

## **THIVANT ERIC**

DOCTOR IN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY LYON 3 - ERSICOM  
(EQUIPE DE RECHERCHE SUR LES SYSTEMES D'INFORMATION  
ET DE COMMUNICATION DES ORGANISATIONS ET SUR LES MEDIAS)  
6 COURS ALBERT THOMAS 69008 LYON – France  
Tel.: 04.78.78.76.87, from France, 33.4.78.78.76.87 from elsewhere  
Fax: 04.78.78.76.88 from France, 33.4.78.78.76.88 from elsewhere  
thivant@univ-lyon3.fr or eric.thivant@numericable.fr

## **INFORMATION SEEKING AND USE BEHAVIOUR OF ECONOMISTS AND ANALYSTS**

### **Biographical note**

Eric Thivant is actually an associated member of Ersicom Team (Equipe de Recherche sur les Systèmes d'Information et de Communication des Organisations et sur les Médias) at the University Jean Moulin Lyon 3. He collaborates also regularly with the GRESEC (Groupe de Recherche sur les Enjeux de la Communication) team at Grenoble and ENSSIB (École nationale supérieure des sciences de l'information et des bibliothèques) team at Lyon, France. He has obtained his PhD in July 2003 with honours. He works on information access, i.e. information seeking and use behaviour, and information activity in a professional context, especially in Finance. He is interesting also in the development of financial markup languages (MDDL, Funds XML, Diams), ontologies and tools. The subject of his thesis was “The Informational Dimension in Financial Products Management and Design: Access to Information and Digital Description”. This thesis focuses on the information process at work in the financial market world. Then a formalised and rigorous tool entitled « A Mark-up Language for Financial Products » or MLFP was developed, a XML - based markup language. That tool enables us to specify the most important items used in the course of these activities.

### **Abstract**

The aim of this research paper is to deal with the Information Seeking and Use problem in a professional context and understand how activity can influence practices, by taking as examples, the economical studies. We analyse the relationship between the situational approach, described by Cheuk, the work environment complexity (with social, technological and personal aspects), and the information seeking and use strategies, which relied on Ellis and Wilson's model, with Bates's comments. We have interviewed height economists, with a questionnaire and the SICIA (Situation, Complexity and Information Activity) method. The SICAI method is a qualitative approach, which underlines the relationship between situations, professional contexts and strategies. Both methods allow to better understand how investors find out what they need for their job. We can clarify their information sources and practices of information seeking, which are very particular due to their activities. We complete our analysis by interviewing analysts from financial institutions. We find similarity in information seeking and use strategies used by these two groups and environmental levels meet in most situations. But some differences can be also found, explained by the activity frameworks and goals. Thus, this study demonstrates that the activity and also the professional context (here the financial context) can directly influence practices.

### **Keywords**

Information seeking behaviour, situated information, seeking practices, economical studies, information activity