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**TOPIC: TEN KINDS OF REFERENCE AND INFORMATION SERVICE WITH A DETAILED EXPLANATION AND EXAMPLES**

**INTRODUCTION**

A Library is no doubt a store house of Information resources and materials in print and non-print form aimed at serving the information needs and purpose of the user community within and without the environment where it is located.

Just like the reception office in an organization, the first point of contact in any given library is usually the reference section where a first time or concurrent user of the library can go to make enquiry or lodge a complain about a particular information resources. The reference section is a very crucial office in a library in that it aims at answering the questions of users to their satisfaction and render assistance inorder to enable them make the best use of the library according to their desired need and interest. Hence the reason for the erection of a signage with the word **"Ask a Librarian"** in a strategic location in the library, take the John Harris Library in UNIBEN for example.

**WHAT IS A REFERENCE SECTION/ REFERENCE SERVICE ?**

A Reference section is a section in the library that provide reference service to users, readers, clientele or patron in a library. Reference service, also known as readers service are the personal assistance provided to users in pursuit of information to enable them effectively make use of the library without been confused. The reference section is usually headed by a reference librarian.

**TEN (10) KINDS OF REFERENCE AND INFORMATION SERVICE WITH A DETAILED EXPLANATION AND EXAMPLES.**

There are various kinds of reference and information services common to the reference section In the library. These include;

(1) **USER EDUCATION ON THE CATALOGUE CARD:** As a service in the reference section, the reference librarian perform the service of teaching the users of information on how to make use of the catalogue card in easily locating and accessing information materials in the library. Eg. Training on how to use the catalogue card to locate and identify books.

(2) **ASSISTING PATRONS TO FIND BOOK:** The reference section through the reference librarian also renders the service of physically helping the readers to find book on the shelves in the library so that users can utilize it for the very purpose of their coming into the library. Eg. Helping users look for book on a particular topic.

(3) **RECOMMENDATION OF BOOKS TO USERS:** Should in case a clientele come into the library with the aim of doing his or her assignment and yet does not know the exact book to use in getting the information needed for the assignment, asking a reference librarian would be very helpful because, the rich in experience librarian would be able to suggest or recommend a material for him or her to use in getting the assignment done successfully. Eg. Recommending of similar books to users who couldn't find their desired book in the library.

(4) **ONLINE DATABASE TRAINING:** The reference section is also responsible for the training of readers on how to use the internet to access information resources for their various use and purposes in the library. This service enables the users not to depend on physical books alone as a source of information, but to also see the rich number of materials available online for use. Eg. Training the users on how to use the OPAC system.

(5) **ADVICE ON SEARCHING INFORMATION:** It is through the service of the reference and information service that the users are advised on how to search for needed information in a way that will enhance it quick retrieval and access within and without the library. Eg. Training and advising the users on how to use the Boolean operators to FasTrack the retrieval of relevant information in the course of searching for a material online.

(6) **ABSTRACTING AND INDEXING SERVICES:** Abstracts and Indexes are pointers to a general or specific Information in an information resource or material. The reference service also known as readers service renders the service of helping users to locate a given information material from a store house of information and repository of knowledge known as the library. Eg. Through the abstracting and indexing of the information materials in the library for readers use.

(7) **CURRENT AWARENESS SERVICES:** The reference section of the library is also involved in the creation of awareness to users about the availability of newly acquired information materials in the library for their use so as to enable them make use of it. Eg. Creation of current awareness through the use of bulletin and or physical announcement of this in the hearing of readers in the library.

(8) **SELECTIVE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION:** The reference and information service also entails the selective dissemination of information resources to enable users and patron have access to the information that best suite their needs and interest in the library. Eg. Dissemination of already sorted information to needy users.

(9) **ASSISTING USERS WITH RESEARCH AND ASSIGNMENT:** In cases whereby an assignment or research work too complicated to understand is given to a student or researcher to carry out, the library becomes the first and best place to go seeking for information that can lead to the success of such a task. And upon getting to the library, the best person to meet with in this regard is the reference librarian in the readers service section who will render the readers service of helping the user. Eg. Such as to interpret the given assignment for better understanding of the student or researcher.

(10) **REFERENCE SOURCE:** The reference section of the library serve as a place where reference materials which are a category of information resources about a particular topic or subject are kept. This provides guide to users on a general or specific scope on any given course or subject of study. Eg. Atlas, encyclopedia, directories, year book and so on are a typical example of reference materials available in the reference section of the library.

**CONCLUSION**

There is no two way about it that the reference section of the library is a very important structure that needs to be well furnished with competent and current human and material resources to provide effective and efficient reference and information service to the user community in a way that would enhance and encourage more patronage of the library by clientele and patrons from both far and near.

Every section of the library was set up for a given purpose as it relates to the operation of the library, but none of them is as open to the need of the users as that of a reference section. It is therefore necessary and important that the reference and information service section of the library continually be a safe haven where users will always be welcomed with a solution for every of their information and resource needs and desires.