

Immigrant Information Seeking Behavior in Everyday Life: Photovoice Study

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Introduction

International migration is a global phenomenon. Immigrant groups consist of a population of refugees fleeing war, violence, or political oppression, as well as economic migrants simply seeking better life opportunities. As immigrants settle in their host countries and begin to build a new life, it is critical for them to have easy access to credible information resources. For immigrants, information is key to:

- Understanding a new country
- Navigating an unfamiliar environment
- Engaging in economic, political, and cultural activities.

This poster presents the findings of a study that explored how recent immigrants in United States (US) find information resources in their daily activities.

Methods

This study employed photovoice, a visual research method in which participants were asked to take pictures of their activities. The following research questions were posed for the study:

- What type of information resources do immigrants search for and use in their everyday information practices?
- How do immigrants evaluate credibility and usefulness of information resources?
- What is the influence of information behavior of immigrants from their countries of origin?

Data Collection

- **Visual data** - the participants were asked to take 10-20 pictures of information resources that they used in everyday life
- **Interviews** - participants explained the context of the pictures and reflected on their experiences in seeking information.

Participants

A total of 15 participants, from three linguistic group were recruited through flyers and community organizations.

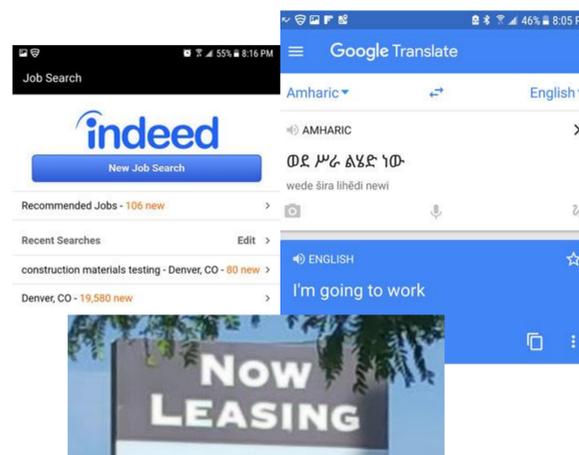
Languages and Countries Represented in the Sample

Language	Country	No. of Participants
Amharic	Ethiopia	5
Russian	Russia, Ukraine Kazakhstan Uzbekistan	6
Spanish	Mexico, Chile	4

Findings

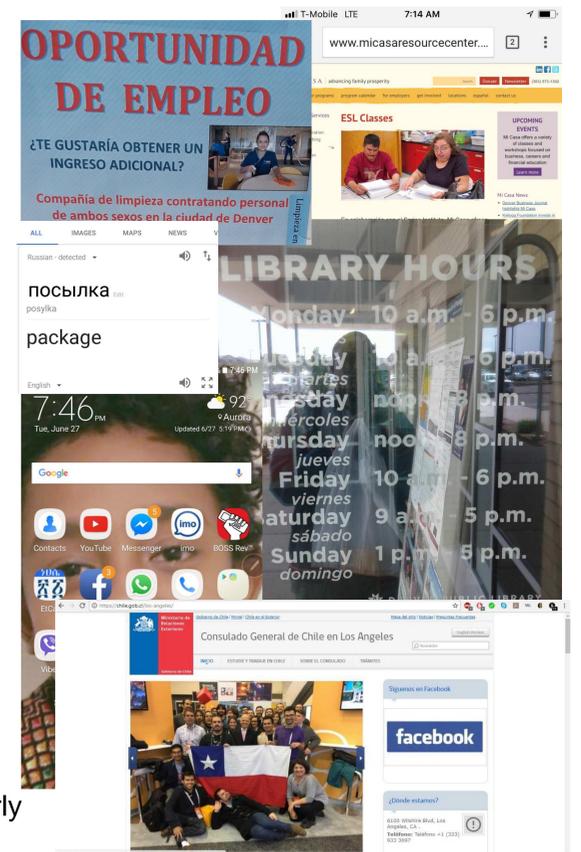
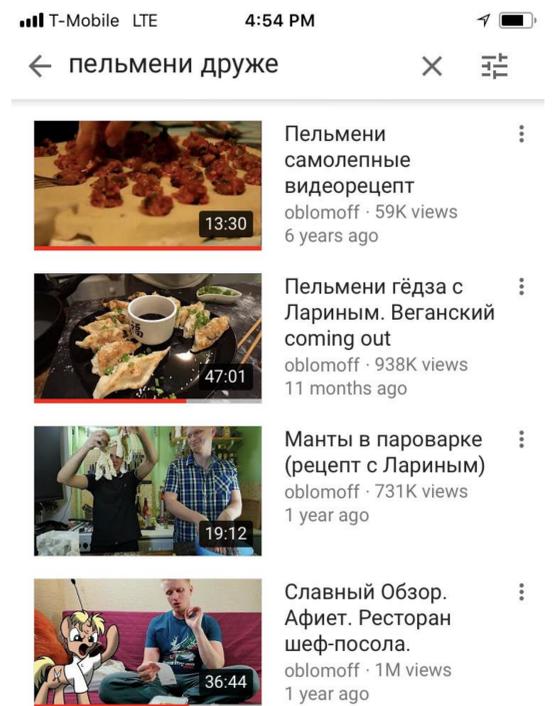
Information seeking behavior of new immigrants is often bilingual

- Shifting to a native language when searching for information about their native countries, cultural and personal topics, and local communities
- Searching in English when looking for jobs or places to live.



Major Themes

- Many participants prefer information in their native language
- Friends and family are primary sources of information
- New immigrants focus on learning English through ESL classes, YouTube and online translators
- Information about employment is the first and most crucial need
- New immigrants have keen interest in and continue to follow current affairs about their country of origin
- Access to information resources in the immigrants' native language is important to maintaining their cultural identity
- It is often difficult for new immigrants to find usable printed resources in their own native language
- Smart phones and the Internet are the primary means by which they find information
- Immigrants use a variety of social apps to maintain contact with family and friends in their country of origin
- Public libraries play an important role in the early phase of immigrants' life.



Conclusion

The study indicates that although recent immigrants use the Internet to seek information, they often feel overwhelmed and face many socio-cultural obstacles.

- People in their immigrant communities, public libraries, and social organizations are the major sources of information and support
- Recent immigrants live between cultures and having access to information in their language and about their culture is important for their well-being and maintaining cultural identities.

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