



RSS REVIEW
June (Pre-Annual) 2009 –Rev. 6/26/09

This is a busy time for the Reference Services Section. To help you keep up to date, this newsletter highlights key activities within the section, and provides an overview of events and meetings of RSS at the Annual Conference in Chicago. But since RSS planning is a fluid process, updates will be made on the version published on the [RSS Website](#) and the [RSS Facebook](#). Inside this issue you will find:

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RSS PROGRAMS AND OPEN DISCUSSIONS AT ANNUAL (Arranged chronologically)

FRIDAY

Reinvented Reference V: Using Our Collective Wisdom [preconference]

8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Intercontinental – Toledo (7/10/09)

Cosponsored by: RSS and MARS

A Dialogue with the Aging Network and the Library Community: The New Guidelines on Library and Information Services to Older Adults [preconference]

9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Sheraton Chicago – Ballroom (7/10/09)

Sponsored by: RSS Committee on Library Services to an Aging Population and the Association of Specialized Cooperative Library Agencies

SATURDAY

Reference Services Section Open House: The best way to start your Saturday at ALA Annual!

Swissotel – St. Gallen (7/11/09)

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. (Open House)

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (All-Committee Meeting following the Open House)

Are you interested in frontline reference issues such as:

- improving the usability of catalogs, search tools, and online point-of-need tutorials
- developing instruction techniques in the reference transaction
- implementing and using virtual reference services
- developing standards for evaluation and management of reference
- meeting the needs of adults, Spanish-speaking, aging, and other populations
- marketing reference services
- supporting research in the reference and user services field

Are you looking for ways to become more involved in your profession, and to meet and network with other reference and information providers?

Come to the Reference Services Section (RSS) Open House, where you can enjoy refreshments provided by Emerald (publisher of the *Reference Services Review*), and learn more about the work being accomplished in RSS. RSS Officers and members will be available to answer your questions and suggest possible committees of interest, and you can visit committee tables where members will be available to talk about current projects. You are welcome to stay from 9am-10:30am to sit at a committee table while they conduct their meeting.

Pleasure or Pain: Selecting and Promoting Electronic Books

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Palmer House – Montrose 4 (7/11/09)

Sponsored by: Dual Assignment Discussion Group

Description: Libraries are increasingly collecting e-books. How are titles selected? How are they promoted? E-books offer lots of benefits - they are readily accessible outside of physical library spaces, their text is searchable, and they can be viewed on a variety of portable devices. How are libraries implementing these new technologies? Are people using them? How will Google Books impact e-book publishing, access, and the future of library collections? All registered attendees are welcome to join us for a lively and thought-provoking discussion as we talk about what we're doing now and where we're going with e-books.

Current Topics in Cooperative Reference Discussion Forum

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Hyatt – Columbus Hall C/D (7/11/09)

Sponsored by: Cooperative Reference Committee

Description: Come join in the discussion on how we can support further development in cooperative reference. We will discuss and invite feedback on possible projects on cooperative reference that will benefit the library community.

When is Nice Too Nice? Disengaging from the Talkative Patron

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. McCormick Place W-190a (7/11/09)

Sponsored by: Services to Adults; Co-sponsored by Management of Reference

Description: Library public services staff commonly experience overly talkative patrons. Some are homeless or mentally ill, but others may simply be lonely and seeking human contact. These “chatty” patrons can be a significant problem when there are multiple people needing assistance, when they exhibit inappropriate behaviors or when they aggressively seek out the time and attention of specific staff members. Join us to explore strategies for addressing this issue in a variety of library settings.

Reference Meets Reality: (Support) Staff Training in Times of Change

3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Sheraton, Huron Room (7/11/07)

Sponsored by: Hot Topics in Frontline Reference Discussion Group

Description: Some libraries have long histories of employing support staff at reference desks. With shrinking budgets, this trend may be increasing. Regardless of whether you staff the desk with professionals or support staff, you may be experiencing a reorganization or (re)training of staff in your library. How do you provide training and evaluation in order to maintain good service at your reference desk? The discussion will be kicked off by: Judith S. Pinnolis (Brandeis University), Evan Simpson (Tufts University), Danielle Theiss-White (Kansas State

University), and Lynn M. Thitchener (Cornell University). All are welcome to attend and participate in this lively conversation!

SUNDAY

15th Annual Reference Research Forum

1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Chicago Hilton Waldorf (7/12/09)

Sponsored by: Research and Statistics Committee

Description: The Research Forum is one of the most popular programs at ALA Annual, where attendees can learn about notable research projects in reference service areas such as user behavior, electronic services and reference effectiveness. This year's Forum features three presentations, including the recipients of RUSA's 15th Anniversary Reference Research Grant, who will present their findings on using WOREP data to build excellent reference service.

Impact of Budget-cuts on Reference Collections & Services

1:30-3:00 Palmer House - Hancock Parlor (7/12/09)

Sponsored by: Reference Services in Large Research Libraries

Description: Come and discuss strategies for meeting the challenges of lower budgets on reference services. How is the balance of collections and services affected? Still buying reference books? What criteria are used in retaining or cancelling online reference sources? How are staffing levels being adjusted? Are there new or different issues involving reference spaces?

The Reference Services in Large Research Libraries Discussion Group is looking for a convener for 2011, so if you're interested, contact out-going convener, Sarah G. Wenzel, or in-coming convener, Scott Garton. This is your chance to set the topics for this group and lead a discussion about what interests you!

You Got Me, Do You Like Me? Evaluating Next Generation Catalogs

3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. McCormick Place W-190a (7/12/09)

Sponsored by: Catalog Use Committee

Description: Congratulations, you have acquired (or may soon acquire) a Next Generation, Web 2.0 catalog—now what? Hear from a panel of academic and public librarians who have been evaluating their open source and off-the-shelf next-gen catalogs. Topics will include usability testing, ongoing assessment, vendor collaboration and user expectations in the transition to next-gen products.

MONDAY

Beyond ¡Hola!: Spanish Reference Resources for Non-Spanish Speakers

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. McCormick Place W-194b (7/13/09)

Sponsored by: Library Services to the Spanish Speaking

Description: Do you have the right tools to help a Spanish-speaker looking for information in your library? Do you know how to purchase the right titles for your Spanish-speaking population? As Latinos become more active library users, what can libraries do to help them become more informed citizens? Join us as we discuss reference resources, Web sites and collection development for this group of patrons.

Assess Without Causing Distress

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 am Palmer House - Indiana Room (7/13/09)

Sponsored by: Performance Issues for Reference/Information Librarians Discussion Group

See the [RUSA List of Events](#) for additional programs of interest.

RSS MEETINGS AT ANNUAL (Arranged chronologically)

SATURDAY

Reference Services Section Open House and All-Committee Meeting

Swisshotel – St. Gallen (7/11/09)

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. (Open House)

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. (All-Committee Meeting)

Following the Open House sponsored by Emerald, committees will have time to focus on their current projects. Each of the following committees will meet at a separate table:

- Catalog Use Committee
- Cooperative Reference Services Committee
- Education and Professional Development for Reference Committee
- Evaluation of Reference and User Services Committee
- Library Services to an Aging Population Committee
- Library Services to the Spanish Speaking Committee
- Management of Reference Committee
- Marketing and Public Relations for Reference Services Committee
- Organization and Planning
- Research and Statistics Committee
- Services to Adults Committee
- User Education and Information Literacy Committee
- Virtual Reference Committee
- Web Advisory Committee

Executive Committee Meeting I

7/11/2009 Saturday 10:30 am - 12:00 pm Swisshotel - Zurich 1

SUNDAY

Organization and Planning II MEETING TIME CHANGE – New meeting time 9:30:

7/12/2009 Sunday 9:30 a.m. -11:00 a.m. Palmer House - Clark 10 (Meeting was previously scheduled for 10:30-noon)

Education and Professional Development for Reference Committee II

7/12/2009 Sunday 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Palmer House - Sandburg 8

MONDAY

Catalog Use Committee II

7/13/2009 Monday 8:00 am - 10:00 am Sheraton - Illinois Exec. Boardroom

Executive Committee Meeting II

7/13/2009 Monday 10:30 am - 12:00 pm Hyatt - Comiskey

RSS SECTION REVIEW

The RSS Section Review is happening right now! What is this, you ask? The RUSA Guide to Policies and Procedures explains:

“Evaluation of Sections: The RUSA Organization Committee reviews sections every five years. Sections are asked to review their committees and discussion groups and evaluate their effectiveness.”

A full explanation of RUSA’s process is available at

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/about/policies/committees/1committees.cfm#eval>

Additionally, I would like to add something not provided in the formal documentation: This is OUR section, and it should be of value to us, the members of RSS! Regardless of what the rules state, we should use this opportunity to see if RSS committees are doing things that are meaningful to the members of RSS. Can frontline reference staff and reference service managers benefit from the existence of the section and the committees that make up the section? That is the goal of the section review as I am leading it this year.

2009 is RSS’s year for section review. The RSS Organization and Planning Committee is overseeing the process. There are three pieces to the review process as we have undertaken it.

1. The committee review: Each of the RSS committees was provided with a list of questions to help it evaluate its value and effectiveness. Committee chairs and members were asked to provide input on those questions.

A task force of Org. and Planning, as well as RSS Executive Committee members, compiled all of the committee reviews. A draft executive summary was written that describes how each committee assessed itself, with recommendations for changes as appropriate. The entire group of RSS committee and discussion group chairs has been asked to review that executive summary by June 15.

2. The section review: There is a separate set of questions that are to be asked of the section itself. The O&P committee is drafting that document now. Once the committee review summary is more firm, the O&P committee will finalize the first draft of the section review, which will discuss the state of the section, its goals, and anything that we would like to see change overall.

The first draft of the section review will be shared at a special meeting of the O&P committee on Sunday during Annual in Chicago. O&P members and the Executive Committee will be expected to attend, but the meeting is open and anyone is welcome. The goal of the meeting will be to discuss recommendations and ideas for the future, and how to revise the document to best describe what RSS wants for itself in the next five years.

That document will be presented at the second RSS Executive Committee meeting on Monday. At that meeting, further input will be solicited and any issues can be raised.

The final versions of the section review and committee review will be written following that meeting. The Executive Committee and the O&P committee has final say over what will be included, but we are hoping to listen to everyone’s input and handle it all fairly.

3. The final step is a presentation to RUSA's Organization Committee. A copy of the executive summary and section review will be provided to that committee within several months of annual (I hope!).

In the end, RSS should be able to make changes to its structure as it desires, except where it impacts RUSA as a whole and other sections. We should be able to take any actions that we choose to by Midwinter 2010, or if not by then, by the following official fiscal year (following Annual 2010). Any changes suggested that affect RUSA as a whole or another section will have to go through RUSA Board and the other sections, so that timeline is unclear at this time.

If you have any questions about the section review process, please send them to me or Sarah Hammill hammills@fiu.edu, the RSS liaison to RUSA Organization.

- [Lisa Horowitz](#), Chair, RSS Organization and Planning, and RSS immediate past chair

NEW DEFINITION OF REFERENCE

In January 2008, RUSA Board adopted a new definition of reference. The new definition considers the broader range of activities that constitute reference services in today's libraries.

The definition of reference is used as the basis for measuring and assessing reference services in libraries. While previous definitions focused on mediated transactions conducted at the reference desk, the new definition includes the work that supports unmediated transactions, which now constitutes much of the work that is done by reference librarians on a daily basis. The new definition also allows for the creation of new standards used in statistics gathering to better capture the work of today's reference librarians.

Reference Transactions are information consultations in which library staff recommend, interpret, evaluate, and/or use information resources to help others to meet particular information needs. Reference transactions do not include formal instruction or exchanges that provide assistance with locations, schedules, equipment, supplies, or policy statements.

Reference Work includes reference transactions and other activities that involve the creation, management, and assessment of information or research resources, tools, and services.

Definition of terms within Reference Work:

- *Creation and management of information resources* includes the development and maintenance of research collections, research guides, catalogs, databases, web sites, search engines, etc., that patrons can use independently, in-house or remotely, to satisfy their information needs.
- *Assessment* activities include the measurement and evaluation of reference work, resources, and services.

The previous RUSA-approved definition of a reference transaction was adopted in 1984. The new definition was developed and presented to the RUSA board by members of the Reference Services Section (RSS) of RUSA.

RUSA Reference Guidelines:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/archive/protocols/referenceguide/definitionsreference.cfm>

RUSA Web site: <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/rusa/index.cfm>

RECOMMENDED READING

Here's a new study that may be of interest. It is the Project Information Literacy Report, put out by the Information School at University of Washington entitled:

[Finding Context: What Today's Collect Students Say About Conducting Research in the Digital Age](http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_ProgressReport_2_2009.pdf)

http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_ProgressReport_2_2009.pdf

RSS Review is the newsletter of the Reference Services Section of Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) of the American Library Association. Please send suggestions for future issues to [Cindy Levine](#), editor.