



Reference and Information Services: An Introduction (Library and Information Science Text Series)

Linda C. Smith, Richard E. Bopp

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Book Description Publication Date: December 15, 2000 | ISBN-10: 1563086247 | ISBN-13: 978-1563086243 | Edition: 3rd Updated to reflect the latest trends in reference services and the newest sources commonly used for reference work, this long-awaited book offers you a state-of-the-art view of the concepts, theories, and practicalities of reference work today. A host of specialists have contributed to the collection. This new edition includes more detailed discussion of a wider range of reference-related services including interlibrary loan, document delivery, and readers' advisory services. There is also increased attention to ethical issues and a stronger focus on user-centered services, both face-to-face and mediated by technology. In addition, the authors discuss Web sites of significant value to reference services and the impact of the Internet and World Wide Web on reference services. This carefully designed and readable text explains the essential theory and provides the practical knowledge necessary for an initial reference course. Its broad scope and organizational clarity will benefit students and practitioners.

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Michael says

I didn't much enjoy my Reference course, but I will admit that the textbook had some merits - moreso than most books written in the field of Library and Information Science, in fact. It's not exactly a fun read, and it does get repetitive at times, but it also is - drumroll please - a great reference work. Although the resources listed are a little out of date (and many things that weren't digital and easily searched when it was printed are now), it gives details on a surprisingly wide-range of reference works and their possible applications. The 2 indexes in the back are good starting points to find out the names of useful basic resources, from Encyclopedias to databases, and from atlases to census reports. The reference librarian who needs more specific information will of course want more training than just this book can offer, but it will generally keep you out of hot water in fielding the (should be) easy questions.

Amy Layton says

I read this book in preparation for the first year of my library science degree (and, not to mention, it was part of my required reading). I can see why this book is the perfect tome for beginner librarians to read--it covers just about every subject about reference services imaginable, and is updated fairly often (the most recent 5th edition was published in 2016).

With the help of different authors, diagrams, and topics, this book lays everything out at a manageable level, where different writing styles are employed and various learning styles are offered. I'm excited to see what we do with the information from this textbook in my class, and would definitely recommend this to those who are already librarians (though that may be a bit redundant), or to those who are thinking about going into library science.

Get the full review [here!](#)

Rooks says

Is the most scintillating book ever? No. Will I be using it to find information for the rest of my life? Probably yes.

Martin Maenza says

This text was a bit of a mixed bag when used for my class. Half the material really serves as a reference source for various types of reference sources - and thus not the easiest material to be tested on. The most useful and critical chapter was the one that outlines the very important Reference Interview process.

Shannon says

Very dry, but packed with helpful information.

Caroline says

I read all of it but two chapters. Let's call it done.

It did its job as a textbook.

Courtney says

The basic information is solid, but this edition is quite obsolete. I only read this ed. because it was what our professor wanted us to use. If you have a choice, seek out the newer edition. ;)

Lisa says

This book is why I hate reading text books, I seriously had to reward myself for making it through like 4 pages at a time and not falling asleep or letting my mind wander! Good luck if you are assigned this book.

SaraKat says

For a textbook, it wasn't terribly boring. I read the entire thing--even the few chapters that weren't assigned, because there was interesting information. The health, legal, and government information chapters were especially interesting since that is the kind of information I can use even if I'm not a reference librarian. The main point of a reference librarian's existence is summarized on p. 23:

Reference librarians know how to search and how to evaluate information. We understand how to judge which sources are credible, and we know search techniques that find resources that simple searching cannot. We know how to determine an author's biases. We know how to identify the underlying political aspects of a document. And we never tell anyone else what we helped you with.

This book focuses on the skills and structures of a reference librarian--not general librarianship, but it covered the theory, the rationale, the structures, the types of sources and how to evaluate and select them, how to market the services and design them, and the future of reference libraries of all types. This is a great book to keep as reference for the reference librarian or student since it is full of chapters about collection development guidelines, tables, and other useful features. Much of it, I won't use anytime soon, but I can see

the information that I starred and marked with tags being useful in the future as I get into different work situations.

I also enjoyed the box of text on p. 269 that speaks to the job stress that reference librarians encounter:

Some experts suggest that jobs with a high emotional labor content, jobs where the performer's persona goes on the line time and time again at the customer interface, should be treated as combat. And like combat soldiers, people in high-stress service jobs need to be rotated off the front line frequently-- and sometimes permanently. As one expert puts it, "In Vietnam we *knew* come hell or high water, that after so many months, we were out of there. You need to do that for service people. They have to know there is a light at the end of that tunnel-- and it isn't from an oncoming train.

This excerpt is so true. I think that is why so many teachers count down to the end of the school year or the next break--not because we don't like teaching (I can't really imagine doing something else), but because the emotional requirement is so intense that we need that time to reboot and gather our strength. I think this rings true for a lot of service professions as well, since working with the public--especially in areas that have upset public a lot-- can be stressful.

Another box on p. 331 resonated with me as a teacher.

Don't blow it. ... If you mess up or only put forth halfhearted effort for a simple homework request there's no way that teen is coming back to ask you about how to write an essay that will get them into the college of their dreams, or how to find resources on their life's great passion for surfing, or how to get out of an abusive relationship. Every interaction we have with teens is an opportunity to make a difference in their lives, either by being the one person that smiled at them today or being the one to give them the perfect resource for their paper. All of it matters. Every day.

This is true for all businesses, but the stakes are higher with young people and we can change their lives forever for good or bad.

And of course, on the lighter side, the joke on p. 423 about Boolean searching made me giggle. "If you send a reference librarian to the store with a Boolean list of "sugar" and "flour" and "eggs," you will get a cookie." he he he

Marta says

Can this book get any duller or drier? It's printed Ambien, guaranteed to put you to sleep. Perhaps a lively update would help, but I highly doubt it.

Lindsay says

Lou says

Good solid reference work on Reference! If you get your MLIS, you will be assigned this book. Lays it all out on the line in clear, precise prose.

CB says

Decent in some places, but overall it waszzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz.....

Craig says

Very helpful for those looking into librarianship in reference services. Almost a must for anyone thinking of going into the field

Brian says

I will retain this book as a reference. A reference book about reference; I never would have expected that. However, it will have its uses from time to time. As a more thorough (and expensive) reference, I would recommend the Taylor & Francis Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences, Third Edition.

Until further notice, I'm reading this book, and a whole lot of library & information science journal articles. Grad school can be fun, but pleasure reading is on hold. :(Update: This course was completed in December 2011!
