Ask the Expert:
Using Expertise Domains for Library Service Assessment

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Given the long history of complaints about traditional methods for recording and assessing reference services, it is perhaps not surprising that as a group ARL libraries report being unhappy with their own procedures. What is alarming is the depth of dissatisfaction.
ARL says:
“Exclude simple directional questions.”

Reference Transaction?
- Yes → Count it!
- No → Simple directional?
  - Yes → Don’t count it!
  - No → Now What?
Simple Directional Query Types

Call number location; Going to the stacks with a person who has a call number; Searching for books not on shelf; Find book reserved for a class; Directing patron to a requested title; Directions to another building or service on campus or any geographical location; Assistance filling out interlibrary Loan request form

Assisting with operation of machines; Clearing printer jams; Rebooting computers; Helping people logon; Fixing printer queues; How do I get a password?

Directions for locating facilities such as restrooms, telephones, photocopiers, etc.; Supplying materials such as paper or pencils; Locating library staff and service points; Information about library policy and hours; transfer a phone call; Explaining Circulation Policies

Research

Technology

Policy

(Spec Kit 268)
# Library Expertise Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U of Utah</th>
<th>Cornell</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Who are the experts?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Library items, resources &amp; information</td>
<td>Non-technology: library resources</td>
<td>Librarians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Computing; Printing &amp; Photocopying</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>IT Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy</td>
<td>Library people and places; Equipment &amp; supplies</td>
<td>Non-technology services Non-technology Information</td>
<td>Para-Professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Patrons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At least two other tragedies imperil information environments such as libraries, especially in the context of the Commons concept, and they are more intractable to change. One is the resistance culture of limited responsibility; the other is the chauvinist culture of expertise.

Bailey & Tierney, 2002
What do we mean by Expert?
Cognitive Psychology

- Excel mainly in their own domains
- Perceive large meaningful patterns in their domain
- Are faster and more accurate than novices at performing skills of their domain
- Have superior short-term and long term memory
- Represent a problem in their domain at a deeper level than novices.
- Analyze problems qualitatively
- Have strong self monitoring skills

(Chi, Glaser & Farr, 1988)
New information is processed by severely limited working memory

Experts bypass working memory limitations due to schemas automated by extensive practice

The only path to expertise, as far as anyone knows, is practice

(Willingham, 2009)
The Expert refers more to a form of interaction than to a person.

There are nonprofessional experts.

The core of the expert’s role consists of providing experience-based knowledge that we could attain ourselves if we had enough time to make the necessary expertise.

(Meig, 2001)
Experts are Knowledge Interpreters

- Most knowledge is codified in books and we are free to use it

- Using experts is a time-efficient use of knowledge

- The training of skills in whatever domain not only consumes time but also results in gained time

(Mieg, 2001)
Troubleshoot; Subject specific

Develop research strategy; Locate non-library materials; Find non-text formats; Deep web search…

Locate library materials; Find item from citation; Write a citation; Demo catalog/database/web search…

Research Expertise
Troubleshoot;
Application specific

Set up equipment/software;
Demo equipment/software…

Print/Scan/Copy help; Password help; Connect to online services…

Technology Expertise
Troubleshoot; Write policy

Interpret policy; Circulation; Lost & missing; Process requests…

Describe policy; Give directions; Office supplies; Refer to library service…

Policy Expertise
Troubleshoot; Suggestions & comments

Researcher (Library use for personal or work related need)

Student (Library use for class assignments)
Measurement can improve the outcome

(McKibben, 2003)
What outcomes do we want?

- Describe the function of our service desks
- Assure that questions are answered by someone with appropriate expertise (or by referral to appropriate experts)
- Implement effective cross-training for librarians and staff
- Monitor patron experience to assure service quality
Our First Attempt, 2007
College & Interdisciplinary Teams

Specialty services formerly offered at subject desks offered by teams using a model of virtual desks

- Social Sciences, Social Work, Business & Education
- Humanities, Fine Arts & Architecture
- International & Interdisciplinary
- Science, Engineering, Mines and Health
- Multimedia
- Special Collections
## DeskStats: Physical Locations

Reference help consolidated in the Knowledge Commons

“One-stop-shopping” service model

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<table>
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<th>Location</th>
<th>Status - Ignore for DeskStats</th>
<th>Received via</th>
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<td>Service Desk</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Nature of your request</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Select option]</td>
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### DeskStats data entry

- **Date:** Tuesday, October 05, 2010

**Research Assistance**

- ARC / Locked Case / AV request
- Bibliographic citation and software
- ILL request assistance
- Locate library materials
- Lost / Missing Request
- Research help - catalog, databases, topic help etc.

**Technology Assistance**

- Workshops, Tours, Classes
- Suggestions/Comments
- Directional/policy
- Circulation Services
- Reserve Services

**Other**

- Other: Please Add Details

**Comment**

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Switch mode | Undo Last
# DeskStats: Virtual Locations

Teams acting as virtual desks answer off-desk queries, share expertise and track accurate referral

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<th>Period</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Directional/policy</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Research Assistance</th>
<th>Suggestions/Comments</th>
<th>Technology Assistance</th>
<th>Workshops, Tours, Classes</th>
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- 6.87% Directional/policy
- 2.29% Other
- 86.26% Research Assistance
- 0.76% Suggestions/Comments
- 1.53% Technology Assistance
- 2.29% Total
## RefTracker Email Reference

Team categories track subject specific queries

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9 record(s)
CampusGuides
Team categories produce statistics for online guides

University of Utah Research Guides Subjects: Documents and Maps

Documents and Maps

Demographic Statistics from the U.S. Census and other sources
by Amy Brunvard - last updated on Sep 21st, 2010
A beginners guide to finding statistics about the U.S., Utah and the U.

International Publications
by Kate Holvoet - last updated on Aug 20th, 2010

Legislative Information from the U.S. Congress & Utah Legislature
by Amy Brunvard - last updated on Sep 30th, 2010
Be an informed citizen! Find out about federal and Utah lawmakers.

Map Collections in the Marriott Library
by Ken Rockwell - last updated on Sep 16th, 2010

Military Science
by Walter Jones - last updated on Jul 29th, 2010

Patents Trademarks and Copyright
by Dave Morrison - last updated on Sep 9th, 2010

Technical Reports
by Amy Brunvard, Dave Morrison - last updated on Aug 13th, 2010
Technical reports are reports from academic departments, government agencies and corporations that describe projects, research and activities of the organization.
There are no stupid questions (and no easy answers, either)
References


*ARL Statistics Questionnaire, 2007-08. Instructions for Completing the Questionnaire.*  


