

Who uses Reference?

Information/Entertainment “Seekers”

These people....

- Don't want to talk to ask questions. If they do ask reference questions, they tend to be deeper level inquiries, or the result of a failed attempt at finding the material themselves.
- Want new items- make impulse “buys”.
- Like Fiction, AV, Music, Popular Non-Fiction, Best Sellers.
- Have access to more personal resources.
- Use the Catalog (in person and from home) and prefer the Web Opac.
- Sometimes need to use a computer and sometimes need computer assistance (visitors, people whose computers/printers are broken, older people)
- Are tuned into media outlets.
- Sometimes use our meeting rooms.
- Figure out our system.
- Want to learn to use the library but also want things to be intuitive.
- Spend little time per visit.
- Browse.
- Want to learn to better use the library. Are proud to be “library users”.
- Enjoy Reader's Advisory.
- Attend some library programs.
- Want to be taught, told, directed.

Information/Entertainment “Needers”

These people...

- Ask questions at the desk.
- Need things to be intuitive. Benefit from intuitive design and organization. e.g. – All of the law books being in one section.
- Ask questions about life changing events such as:
Divorce
Family Issues (Adoption, Guardianship)
Entrepreneurship
Educational/Career Choices
- Want to be given/shown information, not as interested in learning how to search.
- Use the computers.
- At the library because they need the information that the library has.
- Want to be guided, shown, given.

Which departments does Reference need to be near?

Primarily:

Magazines and Newspapers- Periodicals are often needed when researching. Every term paper and business search requires at least a quick search of pertinent magazines and newspapers. Reference would like to be able to provide this natural research need in one centralized location. Additionally, periodical readers are often non-fiction readers. Few periodicals are strictly fiction. They lend themselves to displays, and to subject oriented areas. We would be very open to absorbing periodicals into our department.

Secondly:

Local History- Local history searches often overlap with resources that are included in the Reference department. Also, it is important that Local History be located near the periodical department for access to microfilm and older editions of local and national newspapers.

Lastly:

Teens- Non-fiction (popular and scholarly) is traditionally very important to teens. Their homework and research needs are such that they need to be near reference. Their personal interests can be well suited to non-fiction and periodicals. Finally, teens have some popular non-fiction in the teen area that we would like easier access to.

Would Be Nice (but not critical):

Sights and Sounds (Overlap of AV non-fiction materials such as books on tape and CD-ROM's), Fiction (Adult Materials) and Special Services (For their special materials, and the ability to refer patrons to them).

Other Thoughts:

It is important that Special Services be near Children's. Many people that have low reading levels would benefit from some children's materials available.

What floor should Reference be on?

Though we love our first floor situation and like the ability to appeal to the first floor browsers, we would like to suggest another alternative to the current layout.

There is a theory that states- the further you go in to the library; the longer you should intend to stay. As people progress into the building, departments get quieter and research is more situated to that area. People are away from the hustle and bustle of circulation and people entering and exiting the library, and they are more able to work on in-depth research and reading.

Here is an illustration of our idea- dealing only with public service areas:

On the first floor, the in and out people:

Staffed Information Kiosk (Concierge - Docent) with Web OPAC's front and center

Audio Visual

The Browsing library (including special additional (no holds) copies of the latest and greatest fiction and non-fiction and the most popular magazines all situated around a café)

The Café

Circulation

30 Minute walk up pharos computers

Restrooms (available to the public)

On the second floor, People planning to stay a little longer:

Children's

Special services

Fiction

Teens (with a circular staircase up into reference and down into the café/browsing library?)

Restrooms (available to the public)

On the third floor, Research buffs:

Reference and Periodicals (Non-Fiction, Magazines and Newspapers)

Local History

Primary Computer Lab- Staffed with computer technician staff with reference help available

2-3 Hour Pharos- Mac's and PC's – User created content stations, Computers with Audio and Instant Messaging, Applications Tutorials and Print Management)

Restrooms (available to the public)

How should Reference look and function?

Reference Desk:

We would like our desk to look fully staffed at all times. This means that when we only have one staff member available at the desk (if for instance their partner was locating a book in the stacks or roving the department), it does not look abandoned. With this set up, staff could feel freer to rove and help patrons without the threat of an empty looking desk. The reference desk itself would also benefit from a better location, allowing for a full view through the stacks with uncompromised sight lines. We would like a smaller desk, but very centralized.

Reference and research is a participatory task. A patron approaches the librarian with a question, and during the reference interview, they are drawn out. We would like the patron to be empowered as a fully participatory partner in the reference process. As time goes on and searching becomes more commonplace, we predict the reference questions that we get will become instructive and will consist of more deeply probing questions. To tackle this future, we would like a variety of desk heights for a variety of tasks. With some patrons, we would like to sit down across a small desk and work out tough questions in a professional way (as loan officers are able to do in a bank). For other quicker questions (directional and ready-reference) we would like to preserve our tall desk. Every desk should allow for comfortable co-browsing of the computer. Patrons should be able to see what we are doing, and what sites and software we are using to help them.

Finally, we would like to propose the installation of a main switchboard. Many calls, which come through reference, are directional (dealing with library hours or locations), quick circulation questions, or are calls intended for other departments entirely. If there was a main switchboard to field incoming library calls, less people would be needed to staff the desk, and more time could be allotted to working in the stacks.

Display Areas:

SJCPL has an abundant collection- it is one of the most engaging and impressive parts of the library. Working flexible display areas into the floor plan will get the most face out books possible. Face out displays really make a difference in the circulation of a book. Display furniture should be abundant, browsable and easy to use (currently we do not have enough area for display). Every display should be easily perused and people should be able to glance through without bending over. Slat-wall could be a useful tool in the redesign.

Collection/Stacks:

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Currently, we have some glaring problems with our circulating collection. Our collection is not laid out intuitively, in the evening and on cloudy days there is not adequate light to read call numbers in many sections (600-799) and there is hardly any ability to put books face out on the circulating shelves. These problems need to be rectified in the redesign. Our non-circulating section is confusing, and patrons often think that those books are the main stacks of the library.

We would like a smaller Reference section with lower shelves (something concrete to signal that it is not part of the circulating collection).

The "Information Needers" require that our library's information be as clear, centralized and as accessible as possible. If we could single out certain needed life enhancing sections of the collection- for instance; Law, Business/Grants, Education and Automotive and consolidate them together (Circulating, Non-circulating) with common colors and common graphics (branding) that would do a lot for people who need to look at the collection as a whole, have big issues to tackle, and who are unwilling or unable to learn our classification system.

Ideally, we would like our library as intuitive as possible- would like children to be able to easily decipher our classification system.

Computers:

Over the next 20 years, "Information Seekers" will increase the trend of doing their research from home, and "Information Needers" will still need a place to get assistance in searching, speedy information, and a place to use computers and online sources (recreationally).

Laptops available for checkout would address recreational users, keep computers scattered throughout the library building and increase the technological visibility of the library. These laptops could be checked out with a library card and used where the patron would really like to be in the library. Patrons could take them to the café, to a table in their subject areas or they could sit in a comfortable chair. These patrons could be mobile and they could seek assistance when needed.

Desktop Computers (perhaps not included in the pharos system) should also be available in subject areas (ideally situated attached to endcaps). These computers should be set to a home page for the subject area, and have access to pertinent databases, subject guides and our Web OPAC.

We should have a centralized computer lab, where patrons can use all of the advanced software that a personal desk top computer allows. In the computer lab, patrons should be able to sit down at a computer with minimal distraction.

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They should be able to concentrate. Individual patrons need spaces where they are not distracted by the computer user next to them. More space and decreased sight lines from computer to computer would be ideal. Conversely, there also needs to be places where patrons can work collaboratively on computer projects, listen to sound and make a little noise. Finally, we need to offer a location where patrons can produce content. The library needs to act as a provider of access to technology. We should be bridging the divide between the technology have and have-nots. This means not only providing access to the Internet, but allowing access to content creation technology for the Internet (scanners, digital cameras, digital camcorders, etc.).

To house this section, a main computer area staffed with technicians who could assist with applications and basic searches would be ideal. We must always keep in mind that basic searches are sometimes only basic on the surface, and upon further inspection, there lies a Reference question. So, though many computer questions could be answered by a technician who is trained in computer useage, we would still like to make sure that Reference help is available at all times to the computer using public. Having Reference help available will help the public with their searches, and also make sure that our librarians are keeping up their computer skills.

Patrons do not like to get up from their computer to seek help. This may be because they fear losing their computer, they are trying to sustain their train of thought, or they are not inclined to get up and seek help. If we could create a computer lab that brings assistance closer to hand, this would remove the need for patrons to snap their fingers for assistance, and help us to serve the patrons where they are.

Seating Areas:

We need a variety of seating options at the new main library. We get asked daily if we have any study rooms that people can use. We would like to suggest semi-private conference rooms (perhaps with glass walls and full wireless access) where students, groups and business people could congregate and work collaboratively on things. We would like to get a variety of seating for common areas. We would like to recommend larger tables which seat 4-6, and smaller tables which seat 1-2. People like a choice in their seating. Booth like seating could be an additional idea to consider.

Staff Workroom:

We would like to place the Staff Workroom on the same floor as the Reference department. We would like natural light, and a view into the department to gauge if help is needed. We would also like some privacy, so that patrons are not constantly waving down their favorite librarian from their work in the back. We would also appreciate floor to ceiling shelving for storage and weeding purposes.

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