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After the Desk:
Reference Service in a Changing Information
Landscape

By Amy Paterson

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Agenda

- Responses to dropping reference desk transactions
- E-resources: killing more than just the book?
- Virtual reference options
- Is Information Literacy the new reference?
- Good practices: some key concepts

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Responding to dropping desk transactions

- Cutting Hours
- Single Service Desk (combining with circulation, IT or both)
- Staffing with paraprofessionals
- On-call reference librarians
- No change



Is the Book really dead?

- Amazon Kindle book sales outpaced print starting 2012 (Malik, 2012)
- E-books still have an uneasy relationship with some libraries
- Many people believe that the end of print books is the end of libraries (Siegler, 2013)

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Why do we fear the Desk's decline, but not
the Book's?

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Virtual Reference





Information Literacy: the new Reference?

- Individual and group consultation stats increasing (Stevens, 2013)
- In-class or in-library orientations form research foundations and establish the librarian as a trusted source
- For-credit Information Literacy classes impart lasting skills and nurture a relationship between librarian and students

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Good Practices: Some Key Concepts

- Outreach
- Flexibility
- Connectivity
- The result: A more organic reference department, moving with change, instead of fighting against it!

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Comments? Questions?

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