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***2017–2018 CARLI Public Services Committee Annual Project:  
Library Public Services Models  
Resource List and Presentations on the CARLI Website***

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<https://www.carli.illinois.edu/public-services-models>

## **Library Public Services Models: Resource List and Presentations**

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### **Introduction**

In light of academic libraries reimagining and combining service points to improve user experience, consolidate staff functions, and redesign public areas, the CARLI Public Services Committee's theme for 2017-2018 was the examination of merged service points.

In addition to two Open Houses focused on this topic, the committee created a short bibliography of recent articles on merged service points from various perspectives: design, staffing and training, blending library and information technology functions, and reference service.

The two open houses featured remodeled library public spaces. The first was hosted by Staley Library at Millikin University in Decatur, where a library building remodel was recently completed. The second was hosted by the Brown Library at University of St. Francis in Joliet, where the staff discussed recent changes to staffing service desks. Both open houses included presentations by CARLI member librarians as well as tours of the facilities.

## Resource List: Citations and Author Abstracts

### ▼ MERGING/DISTRIBUTING LIBRARY SERVICE POINTS

Bunnett, Brian, Andrea Boehme, Steve Hardin, Shelley Arvin, Karen Evans, Paula Huey, and Carey LaBella. "Where Did the Reference Desk go? Transforming Staff and Space to Meet User Needs." *Journal of Access Services*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2016, pp. 66-79. doi: [10.1080/15367967.2016.1161517](https://doi.org/10.1080/15367967.2016.1161517).

Abstract: A sharp decline in the number of reference queries prompted the library administration at Indiana State University to begin a project to combine the circulation, reference, and IT desks to reduce staffing at a new consolidated service point. All faculty and staff in the reference/instruction and circulation units participated in the project. The new arrangement and subsequent removal of librarians from routine desk duties have expanded instructional opportunities, consistent with the university's goals. Project participants plan further assessments to better determine the impacts of the new service arrangement.

Dickerson, Madelynn. "Beta Spaces as a Model for Recontextualizing Reference Services in Libraries." In *The Library With The Lead Pipe*, 18 May 2016. <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2016/reference-as-beta-space/>.

Abstract: Reference services are at a crossroads. While many academic libraries continue to offer reference services from behind a desk, others are moving to roving and embedded reference models. Meanwhile, libraries are also engaged in the development of collaborative learning spaces—often rich with technology, such as makerspaces and learning labs—but these spaces are often removed from the reference services environment. Beta spaces are another type of collaborative environment used in both public and academic libraries with the potential to infuse energy into the reference space and emphasize research support through experimentation, collaboration, and user contribution. Beta spaces are user-oriented environments with a focus on innovation and experimentation, much like a makerspace but with an emphasis on ideas over technology. A beta space model for reference services would enhance opportunities for active learning, help make the research process visible and tangible, and effectively demonstrate the value of reference.

Hannan, Heather Groves. "Great Expectations: (Re)Design Motivator for Merging Traffic at the Service Desk." *The Future of Library Space*, edited by Samantha Schmehl Hines and Kathryn Moore Crowe. Emerald Group, 2016, pp. 199-216. *Advances in Library Administration and Organization*, 36. <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/S0732-06712016000036009>

Abstract: Purpose: Merging library traffic from dispersed service points into a combined services desk is not new, and many reasons prompt this move. George Mason University, Virginia's largest public research institution, combined a total of 10 service desks located in four libraries on three distributed campuses. To consolidate services and reduce costs, the Mason Libraries established a "one-stop" service point in each library. With the goal of "one-stop" service point in each facility, the Mason Libraries recrafted physical spaces, reviewed policies, procedures, and workflows as well as revised staff roles and responsibilities.

Jones, Phillip J., and Tim Zou. "The Process and the Promise of Consolidating Public Services Desks: You Can't Hurry Love." *Brick and Click Libraries Symposium Proceedings*, 6 Nov. 2009, Northwest Missouri State University, pp. 4-14. <http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/5838/1/ED507380.pdf>.

Abstract: Professional literature and anecdotal evidence from presentations at conferences indicate that the consolidation of public service, common in branch libraries and other small academic libraries, is being debated and implemented in some central libraries of larger institutions. The personnel of the University of Arkansas Libraries analyzed this emerging trend in 2008 while addressing new strategic goals. A task force of twelve supervisors ultimately recommended a centralized one-stop service desk in the main library, Mullins. Several major considerations guided the project: streamlining service to avoid the confusion of patrons and the ping-pong effect of referrals among multiple service points, and staffing personnel in a cost-effective manner. Open-minded and thorough brainstorming was critical to the task force's success. This paper discusses the rationale for the changes, explains the process of striving to build consensus across all functions within the Public Services Division, presents factors that led to the decision to relocate reference service to the circulation desk, and reviews the implementation in December 2008 and initial results.

Kiesling, Bruce L., and Claudene Sproles. "Reviewing and Reforming Library Service Points: Lessons in Review and Planning Services, Building Layout, and Organizational Culture." *Library Management*, vol. 38, nos. 8/9, 2017, pp. 426-36. <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/abs/10.1108/LM-02-2017-0020>.

Summary: This paper provides a process and framework for library leadership who are evaluating and revising service delivery models, and shows that comprehensive and ongoing user assessment is crucial to planning for renovations and service changes.

Lund, James R. "Service Desk Shuffle." *The Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances*, vol. 25, no. 1, 2012, pp.23-25, doi: [10.1108/08880451211229199](https://doi.org/10.1108/08880451211229199).

Abstract: Purpose – The purpose of this article is to encourage public librarians to consider replacing two service desks with one. Design/methodology/approach – The author interacts with his experience of providing library services from a two-story Carnegie library and a multi-desk one-story library to make an argument for a single service desk. Findings – Providing one service point creates a seamless experience for patrons and necessitates teamwork from all service staff – professional and non-professional. Originality/value – Offers a "common-sense" perspective on providing reference and circulation services.



## ▼ STAFFING AND TRAINING AT MERGED LIBRARY SERVICE POINTS

Chauvet, Marianne, Vicki Bourbous, and Frances Liston. "Service Matters: Single Service Point as a Collaborative and Professional Learning Initiative for Service Excellence." *Journal of Access Services*, vol. 13, no. 2, April/June 2016, pp. 80-90. doi: [10.1080/15367967.2016.1161518](https://doi.org/10.1080/15367967.2016.1161518).

Abstract: Changes and innovations in higher education learning and teaching acted as a catalyst for rethinking the way in which service was delivered to library clients at Australian Catholic University. The Single Service Point was piloted at one campus library in 2014 to develop a best practice approach to service delivery. The merging of cultures within the library environment was achieved through committed leadership, with staff agreeing on shared values and goals and applying the university mission. All staff were responsible for seeking solutions to challenges and becoming autonomous in their professional development and training. Overall, in a Single Service Point model, service efficiency, excellence, and quality increased through staff teamwork, contribution, and collaboration.

Moore, Margaret Eilene, Kathleen A. McGraw, and Julia Shaw-Kokot. "Preparing Staff to Work at a Single Service Desk." *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2001, pp. 79-86. doi: [10.1300/J115v20n01\\_08](https://doi.org/10.1300/J115v20n01_08).

Introduction: This column will describe approaches to staff training for a single service desk—the setting, background, service goals, training objectives, training plans, evaluations, and next steps. Given that the service center is our users' on-site and off-site gateway to the entire range of library resources and services, developing and implementing effective training has been the library staff's greatest challenge. Colleagues at other libraries that had previously adopted single service desks told us that training was critical to success and was a major challenge. Evaluations during the first year of operation have proved the need for ongoing training improvements, and it is expected that training will continue to be the number one challenge. We hope that our experiences will help others build staff training and development programs, regardless of the scope of services.

Murphy, Beverly, Richard A. Peterson, Hattie Vines, Megan von Isenburg, Elizabeth Berney, Robert James, Marcos Rodriguez, and Patricia Thibodeau. "Revolution at the Library Service Desk." *Medical Reference Services Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2008, pp. 379-93. doi: [10.1080/02763860802367870](https://doi.org/10.1080/02763860802367870).

Abstract: This article will describe how a revolution in customer service provision beginning in 2002 has led to an evolution of library services. When the reference and circulation desks were merged to create a single service point, responsibilities were broadened, core competencies were developed, and staff members were cross trained. In 2005, an analysis of staffing and work patterns demonstrated a need to build upon the original model to better utilize staff and ensure coverage of the desk. Reference librarians were moved to "on call" status, technical services staff were added to the schedule, and core competencies and procedures were refined.

Oud, Joanne, and Peter Genzinger. "Aiming for Service Excellence: Implementing a Plan for Customer Service Quality at a Blended Service Desk." *Journal of Access Services*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2016, pp.112-30. doi: [10.1080/15367967.2016.1161521](https://doi.org/10.1080/15367967.2016.1161521).

Abstract: This article discusses a public service review and redesign that resulted in a blended service desk combining reference and circulation functions, staffed by nonlibrarians. The redesign implements a number of organizational structures that encourage service excellence, as found in the business literature and in examples of nonlibrary organizations that excel in customer service. The article identifies key organizational structures that have been shown to support or hinder good service and discusses the process of implementing these structures in practice and the results of an assessment process designed around determining success.

Venner, Mary Ann, and Seti Keshmiripour. "X marks the Spot: Creating and Managing a Single Service Point to Improve Customer Service and Maximize Resources." *Journal of Access Services*, vol. 13, no. 2, April/June 2016, pp. 101-11. doi: [10.1080/15367967.2016.1161520](https://doi.org/10.1080/15367967.2016.1161520).

Abstract: This article will describe how merging service points in an academic library is an opportunity to improve customer service and utilize staffing resources more efficiently. Combining service points provides libraries with the ability to create a more positive library experience for patrons by minimizing the ping-pong effect for assistance. The Access Services Department at the University of North Texas Libraries was charged with management of the circulation and reference services offered at the service desk. Streamlined planning and modernized management of the desk and its impact on customer service in a changing library environment will be discussed.

## ▼ MERGED LIBRARY AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICE POINTS

Kimmell-Smith, Stacey E. "Ten Years After: The Integrated Computing and Library Help Desk at Lehigh University." *Internet Reference Services Quarterly*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2006, pp. 35-55. doi: [10.1300/J136v11n03\\_03](https://doi.org/10.1300/J136v11n03_03).

Abstract: In 1996, Lehigh University merged its libraries, computing, and telecommunications services into a single organization called Information Resources. As part of the merger, the frontline services—the computing support desk and the library reference desk—were combined into a single help desk designed to offer a single point of service, with backup by a second tier of computing, instructional technology, enterprise information, and library consultants. The author reviews the literature on the service implications of merging libraries and computing and provides an overview of the new organizational structure of Lehigh's Information Resources. The rest of the paper traces the development of the LTS (Library and Technology Services) integrated help desk over ten years and describes management issues such as training, staffing, referral, workflow, assessment, and other topics.

Magee, Christopher, and Michael Perini. "The Blended Desk and its Consequences on Collaboration." *Collaborative Librarianship*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2014, pp. 124-29. <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1095&context=collaborativelibrarianship>

Abstract: This article discusses the complications arising from the implementation of the "blended desk" model in an academic library and its influence on intra-organizational collaboration. Blended desks combine the physical spaces of traditional Circulation and Reference desks and staff in an arrangement with a new desk and multi-skilled individuals. Traditionally dissimilar mentalities and skill sets of the Circulation and Reference personnel along with a culture reflecting typical academic hierarchy all create impediments to the success of this service model. Given this, various reconsiderations of the blended desk model are suggested.

Wang, Bing, and Bruce Henson. "Change is Coming: A Combined Services Area Project." *Science & Technology Libraries*, vol. 30, no. 1, January 2011, pp. 89-98. doi: [10.1080/0194262X.2011.545678](https://doi.org/10.1080/0194262X.2011.545678).

Abstract: Many academic libraries are following the trend of combining reference and access services at a single service location. Here at the Georgia Institute of Technology Library and Information Center, we are working on a Combined Services Area Project to transform current service points into a one-stop-shop area that offers reference, circulation, and technology support services. This article details the processes involved in planning and implementing an integrated services desk, outlines the benefits and challenges discovered in the process, and sets the framework for developing a collaborative service model.

Wang, Bing, and Bruce Henson. "A Combined Services Area Project: Strategies for a Successful Operation." *Science & Technology Libraries*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2017. doi: [10.1080/0194262X.2017.1365042](https://doi.org/10.1080/0194262X.2017.1365042).

Abstract: Since 2011, Georgia Tech Library has been undergoing a series of changes to redefine the 21st century research library. At the beginning of these changes were combining reference, circulation, and technology support into a one-stop-shop service model. Although operations under the integrated services model faced many challenges, forming a new department to include all staff members who provide such integrated services and helping these employees develop and maintain their competency are two key successful factors.

## ▼ REFERENCE FUNCTIONS IN A MERGED ENVIRONMENT

Bandyopadhyay, Aditi, and Mary Kate Boyd-Byrnes. "Is the need for mediated reference service in academic libraries fading away in the digital environment?" *Reference Services Review*, vol. 44, no. 4, 2016, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/RSR-02-2016-0012>.

Abstract: Academic libraries are experiencing numerous changes in their services due to high demands for digital resources and changes in users' information needs and expectations. Many academic library users give preferences to Google, Google Scholar and other search engines on the internet when they search for information. As reference transactions are decreasing in many academic institutions, this paper aims to investigate the continuing need for mediated reference services in the technology-driven environment in academic libraries.

Douglas, Arellano. "A Reference Redo." *ACRLog: Blogging by and for Academic and Research Librarians*, 16 Jan. 2017, <http://acrlog.org/2017/01/16/a-reference-redo/>.

Summary: Instead of continuing on with business as usual, our library director gathered us together to discuss reference services at our library. It was an informal meeting, but I thought her discussion questions did a great job at getting to the core of why we provide reference services, what reference means to each of us, and how we could potentially be doing it differently.

Kenney, Brian. "Where Reference Fits in the Modern Library: Today's Reference User Wants Help Doing Things Rather than Finding Things." *Publisher's Weekly*, 11 Sept. 2015, <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/68019-for-future-reference.html>.

Summary: The library today is still a trusted institution, but the public is coming to us with different expectations. Clinging to an outdated reference mission has left many libraries struggling to meet these new expectations.



LaMagna, Michael, Sarah Hartman-Caverly, and Lori Marchetti. "Redefining Roles and Responsibilities: Implementing a Triage Reference Model at a Single Service Point." *Journal of Access Services*, vol. 13, no. 2, April/June 2016, pp. 53-65. doi: [10.1080/15367967.2016.1161516](https://doi.org/10.1080/15367967.2016.1161516).

Abstract: As academic institutions continue to renovate and remodel existing libraries to include colocated services, it is important to understand how this new environment requires the redefining of traditional library roles and responsibilities. This case study examines how Delaware County Community College redefined reference and research service by transitioning to a triage reference model. This includes how information desk staff and student workers at a single service point determine when to refer users to librarians and how this model has evolved based on specific situations and experiences.

McClure, Hazel, and Patricia Bravender. "Regarding Reference in an Academic Library: Does the Desk Make a Difference?" *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 4, Summer 2013, pp. 302-8. [https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/library\\_sp/47/](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/library_sp/47/)

Abstract: Some academic libraries are consolidating their circulation and reference desks into single service points. The librarians at one academic library undertook a study to determine if such a consolidation would affect their reference service. They analyzed the number and type of questions asked during times when a librarian was physically present at the reference desk and compared it to the number and type of questions asked when a librarian was "on call" (not present at the desk, but available to be called to the service desk to answer reference questions) over a period of seven academic semesters. This article reports on the methodology used to collect and analyze the data and the researchers' findings. The results show that true reference questions remained steady whether or not the reference desk was staffed. The implications are important at a time when libraries are moving to single service desks staffed by nonlibrarians and are unsure of the efficacy of this model.

Meldrem, Joyce A., Lori A. Mardis, and Carolyn Johnson. "Redesign Your Reference Desk: Get Rid of It!" Paper presented at the 12th National Conference of ACRL, Minneapolis, MN, April 2005.

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/sites/ala.org.acrl/files/content/conferences/pdf/meldrem05.pdf>.

Abstract: This case study of a medium-sized academic library reports the evolution of reference service from a traditional reference desk to a two-tiered reference system to a "one-stop shopping" model of providing public service that eliminates a physical reference desk while maintaining service for walk-in patrons. A pilot project tested the feasibility of eliminating a physical desk for providing reference service. The project consisted of a review of literature, discussion and analysis, proposal, implementation, marketing, and assessment. The pilot project in this case study can be used as a model for other small-to-medium-sized academic libraries for eliminating a physical reference desk or as a springboard for considering other multi-tasking options when experiencing declining reference questions.

Schulte, Stephanie. "Eliminating Traditional Reference Services in an Academic Health Sciences Library: A Case Study." *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, vol. 99, no. 4, October 2011, pp. 273-9,

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3193369/pdf/mlab-99-04-273.pdf>.

Abstract: How were traditional librarian reference desk services successfully eliminated at one health sciences library? The analysis was done at an academic health sciences library at a major research university. A gap analysis was performed, evaluating changes in the first eleven months through analysis of reference transaction and instructional session data. Substantial increases were seen in the overall number of specialized reference transactions and those conducted by librarians lasting more than thirty minutes. The number of reference transactions overall increased after implementing the new model. Several new small-scale instructional initiatives began, though perhaps not directly related to the new model. Traditional reference desk services were eliminated at one academic health sciences library without negative impact on reference and instructional statistics. Eliminating ties to the confines of the physical library due to staffing reference desk hours removed one significant barrier to a more proactive liaison program.

Su, Mila. "Beyond Circulation: The Evolution of Access Services and Its Relationship to Reference Librarianship." (2008) *The Reference Librarian*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2008, pp. 77-86. doi: [10.1080/02763870802103795](https://doi.org/10.1080/02763870802103795).

Abstract: Academic libraries have undergone a variety of organizational changes in the last two decades. One area that has evolved out of these changes is access services. Relationships between circulation, interlibrary loan, and reference have been explored though informal and formal organizational structures. Because of these types of interactions it is feasible for reference librarians to consider positions in access services.

Thorpe, Clare. "Engaging with Our Communities: Future Trends and Opportunities for Reference Services." *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association*, vol. 66, no. 4, 2017, pp. 406-15. doi: [10.1080/24750158.2017.1359993](https://doi.org/10.1080/24750158.2017.1359993).

Abstract: Libraries across the world are constantly reinventing themselves as they respond to changing community needs and the benefits and challenges posed by new and emerging technologies. This literature review was undertaken to inform a visioning and planning exercise in the Visitor Experience team at State Library of Queensland to identify opportunities and trends for the provision of engaging and relevant reference services. Four key themes are discussed in this review: changing community expectations and user behaviour, defining and measuring the impact of the modern library and reference services, offering flexibility in spaces and service delivery, and the roles of library staff and future skills sets. This review confirms that libraries, specifically reference and information services, remain in a unique position to support their communities in learning, work, recreation, creativity and innovation. The challenge for library leadership is to measure the impact of the library in their local community context.

## Open Houses – New Service Models in Action

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### MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY – STALEY LIBRARY AND NEW UNIVERSITY COMMONS, MARCH 15, 2018

- Welcome, Overview of the Day, Planning for the University Commons
  - Jeffery Aper, Provost
  - Cindy Fuller, Director of Staley Library
  - Rachel Bicicchi, Associate Professor, Educational Technology Coordinator, and Research/Instruction Librarian
  - Sue Franzen, Chair, CARLI Public Services Committee
- New Technologies Studio Overview
  - Rachel Bicicchi, Associate Professor, Educational Technology Coordinator, and Research/Instruction Librarian
  - Eric McKinney, Educational Technology and Technical Services Specialist
- Instruction Program Overview
  - Dr. Matthew Olsen, Assistant Professor, Instruction Coordinator, and Research/Instruction Librarian
- Building/Library Tour
  - Cindy Fuller, Director of Staley Library
- Panel Discussion with all University Commons Stakeholders including:
  - Jessica Wilcoxon, Associate Professor and Chair, Arts Technology
  - Z. Paul Reynolds, Director of Student Development & University Commons
  - Carrie Pierson, Director of the Office of Student Success and ADA Coordinator
  - Cindy Fuller, Director of Staley Library
  - Judi Crowe, Director of the Writing Center and Assistant Professor of English
  - Molly Berry, Director of Inclusion and Student Engagement
-  Presentation by Quincy University, Patricia Tomczak, Dean of Library and Information Resources, Quincy University

→ [Event Photo Gallery](#)

### UNIVERSITY OF ST. FRANCIS – BROWN LIBRARY, APRIL 6, 2018

- "Shared Circulation & Reference Desk Experience at USF," Shannon Porhte Wenzel, Director of Brown Library, University of St. Francis
- Library Tour
-  "Beta Desks and Planning for a New Service Model," Nancy Weichert, Instructional Services Librarian, University of Illinois at Springfield
- Discussion of Service Models

→ [Event Photo Gallery](#)