

Annotated Glossary of Terms from The Desk and Beyond: Next Generation Reference Services

Madden, Leslie M. and Sarah K. Steiner, eds. 2008. *The desk and beyond: next generation reference services*. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries.

This book has 13 chapters and most discuss different modes of reference services, some delivered the physical world and others in the virtual world. Advantages and problems of each type are described with additional annotated resources and bibliography at the end of each chapter. There is some overlap between some of the chapters but unique features or problems were covered that were useful overall.

Glossary of terms used in the book is listed below and is useful to understand the many types of references services described. Definitions are in order of chapters of book.

Learning Commons (or Information Commons): reformatting the reference desk into a combination of circulation and reference desk; tutoring, multi-media support, IT services combined with reference. Drawbacks noted: increase in noise levels and some librarians not comfortable collaborating with IT and other services

Research Consultations: synonyms include clinics, appointments, and similar to faculty office hours. Jo Bell Whitlatch calls the service “knowledge-counseling, extended counseling or coaching interactions” (p. 20), and may occur outside of the library as well as in the library. Advantages: increases relevance of library services on campus and trust between librarians, students and faculty enhanced.

Field Librarian: U. of Michigan placed subject specialists in liaison departments; departments provided office space, and the librarians provided continuous support to faculty and students. Field Librarians develop collegial relationships with faculty but expanding the program depends on funding from academic departments. Advantages noted include book-centered atmosphere of library removed from this type of service that can be formal and intimidating. Other types of field librarian include “**Rovin**” Reference, “**Mobile Librarian**”.

Rovin’ Reference at Occidental College: 1 hour, four days/week librarians are in student residence halls to conduct reference services; similar service called “**Mobile Librarian**” at U. of Notre Dame.

My Librarian program at U. of South Florida teams up librarians with individual freshmen students for one-on-one tours, letters, and emails to provide personal services. Service increased student use of the library by 500%.

Solution-Focused Reference: based on a reference model developed by David Maxfield at U. of Illinois, Chicago in 1950s that was called Counselor Librarian. These librarians were trained in the social sciences skills of counseling, advising, study skills, and psychology to work with students at the Advisory Information Desk. Solution-Focused reference is based on similar types of skills, and especially related to short term therapy skills to help students find solutions quickly to their research questions. Patrons and librarians are equal partners in the process. “Miracle questions” help discern the research or questions quickly:

“If you found the perfect journal article for your paper, what would the title be?”
“Imagine your paper is done, and your professor asks you to tell the class what it is about. What would you say?”

Embedded Library, Embedded Librarian: library and librarian services embedded in course management software (CMS) and useful for distance learning courses, and librarians “lurk” or participate in class discussions in the CMS. Some courseware programs are integrating social networking; Elgg (elgg.org), an open source networking program works with WebCt. Advantages include integrating “silos” of library web pages, subject guides, etc. and course management software. Disadvantages: not all faculty are willing to provide administrative access to their distance classes.

Chat/IM Reference: “virtual” reference services. Chat services can be expensive and requires training. IM reference is easier to use but has less capabilities such as pushing pages to students. QandANJ, a chat reference service, now permits profile pages on MySpace, one of many social networking tools. IM reference considered more mobile. Younger students prefer IM, older students and faculty prefer web-based chat.

Social Networking tools and Reference: Google’s OpenSocial tool allows connecting a library’s catalog to its social networking website. Facebook allows libraries and other organizations to create “pages” for sending and receiving messages but is set up for individuals. MySpace allows both individual and institutions to have profiles to interact with participating members. Social networking websites allow outreach to students where they are. Wikis can be used to form collaborations, market subject guides and create readers’ advisories.

Preemptive Approach: proactive role for librarians and use of social networking tools allow librarians to approach students first instead of waiting for students to come to the librarian. Embedded librarians in courseware management systems offer possibilities for librarians to initiate services.

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12/2008