

Volunteer Connections

February 10 2009

Information seeking behaviour and volunteer recruitment

Melody Hainsworth, Ph. D.
HMS Management Group
www.hmsmg.ca
604-763-2057
melody@naples.net

Information is...

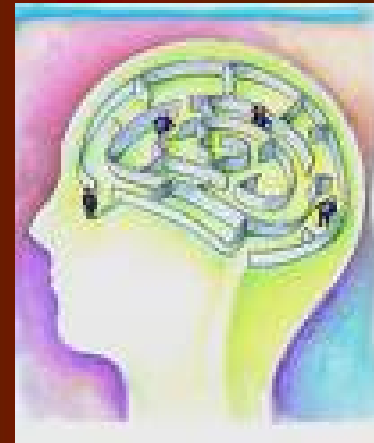
- A word only used for 600 years
- Stimuli we recognize in our environment
- Meaning assigned to data - previously unknown to the recipient
- Communication of the knowledge or news of some fact or occurrence

Information Seeking Behaviour (ISB) is the study
of

- 1. Why you seek information?
- 2. When you seek information
- 3. Where you seek information?
- 4. How do you seek information?
- 5. How do you feel?
- 6. What tells you that you have enough

1. Why do you seek information?

- Need to know
- Curiosity
- Unfulfilled feeling
- An event
- A need-creating environment



Important relationship intersecting here for volunteer recruitment

- Q: what causes a person to seek information about volunteering?

2. When do you seek information and what influences the seeker

- Values
- Norms
- Practices
- Time

Important relationship intersecting here for volunteer recruitment

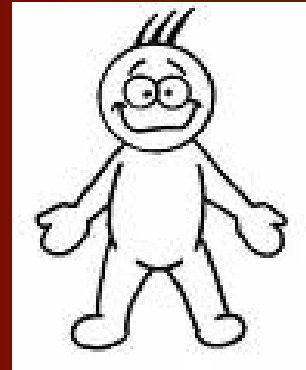
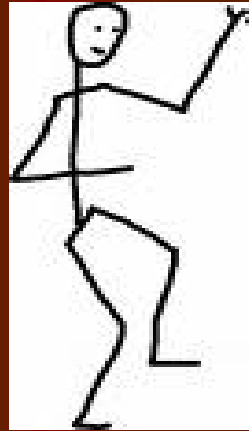
- Q: When does wanting to become a volunteer a strong enough need to cause a person to seek information about volunteering?

3. Where do you seek 3 broad categories of information resources

- A. People
- B. Sources
- C. Systems – catalogs, filing cabinet; web portals; web directories

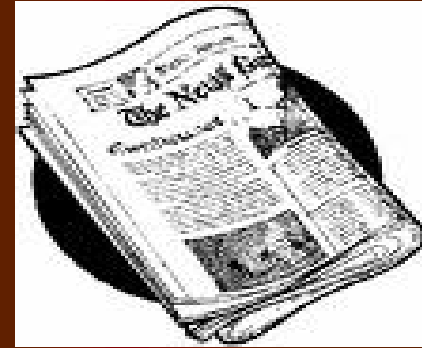
A. People

- The closer the better
- No concern about
 - authoritativeness,
 - accuracy,
 - currency or
 - completeness



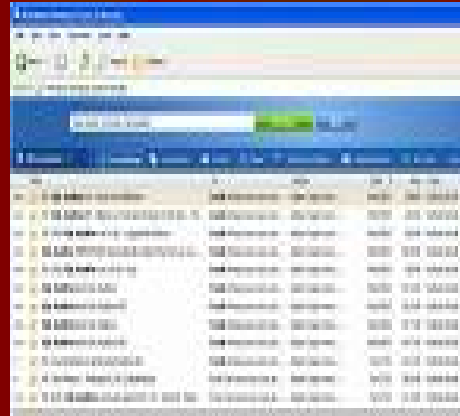
B. Sources

- Documentation
- prospectus
- TV and radio ads
- company homepage on the web
- Books, brochures, flyers, newspapers, magazines



C. Systems of information

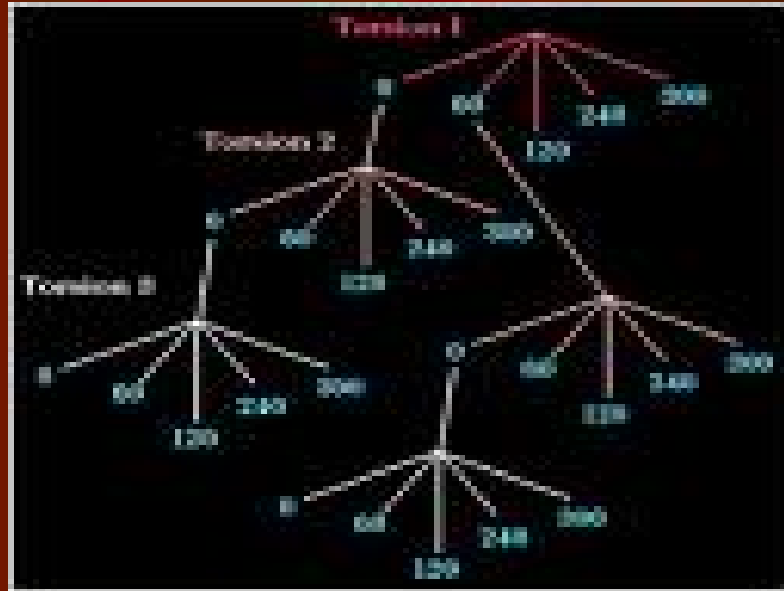
- Libraries
- Mass media
- Meetings and conferences
- Forums, displays and speeches



4. How you seek

Six typical patterns of active information seeking behaviours

- Browsing
- Watching
- Asking
- Reading
- Paying attention
- Active/passive searching (overt/covert)



5. How do you feel during the search?

- Anxious
- Hopeful
- Sense of urgency
- Unsettled
- Frustrated
- Relieved
- Fulfilled
- Happy
- Called to action
- Satisfied



6. What indicates that you have enough?

- You have a feeling
- You act
- You stop because of factors beyond your control:
 - Others
 - Time or
 - \$\$

Using the knowledge of ISB to improve Volunteer recruitment

- Survey your current volunteers
- Survey your past or quit volunteers
- Q: "How did you find out about this volunteer opportunity?"
- Observation
- Why did you decide to volunteer? Or Why did you stop volunteering?
- Assess where you advertise now against actual results of attaining volunteers.

Do not just collect the
information-
that is the easiest part

Do not just collect the information- that is the very easy part

- The art of continuous improvement involves
 - collecting information,
 - evaluating the information,
 - changing practice
 - Collecting information
 - Evaluating the information
 - Changing practice
 - collecting information,
 - evaluating the information,
 - changing practice
 - collecting information,
 - evaluating the information,
 - changing practice

Importance of knowing about ISB and how ISB relates to volunteer recruitment activities

- Combine the language of what
 - inspires a person to volunteer with the
 - understanding of the personal needs of the new volunteer and then
 - place that recruitment language in a location where that potential volunteer will go to seek information.
- Save \$\$ because less wasted effort
- Save time because less wasted effort
- More targeted advertising