

Basic Reference Sources (LIS-5104)

Course Instructor:

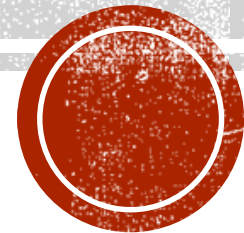
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Basic Functions of the Reference Librarian

- Teach people how to use the library and its resources.
- Answer readers' questions.
- Aid the reader in the selection of good books.
- Promote the library within the community.

(Green, 1876)



Functions of the Reference Librarian Today

- With changes in technology and the continuing diversity of library users, what is reference like now?
- Surprisingly (or perhaps not), the actual functions of the reference librarian have changed very little over the years.
 - Assistance and instruction (formal or informal) in the use of the library.
 - Assistance in the identification and selection of books, journals, and other materials relevant to a particular information need.
 - Provision of brief, factual information of the “ready reference” variety.

(Galvin, Thomas)



Functions of the Reference Librarian Today

- **Reference Transactions**

Information consultations in which library staff recommend, interpret, evaluate, and/or use information resources to help others to meet particular information needs.

- **Reference Work**

Reference transactions and other activities that involve the creation, management, and assessment of information or research resources, tools, and services.

Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)



Types of Reference Service

Within these philosophies and functions of the reference librarian following are the main types of RS:

- **Readers Advisory**

- The process of recommending sources to library users.
- A readers' advisor recommends specific titles and/or authors, based on knowledge of the patron's past reading preferences, and may also compile lists of recommended titles.
- Any reference librarian who recommends sources based on the user's needs is in fact doing readers' advisory service.



Types of Reference Service

■ Research Consulting

- Assisting users with research questions is an important aspect of reference service.
- In this case, the librarian may suggest sources, search terms, and pathways that will lead to material relevant to the research project.
- These questions do not have single, factual answers but have many possible results that vary depending on the researcher's interests and needs.
- To find out what aspects of the problem the user is interested in and to suggest possible search strategies that will lead the user toward the best solution.



Types of Reference Service

■ Subject Specialists

- Some large libraries hire librarians to be specialists in a specific subject field or discipline.
- Librarians immerse themselves in the subject area, usually selecting materials for the collection as well as assisting users with specialized research.
- Covering most common in areas that society sees as requiring more specialized knowledge to succeed, such as law, medicine, the sciences, and business.
- Most often found in academic libraries, large public libraries, and special libraries.



Types of Reference Service

- **Bibliographic Verification and Citation**
 - The process of reading, identifying, and interpreting citations to information sources.
 - As information becomes more and more complex, verification is a growing activity for reference librarians.
 - This is the primary activity of interlibrary loan librarians, whose entire operation depends on citations.
 - A newer function related to bibliographic verification is helping users to correctly cite the information sources that they have used.



Types of Reference Service

- **Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery**
 - The process of sharing material between libraries.
 - A common service in most libraries of all types because it extends the range of material available to users beyond the home library's collection.
 - Interlibrary loan librarians spend a lot of time doing bibliographic verification.



Types of Reference Service

■ Instruction

- Instruction tends to take two forms: *direct* and *indirect*.
- **Direct** instruction is characterized by the librarian communicating directly to the user and is delivered through any of a number of channels.
- In **indirect** instruction, the librarian does not communicate directly with the user, but communicates through instructional tools.
- In order to assist users with common problems, librarians write guides or pathfinders that describe how and where to approach various research problems.



Types of Reference Service

▪ Literacy Programs

- To providing resources for the literate segment of society, libraries have continued to play a role in education itself.
- Many librarians conduct literacy programs that are designed to teach reading skills to those members of the community who have not acquired such skills through other channels.
- Literacy programs are most common in public libraries.
- These programs continue the historic role of the public library in educating members of the communities that they serve.



Types of Reference Service

- **Outreach and Marketing**

- PR is as important in today's libraries as it was never before.
- Academic and public libraries frequently have staff whose primary responsibility is to work with specific segments of the community to increase library awareness and use within those populations.
- In the academic environment, the library may target outreach efforts at specific disciplines or departments, or toward specific types of users, such as faculty or graduate students.
- In public libraries, outreach is often directed at segments of the community, such as teens, senior citizens, minorities, or members of clubs or interest groups.

