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CILIP Case number: 0012

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Sector: Legal (and other professional services)

When skimming the surface won't do

Should the information professional limit the depth of enquiry in helping to solve a user's problem when time is limited?

Summary: In a very busy information unit of an investment bank the information professionals, being only two in number, often found the workload heavy. Prioritisation of enquiries sometimes meant that a decision was made to refuse to carry out a task for a user, or a task was only partially carried out, in order that more tasks could be completed within the time available, or that priority could be given to completing tasks deemed to be more important. The information professionals felt uneasy at having to refuse to carry out enquiry work, fearing that it would lead to criticism against them.

NOTE: This Case Study is fictitious. It is informed by experience in the information world, but it does not claim to represent a scenario of actual events or relate to individual people or organisations.

Case Study: The information professionals' conscience weighed heavy, not only because they feared being criticised for having to deprioritise tasks, but because they also realised that it was too convenient always to blame a lack of time for an

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