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QUESTION-NEGOTIATION AN INFORMATION-SEEKING IN LIBRARIES.

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Abstract : The report is a study of two types of the process of question- negotiation in libraries and information centers. Through taped interviews with special librarians and information specialists, five levels of information were isolated which are consciously sought and received by the librarian in the negotiation process. These are (1) subject definition; (2) objective and

motivation; (3) personal characteristics of the inquirer; (4) relationship of inquiry description to file organization; (5) anticipated or acceptable answers. The second type of negotiation, self-help, is that in which the inquirer alone negotiates with the total information system. Undergraduate students in courses in the information sciences reported on this process resulting from a self-generated information need: the decisions and strategies; the sources used, both human and print; the complexities and failures of their processes; and the ambiguities of their question-asking strategies. Four such reports, including systems charts, are shown. The two types are compared with recommendations for improving the displays at the interface between inquirer and system.

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