ENTERING THE INFORMATION FLOW NETWORK

The key point for the researcher is to understand the nature of the information flow. If a researcher wishes to know which departments in the state are currently conducting research on community relations with non-English speaking minorities, and needs the information to form a formal network, it is best to plug into that network in the fastest way possible. A possible method is to call a directory list in Appendix B, or a message board on a discussion list. On the other hand, if what is wanted is a thorough review of all such programs currently underway, and you have a few days, then it may be best to get an overview of the literature before making a research decision. Just as there is an overall log to the materials in which information moves, so there is also an overall logic to the tools which enable researchers to access that information.

Reference tools have been developed to serve as connectors between the information flows which lead to that information. Knowing the manner in which information moves within the field and the appropriate reference tools for locating that information is one key to efficient and effective library research.