

# Pilot by the People:

## Trialing New Reference Service Points



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### Why a Reference Relocation Pilot?

When Humber's North Campus Library moved to its current home in 2015, the reference desk was located away from the physical collection and out of sightlines.

Observing a decline in usage, combined with concern surrounding students' experience, reference staff advocated for and initiated a low-cost project to establish a more suitable reference desk location.

### Project Outline:

#### Planning

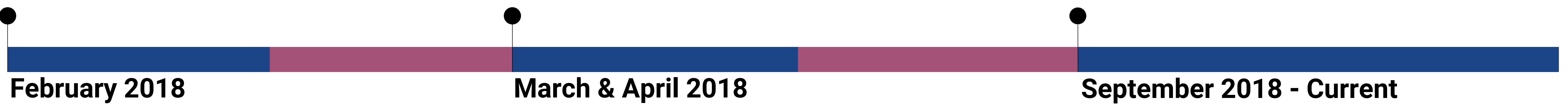
- ▶ Reference staff identify 2 pilot locations considering flow of traffic, infrastructure, accessibility
- ▶ Logistics established (connectivity, staffing, statistics tracking)

#### Phase 1: Initial Pilots

- ▶ 2-week 'pop-up' pilots offering reference services in 2 locations (4 weeks total)
- ▶ Ref. services continue at 'regular' desk throughout; stats and feedback collected

#### Phase 2: Soft Launch

- ▶ Reference relocated to successful pilot location; equipment and semi-permanent desk allocated
- ▶ Former reference desk repurposed to serve as Tech Help Desk

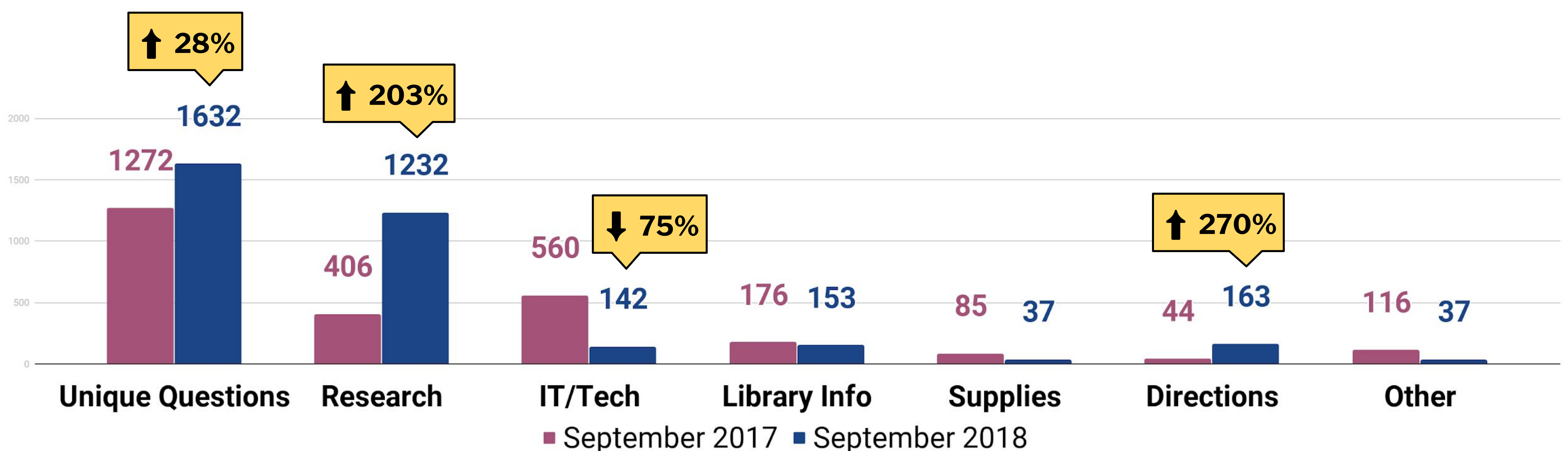


### Results

Phase 1 data showed that in the most successful pilot, students were better able to locate and make use of reference desk services.

Phase 2 statistics comparing September 2017 and 2018 show research-related questions have tripled, and visits to the desk have climbed 28%. Non-research related questions that previously occupied staff time have declined.

Situated in a prominent location near entrances, collections, and circulation, staff feel reinvigorated, energized, and better able to support students and colleagues.



**"I like how much more visible and easily accessible we are to new students."**

**Comparing to September 2017: "I feel like I am now doing reference."**

-Reference Staff Feedback

### Takeaway Thoughts

- ▶ When it comes to reference services — location, location, location!
- ▶ Experiment — low-investment pilot projects are a realistic means of 'testing the waters' and advocating for larger initiatives.
- ▶ Team-based planning lends itself to practical solutions and fosters engagement.