



Redefining a University Library's Reference Service in 2018: A Continuum of Service

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What am I going to talk about?

- Single-desk pilot project: the merger of the circulation and reference services
- Individual consultations for students and researchers
- Triage service for these individual consultations

What am I **not** going to talk about...

Our reference collection was reduced in size 3 times, to finally be merged with the general collection in 2017



What am I **not** going to talk about...

- Library renovations in 2008 : one desk
- Was still operating as **two** separate services (circulation and reference) until 2016



General information

Context

University of Ottawa
(+40,000 students)

Bilingual : French / English

Health Sciences Library
(Faculties of Medicine and
Health Sciences)

Why these changes?

- Significant decrease in circulation activities (loans, reserve, book shelving) and questions received at the reference service
- Changes in users' habits (digital over print)

Phases of the Single Desk Pilot Project

Beginning

December 2015

- Librarians pull out of the reference desk
- Support staff: several trainings

During...

- The single desk's role: triage and answering level 1 and 2 questions
- Librarians were available to help during this transition

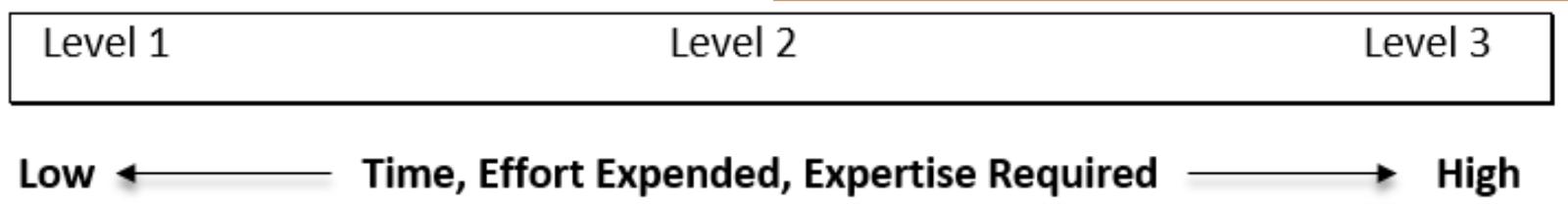
The End

May 2017

Assessment of the pilot project:

- Survey of users and employees
- Type of questions answered at the desk reviewed

Here is a figure that can help you visualize this new model:



Source: Gariepy, L., Hodge, M., Doherty, M. T., & Clark, D. (2015)

What the heck are Level 1, 2 and 3 ???

Level 1:

- Orientation / directional questions
- Help with library catalogue (basic/introductory)
- Circulation services
- Referring students to the appropriate research guides

What the heck are Level 1, 2 and 3 ???

Level 2:

- Help finding articles using our discovery tool
- Help people getting started with databases
- Troubleshooting for electronic resources, e-journals, e-books
- Basic citation manager questions and support

What the heck are Level 1, 2 and 3 ???

Level 3 *Referral to a subject specialist or service*

- Help with a literature review, systematic review, scoping review, etc.
- Advanced help with keywords and subject heading use for database searches
- Advanced citation manager questions and support
- Questions specific to a discipline which need to be addressed by the subject specialist



The ability to identify issues that should be referred is an important skill required for good customer service. Even if the employee does not know the answer to a question, the client will long remember the Library staff friendliness and willingness to help, even after forgetting his question.



Assessment of the pilot project

1. Surveyed support staff and librarians

All survey participants answered that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the single-desk pilot project.

2. Surveyed library users

39 users participated in the survey. 92% of survey participants were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the help received at the single desk.

Assessment of the pilot project

3. Review of questions' statistics answered at the single desk, from April 2016 to February 2017

- 68% were general information questions
- 39% were bibliographic research questions
- 1% were advanced reference questions

This result demonstrates that "level 3" questions have indeed been transferred to the specialized librarians.

From May 2016 to March 2017, librarians spent 919 hours doing consultations with students and researchers.

Part 2 : Individualized Consultations

- These consultations are one-on-one meetings between a librarian and a student or researcher, in person or virtual (Skype). These appointments are designed to help with their research projects, large or small.
- In recent years, librarians have become accustomed to booking appointments with their clients.
- These meetings are very much appreciated by the students, since we are providing help tailored to their needs.



Karine Fournier

Prenez un rendez-vous / Schedule
Appointment

Contact:

Bibliothèque des sc. de la santé / Health Sciences
Library

The arrival of LibCal

- The University of Ottawa Library uses SpringShare's "LibGuides".
- LibCal is an appointment scheduling system.
- LibCal automatically "syncs" with librarians' Outlook calendars.
- \$\$: additional cost involved.

What the students see:

Choisir la date |
Select date

◀		Feb	▼	2019	▶	
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

Choisir l'heure |
Select time

2019-02-06

10:00

11:00

13:30

14:30

Students have to fill
up a mini
questionnaire:

Nom | Name *

Prénom | First name

Nom de famille | Last name

Courriel | E-mail *

Quel est votre programme d'études, ou avec quel département ou école êtes-vous affilié ? / What is your program of study, or with which Department or School are you affiliated? *

Êtes-vous.. / Are you.. *

- Au 1er cycle / Doing an Undergraduate degree
- Aux cycles supérieurs / Doing a graduate degree
- Chercheur(e) ou Professeur(e) / Researcher or Professor
- Autre / Other

Administrative side of LibCal

Appointments

[My Appointments](#)

[Availability](#)

[Booking Explorer](#)

[My Settings](#)

[Integrations](#)

[Widget/Embed Code](#)

▼ Appointment Settings

Appointment Duration i

60 minutes



Appointment Padding i

0 minutes



Patron Must Book In Advance i

4 hours before Appointment



Administrative side of LibCal

Add/Delete Availability

Select the location and pattern that you want to add availability for. Note that input dates are restricted to 12 months in advance.

Start Time ⓘ

⊙

End Time ⓘ

⊙

Repeat Pattern ⓘ

Single Date Daily Weekly Monthly Multi-Date Picker

Days Of Week ⓘ

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

Frequency ⓘ

⬆️⬇️⬆️ week(s)

Start Date ⓘ

📅

End Date ⓘ

📅

Part 3 : Triage Service - Two Ways

From the single desk:

- Employees can redirect more complex requests to the appropriate librarians (by discipline).

For librarians:

- A librarian may decide to transfer a request if he/she receives more requests than usual, or when they are away for a certain period of time.

LibCal
“common
calendar” for
Triage

Prendre un rendez-vous | Make an appointment - Bibliothèque Sciences Santé | Health Sciences Library (RGN)

Pavillon Roger-Guindon | Roger-Guindon Hall
Pièce 1020 | Room 1020
451, rue Smyth | 451 Smyth Road
Ottawa, ON K1H 8M5
Canada

1. Choisir un/e bibliothécaire | Select a librarian

Recherche | Research

Systematic Review

- Aucune préférence | No preference
- Karine Fournier
- Lindsey Sikora
- Marie-Cécile Domecq

Conclusion: Lessons learned

- Support from your administration is key to go through a change such as the merger of two services.
- All library employees should be involved from the beginning, they should have a voice :
 - Present a plan to them, have them provide you with constructive feedback
 - Regular meetings with staff, where concerns are heard.
 - Be aware of change management practices, for yourself and your team.
 - Don't be afraid to talk about difficult topic « *this is not a exercise to layoff employees, but instead to upgrade the library services with the current practices of our users* »

Questions?

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