

University Library Reference/Research Services 2006-2007

Background

University Library offers reference assistance at three main service points:

Klevin Smith Library

Kulas Music Library (Haydn Hall)

Special Collections (Housed in Kelvin Smith Library)

The Kelvin Smith Library is the main library for Case Western Reserve University. It houses collections and services for Case faculty, students, and staff in of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Case School of Engineering, and the Weatherhead School of Management. Reference service is provided in a variety of formats.

- In person reference assistance is provided at the KSL Reference desk Monday-Thursday 9am to 10pm, Friday and Saturday 9-5 and Sunday 1-5.
- Chat Reference service began 4 years ago. Hours of service expanded this year from Monday-Friday 1-5 to Monday-Thursday 1-10pm, Friday 1-5 and Saturday all day.
- E-mail service continued. Questions can be sent to our e-mail box (ulrefer) at any time and replies are made within 24 hours.
- Instant Message reference service began in August of 2007 .There is no fixed schedule at this time but service is generally available throughout the day and for some evening hours depending on staff availability

Kulas Music Library is a satellite library of Kelvin Smith Library. It houses Case's library collections in the area of music. The library contains 45,000 items, including music scores, books on music, sound recordings, video recordings, microforms and music periodicals. Reference service is provided all of the hours that the Library is open

Monday: 8:30-9:00, Tuesday: 8:30-5:00, Wednesday 8:30-9:00

Thursday & Friday: 8:30-5:00, Saturday: 10:00-4:00, Sunday 1:00-5:00

The Department of Special Collections houses the rare books, manuscripts, and special collections of University Library. These areas of the Library were designed to provide protective and controlled environments for such materials which, because of their rarity, value, fragility, ephemeral nature, or because they are part of a distinctive subject or author collection, require special care and handling. Reference assistance is provided all of the hours the department is open.

Monday through Friday, 9:00 to 12:00 and 1:00 to 5:00.

Discussion

The transition from print based resources to electronic access has allowed a high degree of self sufficiency among users seeking information. However the number and complexity of resources available makes assistance and instruction by reference staff vital for our community of users and requests for reference assistance remains high. Making our community aware of the best resources available and providing assistance in and teaching the effective use of those resources is one of our primary goals. We want to ensure that our faculty and students find and use those resources that will provide them with the best information available.

For the academic year 2006-2007 in person reference assistance continued to make up the major portion of our interactions with our community. We experienced a slight drop in the overall number of reference queries – from 17,092 in 2005-2006 to 16,159 in 2006-2007. This drop came in the area of in person service.

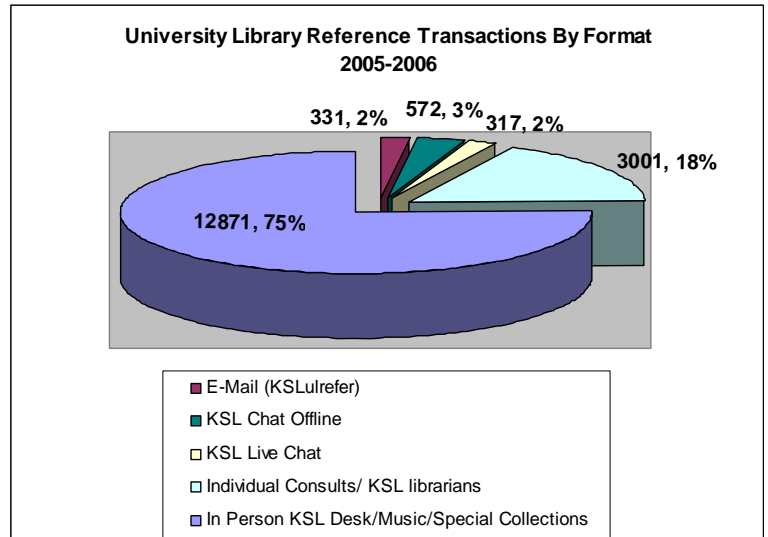
This reduction impacted the number of transactions at the KSL Desk and in the number of reference consultations with individual KSL librarians. This can be explained by 4 factors.

- Reduction of KSL desk hours by 5 per week
- Two reference librarians were not active for much of this semester.
- Lack of an effective technique for collecting data.
- The tendency being found across all academic libraries for patrons to conduct more of their research from a remote location (such as office, home or dorm room).

As would be expected with more work being done outside the library, reference assistance provided through e-mail and Chat has grown - from about 7% to 8% of our total number of questions for 2006-2007. We expect this trend to continue. In August we added an Instant Messaging reference service which we hope will make us more accessible – particularly to the undergraduates who rely heavily on this form of communication. We also hope to have a bigger presence on campus blogs, wikis and forums in the coming year.

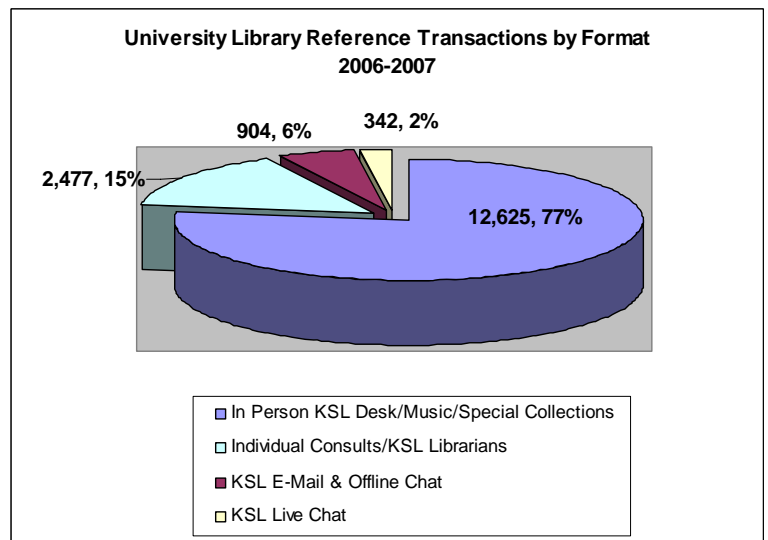
University Library Reference Transactions 2005-2006

Format	Transactions
In Person KSL Desk/Music/Special Collections	13,791
Individual Consults/ KSL Librarians	3,001
E-Mail (KSLrefer)	331
KSL Chat Offline	572
KSL Live Chat	317
Total	18,012



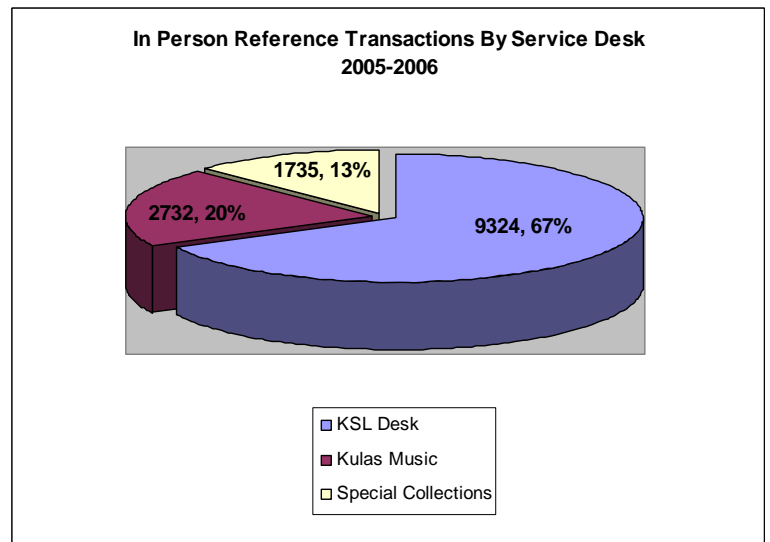
University Library Reference Transactions 2006-2007

Format	Transactions
In Person KSL Desk/Music/Special Collections	12,625
Individual Consults/KSL Librarians	2,477
KSL E-Mail & Offline Chat	904
KSL Live Chat	342
Total	16,348



In Person Reference Transactions by Service Desk 2005-2006

Location	Transactions
KSL Desk	9,324
Kulas Music	2,732
Special Collections	1,735
Total	13,791



In Person Reference Transactions by Service Desk 2006-2007

Location	Transactions
KSL Desk*	9,264
Kulas Music	2,186
Special Collections	1,175
Total	12,625

* Based on sampling

