



Review

***Reference Reborn:
Breathing New Life Into Public Services***

Diane Zabel, (Ed.). Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2011. 401 pp. ISBN: 978-1-59158-828-3. \$55.00.

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As reference transactions have become ubiquitous in libraries, one might feel that there is nothing left to glean professionally from related literature. Unfortunately, this forethought has led to stagnation in services and the constant challenge to validate ourselves in the face of new technology and search engine domination. The need for faces in the information wilderness is more pressing now than ever before as the digital divide widens and opportunities shrink.

Reference Reborn looks at several of the current trends in reference services and offers a mix of scholarly and how-to essays designed to help librarians look at a variety of options for reinvigorating their core mission, public service. The book is exhaustive in the amount of topics it covers, from telephone to face-to-face to virtual reference, embedded librarians, community outreach, marketing, interfaces (databases, OPACs), user trends, tech trends, continuing education for all levels of librarianship and still much more. The essays are concise yet thorough enough to be usable on their own or a good jump off point for those looking to start researching a new model for integration.

One thing the book does well is to show that there is room and need for both techier virtual librarians and the face-to-face standard bearers. It also highlights how the blending of both of those skill sets is vital to addressing the public service needs of our future users.

At 401 pages, it is doubtful many will want to curl up with this book for a night of reading or take it cover to cover. However, it deserves a spot on the continuing education shelf as it undoubtedly offers something for every member of team library.

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