

Case Study:

Desk Tracker™ in a Public Library



The Challenges

We are a very busy library in suburban Chicago. Keeping track of reference interactions was a manual process of hash marks at the desk. Every month it took about 1.5 hours to tally up the daily statistics in Information Services Department. Since there were many more transactions at the Circulation Desk, the time to compile their statistics was even greater. We wanted to reduce the amount of time we were spending gathering and compiling statistics.

Name of Library: Arlington Heights Memorial Library
Location: Arlington Heights, IL
Population Served: 76,000
Of Special Note: 2009 5-star library ranking (Library Journal Index)

*Interview with Patrick McDonald,
Director of Library Experiences*

The Desk Tracker Solution

We learned about Desk Tracker from a product announcement in *Public Libraries*. We signed up for a free trial to see how it would work at the Reference Desk. Once we configured it for our library and trained Reference Desk staff, word spread quickly to the other service desks. The enthusiasm for the efficiencies Desk Tracker could give us was contagious. All ten of our main service points are now using Desk Tracker.

“The enthusiasm for the efficiencies Desk Tracker could give us was contagious.”

We have used Desk Tracker primarily to help us compile the statistics we need to comply with the year-end report required by the State of Illinois. The types of statistics we gather run the gamut: directional requests; source (phone, walk-in, IM or email); roving interaction; extended reference question or ready reference; request for computer training; equipment problem and which piece of equipment; sign-up for a computer station, etc. The flexibility of Desk Tracker allows us to customize the information we collect at each service desk.

Recently we set up a temporary service point in the library to expand our help to adults needing career assistance. We established special categories in Desk Tracker at this service point to help us better assess what patrons needed. The categories included areas like resume help; job listings; personal email account setup; applying for unemployment; etc. Using Desk Tracker to capture data provided immediate feedback and demonstrated that the most prevalent need was for resume review. With this information we were able to adjust the type of service we were offering to better meet the needs of the patrons.

“Our subscription to Desk Tracker is yielding a substantial return on our investment.”

Desk Tracker has enabled us to greatly reduce the amount of staff time it takes to tally statistics and produce reports. If we calculate the hourly rate of a staff person times the number of hours spent monthly, it's clear that our subscription to Desk Tracker is yielding a substantial return on our investment. This, plus the ability to track the topical nature of interactions, makes Desk Tracker a potentially very useful tool for public libraries.

About Desk Tracker

A product of Compendium Library Services, Desk Tracker provides the fastest, easiest way to track library activity at every public service point. Web-based and fully customizable, Desk Tracker provides instant access to the data needed to effectively manage library resources. Visit desktracker.com for more information, or contact Compendium Library Services at 970-472-7979 or PO Box 82, Bellvue, Colorado, 80512. You can also visit us on the web at compendiumlib.com.