

# Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century

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AN INTRODUCTION

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# 17

## Selecting and Evaluating Reference Materials

Of all the sections of a library collection, the reference collection must be the most focused, specific and selective. Although far smaller than circulating collections, the works they contain are often more expensive than those found elsewhere. Consequently, developing a reference collection must be carefully orchestrated, each step requiring great thoughtfulness and care. To stay balanced and keep the collection from toppling over into the abyss of redundancy and irrelevance, the book selector must combine knowledge and experience to great effect. Each choice must be made with care, allowing the library to best leverage its resources and ensuring that neither money nor shelf space goes to waste. As has been suggested in the previous chapters, thoughtful evaluation of relevance and currency is crucial with each individual purchase, but those responsible for development must also possess the following:

- Knowledge of the library's community of users and their needs and interests
- Knowledge of how different types and formats of reference materials are used
- Knowledge of subject areas and how much updating they need
- Knowledge of how to evaluate reference materials

More often than not, these areas are interdependent. Note, for example, that an understanding of the library's users often goes hand in hand with the type of library and the educational level of the community it serves.

The takeaway-point here is that selectors must be willing to think out of the box and look beyond their immediate spheres of influence. Thus, academic librarians must take the various disciplines studied at their university or college into account when considering purchases. The needs and interests of this community are defined by the college or university's curriculum as well as the research needs of both students and faculty. As the curricula change, the academic library must respond by adding new reference materials that will meet these new needs. Likewise, public libraries must respond to the requests for information from members of their communities. The response should reflect users' wide-ranging information needs and interests from educational

and career interests to hobbies and leisure reading. Public libraries have the most diverse user body. Their audience includes children, teens, and adults of all ages and all backgrounds. Consequently, reference collection development must take into account the widest possible range of users. School libraries serve a community of students and faculty. They tailor their collections to the subject areas being studied in the school as well as the interests of their user group. Special libraries serve the needs of their community of users, be they museum curators, hospital employees, businesspeople, or others. Their users have very specific information needs and interests that may change over time.

The ways in which knowledge is sought out and used by a library's patrons also plays a crucial part in the shaping of the reference collection. If the users tend toward factual information, the library may collect a large number of ready reference materials or build a ready reference section on its Web site. If queries tend more toward in-depth research, the library should concentrate on indexes and other reference sources that lead the user to full-text information. Sometimes libraries will need specialized materials such as maps or government documents. Alternatively, they may need collections of directories to meet certain kinds of requests.

By understanding characteristics of specific types of materials the libraries can tailor their collections to meet user needs. Formats of reference materials are much more important than ever before. In particular, libraries must decide how to balance print and electronic acquisitions. This may be based on the way the library's users request and utilize materials or the most suitable format for particular types of material. In general, there is now less demand for print resources since users tend to prefer electronic resources. Resources may also be purchased on CD-ROM or microform if they are necessary, but rarely used, guaranteeing patron access while freeing up shelf space. Alternate media may also be selected in some circumstances if they provide a more inexpensive way to provide access to the information.

A comprehensive knowledge of relevant subject areas will help the librarian decide how much material is needed to fully cover any given topic. Again, it is helpful here to think in terms of what users need and want. Sometimes, if demand is low, a single book or database is sufficient coverage for a given subject area, while in other subject areas multiple titles are needed to support the user requests. Further, titles about subjects in flux will have to be weeded and replaced with much greater rapidity, meaning that those responsible for reference collection development must stay abreast of changes in the field. Returning to the question of formats, note that frequent content changes in a subject area may call for the purchase of or subscription to online resources that are regularly updated.

Finally, as should by now be obvious, knowing how to evaluate reference materials is key to the success of a reference department. This requires both knowledge of how reference materials are used and knowledge of the subjects of the materials. Careful examination of the many important criteria is essential, as well as deciding for a particular work what the most important characteristics are. For many subject areas there may be more than one choice. Knowing the

library's users ensures that the librarian can select the materials best suited to this particular audience.

Although reference collection development may appear to be one-dimensional, it actually includes a number of different tasks, such as:

- Identifying, selecting, and evaluating new reference material
- Management of the reference budget, including approval plans, standing orders, exchange agreements, and cooperative collection development
- Ongoing assessment of the reference collection
- Weeding the reference collection
- Writing and updating a reference collection development policy
- Promoting and marketing new reference materials to the library's users

## Identifying, Selecting, and Evaluating New Reference Materials

Many reference materials are published both in print format and as an electronic database, whereas others are available in only one of these formats. Since most reference collections can acquire only a selection of the available titles, all decisions must be made thoughtfully. Reference materials should be selected either through personal examination, reference to literature produced by the publisher, reading of reviews, or some combination of the three.

### Sources of Reviews

Reviews are one way of obtaining information about reference materials. *Booklist's Reference Books Bulletin*, *Library Journal*, *School Library Journal*, *Choice*, and *Reference & User Services Quarterly* are the review sources most frequently consulted by librarians searching for reviews of new reference titles.

*Booklist* is published by the American Library Association twice monthly September through June and monthly in July and August. The purpose of *Booklist* is "to provide a guide to current library materials in many formats appropriate for use in public libraries and school library media centers. Materials are recommended for reasons relating to both quality and demand." "Reference Books Bulletin," a section of each issue of *Booklist*, states "reference sources are those designed by their arrangement and treatment to be consulted for specific items of information rather than to be read consecutively... that would be of interest primarily to public libraries and school media centers" ([www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/office/publishing/booklist\\_publications/booklist/insidebooklist/booklistpolicy/booklistselection.cfm](http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/office/publishing/booklist_publications/booklist/insidebooklist/booklistpolicy/booklistselection.cfm)). The reviews in "Reference Books Bulletin" are prepared and critiqued by members of the editorial board and by contributing reviewers and represent the board's collective judgment. Each issue includes reviews of adult and youth reference titles. The reviews are well written and thorough. Occasional special sections on types of material or one subject area such as an annual review of encyclopedias or a page devoted to science databases are among the best to be found. This review source is available online.

*Reference & User Services Quarterly* is published by the Reference and User Services Association of the American Library Association. This journal is devoted to articles on all aspects of reference services. Each issue includes a "Reference Books" column that reviews twenty-five to thirty reference titles. The signed reviews both describe and critically evaluate each work.

*Library Journal*, a publication of Media Source, Inc., is published twice a month. A "Reference" section in each issue looks at about fifteen to twenty reference titles with a recommendation as to whether the title is recommended and for what type of library. Cheryl LaGuardia writes an "eReviews" column in each issue reviewing in depth one subscription database. LJ also publishes regularly on its Web site many reviews of e-reference materials ([www.libraryjournal.com](http://www.libraryjournal.com)).

*School Library Journal*, also published by Media Source, Inc., is a magazine for librarians who work with young people in schools or in public libraries; in it are two reference-related columns "Digital Resources" and "Reference Reviews." Suggestions as to which titles should be purchased are clearly made.

*Choice* is published monthly by the Association of College and Research Libraries. It is a book review service designed to support undergraduate library collections. *Choice's* reference reviews are divided into General, Humanities, Science & Technology, and Social & Behavioral Sciences. More than sixty reference titles are reviewed in each issue. These reviews are written by academic scholars and librarians and, similar to the other titles discussed above, include a recommendation as to whether the text should be purchased and the types of libraries for which it is recommended. Electronic resource reviews are integrated with the print material reviews. Each issue includes a bibliographic essay pointing to resources in a particular subject area. *Choice* reviews are also available online at [www.cro2.org](http://www.cro2.org).

ARBA (*American Reference Books Annual*), published by Libraries Unlimited, reviews all new reference works in print, online, or on CD-ROM published in the United States and Canada during the year. The reviews are arranged by four broad subject categories—general reference, social sciences, humanities, and science and technology. It is an important source of information about reference materials and includes some professional materials. This reference tool is also available online. The online version ([www.arbaonline.com](http://www.arbaonline.com)) covers 1997 to date and is updated monthly with 100 to 150 additional reviews.

In addition to the publications described previously, a number of annual lists of recommended reference titles are produced by committees and publications. These include *Outstanding Reference Sources*, a list compiled annually by a RUSA committee and published in May in *American Libraries*, and *Best Reference Sources*, an annual list compiled by *Library Journal* and published in the April issue. Reference reviews also appear on the Gale site ([www.gale.cengage.com/reference/](http://www.gale.cengage.com/reference/)) under "Guest Columnists." The four columns include "Peter's Digital Reference Shelf," in which Peter Jacso reviews online and CD-ROM products; a review of public and academic reference resources by John R. M. Lawrence called "Lawrence Looks at Books"; "Reference Unbound" by Wendy Stephens that reviews print and online resources for

K-12; and "Doug's Student Reference Room" that reviews both print and online resources for K-12 as well as a "Reference Archive."

Other retrospective guides to reference materials include *Guide to Reference: The New Walford Guide to Reference Resources* (three volumes); *Recommended Reference Books for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries and Media Centers*; and *Reference Sources for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries*. For further information about these titles, please see the "Resources Discussed in This Chapter" section.

## Evaluation Criteria

In order to determine which reference materials to purchase, the materials must meet certain evaluation criteria. In general, these criteria apply to both print and electronic materials:

- Scope
- Quality of content
- Accuracy of content
- Currency
- Authority of author and/or publisher
- Ease of use including usability, searching capabilities, and response time (for electronic resources)
- Arrangement of material
- Appropriateness to the audience/meeting of user needs
- Format
- Cost

When evaluating a reference work, it is important to understand its scope and purpose. In printed works the author usually discusses this in the preface or introduction. This should include a discussion of what the work covers, including topics such as how comprehensive it is, whether it covers allied fields, the dates covered, and whether the work includes only information from the United States or is international in scope. Reference to this information will give the librarian a way to compare this work with similar reference works on the same subject and to decide if this one is a necessary addition to the collection. Determining the scope of an electronic database is often more difficult, as there is rarely a direct equivalent to the preface and access to nonsubscribers may be limited. Often the printed material from the publisher describing the electronic database includes information on scope, and the Web site of the company may also be a source of information. In electronic versions of print resources, coverage is still an issue, as it is important to determine whether the digital version offers anything newer than the print version and, if so, what time period it covers. Questions of duplication are critical because most libraries cannot afford to have identical print and electronic resources.

The quality of the content has become particularly important in electronic resources because the librarian appears to have less control over what content

the publisher chooses. Quantity is not as important as quality here. Quality content can be defined as accurate, up-to-date information of sufficient depth for the intended audience. Given the diversity of reference titles on almost every subject imaginable, librarians must try to distinguish between the good and the bad. A close examination of a title will reveal whether it has material that is not found in other similar titles or presents the material in a unique way. This would be a good reason for purchasing this title.

The authority of the reference work is indexed by the qualifications of the author or the publisher. The author may be someone known for authoring reference materials. Some publishers have a good track record in a certain area of reference material, meaning that the selector can begin the examination of the work with some confidence that the publisher will produce a credible work. Remember, though, that even the most seemingly authoritative work still needs to be examined for accuracy and currency. Accuracy can be tested by comparing it to other works on the same topic. Currency can be tested by checking to see if recent information on a specific topic is included in the work and checking the dates of resources cited. It is also important to note the cutoff date in relation to the publication date for this reference work. To test this, in the case of electronic databases, choose a current topic or a recent world event and see how current the information on that topic is.

Electronic resources should be examined for usability. Here, the most relevant factors are whether the program is easy to search and how quickly it responds to commands and queries. In addition, the resource should be examined to see if it can accept Boolean operators, whether it has both basic and advance search capabilities and whether it can easily be browsed. These issues of manipulating the database are one set of criteria that applies exclusively to electronic resources. The electronic resource should also provide a "Help" option and a "How to" guide.

Examining the arrangement of the reference work will determine whether its sections are organized and indexed in such a way as to facilitate easy access to the information it contains. Good organization separates a truly useful reference work from a text or simply a well-written work on a subject. The print reference work needs to have good page layout with many headings to make it easy to scan the pages. A sufficient amount of white space is needed, and a typeface that is clear and easy to read. The reference work must also have a good table of contents and index with cross-references where appropriate. An electronic work should use a thesaurus or accepted list of subject headings such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings as well as cross-references to enable the user to find the information easily. An intelligible interface and searchable help files are equally significant ways to enable the user to understand how to search the database easily. Because choices must often be made about which format materials should be purchased, it is important to consider the form that will best convey a title's content. Some information is still appropriately in print format whereas other material lends itself to electronic format. If the content changes often, it may be best in electronic format since the changes are easily made online. Indexes for periodicals and newspapers are far superior in

electronic format since new material is being indexed constantly. Directories are another good candidate for the electronic format since addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, etc., are constantly changing. Other reference works may be best or very acceptable in print. These include atlases, some ready reference materials, and handbooks.

The audience for the reference work must be considered in purchasing. A good reference work that is not for the audience of a particular library is not a good purchase. For example, a science handbook that is aimed at a university or professional audience will not be appropriate in a high school library. Reference works on the same subject are usually available on a variety of levels so that there is an appropriate title for the library's audience. On this account, it may be helpful to consider where in the professional literature a work has been reviewed. A text spotlighted in a school library publication will probably be inappropriate for the main research library of a large university. An astute selector should be able to determine this information on his or her own, however, as it should be clear on consideration of the text.

Format has been a tremendously complicated issue for librarians as reference sources have changed from print to electronic. The choices continue to be complex for a variety of reasons. First, not all reference sources are available in both print and electronic versions, so librarians who need a particular work must acquire it in whatever format is available. Second, if both print and electronic versions are available, the choice will depend on the library's user population and the library's budget. Academic libraries, for example, want most reference sources in electronic format since their user population wants off-site access. Public and school libraries have more choices since they have users who want print and users who want electronic. Also, public and school libraries do not always have a large enough budget to support a large number of electronic resources. Third, some reference resources are very acceptable in print such as atlases and maps and some ready reference sources.

Cost may be the final determination as to whether to purchase a specific reference work. For most subjects several reference works are available and the librarian can choose based on any or all of the criteria above. But in the end—all other factors being equal—price may be the determining concern. In the case of electronic resources the library may want to be part of a consortium in which it can share costs to afford the more expensive electronic resources.

### Choosing Between Print and Electronic Resources

Many factors go into the decision as to which format to buy. Usually it is a decision based on the library's own needs. Some factors that may influence a library's decision are how often the resource is updated, whether everything in the print version is included in the electronic version, the years of coverage, the ease of use, and whether the resource is compatible with the library's technology infrastructure. For many academic libraries electronic resources are the

best choice for many materials since students want to use the resources outside of the library and at any hour. In public libraries the choice may not be so clear, because most public libraries have a wide range of users—many of whom are probably not accustomed to doing all their research electronically or simply prefer print resources. Sometimes the decision must be to duplicate the resource in print and electronically because it is so heavily used that it makes sense to have both. Encyclopedias are an example of a resource that is useful to have in both print and electronic format, as the print set will accommodate more users at one time. Some reference materials are really still best in print, because not all digital conversions are as good as their original sources. Materials where visual browsing within the text is useful are still best in print. Although there is not a large place for CD-ROMs in the library today, there may still be occasions when it makes sense to buy a CD-ROM. Some examples of this might be a seldom updated bibliography or a dictionary.

### Management of the Reference Budget

Librarians must learn to manage and maximize the library's reference budget. Reference departments typically have a specific annual budget. Depending on the size and administrative complexity of the institution this may be one budget or may be divided into a number of categories such as print, electronic, approval plans, standing orders, and specific subject areas. Either way, the staff must make a plan at the beginning of the year as to how the budget will be distributed. In academic and large public libraries approval plans and standing orders play a major role in the reference budget. Money must be allocated at the beginning of the year to pay for these plans. Reference works may come as part of a larger library approval plan or the library may set up approval plans with reference publishers. Electronic resources may include contracts paid for by the library and cooperative arrangements with library consortia. Most libraries have found it economical to join or form consortia for the purpose of purchasing electronic resources. This has made it possible to buy more titles for a more reasonable price. Another way to build collections without spending more money is to develop exchange agreements with other institutions and libraries. Some institutions publish quality journals as a way of being able to exchange with other institutions.

### Ongoing Assessment of Reference Collections

Collections should be assessed on a regular basis to ascertain whether the materials meet the needs of the users and whether the selections are worth the cost. This is a two-pronged process that involves both determining gaps in the existing collection and evaluating the quality of available resources. On the former count, the library might want to look at the questions it received and could not answer and the interlibrary loans placed because the material was not available at the library. In addition to this, it is wise to browse the shelves to see if the collection appears balanced in relation to the current interests of the

library's users. Is there too much material on subjects no longer of interest to the users? Is more material needed on subjects that have recently become more popular?

Collections may be assessed in a number of ways. For example, the staff could check the collection against standard lists such as the *Guide to Reference Resources for College Libraries*, *Recommended Reference Books for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries and Media Centers*, or *Reference Sources for Small and Medium-Sized Libraries*. Alternatively, the staff could use the conspectus approach developed by the Research Libraries Group, which evaluates the level of materials in each subject area (i.e., 1 is the minimal level, 2 is the basic information level, 3 is the instructional support level, 4 is the research level, and 5 is the comprehensive level) and whether the level reflects the emphasis and interest in the subject area as reflected in the use of the materials. Third, the library could compare its holdings with comparable libraries using OCLC's WorldCat Collection Analysis or comparable programs.

User satisfaction can also be ascertained by questionnaires to the library's users—in person, by mail or e-mail, through interviews, and through feedback at the reference desk.

### Weeding the Reference Collection

Weeding or deselection is an important part of reference collection development. Reference collections by their very nature must have the most current information to accurately answer users' questions. Anything less than the most current information possible is simply not acceptable. Accordingly, removing dated materials from the collection must take high priority. Current thinking dictates that print reference collections should be smaller since many materials are available electronically and are much more suitable in that form.

The criteria for weeding reference materials in any type of library are as follows:

- The content is no longer up to date or accurate.
- A new edition is available.
- The reference work is seldom used.
- The information is duplicated in another reference work.
- The book is worn out.

Libraries may want to use the same guidelines for weeding reference materials as for circulating nonfiction. Libraries will want to identify subjects that date quickly and weed those areas more often. History, art, literature, philosophy, and religion are seldom weeded, whereas science, medicine, and some of the social sciences require continual updating. Libraries do not necessarily replace all annuals each year. Because of the cost considerations some annuals are replaced every two or three years. Encyclopedias are often rotated out of the collection; five years is the longest an encyclopedia should be kept in a reference collection (Nolan, 1998: 162–163). Cumulative sets are usually maintained such as *Current Biography* unless they become available online at an affordable price.

It is useful to have an organized approach to weeding so that within a particular time period all materials have been reviewed. A weeding team is a good approach so that materials in question can be discussed and decisions made as to whether to discard, move to the circulating collection, or put in storage.

### **Writing a Reference Collection Development Policy**

Reference collection development policies provide a way to document current practices in a reference department and to set directions for their future development. This is useful for guiding the present staff in their work, orienting new staff, and providing information to the users. It also provides consistency and continuity within the library as staff changes. Although the reference collection development policy need not repeat details about collection development that have already been documented in the library's overall collection development policy, it does help to document separately the collection development activities of the reference department, especially as it reflects some practices that differ from the rest of the library. The primary parts of this policy should include:

- Introduction that describes the library, its clientele and its areas of research or reference service
- Description of the scope and size of the collection
- Formats of materials collected, with a separate section on electronic resources
- Collecting levels by subject
- Types of reference materials collected
- Description of the responsibilities of staff and others for selection
- Criteria for selection, assessment, and weeding
- Sources of funding
- External relationships with other libraries, consortial arrangements, and resource sharing

In the *introduction* the policy should describe briefly the library, its goals, and its clientele. This introduction should also provide an overarching statement about the goals of the reference collection, which might be to provide accurate, up-to-date information or to support educational and informational needs. If others use the library who are not the primary clientele, this should be mentioned, as well as how the library serves them. For example, some university libraries are open to the general public as well as to the school's employees and students. With the increase in distance learning the policy might want to discuss how the library serves this part of its users.

In the *description of the scope and size* of the collection the library needs to describe the subject areas covered by the reference collection. This may be different from the circulating collection or may mirror it. In any case, it is important to describe what the collection does and does not include. For example, the library may not buy textbooks or may not purchase materials in certain subject areas. The size of the collection is equally important. Today the

size must include both print and electronic resources so the description may begin to differ from previous policies.

The *formats of materials collected* should be outlined. Here the library should discuss how it decides whether to buy a reference work in print or in an electronic format and when it might buy both. It is also important to state whether microform collections continue to be maintained and whether CD-ROMs continue to be purchased. This area of electronic resources has become an important part of the collection. Guidelines must be set up to help staff and users understand how these decisions are being made. Some of the issues that need discussion are whether electronic resources will be offered for remote use, criteria for purchase of electronic resources, and consortial relationships. Future plans for electronic resources might be outlined here.

*Subject collecting levels* and the *types of reference materials collected* reflect the use of the reference collection. The subject levels might be explained using the Research Library Group system or another system that describes subject levels. The library might also want to list some specific types of reference materials it collects, such as government documents, maps, etc. The reference collection is developed and maintained based on user requests and interests. This can change over time as user needs move in new directions.

*Staff usually have specific collection development responsibilities.* Each staff member may be responsible for a certain area of the collection. In an academic library the faculty as well as the library staff may have some responsibility for collection development. Some libraries use committees to discuss proposed additions to the reference collection. This may be particularly true for electronic resources, since their cost is so much greater than that of a reference book.

The library should outline the *criteria used for selection and for weeding.* General guidelines are discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

It can be helpful to discuss in general terms the *funding of the library's collection.* Many people have no idea of how a library is funded and the limits of its budget.

Finally, the policy should *discuss relationships* that the library has with other libraries, such as the consortia agreements between academic institutions discussed throughout this chapter. The policy will document whatever agreement has been developed with other libraries, whether for print or electronic materials.

An example of a general statement about the reference collection is the following from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne:

The reference collection supports the research needs of IPFW students, faculty and staff. It contains such materials as abstracts and indexes, encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases, directories, bibliographies, statistical compilations, and handbooks. The reference collection primarily supports IPFW academic programs. Reference works that provide basic bibliographic access to or an overview of other academic disciplines are also selected. ([www.lib.ipfw.edu/2909.0.html](http://www.lib.ipfw.edu/2909.0.html))

## Promoting and Marketing Reference Materials to Library Users

Promoting and marketing reference materials have recently increased in importance because of the advent of electronic resources. These new resources often remain hidden from users unless they are making extensive use of the library's Web site. Most libraries believe that their electronic resources are underutilized by their users. In the hopes of rectifying this situation, many have begun to take more active steps to increase the visibility of these resources among library users.

Two important areas must be addressed in promoting these resources: The first is the staff. Many electronic resources are added to the collection in a short time such that the staff does not have much time to get acquainted with them. It is important to go back and refresh the staff's knowledge of these databases. Some libraries send out a writeup on a different database each week or month. Other libraries ask staff members to each study a particular database and then make a presentation. For the users, the library can feature a "database of the week" or month on the library's Web site. The librarians can feature databases in newsletters and on bookmarks, or they can encourage staff to tell users about the electronic databases.

Regardless of the approach taken, it is crucial that the contents of the collection be advertised to the library's users. Reference work is, after all, predicated on service, and unless the collection is put to use in real, practical scenarios it does little good.

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# 18

## Managing Reference Departments

### **Of Car Designs and Learning Styles**

Much before the general economic recession that came to a head in 2008, General Motors, once the largest employer in the United States, had the thankless job of announcing the layoff of 30,000 workers, just prior to the Thanksgiving holiday of 2005. Many of those workers, according to a commentator, "... were its best and most productive. Their bosses simply couldn't give them a car to build that Americans really wanted to buy" (Bai, 2005:15). In other words, despite stellar staff and a conscientiously produced product, it was management that had failed in its primary duty of making effective business decisions. The fallibility of their decision making was further traced to an inability or unwillingness to "let consumers drive its designs."

Library management has traditionally looked to corporate management for guidance. For reference managers of the twenty-first century a clear cautionary tale can be salvaged from GM's managerial pileup. The consumers of reference services are information seekers, and information is mined according to their individual learning styles. Do information seekers of the twenty-first century have learning styles that are intrinsically different from the past? If we peer through the mists of time, we can see Socrates surrounded by a group of students who have presumably traveled from many directions to quite literally be at the feet of the master in their search for answers. If we flip forward two-and-a-half millennia to the Simon Fraser University in Canada or Harvard University in Boston, we see reference librarians toting laptop computers, primed to instantly and tangibly assist students in their search for answers. So yes, the "design" has changed and there is such a thing as a twenty-first-century learning style.

It is a style that has developed a muscular expectation for rapid and on-demand information. Fueled by this expectation, the organization of reference delivery and access continues to change in many ways. The reference manager of the twenty-first century must not only be acutely sensitized to the evolving environment, but must be prepared to ably administer and manage dramatic new service models, information delivery systems, and innovative staff configurations. All this must be done while gracefully accepting the additional new roles thrust upon them by the continuing changes.