

**Statewide Reference Resource Center  
at Providence Public Library**

**2005 Survey of Usage and Future Directions**

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## 2005 Statewide Reference Resource Center Survey

### Introduction

In June 2005 the Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) conducted a survey of Rhode Island public libraries to determine the usage of and future directions for the Statewide Reference Resource Center at the Providence Public Library. The Providence Public Library (PPL) serves as Rhode Island's Statewide Reference Resource Center (SRRC) with state funding provided via OLIS per Rhode Island General Law 29-6-9. The goal of the program is to provide quality reference services to all Library of Rhode Island (LORI) member libraries and to all residents of Rhode Island.

In the spring of 2005 OLIS and PPL engaged in a series of meetings to discuss the direction of the SRRC. This survey is a result of those meetings, which identified the need to gather input from LORI libraries about the role of the SRRC as a resource center. It was determined that an electronic survey would be a suitable tool to gather such information as OLIS had the technical resources to create and distribute an online survey and electronic surveys are efficient tools for collecting and analyzing a large amount of data, especially when time and resources are limited. PPL and OLIS worked together to create the content of the survey and OLIS developed the actual survey. PPL administration and the Reference Department reviewed the survey and recommended changes before the final product was released.

### Method

The survey was developed as a closed online survey using PHP Surveyor, a free survey software package installed and deployed by the OLIS Web Team.<sup>1</sup> Survey participants were provided with a link to the survey and had to enter a user name and password to access the survey. This ensured that only the intended group (public libraries) could complete the survey. The survey tool also automated the process of distributing the email invitation to the survey, along with follow-up emails to individuals who had not yet completed the survey.

The survey consisted of 13 questions and follow-up on those questions to clarify responses. Questions were generally yes/no or multiple choice; participants were also asked to rank services offered by the SRRC and given the opportunity to ask for additional services in a free text format.

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<sup>1</sup>PHP Surveyor, copyright © 2003-2005 phpSurveyor.org, is distributed for free under a General Public License. PHP Surveyor is a set of PHP scripts that interact with MySQL to develop surveys, publish surveys and collect responses to surveys. See <http://phpsurveyor.sourceforge.net/index.php>

The questions were divided into two sections. The first section contained questions about the usage of the SRRC as a reference resource by individual libraries. Respondents who indicated they did not use the SRRC were automatically forwarded to the second section of the survey. The second section contained questions about the use of other SRRC services, such as continuing education classes and consultant services. This section also contained a question asking respondents to rank the importance of specific services. Finally, respondents were asked to list other services that they would like the SRRC to provide.

The survey was distributed to the directors of Rhode Island's 48 public libraries on June 13, 2005. As the host of the SRRC, PPL did not participate in the survey. The instructions requested that if someone else at the library were more familiar with how that library utilized the SRRC, then the respondent should discuss the responses with them. The original deadline for completion of the survey was June 24, 2005; the deadline was subsequently extended to July 1 to allow greater participation.

The print version of the survey is provided as Appendix A.

## Survey Results

### Response Rate

41 out of 47 invitees responded to the survey, a response rate of 87%.

### Utilization of the SRRC by individual libraries

66% of the respondents utilize the SRRC. 32% of respondents use it an average of once a month and 20% use it an average of two or three times a year. 10% of respondents (4 libraries) use the SRRC twice a month or more. In total, 56% of respondents use the SRRC once a month or less, while 34% do not use it at all. (Table 1)

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
At least once a week	1	2.44%
Two or three times a month	3	7.32%
Once a month	13	31.71%
Two or three times a year	8	19.51%
Less than twice a year	2	4.88%
Don't use	14	34.15%

The most popular way to contact the SRRC is by phone. Respondents who used the SRRC were asked to indicate all ways in which they contacted the SRRC; phone use was most common (60%), followed by the online subject request form on the OLIS website, email, fax and live chat. (Table 2)

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Phone	26	60.47%
Online subject request form	9	20.93%
Email	5	11.63%
Fax	2	4.65%
Live chat	1	2.33%

Of the respondents who utilize the SRRC, 100% identify themselves as being from a library when they call the SRRC. Nearly 70% reported receiving a response to their request within the day, with the remainder reporting a response within the week. (Table 3) 78% of respondents who reported waiting more than a day were not informed of what the SRRC was doing to respond to the request. (Appendix B, Field Summary 2-5a)

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Within the hour	4	14.81%
Within the day	14	51.85%
Within the week	9	33.33%
Longer	0	0.00%

The most common types of questions referred to the SRRC were about art and music, with the RI Collection and business following. (Table 4)

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Art and music	18	20.45%
RI Collection	14	15.91%
Business	13	14.77%
Genealogy questions	8	9.09%
Subject request	7	7.95%
Patents	6	6.82%
Internet or online database searching	4	4.55%
Foundations Collection	3	3.41%
Legal questions	3	3.41%
Medical or health	3	3.41%
RI government	2	2.27%
Children's resources	0	0.00%
Other (newspaper archives, Providence Journal Microfilm (2), Older Obits from PROJO, Obituaries, Science, microfilm)	7	7.95%

### Non-Utilization

34% of respondents (14 libraries) indicated that they do not use the SRRC to assist patrons with reference questions. Of that number, more than half (8 respondents, or 57%) indicated that they have no need for the service. Examining the 3 respondents who cited an “other” reason for not using the SRRC, 2 indicated that it was either too long a wait when calling or that the wait was too long, though this respondent did not specify what took too long. Another indicated that they would use SRRC if they had to, from which may be interpreted that this respondent had no need for the service, bringing the number of non-users who do not need the service to 64%. Three respondents (21%) indicated they would like to know more about the service. Those who responded that they had no need for the service were asked to explain why they did not need the service. Responses are included in Appendix B under Field Summary 2-1a. None of those responding answered that they were unaware of the service.

### Usage of Other SRRC functions

#### Patron Referral

68% of respondents refer patrons to the SRRC for reference assistance. 32% refer patrons an average of two to three times a year; 17% refer patrons once a month, and 12% refer patrons two or three times a month. 32% of respondents do not refer patrons to the SRRC. (Table 5)

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
At least once a week	0	0.00%
Two or three times a month	5	12.20%
Once a month	7	17.07%
Two or three times a year	13	31.71%
Rarely	3	7.32%
Don't refer patrons	13	31.71%

#### Continuing Education

78% of respondents indicated that either they or their staff have attended programs offered by PPL through the OLIS Continuing Education (CE) Programs. Working with the OLIS CE Team, PPL has offered training classes on computer software such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, Powerpoint, Publisher, and FrontPage. In addition, PPL has also offered reference programs on resources at PPL and elsewhere, and workshops on marketing, public relations, and grant proposals. Although computer programs constitute the bulk of the offerings, the reference programs proved to be most popular. (Table 6)

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Reference workshops	27	46.55%
Computer or software classes	20	34.48%
Library development	9	15.52%
Other (PPL Collections, grants)	2	3.45%

### **Consultant Services**

Through the SRRC contract, PPL professional staff are available to LORI librarians for consultation, including development and public relations staff, reference librarians, children's services librarians, the interlibrary loan librarian, the Special Collections Librarian, and the Electronic Information Services Coordinator. Only 7% of respondents indicated that they have used SRRC professional staff for consultation services. Those respondents indicated that they have consulted the Electronic Information Services Coordinator, Reference Staff (including the business and RI Collection librarians), and the Special Collections Librarian. (See Appendix B, Field Summary 3-3 and 3-3a)

### **Use of other libraries for reference assistance**

78% of respondents indicated that they use libraries other than PPL for reference assistance throughout the year. This is a higher percentage than those who reported using the SRRC. 56% of the respondents use other libraries two to three times a year, 10% use other libraries once a month, and 12% use other libraries two to three times a month. (Table 7) Compared to the SRRC (Table 1), more respondents use other libraries, but they use other libraries less frequently than they use the SRRC.

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Two or three times a year	23	56.10%
Once a month	4	9.76%
Two or three times a month	5	12.20%
At least once a week	0	0.00%
Total use of other libraries	32	78.05%
Never	9	21.95%

### **Satisfaction**

The majority of respondents indicated moderate satisfaction with the SRRC. (Table 8)

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 (Not satisfied at all)	2	4.88%
2	4	9.76%
3	20	48.78%
4	8	19.51%
5 (Very satisfied)	7	17.07%

### Ranking of Services

The survey asked respondents to rank the importance of various services that the SRRC provides. The survey required that respondents rank all services; it was not possible to rank only services that were considered relevant. Telephone Reference was ranked as the number one priority by 39% of the respondents; the second highest priority was Databases (20%), followed by Internet/email reference (15%). Examining the top five priority ranking of the services, Telephone Reference was ranked in the top 5 by 93% of the respondents, followed by Databases (78%), and Internet/email reference (68%). Sunday hours were ranked as the lowest priority by the most respondents (29%), followed by AV Materials (20%); opening during business hours and CE Programs tied as the third choice for the lowest priority service (17%), although overall CE Programs were assigned the fourth highest priority. Examining the bottom five priority rankings of the services, AV materials were ranked lowest priority by the most respondents (59%), followed by Sunday hours (54%), and opening during business hours (49%). Complete results are listed in Appendix B, Field Summary 3-6.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Highest Priority Level</b>					<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>		
<b>Telephone reference</b>	16	10	5	6	1	38	<b>92.68%</b>
<b>Databases</b>	8	7	12	2	3	32	<b>78.05%</b>
<b>Internet/e-mail reference</b>	6	7	4	7	4	28	<b>68.29%</b>
<b>CE programs for library staff</b>	4	5	3	6	6	24	58.54%
<b>Print materials</b>	2	2	5	5	7	21	51.22%
<b>Open hours: evenings &amp; Saturdays</b>	3	4	2	3	5	17	41.46%
<b>AV materials</b>	1	1	3	4	5	14	34.15%
<b>In-person reference</b>	0	2	3	3	5	13	31.71%
<b>Open hours: business hours</b>	1	0	1	4	3	9	21.95%
<b>Open hours: Sundays</b>	0	3	3	1	2	9	21.95%
<b>Service</b>	<b>Lowest Priority Level</b>					<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>		
<b>Open hours: Sundays</b>	12	6	4	4	6	22	<b>53.66%</b>
<b>AV materials</b>	8	9	7	1	2	24	<b>58.54%</b>
<b>Open hours: business hours</b>	7	2	11	9	3	20	<b>48.78%</b>
<b>CE programs for library staff</b>	7	4	2	0	4	13	31.71%

<b>Internet/e-mail reference</b>	3	3	2	2	3	8	19.51%
<b>Print materials</b>	2	2	3	7	6	7	17.07%
<b>In-person reference</b>	2	4	3	12	7	9	21.95%
<b>Telephone reference</b>	0	0	0	0	3	0	0.00%
<b>Databases</b>	0	1	2	3	3	3	7.32%
<b>Open hours: evenings &amp; Saturdays</b>	0	10	7	3	4	17	41.46%

### Other Services

17 respondents entered comments for the final question, which asked if there were other services they would like the SRRC to provide. As there was no space for additional comments, some respondents used this space for general comments, including praising the service. Out of the 17 respondents, 10 (59%) cited the need for PPL to either manage statewide databases or provide statewide access to databases that they currently subscribe to. Two respondents cited a need for 24/7 or overnight or “off-hours” reference service.

### Summary

- Invitations were sent to all public libraries in RI; 41 out of 47 responded, or 87%
- 66% of respondents use the SRRC; 34% do not
- 10% of respondents contact the SRRC more than once a month; 56% use the SRRC once a month or less
- 78% of respondents contact libraries other than the SRRC for reference assistance throughout the year
- 12% of respondents contact other libraries for reference more than once a month; 66% use other libraries for reference once a month or less
- Phone use is the most common way to contact the SRRC, followed distantly by the OLIS subject request form and email
- Most common reference question types are those about art and music, followed closely by the RI Collection and Business
- 68% of respondents refer patrons to the SRRC: 17% make referrals more than once a month, 56% make referrals 2 or 3 times a year or less
- 93% of respondents do not contact PPL professional staff for consultant services
- 78% of respondents or their staff attend the Continuing Education programs offered by PPL through OLIS CE; reference sessions are most popular, though computer software training programs are offered more frequently
- Top priority services: telephone reference (93%), databases (78%), Internet/email reference (68%)
- Lowest priority services: AV materials (59%), Sunday hours (54%), opening during business hours (49%)
- Database access (to PPL resources) and the management of statewide databases was the most commonly requested “other service”

## Conclusions

The SRRC service consists of two distinct parts: backup reference assistance, subject requests, and other services (CE, consultation) to Rhode Island libraries; and service to Rhode Island residents. This survey indicates that Rhode Island public libraries use, but do not make extensive use of the SRRC for reference assistance. More libraries contact libraries other than PPL for reference assistance, but PPL is contacted more frequently by those who make use of the SRRC at PPL. The most common use of the SRRC is for questions relating to art and music, the RI collection, and business. Rhode Island public library staffs attend CE programs offered by PPL through the SRRC and OLIS CE; reference programs are most popular. Overall, CE was assigned the fourth highest priority for the SRRC. Respondents ranked telephone reference, database access and Internet or email reference as the most important services offered by the SRRC.

Statistics submitted to OLIS by PPL confirm the limited use of the SRRC by Rhode Island libraries. In FY2005, the SRRC received 119 LORI subject requests and 393 reference questions (361 telephone, 19 in-person, 13 email) from LORI Libraries. The total number of questions and subject requests from LORI libraries in FY2005 was 512. In FY2004, SRRC received 482 reference questions from LORI libraries and 115 LORI subject requests, a total of 597. The total number of questions and subject requests has been declining annually. (Statistics included in Appendix C)

The other aspect of the SRRC contract is service to Rhode Island residents. Statistics provided by PPL to OLIS show that in FY2005 the SRRC received 18,930 telephone, 31,756 in-person, and 1,114 email reference questions, or a total of 51,800. In FY2004, the SRRC received 72,306 questions. A survey of reference use by service point and user location conducted in May 2005 by PPL indicates that telephone reference is evenly divided between Providence residents and RI residents who do not live in Providence (both 47%), with 6% from out of state; for in person reference, 56% of the questions received were from Providence residents, 41% were from RI residents who do not live in Providence, and 4% were from out of state. For telephone and in person service combined, 52% of the questions received by the SRRC were from Providence residents, 44% were from RI residents not living in Providence and the remainder were from out of state. (Statistics included in Appendix D)

In FY 2005, SRRC responded to 2,813 emails and 1,072 chat sessions via the state government portal RI.gov in its "Ask a Librarian" capacity. In FY2004, SRRC responded to 1,535 email and 455 chat sessions via RI.gov (chat service began April 2004). An analysis of zip codes of the online questions indicates that Providence residents account for 8% of online transactions while RI residents who do not live in Providence account for 29%; out of state questions account for 28% while 35% of the questions were of unknown origin. This statistical analysis examines 68% of the online questions received by the SRRC. (Statistics included in Appendix E)

In conclusion, RI libraries make limited use of the SRRC; the most important services are telephone reference, database access, email reference and continuing education. Of the

RI residents who use the SRRC in person or by telephone, 52% are from Providence and 44% are Rhode Islanders not living in Providence. Of the reference questions received by the SRRC through the online service at the state government portal (RI.gov) that were identified by zip code, 13% are from Providence residents, 44% are from Rhode Islanders not living in Providence, and 44% are from out of state.

## **Appendix A**

### **Statewide Reference Resource Center Survey**

# Statewide Reference Resource Center Survey

Survey to determine usage and future directions for the Statewide Reference Resource Center at the Providence Public Library.

## 1. Survey Participant Information

### 1-1: Library (use library's LORI delivery code):

Please write your answer here:

### 1-2: Person Responding:

Please write your answer here:

### 1-3: Position:

Please write your answer here:

## 2. Usage of SRRC by your library

Questions about the usage of the SRRC by your library; note that questions about patron referrals to the SRRC appear later in the survey.

### 2-1: Does your library use the SRRC to assist patrons with reference questions? (Please note that questions about patron referrals to SRRC appear later in the survey.)

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Yes

No

[Only answer this question if you answered 'No' to question '2-1 ']

### 2-1a: Why doesn't your library use the SRRC?

Please choose **only one** of the following:

Unaware of Service

Would like to know more about this service

No need for service

Other

[Only answer this question if you answered 'No' to question '2-1 ' and if you answered 'No need for service' to question '2-1a ']

### 2-1b: Please explain why your library has no need for the service:

Please write your answer here:

---

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '2-1 ']

**2-2: On the average, how often does your library ask for reference assistance from the SRRC?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- At least once a week
- Two or three times a month
- Once a month
- Two or three times a year
- Less than twice a year

---

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '2-1 ']

**2-3: How does your library usually contact the SRRC?**

Please choose **all** that apply

- Phone
- Fax
- Email
- Online subject request form
- Live chat

---

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '2-1 ']

**2-4: When your library contacts the SRRC, does the caller identify themselves as being from a library?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

---

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '2-1 ']

**2-5: On the average, how long does it take the SRRC to respond to your library's request?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Within the hour
- Within the day

- Within the week
- Longer

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '2-1 ' and if you answered 'Within the week' or 'Longer' to question '2-5 ']

**2-5a: If the SRRC does not provide the answer within a day, do they keep you informed of what they are doing with the request?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '2-1 ' and if you answered 'Longer' to question '2-5 ']

**2-5b: If it takes the SRRC longer than a week to answer your library's request, how long does it take?**

Please write your answer here:

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '2-1 ']

**2-7: During the past year, for which types of reference questions has your library asked the SRRC for assistance?**

Please choose **all** that apply

- Art and music
- Business
- Children's resources
- Foundations Collection
- Genealogy questions
- Internet or online database searching
- Legal questions
- Medical or health
- Patents
- RI Collection
- RI government
- Subject request

Other:

**3. Other SRRC Functions**

**3-1: Does your library ever refer patrons to the SRRC for reference assistance?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '3-1 ']

**3-1a: How often does your library refer them?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- At least once a week
- Two or three times a month
- Once a month
- Two or three times a year
- Rarely

---

**3-2: Have you or your staff ever attended SRRC Continuing Education (CE) Programs, which are conducted by the Providence Public Library and offered through OLIS CE? e.g., computer software training, reference training, or library development**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

---

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '3-2 ']

**3-2a: What type of CE programs have you and/or your staff attended?**

Please choose **all** that apply

- Computer or software classes
- Library development
- Reference workshops

Other:

---

**3-3: Has your library ever asked the SRRC professional staff for consultation services?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- Yes
- No

---

[Only answer this question if you answered 'Yes' to question '3-3 ']

**3-3a: Which staff has your library consulted?**

Please choose **all** that apply

- Children's services
- Development and public relations
- Electronic information services coordinator
- Interlibrary loan librarian
- Reference
- Special collections librarian

Other:

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**3-4: How often does your library use libraries other than the SRRC for reference assistance?**

Please choose **only one** of the following:

- At least once a week
- Two or three times a month
- Once a month
- Two or three times a year
- Never

---

**3-5: What is your overall satisfaction with the SRRC?**

Please choose the appropriate response for each item

1=not satisfied at all, 5=very satisfied  1  2  3  4  5

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**3-6: Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):**

Please number each box in order of preference from 1 to 10

AV materials

CE programs for library staff  
Databases  
In-person reference  
Internet/e-mail reference  
Open hours: business hours  
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays  
Open hours: Sundays  
Print materials  
Telephone reference

---

**3-7: Are there other services you would like the SRRC to provide?**

Please write your answer here:

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**Submit Your Survey**

Thank you for completing this survey. Please fax your completed survey to: by 2005-07-01.

## **Appendix B**

### **Statewide Reference Resource Center Survey Results: Raw Data**

## APPENDIX B: Statewide Reference Resource Center Survey Results

Results
<p align="center"><b>Statewide Reference Resource Center Survey</b></p> <p align="center"> <b>Number of Invitees: 47</b>  <b>Number of Respondents: 41</b>  <b>Response Rate: 87.23%</b> </p> <p align="center"> <b>Summary Data</b>            Total records in survey data: 41            Percentage of total: 100.00%         </p> <p align="center"> <b>Survey Conducted June 2005</b>  <b>RI Office of Library and Information Services</b> </p>

Field Summary for 2-1:		
<p align="center"><b>Does your library use the SRRC to assist patrons with reference questions? (Please note that questions about patron referrals to SRRC appear later in the survey.)</b></p>		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Yes (Y)	27	65.85%
No (N)	14	34.15%

Field Summary for 2-1a:		
<p align="center"><b>Why doesn't your library use the SRRC?</b></p>		
Answer	Count	Percentage
Unaware of Service (1a1)	0	0.00%
Would like to know more about this service (1a2)	3	21.43%
No need for service* (1a3)	8	57.14%
Other** (-oth-)	3	21.43%

\*Reasons for not using service:

1. So far we have not had any difficult reference questions that we could not answer ourselves.
2. We find that our access to online databases gives us more than enough information to provide to our patrons. Our collection has \"virtual depth\" not previously available before Internet access. Interlibrary loan, both within CLAN and outside the consortium, is also useful. We also added a reference librarian to staff 3 years ago, which has been very helpful.
3. We answer the questions that are asked.
4. The internet makes it a lot easier to find information for our patrons if we cannot locate it in print sources.
5. This is the smallest library in the state and it is really a popular reading library. We do no reference work to speak of.

6. Staff has not used the service for some years relying increasingly on ill or internet and or data bases. In last year the staff has only called once and that was to request a copy of the Rhode Island Index listings for a specific event. Our interaction with PPL (aside from CLAN related services) is by an large limited to borrowing from PPL\'s vast collection, and sending patrons to use their special collections or individual reference items.

7. We get very few in-depth reference questions; most are easily answerable with our own resources.

8. Staff either answers questions or assists patrons in finding resources to answer questions.

\*\*Other:

1. too long a wait when calling
2. would use it if we need to do so
3. used to but response time is too slow now

**The following questions were answered by only those libraries (27) using the SRRC:**

<b>Field Summary for 2-2:</b>		
<b>On the average, how often does your library ask for reference assistance from the SRRC?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
At least once a week (2-2a)	1	3.70%
Two or three times a month (2-2b)	3	11.11%
Once a month (2-2c)	13	48.15%
Two or three times a year (2-2d)	8	29.63%
Less than twice a year (2-2e)	2	7.41%

<b>Field Summary for 2-3:</b>		
<b>How does your library usually contact the SRRC? (Choose all that apply)</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Phone (2-3a)	26	60.47%
Fax (2-3b)	2	4.65%
Email (2-3c)	5	11.63%
Online subject request form (2-3d)	9	20.93%
Live chat (2-3e)	1	2.33%

<b>Field Summary for 2-4:</b>		
<b>When your library contacts the SRRC, does the caller identify themselves as being from a library?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes (Y)	27	100.00%
No (N)	0	0.00%

<b>Field Summary for 2-5:</b>		
<b>On the average, how long does it take the SRRC to respond to your library's request?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Within the hour (2-5a)	4	14.81%
Within the day (2-5b)	14	51.85%
Within the week (2-5c)	9	33.33%
Longer (2-5d)	0	0.00%

<b>Field Summary for 2-5a:</b>		
<b>If the SRRC does not provide the answer within a day, do they keep you informed of what they are doing with the request?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes (Y)	2	22.22%
No (N)	7	77.78%

<b>Field Summary for 2-7:</b>		
<b>During the past year, for which types of reference questions has your library asked the SRRC for assistance? (Choose all that apply)</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage of questions</b>
Art and music (2-7a)	18	20.45%
Business (2-7b)	13	14.77%
Children's resources (2-7c)	0	0.00%
Foundations Collection (2-7d)	3	3.41%
Genealogy questions (2-7e)	8	9.09%
Internet or online database searching (2-7f)	4	4.55%
Legal questions (2-7g)	3	3.41%
Medical or health (2-7h)	3	3.41%
Patents (2-7i)	6	6.82%
RI Collection (2-7j)	14	15.91%
RI government (2-7k)	2	2.27%
Subject request (2-7l)	7	7.95%
Other	7	7.95%

Other:

1. newspaper archives
2. Projo
3. Providence Journal Microfilm
4. Science question

5. Older Obits from PROJO
6. microfilm
7. Obituaries

The following questions were answered by all libraries:

<b>Field Summary for 3-1:</b>		
<b>Does your library ever refer patrons to the SRRRC for reference assistance?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes (Y)	28	68.29%
No (N)	13	31.71%

<b>Field Summary for 3-1a:</b>		
<b>For those who refer patrons, how often does your library refer them?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
At least once a week (3-1aa)	0	0.00%
Two or three times a month (3-1ab)	5	17.86%
Once a month (3-1ac)	7	25.00%
Two or three times a year (3-1ad)	13	46.43%
Rarely (3-1ae)	3	10.71%

<b>Field Summary for 3-2:</b>		
<b>Have you or your staff ever attended SRRRC Continuing Education (CE) Programs, which are conducted by the Providence Public Library and offered through OLIS CE? e.g., computer software training, reference training, or library development</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes (Y)	32	78.05%
No (N)	9	21.95%

<b>Field Summary for 3-2a:</b>		
<b>What type of CE programs have you and/or your staff attended?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Computer or software classes (3-2aa)	20	34.48%
Library development (3-2ab)	9	15.52%
Reference workshops (3-2ac)	27	46.55%
Other	2	3.45%

Other

1. PPL Collections

## 2. grants

<b>Field Summary for 3-3:</b>		
<b>Has your library ever asked the SRRC professional staff for consultation services?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes (Y)	3	7.32%
No (N)	38	92.68%

<b>Field Summary for 3-3a:</b>		
<b>Which staff has your library consulted?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Children's services (3-3aa)	0	0.00%
Development and public relations (3-3ab)	0	0.00%
Electronic information services coordinator (3-3ac)	2	28.57%
Interlibrary loan librarian (3-3ad)	0	0.00%
Reference (3-3ae)	2	28.57%
Special collections librarian (3-3af)	1	14.29%
Other	2	28.57%

Other:

1. Business Librarian
2. RI Collection Librarian

<b>Field Summary for 3-4:</b>		
<b>How often does your library use libraries other than the SRRC for reference assistance?</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
At least once a week (3-4a)	0	0.00%
Two or three times a month (3-4b)	5	12.20%
Once a month (3-4c)	4	9.76%
Two or three times a year (3-4d)	23	56.10%
Never (3-4e)	9	21.95%

<b>Field Summary for 3-5(3-5a):</b>		
<b>What is your overall satisfaction with the SRRC? [1=not satisfied at all, 5=very satisfied]</b>		
<b>Answer</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1 (1)	2	4.88%

2 (2)	4	9.76%
3 (3)	20	48.78%
4 (4)	8	19.51%
5 (5)	7	17.07%

**Ranking of Services (results shown for Priority 1, Priority 2, through Priority 10, or lowest priority):**

<b>Field Summary for 3-6 [1]:</b>		
Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 1]		
Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	1	2.44%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	4	9.76%
Databases (3-5c)	8	19.51%
In-person reference (3-5d)	0	0.00%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	6	14.63%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	1	2.44%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	3	7.32%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	0	0.00%
Print materials (3-5i)	2	4.88%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	16	39.02%

<b>Field Summary for 3-6 [2]:</b>		
Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 2]		
Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	1	2.44%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	5	12.20%
Databases (3-5c)	7	17.07%
In-person reference (3-5d)	2	4.88%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	7	17.07%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	0	0.00%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	4	9.76%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	3	7.32%

Print materials (3-5i)	2	4.88%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	10	24.39%

#### Field Summary for 3-6 [3]:

Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 3]

Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	3	7.32%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	3	7.32%
Databases (3-5c)	12	29.27%
In-person reference (3-5d)	3	7.32%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	4	9.76%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	1	2.44%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	2	4.88%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	3	7.32%
Print materials (3-5i)	5	12.20%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	5	12.20%

#### Field Summary for 3-6 [4]:

Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 4]

Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	4	9.76%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	6	14.63%
Databases (3-5c)	2	4.88%
In-person reference (3-5d)	3	7.32%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	7	17.07%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	4	9.76%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	3	7.32%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	1	2.44%
Print materials (3-5i)	5	12.20%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	6	14.63%

#### Field Summary for 3-6 [5]:

Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what

services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 5]

Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	5	12.20%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	6	14.63%
Databases (3-5c)	3	7.32%
In-person reference (3-5d)	5	12.20%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	4	9.76%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	3	7.32%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	5	12.20%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	2	4.88%
Print materials (3-5i)	7	17.07%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	1	2.44%

#### Field Summary for 3-6 [6]:

Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 6]

Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	2	4.88%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	4	9.76%
Databases (3-5c)	3	7.32%
In-person reference (3-5d)	7	17.07%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	3	7.32%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	3	7.32%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	4	9.76%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	6	14.63%
Print materials (3-5i)	6	14.63%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	3	7.32%

#### Field Summary for 3-6 [7]:

Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 7]

Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	1	2.44%

CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	0	0.00%
Databases (3-5c)	3	7.32%
In-person reference (3-5d)	12	29.27%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	2	4.88%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	9	21.95%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	3	7.32%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	4	9.76%
Print materials (3-5i)	7	17.07%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	0	0.00%

#### Field Summary for 3-6 [8]:

Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 8]

Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	7	17.07%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	2	4.88%
Databases (3-5c)	2	4.88%
In-person reference (3-5d)	3	7.32%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	2	4.88%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	11	26.83%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	7	17.07%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	4	9.76%
Print materials (3-5i)	3	7.32%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	0	0.00%

#### Field Summary for 3-6 [9]:

Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 9]

Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	9	21.95%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	4	9.76%
Databases (3-5c)	1	2.44%
In-person reference (3-5d)	4	9.76%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	3	7.32%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	2	4.88%

Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	10	24.39%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	6	14.63%
Print materials (3-5i)	2	4.88%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	0	0.00%

#### Field Summary for 3-6 [10]:

Even if your library has not used the SRRC, please consider what services are most important for the SRRC to provide to the library community. Rank the following services in order of priority, with #1 being highest priority (all services must be ranked):[Ranking 9]

Answer	Count	Percentage
AV materials (3-5a)	8	19.51%
CE programs for library staff (3-5b)	7	17.07%
Databases (3-5c)	0	0.00%
In-person reference (3-5d)	2	4.88%
Internet/e-mail reference (3-5e)	3	7.32%
Open hours: business hours (3-5f)	7	17.07%
Open hours: evenings and Saturdays (3-5g)	0	0.00%
Open hours: Sundays (3-5h)	12	29.27%
Print materials (3-5i)	2	4.88%
Telephone reference (3-5j)	0	0.00%

#### Field Summary for 3-7:

Are there other services you would like the SRRC to provide?

Answer	Count	Percentage
Answer	17	41.46%
No answer	24	58.54%

Other services:

1. After taking this survey we might try the SRRC for more things.
2. management of statewide databases
3. The central library is generous with lending their materials and they have a vast collection. We would like access to more databases.
4. More access to more databases through the library as well as for patrons from home.
5. overnight or \"off hours\" (when most libraries are closed) reference service that is easily accessible to the average person.
6. More resource sharing databases in various areas. We really like the subject specialists and the work they do.
7. access to the databases the SRRC subscribes to
8. statewide Access to all databases, at least from in the libraries

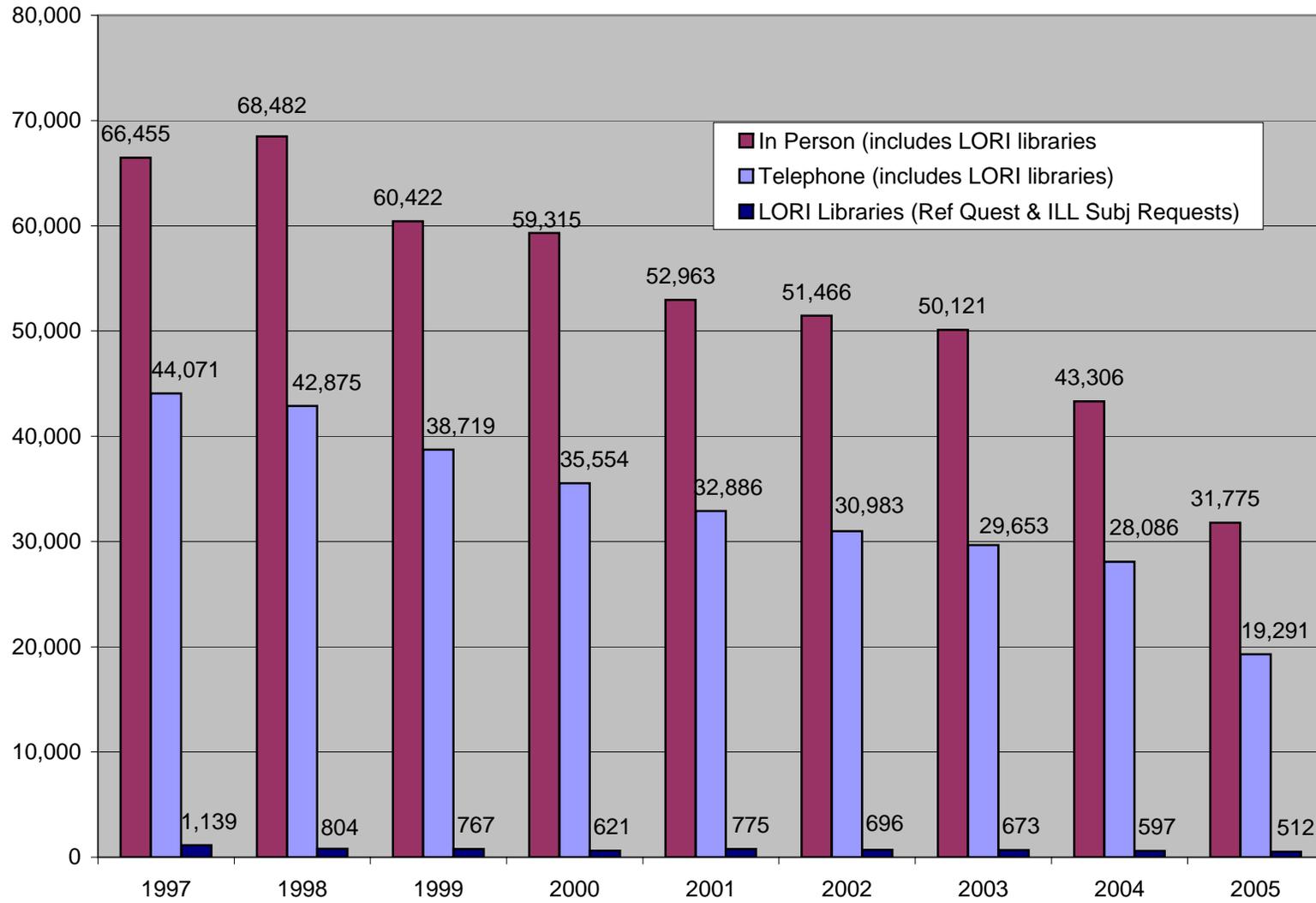
9. At Newport Public Library we always used SRRC as a staff resource. Patrons were simply referred to the Providence Public Library when appropriate as we would to any other library that offered services and resources they required. We would like to see SRRC doing more as a resource for librarians.
10. not sure
11. All the state\'s citizens should have access to the databases.
12. Provide materials or access from sites that are exclusive to them. Give me the password or access code (for one time use)
13. I think that the SRRC should be looking into providing Reference e-books so that the whole state could potentially access thru their website. With staff and hours reduced this would allow them to continue to provide services 24/7.
14. Twenty four hour statewide refernce service by phone or internet. More databases available to all Rhode islanders from home or at other libraries.
15. Don\'t cut service. The Central library at Providence is not simply a larger version of any other library\'s reference collections but is, in fact, a research center with the depth and breadth of subject coverage, the home-grown indexes and special collections, and deeply knowledgable staff that is rarely seen in a public library. In Rhode Island, it is the only institution of its kind whose clientele is the general public and not exclusively academics or special subject researchers. It is not true that technology has leveled the playing field within the library community, that now with local libraries having far more access than ever to Web-based reference resources, the differences between them and a research facility like PPL are minimal, and shrinking all the time. This is not to disparage the excellent services and staffs of other RI public libraries, including my own. It is to acknowledge the uniqueness of PPL Central\'s role. The same goes for the argument that the general public, having more access to the same information from home or from their local libraries, doesn\'t need the resources available at the Central library. How does better technology help people find specific chapters in various histories of Rhode Island that deal with Drum Rock, or the Dorr War, or the Bonded Vault robbery? Where will people find the few pages comparing Ophelia to other Shakespearean femal characters in a slew of books about the Bard? How will people find the sheet music they need that has an ocean theme? Somebody at PPL is doing the hard, meticulous work of indexing these materials so that people won\'t have to slog through them. That\'s what a research library provides, and no other public library in Rhode Island has the materials, the staff, or the mission to do it; and no technology can provide it if the indexing work isn\'t done first. PPL\'s strength as a statewide resource center is precisely this: that it doesn\'t just have more of the many things that more libraries can now also provide, but it--and no other library--has the one thing someone is looking for. If library staffs around the state are unaware of this and therefore don\'t use this resource at all or as much as they could, perhaps there is a reason. At a recent meeting people decried the fact the smaller libraries in the state wanted to save money by no longer subscribing to reference databases through CLAN, because it costs so much and people just aren\'t using them enough to justify the cost. There seemed to be consensus around the table that the smaller the library staff the more they should need the databases, and perhaps the staffs weren\'t as familiar as they should be with them. In the same way, use of PPL by libraries can be summed up: if you only ever heard a three-piece combo, it\'s hard to imagine a symphony orchestra.
16. outreach, business classess more genealogy resources online or digitalized

17. FYI: the only services important to our library are #1 and 2 above. I only ranked the remainder of the items on the list so that I would be permitted to exit and submit the survey!

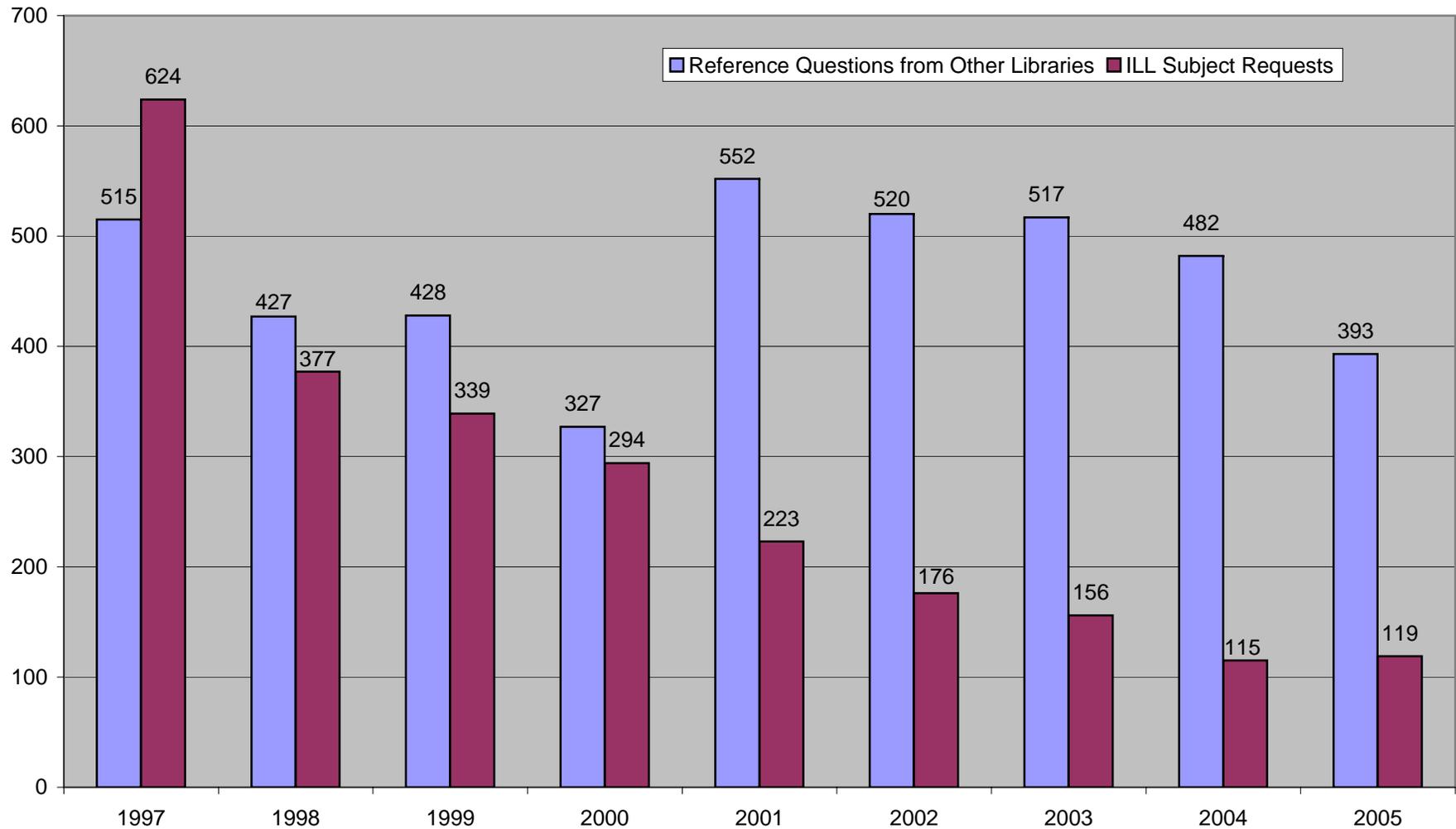
## **Appendix C**

### **Statewide Reference Resource Center Statistics**

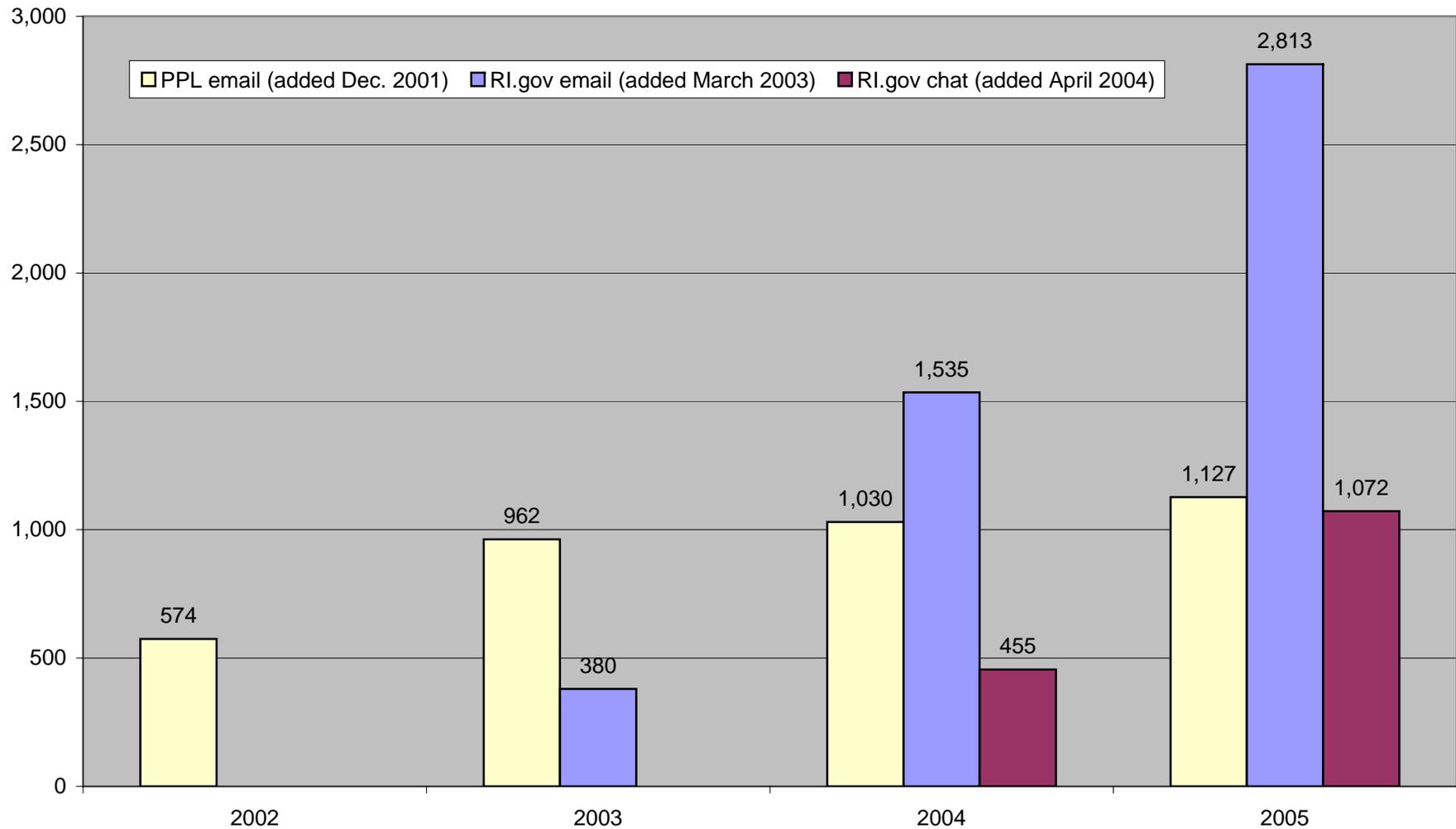
### Statewide Reference Resource Center: Annual Use



### SRRC: Other Libraries: Reference and ILL Subject Requests



### SRRC: Email & Chat (PPL & RI.gov)



## **Appendix D**

### **Reference Use by Service Point & User Location**

## Providence Public Library: Statewide Reference Resource Center

### Reference Use by Service Point & User Location - May '05

#### May-05

	Telephone			In Person			Email		
	Pro	RI	OS	Pro	RI	OS	Pro	RI	OS
Week 1									
2-May	21	23	4	22	15	4	0	0	0
3-May	15	22	4	19	22	0	1	1	5
4-May	19	17	1	27	12	2	0	0	7
5-May	10	23	2	25	16	0	1	7	2
6-May	16	17	2	27	16	2	2	6	3
7-May	5	10	1	19	19	3	3	1	2
Week 2									
9-May	23	22	3	26	10	0	2	4	3
10-May	11	12		21	15	0	0	7	5
11-May	23	11	2	28	10	0	1	4	2
12-May	17	6	3	9	20	1	0	6	2
13-May	9	10		10	6	2	1	2	4
14-May	14	10	0	17	22	3	1	2	1
Totals by Service Area	183	183	22	250	183	17	12	40	36
	47%	47%	6%	56%	41%	4%	14%	45%	41%
Totals Consolidated	445	406	75						
	48%	44%	8%						
Totals less email	433	366	39						
	52%	44%	5%						

PRO = Providence Resident

RE = Rhode Island Resident Living Outside of Providence

OS = Out of State

*Statistics compiled by the Providence Public Library.*

## **Appendix E**

### **Geographic Analysis of Online Reference Questions**

**Statewide Reference Resource Center  
Geographic Analysis of Online Reference Questions**

Users of the Ask A Librarian email reference service are required to enter a zip code. Users of the Instant Answers chat reference service are not and cannot be traced geographically. Table 1 presents statistics from all questions that are logged for content. Table 2 presents statistics for all online reference questions reported by the Providence Public Library. An average of 68% of the total reference questions reported are actually logged for content.

**Table 1: Point of Origin of Ask A Librarian and Instant Answers on RI.go**

2005-2006	Total Logged Questions	Questions with zip	Providence questions	RI questions (not Prov)	Total RI questions	Out of state	Origin unknown
October	197	149	21	63	84	65	48
November	174	124	11	49	60	71	53
December	128	77	9	28	37	40	51
January	242	149	12	78	90	59	93
February	253	164	17	68	85	79	89
March	329	210	22	107	129	81	119
April	292	188	22	78	100	88	104
May	264	170	28	74	102	68	94
June	193	114	13	54	67	47	79
July	143	96	11	50	61	35	47
August	174	103	19	44	63	40	71
September	162	118	24	43	67	51	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,551</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>892</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>% of all questions</b>		65.15%	8.19%	28.85%	37.04%	28.38%	34.97%
<b>% of zip code identified</b>			12.58%	44.28%	56.86%	43.56%	

**Table 2: Monthly statistics provided by the Providence Public Library**

2005-2006	Total Reported Questions	Total Reported Email	Total Reported Chat	Total Logged Questions (Table 1)	Percentage of Questions Logged
October	321	220	101	197	61.37%
November	265	202	63	174	65.66%
December	202	140	62	128	63.37%
January	342	249	93	242	70.76%
February	378	266	112	253	66.93%
March	477	354	123	329	68.97%
April	405	304	101	292	72.10%
May	400	281	119	264	66.00%
June	255	208	47	193	75.69%
July	216	147	69	143	66.20%
August	255	184	71	174	68.24%
September	254	173	81	162	63.78%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,770</b>	<b>2,728</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>2,551</b>	<b>67.67%</b>