Assessing Reference and User Services in a Digital Age (Reference Librarian)

Eric Novotny

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Assessing Reference and User Services in a Digital Age (Reference Librarian) Eric Novotny Effectively assess whether any library is making good use of the reference/user service resources available today

Libraries need to develop standards by which they can assess their individual performances in a larger context, and Assessing Reference and User Services in a Digital Age makes significant contributions to this ongoing discussion. The book addresses its subject matter via approaches ranging from case studies of individual libraries to general discussions of best practices. The contributors explore the impact of the Internet on the field of evaluation, focusing on electronic reference and instruction. They highlight current issues, present research results, and offer expert advice on how to assess online reference and instruction. All chapters are well referenced to facilitate further study, and many include tables, appendixes, checklists, and other helpful features that make difficult information easy to access and understand.

The chapters that make up Assessing Reference and User Services in a Digital Age are as rich and varied as the backgrounds of their authors. Experienced researchers provide the results of studies conducted to determine the nature and effectiveness of the online reference services offered by various libraries. Practitioners and administrators from different institutional settings (academic libraries, public libraries, consortiums, etc.) provide their perspectives on the issues facing librarians who need to assess the electronic services they provide.

In this important new book:

- Andrew Briedenbagh shows how a chat service can be implemented and suggests which data should be collected for it
- Buff Hirko examines VET: the Virtual Evaluation Toolkit
- Ruth Vondracek shares the experiences of a university library as it entered a statewide e-reference consortium, and offers advice and issues to consider before entering such a partnership
- librarians from San Jose State University present a model for evaluating electronic reference services that can be used in public or academic libraries
- Kathleen Kern discusses holistic evaluation
- chat transcripts are addressed in several chapters, including Joseph Fennewald's comparisons of question categories, Lesley Moyo's analysis of the use of instruction in the virtual environment, and Caleb Tucker-Raymond's proposed set of quality measures for chat reference
- Laurie Probst and Michael Pelikan report on the use of a "Tell Us What You Think" button to gather user feedback
- Kristi Nelson and Catherine L. Ross examine a research study that asked library school students to submit a reference question online and report on their experiences
- Melissa Gross, Charles McClure, and R. David Lankes suggest measures to determine the cost and benefits of a virtual reference service
- librarians from Utah State University describe the development of their online instructional module

Assessing Reference and User Services in a Digital Age is designed as essential reading for library administrators, public service librarians, and researchers. It provides general advice for practitioners as well

as an examination of research results and methodological issues. We urge you to consider making it part of your professional or teaching collection today.

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