"I WANT IT THE WAY I NEED IT: MODALITY, READABILITY, AND FORMAT CONTROL FOR AUTISTIC INFORMATION SEEKERS ONLINE.

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PURPOSE

This study explored how autistic individuals and their parents talked about their information needs.
A crucial guiding question was:

> *"What does it mean to give autistic people the information **they** want, rather than the information others think they need?"*

TAKEAWAYS

Information systems *should* be designed around the needs of their users, but in practice this means that they are typically designed for a particular type of "average" user. This often excludes autistic and other neurodiverse individuals.

This forces those users to navigate around the systems' inflexible and inaccessible nature. This has serious consequences for marginalized individuals. *Their personal safety and independence rely on navigating these systems effectively.*

This study demonstrates that *creators of information systems need to think more critically about the needs of **all** of their users.*

RESULTS

Autistic Individuals:
- saw themselves as **active seekers** of information
- displayed high levels of **motivation** and **critical evaluation skills**
- had **clear preferences** about how they engaged with information.

Important Factors:
- **modality** - how information is *delivered*
- **format -** how information is *presented*
- **readability**

Strong Preferences:
- **Manageable, structured** information environments that gave them the most **control** over their information-seeking
- Interacting with information via **social media** and **online environments**