

11-7-2005

# Demise of the Reference Desk: Tradition and Transformation

Ann Ellis

*Stephen F Austin State University, aellis@sfasu.edu*

Tina Oswald

*Stephen F Austin State University, toswald@sfasu.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/libfacpres>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Tell us how this article helped you.

---

## Recommended Citation

Ellis, Ann and Oswald, Tina, "Demise of the Reference Desk: Tradition and Transformation" (2005). *Library Faculty and Staff Presentations*. Paper 3.

<http://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/libfacpres/3>

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the Ralph W. Steen Library at SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Faculty and Staff Presentations by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu](mailto:cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu).

# Demise of the Reference Desk:

Tradition and Transformation

Presented by Tina Oswald and Ann Ellis,  
Stephen F. Austin State University



# Our University

- Size – 11,000 students
- Description – state university in a small rural city
- Programs - 93 bachelor's, 61 master's and two doctoral programs

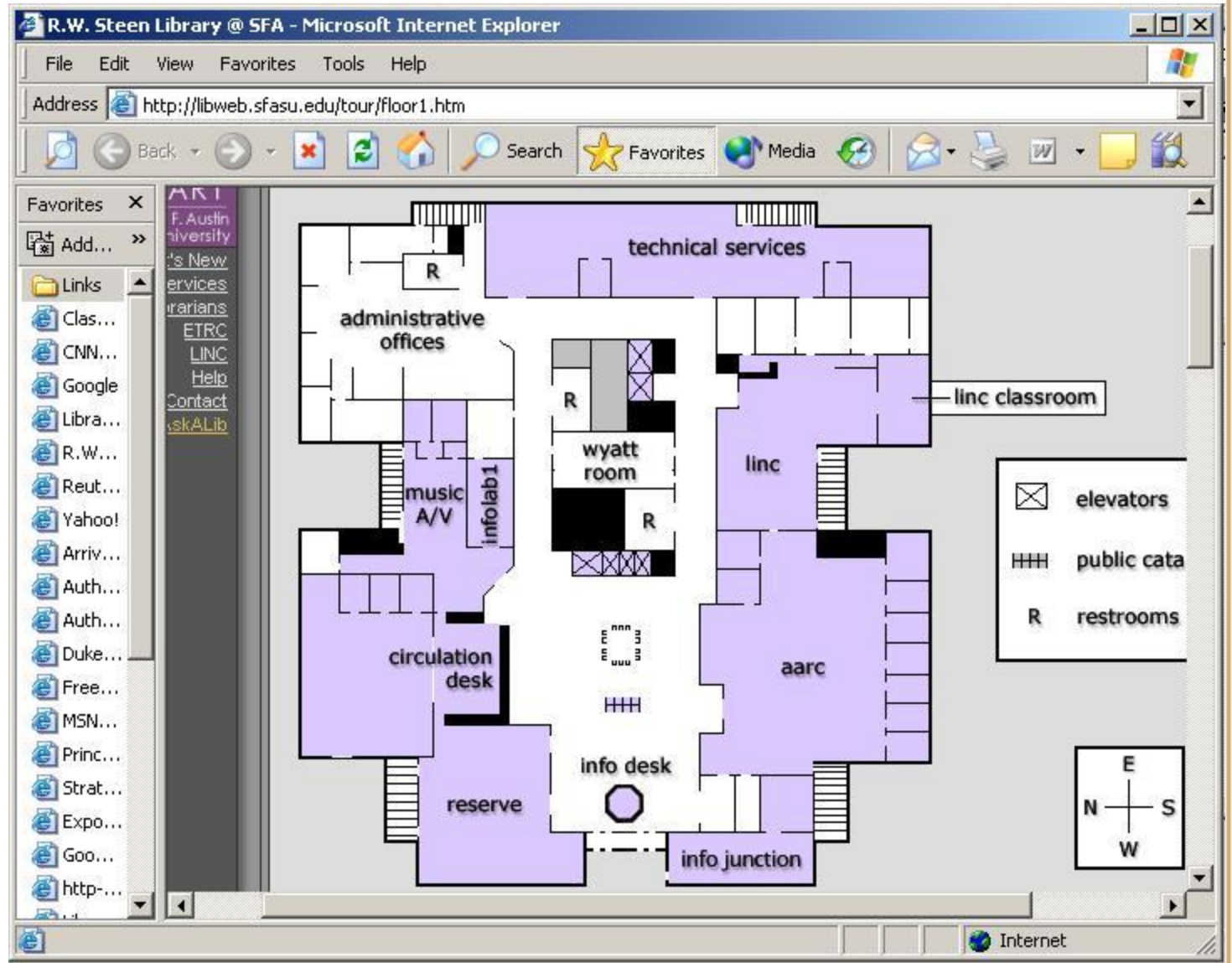


# Our Library

- Size – 1.9 million volumes
- Layout – 4 floors
- Features – offices, computer labs on first floor; reference dept. on second floor
- Special areas – tutoring center, 3 computer labs, computer classroom, meeting rooms



# First Floor



# Second Floor

R.W. Steen Library @ SFA - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address: <http://libweb.sfasu.edu/tour/floor2.htm>

Navigation: Back, Forward, Stop, Home, Search, Favorites, Media, Print, Mail, Help, Home

**LIBRARY**  
 Stephen F. Austin State University  
 What's New  
 Services  
 Librarians  
 ETRC  
 LINC  
 Help  
 Contact  
 AskALib

**Links**

- Class...
- CNN...
- Google
- Libra...
- R.W...
- Reut...
- Yahoo!
- Arriv...
- Auth...
- Auth...
- Duke...
- Free...
- MSN...
- Princ...
- Strat...
- Expo...
- Goo...
- http...

**Legend:**

- ☒ elev
- H pub
- R rest
- ☒ mic
- A Don
- B Susa
- C Prisc
- D Nata
- E Caro
- F Tina
- G Inter
- H Facu
- J Kayc
- K Docu

**Room Labels:** infolab 2, current periodicals, government documents, curriculum, maps, web development, east texas research center, research librarians suite 202 A-J

**Room Markers:** H, R, K, J, G, F, E, D, C, B, A, N

Internet

# Reasons for Change

- Building layout
- Desire for fewer service points
- Decline in number of reference questions
- Flexibility in scheduling work responsibilities





# Beginnings of Change

- Reorganization workshop
  - Entire staff involvement
- Suggestions for changes
- Discussions
  - Administrative Committee
  - Reference Department meetings





# Implementation of Changes

- Steps taken to begin change
- Staff issues
- Trial and error
- Discussions continued
- Name changed to Research and Instructional Services
  - Reduction in reference staff



# Information Desk

- History of desk – began as security checkpoint
- Ideas to change it
  - Limit scope of responsibility
- Staffing issues
- AARC involvement
  - supervision
  - training
- Transfer responsibility to RIS



- The Info Desk is not a reference desk:



## Lobby Area and Info Desk





## Info Desk



# Research Services

- Office hours with on-call hours
- Faculty liaison program
- Information literacy focus
- Consultations
- Training/workshops
- Community outreach
- Other responsibilities



# Is it Working? - Outcomes

- Results of user survey
- Satisfaction of current staff
- Problems encountered
  - Workload issues
  - Visibility of librarians
  - Changes continue to be made
  - Consider relocation of department to 1<sup>st</sup> floor

