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Whenever I tried to explain what life was like behind the reference desk to people who had never worked in a library before, I always found myself saying, "It can be quite stressful, since you never know what the next person is going to bring. You have to be prepared to answer the strangest things, all with a cheerful smile on your face." I always nod along knowingly while reading our ongoing feature "Real-Life Reference." Nicolette Sosulski recounts her reference desk experiences, and this month, you'll discover the proper temperature for show dogs. I think many of you will also nod along at how you find "subject experts."

Speaking of subject experts, I'm borrowing a feature from our *Corner Shelf* newsletter, "Notes from the Field," in order to bring readers an interview with Barbara Bibel, who recently retired from the Oakland (CA) Public Library and is a certified consumer health specialist. We also have a "Reference Site to Remember," a featured review, the ever-popular "#twitterreference," and a look at how our sponsor, Gale/Cengage, is integrating Google into their

online resources. If you have any suggestions about what you'd like us to cover—or would like to contribute a feature article—feel free to e-mail me at rvnuk@ala.org.

—[Rebecca Vnuk](#), Editor, Reference and Collection Management, *Booklist*

Real-Life Reference: Is My Dog Gonna Freeze?

by Nicolette Sosulski



It was a brisk fall day in Michigan (we have a goodly number of those). The woman came up to the desk with a somewhat rushed, hectic demeanor and a disturbed look on her face. I was alone on the desk and finishing up a phone call with another patron, and you could tell that she was trying to be cordial but that inside she was fuming. She was not tapping her fingers or her feet (thank goodness—I hate that!), but she was fidgeting in the way that shows she needs the answer *now*, and the question was not "Which way is the bathroom?" I got off the phone, which was hard, because I had one of those very courteous and appreciative

patrons who wants to express her gratitude at some length for a fairly simple thing that you have done for her. Those patrons are always the ones on the phone when you have a patron in a hurry in front of you.

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Getting into the Flow. The Google Flow.

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According to a recent Cengage Learning survey, 75 percent of college students say they wish they took greater advantage of the library and its resources. And, interestingly enough, 70 percent of that same group admit to never asking their campus librarian for help with course assignments.

Academic librarians know well that only a fraction of students will seek their assistance. Yet the library provides information that will enhance student research and performance. So, how can the gap be bridged?

Gale has been working closely with librarians to identify and address growing concerns about this disconnect. The answer is getting authoritative content in the normal path students use for research and assignments.

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Notes from the Field, Reference Edition: Barbara Bibel

by Rebecca Vnuk



Barbara Bibel is known to many in the field, thanks to her contributions to the American Library Association, the Medical Library Association, and *Booklist*. She recently retired from the Oakland (CA) Public Library after almost 30 years as a reference librarian. I recently had a chance to ask her about her career.

Rebecca: Tell us a little about yourself.

Barbara: From 1988 until earlier this year, I was a reference librarian and collection development/consumer health information specialist (Medical Library Association certification) at the Oakland Public Library in Oakland, California. My duties included providing service on the reference desk, conducting training on reference skills and health and medical information, and ordering books in the Dewey 200s, 500s, and 600s as well as books in Russian and Spanish. I used to order in French as well, but that collection was discontinued. I am fluent in these languages—my undergraduate degree is in French—and I have a master's in romance languages.

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Reference Site to Remember: Practical ECommerce's "91 Leading Social Networks Worldwide"

by Rebecca Vnuk

You don't need a study to tell you that social media is king right now, but if you're a librarian, you'll want a source. The Pew Research Center's Social Media Update 2014 pinpoints that 71 percent of all Internet users are on Facebook, 52 percent of online adults use multiple social media sites, and social media use continues to grow every year. In light of this phenomenon, Practical ECommerce's list of "91 Leading Social Networks Worldwide" is one you'll want to bookmark.

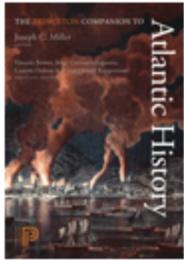


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Featured Reference Review: *The Princeton Companion to Atlantic History*

by Christopher McConnell



This unique book covers the human history of the Atlantic Ocean from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Exploring connections between Africa, Europe, and the Americas in a multicultural and multidisciplinary approach, the work focuses on major historical shifts and the people and cultures that motivated and were affected by them. Large portions of the text are devoted to the slave trade, emigration, war, religion, and emerging technologies. The Atlantic Ocean was the conduit for the transfer of ideas, people, and political ideologies, for better or worse, for hundreds of years.

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#twitterreference

by Rebecca Vnuk

Librarians rarely just sit there while out at the reference desk. Even when there's not a patron in front of them, they're often furiously typing away at something on their computer. It's likely that they're searching for the answer to a previous question, working on the latest collection report, tweaking a new public desk schedule . . . or perhaps they're tweeting. Let's take a peek.



Kelly T
@honestyalice

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My colleague just took a reference question over the phone about chupacabras. #librarylife #jealous

2:45 PM - 28 Jul 2015

[↩](#) [↻ 2](#) [★ 5](#)



holly
@hollysue

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things that amuse me: print-on-demand books that are listed as out of stock. i mean... what? is the printer out of ink?

#librarylife

11:44 AM - 28 Jul 2015

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Samantha Helmick
@SHelmick

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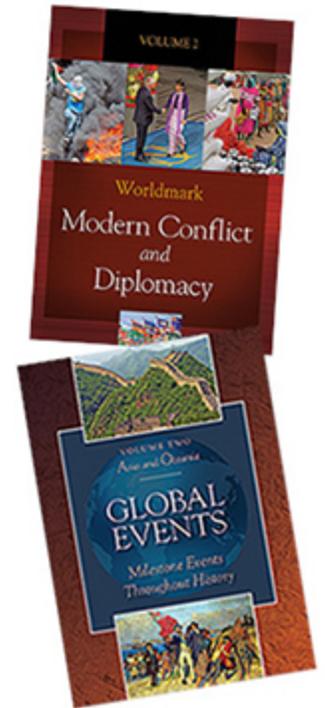
Just referred to as a "miracle-worker" for a reference answer. Not quite, but that's a day-maker. #librarylife

9:31 AM - 14 Jul 2015

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Beastbrarian
@amydieg

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my boss just commented that my lipstick tips to a patron today were TOTALLY reference [#librarylife](#)

3:12 PM - 11 Aug 2015

4 23



Molly Wetta
@molly_wetta

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debating with patrons about who would win in a chess game sherlock or doctor who like it's my job (it is my job) [#librarylife](#)

2:16 PM - 4 Aug 2015

3 5



David Wright
@guybrarian

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Today I was introduced to someone as "the mayor of the library." I'd hoped for "the Mayor McCheese of the Library."

4:54 PM - 29 Jul 2015

3



Fake Library Stats
@FakeLibStats

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A tattoo on a librarian's back is called a spine label

11:06 AM - 17 Apr 2015

264 264



Ranting Librarian
@SurlLibrarian

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I thought there was nothing worse than being a [#saturdaylibrarian](#) but I was wrong. Meet the [#sundaylibrarian](#)

11:42 PM - 1 Aug 2015

3



Stacy Taylor
@GlowingFish

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New favorite reference question: Have you ever been to Narnia? #librarylife #sundaylibrarian

5:16 PM - 12 Jul 2015



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