



# Virtual Dave Lankes

## Presentation

<http://www.DavidLankes.org>

**TITLE:** Research in Digital Reference: A Town Hall Meeting

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**ABSTRACT:** Participate in a “town hall” meeting on research. After a brief update on selected issues, the speakers will solicit ideas for supporting an ongoing research effort to study and improve digital reference.

**KEYWORDS:** Virtual reference, digital reference, research

# RESEARCH IN DIGITAL REFERENCE: A TOWN HALL MEETING

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# CURRENT CONTEXT

- BUDGETS ARE OFTEN STAGNANT AND MONEY FOR RESEARCH VERY DIFFICULT TO FIND
- DEMAND FOR BETTER SERVICES WITH NEWER TECHNOLOGY IS EXPANDING, WHAT DO WE DO?
- DIRECTORS, GOVERNING BOARDS, AND STATE OFFICIALS, WANT INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY AND BETTER JUSTIFICATION OF SERVICES
- NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IS HAVING A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE LIBRARY AND ITS PROVISION OF SERVICES, WHAT DO WE BUY?
- CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE WRONG AND COSTLY DECISIONS



# HOW IS DIGITAL REFERENCE RESEARCH SUPPORTED NOW?

- GRANT/FOUNDATION MONEY
- SOME LIMITED SUPPORT WITHIN INDIVIDUAL LIBRARIES AND CONSORTIA
- “IN-KIND” SUPPORT BY DEDICATED FOLKS WITHIN INDIVIDUAL LIBRARIES AS DIRECTED BY THE LIBRARY
- DONE PRO BONO BECAUSE THE RESEARCHER IS INTERESTED IN THE TOPIC



# SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- THERE IS NOT ENOUGH MONEY AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS ALL THE RESEARCH NEEDS IN THIS AREA
- THERE ARE TOO MANY TOPICS/ISSUES RELATED TO DIGITAL REFERENCE THAT NEED INVESTIGATION
- WANT TO MAXIMIZE IMPACT FROM THE LIMITED RESEARCH MONIES THAT ARE AVAILABLE
- DON'T WANT TO BE REINVENTING THE WHEEL



# BASIC MODELS FOR SUPPORTING RESEARCH


- SUBMIT PROPOSAL AND (HOPEFULLY) GET FUNDED BY A GRANT AWARDING INSTITUTION – OFTENTIMES HAVE TO ADDRESS THEIR PRIORITIES
- AN INDIVIDUAL GETS INTERESTED IN A RESEARCH QUESTION/TOPIC AND PURSUES IT WITH LITTLE EXTERNAL SUPPORT
- A GROUP OF LIBRARIES AND/OR OTHERS PARTNER TOGETHER AND SUPPORT A SPECIFIC PROJECT



SOME EXAMPLES...



# QUALITY STUDY

- GOAL: DEVELOP METRICS AND STANDARDS TO ASSESS QUALITY IN DIG\_REF
- COST \$ 125,000
- SUPPORTERS: 
- DELIVERABLES
  - LITERATURE REVIEW
  - REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES FROM PARTICIPATING LIBRARIES
  - FIELD-TESTING OF MEASURES AND QUALITY STANDARDS
  - PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND FINAL REPORT
- GOVERNANCE: ADVISORY BOARD OF FUNDERS



Statistics, Measures  
and Quality Standards  
for Assessing Digital  
Reference Library Services:  
Guidelines and Procedures

Charles R. McClure  
R. David Lankes  
Melissa Gross  
Beverly Choltco-Devlin



# SUPPORTERS

- OCLC ONLINE COMPUTER LIBRARY CENTER, INC.
- THE DIGITAL LIBRARY FEDERATION
- UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND LIBRARY
- REFERENCE AND USER SERVICES ASSOCIATION
- LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY (UK)
- PENNSYLVANIA OFFICE OF COMMONWEALTH LIBRARIES
- FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
- MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY (PORTLAND)
- LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
- STATE LIBRARY OF FLORIDA
- CLEVELAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
- MID-YORK LIBRARY SYSTEM (UTICA NY)
- BRISTOL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (UK)
- THE LIBRARY OF MICHIGAN
- SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



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# RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

- GOAL: TO DEVELOP A DIG\_REF RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM
- SUPPORTERS: IIS, NLC, ACRL, QUESTIONPOINT
- PHASES:
  - WHITE PAPERS
  - SYMPOSIUM
  - DISSEMINATION
- GOVERNANCE: EDITORIAL BOARD

The graphic features a dark background with a faint, large-scale image of a globe. In the upper right corner, there is a small, detailed image of a compass rose. The text "Draft White Papers" is written in a white, serif font, centered in the upper half of the graphic.

Draft White Papers

*Digital Reference*  
Research Symposium  
Cambridge, Massachusetts  
August 1-3, 2002



# DIGITAL REFERENCE EDUCATION INITIATIVE

- GOAL: TO DEVELOP A REPOSITORY AND KNOWLEDGE AND MATERIALS IN DIG\_REF
- COST: \$250,000
- SUPPORTERS: IMLS AND CONTENT PROVIDERS
- DELIVERABLES:
  - RUBRIC, PORTAL, VRD EVENTS
- GOVERNANCE: ADVISORY BOARD

The screenshot shows the website for the Digital Reference Education Initiative (DREI) at <http://drei.syr.edu/>. The page features a blue header with the DREI logo and navigation links for Home, About Us, Contact Us, and VRD Home. A left sidebar contains a menu with categories such as Competencies for Digital Reference, Digital Reference Policies & Guidelines, Digital Reference Publicity & Marketing Plans, Digital Reference Transcripts, Interactive, LIS Course Descriptions & Syllabi, Publications, Resources, Sample Assignments, Software, Training Programs & Materials, Volunteer Opportunities, Workshops & Classes, Job Opportunities, Internships, and Question Authority Blog. The main content area is titled 'Digital Reference Education Initiative' and includes a search bar, a 'DREI Members' section with links for login and registration, a 'Blog Calendar' for November 2004, and 'Featured Resources' and 'Featured Jobs' sections. The 'Featured Jobs' section includes a table with columns for Title, Organization, and Location, listing a 'Research Librarian, User' position at the Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA.

Title	Organization	Location
<a href="#">Research Librarian, User</a>	Virginia Commonwealth	Richmond, VA



# TOWN HALL MEETING QUESTIONS

- WHAT MODELS OF SUPPORTING RESEARCH RELATED TO DIGITAL REFERENCE ARE LIKELY TO BE MOST PRODUCTIVE FOR US?
- WHAT ARE THE KEY RESEARCH TOPICS AND ISSUES THAT WOULD BE BEST ADDRESSED BY A COORDINATED EFFORT (OF SOME TYPE)?
- HOW DO WE MAKE THE MODELS HAPPEN AND ATTACK THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESEARCH?



# PARTING SHOTS

- RETHINK THE EXISTING MODELS FOR HOW TO SUPPORT RESEARCH RELATED TO DIGITAL REFERENCE
- INCREASE THE POOL OF AVAILABLE FUNDING SOURCES
- BETTER COORDINATE AND LEVERAGE THE RESEARCH THAT IS POSSIBLE TO DO
- FORGE BETTER PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PRACTITIONERS AND RESEARCHERS
- DEMONSTRATE THAT THE RESEARCH WE DO GET DONE HAS AN IMPACT AND HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE.



SO... LET THE DISCUSSION  
BEGIN!