Scope Note:

This bibliography includes articles about the information seeking behavior of societal outsiders, specifically the poor and homeless, racial minorities, homosexuals, people suffering with a stigmatizing virus like HIV/AIDS, and battered women. Although these different user groups are vastly different from each other, they are all groups that aren’t considered often, especially in relation to their information-seeking behavior. Information about this behavior is very important to gain because these groups of potential library patrons are often the people librarians have the hardest time serving.

The articles included are from 1996-2007. The articles have mainly been found through Dialog searches of ERIC and Library Literature & Information Science. Also used were ISI Web of Knowledge, Library & Information Science Abstracts (LISA), and Library Literature & Information Science Full Text: Wilson Omnifile.

Bibliography:


“This article describes the information use environment (IUE) of African-American gatekeepers in Harambee, an inner-city neighborhood in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In-depth one-on-one interviews were held with a purposive sample of 20 gatekeepers identified through community-based organizations between April and May 1997. Findings indicated that the gatekeepers were slightly better educated and earned more than the average Harambee resident. The most prevalent information needs experience related to race relations, crime and family, and their sources of unmet needs were lack of awareness of or access to existing information or resources. Interpersonal sources were preferred over all other sources because of concerns about trustworthiness and credibility of information. The implications of these findings for professional information services are discussed (Agada, 1999, p. 74).”

Database: ISI Web of Knowledge
Method of Searching: Keyword
Search Strategy: I first searched in DIALOG using: s librar? and information()seeking and minorit? In this search, I found an article that cited this article which I decided to include.
Comment: I decided to include this article because it has been cited several times in other articles, and it dealt with a different outsider group. This article discusses and studies the information seeking behavior of inner-city African Americans.


“Drawing upon a series of studies that examines the information world of poor people, the author discovers four critical concepts that serve as the basis for defining an impoverished life-world. These concepts are risk-taking, secrecy, deception, and situational relevance. Moving back and forth among the worlds of janitors, single mothers, and an aging population, the author develops a conceptual framework that links the world of the information poor-the outsiders-with a world of insiders. Paradoxically, the author finds that the very existence of two worlds is in itself a hindrance to information seeking and sharing behaviors. Insiders, because of their status, reinforce information poverty by neglecting to accept sources of information not created by themselves. The author's findings thus indicate that the world of insiders is one in which outsiders are not sought for information and advice and is a world in which norms and mores define what is important and what is not (Chatman, 1996, p. 193).”

Database: ISI Web of Knowledge
Method of Searching: Author and Controlled Vocabulary
Search Strategy: I searched in Dialog using the following commands: information() needs/de s information() needs/de s s1 and (poor or homeless)
I found an article by this same author. I then went into ISI to search for the article found through Dialog and I found this article which was better.

Comment: This article was included because it is a well referenced article about people who are information poor. It has been cited in 60 articles on a broad range of topics. Some of these topics include the minorities covered in this bibliography.


“Two branches of applied social science have devoted substantial attention to researching information seeking and use. One branch is the field of communication, with its emphasis on the design of messages to effectively transmit expert information. The second is the field of library and information science, with its emphasis on meeting user needs. This
paper is an overview and comparison of what is known about information seeking and use based on these two bodies of research, particularly as it applies to serving the needs of racial and ethnic minorities. This paper is informed by three in-depth literature reviews of the two fields and of the difficulties of bringing findings from disparate fields to bear on the same phenomena. Twenty-five broad brushstroke propositions are extracted in a way that allows both commonalities and contradictions to be informative, particularly as they relate to how the flexibilities offered by electronic technologies may allow experts to serve user needs more effectively and efficiently. Remarkably, while both fields have approached their studies from separate viewpoints without much overlap, both have struggled with the baggage imposed on their research by information-as-transmission assumptions and both have moved toward approaches that focus on information-as-communication (Dervin, 2005, p. 74).

Database: Library & Information Science Abstracts (LISA)
Method of Searching: Keyword
Search Strategy: Search string: (minorit* or disadvantaged or poor) and (information seeking) and (librar*)
I then looked through the Peer-Reviewed Journals tab.

Comment: I hesitated to include this article because half of it is about libraries aiding the disadvantaged. However, the first half of the article covers the information seeking and use of libraries by disadvantaged populations. Also, I included this article because it generally covers disadvantaged groups of people without concentrating a specific group.


“Objectives: To obtain basic facts and considered opinions from health care professionals and students (nonlibrarian and librarian) about the information needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (GLBT) health care professionals and their interactions with medical librarians (Fikar & Keith, 2004, p. 56.”

Database: DIALOG (R) File438: Library Literature & Information Science
Method of Searching: Keyword and Controlled Vocabulary
Search Strategy: I searched in Dialog using the following command s information()needs/de s s l and (gay? or lesbian? or transgender? or bisexual? or homosexual?)

Comment: This article was included because, even though it had only been published a few years ago, it has already been cited several times. Also it deals with a large minority group working in a specific situation which was interesting and different than some of the other articles found on this minority group.

“This inquiry, undertaken in New Brunswick, New Jersey, United States examines information-seeking of young gay males about coming-out, taking a social constructionist perspective on gay identity. The investigation uses data collected from critical incident technique interviews in which these young men related their information needs, information-seeking activities, and the conditions of these activities. Findings show that they typically encountered three types of information needs; these are linked to self-labeling, consequences for self-identifying as gay, and forming an understanding of a gay identity. Participants’ information-seeking typically involved interacting with young gay adults through online forums. However, they also experienced a period when they did not pursue their information needs about coming-out. Conditions most strongly characterizing information-seeking were the experience of fear and the concealment of information-seeking activities. These findings are considered in association with Chatman’s (1996) Theory of Information Poverty. The discussion of the findings also proposes directions for future research and provision of information (Hamer, 2003, p. 73).”

**Database:** DIALOG (R) File438: Library Literature & Information Science

**Method of Searching:** Keyword and Controlled Vocabulary

**Search Strategy:** I searched in Dialog using the following command s information()needs/de s s1 and (gay? or lesbian? or transgender? or bisexual? or homosexual?)

**Comment:** I included this article because I wanted to include an article each about gay men and lesbians. Also, this article is a well-researched article from a refereed journal and it references the Chatman article that is included in this bibliography as general background on many types of outsider groups who are information-poor.


“One hundred and five women who were abused by their intimate partners described their experiences in searching for help and the outcome of their interactions with different services that comprise the formal help network in a city with an international reputation for its coordinated response to woman abuse. In the aftermath of violent incidents, the women most frequently sought protection, safe shelter, removal of their abusive partners, advice about managing their situations, a criminal charge against their partners, and
medical treatment for their injuries. The women tended to use help-seeking pathways that led them first to the police or a hospital emergency department. In turn, these services often directed them toward community agencies with a specific mandate to assist abused women. The abuse-specific agencies then referred the women to a wide range of services in the community. Regardless of the type of assistance they were seeking, the women repeatedly mentioned the importance of the personal demeanor of service providers when they assessed the outcomes of their encounters with the formal help system. The findings are discussed with respect to designing community coordination mechanisms that overcome common barriers to seeking help and information (Harris, 2001, p. 123).”

**Database:** ISI Web of Knowledge  
**Method of Searching:** Citation Search  
**Search Strategy:** In a Dialog search, I found an article titled “Information seeking and use by battered women: A ‘person-in-progressive-situations’ approach.” When I looked this article up in ISE Web of Knowledge, one of its citations was the article chosen for this bibliography.

**Comment:** This article was chosen because it was about a disenfranchised minority group. This article has been cited several times by others and has been significantly researched. Another reason this article was chosen was because the authors made an effort to include research from diverse populations. Therefore this research is not just useful for some libraries in some areas. Also, this effort to include diverse populations makes the article applicable to some of the other groups of outsiders being researched in this bibliography.


“Homeless persons lack economic capital, but it is less clear whether they concomitantly lack important information capital. The basic information needed by the homeless is not available on the Internet as this is information controlled by governmental social services agencies, but does this result in a state of information poverty? This paper examines the issues of how the lack of access to information technology does not affect how the homeless access basic-needs-level information. The study investigates the information needs of the homeless, information sources, and information-seeking behaviours within the analytical constructs of information outsiders and insiders and the theory of information poverty posed by Chatman (1996). The study explores the differences in information seeking pursuits based on whether the catalyst for the search is internally or externally motivated. Finally, the paper speculates on whether making basic level needs information available via the Internet would be useful and/or used (Hersberger, 2005, p.45).”

**Database:** ISI Web of Knowledge  
**Method of Searching:** Author
Search Strategy: During my Dialog search I came across several articles by the same person about the homeless and how libraries serve them. Because this person seemed to write about this topic often I searched for the name in the ISI Web of Knowledge. This is how I found this article.

I chose to include this article because it was heavily researched, it was cited once, the author had written several articles about the topic which were included in refereed journals and therefore seemed to be an expert. Although I found many articles about how libraries serve the homeless, this was one of the few I found about the information seeking behaviors of the homeless.


“Introduction. When children are adjudicated by a court of law as being maltreated, they are summarily removed from their homes, resulting in a disruption of their daily lives. This pilot study examines the context in which maltreated children seek and use information to cope with this stressful period of their lives.

Method. This study applies Taylor’s four components of information use environments to look at the user and the uses of information and the contexts within which those users make choices about what information is useful to them at particular times.

Analysis. The characteristics of foster children as a population are examined. The settings in which such children seek information are described and the problems they experience, which are linked to information seeking, are articulated as are the problem resolutions.

Results. The most important finding of this study is that there are three clearly differentiated phases of information needs and seeking corresponding to the three phases of adjustment the children experience.

Conclusion. Understanding problem phases underpinning everyday life contexts in foster care environments afford support personnel, who provide information to these children, better insights into what helps and what results in increasing anxiety or causes more trauma (Hersberger, Redfern, Murray, & Sokoloff, 2006).”

Database: Library & Information Science Abstracts (LISA)
Method of Searching: Keyword
Search Strategy: Search string: (minorit* or disadvantaged or poor) and (information seeking ) and (librar*)
I then looked through the Peer-Reviewed Journals tab.

I chose this article for two reasons. The first is that it was a different outsider group. This article is about children in foster homes and their information seeking behaviors.
The other reason I chose this article is because I previously found several excellent articles, one of which is included in this bibliography, by this author on information seeking behavior of a different minority group.


“Although a portion of the HIV/AIDS population has long been active in seeking out information in support of self-care, little work has been done to examine closely the information needs and information-seeking behaviors of this community relative to the provision of medical reference. This exploratory study provides insight into the types of information HIV positive individuals seek and the resources they consult in gathering information to bolster health and well-being. Having a better understanding of the information needs and information-seeking behaviors of individuals with HIV/AIDS will facilitate information intervention for this community (Huber & Cruz, 2000, p. 39).”

**Database:** DIALOG (R) File438: Library Literature & Information Science  
**Method of Searching:** Keyword  
**Search Strategy:** I searched in Dialog using the following command s (information(seeking) and minorit?)

I chose to include this article because it was one of the few articles found on the subject of HIV/AIDS that did not concentrate on information seeking behavior on HIV/AIDS by homosexuals. It is a scholarly article from a refereed journal and it pertained to all people who have HIV/AIDS and are seeking information about the virus.


“In 1995 a survey was conducted on the campus of San Jose State University where, for the first time, so-called minorities made up 50.7 percent of the total student population. Asian students compose the largest group among other ethnic groups. The study shows that students who use English as their primary language are usually more successful in using the library than those who use English as a second language. Length of stay in the United States also affects how often students use the library, as well as their behavior in asking reference questions. The survey found that Asian students are hindered by a fear of asking stupid questions, a belief that their English is not good enough, an inability to
understand answers well, and a lack of familiarity with the library reference desk (Liu & Redfern, 1997, p. 348).”

Database: DIALOG ® File 438: Library Literature & Information Science
Method of Searching: Keyword
Search Strategy: s librar? and information()seeking and minorit?

I included this article because it covered the outsider group of people who speak English as a second language using libraries. It was also an article that is well-referenced and has been cited numerous times since its publication. There were articles with a very similar topic that had not been cited as often so I didn’t use those.


“In my dissertation research (Rothbauer 2004a), I explore the role of voluntary reading in the lives of self-identified lesbian or queer young women (18-23 years). The larger context of this inquiry concerns the negotiation of diverse meanings of alternative sexualities constructed by young people through the consumption of a range of self-selected reading materials, including lesbian and gay literature. Data collection and analysis were guided by qualitative principles of interpretive and reflexive research, and data are taken primarily from conversational interviews with 17 young women, conducted between November 2001 and February 2003. One area of significant findings encompasses the uses of the Internet by my participants as they sought lesbian and gay reading materials in a computer-mediated on-line environment. In their reading accounts, these young women variously conceived of the Internet as a search medium and as a site of access to digital and paper-based texts. However, their failure to locate desired texts, along with a reluctance to draw attention to unsanctioned reading preferences, invites contemplation of the role of public libraries in the creation of access to lesbian and gay materials (Rothbauer, 2004, p. 89).”

Database: ISI Web of Knowledge
Method of Searching: Keyword
Search Strategy: Topic=(librar*) AND Topic=(lesbian*)

This article is included in the bibliography because I wanted to include at least one article that concentrated on gay men and one article that concentrated on lesbians. This article was specifically interesting because it explored information seeking behavior of lesbians on the internet, which was different than the article included on gay men.

“This study examines international student information needs and whether education level, age, and gender affect their information use. An e-mail survey revealed that international students need information that supports their academic courses, and those with higher education levels use databases, remote access to library offerings, and e-journals more frequently (Yi, 2007, p. 666).”

**Database:** Library Literature & Information Science Full Text: Wilson Omnifile  
**Method of Searching:** Keyword and Controlled Vocabulary  
**Search Strategy:** Search string: librar* <in> Smart Search AND (minorit* or disadvantaged or poor or homeless) <in> Smart Search AND (Information needs or Information seeking) <in> Subject(s) AND Peer Reviewed

I chose to include this article because it addresses the information usage of ESL students and studies this in the context of other factors such as age, gender, and education level. The other article I included about ESL students has a different focus.