

## Serving the Non-user: Cornell's Research Connection

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Cornell University Library's *Research Connection* seeks to serve the non-users by being located where the researchers are and by making a strong marketing case for the difference librarians can make in people's lives.

Cornell University's College of Engineering has officially dedicated its newest building, Duffield Hall, in October 2004. This state of the art facility has a primary focus on research in the field of nanotechnology, although it also houses graduate student offices and some teaching labs. The building's atriums also serve as a community space for the College as well as a sheltered passageway between two other buildings of the Engineering Quad.

Cornell University Library has established a presence in the Duffield atrium to promote the services of the library and to encourage contact with that segment of the college that does not regularly come to the library. Reference specialists provide services in one of the atrium's study alcoves based on a regular schedule several times a week. They rely on a laptop, a portable printer and some printed handouts. They carry a cell phone to keep in touch with their home base in another building of the Engineering Quad. The *Research Connection* is being promoted with a 7' tall triangular sign that is always on site and gets lit up when a librarian is on duty as well as with a bookmark that also serves as a business card with easily identifiable contact information. Free imprinted mechanical pencils and candy are also used to raise awareness of the service.

The main message that the *Research Connection* aims to convey is that librarians can save time primarily by making sure that a specific research project takes full advantage of learning from previous efforts. The other message is that the right information can be challenging to find and often cannot be identified through popular search engines so the librarians' expertise can save time. These messages are being introduced through a couple of provocative quotes as well as ALA's masterful slogan: "Librarians \* the ultimate search engine."

Staffing this service takes a new, proactive attitude from the reference specialists. To prepare for this role we have worked with a training expert. Having everyone prepare their own "elevator talk" combined with role plays served as a non-threatening way to practice new skills. Also, working on the details of the service together had benefits for the staff. For example, drafting the invitation for the opening celebration provided an unexpected yet useful way to think through the service from the users' point of view.

The assessment of the outcomes is going to take multiple approaches. The success will be measured in increments through an increasing level of confidence in the staff about a proactive service model as well as increased contact with users in a non-library setting.