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It’s time for Reference Counts! Please review this document for up-to-date information about this important week! You will find all of the answers to your burning questions about…Reference Questions!

What’s the point?

* Why do we count Reference Questions?
* *![C:\Documents and Settings\janina.goodwin\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\G2EBI5SB\MC900434403[1].wmf]()*Why is this an important statistic?

*“Among a host of other metrics, reference questions are basic informational items that libraries track.  This information is required by annual surveys, such as the Library Research Service at the Colorado State Library, as well as a nationwide survey called the Public Library Data Service.  These stats are then compiled and used by libraries throughout the country for a variety of informational purposes.  Sometimes grant funding or state and local funding is based on these statistics, as well as recognition for those libraries that are deemed to be “doing it right”, through analysis by Library Journal and the HAPLR report.  It’s important to make sure that we’re consistent with other libraries when we correctly identify and count these reference questions, as the information may be used in a myriad of different ways.”*

Ok then – what is a Reference Question?

![C:\Documents and Settings\janina.goodwin\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\RCR16LYB\MC900440424[1].wmf]()A reference transaction is an information contact which involves the knowledge, use, recommendations, interpretation, or instruction in the use of one or more information sources by a member of the library staff. It includes information and referral services. Information sources include printed and non-printed materials, machine-readable databases, catalogs and other holdings records, and, through communication or referral, other libraries and institutions and people inside and outside the library. The request may come in person, by phone, by fax, or by mail, electronic mail, or through live or networked electronic reference service from an adult, a young adult, or a child.

This definition is from <http://www.imls.gov/>

![C:\Documents and Settings\janina.goodwin\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\G2EBI5SB\MC900440430[1].wmf]()Just to break it down…

* Reference questions are:

 *Information provided by library staff…using library resources or referrals*

* Reference questions are not:

*Directional, Account Inquiry, Basic Library Technology Instruction, Questions about Policies*

Quiz Time! Are these reference questions?

1. Where is your restroom?
2. Where can I find call number 510.9?
3. Do you have any books about Isaac Newton?
4. Can you tell me what place I am on the hold list for *A Beautiful Mind*?
5. How do I print the report that I wrote about mathematics?
6. I need to apply to MIT so I can become an accomplished mathematician, how do I set up an email account?
7. I just got a new smartphone and all I know how to do is access the calculator! Can you show me how to download books about Fibonacci Numbers?
8. You have countless things to do in the library – how late are you open?

How’d you do? Do you know which ones are Reference Questions? Here are the answers!

1. ![C:\Documents and Settings\janina.goodwin\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\G2EBI5SB\MC900440454[1].wmf]()NO - This is not a reference question, it is a directional question. Please do not log this question.

Note: Directional questions ***are not*** questions asking for direction to a place. Sometimes people ask us for directions to somewhere, such as, “Where is the courthouse?” Since you may need to consult a resource to answer this question – that would be a reference question. The nature of most directional questions is that you can generally point to the answer. (However, pointing isn’t exactly great customer service – so that isn’t the best response. ☺)

1. NO - This is also a directional question because we can very easily direct customers to this call number without accessing any of our resources. Please do not log this question.
2. YES - This is a reference question, please log it on the Reference Counts Form:

[https://docs.google.com/a/pueblolibrary.org/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFBvdWtfUlNSdVlJQlg4c0xiVmVtYnc6MA#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/a/pueblolibrary.org/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFBvdWtfUlNSdVlJQlg4c0xiVmVtYnc6MA)

Note: you may be such an expert that you don’t have to consult resources to answer this question. That is great! However – if someone else would have to consult a resource then this question qualifies as a reference question.

1. NO - This is not a reference question, this is an account question. Please do not log account questions
2. NO - This is a BASIC technology question that does not require us to access or provide resources to answer. Please do not log these questions.
3. YES - This is a reference question, please log it on the Reference Counts Form:

[https://docs.google.com/a/pueblolibrary.org/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFBvdWtfUlNSdVlJQlg4c0xiVmVtYnc6MA#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/a/pueblolibrary.org/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFBvdWtfUlNSdVlJQlg4c0xiVmVtYnc6MA)

1. YES - This is a reference question, please log it on the Reference Counts Form:

[https://docs.google.com/a/pueblolibrary.org/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFBvdWtfUlNSdVlJQlg4c0xiVmVtYnc6MA#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/a/pueblolibrary.org/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFBvdWtfUlNSdVlJQlg4c0xiVmVtYnc6MA)

1. NO - This is a policy question Please do not log questions about Library policies.

**![C:\Documents and Settings\janina.goodwin\Local Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\RAMNT4QZ\MC900440428[1].wmf]()**Now what?

* Count reference questions during the week of 6/19-6/25
* You will get reminder emails with the links to the log each day
* The link is available on our Portal, under LINKS.
* Open the log at the beginning of each shift at a Public Services desk. If a question is not logged, we cannot add it later…so log it in real time.
* Reference questions don’t always happen in person – if you answer a reference question on the phone…**LOG IT!**
* Don’t forget – you don’t have to sit at a Reference Desk to provide the answer to a Reference Question! MHTs do too – any question that you answer without referring to someone else might be a Reference Question…**LOG IT!**

One more thing…

Counting reference questions does not in any way measure your level of busy-ness. We know you get LOTS of questions that are not reference questions, and those keep you hopping all day long! Right now, we are just trying to count reference questions so we can accurately report that statistic on our surveys. If we ever decide we should measure other questions – we may create a form with more categories: directional, account, basic technology, etc. But for right now, we are not measuring that. THANKS!