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Adventures in Librarianship: Fee for Service

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Do You Remember...

by Nancy McKeehan (MUSC Library)

- The card catalog • Boston Medical Classification System
- MTST (IBM’s Magnetic Tape Selectric Typewriters) • Kardex
- McBee Cards • Acoustic couplers • TWX machines • Filmstrips
- 3/4" videotape • 6 mm films • VT100 terminals • VAX
- Beehive terminals • BRS • Faxon • Moore-Cottrell • Ballen
- Richard Abel Co. • 300, 1200, 2400 Baud modems • DOS • LIS • Gopher
- Premier Library Schools, e.g., U. Chicago, UC Berkeley, Emory, Columbia...

Adventures in Librarianship:
Fee for Service

by Ned Kraft (Ralph J. Bunche Library, U.S. Department of State) <kraftno@state.gov>

Memorandum

Date: December 29, 2000
To: All Department Heads
From: The Library
Subject: Fee for Service

In accordance with recent institutional directives, the library has developed a "fee for service" plan which it will implement at the beginning of the new fiscal year. Before entering the library, please review the guidelines. Send your comments by email to fullbox.library@insti.org.

The cost for claiming missing periodical issues (about 27.5 cents per claim) will be prorated among those who have used the journal. Patrons who have read full articles will pay a larger portion of the claim costs than those who have merely "skimmed." The heaviest costs will be reserved for researchers who have cited the journal.

Reference assistance will range from $1.00, for simple directional questions (such as "where is the men's room") to several hundred dollars for complex research and reporting (doing your work for you). If you have asked a reference question and you are unsure of the value of the response, put one dollar in the "reference jar." If the librarian looks off in the distance, frowns, and taps her pencil, this means that you have not yet covered the value of the reference service. Continue depositing dollars until the reference librarian stops tapping her pencil.

Borrowing is a privilege, a privilege for which you must now pay. Again, we relied on the "pro-rate" principle in the development of the following "reverse ponzi" scheme. The first borrower of a book will pay for the full acquisition costs of the book (list price, minus discount, plus standard processing fees). However, as more patrons borrow a book, they will pay the newly calculated pro-rate, thereby pushing refunds back to all earlier borrowers. If you have enjoyed a book (or if you have simply "read" a book), you may find it profitable to solicit other readers. The library can provide mailing lists.

Patrons will notice that the standard PCs that were located in the reading room have now been replaced by Vend-Dells. Use the New Vend-Dells for catalog and database searching. They are coin-operated, quarters only, much like laundromat machines. Please do not ask the front desk for change. There are change machines located in the lounge.

As for inter-library loan, patrons will be pleased to hear that the library has reached a cost share agreement with Allsbroth Aluminum Company. With their generous support, the library can offer inter-library loan free of charge! If you come to the reference desk wearing the "I love Allsbroth Aluminum" t-shirt, the inter-library loan fee ($17.50) will be waved. T-shirts will be sold in the lounge — $17.50 for small and large, no mediums available.

Rare Book Room privileges will be granted as yearly subscriptions. Researchers gain full access for $250 per year. White cotton gloves will be sold in the lounge.

We know our patrons share our excitement as the library moves toward its new goal of becoming a "profit center."