

Adult Services Minutes  
**November 21, 2002 Meeting Notes**

**Speaker:** Candace Merbler, UAlbany Reference Librarian

**Topic:** One Phone Call, Three Questions, or If Reference is Down, Then How Come I'm So Busy?

The Reference Department at UAlbany library underwent a change in philosophy concerning reference statistics. It was felt that the old way of measuring reference questions - one patron equals one transaction - was inadequate and did not reflect what actually happens at the reference desk. The department needed a more accurate tool to measure reference transactions to help them determine staffing needs and justify additional equipment and training. The form they now use is divided by time of day, and then in person, phone, known item/quick fact, how to use, CD-ROM, web databases, Internet, longer reference, research strategy, directional/elsewhere, paperclips etc., and various machine problems. They can analyze the data by the hour and put the information into spreadsheets for comparisons. Candi said that it was labor intensive but worth it. Since the university offers information literacy courses that are mandated, the impact on the reference department needs to reflect its increased use by students. She has the form copied onto bright paper so that reference staff will remember to record their transactions. If you would like a copy of the form, call or email Rachel (437-9880 x. 225; [jo-ann@uhls.lib.ny.us](mailto:jo-ann@uhls.lib.ny.us)).

**Suggestions for Future Meetings:** The group agreed that we should survey the reference and adult services staff of the member libraries to see what their needs are. Rachel will do a survey for the next meeting. They also had the following suggestions:

- Meet in other libraries on a rotating basis.
- Try again for each person to bring reference sources to discuss and pass around.
- Send a reminder a week ahead of each meeting.
- Leave time for round robin discussions.
- Hold a "sanity session" after epixtech is in place.
- Possible topics for future meetings: chat and IM (how it works); joint YS/AS meeting on buying AV materials; budgeting and acquisitions (how to project actual costs); grants that UHLS has and what others can learn from them; a demonstration of all of the trial databases so they can be discussed in a group setting; marketing your library; weeding (bring your worst weeding find).

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 11, 2002 at 9:30 AM in the UHLS Conference Room.**