

Week 01 Assignment 01: Reference Services

How do you see reference services changing in the next 10 years? How will developments in technology affect how people search for information and use libraries?

The core of reference service, as in, the valuable interaction between librarian and user will always be there, even in the next 10 years; what will change are the ways that users interact with librarians and reference services. What will change substantially in the next 10 years is the infrastructure technology on the backend that helps a library operate.

For so long now users have found value in interacting with the librarian at a close level. Technology has helped with advancing how these interactions happen. It is no longer just walking up to a librarian at a reference desk. Many reference transactions happen now through phone, email, and chat services. In the next 10 years, I foresee better communication services being available to help librarians help users find information. If it has not already moved in this direction, in the near future, libraries will heavily use social media to interact with users. A social media platform like a library Twitter account can be used to answer specific questions like ready reference questions. If users have specific questions about the library or how to find resources, they can use Twitter to ask the question, where a librarian can answer. The benefit of Twitter is that not only will the user who asked the question see the answer, but also all of the Twitter account's followers. This type of interaction could be open to anyone and can spark more conversation on the subject and will encourage more users to continue asking questions if they see the answers are helpful. Moreover, Twitter threads would be extremely beneficial for reference interactions, and more users can share information they learn from the thread or add their own thoughts or clarify on more complex questions with a librarian.

Using social media, librarians can also promote library services and events to the community. This will engage more members of the community to learn more about how they can use the library and all the great benefits it offers. I have seen a few Instagram and Facebook accounts that will post Library events and programs encouraging users to stop by. This type of engagement will motivate users to go to the library more when they start to discover more of what the library offers and how it can be beneficial to them. Furthermore, this type of social media engagement can be used to appeal to millennials and the younger generation to come in and use the library when they have a hard time looking for information online.

Besides the technology to encourage engagement with users, as a techie, I'm very interested in how the backend infrastructure of a library will continue to grow. I am interested in exploring how libraries will store the content that continues to grow as time passes. The physical library will always be there to store its physical books, magazines, catalogs, and other media, but how much of the content will move to electronic versions? In the next ten years, libraries will minimize their physical server hardware to store data and start moving to cloud services to store and handle queries for their content. To keep costs and maintenance at a low level, libraries will invest in more innovative ways to store their information and make it faster to get to the users who request it. These cloud services can open doors to how many versions a library can offer at a

time and they won't run into the issue of having an item checked out or lost so they can no longer offer it to anyone else.

As everything will start moving to more cloud services I am interested in learning how libraries will stay connected and offer more global services to communities who cannot easily get to a physical library. In the next ten years, I would like to see libraries around the world start to share more content and find innovative ways to offer their services to more people around the world.