

Case Study:

# Desk Tracker™ in a University Library



## The Challenges

Eastern Washington University (EWU) is a regional, comprehensive public university with a main library, a joint-use library staffed cooperatively with another institution, and academic programs offered in nine locations. In the past, the libraries used the traditional "hash mark" manual process to track information transactions at multiple service points, including the Circulation Desk, Media Desk, and Archives/Special Collections at John F. Kennedy Memorial Library, the main library. Student workers collected the data sheets from service points and entered the data into Microsoft Excel. The process was cumbersome and subject to low reporting and data-entry error. One service point, the joint-use Riverpoint Campus Library, did not track reference transactions. Once the data was compiled, we used the results primarily to complete the National Center for Education Statistics and other surveys.

**Name of Library:** EWU Libraries  
**Name of University:** Eastern Washington University  
**Location:** Cheney, Washington  
**Population Served:** 10,800 students, 649 faculty

*Interview with Paul Victor,  
Head of Instruction and Research Support Services*

Our goal in implementing Desk Tracker was to pull together information from the multiple service desks at both libraries to track trends and to produce meaningful reports that could inform policy decisions.

## The Desk Tracker Solution

Desk Tracker has made a big difference in the way we collect data and compile reports. We now have a more complete and accurate picture of the activity at our service desks in both libraries. The information we gather includes type of question, type of contact (i.e., in person, phone, etc.), patron type and duration of assistance. This data helps us to evaluate services and trends. When we meet with the dean or division heads, we can advocate for policy decisions using solid data.

**"We now have a more complete and accurate picture of the activity at our service desks."**

The level of detail we are able to capture in Desk Tracker is also very helpful when conducting annual faculty and staff performance reviews. The individual employee can document the number and type of information transactions performed in the last year, as well as the library resources used to answer questions. We use this data to demonstrate the competency and professionalism of our staff and the value of the resources we use.

Working closely with the Desk Tracker development staff, we recently created a module to capture library instructional statistics. With this capability we can track the number of sessions taught, the course descriptions, the length of each session, the preparation time, the location of the session, names of course instructors, and the class-level of students taught. We use this data to demonstrate the extent to which EWU Libraries support the curriculum and contribute to the university's mission.

Desk Tracker has reduced the inefficiencies associated with data collection and makes it easy to provide meaningful reports that demonstrate the active role the library plays in the EWU community. We think that's a great return on our investment.

## About Desk Tracker

A product of Compendium Library Services, Desk Tracker provides the fastest, easiest way to track library activity at every public service point. Web-based and fully customizable, Desk Tracker provides instant access to the data needed to effectively manage library resources. Visit [desktracker.com](http://desktracker.com) for more information, or contact Compendium Library Services at 970-472-7979 or PO Box 82, Bellvue, Colorado, 80512. You can also visit us on the web at [compendiumlib.com](http://compendiumlib.com).