

Information Needs, Preferences, and Behaviors of Home Cooks

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Abstract

This research aims to contribute to the analysis of the information needs, preferences, and behaviours of home cooks and how libraries can serve this user group. The research used 31 anonymous home cooks in the USA who describe their information needs, preferences, and behaviors when in the process of gourmet cooking. Home cooks seek recipes that meet specific needs such as quick, budget-friendly, child-friendly, special occasions, personal preference, portable, and ethnic foods. To find information, home cooks use the *All Recipes*, *Food Network*, *Epicurious*, or *Google* websites; *Cooking Light*, *Southern Living*, or *Real Simple* magazine subscriptions; and *Barefoot Contessa*, *30 Minute Meals with Rachael Ray*, or other *Food Network* channel television shows. This study can serve as a guide to libraries in order to improve their services for home cook users.

1 Introduction

Cooking is an activity done by many people for consuming food for sustenance. However, cooking can become a serious hobby when participants dedicate themselves to the activity with passion. When people cook as a hobby, they interact with many information sources in order to perfect their craft. Hobbyist cooks are not the same as chefs who work professionally in the culinary arts; rather they cook for pleasure in their own homes. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, this group was referred to as home cooks and their information needs, preferences, and behaviors were profiled. This profile will help library professionals better serve this user group.

2 Defining the user group

The demographics for this user group vary widely to include both genders; all adult age groups; and a variety of lifestyles, careers, and income levels. In order to be considered as a home cook for this study, an individual had to meet the following three criteria:

1. Must not work in the culinary profession as a career.
2. Must cook for pleasure, rather than just sustenance.
3. Must actively use many information sources to perfect his/her craft that include but are not limited to: individual recipes, cookbooks, cooking websites, other culinary literature, cooking television shows, and interaction with other cooks.

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These criteria were similar to the criteria that Hartel (2002) outlined for gourmet cooks:

[The] hobbyist cook: is not employed in the food industry; prepares food for educational, experiential, or entertainment purposes rather than sustenance; exhibits at least three of these food information behaviors: owns at least 20 cookbooks, subscribes to at least 2 cooking magazines, views at least 5 cooking-related television programs per week, cultivates a recipe collection, visits online food-related websites at least once a week. (p. 548)

Hartel was more specific because the home cooks that she studied in particular cook gourmet or ethnic foods for group settings. The criteria for this study were expanded because a person may cook as a hobby, but may not cook strictly gourmet, ethnic varieties of foods, or for other people in educational or entertainment settings.

3 Methodology

This study was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved reviewing the literature. Jenna Hartel has conducted research specifically on home cooks. Cooking also falls under the category of serious leisure or hobbies in information studies. Thus, the literature review also includes a few other ideas and theories that can be applied to home cooking. The second stage involved conducting original research. Hartel was the only model for researching the home cook user group. She researched her users through personal interviews and video recorded tours of their kitchens. This study took a different approach by conducting electronic surveys using the online survey service, Survey Monkey. The surveys were online in order to provide participants with an easy way to respond and it helped to reach participants no matter where they lived. The participants were not random, but rather friends or friends of friends who were known to be home cooks. Although the sample was not random, it was convenient to find people who were home cooks through their friends since home cooks are not commonly found in one community or another. However, since the respondents were friends of friends, there is a certain aspect of peer influence that could have impacted the results. Friends may display similar information seeking styles because of this influence. Respondents were anonymous when filling out the survey. The survey had a variety of questions that were intended to elicit data concerning the information needs, preferences, and behaviors concerning home cooks.

For the analysis, the responses were tallied and percentages were calculated in order to understand the survey sample as a whole. These totals and percentages showed which responses were the most popular. For the free response questions, a list was made of all of the responses given and any repeats were tallied. If the respondent did not have an answer for the questions, their responses were tallied as "None." In the matrix questions, the response percentages were calculated based on the number of respondents that answered each question. For the last free response question, trends from each cooking episode were tracked and analyzed.

4 Literature review

Cooking is “one of the most popular hobbies in the United States and has several million participants, sometimes called *gourmets* or *foodies*” (Hartel, 2006). Cooking can be considered a hobby, which is defined as “a systematic, enduring pursuit of a reasonably evolved and specialized free-time activity having no professional counterpart” (Stebbins, 2003, 228). Cooking as a hobby falls under the model of serious leisure (Hartel, 2005, 314). This model “involves proactive acquisition of knowledge and skill” and “includes an occasional need to persevere, as when a cook searches doggedly for the ideal recipe” (Hartel, 2005, 314). This was noteworthy because information studies frequently state the idea that people are satisfied with the quickest and easiest source they can find, known as the principle of least effort (Zipf, 1949). Serious leisure is a different idea of everyday life because it involves the hobbies that people are passionate about. Hartel (2002) defined a hobbyist cook as:

[Someone] who loves to experience food and cooking, and practices this passion on a regular basis as a favourite activity through hands-on practice and mediated experiences.

(p. 548)

They are more dedicated in their information seeking because their passion usually outweighs any time or resource constraints.

Fulton and Vondracek (2009) summarized Hartel’s (2006) description of the cooking hobby as episodes “with discrete cooking tasks, information activities, and resources associated with this practice” (p. 613). Many resources are available for home cooks to use and Hartel (2006) noted “resources such as print cookbooks, culinary serials, television cooking shows, and Websites with recipe databases.” Hartel (2010) also discussed that:

[Hobbyists] pursue (non-documentary) experiences in which they learn about cooking; such as friendships with other cooks, eating out at restaurants, shopping in specialty markets, and traveling to explore new culinary cultures.

(p. 851)

The home cook “[focuses] on gathering and tending the materials that enable the acquisition of culinary knowledge.” (Hartel, 2010, 851). Home cooks must continue “ongoing consumption of literature and media about cooking, to build background knowledge and to monitor trends” (Hartel, 2010, 851). Therefore, it is known that the home cook is frequently active in seeking, browsing, and using information throughout their cooking activities.

Hartel (2006) had studied the process that hobbyist cooks go through when cooking and outlined “a common and logical nine-step process” (Results section, para. 2), summarized as exploring, planning, provisioning, prepping, assembling, cooking, serving, eating, and evaluating. Exploring “is a quest for inspiration, not information” (Results section, para. 4) and involves browsing as the main information behavior. Planning helps to determine what recipe the hobbyist cook will use and may involve the person to “[seek] multiple versions of the same recipe, which are analyzed and compared” (Results section, para. 5). Provisioning is collecting “the necessary ingredients or tools” (Results section, para. 7) needed

for the cooking episode; prepping is “making ingredients ready to cook” (Results section, para. 8); assembling is “the process of combining ingredients prior to cooking” (Results section, para. 9); cooking is “the addition of heat to food [that] improves its safety, texture, and flavor” (Results section, para. 11) and serving is “the act of placing food in front of someone” (Results section, para. 12). Hartel (2006) also noted that even though hobbyist cooks are passionate about cooking, they do not have much to discuss about the act of eating it. Finally, evaluating is when “the cook reflects on and assesses the results” (Results section, para. 14). Throughout this process, a variety of information sources are frequently used and re-used. In concluding her paper, Hartel made three observations about the information behavior of hobbyist cooks:

[The] use and re-use of culinary documents is the prevailing information [practice;]...[the] gourmet cook is an active producer and manager of information [resources; and]...[recipes] are the principle information resources of gourmet cooking.

(Discussion section, para. 2-4)

A few models can be observed when studying this user group. Savolainen (1995) discussed information seeking in everyday life as a way of life. Information exploration by home cooks could be considered a way of life for their everyday life seeking behaviors as they search for recipes to cook and new techniques to try. Hektor (2001) also studied everyday life information seeking in which home cooking could be considered in his terms, a recreation project. A third model is the domain analysis model that argues:

[It] is more fruitful to view domains (specialties, disciplines, or discourse communities) as basic units of analysis rather than focus on “users” in a generalized and context-independent manner. (Talja, 2005, 123)

Hartel (2010) described that:

[Domain] analysis upholds a realist orientation to observable information activity and artifacts, in contrast to a cognitive focus on behavior, understanding, or meanings.

(p. 850)

Rather than studying home cooks themselves as individuals, the user group should be studied within their actual cooking activities. This model is relevant to home cooks because they vary widely in demographics and lifestyles outside their cooking hobby. Therefore, looking to the domain analysis model, we can find the similarity between these users in their cooking specialty.

5 Findings

Thirty-six respondents completed all or part of the survey. For the tenth question, respondents were asked to write out a story of their latest cooking episode and some chose to skip this question. Rather than throwing out data from the first nine questions because the tenth question was unanswered, those surveys were kept for their contribution to the total results. If the respondent did not meet the three criteria that would classify them as a home cook in the first three questions, their survey was thrown out entirely. After this initial sifting, data were collected from

31 surveys, with 24 of them including a story of the respondent’s latest cooking episode. A summary of the results is divided into the analyses of information needs, preferences, and behaviors of the home cooks surveyed.

The first three questions verified that the respondent was someone who was not in the culinary career (Table 1), enjoyed cooking for pleasure rather than sustenance (Table 2), and cooked gourmet food at least once a month (Table 3). When using the word “gourmet,” the assumption was made that the respondents would understand this meant food of high-quality. In the survey, however, the interpretation of this word was left for the respondent to decide.

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes and I still do as my career	0.0%	0
Yes, but I do not anymore	3.2%	1
No, I have never cooked professionally in the food industry	96.8%	30

Table 1: “Have you ever cooked professionally in the food industry?” (*Multiple choice format – one choice allowed*)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, I cook them more for pleasure than for sustenance	22.6%	7
No, I cook them more for sustenance than for pleasure	0.0%	0
I equally cook them for pleasure as much as I cook them for sustenance	77.4%	24

Table 2: “Do you cook gourmet or ethnic dishes, meals, or desserts more for pleasure than for sustenance?” (*Multiple choice format – one choice allowed*)

	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	96.8%	30
No	0.0%	0
Unsure	3.2%	1

Table 3: “Do you consider yourself a home cook when defined as someone who cooks gourmet or ethnic dishes, meals, or desserts at least once a month?” (*Multiple choice format – one choice allowed*)

5.1 Information needs of home cooks

In order to gauge the information needs of home cooks, the 24 responses of cooking episode stories were qualitatively analyzed in order to determine what the home cooks identify as their needs during their episodes. The question posed in the survey was “Please describe in as much detail as possible a recent episode in which you cooked a gourmet or ethnic dish, meal, or dessert. (Include your process of browsing, selecting, preparing, planning, cooking, eating, and

evaluating).” Most of the needs presented were based on the types of recipes needed such as new, quick, easy, detailed, budget-friendly, child-friendly, and simple. Recipes were needed for special occasions such as a wedding brunch, a team get-together, a club meeting, and Thanksgiving. Some respondents had certain dietary needs or choices such as healthy, vegan, vegetarian, or sugar-free. Recipes were also needed based on the respondent’s own personal preference or taste which varies for each individual. Some recipes were needed for certain ethnic themes, such as Japanese, Spanish, Indian, or Chinese. Other recipes were sought after with the ability to be portable such as for traveling events, potluck dinners, and picnics. Other information needs that were explained were specific cooking techniques and where to find specific specialty or ethnic foods.

5.2 Information preferences of home cooks

To determine the information preferences of home cooks, responses were analyzed to find what websites, magazines, and television shows respondents view most often. The responses of what types of information sources they prefer were also analyzed. Finally, locations were analyzed to find where respondents preferred to go to for the information sources. Responses for website preferences are listed in Table 4. Five or more respondents prefer the *All Recipes*, *Food Network*, and *Epicurious* websites. *AllRecipes.com*, as of May 2011, has “over 40,000 free recipes created and rated by home cooks—plus, menus with dinner ideas, holiday meals, and party food ideas.” *Food Network* is the website for the American television channel that broadcasts various cooking, food, and restaurant shows. *Epicurious* (2011) compiles over “100,000 recipes from...cookbooks, chefs, and home cooks” as well as from magazines they have partnered with such as *Gourmet*, *Self*, and *Bon Appétit*. Seven respondents also mentioned that they use *Google* as a first choice for information inquiries.

	Response Count
All Recipes	8
Google	7
Food Network	6
Epicurious	5
Cooking Light	3
Food TV	3
The Pioneer Woman	2
Taste of Home	2
Real Simple	1
Cooks	1
South Beach Diet	1
Southern Living	1
Martha Stewart	1
New York Times	1
Crock Pot	1
Country Woman Magazine	1
Recipes	1
Savvy Vegetarian	1

The Kitchn	1
Smitten Kitchen	1
What the ____ Should I Make For Dinner	1
None	1

Table 4: “What websites, if any, do you view for your cooking activities?”
(Comment box format – free response)

Table 5 displays the responses for magazine preferences. Three or more respondents prefer the *Cooking Light*, *Southern Living*, *Real Simple*, and *Taste of Home* magazine subscriptions. *Cooking Light* (2011) states that it offers “fresh, nutritious and easy-to-follow kitchen-tested recipes for every day living or special occasions,” (The Magazine section, para. 2). *Southern Living* (2011) “was created to highlight the beauty and culture of the growing South” and includes recipes for American Southern cooking (The Magazine section, para. 1). *Real Simple* is a magazine that offers simple ideas for organization, beauty, health, and cooking. *Taste of Home* (2011) offers recipes that are “practical because they’re from home cooks—not gourmet chefs—and feature familiar, everyday ingredients; clear, beautiful photos; and easy-to-follow, step-by-step instructions” (para. 1).

	Response Count
Cooking Light	7
Real Simple	3
Taste of Home	3
Southern Living	3
Paula Deen	2
Food Network	2
Better Homes and Gardens	2
Women’s Health	1
Whole Living	1
Eating Well	1
Cooking	1
Martha Stewart	1
Cooking Pleasures	1
Cooks Illustrated	1
FOOD	1
Cooks Country	1
Country Woman	1
Everyday with Rachel Ray	1
Food & Wine	1
Vegetarian Times	1
Women’s Day	1
Marie Claire	1
Health	1
Oprah	1
Good Housekeeping	1
Cuisine	1
Good Cook	1

Clean Eating	1
None	1

Table 5: “What magazines, if any, do you subscribe to or read regularly for your cooking activities?” (*Comment box format – free response*)

The responders’ television show preferences are displayed in Table 6. Four or more respondents prefer to watch *Barefoot Contessa*, *30 Minute Meals with Rachael Ray*, or *Food Network* channel in general. On *Barefoot Contessa*, “popular cookbook author and magazine columnist Ina Garten throws open the doors of her Hampton's home for delicious food, dazzling ideas and good fun” (*FoodNetwork.com*, 2011b, About the Host section, para. 1). *30 Minute Meals with Rachael Ray* is a television show on *Food Network* where “Rachael promises that her dazzling dishes will never take more than 30 minutes to make, from start to finish” (*FoodNetwork.com*, 2011a, About the Show section, para. 1).

	Response Count
Food Network, in general	5
Barefoot Contessa	4
30 Minute Meals with Rachael Ray	4
Giada DeLaurentis	2
Everyday Italian	1
Jaime Oliver’s Kitchen	1
La Dolce Vida	1
The Martha Stewart Show	1
Tyler’s Ultimate	1
Aarti Party	1
Chopped	1
Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives	1
Paula Deen	1
Good Eats	1
The Best Thing I Ever Ate	1
Julia Childs	1
Jacques Pepin	1
Good Eats	1
None	3

Table 6: “What television shows, if any, do you watch for your cooking activities?” (*Comment box format – free response*)

Respondents were asked about the information sources they preferred to use most when planning a cooking episode. Their responses are displayed in Table 7. More than 75% of the respondents prefer cookbooks, websites, magazines, and conversations with other cooks.

	Prefer Greatly	Prefer Somewhat	No Opinion	Prefer Rarely	Do Not Prefer	Not Applicable	Response Count
individual recipes	33.3% (10)	30.3% (9)	16.7% (5)	10.0% (3)	10.0% (3)	0.0% (0)	30
cookbooks	54.8% (17)	35.5% (11)	0.0% (0)	6.5% (2)	3.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	31
cooking or food-related websites	58.1% (18)	25.8% (8)	0.0% (0)	12.9% (4)	3.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	31
cooking television shows	17.9% (5)	35.7% (10)	14.3% (4)	17.9% (5)	10.7% (3)	3.6% (1)	28
cooking magazines	27.6% (8)	58.6% (17)	3.4% (1)	3.4% (1)	3.4% (1)	3.4% (1)	29
other cooking literature	0.0% (0)	25.9% (7)	48.1% (13)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (3)	14.8% (4)	27
conversations with other cooks	25.9% (7)	55.6% (15)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (3)	7.4% (2)	0.0% (0)	27
shopping at specialty markets	11.1% (3)	44.4% (12)	7.4% (2)	11.1% (3)	14.8% (4)	11.1% (3)	27
eating out at restaurants	14.8% (4)	37.0% (10)	14.8% (4)	7.4% (2)	18.5% (5)	7.4% (2)	27
traveling to explore new culinary cultures	14.3% (4)	21.4% (6)	25.0% (7)	10.7% (3)	10.7% (3)	17.9% (5)	28

List any other locations where you seek information for your cooking activities: (*Comment box format – free response*)

- Google the dish until I find a recipe I like, or pick and choose pieces of recipes to create my own

Table 7: “What information sources do you prefer most when planning a gourmet or ethnic dish, meal, or dessert?” (*Matrix of choices – one answer allowed per row*)

Table 8 displays the responses for location preference when seeking information for their cooking episodes. Over 50% of the respondents prefer their home, friend’s house, and family member’s house.

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Not Applicable	Response Count
Home	80.6% (25)	16.1% (5)	3.2% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	31
Friend’s House	3.2% (1)	51.6% (16)	29.0% (9)	16.1% (5)	0.0% (0)	31
Family	19.4%	51.6%	22.6%	6.5%	0.0%	31

Member's House	(6)	(16)	(7)	(2)	(0)	
Restaurant	6.5% (2)	35.5% (11)	25.8% (8)	32.3% (10)	0.0% (0)	31
Grocery Store	12.9% (4)	35.5% (11)	32.3% (10)	16.1% (5)	3.2% (1)	31
Specialty Market	9.7% (3)	32.3% (10)	32.3% (10)	19.4% (6)	6.5% (2)	31
Work	3.2% (1)	35.5% (11)	25.8% (8)	29.0% (9)	6.5% (2)	31
Church	3.2% (1)	25.8% (8)	22.6% (7)	35.5% (11)	12.9% (4)	31
Library	3.2% (1)	12.9% (4)	19.4% (6)	58.1% (18)	6.5% (2)	31
School	0% (0)	3.2% (1)	6.5% (2)	54.8% (17)	35.5% (11)	31

Table 8: How often do you seek information for your cooking activities at the following locations? (*Matrix of choices – one answer allowed per row*)

5.3 Information behavior of home cooks

The behaviors of home cooks were analyzed by what information sources they have used in the last month and a qualitative analysis of the processes that occur with each of the 24 respondents in their cooking episode story. From the same list provided for information source preferences, 30% or more of the respondents said that they have used individual recipe cards, cookbooks, websites, magazines, conversations with other cooks, and eating out at restaurants in the past month for their cooking hobby (Table 9).

	Response %	Response Count
cookbooks	87.1%	27
cooking or food-related websites	77.4%	24
individual recipe cards	58.1%	18
cooking or food-related magazines	51.6%	16
conversations with other cooks	41.9%	13
eating out at restaurants	41.9%	13
shopping at specialty markets	29.0%	9
cooking or food-related television shows	22.6%	7
other cooking of food-related literature	9.7%	3
traveling to explore new culinary cultures	9.7%	3
no information sources are used for cooking activities	3.2%	1
other(s) (please specify)	6.5%	2
Other(s): (<i>Comment Box format – free response</i>) food packaging Wegmans sends out a magazine with recipes that feature items from their store.		

Table 9: “Please select all of the information sources that you have used in the last month for cooking activities.” (*Checkbox format – multiple choices allowed*)

Their cooking episode stories reveal that they first get inspired by a previous food experience, grocery store trip, specialty cooking store visit, or food label. They may have a dish or meal in mind because it was asked for, craved for, is readily available, or is of a specific ethnic origin. Then, the home cooks plan when to make and eat the dish or meal. They may need to plan the menu for a larger meal or event.

A home cook may obtain a recipe from a library cookbook, owned cookbook, website, magazine, coupon, or personal collection of recipes. There also may be the process of choosing one version of a recipe over another for various reasons. Then a home cook will plan the order of preparation if there is a large dish or meal based on cooking times, heat retention, and spoiling factors. Some home cooks may alter the recipe to what is available, preferred, or based on previous experiences. Others may alter the recipe to the number of people to be served or the opportunity for creating leftovers.

After a recipe has been chosen, a home cook may seek to learn from other cooks, family members, or friends about cooking techniques. Then, ingredients may be obtained from a grocery store, ethnic market, health food store, or personal garden. Some home cooks may need to obtain specific cooking equipment as well. Then they will prepare ingredients and cook the dish or meal. Some home cooks need to multi-task with the various cooking steps of a recipe or multiple recipes. During the cooking process, a home cook may also need to adjust the recipe because of mistakes or mishaps.

Once the dish is complete, a home cook may manage the presentation before serving to their family or other guests. The food is then consumed and they will note what things worked well or not for next time either mentally or by writing the notes down in a journal or on the recipe itself. These steps from the cooking episode stories fall under Hartel's (2006) nine-step process well. However, there was an additional step at the end of the process that a few respondents mentioned about properly storing leftovers, if any.

6 Conclusion

Jenna Hartel did thorough research on the behaviors and processes of home cooks. She focused on how home cooks used information. This research took a different approach in that it focused on what information sources were used. When studying this user group, it is important to look at both the behavior and the information sources. The behavior can help information professionals understand where home cooks go to seek information. The information sources helps information professionals understand what they need to provide to these users.

The analysis also leads to recommendations that better inform library professionals on how to serve this user group. Home cook needs revolve mostly around recipes. Libraries could focus on this need by providing a variety of different types of cookbooks or online recipe sources for users. One general reference cookbook may not satisfy the needs of a home cook who may need something for dietary restrictions or specific special occasions. A library could broaden the variety of recipes that can be found at their location by adding a few

specific cookbooks that contain ethnic recipes, budget-friendly recipes, dietary-need recipes, or other specialties that home cooks may need. Other ideas for libraries to meet home cooks' information needs are to post a recipe of the week or host a home cooking discussion group where they could discuss their techniques with each other. The home cooks preferred to use their home or a friend's house to access their cooking information sources which shows that libraries could host events that will draw the home cook community into the library so that they can see the resources available.

Home cooks prefer information sources that are relatively close and easily accessible. This is illustrated by their preferences in information source location and type of information source. They prefer sources that are accessible at home, online, and on the popular cable network channel, *Food Network*. Libraries could seek to meet these needs by providing online bibliographies of good-quality cooking websites. They could also subscribe to popular cooking magazines such as *Cooking Light*, *Southern Living*, and *Real Simple* as well as advertise to their users that these subscriptions are available to read for free at the library. Finally, they could buy some of the season DVD sets of the popular cooking television shows such as *Barefoot Contessa*, *30 Minute Meals*, or other shows from the *Food Network*. It is important to advertise to the users that these sorts of resources are available.

The information behavior of home cooks follows well with Hartel's (2006) nine-step process of exploring, planning, provisioning, prepping, assembling, cooking, serving, eating, and evaluating; with an additional step contributed by the survey respondents of properly storing leftovers. Libraries can use this information about the information behaviors of home cooks to meet them in their process. Most of their information needs occur during the exploring and planning phases which anticipate the next seven or eight steps. Recipes are obtained and adjusted during these first two stages so that they can be re-used for the rest of the process. By focusing on these first two behaviors, we see the same needs that were found in the above assessment and can provide sources accordingly.

If conducting this research again, it would be recommended to also include an investigation of how often home cooks visit the library for other reasons. There may be an opportunity for libraries to promote their home cook resources to users who use the library, but not specifically for home cooking purposes. From the results gathered here, it can only be concluded that home cooks rarely use the library for their home cooking needs. This does not mean that these users do not frequent the library, only that it is not being used for their hobby. Libraries should advertise and promote their various hobby resources so their patrons not only know of their existence, but also attempt to increase use of the library in general by demonstrating an interest into users' leisure activities. Promotional campaigns can be done through any marketing techniques that already exist in the library, such as displays, signs and flyers. The library can also market their services in their community through newspaper advertisements, community newsletter articles, local television announcements, library and community websites, and social networking strategies.

It is important to remember that cooking is something that hobbyist cooks are passionate about. Since it is a serious leisure activity, they will go to great lengths to get the kind of information they seek. Libraries can provide certain helpful resources to decrease the length between their information need and the information source. Finally, home cooks have shown that they like to have the information they need at home in the environment that they cook in. This means libraries should provide resources online and available for check out. A cookbook or cooking DVD should be in the circulating collection rather than the reference or reserved materials for this purpose. This is a great user group to become acquainted with because they may reward you with some tasty treats for your courteous attention. Bon Appétit!

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