

Northern Arizona University's Model of Serving Distance Patrons

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<http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~rse/DistanceDocs.htm>

Parallel Service Developments

- **Field Services** -Established in 1987, created to provide library services to NAU's distance students. Later called Distributed Library Services (DLS).
- **U.S. Documents** -A stand alone Documents unit prior to 1989.
- **Reference**-The unit which oversees most of the what were Documents and Distributed services today

Field Services/ Distributed Library Services

- Established in 1987
- Provided Reference and Interlibrary Loan service to NAU distance students.
- Services included:
 - Literature searches
 - Delivery of article and book material
 - On site bibliographic Instruction
 - General Reference service

Field Services/ DLS Evolution

- Document Delivery Services absorbed the interlibrary loan functions carried out by Field Services/Distributed Library Services.
- Reference began assisting with DLS by doing literature searches, and eventually some of the in field instruction.
- In 2001, remaining DLS services were absorbed by Reference. DLS unit ceased to exist.
- On line database availability replaced mediated search services.

Methods of Assisting All Library Users Not in the Library:

- In person, via bibliographic instruction sessions held on site, or via IITV.
- By phone (800 number availability for long distance)
- By e-mail
- By Ask-A-Librarian

Methods of Assisting All Library Users Not in the Library, continued

- Reference-including research assistance.
- Interlibrary Loan for affiliated users. Including: books, articles and media. Articles delivered via mail, fax, or electronically, at no charge.
- Non-affiliated users are referred to Internet-based resources, or provided access NAU materials via ILL from local libraries.

Documents Service at NAU

- Depository status granted in 1937 by U.S. Senator Henry Ashurst.
- Profile has ranged from 58-75% 1975-present.
- Notable collection depth in areas of Forestry, Geology, History and Native American topics.
- Service began as stand alone unit.

Documents Evolution at NAU

- Stand alone service integrated into general Reference service beginning in 1989.
- Cataloging and insertion of records into library OPAC moved to Bibliographic Services Dept.
- Within Bibliographic Services, cataloging/processing streamlined into existing monograph, serial and special formats units.

Current Documents Services at NAU

- In person use and access of the collection.
- Documents available via Internet.
- Reference Service in person, by phone, by e-mail, by Ask-A-Librarian.
- Documents held at NAU are available for loan to anyone at NAU, the local and state communities, and via Interlibrary Loan.

Changes in Documents Service

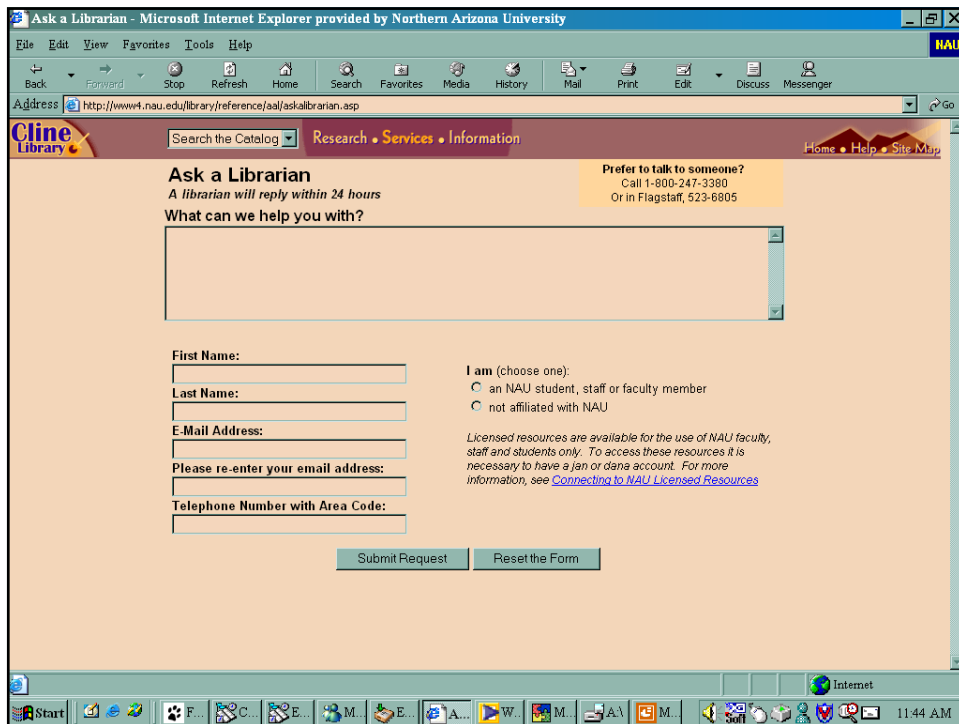
- Integrating cataloging/processing into existing Bibliographic Services units permitted greater access to Documents records via the OPAC-virtually anywhere.
- Providing quality web pages on U.S. Government information, which also provided phone and e-mail contact information expanded service beyond that available at Reference.

Changes in Documents Service (continued)

- Changing service point to Reference increased service hours to more than 90 hrs. per week.
- Integrating documents into existing workflow increased number of staff knowledgeable of Documents
- Adding documents service to Ask-a-Librarian

Ask-A-Librarian: What is it?

- While an outgrowth of older DLS service, Ask-A-Librarian is becoming the generic on line place for the public to ask questions of the Cline Library. While many users are "traditional" distance students, more and more are simply library users not in the building.
- Ask-A-Librarian is a service that:
Is 24x7.
Guarantees 24 hour turn around for all questions.
Portal to all library services/units.
Technologically stable.
Known technology for users.
Available to all with access to the Internet.



Conclusions and Implications for general library service:

- Breaking down departmental barriers can increase efficiency.
- Utilizing even basic technology can help equalize services to patrons regardless of location.
- Cross-training within and across departments can yield great service benefits.

Documents Service Conclusions and Implications

- Outreach to distance users can increase vitality of federal depository libraries.
- Such service improvements can emphasize the value of on line availability of documents and agency information.
- Documents may provide a viable alternative o commercial resources not available to non-affiliated patrons.