Transforming a Literature Search Service
Adapting a Reference Management System

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We modified Altarama’s RefTracker Express to improve our search quality, increase efficiency, leverage search expertise and demonstrate alignment with institutional goals.

Prior Inefficiencies

Unstructured Requesting
Ex: A client emails the library, requesting a literature search on testosterone administration. No contextualizing details are provided about the topic or requester.

Duplicate Search Requests
Ex: In March, Jackie completes a search for a client on spina bifida and learning disorders. In August, the same client contacts Peggy for an identical search.

Repetitive Search Topics
Ex: In May, a PICU nurse requests a search on best practices for central line flushing. In July, a different nurse from Hem/Onc requests a search on best practices for central line care. In August, the same client requests a search on best practices for intravenous access devices.

Decentralized Records
Ex: A client had a search completed three years ago, by a now-retired librarian, and needs an update run with the original search parameters.

Lost Opportunities

Search Statistics
Ex: The library needs metrics to plan and design a new service line to support manuscript development and publication.

Data-Informed Strategic Planning
Ex: The library has a strategic goal to initiate a liaison service for nursing. Past nurse requesters could be identified as potential resources for a needs assessment.

Library Value Communication
Ex: Manager needs to highlight department value to the new CIO, demonstrating alignment with hospital strategic goals.

Lessons Learned

RefTracker Express forms are flexible and easy to customize.

Lessons Learned
Staff training, record audits, and form revisions improve entry compliance and reporting accuracy.

Lessons Learned
Demonstrating connections to hospital strategic goals and requiring ongoing surveillance.

Next Steps
Implement a RefTracker-automated literature search survey, deployed when records are closed.

Next Steps
Use system communication capabilities to record librarian-client interactions, rather than corresponding via email.