

Charting Future Directions for Reference Service

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University of Kansas
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Outline








- Background
- Methodology
- Trends
- Findings
- Other Influences
- Charting the Future

University of Kansas



- 29,000 student enrollment
- 2,500 faculty
- 7 Libraries on Lawrence campus
- 1 Library on Regent Center campus

Timeline

- Traditional desk-bound reference services  2002
- Combined reference staff from Watson and Anschutz Libraries  2003
- Chat/IM reference  2004
- “Peer and tier” model implemented  2005
- Merged reference dept. dissolved  2006
- Service quality issues (LibQual)  2007 to present
- Librarians and research specialists staffing desks again  present

Background

- Using LibStats since Fall 2007
- Collecting reference desk statistics at Anschutz & Watson Libraries
- Rationale
 - Answer questions about scheduling, staff time, training, complexity, subject area/discipline
 - Addition of IM to desk duties

Methodology

- Locations – Anschutz & Watson Libraries
- Time frame – 2008-2010
- Number of questions – 27,000
- Sampling– 4,200 (15%)
- Format – in-person, IM, telephone
- Subject taxonomy

Subject Taxonomy

- Research by Subject /Libraries' webpage
- Disciplines
 - Humanities, Social Sciences, Science
- Professional Schools

KU Library Stats : Add Question

Location Ans. LS Info Desk Ans. Consult. Office Watson Anschutz Staff Office	Patron Type Unsure Undergrad Graduate Fac/Staff Other	Question Type Reference Directional Equip/Tech Circulation Referral	Time Spent 0-5 minutes 5-10 minutes 10-20 minutes 20+ minutes	Question Format In-Person Telephone IM Text message Office consultation	Initials fad	Backdate <input type="text"/>
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Question

Answer

Last question added from this computer at 4/11 9:48 AM

Go to page: Previous 1 2 3 ... [645](#) [646](#) [647](#) [Next](#) Show questions per page

Edit	Patron Type	Question Type	Question Format	Location	Question / Answer <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Show Empty Questions	Date	Initials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Show
51025	Unsure	Reference 5-10 minutes	In-Person	Ans. LS Info Desk	Q: trying to find full text articles based on citations from a professor A: helped find two from old new york times issues - explained advanced search in ProQuest Historical newspapers	4/12/2011 12:46 PM	ee
51023	Unsure	Reference 5-10 minutes	In-Person	Watson	Q: looking for books on tiger tanks or WWII tanks A: used a combination of keyword / subject searching. World War, 1939-1945--Tank warfare is an LC heading. We have 59 books on the subject. Found some specifically about german panzers, pointed him to the location on 1 east.	4/12/2011 12:34 PM	kls
51021	Undergrad	Reference 0-5 minutes	In-Person	Watson	Q: Where are the books about sports management? A: Looked up a couple. GV 700ish. Sent to stacks.	4/12/2011 12:32 PM	jkb
51020	Unsure	Reference 0-5 minutes	IM	Watson	Q: im question re: retrieve from shelf A: kyle.sederstrom is 0.8383155759488062 12:12 guest500194@chat.library3lp.com hello 12:13 me hello 12:13 dawitaklilu2000\40gmail.com@gtalk.library3lp.com can i get this book reserved at front desk ? at anchutz? Introduction to Algorithms, Second Edition, by Cormen, Leiserson, Rivest, and Stein. 12:15 me you would have to click on the "recall / request" button on the catalog entry here: http://catalog.lib.ku.edu/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?v1=38ti=1,38CNT=258SL=None&Search_Arg=Introduction%20to%20Algorithms&Search_Code=TALL&PID=zNI3p7MNHvPE9ka13ZbYmYpYm--O&SEO=20110412121415&SID=1 12:16 me and do a retrieve from shelf request 12:17 dawitaklilu2000\40gmail.com@gtalk.library3lp.com i dont see the first option from the link u sent me 12:17 me it should be in the middle of the row of buttons at the top of the page 12:19 dawitaklilu2000\40gmail.com@gtalk.library3lp.com u should have sent me the Direct URL for this record 12:19 dawitaklilu2000\40gmail.com@gtalk.library3lp.com now i go tit 12:22 dawitaklilu2000\40gmail.com@gtalk.library3lp.com what is the Barcode, Last 8 digits: field on the request form 12:23 me it would be the barcode from your ku id card. you can also click the "login with your ku id and password" option to use your e-mail login 12:27 dawitaklilu2000\40gmail.com@gtalk.library3lp.com k thanks	4/12/2011 12:32 PM	kls
51019	Undergrad	Directional 0-5	In-Person	Watson	Q: Where do I find the HQ call numbers? A: 1 West Directions	4/12/2011 12:31 PM	jkb

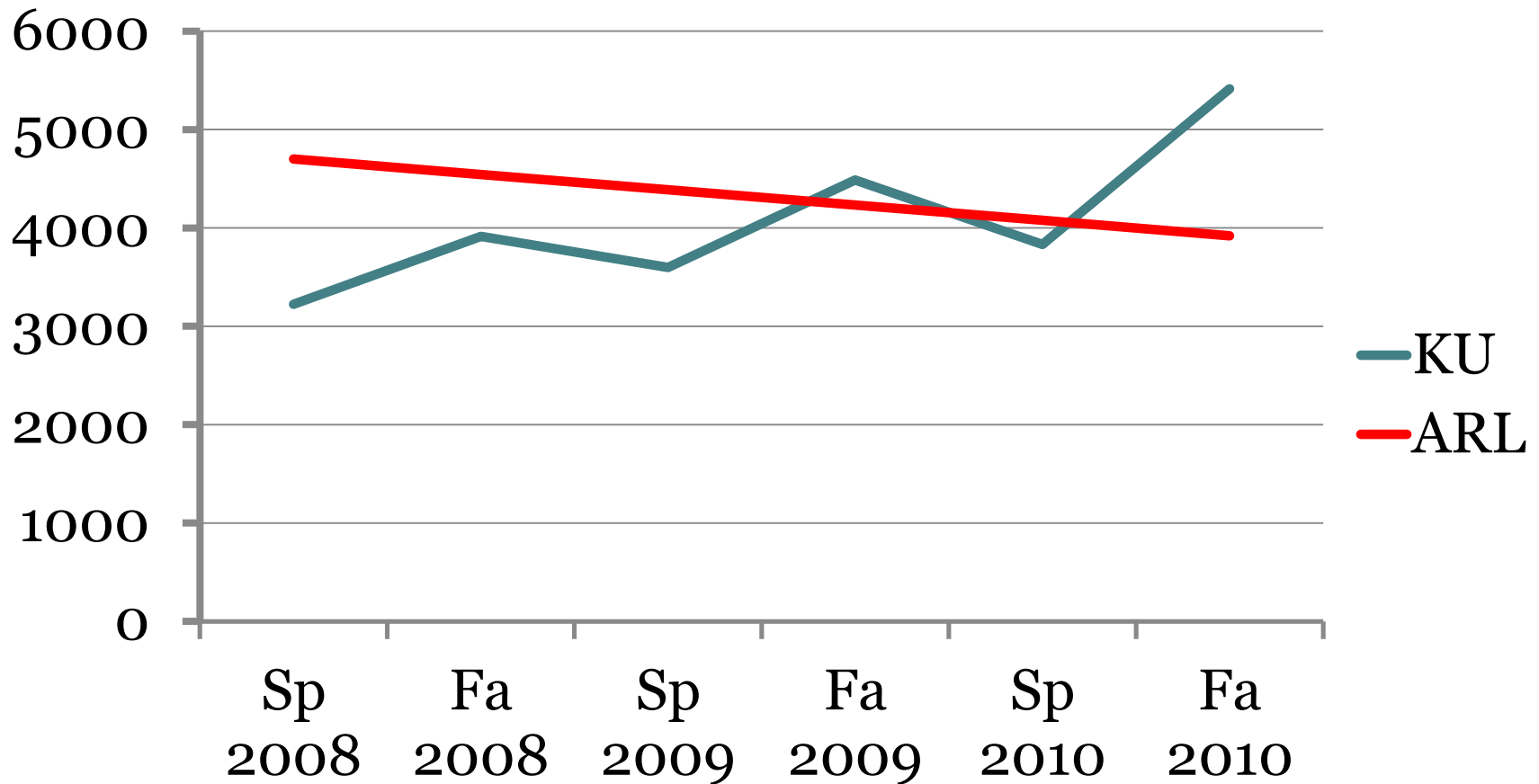
What is Reference (anymore)?

- Help users find information
- Modes of delivery have changed
 - in-person, telephone, email, chat, instant messaging/ texting, roving, and research consultations with librarians
- Teaching philosophy
- “Reference” as term not meaningful to users

Trends

- ARL Statistics (1991-2008) reference transactions declined by 53%
- Questions are more complex
- Undergraduates more comfortable with technology

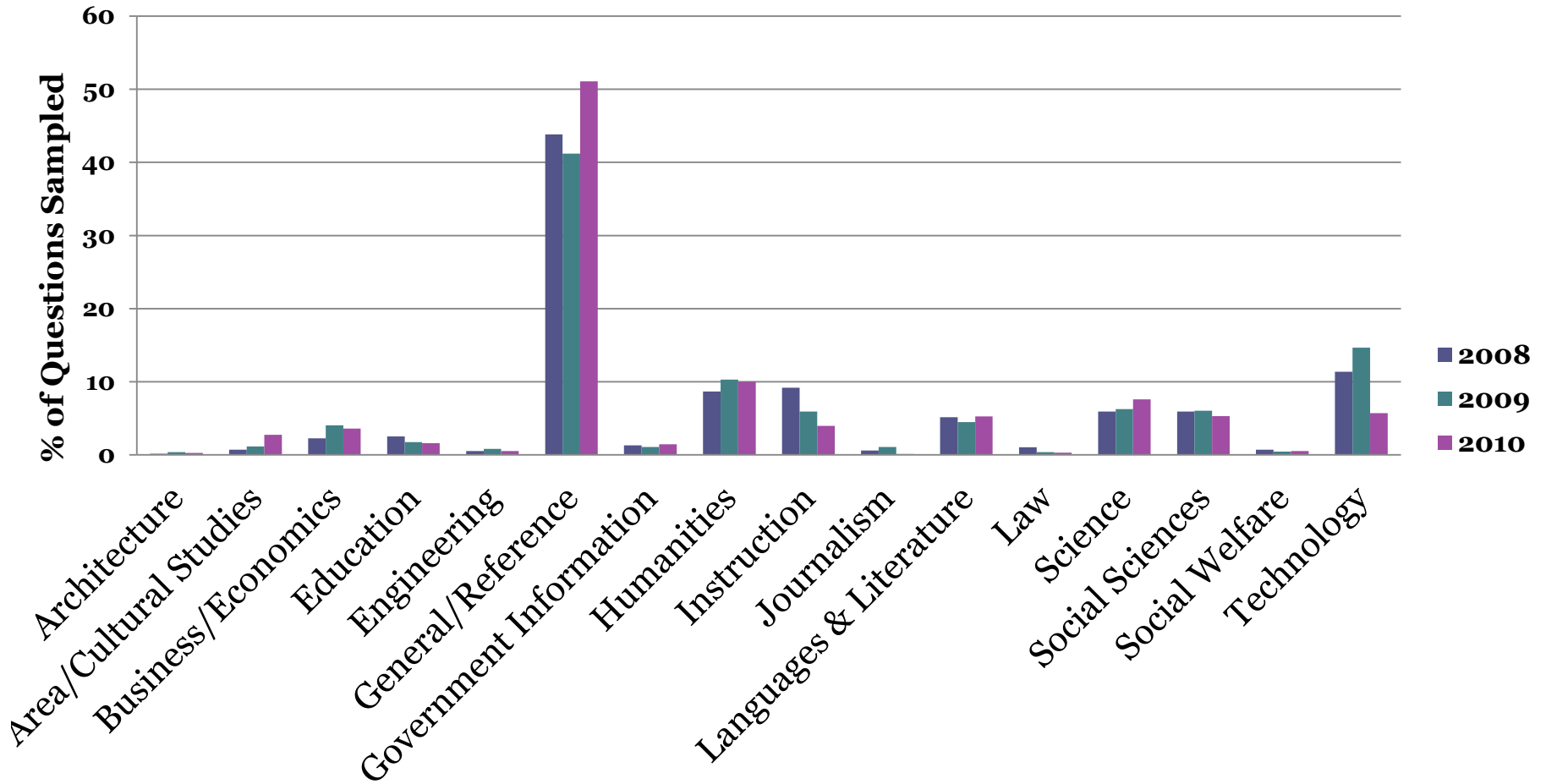
KU VS. ARL Trend



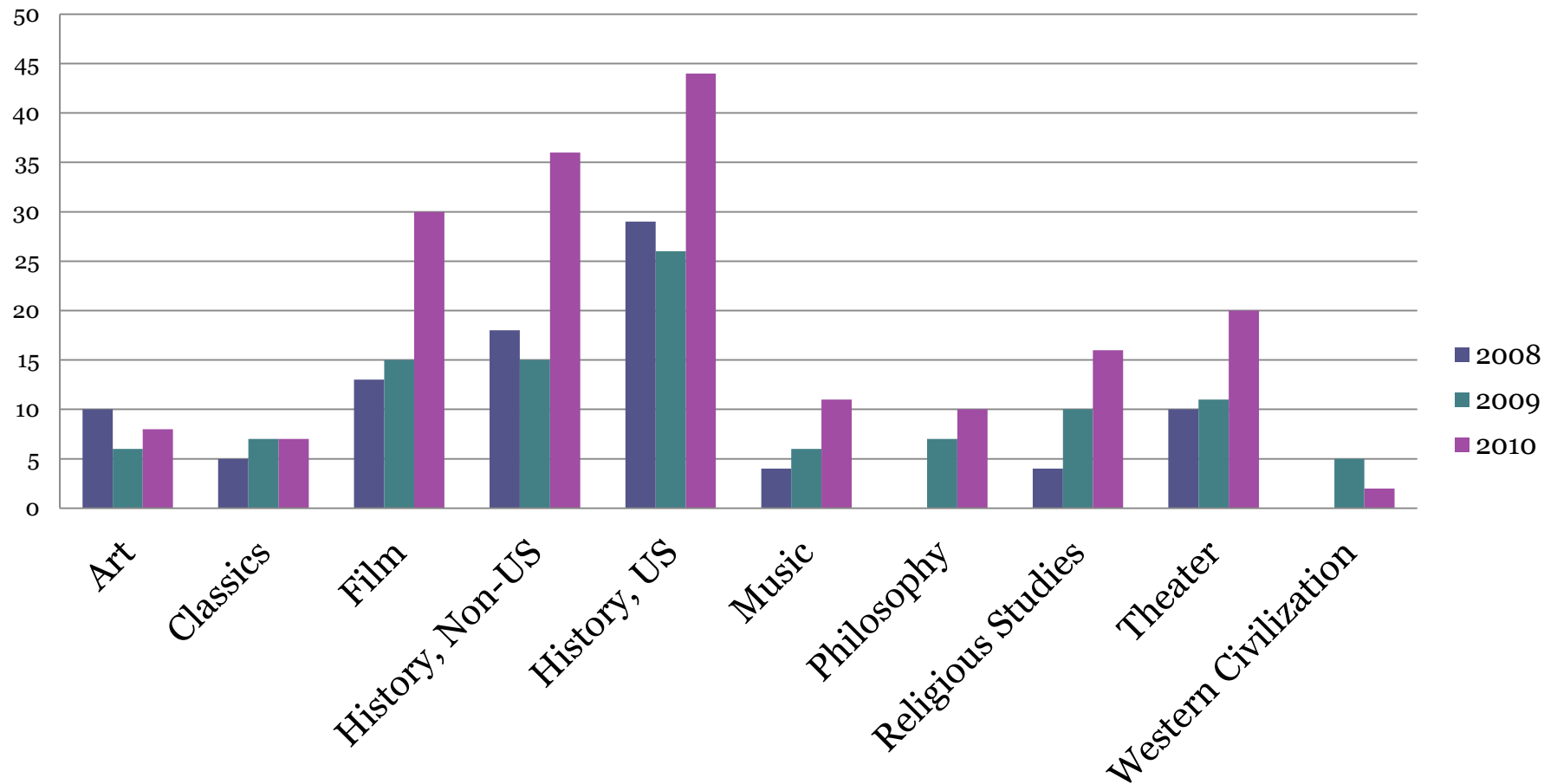


Trends in Subjects/Disciplines

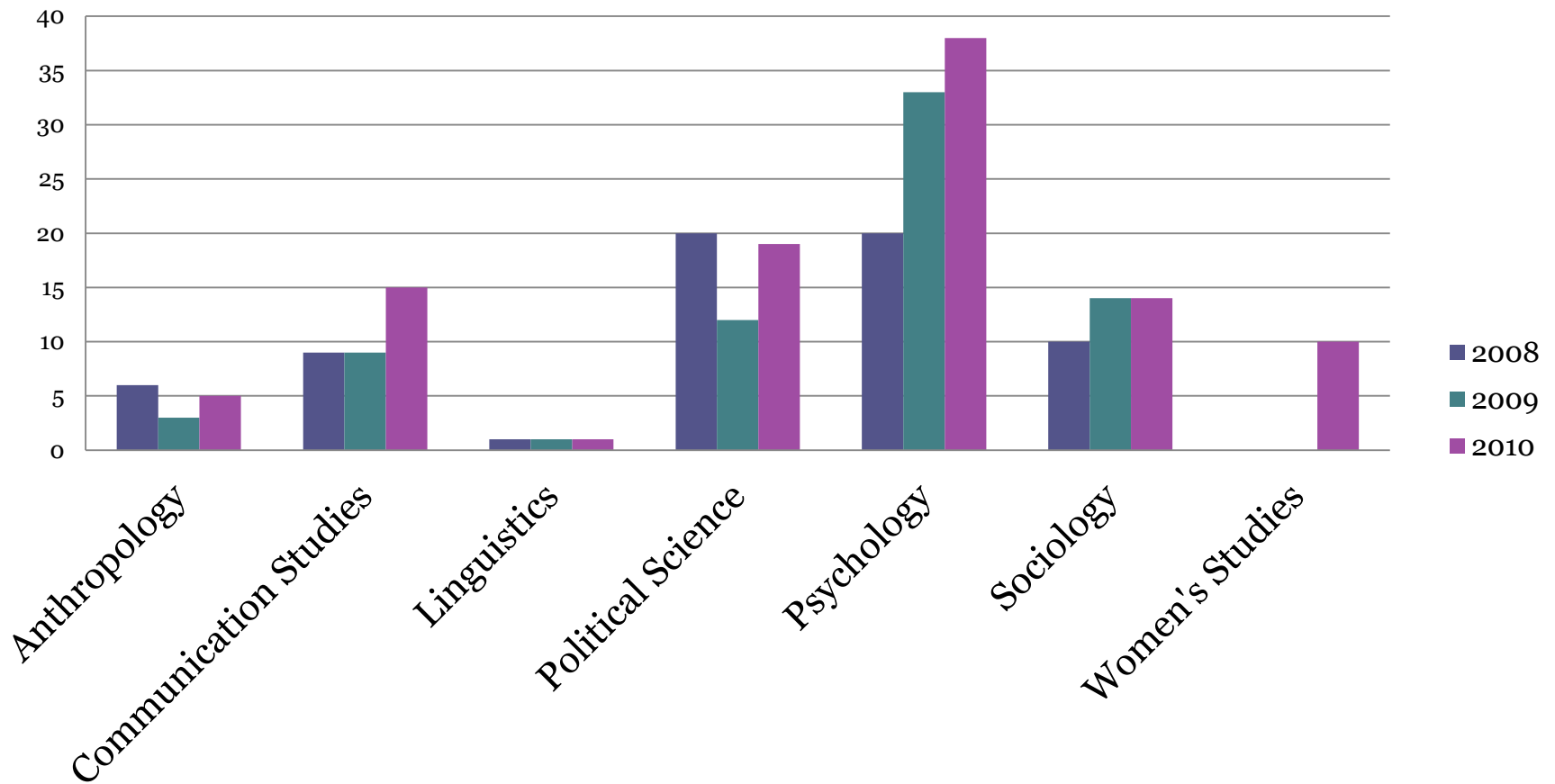
Discipline/Subject/School



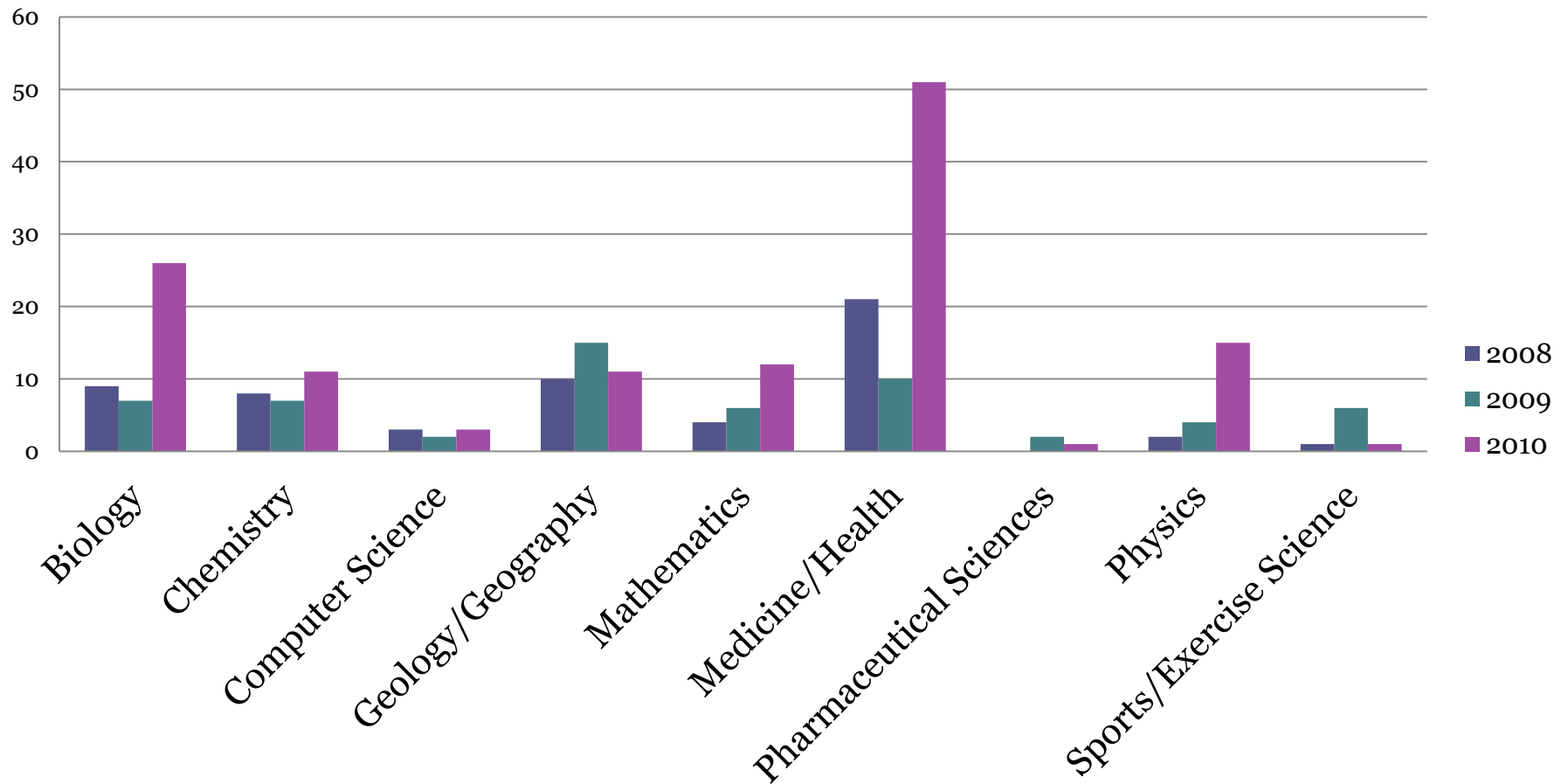
Humanities



Social Sciences



Sciences



Findings

- In-person reference enquiries increasing
 - Watson – 8% increase
 - Anschutz – 61% increase (Learning Studio)
- Instant messaging trending up since 2008
- Undergraduates are largest user group
- Largest categories of questions
 - General Reference & Technology
- Fall semesters are busier than Spring

Other Influences on Reference

KU Libraries Consultants' Report: *Positioning KU Libraries*

Findings:

- Strong executive leadership & engaged staff
- KU faculty understand Libraries' role in teaching and research
- User services strong & user-centered
- Learning Studio partnerships successful
- Consolidation & cross-training successful

KU Libraries Consultants' Report: *Positioning KU Libraries*

Recommendations:

- Organizational structure review
- Diminish “silos”
- Scholar & student work flow and needs
- Integration of instructional programs into Anschutz Learning Studio

Huron Consulting Group

Findings:

- Services offered at or above peer institutions

Recommendation:

- Need to re-assess library staffing and key service levels

Charting the Future

- Organizational influences
- Technological influences
- New roles for librarians
- Staffing implications

Organizational Influences

- Provost's Strategic Plan
 - Goals and Strategies “Bold Aspirations”
- General education learning outcomes
- Shrinking budgets/resources
 - Efficiencies

Technological Influences

- Access expert assistance “anytime, anywhere”
- IM/texting/mobile devices
- Explosion of resource accessibility
 - Databases/Interfaces
 - Google/Search engines
- Rapid change

New Roles for Librarians

- Leveraging expertise (in & outside library)
- Making strategic connections
- Faculty/librarian teaching collaboration
- Scholarly communication
- Data management

Staffing Implications

- Service models subject to evaluation each semester
- Examples include:
 - Desk schedule (layered for busy times)
 - IM staffing
 - Creation of new service points
- Built-in flexibility for staffing needs
- Research specialists from other units

Challenges

- Other responsibilities (reference not primary)
- Building generalist levels of proficiencies
- Knowing when to refer
- Unfilled positions

Where Do We Go From Here?

- Continue to collect and use data to inform decisions about staffing, scheduling, and training
- Further refinement of LibStats program:
 - Ability to tag subjects and/or disciplines
 - Evaluate other tracking products

- Receive & review consultants' recommendations
- Seek to remain relevant in an era of increasing self-service and Google
 - Add value to our services
- Build staff proficiencies to answer general reference questions
- Deploy new technologies that can be personalized to meet user needs

Questions or Discussion?

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