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Subject: PRINCIPLE OF LEAST EFFORT

1. Purpose. To record information on the Principle of Least Effort.
2. Information. In *Library Research Models: A Guide to Classification, Cataloging, and Computers*, Mr. Thomas Mann provides the following information on the Principle of Least Effort.

This principle states that most researchers (even “serious” scholars) will tend to choose easily available information sources, even when they are objectively of low quality, and, further, will tend to be satisfied with whatever can be found easily in preference to pursuing higher-quality sources whose use would require greater expenditure of effort.

What happens in the real world is that librarians are quite willing to pay lip service to the principle, but when implications are raised (i.e., that existing arrangements and practices must actually be changed), then the principle tends to be dismissed as insignificant or insubstantial.¹

¹ Mann, Thomas, *Library Research Models*, Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 1993, page 91