

Information360

Assessing information for consumer governance

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Introduction

Lifelong Learning is the most interesting challenge if you see it as an expedition in the great unknown world around you! A discovery journey in all directions, one after another, which helps you to develop a growing insight in the great harmony of all things! Gathering information is the beginning of every journey. Finding all the arguments to choose for one thing or another is the next step before making decisions.

Of course we can't always expect our information to be one hundred percent complete, fully transparent and perfectly fitting all our questions. But we can try to look into all directions, the full *360 degrees* of our complete horizon! Then and only then can we have the feeling that we tried our ultimate best. And when we do that "trick" again next time with our next decision, the circle becomes an ongoing upward spiral, a learning process in which we grow more and more experienced and our knowledge gets better and better!

In every search for information, in every discussion about arguments we can become aware of the infinite number of possibilities, even getting the feeling of getting lost in a jungle of facts and facts and more facts. But there is a fundamental harmony in the world around, and the consumer should become aware of that. Based on the twelve daily needs of the consumer (2) we can find our ways in gathering information. These insights can be used as reference for all the searching activities.

Consumer needs

In every single case in the search for information we can bear in mind the bigger picture as well. Improving the *quality of life* is the fundamental question. "What do we really want, need, wish?" This question is the philosophical basis, is in fact the beginning of our search for information. Looking for the quality of products and services which we need for our personal situation is the next step. Comparing prices and other issues in buying or not buying the final step.

Knowing that there are more than eight billion websites to be found on Google can make us very uncertain about the validity of any information. But there are some "doubles" which can guide our choices. In fact we have to do with only *twelve daily needs* i.e. twelve consumer organizations for groups of products and/or services:

Religion-art-science-education-medicare-food-housing-means-transport-communication-laws-associations.

In the final analysis a cash flow manager with 12 columns can provide us with the right mirror for all our expenses.

Information gathering

The basic level of communication or information gathering is *direct observation*. Open days on farms, factories, theatres, railway companies and even the Army, Navy and Air Force give you the most direct information ever possible. Or observing plants and bees to understand the world of nature, food, medicine. Discovering at random by shopping and reading and talking keeps us on the move to be creative. We can be reading about mainstream ideas and sidelines in every direction, but we should always try to connect the details with the total picture. Then gradually we can discover the harmony between all details.

The overall picture

If we start with exploring the *overall picture* it will be a lot easier to search and find all the information about details that we want. And especially: how to interpret, to judge the quality of the information itself! Because the world is also full of misinformation (accidentally false) and even des-information (intentionally false to influence you)!

For instance we receive a steady flow of words directives and explanations with respect to choosing our daily food. Are we able to recognize what is mainstream and what is just detail? Far into the 19th century we talked about agriculture in general. But then it split up into three different directions. Industrial agriculture only looking at the earth to get the highest productivity out of it in the most efficient way. Biological (organic) agriculture is also taking the environment into consideration, nature, the whole atmosphere. And biodynamic agriculture also recognizes the influence not only of sun and moon above us but of all planets involved! We see tendencies now in these three working methods to more and more communicate with each other (exchanging information) so that in due time we can speak of efficient-organic-dynamic agriculture, or about AGRICULTURE again. Now not based on old knowledge of the past but on the newest insights of modern research, also of the “inner” quality! In the same way we can look at the headlines in the other eleven sectors.

In our search for the information to help us choose a shop or choose a product we have to know to which of the three directions mentioned above they belong, not only for the health of our environment but for our own health in the first place! Furthermore our questions and choices are in reverse of those for the information gathering of the producers. This is necessary in an economy of question and answer to get the products we want in the end!

Jumping into details

Within the sectors it is possible to distinguish again twelve subsectors. But that's more interesting for consumer organizations. For the individual consumer/citizen the next step is to find out about the seven aspects of trade:

Quality-quantity-price-guarantee-payment-delivery-user guide.

In line with the basic demand for quality of life the quality of products or services is the first step to consider. Although not-buying can sometimes give more quality of life!

If we want to work towards a sustainable future, sustainable questions have to be asked. In fact we can talk about RE-storing sustainability because until the industrial revolution life was already sustainable, otherwise we wouldn't have been here now. So all the questions for information have to be holistic in themselves!

And how can we ask the right questions to get the right answers? Not by puzzling about every single product in the first place, but by doing our homework especially well when we take *long-term decisions*. For instance when choosing a car, thinking about the kind of education for our children, or choosing the store with the kind of food products we really want, as we already suggested above. For our trust in the whole product range it is necessary to have a basic trust in the producer we choose, otherwise we need to check every detail over and over again. So only after those big decisions we can look for the details about quality reached (guarantee), a fair price, good service, delivery just-in-time or just-in-place, etcetera. But we will be more and more taking recourse to random testing. The big check every year can be the open day at the farm, the annual report or the annual meeting of the consumer association (our most important representative), or an in-depth seminar about an actual issue.

More details

Of course the world is full of information about details we can't handle in this article and not even in many books. But as we said above our basic insights into the information structure can help us to better look for and find the answers to our questions! But some *interesting items* in every sector can be mentioned to help the gathering of information get under way.

Religion: religions are easier to understand when looking at them as different views in different times on the same issue. When furthermore in the human being himself we see it as a lifelong learning process, religion as a whole becomes more and more coherent and all the misunderstandings drop out by themselves.

Art: art does not need a warning or an advise creativeness has no borders!

Science: natural science as it developed since the renaissance is mainly fascinated by the physical aspects of reality, hardly oriented at all towards higher forms of cognition necessary for the regions of living processes of plants and animals which can be understood by projective geometry, or biographical study as a spiritual research method into the human self. Or even the insights of imagination inspiration and intuition that give a clearer understanding of our creative processes (leading up to Archimedes shouting Eureka! and all other innovations in science and knowledge).

Education: if one accepts a child as an individual human being education will be on the right track. Because the quality of education depends on attentively observing the child in the first place. The learning books come only second place as a tool. Education is not there to fill a vat, but to light a fire!

Medicare: the basis for looking to healthcare problems is the human being who has to manage the healing process him/herself in the first place.. Physicians, specialists therapists and all the medicines of the world are only helpers. As with education it is important to look at the patient first to gather information from closely observing that patient and then and only then dive into books and internet sites instead of vice versa.

Food: with respect to food we already mentioned the coherence of the three mainstreams in the 20th century now coming together in an integrated vision on agriculture. We went through a metamorphosis, from the old knowledge of thousands of years into a new knowledge of research and understanding. It is a good example of the human being becoming mature in the 21st century and wanting to know everything him/herself (3),(5). For better or for worse! It also pictures the age of information with its overwhelming demand for information. Other items we can recognize beside food in the agricultural world, in working with nature are clothing, nature conservation and 'restyling', landscaping, but also commodities and energy. Those gifts of nature are also "feeding" us in different layers around our body: earth water, air and fire in all metamorphosed ways our industry or handcrafting can supply! An important concept here is sustainability (Cradle2Cradle).

Housing: in housing there is now experimentation in all directions, a main stream coming up is organic architecture based on projective geometry (tangents). Issues about materials and energy are important for sustainability, all other information has to do with personal preferences.

Means: expedients in general have to do with all other eleven sectors. And just as warmth permeates the other elements, money is a general sort of expedient that permeates all other sectors. We're talking now about banking, insurances, taxes and international finance markets. In this sector it is of special importance to intensively search for information, because one product or another can differ immensely in complexity, effectiveness and.... cost or risk!

Transport: all transport and travelling has of course to do with energy first, but the future of green energy is opening up wider perspectives of hope that things go better!

Communication: communications of all kinds, means and techniques have their pro's and contra's, but the *best way of communication and information gathering* is and will of course always be the "meet&greet"! We can choose for as little or as much meetings as we are interested in. Every annual meeting, open visitors day, excursion, consumer panel, stage or workshop can give the opportunity we're looking for. For the remaining sectors we can read the annual report and choose for the meeting in another year. During the visits and discussions on open visitor days we have the possibility of getting the holistic view on processes, problems and possibilities. And it gives the consumer the opportunity to feel part of the real world! The combination of visiting, reading, internet, radio and TV plus some workshops can give us a 360-overview of a sector. In which every detail we're looking for in the future can get its place!

Laws: government issues are in fact all about the "social contract" we made/make together. So the only road towards change and development is by joining the discussions locally and globally down from the own governmental structure up till the United Nations, in which civil society was incorporated too since 2005! In politics we see the widest range of information and arguing about facts and opinions, goals and roadmaps (1),(4). Which we can follow best in Live programming or Breaking News to get the most direct information about what's going on worldwide.

Association: association is the end-purpose of all human development, the quality of our individual life has everything to do with the quality of living together. We know all kinds of associations, from culture and sport, scouting and tea-probing, being part of a group and even

marriage has to do with association. But one kind of organization is the most important for all our “consumer governance”: the consumer associations. *Being member of all twelve associations is in fact THE basis for all communication, gathering and assessing information in the future!* I think!

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