

## Recent trends in reference services.

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### ABSTRACT

Reference service is one of the Library's Priority practices besides acquisitions classification, cataloging and physical planning. The term reference services or sometimes referred to as reference and information services can be defined as personal assistance provide by trained personal to library users seeking information.

**Keywords:** Book, journals, Dictionaries, Encyclopedias, digital, Reference service, E-mail, Ask a service OPAC.

### INTRODUCTION

The word reference, in this context refers to the task of providing assistance to library users in finding information, answering questions. Reference services form the physical reference desk to a virtual reference desk.

An important part of a reference service is the reference interview, which involves a personal discussion between a user and reference through the interview the reference librarian tries to understand the specific information needs of the user as well as subject knowledge and the reason for searching for the information.[1]

Libraries have also played a key role in providing information services. Such protective services include various from of current awareness and selective dissemination of information services. [2]

## CONCEPT OF REFERENCE SERVICE

"Dr. S. R. Ranganathan" right contact means, "Contact between the right reader and the right book at the right time and in the right personal way."

Ready reference service and long range reference service and two different aspects of reference service.

Accordingly to Ranganathan, "Ready reference service is reference service finished in a very short time in a moment if possible. Thus the concept of ready reference service is based on duration of time. The nature of ready reference service will differ from library to library.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

It is electronic technologies used for collecting, storing, processing and communication information. [3] There are two main categories- those which process information (such as computer systems.) and those which disseminate information (such as telecommunication systems). It has a wide connotation for librarians which include in addition technology like repro-micrographic technology, technical communication technologies, and database creation and use.

The term information technology is widely used in UK, USA and India.

### SCOPE

Dr. S. S. Multhay says that 'Information Technology' is operative in the following environments:-

- 1) **Library Management:-** Classification, cataloging indexing, database creation, CAS, SDI, etc.
- 2) **Library Automation:-** Organizing database and automating library housekeeping operations.
- 3) **Library Networking :-** Resource sharing and information dissemination
- 4) **Reprography :-** Photography, microfilms audio and video tape, tapes, printing, optical discs, etc.
- 5) **Technical Communication:-** Technical writing, editing, publishing, DTP systems etc.

## The Electronic Library

The Electronic Library is a storehouse of information, documents, audio visual and graphic materials stored in a variety of media ranging from printed books, periodicals, poster and reports, microforms, slides, films, video, audio disc. Audio tapes, optical disks, magnetic tapes, floppy disks, etc.

## Elements of Reference Service

1. Information or knowledge base
2. Use for client-now like to be a member of new cyber-community in which the library operates
3. Information professional or librarian, who plays the role of intermediary assisting and advising the other in the user in the information seeking

Out of these three basic elements of reference service listed above the first is the information or knowledge base. An essential part of the original reference paradigm was the taxonomy of reference services (encyclopedias, directories, yearbooks, bibliographies, indexes, etc.) that was integral to the early textbooks, and the guides to reference sources.

The most important element of the reference service is user. Essence of the Five Laws of Library Science, is that the user and his information need is the prime factor in designing a reference service. Reference service is user centered. [4]

## Some forms of IT base (Digital) Reference Service

### 1. E-mail based Reference

E-mail is the earliest and perhaps the most prevalent medium of virtual reference. With the proliferation of the internet in the past of the internet in the past decade and the availability of an e-mail account to almost everyone in the R & D organization, e-mail reference service became a popular service in large research and academics organization. Many libraries and information centers are extensively using e-mail facility to provide online reference service. [5]

### 2. Ask a Services

Ask A Service refers to web sites that provide such as Ask a librarian. Ask An-expert, Ask A-question in which users question are referred to an individually answered by a people. Many Ask a Service provide

online request forms for users to ask questions and to provide information that is usually obtained from an initial reference interview. In Ask A-Question forms, users are asked to provide information as how the sought-for information will be used, type of answer expected, and sources already consulted. This kind of information may help reduce irrelevancy and the number of subsequent communication, thereby to a certain extent alleviating the problem of a cumbersome reference interview process. There are many Ask A services available on the web. [5]

a) **24/7 Reference) (<http://www.247ref.org>)**

It is a set of software tools that enables librarians to provide real time reference assistance to their patrons over the internet. Each library can customize these tools to best serve its community.[6]

b) **Live Reference ([https://www.public.iastate.edu/-CYBER STACKS/LiveRef.htm](https://www.public.iastate.edu/-CYBER_STACKS/LiveRef.htm))**

Live Ref is a registry of real time reference services, which is created by Gerry McKiernan. It is a categorized listing of libraries that offers real time library reference or information service using chat software, live interactive communications utilities, call center management software, customer, interactive management, web contact center software, bulletin board services, interactive customer assistance system or related internet technologies.

c) **Know-it-Now Service ([www.cpl.org](http://www.cpl.org))**

CLEVNET library consortium's Know-it-Now service is an association of 31 public libraries in the Los Angeles area. Know-it-Now Services are available to users on the web round the clock, except on certain holidays. Basically the service is extension of text-based chat reference. However, it has more features and capabilities than put chat reference.

## CONCLUSION

All the electronic/digital surrounding reference forms discussed above have different technological natures, and hence they differ in their capabilities and in how they are actually used. Since e-mail is the most prevalent and primary communication medium for

Ask-A services. E-mail and Ask-A Reference Services may be grouped together technology wise.

Though the information professional are required to cope up with the new technology changes, but at the same time one should not fear that the new emerging technology based services will replace the traditional service completely rather these are emerging as supplementary services to improve the information dissemination amongst the user community.

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