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Reference Answers

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The Reference Answer

Val Harper

University Library, UNH

April 5, 2004

“ ... And now for something completely different...”

A Typical Day:

- **Abstract art**
- **Boomerangs**
- **Cervantes**
- **Doughnuts**
- **Echinoderms**
- **Fascism**
- **Grants**
- **Habits**
- **Iodine**
- **Japanese**
- **Kitty Hawk**
- **Labor law**
- **Mayonnaise recipe**
- **Naples, Italy**
- **Oprah transcripts**
- **Peloponnesian Wars**
- **Quicken**
- **Radial tires**
- **Stocks**
- **The Red Pony**
- **Uvula**
- **Vacation sites**
- **Wind power**
- **Xenon**
- **Yalta**
- **Zoology**

55%



55%

The Typography of Reference Work:

Types of Questions

TYPES OF PATRONS

Types of Sources

Types of Media

Types of Questions:

- Directional



Types of Questions:

- Directional
- Bibliographical



Types of Questions:

- Directional
- Bibliographical
- Factual



Types of Questions:

- Directional
- Bibliographical
- Factual
- Informational



Types of Patrons:

- Variation by type of library:
 - Public
 - Academic
 - School
 - Special

Types of Patrons:

- Variation by type of library
- Variation by age:
 - Child
 - Adolescent
 - College student
 - Adult
 - Older adult

Types of Patrons:

- Variation by type of library
- Variation by age
- Variation by status:
- Economic
- Educational
- Social
- Geographic

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Ready-reference sources**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Ready-reference sources**
- **Biographical sources**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Ready-reference sources**
- **Biographical sources**
- **Dictionaries**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Ready-reference sources**
- **Biographical sources**
- **Dictionaries**
- **Geographical sources**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Ready-reference sources**
- **Biographical sources**
- **Dictionaries**
- **Geographical sources**
- **Government documents**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Ready-reference sources**
- **Biographical sources**
- **Dictionaries**
- **Geographical sources**
- **Government documents**
- **Everything else**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Ready-reference sources**
- **Biographical sources**
- **Dictionaries**
- **Geographical sources**
- **Government documents**
- **Everything else**
- **Print**
- **Electronic**

Types of Sources:

- **Bibliographies and catalogs**
- **Indexes and databases**
- **Encyclopedias**
- **Ready-reference sources**
- **Biographical sources**
- **Dictionaries**
- **Geographical sources**
- **Government documents**
- **Everything else**
- **Print**
- **Electronic**
 - **Web**
 - **CD-ROM**
 - **DVD**
 - **Next thing down the pike**



The Reference Librarian:



The Reference Librarian:



Reference Librarians Answer Questions

User

Librarian

Information

Query

Search process

Answer



User

Librarian

Information



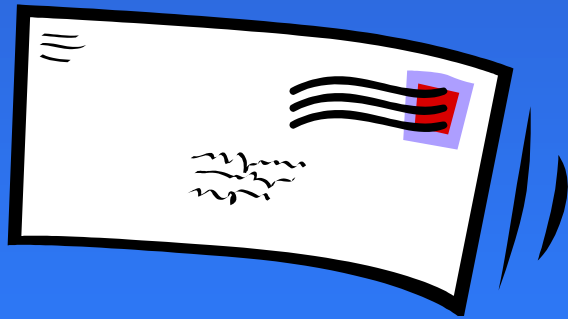
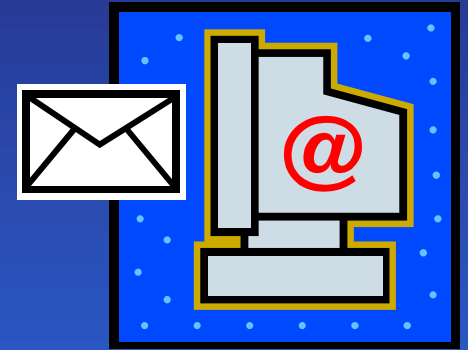
Reference Interview

Knowledge & Expertise

Putting it all together ...

**The right source for
the right patron at
the right time**





Supporting Functions

Collection Development



Supporting Functions

Collection Development
Technical Services



Supporting Functions

Collection Development
Technical Services
Space Planning



Supporting Functions

Collection Development
Technical Services
Space Planning
Administration



Supporting Functions



Collection Development
Technical Services
Space Planning
Administration
Professional Development



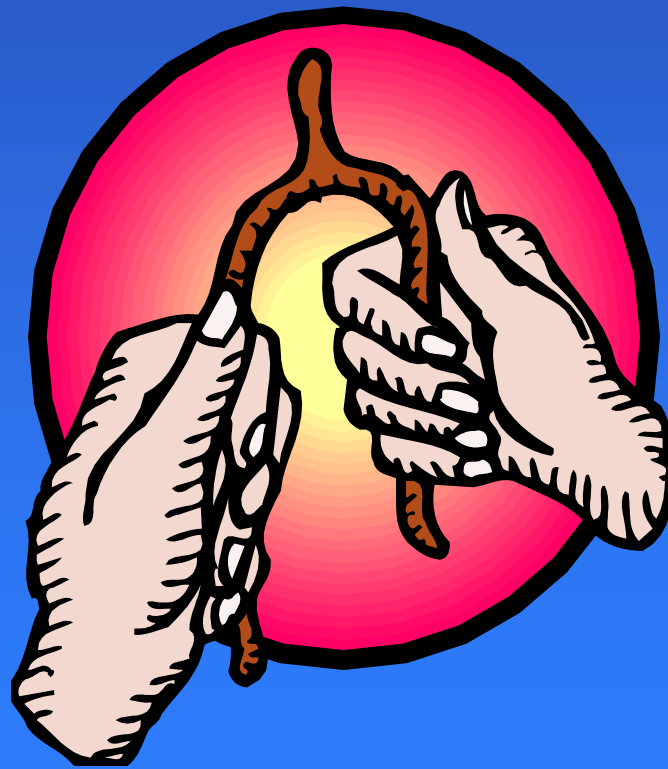
Supporting Functions



Collection Development
Technical Services
Space Planning
Administrative
Professional Development
Nitty Gritty



Break Time!



The Reference Question Refresher (Or Not)

**Because you can't answer the question until you
know what the question is!**



Overt
questioning

vs

Covert
questioning



Reference Behaviors

- Inviting the question

Reference Behaviors

- Inviting the question
- Greeting
- Inviting
- Signage
- On-desk activity
- Desk position
- Eye contact
- Body language

Reference Behaviors

- Inviting the question
- Active listening

Reference Behaviors

- Inviting the question
- Active listening
- Verifying
- Clarifying
- Open questioning
- Closed questioning

Reference Behaviors

- Inviting the question
- Active listening
- Finding the answer

Reference Behaviors

- Inviting the question
- Active listening
- Finding the answer
- On the first try!
- Report back to patron

Reference Behaviors

- Inviting the question
- Active listening
- Finding the answer
- Following through

Reference Behaviors

- Inviting the question
- Active listening
- Finding the answer
- Following through
- Does this completely answer your question?
- If yes, let patron indicate end of transaction
- If not, back to active listening

The Search Strategy



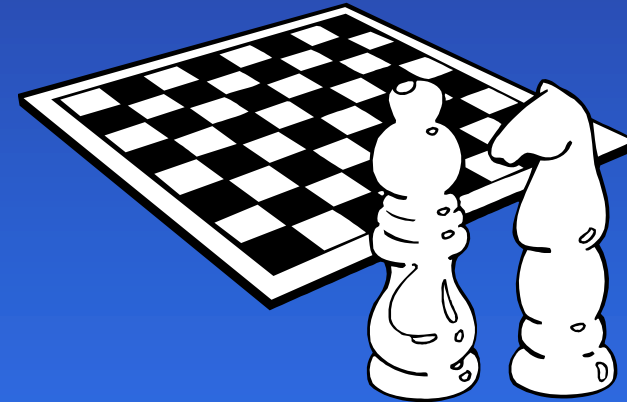
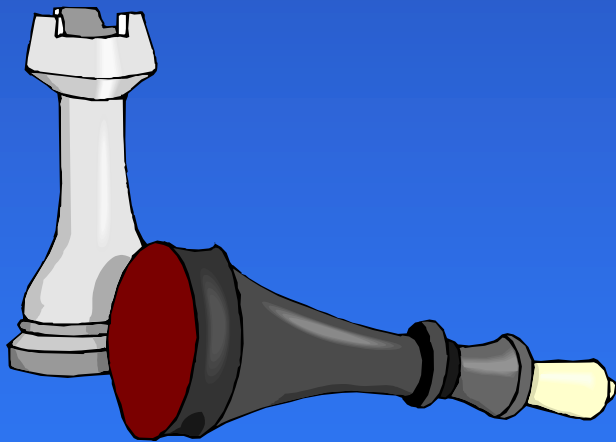
The Search Strategy

20/80

80/20

Strategy vs. Tactics

- Strategy = a plan of action intended to achieve a specific goal



- Tactic = action or procedure used to implement the strategy

The Search Strategy

Specific to General:

Taking a known item and finding others like it

General to Specific:

Finding an overview and selecting items or concepts within that

The Search Strategy

Break question down into key concepts:

The Search Strategy

Break question down into key concepts:

“I would like information on Paul Simon”

The Search Strategy

Break question down into key concepts:

“I would like information on Paul Simon”

Paul Simon
Congressman
Address
Voting Record
Presidential bid

Paul Simon
Singer
Lyrics
Discography
Grammy Awards

Types of Questions:

Directional:

- Clarify if necessary
- Know your library
- Know your town
- Know who to ask



Types of Questions:

Bibliographical:

- Requires a bit more questioning
- May involve searching locally or regionally
- May become another type of service in the process



Types of Questions:

Factual and Informational:

- May require a little to a lot of interviewing
- Subject sources
- Form sources



What's going on inside?



Search Tactics

Memory

Call Numbers

Colleagues

Keep a list

Use the index

Use encyclopedias

Use your imagination

Next Week:

- Go over homework assignments
- Reference Sources, Part 1

