

Patricia McLinn's

10 Tips for Finding Out What You Need to Know

- 1.) Libraries are wonderful resources - librarians are even better.
- 2.) Books - check the index, rather than the table of contents. Especially explore the bibliography. Keep digging back to primary sources.
- 3.) Internet is a great starting place - but a terrible ending place.
- 4.) There is an association for everything. Use them as a source.
- 5.) Public affairs/information/media office often last resort & slow answer.
- 6.) Go as high as you can. Start there. Avoid the phone trees.

Points on talking to people:

- most like to answer questions about what they do/know
- but ask to set up convenient time for them
- have a few questions ready, but also let their answers lead you to more questions
- ask what books/movies/stereotypes, etc. get wrong about them.
- ask if you haven't asked something you should have.
- what can they tell you about their area of expertise that most people don't know or would be surprised about.

- 7.) Straight lines are often the fastest route to nowhere - Instead, zig-zag.
- 8.) Think connections.
- 9.) Avoid dead ends by asking all sources their ideas of whom else to talk to.
- 10.) Have more than one line of inquiry going.