



A peer-reviewed student publication
of the University at Buffalo
Department of Library and Information Studies

Reference librarianship: notes from the trenches (Review)

Reference librarianship: notes from the trenches
By Charles R. Anderson and Peter Sprenkle
New York: Haworth Information Press,
2006.
ix, 258 pp. \$24.95
ISBN: # 0-7890-2948-0
ISBN-13: # 978-0-7890-2948

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Library Student Journal,
July, 2007

Review

Reference librarianship: notes from the trenches is a must read for a library school student, practicing librarian, or library administrator. It is a book that can familiarize a new librarian with real reference encounters, comfort a practicing librarian in the notion that they are not alone, and remind administrators of the demands of the public on their staff members.

Daily encounters at a public reference desk are documented over the course of one

year by public librarian Peter Sprenkle. The original intentions of documenting the encounters were for use on a blog. The transactions are a means of providing readers with a true reference desk experience, with even the most absurd encounters included. Reading the encounters documented in this book provides one with a better understanding of the demands of the public in today's library environment.

Observations are made by Charles R. Anderson at the beginning of each chapter. Written as short articles, Anderson reflects on how libraries have changed due to technological advancements within society as well as the library environment over time.

A sampling of the encounters documented in *Reference librarianship*:

Wednesday, September 10, 2003

Old city directories.
Apparently he didn't want to wait over the phone.
She wants to e-mail her boyfriend nude pics of herself. I show her how to attach files.
Try an online catalog, ma'am.
Pencil.
Constitution guide, in Spanish.
How to Be Your Dog's Best Friend, by the Monks of New Skete.

Computer crash.
Printer advice.
Counseling (vocational guidance)
More e-mail attachment questions.
Stapler.
"I need world history. I couldn't find it
on the computers."
Printer advice.

Reference librarianship is enjoyable for familiarizing oneself with the world of a reference librarian. The diary style of writing can be as repetitive to the reader as reference transactions can be to a librarian. Although I recommend reading this book, I cannot say that it is one which can be taken in as a whole. The book should be read as a blog would be, just a posting or two each day is sufficient for ones needs.

Reviewer's Bio:

Bridget recently received her Master of Library Science degree from the University at Buffalo. Her interests include information literacy, reference, and outreach within academic libraries. She is currently employed within the Arts and Sciences Libraries at the University at Buffalo.