Digital Reference Services

Linda S Katz

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Extensive data on the theoretical and practical aspects of electronic reference services!

Digital Reference Services provides an overview of electronic reference services and software, and explores the opportunities that real-time digital reference services can offer in a variety of library settings. Experts in the field convey numerous opinions and theory about the growth of this new approach to answering reference questions. This book teaches librarians new methods and techniques for offering technologically advanced reference services to the public.

The first half of Digital Reference Services includes such topics as:

- real-time or "live online" reference services
- the historical development of digital reference services and the role of the reference librarian
- mediated online searches
- how to create a virtual-ready reference collection of elite reference Web sites—includes a list of the top sites available to the public
- how to start and operate a digital reference desk in your library

The second half of Digital Reference Services covers examples of libraries—both large and small—which have used revolutionary ideas to bring electronic reference services to their patrons. These ideas include:

- utilizing ATM-like kiosks in remote locations from library buildings to connect with underserved populations
- implementing live, interactive web-based reference services—the challenges and benefits, cost, training, and workload requirements
- evaluating your real-time references services—investigating self-assessment and blind reviewing, incorporating your assessment into an existing evaluative program, and obtaining the administrative support essential for an accurate assessment
- creating a statewide virtual reference system—selecting software, developing policy, marketing, coordinating the project, and staffing and training
- online reference management for smaller libraries—because of the smaller staff, smaller budget, and smaller amount of patrons, is it a feasible addition to the library?
- much more!

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