
The aim of this book is to discuss two core aspects of academic librarianship: library reference services and information literacy. The book traces the history of these areas of service, the relationship between them and the way in which libraries in academic institutions are performing these roles/services in a rapidly changing arena.

The book is divided into three sections: Background in Reference and Instruction, Services in Academic Libraries and Conclusion. Section 1 has four chapters which alternatively discuss the history of reference services and the history of information literacy, followed by chapters on reference and information literacy services currently being provided. Whilst the authors illustrate current modes of practice in reference and information literacy services, they also discuss the changes that have occurred to reach this point and how libraries need to continue to develop and assess their practice in these areas if they are to provide a quality library service. These changes and developments include the Internet, shrinking physical collections, a rise in distance students, roving reference services, information commons, the change in so-called traditional office hours and virtual services (including chat reference and social networking). The discussion in this section leads nicely into Section 2, which provides examples of libraries striving to provide relevant library services in the 21st century.

Section 2 consists of seven chapters, each of which provides a case study of reference and/or information literacy services in a particular academic institution. The chapters are all set out with the same subheadings: executive summary, objectives of the chapter, setting the stage, current state, integration, challenges and future directions and a list of references. Each chapter provides an illustration of how a particular library deals with the challenges of providing reference and information literacy services in a changing library world. Examples of this include integration of the two services, including staffing, utilising and sharing resources between branch libraries, using new technologies to build instruction into online courses, and virtual reference. There is much to be learned from this section, which provides interesting and informative reading as each library shares its unique experiences.

Section 3 contains a concluding chapter titled Reference and Instruction Services as an Integrated Approach. This chapter highlights the necessity to integrate reference and instruction services to provide a relevant library service. It discusses the history of these services and the required areas of integration needed between reference and information literacy services to provide a quality library service. These areas of integration include curriculum, services, collection management, technology and assessment. The chapter also devotes a section to the challenges academic libraries face today.

Although academic in its nature, the layout of the book, the division of sections and tone of writing result in a book that is easy to read. The content is instructional and informative from a professional learning point of view, although I do think its audience will be limited to the academic library sector or a student of librarianship undertaking research.

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