UC Berkeley
Working Papers

Title

The information-seeking behavior of local government officials

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/98s91358

Author

Levin, Marc A.

Publication Date

1990

THE INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

By

Marc A. Levin
Institute of Governmental Studies
University of California, Berkeley

Working Paper 91-9

IGS
INSTITUTE OF
GOVERNMENTAL
STUDIES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY

THE INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

BY

MARC A. LEVIN

December 1990

Institute of Governmental Studies
University of California, Berkeley
109 Moses Hall
Berkeley, Calif.
94720

(415) 643-6476
(415) 642-3020 (fax)

ABSTRACT

THE INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

This is a report of research that assesses the information-seeking behavior of top-level municipal and county government officials. Data were obtained through a 1989 mail questionnaire sent to 200 local officials serving in the San Francisco Bay Area of Northern California. Usable questionnaires were returned by 156 officials, resulting in a 78 percent response rate. The survey explored eight attitudinal areas related to the quest for local policy knowledge: kinds of information needed, preferred sources, barriers to accessing information, use and usefulness of professional reading materials, receptiveness of public affairs organizations, satisfaction with amount of information, time spent in information gathering, and the role of office computers. Findings are that high-ranking local officials spend significant work time engaged in information-related tasks, are generally satisfied with their results, are pessimistic about the professional literature yet optimistic about public interest organizations as information providers, and undervalue university-based outreach units and computer-assisted information services. Suggested improvements in the delivery of information services to local decisionmakers focus on the development of electronic "expert systems" and the need for an information-literate local bureaucracy.

THE INFORMATION-SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

According to Herbert A. Simon, a leading organizational theorist, the central task confronting postindustrial-era executives is not how to organize production efficiently, but how to organize decision-making--that is, how to process information (1976, p. 292). In recent decades, the collection, use, analysis, and conceptualization of information have become extremely complex and urgent tasks for senior decisionmakers in both public and private enterprise. This observation carries particular import for local government officials, who require specialized data and information for effective policy formulation and efficient program implementation.

In addition to the "information explosion" that has affected all executives, local government officials have had to adjust to a nationwide trend toward decentralization, that is, the transfer of power and responsibility down to lower levels of government or, from these officials' perspective, the broadening of the scope and responsibilities of local public agencies. Moreover, local officials have had to accelerate their decision-making processes to meet the public's demand for shorter lead times between the identification of important problems and the announcement of appropriate remedial actions. Declines in both public support and financing, and the soaring costs of misconceived policies have put additional pressures on the local governments' decision-making processes.

To respond effectively to the increased complexity and urgency of policymaking, local government officials must rely on their ability to access relevant, accurate, and

timely information. In this context, information is any written or oral message that reduces an official's doubts or uncertainties about a given topic; examples of such messages include documents, reports, consultations with experts, and meetings with local residents. In turn, information-seeking behavior refers to any activity "undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need" (Krikelas, 1983, p. 6). Information-seeking begins when an official perceives that his or her store of knowledge is inadequate to address some issue or problem that requires attention, and information-seeking ends when that cognitive need has been satisfied. In general, the information needs of local government officials are diverse and subject to frequent change. The problem of defining and providing a taxonomy of domestic local information needs is one of immense complexity, and there is meager published research in this area, with the exception of the pioneering work done in Great Britain for the London Fire Brigade (Mullings, 1981).

This research article reports on a self-administered questionnaire that explores the information-seeking behavior of a representative sample population of 156 high-ranking municipal and county officials in the San Francisco Bay Region of Northern California. The Bay Area is a dynamic region consisting of nine counties and 98 incorporated cities that are linked economically, socially, and environmentally. Urban in character, the region covers more than 7,000 square miles--larger than the state of Connecticut--and in 1989 it was home to over 5.7 million residents.

The survey instrument included general inquiries about the availability and accessibility of information, as well as specific questions about the types of information

needed, the sources most often consulted, and the amount of time devoted to information-seeking activities.

Literature Review

An information need arises from an individual's perception of uncertainty in a given situation, and characteristics of both the information-seeker and the situation affect subsequent information-seeking behavior. Studies of the general public, as well as those focusing on specific populations of workers (e.g., engineers, scientists, blue-collar workers, professionals, etc.) have demonstrated that the two principal factors that influence a person's information-seeking behavior are the organizational setting in which that individual works and the individual's educational level (Majchrzak, 1986, p. 196).

More specifically, Parker and Paisley's pioneering study (1960) showed that the particular type of information sources consulted by an individual are a function of a mix of demographic and psychological variables, rather than a function of the type of information required by a given situation. Building on this research, Chen and Hernon (1982) discovered that when selecting information providers, information-seekers tend to value convenience, perceived helpfulness, and ease of access over accuracy. Chen and Hernon's study also confirmed the assumption that information-seekers generally prefer interpersonal sources over written sources, with the seeker's degree of satisfaction dependent on occupation, education, and income level.

Although popular belief holds that an increase in the amount of available information strains decisionmakers' confidence in their ability to make decisions, a novel study by Weiss (1982) demonstrated that increasing the amount of available information

3

resulted in a significant increase in the number of factual arguments that decisionmakers marshaled to justify their choices, and also resulted in a noticeable improvement in the overall quality of the decisions rendered.

Finally, the research findings of Jones and McLeod (1986) support the contentions that private-sector executives receive considerable information from both in-house and external sources, that informal systems play a role equal to that of formal systems, and that top executives do not receive much useful information directly from computers.

Method

During the spring of 1989 a 14-item questionnaire was mailed to 200 high-level municipal and county officials in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Region (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma counties). The names of the officials were selected by random probability sampling from a database maintained by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), a regional council of governments. One hundred and fifty-six questionnaires were returned, for a response rate of 78 percent.

The questionnaire included three items eliciting demographic data about the sample population: sex, age, and educational attainment. Of the respondents (N = 156), 30% were female and 70% were male; 16% were under age 40, 46% were between 40 and 49, 28% between 50 and 59, and 11% were over 60. In terms of educational attainment, 3% had finished high school only, 9% had completed some college coursework, and 88% had earned a baccalaureate. Almost half the respondents

4

(N= 73) held a postgraduate degree: 58 held a master's degree (M.A., M.S., M.B.A., M.C.P., or M.P.A.), 12 held a law degree (J.D.), 2 held a doctoral degree (Ph.D.), and 1 held a medical degree (M.D.).

The demographic portrait of the respondents was rounded out by four questions pertaining to tenure in local government, appointment status, level of government (county or municipal), and job title. Regarding job tenure, 13% of the sample reported less than 5 years in government, 20% reported between 5 and 10 years, 18% indicated between 10 and 15 years, and an impressive 49% reported over 15 years in public service. By appointment status, 44% held elected positions, 40% were appointees, and 16% were civil service officeholders. County government workers accounted for 20% of the sample, including county supervisors, county administrators, auditor/controllers, county clerks, county counsels, planning directors, and sheriffs. The remaining 80% were affiliated with city government: city councilmembers, city managers, assistant city managers, city clerks, finance directors, mayors, city attorneys, and fire and police chiefs.

In sum, the balance of county and municipal officeholders, the rich array of local responsibilities, and the respondents' lengthy tenure in government service evidence a sample population well versed in local information needs.

The remaining questionnaire items concerned information-seeking behavior:
- ➤amount of time devoted to information seeking,
- ➤satisfaction with information received,
- ➤difficulties in locating information,

➤types of information needed at work,

➤sources of information consulted,

➤usefulness of computer-generated information.

Responses to these items are presented in the discussion that follows.

Information-Seeking Activities

The nature of work in local government can best be described as hurried, subject to interruption, and interactive. Local officials spend a large part of their time engaged in tasks characterized by "brevity, variety, and fragmentation," as documented by Hale (1989, p. 168), building on the classic work of Mintzberg (1973), who studied corporate counterparts. According to Hale, city managers devote up to 70 percent of their working hours to conversation (meetings--both scheduled and unplanned--and telephone calls); presumably, a considerable portion of these verbal interactions involved the gathering and dissemination of information. Similar conclusions were reached from a survey of the time allocation of city executives and mayors (Ammons and Newell, 1989).

The questionnaire used in the present study asked these high-ranking local government officials to indicate how many hours a week they typically spent seeking written or oral work-related information. Predictably, the amount of time these respondents devote to information-seeking activities varied considerably. An impressive 10% of the respondents indicated that information-seeking activities filled 20 or more hours in an average workweek, and 23% devoted between 10 and 20 hours to these tasks. About one third (36%) spent between 5 and 10 hours a week gathering information, and

another one third (31%) spent less than 5 hours a week gathering information--a group that likely includes holders of part-time elective offices. In open-ended comments, several officials wished for more staff ("more bodies"), better-trained staff, and more clerical support to assist them in gathering and organizing information.

How satisfied are these local elites with their information acquisition? The majority of respondents (57%) were satisfied with the amount of information they now receive; only 16% said they needed more information, while 27% believed that they could do their jobs with less information than they now receive. Thus, contrary to popular perception of an information overload, less than one in three of these high-level local officials felt overburdened by the amount of information that crossed their desks, although one respondent mentioned a "paper blizzard," a hodgepodge of useless and high-quality information that needed to be separated out.

Nor was access to desired information a problem for the majority of these officials. Respondents were asked to indicate how well the following statement applied to their situation: "There is too much information that I simply cannot get--even when time and money present no problem." Forty-seven percent replied that this statement was not "at all" applicable to their situation, and another 42% said it did not apply "too well"; only 10% felt it applied "fairly well," and a mere 1% (N = 2) said it applied "very well."

More specific questions about access-related problems brought similarly low assessments of dissatisfaction: only 8% reported difficulties related to data being available only in machine-readable form; only 5% cited problems arising from

confidentiality or proprietary restrictions; and only 6% felt that their access to needed materials was impeded by distance or the need to travel to sources of information.

While these access issues per se were not a problem, 21 percent of these officials often felt that some of the information they needed simply wasn't available--or if it was, they had not been able to locate it. Three themes predominated in the respondents' comments on this issue. (Typical comments precede the discussion of each theme.)

1. Inadequacy of local databases and local records:

   "Information specific to my city or parts of my city are not available."

   "Data is not localized at municipal or county level."

   "Lack of documentation by past employees."

   "Past recordkeeping in City Hall has been inadequate, often difficult to locate."

As the largest producers and consumers of local data and records, city and county governments have generally been remiss in creating comprehensive information management programs unless such programs are either required by law or are essential for the conduct of routine business. With the exception of systems designed for very specialized needs, most local data systems are concerned with broad problems like transportation, housing, health, and social welfare. A common complaint about narrow single-purpose systems is that they hinder local strategic planning efforts to address crosscutting and interdependent problems, such as the balance between jobs and housing, the relationship between transportation and air quality, or the effects of land

use decisions on the environment.

A lack of local information management is endemic; the miserable state of local recordkeeping has been well documented by recent surveys issued by the Committee on the Records of Government (1985) and the National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators (1983). As a consequence of poor records management and document retrieval systems, a prodigious amount of local information is often inaccessible, even to the bureaucracy that collects and owns it.

2. Lack of timely and relevant information on new and emerging issues:

"Finding the most current demographic/economic information is often too difficult."

"Need data on how to solve certain problems as a result of new legislation or newly identified problem."

"Assuring that the information received is totally accurate is difficult."

"Too much extraneous information, too poorly organized."

Social and economic issues often reach the local agenda long before any systematic national experience has evolved with respect to policy. Thus local officials must often make critical decisions based on only a limited knowledge of lessons learned from other jurisdictions that are grappling with similar problems. Moreover, federal and state legislative bodies often mandate new local programs and services that demand specialized knowledge of emerging situations.

Several respondents bemoaned the poor or inconsistent quality, reliability, and currency of available information on emerging social and economic issues that are

particularly controversial or emotional (e.g., growth control, homelessness, solid waste management). In addition to needing information that is timely and accurate, most policymakers want a balanced diet of information that "has been agreed upon by people and organizations representing many different and often conflicting interests" (Feldman, 1989, p. 12).

      3. Barriers to effective information-seeking:

> "Not knowing where to look for information, what office of state or federal government to contact."

> "Data may not be available from others because they have no time to give it to me."

> "My colleagues are not willing to readily share information relative to the agencies they serve on."

> "Staff either not knowledgeable or not motivated enough to do the work necessary to find the appropriate information."

Insufficient bureaucratic expertise and inadequate "information literacy" skills on the part of decisionmakers' administrative support staff seem to inhibit the quest for local information. When staff members lack the training needed to locate information or have not developed the analytic and interpretative skills needed to evaluate the validity of information, local officials tend to cultivate alternative informal channels, either internal or external to their own agency, in order to satisfy their information needs.

    The prominent role such alternative and interpersonal sources play in the information-seeking chain is not evenly distributed, nor well understood. Informal and

10

collaborative information networks are likely to be effective for more experienced and well-connected officials, but these methods fail miserably for others. Especially at a disadvantage are officials new to their jobs, for they may not have equitable access to institutional resources or may be unaware of the invisible networks so pervasive in the local sector. Maverick policymakers may also find themselves shut out from such networks. And, on occasion, informal access to internal agency information may be manipulated by elected officials as a means of gaining control over the local agenda-setting process or stifling the political opposition.

Types of Information and Sources

Local officials' concerns that the information they need is either unavailable or impossible to locate are, no doubt, in part a function of the wide variety of information that most of them require in the course of a typical workweek. Respondents were presented with a list of 12 types of information, and at least 30 percent of respondents reported needing the following 7 types of information on a daily or weekly basis (see Figure 1):

> ➤directories of names, addresses, and phone numbers
>
> ➤legal information
>
> ➤information on policies of city council or board of supervisors
>
> ➤agency rules and regulations
>
> ➤departmental budget or financial information
>
> ➤information about new developments in respondent's field
>
> ➤information on local agencies and organizations.

Three other types of information were used less often, but at least once a month, by many respondents: demographic data, technical specifications, and intergovernmental information.

[FIGURE 1 GOES HERE]

A more uniform picture emerges from a question concerning the frequency with which the respondents consulted particular types of information sources. By and large, these officials rely mostly on written documents, rather than conversations or consultations with colleagues, experts, or outside consultants. Within the realm of printed materials, they strongly favor their own personal collections of books, reports, or files and other in-house resources, such as internal departmental records and departmental libraries (see Figure 2). Over 90 percent of these officials reported that they rarely or never consulted external collections (public, college, or university libraries). The principal reasons for this underuse of local library resources are likely to be those cited by Slack (1990, p. 453): general unawareness of the applicability of library-based services as tools for local government problem-solving, and unfamiliarity with the kinds of information services provided by university-based outreach units that host public administration libraries.

[FIGURE 2 GOES HERE]

Although written documents were the resource most often consulted by the respondents, professional journals were not a major channel of information for them.

Of a selection of 17 professional and practitioner journals that serve the region, only 4 titles were familiar to over half of the respondents: Western City (read, at least occasionally, by 93%), Golden State Report (83%), California Journal (71%), and American City and County (57%). In comparison, four leading professional journals were unfamiliar to at least 60% of the respondents: Public Management, Nation's Cities Weekly, Public Administration Review, and County News. Moreover, of those respondents who had read these four journals, only a small minority rated them as very helpful in their work (see Table 1).

[TABLE 1 GOES HERE]

Respondents' estimates of the job-related usefulness of four preeminent local affairs journals were also relatively unenthusiastic, except for Western City (published by the League of California Cities), rated either "somewhat helpful" or "very helpful" by 79 percent of the respondents. By this measure, Golden State Report was a distant second, rated as somewhat or very helpful by 56 percent of the respondents. Even fewer respondents deemed California Journal or American City and County either somewhat or very helpful in informing them of new trends, ideas, or solutions relevant to local problems (these responses are also presented in Table 1). In sum, those high-level local officials unfamiliar with any of the 17 journals listed on the questionnaire would probably not, based on their peers' assessment, find them particularly helpful, with the exception of Western City and, perhaps, Golden State Report.

These findings are consistent with the literature (Watt et al., 1973; Hinton and

13

Kerrigan, 1989) that profiles the knowledge and skills deemed important by urban officials: these officials want information about broader policy issues that they can bring to bear in understanding the underlying causes of urban problems. In support of the concept of the local official as generalist, both Western City and Golden State Report specialize in publishing pertinent general interest and nontechnical domestic policy articles.

In response to an open-ended question about other professional publications deemed helpful in providing information about new trends, ideas, or solutions to local problems, several respondents mentioned specialized journals, newsletters, bulletins, and reports (e.g., American Fire Journal, Journal of Accountancy, Zoning News) and the various publications issued by the League of California Cities (LCC).

These findings describe reading habits that reflect the diversity of professional affiliations, memberships, and expertise associated with the respondents in the sample. Since 80 percent of the respondents work in municipal government, the predominance of publications issued by the LCC was somewhat predictable. One benefit of a locality's membership in the LCC is that all of its officials automatically receive information disseminated by this statewide local government interest group.

Reliance on information published by local government interest groups such as the LCC, moreover, has a rich tradition in public management (Haider, 1974; Menzel, 1990). Local government interest groups operating on the national level (e.g., National League of Cities, International City Management Association, National Association of Counties) expend vast organizational resources on the collection and circulation of

information designed for local decisionmakers. That the respondents favored the publications of the LCC supports the assumption that the historical linkages between local government associations and local practitioners are still intact and significant.

Respondents were also presented with a list of 17 organizations that provide a knowledge network for local governments and asked whether they had ever contacted those organizations and, if they had, how helpful those organizations had been. Only 7 of the 17 organizations had ever served as information sources for at least half of the sample. However, 97 percent of respondents cited the category "other local governments" as a resource; clearly, local decisionmakers seek out and prefer documents, reports, and policy-concurring advice from other localities. The other organizations that had been contacted by at least half of the respondents are: League of California Cities, local chambers of commerce, Association of Bay Area Governments, California State Legislature, U.S. federal agencies, and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (see Table 2).

[TABLE 2 GOES HERE]

Surprisingly, perhaps, 53 percent of the respondents said that they had never contacted the Governor's Office for information, and far fewer had ever contacted any of the various national, state, or local clearinghouses serving local government interest groups: National Municipal League, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities (these responses are also presented in Table 2).

Only two organizations (the League of California Cities, and "other local

15

governments") were ranked as very helpful by at least half of those respondents who had contacted them. All 17 organizations on the list, however, even those unfamiliar to the vast majority of respondents, were judged either somewhat helpful or very helpful by at least half of the officials who had contacted them. In other words, there is a strong expectation that if high-ranking local officials initiated contact with organizations new to them, they would find those organizations at least somewhat helpful.

In response to an open-ended question, several respondents listed specialized agencies that they had contacted, for example, California City Clerks Association, California Police Officers Association, software user groups, as well as local citizens' groups and public-interest organizations such as the Sierra Club and the League of Women Voters.

Finally, the respondents were asked whether they had access to a computer and, if so, how useful they found it in locating work-related information. The responses to these questions confirm the findings of Jones and McLeod (1986) for high-level executives in the private sector. Although 60% of the high-ranking public officials in our sample had computers in their offices, and another 24% said that there were computers in nearby offices, only 24% of all respondents rated computers as very useful in locating information. Another 25% said computers were somewhat useful, while 33% rated computers as "not too useful." The remaining 18% (N = 24) stated that they never used a computer--a group that corresponds in size to those respondents who said there was either no computer available to them at work (N = 22) or that the office computer was on a different floor than their office (N = 3).

16

These findings confirm Mulder's (1988) conclusion, drawn from his ICMA survey of microcomputer use by local executives: While personal computers are excellent for organizing and manipulating large amounts of repetitive and routine alphanumeric data, they are far less useful during the information-seeking phase of decisionmaking.

CONCLUSION

Appropriate information, when used to educate, validate, and extend people's experiences, can mobilize and empower. Local officials, as information-seekers, desire knowledge for improved sense-making and local problem solving. In this context, information plays a critical role in shaping perceptions of reality and behavior. In the local setting, policies are initiated in response to a perceived need or identified problem. Local decisionmakers seek information to determine technical feasibility, costs, anticipated social benefits as well as long-range environmental and other consequences of policy questions. An effective policymaker must maintain a high degree of awareness, always scanning the policy environment for fresh understanding and new knowledge of emerging social and political changes.

This study found top-level local officials to be spending a significant portion of their work time engaged in myriad information-seeking activities. Overall, the respondents were satisfied with the results of their investigations, and they reported few barriers to accessing needed information, with three exceptions. Those three obstacles could be alleviated by improvements in local information resource management systems and technology, the development of a regional information network that enhances local policy concurrence among officials, and information literacy training within local

17

bureaucracies. Respondents were less enthusiastic about the professional reading materials targeted to them, but seemed positive about the various organizations that serve in the sphere of local affairs and in the public interest. This finding validates Chen and Hernon's (1982) conclusions about information-seekers' higher satisfaction with and preference for interpersonal over written sources. Finally, the respondents' underuse of university-based research/outreach units and computer-assisted information services would seem to reflect their general lack of awareness of these two significant local information resources.

These results suggest two new directions for future research, exploration, and analysis. Technology-driven communication networks, for example, need to acknowledge policymakers' preference for human interaction. Thus more attention should be given to developing a second generation of "expert systems," artificial intelligence systems that can mimic the thought and decision-making processes of a human expert. Expert systems, designed for users who are not computer specialists, are already used in such diverse applications as medical diagnosis, investment analysis, contract bidding, and geological prospecting. Control Data Corporation's LOGIN and the National League of Cities' LOCAL EXCHANGE, for example, are economical and widely available national electronic shared-information networks suited for local practitioners. These two specialized electronic data banks have demonstrated the effectiveness of interactive multi-function online systems merging features such as electronic mail, news bulletins, legislative alerts, and access to commercial databases for researching solutions to administrative problems (Strazewski, 1990). To address

complex and vexing policy problems, however, local officials need more advanced systems that are capable of assisting users with tasks such as judgment, reasoning, prediction, and intuition as a means to investigate and manipulate information in ways that were simply impossible before.

Successful management of information entails knowing how to make a whole of scattered information, how to screen out irrelevent information, and how to extract significant items from the vast information environment. Although the application of technology to local information management is likely to alleviate most problems associated with information processing, the administrative support staff serving public officials must be able to recognize what information is needed and be able to locate, filter, and evaluate the needed information as a precursor for good local decisionmaking.

Local administrative support staff need to develop advanced information-literacy expertise that enables them to distinguish between information (a collection of facts and data) and knowledge (the power of ideas). The information-literate staff member adds value to raw information; by applying critical judgment, he or she transforms and organizes discrete facts and data into useful policy knowledge for superiors. This involves applying the principles of "knowledge processing" through the creation, dissemination, acquisition, and utilization of information during the policy formulation phase. Inservice training, particularly in emerging interactive technologies, and an emphasis on strategic thinking and creative problem-solving are needed to begin to address the problem of how to prepare the local bureaucracy for lifelong learning in the "information age."

REFERENCES

David N. Ammons and Charldean Newell, *City Executives: Leadership Roles, Work Characteristics, and Time Management* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

Ching-chih Chen and Peter Hernon, *Information Seeking: Assessing and Anticipating User Needs* (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 1982).

Committee on the Records of Government (U.S.), *Report* (Washington, D.C., 1985).

Martha S. Feldman, *Order Without Design: Information Production and Policy Making* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

Donald H. Haider, *When Governments Come to Washington* (New York: Free Press, 1974).

Martha L. Hale, "The Nature of City Managers' Work," In H. George Frederickson, ed., *Ideal and Practice in Council-Manager Government* (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 1989), pp. 168-176.

David W. Hinton and John E. Kerrigan, "Tracing the Changing Knowledge and Skill Needs and Service Activities of Public Managers," In H. George Frederickson, ed., *Ideal and Practice in Council-Manager Government* (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 1989), pp. 155-163.

Jack William Jones and Raymond McLeod, Jr., "The Structure of Executive Information Systems: An Exploratory Analysis," *Decision Sciences,* vol. 17 (Spring 1986), pp. 220-249.

James Krikelas, "Information-Seeking Behavior: Patterns and Concepts," *Drexel Library Quarterly*, vol. 19 (Spring 1983), pp. 5-20.

Ann Majchrzak, "Information Focus and Data Sources: When Will They Lead to Use?" *Evaluation Review*, vol. 10 (April 1986), pp. 193-215.

Donald C. Menzel, "Collecting, Conveying, and Convincing: The Three C's of Local Government Interest Groups," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 50 (May/June 1990), pp. 401-405.

Henry Mintzberg, *The Nature of Managerial Work* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

Clifford Mulder, "Microcomputer Use in the Local Government Administrator's Office," *MIS Report* (ICMA), vol. 20 (May 1988), pp. 1-12.

Christine Mullings, *A Manual for the Investigation of Local Government Information Needs* (London: British Library, 1981).

National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators, *Documenting America: Assessing the Condition of Historical Records in the States* (Albany, N.Y.: National Historical Publications and Records Commission, 1983).

Edwin B. Parker and William J. Paisley, *Patterns of Adult Information Seeking* (Stanford: Stanford University, Institute for Communication Research, 1960).

Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organizations* (New York: Free Press, 1976).

James D. Slack, "Information, Training, and Assistance Needs of Municipal Governments," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 50 (July/August 1990), pp. 450-457.

Len Strazewski, "Locals Link With LOGIN, Save Research Time," *City & State*, vol. 7 (July 2, 1990), p. 34.

Graham W. Watt, John K. Parker, and Robert R. Cantine, "Roles of the Urban Administrator in the 1970s and the Knowledges and Skills Required to Perform These Roles," In Frederick N. Cleaveland, ed., *Education for Urban Administration*, Monograph 16 (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1973), pp. 50-79.

Janet A. Weiss, "Coping with Complexity: An Experimental Study of Public Policy Decision-Making," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 2 (1982), pp. 66-87.

FIGURE I

Types of Information Needed Daily or Weekly
by at Least 30% of Local Officials

	% Needing at least once a week	% Needing every day
Directories of names, addresses, phone numbers	33	38
Legal information	41	24
Information on policies of city council or board of supervisors	36	22
Agency rules and regulations	33	24
Departmental budget or financial information	27	22
Information about new developments in my field	21	11
Information on local agencies and organizations	25	7

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

Types of Information Resources Consulted Daily or Weekly by at Least 30% of Local Officials

	% Needing at least once a week	% Needing every day
Internal department records from my own department (not library)	37	30
My own collection of books, reports, files	23	40
My department's library or information center	28	19
Consultation with a knowledgeable colleague, expert, or outside consultant	31	12
Co-worker's collection of books, reports, files	32	5

FIGURE 2

TABLE 1

Local Officials' Familiarity With Professional Journals and Judgments

of Their Work-Related Usefulness

TITLE	% NOT FAMILIAR WITH JOURNAL	% FAMILIAR WITH JOURNAL AND USEFULNESS RATINGS		
		Not too helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful
Western City	8	14	54	25
Golden State Report	17	27	46	10
California Journal	30	23	39	9
American City & County	44	33	21	3
Public Management	63	15	18	5
Nation's Cities Weekly	64	14	18	5
Public Administration Review	73	18	9	--
County News	78	14	7	1

TABLE 1

TABLE 2

Local Officials' Familiarity With Public Affairs Organizations
and Judgments of Their Work-Related Usefulness

ORGANIZATION	% HAVE NEVER CONTACTED	% HAVE CONTACTED AND USEFULNESS RATINGS		
		Not too helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful
Other local governments	3	3	39	55
League of Calif. Cities	10	4	26	61
Local chambers of commerce	14	18	43	25
Association of Bay Area Govts.	16	7	52	24
Calif. Legislature	16	11	51	22
U.S. Federal agencies	23	23	48	7
Metropolitan Transportation Commission	40	13	30	18
Governor's Office	53	13	31	3
National League of Cities	59	11	25	5
ICMA	66	5	21	8
National Municipal League	86	5	7	2
American Society for Public Administration	87	6	7	1
U.S. Conference of Mayors	88	3	6	4
National Association of Counties	88	5	7	1

IGS Working Papers

1991

91-10 Intra-Party Preferences, Heterogeneity, and the Origins of the Modern Congress: Progressive Reformers in the House and Senate, 1890-1920 David W. Brady

91-9 The Information-Seeking Behavior of Local Government Officials Marc A. Levin

91-8 Working in Practice But Not in Theory: Theoretical Challenges of "High-Reliability Organizations" Todd R. LaPorte, and Paula M. Consolini

91-7 Pork and Votes: The Effect of Military Base Closings on the Vote in Ensuing Congressional Elections David Hadwiger

91-6 Designing an Interactive, Intelligent, Spatial Information System for International Disaster Assistance Louise K. Comfort

91-5 Constitutional Mischief: What's Wrong with Term Limitations Nelson W. Polsby

91-4 Thermidor in Land Use Control? Paul van Seters

91-3 Parchment Barriers and the Politics of Rights Jack N. Rakove

91-2 The Study of American Politics in Japan: Its State, Trends, and Problems Ichiro Sunada

91-1 The Revision of California's Constitution: A Brief Summary Eugene C. Lee

1990

90-34 Recent Developments in Disease Prevention/Health Promotion in the Federal Republic of Germany, Rolf Rosenbrock

90-33 Recent Developments and Reform Proposals in the Politics of Pharmaceutical Supply in the Federal Republic of Germany, Rolf Rosenbrock

90-32 Speech Before the Meeting of Texas Public Interest Organizations, David Cohen

90-31 A Curious Life—The Pursuit of an Understanding of Public Administration, James W. Fesler

90-30 The Cultural Conquest of the Presidency: Incorporation and the Transformation of American Political Life, 1890-1916, Peter Schwartz

90-29 The Fat Lady Has Not Yet Sung: Is the Tax Revolt Over? Randy H. Hamilton

90-28 A Tightrope Walk Between Two Spheres of Logic: Observations—and Self-Observations—of a Social Scientist in Parliamentary Politics, Rolf Rosenbrock

90-27 Iran Air Flight 655 and the USS *Vincennes*: Complex, Large-Scale Military Systems and the Failure of Control, Gene I. Rochlin

90-26 Political Leadership and Value Change: Reagan, Thatcher and the Conservative Revolution? Pippa Norris

90-25 Party Rules and Women's Representation: Reforming the British Labour Party, Joni Lovenduski and Pippa Norris

90-24 Political Cultures, Michael Thompson, Richard Ellis, and Aaron Wildavsky

90-23 Ecological Regression and Voting Rights, D. A. Freedman, S. Klein, J. Jacks, C. Smyth, and C. Everett

90-22 The San Jose Metropolitan Area: A Region in Transition, Donald N. Rothblatt

90-21 The Demand for Referendums in West Germany "Bringing The People Back In?" Wolfgang Luthardt

90-20 Sunset As Oversight: Establishing Realistic Objectives, Cynthia Opheim, Landon Curry, and Pat Shields

90-19 Government Expenditure Levels: Alternative Procedures for Computing Measures, Brian Stipak

90-18 Transformation of American Liberalism, 1940s-1980s: An Analysis of Liberal Policy Change and the ADA, Ichiro Sunada

90-17 The Politics of Policy: "Political Think Tanks" and Their Makers in the U.S.-Institutional Environment, Winand Gellner

1989

1988

1987

Please add my name to the *PAR* mailing list (free). _____
TITLE   QUANTITY/COST
_____
_____
_____
_____

                        SUBTOTAL _____
                       SALES TAX _____
                 HANDLING (20%) _____
                           TOTAL _____

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
_____
CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____