

POS Focus Group
Reference & Adult Services Staff
February 22, 2006

Challenges / Issues

- Technology
 - New technologies to learn
 - Continued need to teach the basics to patrons; more “older” patrons need assistance
 - Preferred interface for YS/YA; keeping up with their knowledge, expectations
 - Impact of increased reliance on Internet by government (tax forms) and businesses (job applications)
 - Significant increase in requests for help downloading forms or filling out online forms
 - Many job seekers are computer novices
 - Increasing burden on reference staff to help them
 - Federated searching (combining OPAC/databases/Internet search with one interface) should be a goal
- Information Literacy
 - Difficult to explain that not everything is online; that some print resources are better than what is currently available online
 - Challenge with both patrons and “new librarians”
 - How to combat lack of patron concern with accuracy of online results? “Convenience trumps accuracy”
 - Kids are not learning info literacy skills at school
- Programming
 - Increased need for variety of “computer classes”
 - Computer basics
 - Internet searching
 - Evaluating web resources
 - Filling out forms
 - Using office productivity software
 - Student research / information literacy
- Collection
 - Print vs. online decisions
 - Space and budget considerations
 - Want to keep print resources that make staff’s jobs easier
 - Teachers are requiring print resources to be used as references
 - Increased need for Spanish materials
- Local History
 - Local history vs. genealogy
 - Helping patrons with genealogy is a big challenge; expectations of delivery time and library’s ability to deliver are very high
 - Having referral list is crucial to help patrons with genealogy searches
 - Lack of staff knowledgeable about genealogy research
- Teachers
 - Very difficult to work with schools (all grade levels)
 - Difficult to teach kids about citation of online sources

- Teachers are often unaware of differences between formats (article in print vs. article through HomeACCESS)
- Patron expectations
 - How to know when to draw the line when helping a patron with the computer?
 - How to deal with patrons that seem to be taking advantage of reference staff?
 - Need help explaining what the staff can actually do for a patron
 - Need to teach more, do less for patrons; more empowerment of patrons
- Misc.
 - More demand for public documents (Superfund, development plans)
 - Issue of storage and preservation; security
 - Increase in requests for antiques and collectable info (price guides/ID)
 - Increased awareness of confidentiality issues by patrons

System Services / Central Library Services

- More databases
 - Related to print resources that are expensive to keep up; that are issued annually
 - Example: Antique and collectable
 - Don't like Gale databases
 - Tough to keep up with medical info
 - Love ProQuest, most heavily used database by far
- More expensive print materials purchased and housed at central library
- A way to know who has what in their reference collection
- Local history referral assistance
- Develop efficiencies since they feel they don't have enough staff
 - Develop centralized way for staff to help computer novices, simple instructions to get started on OPAC, HomeACCESS, other databases, Internet, computer, filling out forms online
- Promotional pieces that help explain:
 - What library staff can actually do for you (and can't do)
 - Difference between internet and electronic resources from the library
 - "It's an information jungle out there, we can help;" librarian is safari guide; "you may think you know what you're doing but you don't"
- Help in attracting late teens/early 20-year-olds to the library
 - Communication through blogs, IM
- How to integrate "the old with the new"? [traditional print resources with changing online opportunities]
- Work towards a federated search interface
- Need for a "Geek Squad"; circuit rider to answer staff and patron tech questions
 - Staff need more troubleshooting support (software (Millennium & SAM) and equipment); online
 - Help in setting up a teen tech volunteer program
- Communication venue for reference staff in member libraries – to share ideas and solutions

How do you define quality service?

- Patron leaves with what they came in for.
- Patrons are treated with respect.
- Patrons are educated by staff and empowered to use library resources on their own.

- Information literacy
- OPAC; subject searching
- Google vs. HomeACCESS
- Age appropriate resources
- Service with a smile
- Give them their next step/referral
- Actively combat the perception that the library is an intimidating place
- Communicate that we're here to be asked, it's not an imposition
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