Traditional Reference Classification

- Directional (Where is the catalog?)

- Ready reference (How tall is Mt. Everest?)

- Specific-search question (Where can I find information about the progressive movement in Louisiana?)

- Research (lengthy detailed assistance)
Strengths

• Analyzes workflow

• Provides statistical comparison with peer organizations within the state

• Provides statistical comparison to evaluate national trends in reference services
Weakness

• Statistics reveal nothing about the content of the question

• This “reference data” is equally important as statistical compilation

• The reference literature contains no effective means of “mining” this data.
GOALS
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• The creation of subject guides to address popular topics

• Target specific courses for library instruction

• Provide further data to aid in collection development
Methodology
Flow Diagram

- Clean Data
- Record Data
- Classify Data
- Collate Data
Recording Data

- After each reference interview the librarian records:
  - Subject of question
  - Class for which the information was sought
  - Professor’s name

- Example: hair styles in the 1950s – ENG 102 / Costello
Recording Data

- It is the responsibility of each reference librarian to narrow the topic during the reference interview.

- Broad: “Decades”

- Narrow: “hairstyles” “1950s”
Recording Data

- Access points of the recorded questions are derived from the reference interview.

- Emphasis on recording the question and subsequent access points.

- Questions without recorded classes are usually identified as “community.”
Cleaning Data

• Sheets of reference data are collected monthly.

• Entries with incomplete, directional, or indiscernable data are excluded.

• Example: Directions to Starbucks
• Example: Business Week? Citations?
Classifying Data

• Entries are correlated to a call number range for each subject using Alice (Ohio University’s Library Catalog) and the Library of Congress Classification scheme.

• Matching of relevant hits to call numbers is done at the discretion of librarian performing the classification.
Classifying Data

- Data is correlated in ALICE (Ohio University’s Library Catalog)
Classifying Data

• Call number is correlated to LOC subject heading such as:

  • TT950-979 Hairdressing. Beauty culture. Barbers' work

  • GT500-2370 Costume. Dress. Fashion

• Matching call number to subject heading is done at the discretion of librarian performing the classification
Collating Data

- Subject headings and class numbers are compiled into an Excel spreadsheet.
- Professors' names are not included in the compilation of the Excel spreadsheet.
- Data is graphed visually for general overview.
Outcomes
Study Guides

• First Subject Guide was “Utopia.”

• We now have nine subject guides directly related to our data mining and instruction initiatives.

• Agriculture, Decades, Environmental Science, Nursing, and so forth.
Outreach & Instruction

• Names of professors, courses, and related data are sent to the instruction librarian for outreach

• Example – Louisiana History / Professor Allured

• Almost one third of the student cap in her class are needing assistance at the Reference Desk.
Collection Development

• Monthly reports are sent to the Collection Manager

• Data is a component of the selecting process

• To date, the library has added several reference books and databases to the collection based on reference data mining
Biggest Obstacle to Implementation
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