

# Helping Libraries Count

## *Collecting Reference Statistics for Meaningful Use*

**Title:** Recording Public Information Services Statistics: Policy

**Category:** Staff

**Source:** Reference & Information Services

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1. **Rationale:** This document describes the policy and provides the definitions used for documenting and reporting public information services provided by librarians, library staff, and ITS student workers in the library.
2. **Scope of data collection:**
  - a. Indiana University Libraries collects statistics from all regional campus libraries on an annual basis.
  - b. Statistics concerning public information services are collected and reported monthly, quarterly and annually. These data are compiled and reported via the data warehouse and in a Director's Memo as well as used as needed in other reports.
3. **Definitions of categories:** All questions and transactions recorded will fall into one of four main categories.
  - a. Directional Questions: A transaction related to locating services, resources, or individuals in the library. Directional questions are answered without having to look up information, although a map, floor plan, schedule, or sign may be used in answering the question. These transactions are documented by using the **DIRECTIONAL** button on the LIBStats utility.

Examples:

    - i. Providing directions for locating restrooms, printers, copiers, or individuals in the library
    - ii. Locating library material when a user has a call number, locating Document Delivery Services (DDS) material, pointing out collection areas (stacks, reference, career reference, etc.)
    - iii. Identifying locations outside the library, such as buildings, smoking areas, parking lots, change machines or eating venues.
    - iv. Making an appointment for a research consultation with a librarian.
    - v. Calling a lab consultant.
  - b. Informational Questions: A transaction involving the use, recommendation, or interpretation of one or more information sources, or requires the knowledge of or instruction in the use of such sources. For the purposes of internal recordkeeping, these transactions fall in to one of two categories.
    - i. General Information: Transactions that require a consultation of 1-3 sources of information, and last less than 10 minutes. A question answered using information gained from previous consultation of source is considered informational. These

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transactions are recorded using the **INFORMATION** button on the LIBStats utility.

Examples:

1. Finding an item in IUCAT, demonstrating basic features in Academic Search Premier,
  2. Answering a commonly asked assignment-related question, "Where are the play indexes?"
  3. Showing how to use the DDS forms, Request Delivery or My Account features in IUCAT, E-Journal Finder
  4. Looking up a phone number, classroom, or the time of an event or service outside of the library.
- ii. Reference Questions: Transactions that are complex enough to go beyond 10 minutes, involve consultation of specialized databases, provide instruction on developing search terms and strategies, or depend on expert knowledge of sources or subject areas. These questions are documented using the REFStats utility. For more information see **REFStats**

### **Procedures: Library Computers**

Examples:

1. Developing search strategies for finding multiple articles on a topic.
  2. Related to assignments in courses above the 200 level.
  3. Involve consulting multiple (3 or more) sources of information.
  4. Information for graduate students, or professors.
- iii. DDS Verifications: Transactions that involve verifying DDS requests. These transactions are documented by using the **DDS VERIFICATION** button on LIBStats utility. (DDS Verifications are counted as informational questions.)

- c. Equipment Questions: Transactions that facilitate the use of machines or other equipment in the library. These transactions are documented by using the **EQUIPMENT** button on the LIBStats utility.

Examples:

- i. Providing help in using photocopiers, printers, microform reader-printers, vending or change machines, etc.
- ii. Providing hole-punches, staplers or staples, or paper cutters.

- d. ITS Computer Lab Questions: Transactions that facilitate the use of the ITS computer lab equipment, including questions about hardware, software applications, or referrals to the ITS Helpdesk. If you answer one of these questions, document it by using the **LAB** button on the LIBStats utility.

- i. Questions about username/password, login issues
- ii. How do something using MS Word, MS Excel, or other software
- iii. How to change printer settings.

## 4. Method of Collection

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- a. All library personnel, except ITS lab workers, are responsible for documenting all transactions that fall in the categories described above.
- b. Directional questions, Information-general questions, Equipment questions and ITS Computer Lab questions are all documented by using LIBStats utility.
  - i. Transactions should be documented as close to the time they occur as possible
  - ii. For more information regarding the use of LIBStats see:  
**LIBStats Procedures: Library Computers**
- c. Information-Reference Questions are all documented by using REFStats utility
  - i. Transactions should be documented as close to the time they occur as possible
  - ii. For more information regarding the use of REFStats see:  
**REFStats Procedures: Library Computers**

**Created by:** Reference & Information Services

**Date Created:** 1998 (Recording Statistics and Questions: Typical Week Statistics)

**Date Revised:** October 2006