation.

The reformulation of this basic model in the 1990s is widely analysed in several publications by its author (Wilson 1997, 1999, 2005) and in hundreds of articles and books in the disciplinary field published in several journals in different countries and languages. The reformulation of the 2020 model will indeed have the same repercussions. The different stages involve applying a wide range of emerging theories from the social sciences and humanities.

By way of closing, let us see Wilson's vision of approaching the disciplinary field's professional and academic paths. He is realistic and sees the difficulties that Information Science must face in the next 20 years; he says in the interview: "it is probably slowly disappearing" (01:11) considering the technological changes, especially since the introduction of networked computers and more recently quantum computers and machine learning. Although he considers the insertion of the field of Information Behaviour in the medical sector and other disciplines, in this sense, we adhere to the quote from Savolainen's (2022) review concerning Wilson's conclusions about our field: "information behaviour research will continue to have relevance into the future: it is now too firmly embedded in a number of disciplines, which are all subject to change, to disappear from the research world" (Wilson, 2022, 101).

Wilson's response to Prof. Naresh Agarwal's last question, "What mentoring advice would you give to people who might follow in your footsteps?" speaks to his human qualities: (...) "*don't follow in my footsteps, find your own, find your*



*own route and pursue it*" (1:51)

## **Activities and integration in professional institutions**

Professor Wilson has been an active professional, being a member of organizations such as the Cataloguing Rules Committee, Library Association; British Standards Institution Technical Committee O.C./20/4 - UDC; British Library R & D Department, Social Welfare Advisory Group; Sheffield Libraries' Coordinating Committee (Acting Chairman, 1982-88); Aslib Council; British-American Joint Committee on Large-Scale Data Resources for the Social Sciences; Research Resources and Methods Committee and the Human Behaviour and Development Committee Economic and Social Research Council; Advisory Committee for the British Library Bibliographical Services Division; Board of the Society for Information Management; European Association for Library and Information Education and Research (founder and Board member); Heads of Departments and Schools Committee of British Association for Information and Library Education and Research; DfE/BLRDD Committee for the Award of Research Studentships; RAE Panel for Librarianship and Information Management; Humanities Research Board, Librarianship and Information Science Panel; Senior Scholar KALIPER Curriculum Research Project, Association for Library and Information Science Education

## **Awards**

The following are the most prominent awards received.

Tom Wilson became an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Information Scientists in 1993 and was awarded the ALISE Award for Professional Contribution to Library and Information Education in 2000 - the first and, so far, the only non-US academic to receive this honour.

Professor Emeritus at the Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, Visiting Professor at Leeds University Business School, Visiting Professor at the University of Borås, Sweden, and *Professor Catedrático Convidado* in the Faculty of Engineering, University of Oporto.

In 2000, Dr. Wilson was the recipient of the ASIS&T SIG-USE (Information

Needs, Seeking and Use of the American Society for Information Science and Technology) award for “*outstanding contributions to information behavior*” and in 2008, was designated “*Bobcat of the year*” for “*outstanding contributions in promoting European library and information science*” by EUCLID, the European Association for Library and Information Education and Research.

Wilson was awarded a Filosofie Hedersdoktor (Honorary Ph.D.) of the University of Gothenburg in recognition of his work in helping to develop library and information research in Sweden, and especially for his work for the Swedish School of Library and Information Science. And a second Honorary Doctorate from the University of Murcia, Spain, in 2010, for his lifetime contributions to information science.

In 2017, he received the Award of Merit from the Association for Information Science and Technology. Asked about winning this prestigious award, Professor Wilson said, ‘I was very surprised to receive the Award, having been retired since 2000. But, of course, I am delighted to receive it, since there is no higher award in the field.’

In 2020 he was given the Jason Farradane Award by the U.K. e-information Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. Professor Allen's comments are illustrative:

Our primary reason for nominating Professor Tom Wilson is his pioneering work in open access through the foundation and editing of *Information Research*: an international electronic journal. When the journal was established in 1995, it was one of the earliest electronic journals to be created. It was originally intended as a channel for promoting research within what was then the Department of Information Studies at Sheffield University, but was developed into a peer-reviewed journal from 1994 onwards. Professor Wilson acted as publisher until 2017, when that responsibility was assumed by the University of Borås in Sweden, with Professor Wilson as Editor-in-Chief throughout the period. As Editor, Web designer, and HTML coder, he has, singlehandedly, built the journal into one of the foremost journals in the field of information science. The journal attracts contributions from all over the world, and its readership is also world-wide. Google Analytics reports 25,000 to 30,000 users a month for the site and the geographic distribution shows the significance of the journal for the developing world: 14 of the top 25 user countries are classed as “developing” by the International Monetary Fund. In the past year there have been users from 151 countries - almost 80% of all countries. There is little doubt that the truly open access character of the journal is a major attractor for readers from the developing world.

## Publications

He founded the print journal *Social Science Information Studies* in 1980, which he edited until 1985, when it was superseded by the *International Journal of Information Management*, which he continued to edit until 1987.

Wilson also founded and continues to edit (Publisher and Editor-in-Chief until 2017) *Information Research: an International Electronic Journal* (<http://informationr.net/ir/>), an online information science journal. Professor Allen commented earlier on its relevance. This is a freely available, open-access, international, peer-reviewed, scholarly journal dedicated to making accessible research results across a wide range of information-related disciplines, which constitutes an excellent resource for I.S. students. It is now the leading open-access journal in the field and one of the highest-ranked journals in information science. Since 2018, *Information Research* has been published by the University of Borås, Sweden, with the financial support of a NOP-HS Grant and a Swedish Research Council Journal scientific journal grant.

Regarding authorship of journal articles, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and ReseachGate indicates citations. Some of his articles are the most cited in Information Science, such as, among others, the emblematic ones: *Models in information behaviour research* Journal of documentation, 1999 (Wilson, 1999), *On user studies and information needs*. Journal of documentation (Wilson, 1981), *Information behaviour: an interdisciplinary perspective*. Information Processing & Management, 1997 (Wilson, 1997) and *Human information behavior* (Wilson, 2000).

Tom Wilson's updated bibliography, is available to 2022: <http://informationr.net/tdw/publ/papers/>. From the first publications (1962) to 2000, the bibliography of Amber M. Adams (Adams, 2001) in the *Journal of Documentation* is noteworthy. Undoubtedly, the articles on the INISS project allowed us to know the project first hand, written by Wilson & Streatfield (1977, 1979).

But since 2004, there has been a very profuse, varied, and enriching emerging production of all his research projects, presentations at events, reports, and so on,

covering his main lines and ideas on Information Behaviour published in *Information Research*, but also in various journals published in several countries. By way of example: an article on research methods, with a clear and intelligent approach to the subject (Wilson, 2002), passing through his concern for the future of libraries and the profession (Wilson, 2018) to the last ones; in one of them, he explores on the transfer of theories and models from information behaviour research into other disciplines (Wilson, 2020). In co-authorship, Riley (2022) explore collaborative information behaviour in the context of highly politicized settings; and with Nonthacumjane, et al. (2022), explore the aims, ways of working, and problems related to local information within a network of collaborating provincial university libraries in Thailand.

Finally, the latest work in *Journal of Documentation*, by Wilson & Maceviciute (2022), called *Information misbehaviour: modelling the motivations for the creation, acceptance and dissemination of misinformation*, remains within the boundaries of information behaviour, mainly looking at what is known of motives related to information misbehaviour or misinformation. The method used is content analysis of research literature.

### **Final considerations: permanence and change in the discipline and the profession**

We think it appropriate to close this brief reference to his career by turning to one of his recent public talks. It is Wilson's text on receiving the Jason Farradane Award (Wilson, 2023 in press). His words are representative of the meaning of working with colleagues: "I'm accepting this award not for myself, but for my colleagues who have worked with me to make *Information Research* one of the key journals in the field, and who share my belief in the genuine, Platinum Open Access model."

His approach to his work throughout his three careers shows his integration into different research groups united by common goals and, in particular, a shared vision of the world with and for diverse communities of information users, but also recognising "*standing on the shoulders of giants*."

In the talk, his considerations on current challenges are appreciable; among them

... just as almost everything the information landscape has changed over the past fifty years or more (...) so the role of the information manager has changed and continues to change. People also change in their search for and use of information, mostly as a result of changing information and communication technologies. As a result we need to change our image of their behavior (...) The computer, the IT network, the Internet and the World Wide Web have put distance between provider and user and, to use the jargon of the day, the system has become "disintermediated".

But he points to permanence, for example, the way people continue to pose their questions in general terms, using only two or three terms in a consultation, as well as to processes that have become more pronounced such as

... the work overload has led to information overload and the influence of *time* seems to be even stronger today than fifty years ago. Many businesses and public sector organizations now employ fewer people than are actually needed and the time pressures on people are significantly greater. This suggests that the principal of least effort will apply even more strongly: people will want systems that deliver answers quickly.

In this regard, he concludes, among others: «We have no idea what the future will bring, in terms of technological change. We know how things are trending; for example, the increased use by organizations of cloud services maintained by third parties, and the potential of machine learning and artificial intelligence».

Undoubtedly, we share this challenge where ethics and the permanence of the values that have identified a way of thinking and doing the discipline and the profession are at stake.

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