Thank you for joining us for today’s webinar.

Relevant, Relatable Reference Services in Your Library
will begin at 1 p.m. CDT. Until then, enjoy the silence!

Today’s panelists:
John Gottfried
&
Katherine Pennavaria
Co-Authors of
Providing Reference Services: A Practical Guide for Librarians

Susan Maguire
Senior Editor, Collection Management and Library Outreach

Download the slides while you wait: bit.ly/TK

Tweaking?
#ReferenceDesk
@ALA_Booklist

John Gottfried
Coordinator of Reference Services and Business Librarian
Western Kentucky University Libraries

Katherine Pennavaria
Katherine Pennavaria
Coordinator of the Visual and Performing Arts Library
Western Kentucky University Libraries

Agenda

• Introductions
• A History of Reference
• Reference Now
• The Reference Interaction
• Going to Market
• The Future of Reference
• Question & Answer

A History of Reference: Where We’ve Been
Reference as we know it is as old as the written word.

Library of Congress reference desk, c. 1900

1920s: telephone reference arrives

Chicago Public Library c. 1930
Relevant, Relatable Reference Services in Your Library

Sophie's Choice, 1982 (set in 1947)

Desk Set, 1957

1969: William Katz redefines reference

Reference Services Now
What’s the problem?

- “Help doing things rather than finding things” (Kenney)
- Information as commodity
- What are they doing?
- What are the obstacles?
- The best possible solution
  - Faster
  - Cheaper
  - Better

Making connections

- “Bad Libraries build collections. Good libraries build services (of which a collection is only one). Great libraries build communities.” (Lankes)
- The goal is not getting people to use the library services; it is helping library users accomplish something
- Connect the library and its resources to what the library users are trying to accomplish

Staying Grounded

- Dig deeper
- Get the backstory
- Bend the resources and advice to fit the problem

The Reference Interaction

Reference & User Services Assn., 1996

- Approachability
- Interest
- Listening/Inquiring
- Searching
- Follow-up

BARRIERS TO APPROACHABILITY
BAD QUESTION: “May I help you?”

EVEN WORSE: “Did you need something?”

GOOD QUESTION: “What can I help you with?” or “How can I help you?”

BAD RESPONSE TO ANSWER: [none, look at computer]

GOOD RESPONSE TO ANSWER: “I’d be happy to help you with that!”

Let them know they’ve asked the right person, that they have come to the right place.

The “put a book in their hand” approach.

What is marketing?

• Ad campaigns, slogans, Super Bowl ads…and selling it!
• Or, developing useful, practical ways to help
• Respond to the patron’s needs, not the library’s
Meeting them where they are

• Understand how and why your patrons are seeking information
• Go where they go, help them do what they do
• You will not only gain better access to your patrons, but better knowledge of their circumstances

So where are they?

• Ask
• Ask again
• Obtain usage data
• Find benchmarks
• Make connections

New approaches?

• New technologies
• New populations
• New locations
• New roles

What are we worth?

• How do you justify the time and expense of providing reference services?
• Use ROI or not?
• How to express the value of library services to your stakeholders?
Telepresence

Virtual Reality?

Virtual Reference

• Email
• Email forums & lists
• Electronic Resources
• Chat/Instant Message
• Teleconferencing
• MOBILE PHONES
• Apps
• Wearable technology

Facing disruption

• Technology, funding, hurricanes, politics
• Change leadership
• Flexibility and mobility

Focusing on the future?

• Five-year plans are always focused five years away
• Realistic plans exist in the current environment
• Focus on the future as it unfolds
• Change must be served (Trott)

Questions? Ask Us!

John Gottfried
Email: john.gottfried@wku.edu
Phone: (270) 745-6176

Katherine Pennavaria
Email: k.pennavaria@wku.edu
Phone: (270) 745-6119
Thank you to today’s panelists:

John Gottfried
&
Katherine Pennavaria
Co-Authors of
Providing Reference Services: A Practical Guide for Librarians

Special webinar discount: REFWEB18 takes 30% off!

Visit The Booklist Reader!
www.booklistreader.com

Booklist’s digital edition is live!

Check out the current and past issues at:
booklistonline.com/issues

Booklist subscribers now get print, online, digital, and archive access to all the
Booklist content they love!

Not a subscriber? Get multi-format access for only $99—that’s less than
$10/month—with this special URL:
www.booklistonline.com/webinaroffer

Thank you for attending our webinar
Relevant, Relatable Reference Services in Your Library

Special thanks to our sponsor:

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD