**REFERENCE IN PERPETUAL BETA:**
The Sonoma State University Experience

"They did what with their Reference Desk?"

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### Fall 2011

**New Public Services Coordinator Arrives**

- 5 Desks
- Shrinking Staff
- Growing Student Population

**Assessment Begins**

Data to gather:
- General length of transactions
- Kinds of transactions
- Where transactions occur

Of 1,965 Transactions...

- 74% of transactions are short or directional
- 97% of transactions occur Monday–Friday
- 84% of transactions occur between 11am–5pm

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### Spring 2012

**Pilot Projects**

Faced with the reality of staffing five desks with a reduced staff, the Public Services Coordinator tested a roving reference service as well as consolidation of the Reference and Circulation Desks.

**Roving Reference**

Librarians were encouraged to rove the library during their Reference shifts. Armed with an iPad, the librarian moved systematically through the building, looking for patrons in need of assistance.

**Co-locating Reference and Circulation**

The space near the Circulation Desk seemed like a logical place for Reference, so the two services could share and refer patrons for assistance as needed.

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### Fall 2012

**Implementation Begins**

**Information/Check-Out Desk**

- Empowered and trained Public Services staff to handle short/directional questions
- Clarified workflow for answering vs. referring

**Research Help**

- Reduced hours to peak times defined in Fall 2011 data
- Added more two-way radios for on-call system
- Designed a space for deeper consultations

**Challenges**

- Referral process learning curve
- Training, training, training
- Marketing the service

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### Spring 2014

**Transformation Continues**

- Increased in-depth Research Help transactions
- Introduced Roving Student Assistants
- Developed Best Practices
- Improved stats form

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