



# Library Research Models: A Guide to Classification, Cataloging, and Computers

By Thomas Mann

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## Library Research Models: A Guide to Classification, Cataloging, and Computers By Thomas Mann

Most researchers, even with computers, find only a fraction of the sources available to them. As Library of Congress reference librarian Thomas Mann explains, researchers tend to work within one or another mental framework that limits their basic perception of the universe of knowledge available to them. Some, for example, use a subject-disciplinary method which leads them to a specific list of sources on a particular subject. But, Mann points out, while this method allows students and researchers to find more specialized sources, it is also limiting--they may not realize that works of interest to their own subject appear within the literature of many other disciplines. A researcher looking through anthropology journals, for example, might not discover that the *MLA International Bibliography* provides the best coverage of folklore journals. In *Library Research Models*, Mann examines the several alternative mental models people use to approach the task of research, and demonstrates new, more effective ways of finding information. Drawing on actual examples gleaned from 15 years' experience in helping thousands of researchers, he not only shows the full range of search options possible, but also illuminates the inevitable tradeoffs and losses of access that occur when researchers limit themselves to a specific method. In two chapters devoted to computers he examines the use of electronic resources and reveals their value in providing access to a wide range of sources as well as their disadvantages: what people are not getting when they rely solely on computer searches; why many sources will probably never be in databases; and what the options are for searching beyond computers.

Thomas Mann's *A Guide to Library Research Methods* was widely praised as a definitive manual of library research. Ronald Gross, author of *The Independent Scholar's Handbook* called it "the savviest such guide I have ever seen--bracingly irreverent and brimming with wisdom." The perfect companion volume, *Library Research Models* goes even further to provide a fascinating look at the ways in which we can most efficiently gain access to our vast storehouses of knowledge.

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#### Review

"Thomas Mann is one of the two or three most important voices in contemporary library science. He unites a depth of practical experience with an intellectual vision to produce texts that are thought-provoking, instructive, and readable. *Library Research Models* is a fine book that should be read by all librarians and all interested in scholarship."--Michael Gorman, Dean of Library Services, *California State University, Fresno*

"Mann, currently on the reference staff of the Library of Congress and author of *A Guide to Library Research Models* presents his readers with an intelligent, lively approach to maximizing the potential of modern research libraries. Using his own public service experiences and citing widely available print and online sources, Mann proposes and describes six models he believes exemplify current research needs and strategies of academics and the general public. Each model is placed in a well-documented historical perspective and carefully analyzed for probably results. This very readable book is valuable not for any ground-breaking new theory or idea but for the author's comprehensive overview of the research quest and librarianship's response.."--*Library Journal*

"This book should be read by all who make use of libraries for serious study (and those who seek diversion too)...Interesting, readable and useful....It will make a valuable contribution to the literature and the practice of the profession of librarianship."--*Journal of Documentation*

"Will be a most helpful reading for my courses."--Nancy Zimmerman, *SUNY Buffalo*

"Librarians and other information professionals will be most interested in this book. Those librarians involved with bibliographic instruction will certainly want to read this book to increase their knowledge of how individuals approach the library and the methods they use to search for needed information....This book will also be useful in various library and information science classes, including general reference, cataloging and classification, and information retrieval theory."--*Pergamon*

#### About the Author

**Thomas Mann** received his Ph.D. from Loyola University of Chicago and his M.L.S. from Louisiana State University. A former private investigator, he has been a general reference librarian in the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress since 1981. He is the author of *A Guide to Library Research Methods*.

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