Why is it that many software developers don't pay enough attention to requirements engineering? Are there ever circumstances where you can skip it?

Within the Audio/Video field, being a field commissioner, I see many programmers that do not want to follow the SRS documents. Most of the time they ignore them. From what I have seen, based on their experience, they feel that they have a better idea for layouts and functionality than the client does. Sometimes that turns out to be the case, but I have come across many clients that I must be the middleman telling them how the programmer wants to build their system, when they expect something else. I look at it as the client pays for what they want, if the programmer recommends changes, they should write out amendments with the clients, not change things on their own and hand the system over to the client with different functionality.

The only time I would think that it is permissible to skip the documentation is on rushed jobs that have extremely vague SRSs. Although, I would never recommend, I have been on large jobs where the SRS is too vague to get a grasp of what the client wants. When they are not responsive to Requests For Information but still demand deadline to be held up, then the programmers, and everyone involved, hands are tied and they have to decide what would be best for the client.