VALE Annual Conference

January 5th, 2012

Reference Services Committee

"Embracing Change at the Reference Desk:

Data Collection Methods and Tools in NJ Academic Libraries"

Survey questions:

1. What kind of data is collected in your library (libraries)?
2. How do you define different reference transaction categories?
3. Are statistics collected only at the reference desk?
4. Do you collect the data on a daily basis or as a sample (once a week, once a month)?
5. Do you register each question or rather each reference transaction?
6. Do you use an electronic tool to collect the data? Is so, what type of software program is used?
7. How is the collected data being used?

Responses received from 37 libraries (2 do not collect reference stats)

30 INSTITUTIONS (58% of VALE members)

35 individual libraries (5 Rutgers libraries)

* + - * 13 public (state); 12 com. coll.; 10 private

**Results – snapshot showing how academic libraries define, collect and use reference data**

* Data is being collected in three main categories with a variety of terms
* Definitions of reference transactions vary
* Reference desk still leading location for collecting data
* Daily - preferable frequency for data collection
* Transactions rather than questions
* Electronic tools – few; homegrown rather than commercial
* Data used for reports, but also for staffing, coll. devel., assessment





**Some currently available reference tracking software:**

**LibAnswers** (from Springshare)

 <http://www.springshare.com/libanswers/>

**Libstats (r**eference tracking system in open source from Google Code) <http://code.google.com/p/libstats/>

**Desk Tracker (not to be confused with Reftracker)**

<http://www.desktracker.com/>

**RefTracker (from Australia)**

<http://www.altarama.com.au/reftrack.htm>

**Gimlet (web based, $10 per month)**

[**http://gimlet.us/**](http://gimlet.us/)

**Denise Brush:** **Brush@rowan.edu**

**Pat Dawson:** **pdawson@rider.edu**

**Maria Deptula:** **mde@berkeleycollege.edu**

**Jennifer Heise:** **jheise@drew.edu**

**David McMillan:** **DLMcMillan@caldwell.edu**