



The Reference Interview Today: Negotiating and Answering Questions Face to Face, on the Phone, and Virtually

Dave Harmeyer

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More an art than a science, the reference interview requires not only knowing a specific set of skills, but also how to apply those skills in an ever-changing world. Good reference interviews accomplish three goals: establishing contact with the user, determining what the user's information need actually is, and checking to make sure that the answer actually meets that need completely.

Built around timeless service principles including Ranganathan's Five Laws, *The Reference Interview Today: Negotiating and Answering Questions Face to Face, on the Phone, and Virtually* is a practical field guide to conducting reference interviews in every modality: face-to-face, phone, chat, text, virtual world such as Second Life, and even mashup reference interviews where multiple modalities are used to answer the question.

Following a concise presentation of reference interview basics, the heart of the book is 12 different reference interview scenarios set in different modes and demonstrating a specific principle. Each of these twelve follows a similar construction: a general overview of the principle (for example, save the time of the reader), a script of the reference interview, and then learning questions designed to demonstrate the principle(s) as illustrated in the script. Examples range from assisting faculty members with scholarly resources to helping a high school student with a paper to assisting a hairdresser with a reference question. One scenario is based in the year 2025 to emphasize the timeless nature of reference service.

Seamlessly combining both time-honored principles and multiple technologies, this practical book demonstrates how librarians can be as relevant and necessary in the digital age as in the print world. Appropriate for both novice and experienced librarians as well as for LIS students, this concise handbook speaks to those working in or preparing for careers in public, school, academic, and special libraries..



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