

# Information Desk Interactions at The Seattle Public Library

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## Introduction

In the summer of 2013, The Seattle Public Library (SPL) made the switch from manual counters for reference activity to a digital clicker application (or app). Rather than use a hand-held manual counter, librarians and other SPL staff now track interactions at their Information desks by clicking "Reference" or "Non-Reference" in an online form. However, with increasingly busy desks and more technology related questions coming forward, does this clicker app serve as a reliable measure of the information needs of SPL patrons?

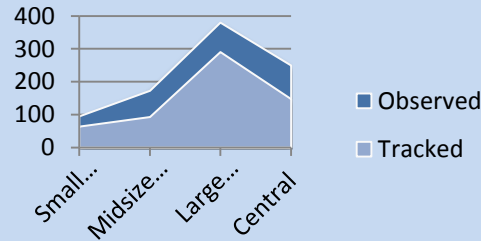
## Research Process

Determining clicker application reliability

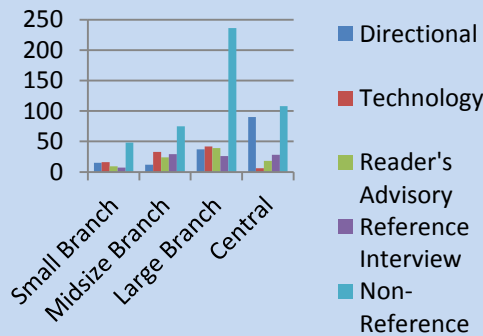
- Information desk observations
  - 48 observations
  - 16 locations
  - 96 hours of data collected
- Personnel questionnaire
  - Anonymous and optional
  - Determined employee opinion
  - 4 closed answer questions, 1 open ended response
  - 51 responses

## Findings

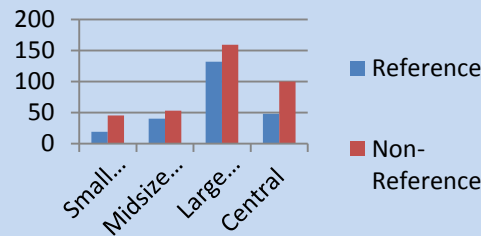
Observed vs. Tracked Interactions



Observation Data by Branch Size



Clicker Application Data by Branch Size



## Conclusions

### Observations:

- 66% of interactions were tracked by the clicker application (596/898 interactions)
- 72% of observed interactions were Non-Reference

### Questionnaires:

- Majority of information desk employees want a more comprehensive system
- Clarity on reference vs. non-reference is needed

## Proposal

### Two-step implementation:

- Comprehensive clicker options—expanding to include directional, technology, reader's advisory, and reference interview options
- Use of roving reference in-house technology (SPLAT) to input data when out with a patron

Ultimately, a more comprehensive list of choices within the clicker application will allow SPL management teams to better assess patron information needs



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