

2010-2-24 Notes

LIS 620: Information Sources and Services

Library Ethics

- Reference ethics: Problem *Patrons* or Problem *Librarians*?
 - Reference and Adult Service Division adopted ALA's Code of Ethics to become the Reference code of Ethics
 - In the 80s, a guy sued a library which wrote a specific policy to keep him out of the library after he had abused it repeatedly (using the rug as a toilet, etc)
 - Write policies before you need them! Ex: people watching porn on the computer
- Who is our user? What's a valid query?
 - Information provided the user in response to any query must be the most accurate possible. Type of question or status of user is not to be considered. Eligibility of users will be determined by the role, scope and mission of individual institutions.
 - Any queries?
 - Depends on what your library's mission.
 - Any user?
 - Depends on where you work. For business libraries, your collection is a *trade secret*.
 - The federal government has tried several times to try and seize records of library users.
- Bias
 - Personal philosophies and attitudes should not be reflected in the execution of service or in the extent or accuracy of information provided.
 - Proselytizing
 - Trying to guilt trip people towards your beliefs.
 - You have to be deadpan when answering questions.
 - Politics
 - People being fired for their beliefs/leanings.
- Confidentiality
 - Information contacts with users, whether reference or directional, are to be treated with complete confidentiality.
 - No exceptions?
 - Professional comrade?
 - We talk to each other anyways, but don't be overheard!

- On plagiarism: no idea is original, various degrees of punishment
- Policies
 - All rules and practices regarding availability and use of the information and resources must be administrated impartially. Rules and practices must be codified (i.e. reference policy statement) and made available to the user in written form.
 - The Morristown problem
 - Philanthropy and power ploys
 - Private vs. public
- Money, Honey
 - No personal financial gain should result because of the librarian/information specialist role as a representative of the library in dealing with the user.
 - Moonlighting: can't work on an outside project w/o permission unless you want your job contract allows the employer to take your money.
 - Become an information broker instead.
 - When are you *not* a representative of the library?
- You need to know the bomb and fire procedures and medical procedures.

The Reference Interview

- What is the real question?
- Rapport
 - Make yourself approachable
 - Smile a bit
 - Have a pencil nearby
 - Get up sometimes
 - Dress, hygiene, demeanor
 - Verbal vs. non-verbal behaviors
 - Etiquette
- Making the library approachable
 - Signage
 - Workspace---signal that you're working
- The Mechanics of the Interview
 - **Reference interview** is a structured conversation between user and librarian which has a specific purpose.
 - Four variables:
 - Question
 - User
 - Librarian
 - Answer

- Question
 - Two levels
 - What is said: Book on trees
 - Real Need: Building a treehouse.
 - Question negotiation
 - Identifying negotiable queries
 - Open ended questions to get the real question
 - Ask vague questions
 - Finding “real” question
 - Defining scope and (if possible) purpose
 - Develop search strategy while trying to ferret out answer
- Questioning
 - What subject?
 - What information about the subject needed?
 - Paraphrase request!
 - Ask question to establish:
 - Definition
 - Scope
 - Purpose
 - Use open vs. closed questions
- Users
 - Five common problems
 - Shy & Uncertain---may be gruff to cover up
 - Feel staff is too busy
 - Feel sensitive about needing help
 - Lacks confidence in staff
 - Hurried, pressed for time
- Librarian
 - Common sources of stress
 - Fear of failure to find the answer
 - Dislike some patrons
 - Too high volume, not enough time
 - Way to drive people off
 - Avoidance behavior
 - Need to pay attention to
 - Facial expression and body language
 - Acknowledge that others are waiting if necessary
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- Answers
 - “Does this answer your question completely?” or words to that effect
 - Drastically improves people’s perceptions of your service
- Theory of communication (and maybe, the reference transaction)
 - Transmission model (Shannon-Weaver)

Information Source==(message)==> Transmitter==(signal)==> Noise Service [_]==>
Receiver==(message)==> destination (which then goes back to “Information source”)

- This model can show the user and librarian interaction where the “Noise Service” shows how the interaction can be messed up via voice, mannerism, colloquia, etc