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Planning a Strategic Lineup for the Delivery of Effective Reference Services

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Planning a Strategic Lineup for the Delivery of Effective Reference Services



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Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine trends in the provision of all forms of reference services by librarians and other staff at the library from July 2010 – June 2011.

The Taubman Library serves professional schools of medicine, public health, nursing, dentistry, pharmacy and the UM Health System; it is also open to the public.

Methods

Data was collected from:

- service management software (Footprints)
- statistical management software (Desk Tracker)

A trend analysis addressed potential correlations in the data for:

- service points
- length of reference transactions
- peak service times
- staffing levels

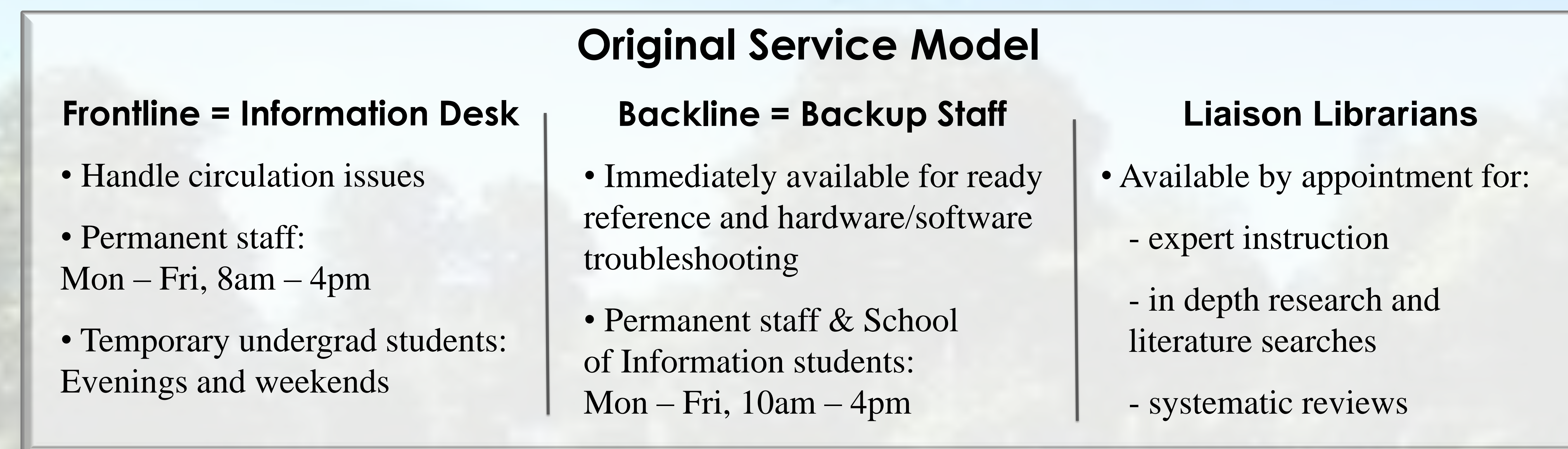
For each service point, frequency and percentage were calculated for the predefined categories of:

- question length
- reference contact type
- purpose of contact/visit

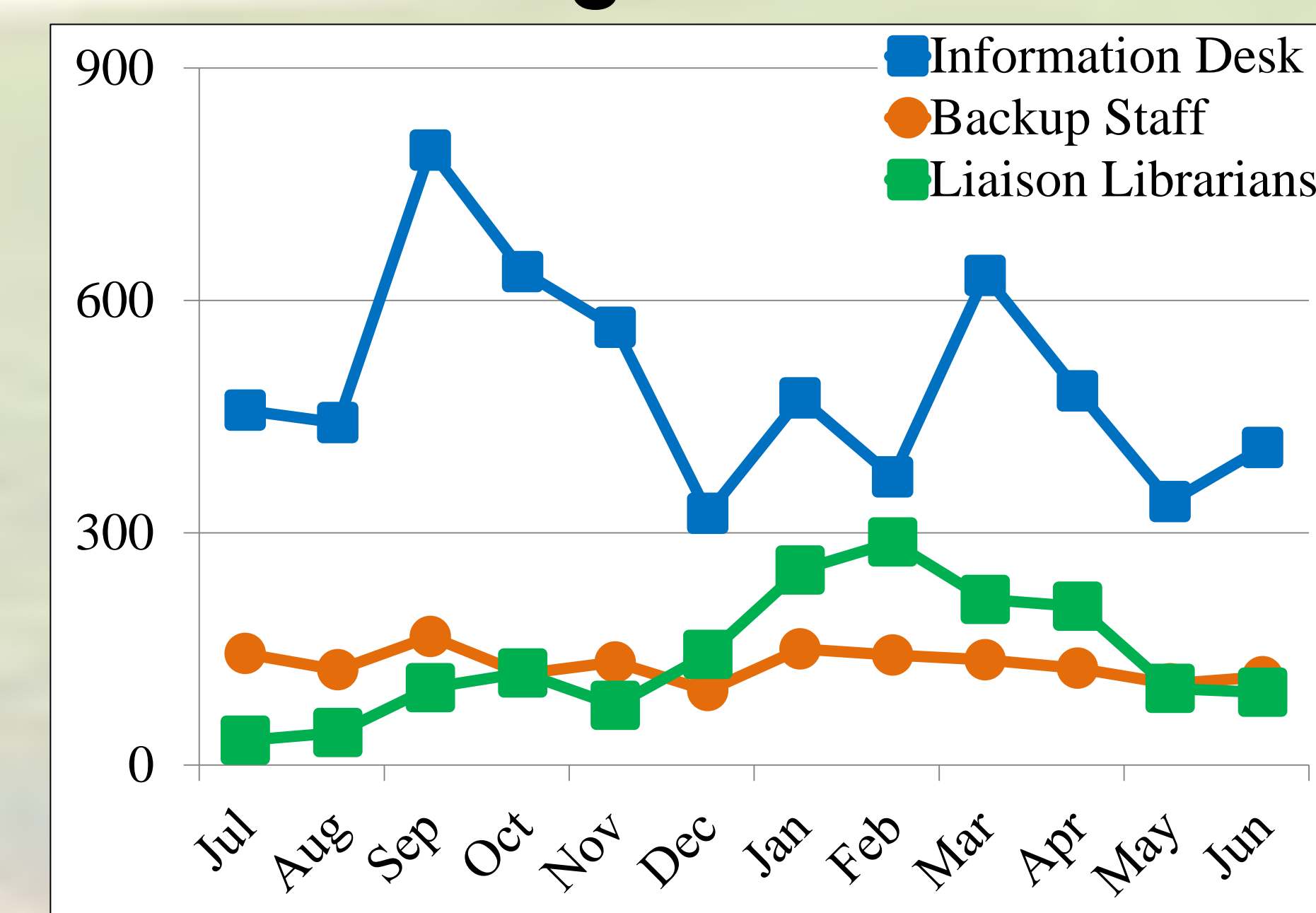
The analysis also addressed trends specific to particular service points, such as:

- frequency in number of transactions over certain periods of time.

Reference Transaction Triage

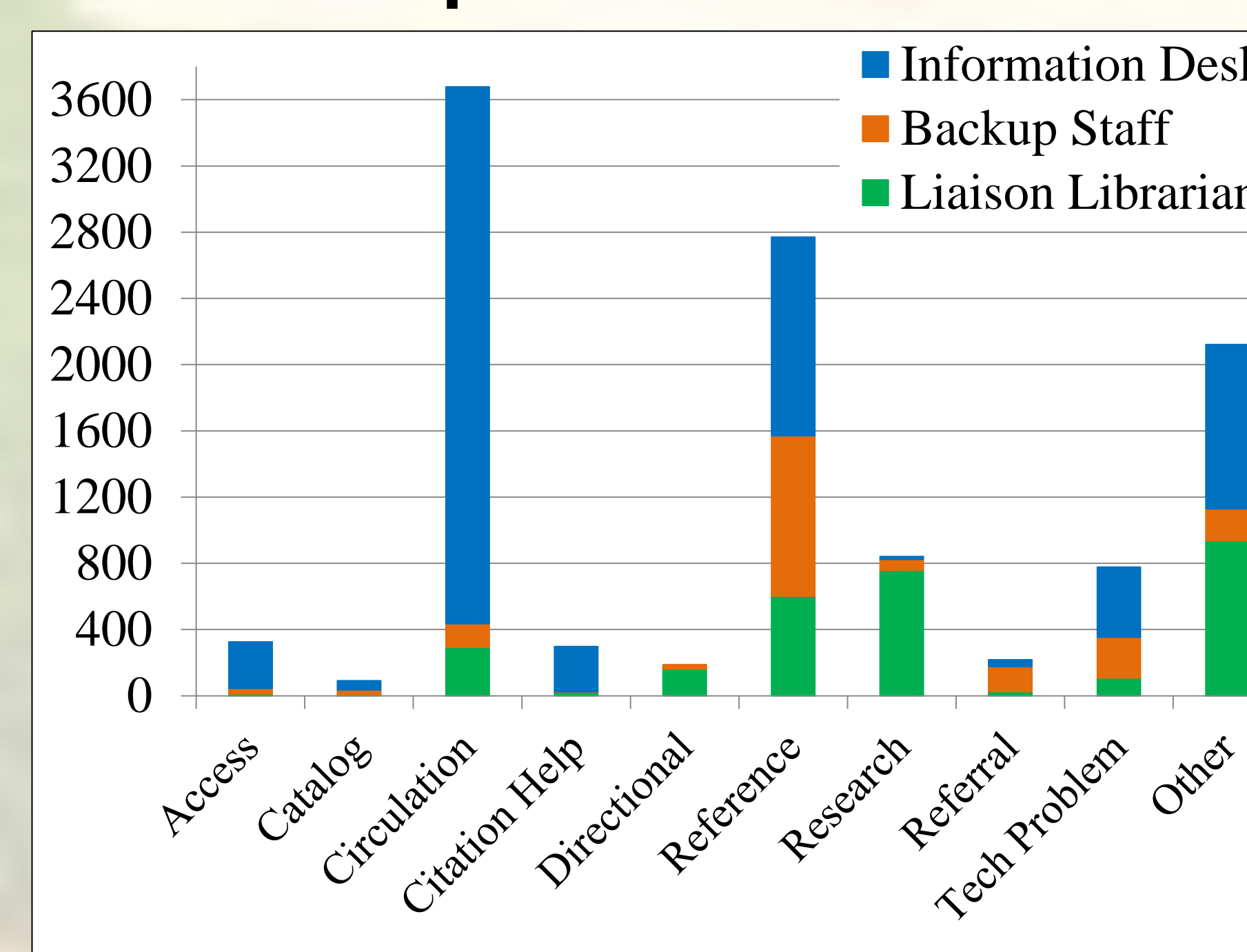


Trends in Usage of Service Points

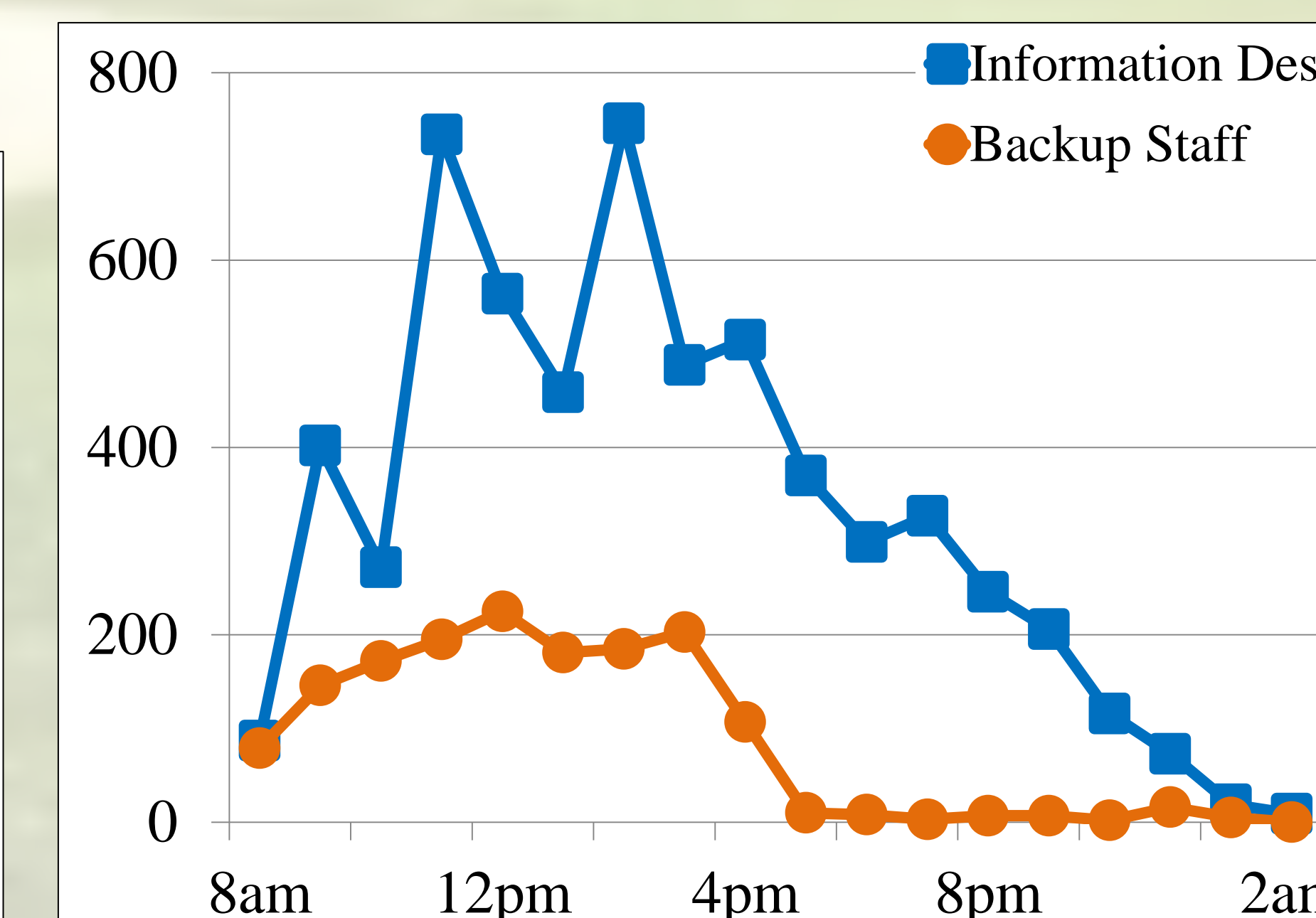


Data Collection

Purpose of Contact



Peak Service Times



Note: This data was not collected for Liaison Librarians due to reporting inconsistencies.

Data Analysis

Insufficient Data Collection

Restrictions on data collection imposed by the parent institution created a lack of detail in the data for:

- Purpose of contact
- Length of transaction

Brief = 5 min or less

Extended = more than 5 min

Has implications for staffing and tracking Liaison Librarian activity.

New Service Model

Simultaneous Uniform Single Service Point

- Reference staff at Information Desk
- Circulation backup
- Requires a higher skill set:
 - more expertise
 - greater knowledge of resources

Conclusions

Trends in usage and peak service times:

- were as expected
- supported initial changes to service points and staffing in 2011 – 2012

Changes made to data collection to provide more detail about the purpose of contact:

- supplementary data collection survey for Information Desk and Backup Staff

Currently evaluating optimal means to collect more detail about liaison activities:

- expanded systematic reviews
- clinical liaison opportunities

The study has been extended for a year to evaluate the changes made to data collection and to determine if additional staffing changes are necessary.

Acknowledgements

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For More Information

Please contact ekerby@umich.edu.

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