Data at a distance
Perspectives from a small academic institution

Terrence Bennett, The College of New Jersey
IASSIST 31 May 2013
- Four-year college
- 6,200 students
- Seven schools:
  - Arts & Communication
  - Business, Education
  - Science, Engineering
  - Humanities & Social Sciences
  - Nursing, Health, & Exercise Science

The College of New Jersey
• Includes a team of reference and instruction librarians

• No formal data services

TCNJ Library
Reference origins of data services

images: archive.com; http://www.40th.med.arizona.edu/

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"In short, data services is reference work, and it draws on skills and knowledge that are used regularly in traditional reference service."

“Most data librarians learn on the job, cobbling together skills and knowledge from self-study, attendance at professional meetings...and quite simply, just ‘doing’ data services.”

[Eleanor Read 2007]
Table 1: Librarians’ roles in RDM and required competencies mapped to existing roles

Andrew Cox et al. (2012), “Upskilling liaison librarians for research data management.” *Ariadne, 70.*
“Distance” at a residential campus

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Distance (?) services at TCNJ

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More distance tools: CMS

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Hey Mister Librarian!

More tools and technologies
“I am in the Accounting Senior Seminar and I am doing research for my final project. I was wondering if we had access to the Bureau of National Affairs (BNA) database because I would like to use their data for my paper.”

Example: The email inquiry
“I am looking specifically for data on whistleblowers such as their gender, age, position in the company, etc.

I have found articles on such things but most are from the 1980s so I am trying to find more current data to compare it to the results found in those articles.”

The actual information need
Thanks for the clarification. The first thing you would want to do is figure out what sources were cited for whistleblower demographics from the articles you found from the 1980s, and see if you can track down those sources and use them to find more recent data...

You didn't mention where you've been searching for articles about whistleblower demographics, but I actually had some success finding fairly recent articles ...

I'm going to email you a few of the citations that I found ... Keep in mind that these articles will themselves cite other articles...

If you're not able to find the information that you need, we can arrange a time to meet...

A brilliant answer
Thank you Terrence!
I will look into everything you sent me. If I find I need more or different information, I would definitely like to set up a meeting with you. Thank you for your time.

A happy (but distant) patron

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“Even though most faculty and students know that the library is the place to go for information, they may not realize that it collects data products ... or that it has staff who can help with the data discovery process.”

[Eleanor Read 2007]
Advanced distance tools

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I was given a project due Sunday night for an interview from a marketing company and was hoping you could help me with locating some data. I checked the library website and saw that it was closed this weekend, so I was hoping emailing you directly, instead of the “Ask a Librarian” feature, would work.

I was given the task of creating 3 marketing initiatives targeted at African moms with children between the ages of 2 and 11 years old for a circus. I have to provide detailed data on this consumer, fact based rationale for the initiatives, and specific measurable anticipated results.

I was hoping you could help me get started with what databases to search for finding this data; I was told Simmons OneView would be helpful; are there any others? Additionally, any other suggestions or places to search would be very helpful.
I will be away from the library until Tuesday, June 4th, and will respond to your message when I return.

If you would like to consult with a reference librarian, please see this webpage for contact information: http://www.tcnj.edu/~library/info/ask.html

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TCNJ Library