Synthesis Lectures on
Information Concepts, Retrieval, and Services

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Rong Tang · Graham Herrli

The Domain of UX in Information Studies: Bridging Theories, Research, and Professional Practice

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To my father, Yongcheng Tang, who passed away in September 2023. His unwavering encouragement and belief inspired me to strive for excellence and approach my work with diligence and purpose.
To my husband, Heyun Yin, whose steadfast support made the book's completion possible.

—Rong Tang

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Introduction

1

Overview

This book was inspired by the experiences of both authors in their years of involvement in academic research and teaching, as well as conducting User Experience (UX henceforth) research and design in work practices. As a result of their experience in the field, both authors observe differences in the expectations, accepted norms, and outcomes of UX research between the academic side and the applied side. The degree of separation of applied and academic UX research is alarming and has not been adequately addressed by the UX community. In two international studies surveying UX researchers in academic and practical settings, Law et al. (2009) and Lallemand et al. (2015) found that a wide gap exists in definitions, understanding of the nature of UX work, and methodologies between the two domains. This disconnect includes a lack of synergy between research discoveries in the academic realm and research discoveries in applied settings. It also results in localized and segmented UX efforts, with findings shared only within a circle of UX researchers. Because both scholarly and practical UX efforts tend to stay within a particular setting, much work has been done separately with duplicated efforts and missed opportunities for cross-pollination of knowledge and advancements across the two domains.

In his review of 100 years of the UX field, Jakob Nielsen (2017) acknowledged that while the century-long perspective is "positive beyond belief" and "UX has come a long way since 1950," he still feels "the overall quality of user experience… is less than 10% of what it should be."

For UX research to truly advance, and for the UX communities to thrive, it is crucial to identify points of convergence between academic and applied UX research. As Lallemand et al. (2015) argue, "the numerous differences observed between Industry and Academia

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