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Title

Better Ways to Count Reference, in order to Count on Reference

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https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7mw1h8zq

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Publication Date

2013-10-25

Copyright Information

BETTER WAYS TO COUNT REFERENCE, IN ORDER TO COUNT ON REFERENCE

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Ask us:

- Why we decided to create an in-house program instead of buying an off-the-shelf product
- What additional statistics we're now capturing
- What reports we're able to generate
- How we are using our statistics to staff and understand better our in-person reference services at our service points
- How individual librarians understand better their off-the-desk reference work with faculty and students
- How we see this data possibly connecting to other data the Libraries capture, to give us more granular details about how our patrons use our services

In **OCTOBER 2012** the UCI Libraries launched a new program for recording and reporting reference statistics on and off the reference desk.

Tell us:

- What possibilities do you see for capturing reference statistics?
- In what ways can we use this data to help demonstrate the value libraries add to the university's mission?
- How do you record reference statistics at your library? How do you use that data?

New Statistics Program:

- PHP and MS SQL
- 110 Staff hours to program and re-fine, from July 2012 through January 2013 (program went live across the UCI Libraries on October 1, 2012).
- To maintain and update: 5 minutes to 20 hours of staff time for each request, depending on request

Previous Reference Statistics Program:

- Cold Fusion
- Retired from use on September 30, 2012

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October 2013

Off-the-shelf products: Why didn't we just buy something?

- Some were PRICEY
- Some weren't very flexible
- NONE would allow us to exchange information across different programs, or merge programs to create more efficient recording of different types of information

⌁ TYPES OF INPUT FORMS ⌁

This form, used at UCI from September 2005 through September 2012, was based on the form used at UCLA. The form was opened as part of the morning's login at the reference desks. Reference activities were recorded throughout the day; the form was closed when the reference desk closed. Langson Library reference had separate forms for ON and OFF the desk statistics, as did the reference desks in the other UCI libraries.

OLD FORMS

NEW FORMS ☞

Reference service ON the desk

- Can toggle between ON and OFF the desk
- Can select the "Where"--in a library or outside the library ("Other")
- Can record the amount of time spent
- Optional notes field
- Link to documentation is in the form

Reference service OFF the desk: all of the ON desk features, plus

- Can record "Appointment Type"
- Can indicate "Patron Status" (optional)
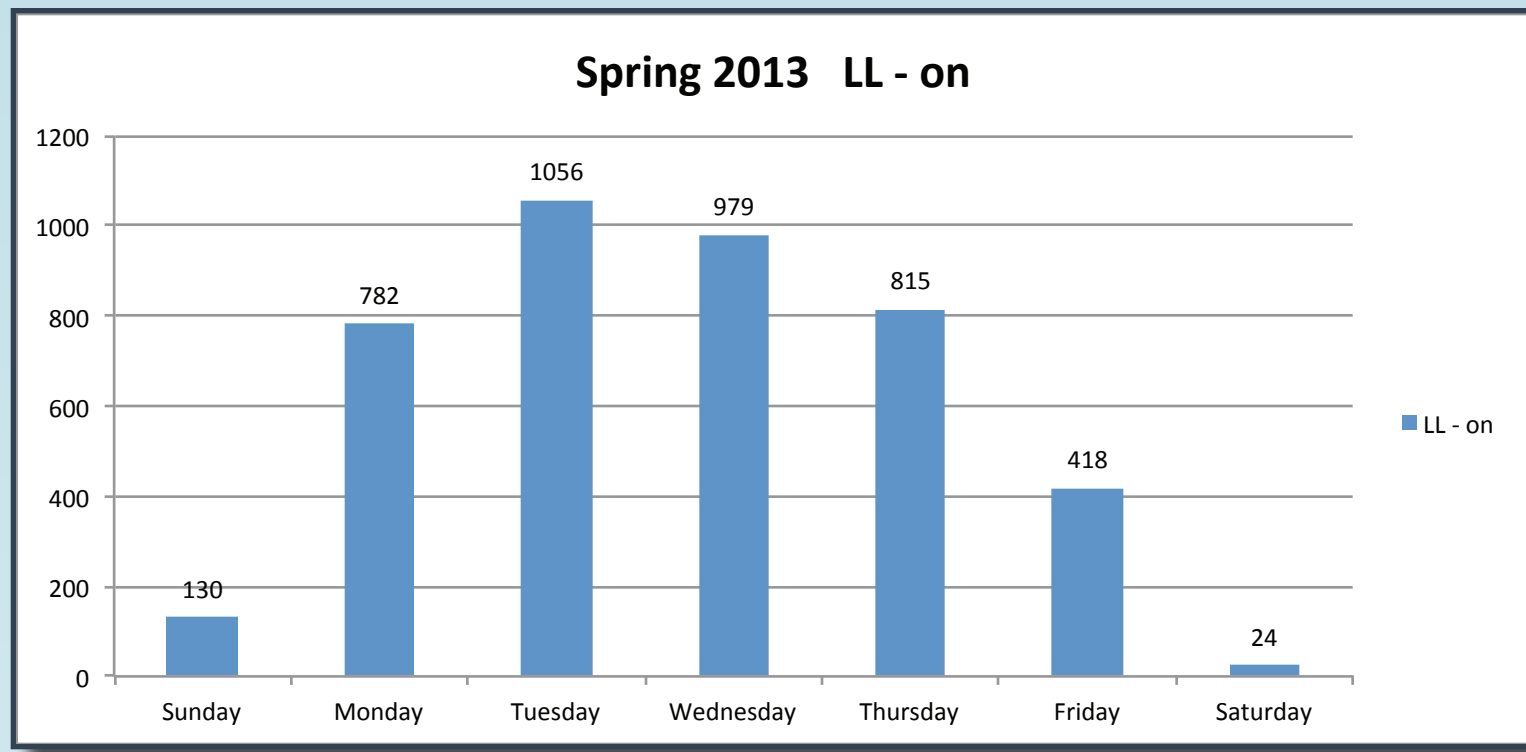- Can indicate "If this is for a class" (optional)

Special Collections & Archives ON the reference desk: same core categories as for Reference, but customized to include

- Thesis Consultation
- Institutional Affiliation
- Number of volumes/archival boxes used
- Gatecount (when researchers return to use materials pulled for them but do not need research assistance)
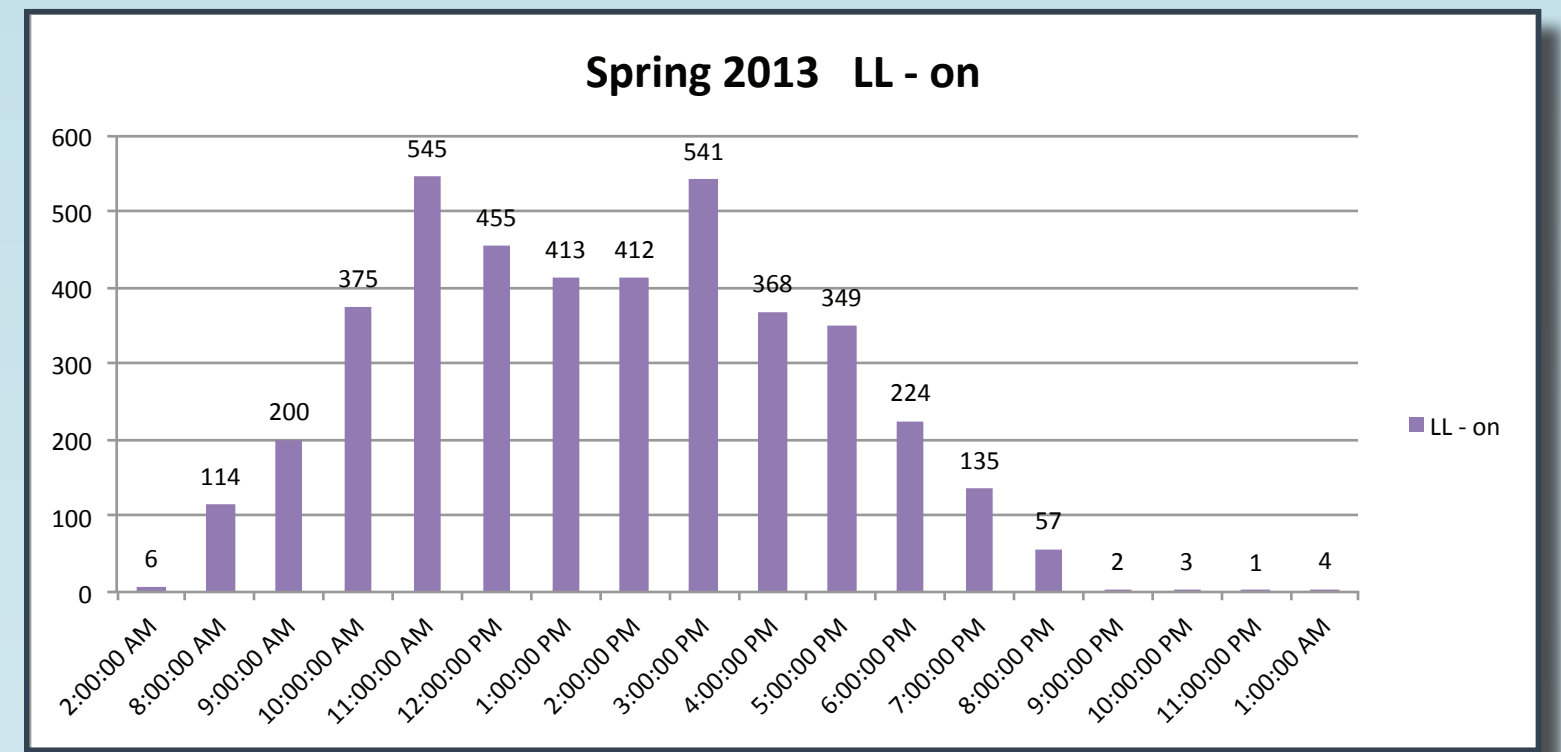
Reports RefStats Can Produce
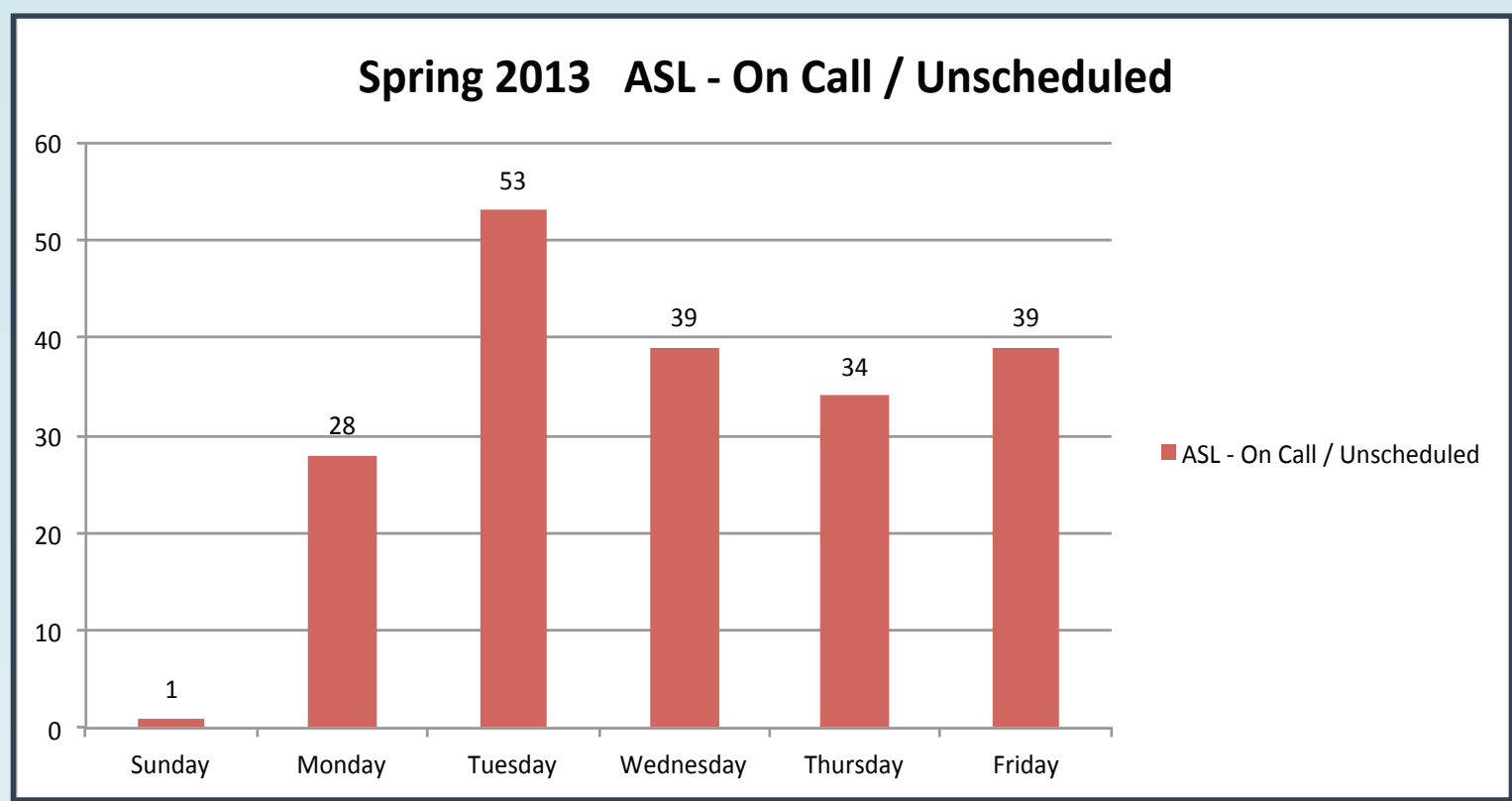
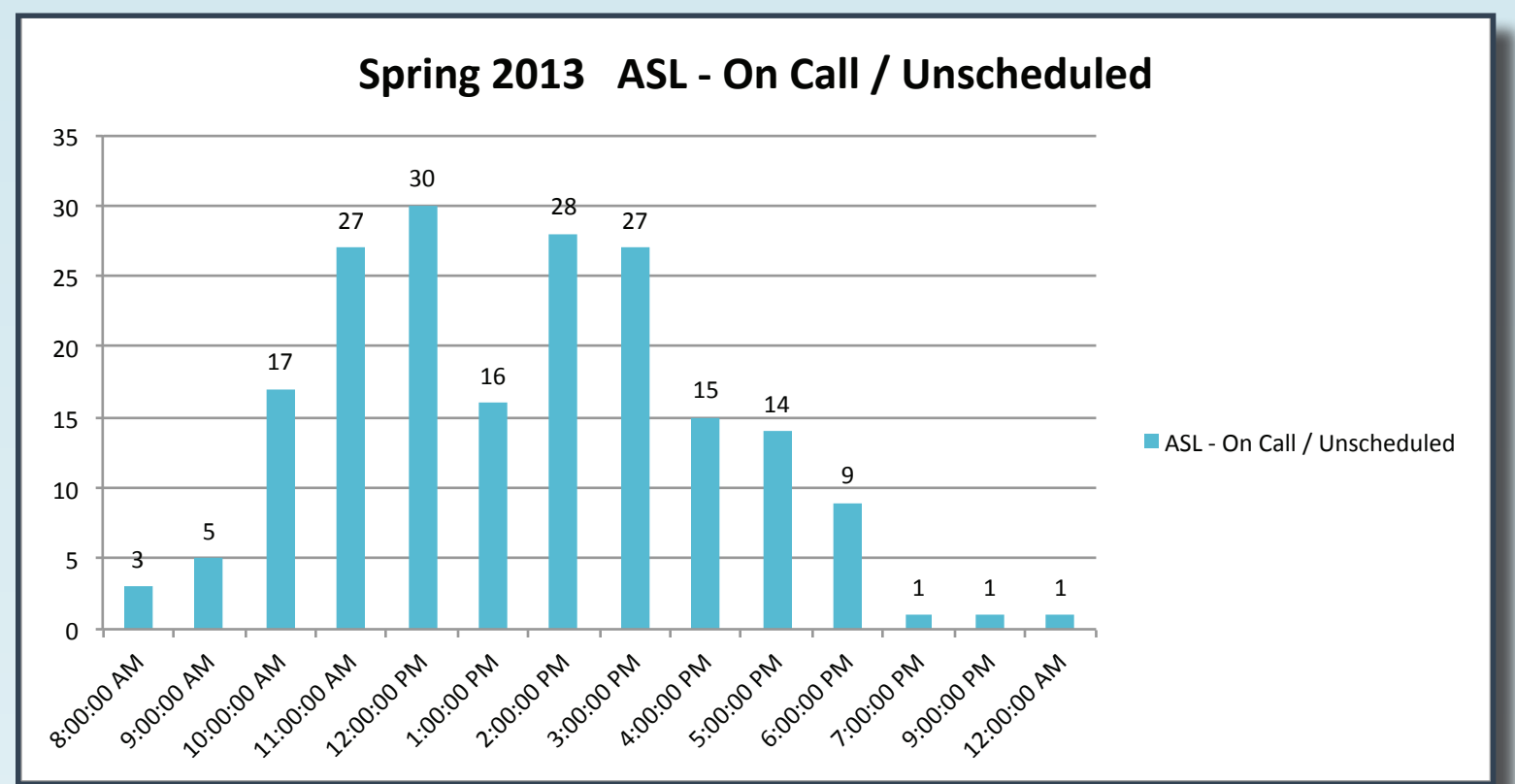👉 Can be generated at any time by that individual   👉 Can select any time period (start and end dates)

Spring 2013   LL - on

(Bar chart — Number of Reference Questions by day of week)
Sunday 130, Monday 782, Tuesday 1056, Wednesday 979, Thursday 815, Friday 418, Saturday 24 — LL - on

Number of Reference Questions at the Langson Library Ask Us Desk, by day of week, during Spring Qtr 2013

Spring 2013   LL - on

(Bar chart — Number of Reference Questions by hour)
2:00:00 AM 6, 8:00:00 AM 114, 9:00:00 AM 200, 10:00:00 AM 375, 11:00:00 AM 545, 12:00:00 PM 455, 1:00:00 PM 413, 2:00:00 PM 412, 3:00:00 PM 541, 4:00:00 PM 368, 5:00:00 PM 349, 6:00:00 PM 224, 7:00:00 PM 135, 8:00:00 PM 57, 9:00:00 PM 2, 10:00:00 PM 3, 11:00:00 PM 1, 1:00:00 AM 4 — LL - on
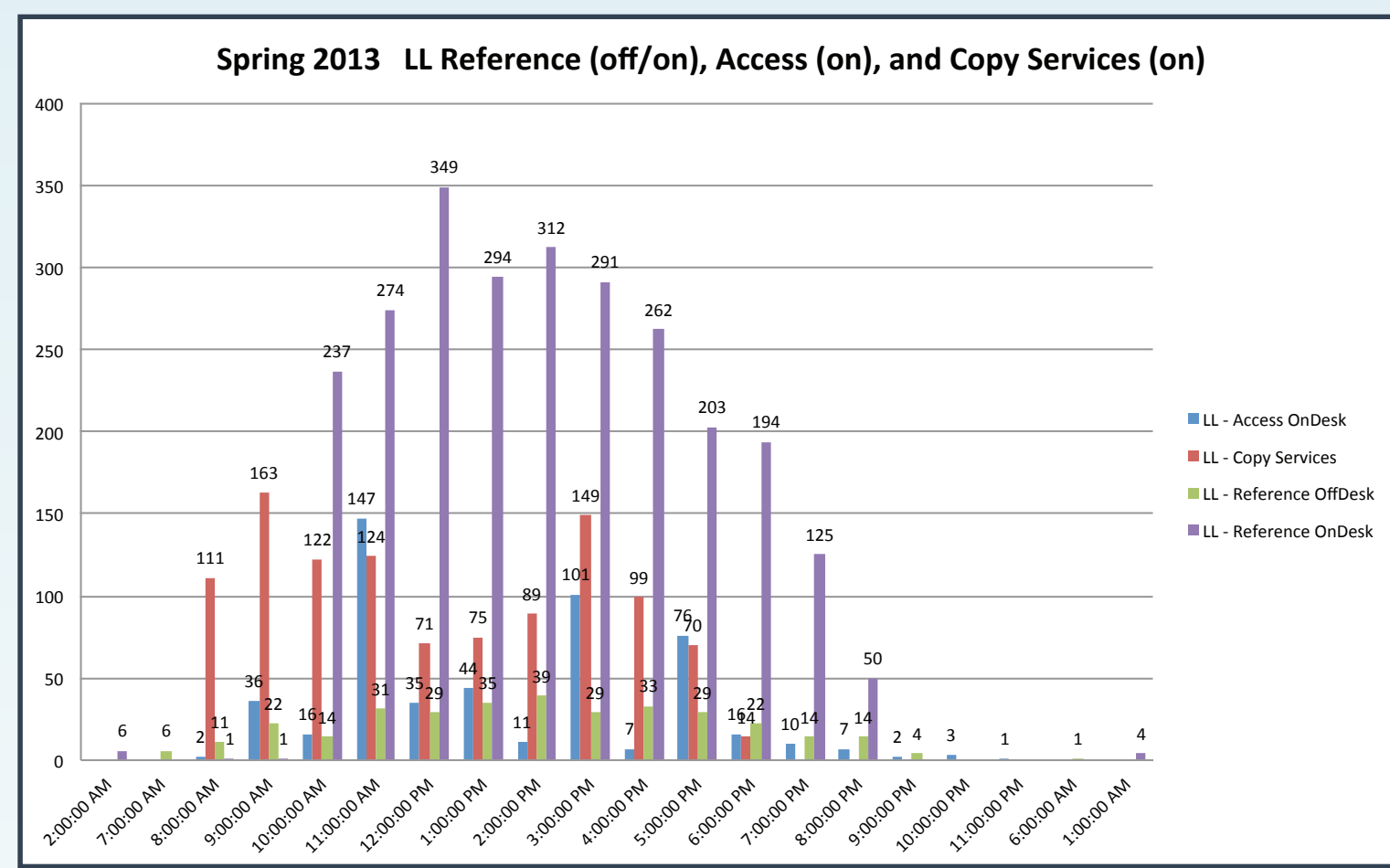
Number of Reference Questions at the Langson Library Ask Us Desk, by hour, during Spring Qtr 2013
Call out: How busy are our evening hours?

Spring 2013   ASL - On Call / Unscheduled

(Bar chart — by day of week)
Sunday 1, Monday 28, Tuesday 53, Wednesday 39, Thursday 34, Friday 39 — ASL - On Call / Unscheduled

Number of Reference Questions at the Ayala Science Library, by day of week, during Spring Qtr 2013
Note: Because the Ayala Science Library Reference desk is no longer staffed, when the Check Out desk staff get reference questions, they IM the reference staff in their offices
Call out: Spring Qtr had 55 days of instruction + finals, so the per-hour average on Mon-Fri was 3-6 questions

Spring 2013   ASL - On Call / Unscheduled

(Bar chart — by hour)
8:00:00 AM 3, 9:00:00 AM 5, 10:00:00 AM 17, 11:00:00 AM 27, 12:00:00 PM 30, 1:00:00 PM 16, 2:00:00 PM 28, 3:00:00 PM 27, 4:00:00 PM 15, 5:00:00 PM 14, 6:00:00 PM 9, 7:00:00 PM 1, 9:00:00 PM 1, 12:00:00 AM 1 — ASL - On Call / Unscheduled

Number of Reference Questions at the Ayala Science Library, by hour, during Spring Qtr 2013
Call out: Are there enough questions to warrant staffing the reference desk again in person?

Spring 2013   LL Reference (off/on), Access (on), and Copy Services (on)

(Clustered bar chart by hour)
Legend: LL - Access OnDesk; LL - Copy Services; LL - Reference OffDesk; LL - Reference OnDesk

Number of Reference Questions at the Check Out desks, Copy Services desks, and by Reference providers On and OFF the desk, by hour, during Spring Qtr 2013
Call out: After 8pm, even the non-Reference service points are getting hardly any questions.

Off Desk Time Spent (in minutes)

(Bar chart by librarian a–w)
Legend: off - ASL; off - GML; off - LL
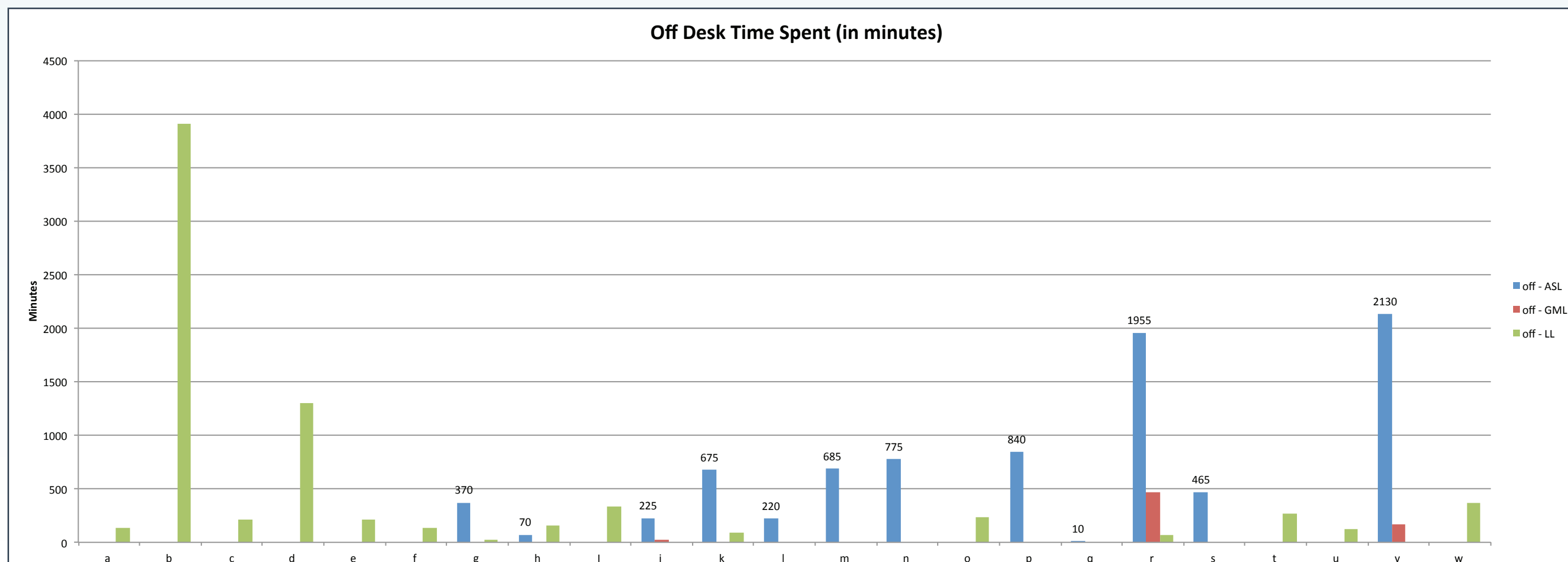
For one quarter, OFF the desk time spent by Librarian and by location