

# How to Stop Being a Librarian

Student-Centered Library Guide Design and Content Curation

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Paper Session 1A

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# Information Seeking Behaviors

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## Librarians

- Trained on search skills and information evaluation and retrieval
- Know the “right way” to search for information
- Teach patrons how to find and evaluate resources and information (basic Information Literacy)

## Patron Users

- Search skills “trained” on Google
- If it gets results, then isn’t that the “right way” to perform a search?
- More interested in how quickly they can obtain a relevant result than in evaluating how authoritative those results are

# User Search Behavior and Guide Design

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According to Sinkinson, Alexander, Hicks, et al in *Guiding Design: Exposing Librarian and Student Mental Models of Research Guides*:

...librarians often have a very fixed view of research, which **steers and legitimizes their research guide design**. Nonetheless, previous research has shown that students and librarians have different mental models of the research process.<sup>31</sup>

...While librarians recognize that students approach research differently, research guides often reflect **librarian models** of research rather than replicating student preferences.

**...While librarian participants clearly consider and recognize user mental models and needs, there remains a contradiction between espoused and enacted pedagogies.**<sup>32</sup> These findings highlight the need for continued and thoughtful conversation about instructional design as applies to research guides.

# Librarians, Users, and Guide Design

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Librarians are bad at turning off our research training and looking at content and guide design from our User's point-of-view.

Librarians are actually trained out of the two main information seeking behaviors our Users engage in:  
**Satisficing and Relevancy.**

# Satisficing

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## Definition:

- Settling for something we know may not be the best possible choice, but that, at the least, meets our essential needs.<sup>1</sup>

## Satisficing Example

What is the distance, in miles, between the earth and the moon?

## Possible Answers

### Google

238,900 miles

### Nasa Space Place

Average of: 238,855 miles

Nearest: 225,623 miles

Furthest: 252,177 miles

### Timeanddate.com

On Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the moon will be between 252,177 to 251,722 miles distant from the earth

# Relevancy

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## Definition:

The ability (as of an information retrieval system) to retrieve material that satisfies the needs of the user.<sup>1</sup>

## Relevancy Example

Based on the description below, does this Databases contain survey instruments?

## Example Database with Relevant Description

### ERIC: Survey Instruments

- Under Search Options (bottom of search screen), change Publication Type to Tests & Questionnaires; abstract page provides further information
- Contains more than 1.3 million education-related items and topics from 1966 – Present; sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education

# Relevancy, Satisficing, and Guide Design

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## Relevancy:

- How is this content relevant for the users of *this particular guide*? How is this relevancy communicated to the guide's user?

## Satisficing:

- Am I trying to give my guide users the content equivalent of a kitchen sink when all they really want or need is a water fountain?

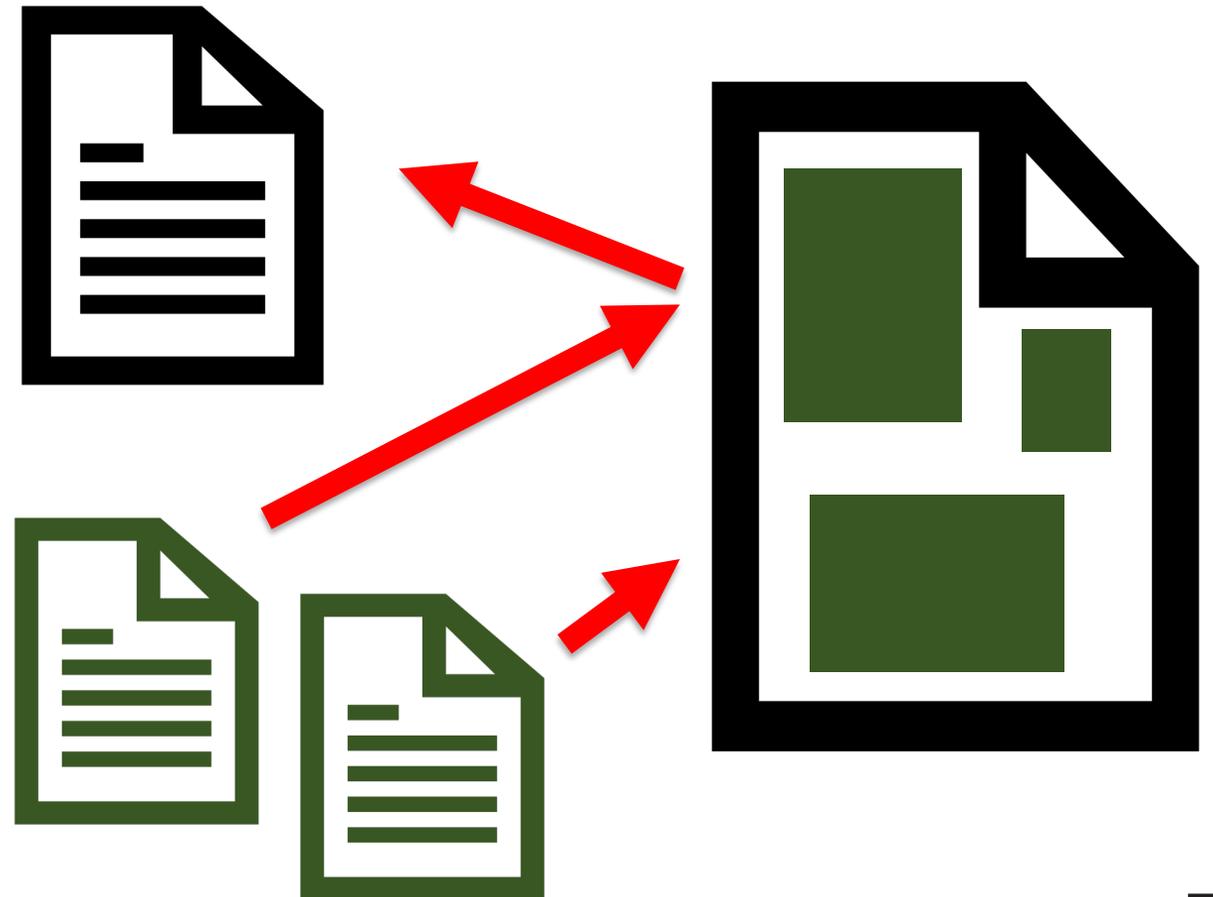


# Satisficing and Relevancy in Guide Design

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## Page Creation Options:

1. Create re-direct link for this page that leads to your generic guide, “How to Write a Research Paper”
2. Copy boxes from the guides “How to Write a Research Paper” and “JAMA Style Citations” onto the page and include links to the full guides on the right side of the page



# Satisficing and Relevancy in Guide Design

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## Satisficing



## Relevancy

Put important information on the top-left or center-top of the guide

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Less is actually more, because users will not scroll to the bottom of a long list of links or a long page

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State the obvious; because if it isn't obviously obvious, users won't see it

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Create a standardized layout and follow it

Information not immediately relevant to the guide topic? Put it to the right

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Only add links to relevant resources; there should not be more than 15 - 20 links per page; preferably only 10 - 15

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Add topic or content headers and guide-specific descriptions to content

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If users can find it, they will use it

# Questions? Contact Me!

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# Further Resources

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1. Guiding Design: Exposing Librarian and Student Mental Models of Research Guides
  - <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/463980> [Open Access]
2. You Are Not the User: The False-Consensus Effect
  - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/false-consensus/?lm=change-blindness&pt=article>
3. Satisficing: Quickly Meet Users' Main Needs
  - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/satisficing/>
4. Simplicity Wins over Abundance of Choice
  - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/simplicity-vs-choice/>
5. Individualized Recommendations: Users' Expectations & Assumptions
  - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/recommendation-expectations/>
6. How Users Read on the Web
  - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/how-users-read-on-the-web/>
7. Horizontal Attention Leans Left
  - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/horizontal-attention-leans-left/>
8. Scrolling and Attention
  - <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/scrolling-and-attention/>