

Desk Tracker™ in a Baccalaureate School Library



The Challenge

Winston-Salem State University is a historically black university offering baccalaureate and graduate programs to a diverse student population. Statistics are important, but we were spending too much time gathering and compiling them. We manually tracked reference questions at the desk, email questions and longer student consultation sessions, collecting papers daily to collate monthly statistics. Papers were lost, staff wasn't consistent in recording information, and on days with few questions we were just wasting paper. Every month a well-trained person was spending 6-8 hours to transfer all the paper information to Excel to produce reports and graphs. That's a lot of hours—and money—in a year.

Name of Library: C.G. O'Kelly Library
Name of University: Winston-Salem State University
Location: Winston-Salem, NC
Population Served: 6,442 students;
400 full time faculty
800+ staff

*Interview with Julie Dornberger,
Library Instruction Coordinator*

The Desk Tracker Solution

Desk Tracker gives us a total picture of our public service activity and collating reports at the end of the month is practically instantaneous. We can log in individually to record the questions we answer in our offices as well as track activity at all our public service points. We can compare month to month or year to date from previous year. Producing graphs from the data is simple so we can identify trends at a glance. For example, this year our reference statistics indicate increased activity because we are working with faculty on an information literacy program. We also know we are doing a better job of recording activity because it's easier to keep track of what we're doing with Desk Tracker.

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The Desk Tracker library instruction module provides valuable data on the contribution we make in the classroom. We enter the subject, the number of students per class, whether or not the instructor was present, which classroom was used, the date of the class, and which librarian was involved. We can track the days and months we have the most instruction requests and make sure the class load is divided evenly among our librarians. The instruction module has also allowed us to see which faculty members aren't requesting instruction so that we can contact them and introduce them to the services the library can provide. This has been a great way for us to increase the visibility of the library and raise awareness of our services.

We think Desk Tracker is a really inexpensive product for the value we get. With service to faculty and students as our priority there's no question that we'd rather have a computer do the statistics work instead of our staff. Even for smaller libraries, the ability to track everything electronically in one place and customize the type of information collected is an incredible time and money saver.

“I'd sooner cut an expensive database that is hardly used than cut Desk Tracker.”

Like all libraries we need to assess and justify where we spend our money. If we needed to cut something from our budget, I'd sooner cut an expensive database that is hardly used than cut Desk Tracker which as an integral part of helping us manage our jobs. When you take into account what it costs in terms of staff time to compile statistics manually and combine that with the ease of use and the accurate, graphical reports you can produce there is no question that Desk Tracker delivers an excellent return on 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 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.