



Virtual Reference in Wisconsin

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History Mark

- Almost 10 years ago ...
 - It's was brand new and shiny
 - Reference service outside the department and the building
 - Cooperative possibilities
 - Coverage
 - Extended hours,
 - Route to home or for expertise
 - For the first time “really” see what happens in reference transactions

Today's Menu

- Using past PowerPoints
 - You knew there was a reason to keep them
- What we did and why we did it
- Chart changes in approach and attitude
- Results of efforts
- See some lessons learned
- Cautions for the future

- Wisconsin Consortium
- Academic and Public Library systems
- Library type coverage global
- Wisconsin type coverage up to library
- Monitoring “your own” is your type in WI
- Info galore: <http://askaway.pbwiki.com>

History

- Started in 2002
 - Stand alone in Wisconsin only
 - First QuestionPoint Consortium
- Re-invented in 2006
 - Added 24/7
 - Some LSTA money added
 - True State wide too
- Always thought we would be “trailing edge”, always ended up “bleeding edge”

QuestionPoint

- 2006, big switch and re-alignment
- OCLC system
- Includes 24/7 Reference Cooperative membership
- Original system proprietary web based chat and web form/email
- Full transcript, response, follow up and routing control

Consortium

- Multi-type from the get go
 - 2 Queues, 1 BME
 - Always asked, always affirmed
 - They like working together
- Always ran integrated email/web form and chat
 - Shared Follow up, Referrals and Quality control

Marketing

- AskAway Day
 - Press Releases
 - Local News, interview prominent folks
 - Give Aways
- Links Everywhere
- Sell to Librarians
- YouTube video contest

Best Practices Webinars

- Monthly hour+ sessions, shared between WI, IL and now MN
- Topics have included YA's, Links, Problem Patrons, Online Resources, Making referrals, Shared Follow up, etc.
- Recordings now available for a year
 - Posted a couple of hours post session
 - <https://www.livemeeting.com/cc/wislineweb/view>
 - Don't have to register for webinar to view

➤ AskAway wikis

➤ Wisconsin

➤ <http://askaway.pbwiki.com>

➤ Constant updates, members add, edit and proof

➤ Illinois

➤ <http://askawayillinois.wetpaint.com/>

➤ QuestionPoint

➤ <http://wiki.questionpoint.org/>

➤ Contract librarians online reference resources

➤ Enquire information

Wiki Content

- Admin Information
- How to's
- Marketing resources
- Meeting support
- Best Practices

Growth

- 2007, no spam blocking, started 2008
- Chats to web form % = 50-50% in 2006, 66-33% in 2011

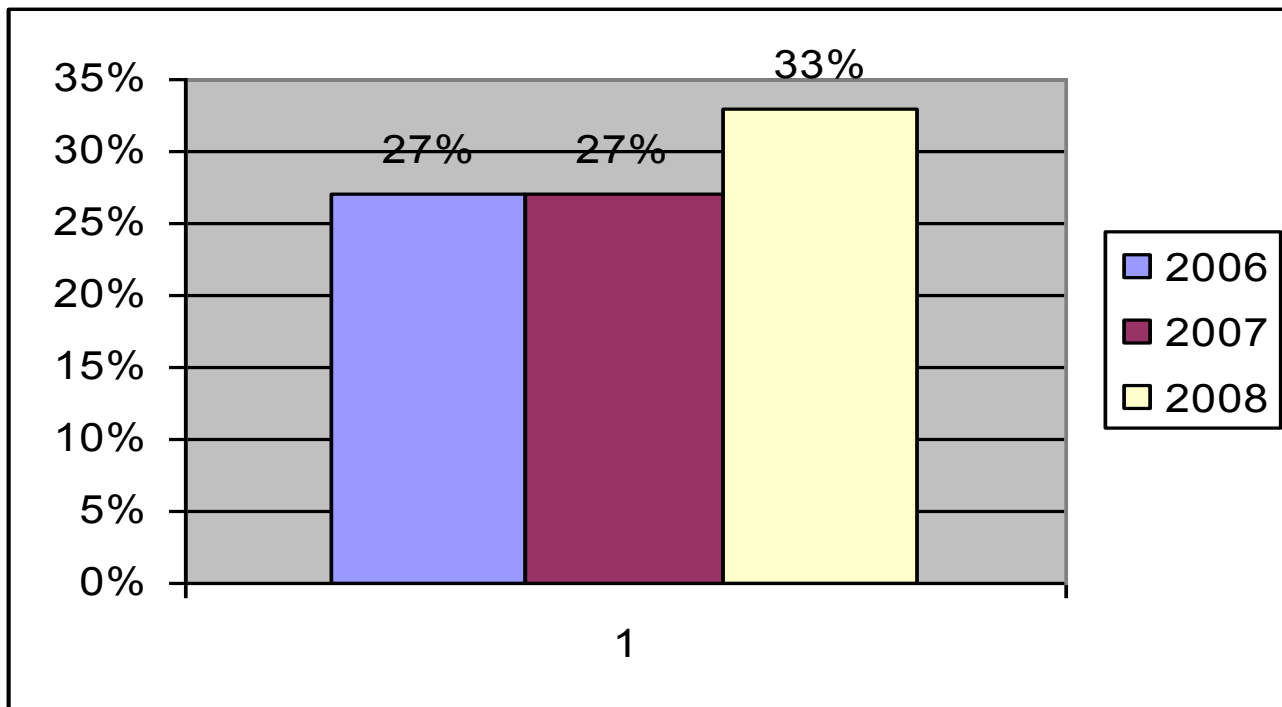
| Year | Total Requests |
|------|----------------|
| 2011 | 18,500 |
| 2010 | 18,000 |
| 2009 | 19,000 |
| 2008 | 23,000 |
| 2007 | 26,000 |
| 2006 | 14,000 |
| 2005 | 4,000 |
| 2004 | 7,000 |
| 2003 | 6,400 |

Why QuestionPoint and 24/7

- Full service and full coverage for our patrons
- A key to creating “digital branch” libraries
- Quality control
- Integration of chat, email/webforms and now the qwidget
- Integration of reply conversations, subject experts and shared follow-up

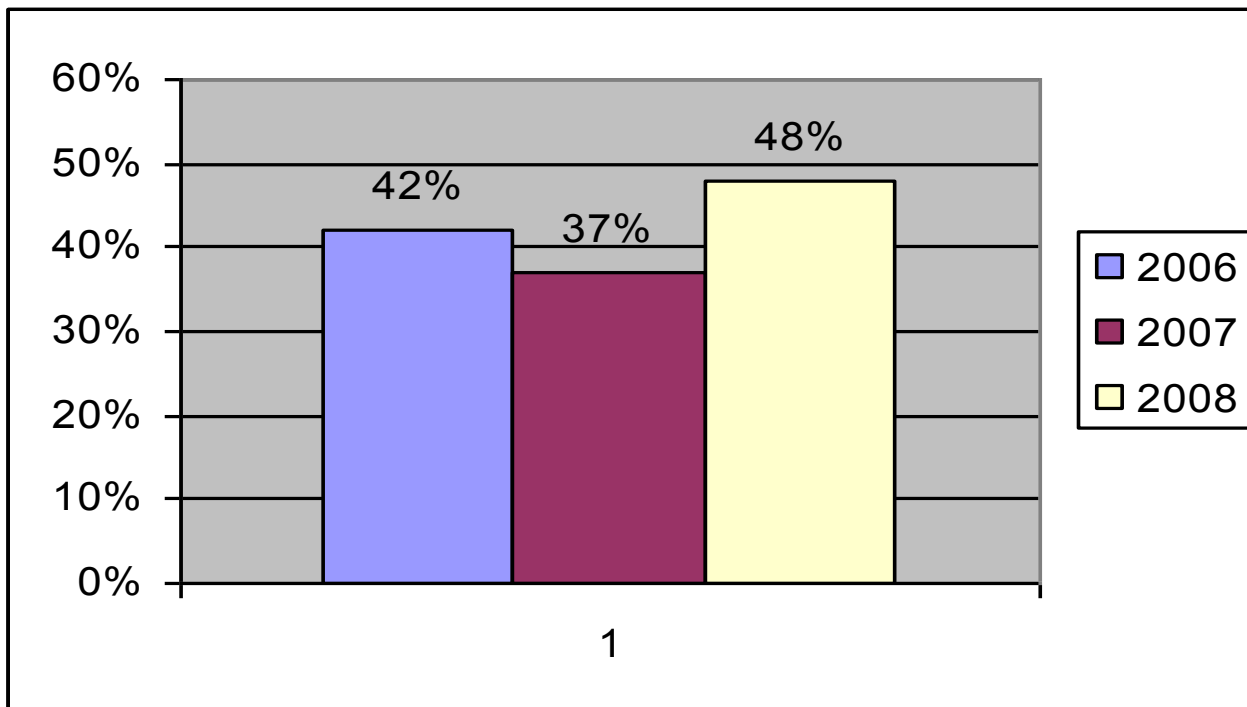
Importance of 24/7 coverage

- Percentages of AskAway patron questions asked before 9am and after 9pm, standard library hours



Importance of 24/7 coverage

- Percentages of AskAway patron questions asked before 9am and after 6pm, typical small library hours



Our Portal at www.askaway.info



Have a question? Need an answer?

Librarians from around the country are available whenever you need information -- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.



Our free service will connect you to an experienced librarian who has the knowledge and tools to find the information you need.

This service is brought to you by the AskAway Consortium, which is comprised of participating libraries & library systems, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and WiLS. This service is staffed by librarians around the country. For local questions, you may get a faster response by contacting your local library. See the [Wisconsin Library Directory](#) for links to libraries' web pages.

[Flash Demonstration of AskAway](#)

If you use a library at a college, university or tech school...

Get the best answers to your questions by choosing your school:

- [Carthage College](#)
- [Chippewa Valley Technical College](#)
- [Edgewood College](#)
- [Fox Valley Technical College](#)
- [Gateway Technical College](#)
- [Madison Area Technical College](#)
- [Moraine Park Technical College](#)
- [Northeast Wisconsin Technical College](#)
- [St. Norbert College](#)
- [UW Madison](#)
- [UW Milwaukee](#)
- [UW Oshkosh](#)
- [UW Whitewater](#)
- [Viterbo University](#)
- [Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College](#)
- [WISPALS or other technical college](#)
- [My academic institution isn't listed...](#)

If you use a public or school library...

To get the best answers to your questions, enter your zip code:

Or choose your county from this dropdown menu:

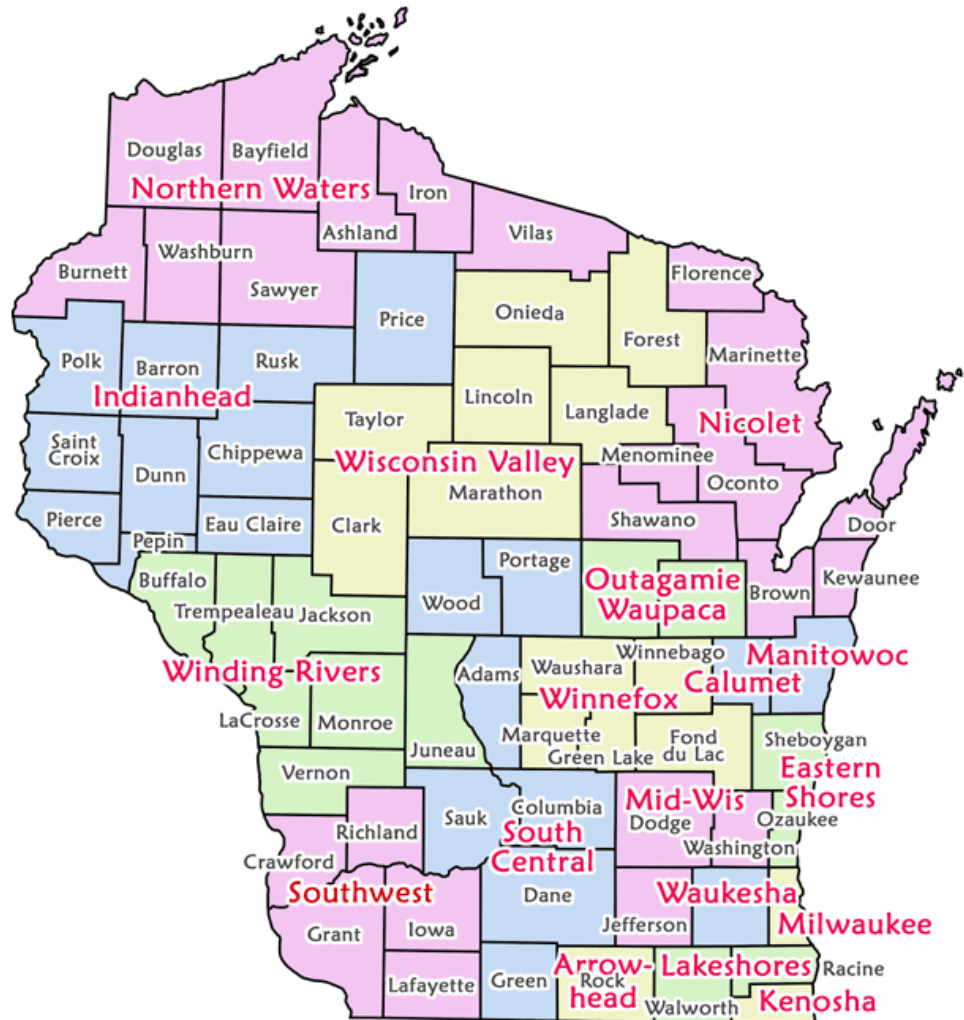
Or click on your county on the map below.



Or if you live in Illinois use the [Ask?Away Illinois](#) service

Our Map

Clickable to go to
a specific library
QuestionPoint
entry page



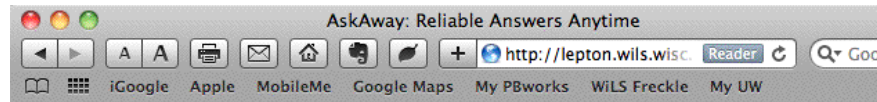
Adding Schools

- Started as a trial, with 4 high schools
- Worked with the schools and their associated public libraries for coverage and training
- Success, being used and endorsed by school librarians and teachers
- Continued slow growth, a couple more high schools and continued to add more
- Requires figuring who covers those critical hours of about 4-6pm, immediately afterschool

Ongoing Issues, 2009

- Economic stress will create tight budgets for at least another 2 years
- Each library contributes some monies and librarian coverage, both have direct costs to each library
- Can we continue to deliver value for each library
- Growth in patron usage depends on marketing which depends on librarian endorsement
 - Continuing growth a primary indicator of value in financially stressed times.

Adding Social Links



**Have a question?
Need an answer?**

Welcome to AskAway!

Librarians from all over the United States are available whenever you need information -- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Our free service will connect you to an experienced librarian who has the knowledge and tools to find the information you need.

The librarian you'll chat with may be from another library but they will be able to help you with resources at your library. They can also forward your question to your local library as needed. If you need help from your local librarian right away, you might be best served to visit or call to them; find your library's phone number and address at the [Wisconsin Library Directory](#).

Follow Us



How the service works.

Step 1: Submit your question using the form on the right side of this screen.

Step 2: Wait a little bit. A librarian will be with you shortly and will send you a message.

Step 3: Work with the librarian. The librarian will chat with you and send you web pages that they think will help answer your question.

Step 4: Use the information. After your session, a complete transcript will be displayed in your browser with all the links you visited with the librarian. If you provided your email address, the transcript will be emailed to you immediately.

MySpace Page

The screenshot shows a MySpace profile page for a user named AskAway. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Browse People, Find Friends, Music, Video, Games, Events, More, Log In, and Sign Up. A search bar is located on the right side of the navigation bar, with a 'Search' button and a 'People' dropdown menu. The profile header includes the user's name 'AskAway', a profile picture, and basic information: Female, 38 years old, MADISON, WISCONSIN, United States. Below the header, there are several sections: 'AskAway is in your extended network' with a 'view more' link; 'AskAway's Latest Blog Entry' with a 'Subscribe to this Blog' link and a 'View All Blog Entries' link; 'Contacting AskAway' with a list of actions: Send Message, Forward to Friend, Add to Friends, Add to Favorites, IM / Call, Block User, Add to Group, and Rank User; 'Myspace URL: www.myspace.com/askawaywisconsin'; and 'AskAway's Blurbs' with an 'About me' section and a link to the 'AskAway web site'. The 'About me' section states: 'I'm 100's of librarians in Wisconsin, combined with 12,000 librarians in the world, waiting to answer your questions, anytime, anyplace about anything.'

Ads by Google

POWERED BY Google

Home Browse People Find Friends Music Video Games Events More Log In Sign Up

AskAway

Female
38 years old
MADISON,
WISCONSIN
United States

AskAway
Reliable answers...anytime
A virtual reference service

View My: [Pics](#)

Contacting AskAway

- Send Message
- Forward to Friend
- Add to Friends
- Add to Favorites
- IM / Call
- Block User
- Add to Group
- Rank User

Myspace URL:
www.myspace.com/askawaywisconsin

AskAway is in your extended network
[view more](#)

AskAway's Latest Blog Entry [[Subscribe to this Blog](#)]

[[View All Blog Entries](#)]

AskAway's Blurbs

About me:
I'm 100's of librarians in Wisconsin, combined with 12,000 librarians in the world, waiting to answer your questions, anytime, anyplace about anything.

Jump into my world at the: [AskAway web site](#)

AskAway: All About It

Facebook Page

The screenshot shows a Facebook page for 'AskAway'. The top navigation bar includes the Facebook logo, a search bar, and notification icons. The page header features the 'AskAway' logo and a navigation menu with options: Wall, Info, ** Chat Now **, Video, Photos, Links, and a plus sign for more options. A post by AskAway is visible, starting with 'What's on your mind?' and including an 'Attach' section with icons for photos, documents, calendar, and video. Below the post is a 'Share' button and an 'Options' link. The main content area contains two posts, each starting with 'Ask' and 'AskAway'. The first post describes the annual Wisconsin Library Association conference. The second post is a feedback post from October 27 at 1:32pm. The left sidebar contains page management tools like 'Edit Page', 'Promote with an Ad', and 'Suggest to Friends', along with a text box about using AskAway for live librarian chat. Below that is an 'Information' section with location (Wisconsin) and hours (12:00 am - 11:59 pm). At the bottom of the sidebar is an 'Insights' section showing 73 Monthly Active Users, 0 Daily New Likes, and 0 Daily Post Views.

facebook Search

Ask? Away

Edit Page

Promote with an Ad

Suggest to Friends

Forget ChaCha and Yahoo Answers! Use AskAway and chat with a live librarian. Get reliable information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Information

Location:
Wisconsin

Mon - Sun:
12:00 am - 11:59 pm

Insights [See All](#)

73 Monthly Active Users

- 0 Daily New Likes
- 0 Daily Post Views

AskAway The annual Wisconsin Library Association conference is in full swing. I conference on Thursday, stop by the Guava room at 4:00 pm for a panel discussion reference. The panel includes librarians from public, system, academic and state a great discussion about virtual reference in all its forms. 11 minutes ago [clear](#)

Wall Info **** Chat Now **** Video Photos Links >> +

What's on your mind?

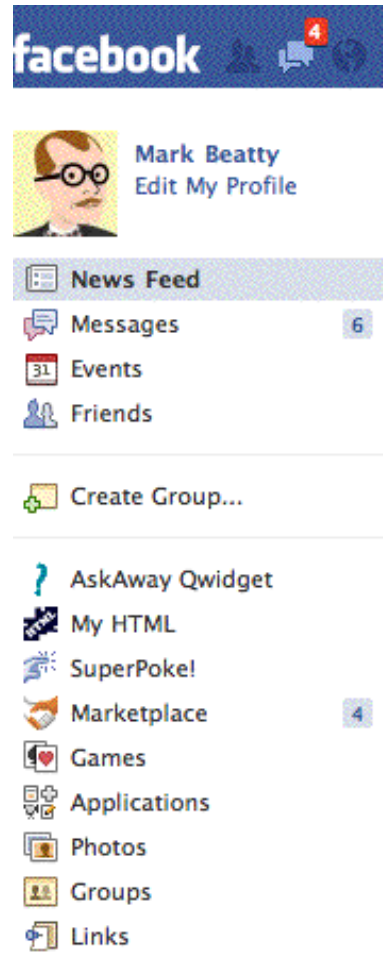
Attach: [Share](#)

[Options](#)

Ask **AskAway** The annual Wisconsin Library Association conference is in full swing. If you're going to be at the conference on Thursday, stop by the Guava room at 4:00 pm for a panel discussion about email, chat and IM reference. The panel includes librarians from public, system, academic and state agency libraris. It's sure to b...
[See More](#)
11 minutes ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Promote](#)

Ask **AskAway** Today's feedback:
"Sometimes I'm feeling a little lazy or it's 10:30 at night and I've got a pressing reference question that I can't figure out on my own and I don't feel like leaving my apartment. I just want to have this great easy access from home, and it's just so easy to pop on sitting in front of my television c...
[See More](#)
October 27 at 1:32pm · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Promote](#)

Facebook Link



QP's Widget maker

Qwidget Configuration

| | |
|---|--|
| Qwidget Language: | English |
| Qwidget Name: | AskAway Wisconsin |
| Offline Message: (English) | The AskAway Wisconsin librarians are off duty, to have your question |
| Customize "librarian is typing" (recommended not to exceed 25 characters): Default:librarian is typing | |
| Qwidget Size: | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Small (160 x 250 px) <input type="radio"/> Regular (190 x 275 px) <input type="radio"/> Fill (100%) |
| Qwidget Color: | <input checked="" type="radio"/> Blue <input type="radio"/> Black <input type="radio"/> Gray <input type="radio"/> Red <input type="radio"/> Green <input type="radio"/> Mint <input type="radio"/> Popsicle |
| Email Option: | <input type="radio"/> Do not Offer Email Service when Chat is not available <input checked="" type="radio"/> Offer Email Service when Chat is not available |
| Mask patron IP addresses: | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes |
| Require Email for Qwidget Chat: | <input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes |
| Required Email Prompt: | Please enter your email address to start a chat session |
| Nudge patron to enter email address: | <input checked="" type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> Yes |

AskAway Wisconsin

The AskAway Wisconsin librarians are off duty, to have your question answered by a 24/7 Reference librarian, click here to start: **Chat now**

Enter your email address

Your Question/Message

Code

```
<!-- if using qwidget size "fi
<!-- Beginning of QuestionPoi
<div id="qchatwidget" ></div>
<script id="qp.bootstrap" type=
```

Step 1: Click "Submit" to set o
Step 2: Copy the updated widg
your website.

Please see [advanced Qwidget](#) t
more information on customizi

WordPress Widget

AskAway Now!



AskAway Qwidget

AskAway Wisconsin

The AskAway Wisconsin librarians are off duty, to have your question answered by a 24/7 Reference librarian, click here to start: [Chat now](#)

Enter your email address

Your Question/Message

Send

Events Page

Events Page

Facebook Widget



AskAway Wisconsin

The AskAway Wisconsin librarians are off duty, to have your question answered by a 24/7 Reference librarian, click here to start: [Chat now](#)

Enter your email address

Your Question/Message
Please enter your email

Send

Facebook Widget



| AskAway Wisconsin |
|---|
| <input type="text"/> |
| <p>Your Question/Message</p> <p>Please enter your email address to start a chat session</p> |
| <input type="button" value="Send"/> |
| <input type="text"/> |
| Chat Available |

Widget in Library Guides

Welcome to LibGuides

Need help with research? You've come to the right place.

Browse All 133 Guides | Search: All Guides

Browse by Subject

You can also browse by [Librarian](#)


- Architecture & Construction
- Arts & Multimedia
- Automotive & Transportation
- Business
- Citation and Research Tools
- Education
- Engineering & Manufacturing
- Environment & Energy
- Faculty Library Services
- General Studies
- Health Sciences
- Information Technology
- Law & Public Safety
- Library Help

Featured Guides | Popular Guides | Recent Guides


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- Current, Controversial Topics: A Research Guide**
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by Kim LaPlante - last updated on Aug 19th, 2010
- Common Questions about the Computer Lab**
by Kim LaPlante - last updated on Aug 9th, 2010
- Introduction to the Marinette Library**
by Theresa Radandt - last updated on Jul 19th, 2010
- Introduction to the Sturgeon Bay Library**
by Mary Gracyalny - last updated on Jul 19th, 2010
- Online Videos - Finding and Using Them**
by Kim LaPlante - last updated on Sep 15th, 2010
- Faculty Services/Policies at the NWTC Library**
by Kim A. LaPlante - last updated on Mar 11th, 2010

Need help? Click to hear.



Featured Librarian



NWTC Library Staff

Ask A Librarian

Click to start a chat session with our 24/7 Reference Librarians (Chat Now!)
Or email your question to us below.

Enter your email address

Your Question/Message

Popular Tags [\(view all tags\)](#)

📁 Explore our guides by tags.

Reference Services Menu Page

Oshkosh Public Library
"Connecting People With Information"

Library Hours:
Mon. - Thurs. 9 am - 9 pm
Friday 9 am - 6 pm
Saturday 9 am - 5 pm
Sunday 1 pm - 5 pm

Local History Research OurSpace KidSpace Readers' Connect Community

Quick Search Catalog Website

AskAway ~ Ask a Librarian a Question



Answers to your questions...

By Chat

Get [live help](#) Need help? A librarian is standing by to assist you now. Librarians are available to help you 24 hours a day, even when our library is closed.



By E-mail

Send us an [email message](#) E-mail us any time and we'll respond as soon as possible.



By Phone

Call our library at 920-236-5205 during **library hours**.




In Person

Stop in at our library at 106 Washington Avenue during **library hours**. Here's a [map](#) showing our location.



If you'd like to suggest the library purchase an item, please use our [Recommendation for Purchase Form](#) instead.

AskAway Links in OPAC

 *Winnepox Library System*

QUIT | Start Over | Your Account | HELP

times search word(s) appears Can't find what you're looking for? [Ask?Away](#) **Title: saturday** [Previous](#) | [Next](#)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="text" value="saturday"/> <input type="button" value="FIND"/> | 12 | Saturday |
| <p>Search by:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Author</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Title</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Subject</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Keyword</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Keyword in Author</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Keyword in Title</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Keyword in Subject</p> <p>Limit by:</p> <p>Library <input type="button" value="v"/></p> | 2 | Saturday afternoon |
| | 1 | Saturday at The New You / |
| | 2 | Saturday big tent wedding party |
| | 1 | Saturday blues |
| | 1 | The Saturday boy |
| | 1 | Saturday come slow |
| | 1 | The Saturday escape / |
| | 11 | The Saturday evening post. |
| | 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1988 |
| | 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1989 |
| | 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1990 |
| | 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1991 |
| | 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1992 |
| | 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1993 |
| 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1994 | |
| 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1995 | |
| 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1996 | |
| 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1997 | |
| 1 | The Saturday evening post. 1998 | |

Title: saturday [Previous](#) | [Next](#)

Start Over | Previous | Next | Your Account | HELP | QUIT

Seeking Synchronicity

Revelations and Recommendations for Virtual Reference

- Lynn Silipigni Connaway and Marie Radford
 - <http://www.oclc.org/reports/synchronicity/default.htm>
- OCLC and others funded, June 2011
 - R in VR needs to change to “Relationships”
 - Users want Convenience
 - Marketing Matters

Seeking Synchronicity

Revelations and Recommendations for Virtual Reference

- Users don't know about VR services
- When they use, people want Convenience
- Query clarification enhances accuracy and satisfaction
- Positive experiences depend on accurate and quick answers from a personable, friendly librarian
- Users negatives from no answer or source
- Librarians negatives from user behavior

Seeking Synchronicity

Revelations and Recommendations for Virtual Reference

- Users don't mind scripts, unless over used
- Users prefer face-to-face, but: VR is the least intimidating and distantly convenient
- Instruction during VR can be effective to receptive users, but ask first, don't force.
- Young stay away from VR because they were taught "stay away from strangers on the internet"

Seeking Synchronicity

Revelations and Recommendations for Virtual Reference

- Market, promote and demo
- Mobile
- Join, start, a cooperative
- Be everywhere, widgets galore
- Multi-ask, intake questions every possible way
- ABC: “Always Be Courteous”

Surveys

- The results
 - Jump to PDFs
- Evaluating old QP set up
- Pricing options
- Deciding on new system

Attitude and Approach, now

- Trying to plan for the future of WI VR, and meet your patrons needs
- Not forcing anyone, looking for solutions
- Can WiLS help move AskAway towards a new VR service that works for you and others, perhaps everyone.
- Using LibraryH3lp will change our approaches

Library H3lp

- The winner
- Cost and flexibility
- Check out the Video
 - <http://screencast.com/t/ZB9isCp3PGd>

Costs

- \$250 a year – minimum
- \$350 a year – maximum
- That's per library entity
- An entity is a library or group of libraries that would act as one for virtual reference: have one administrator, one queue, one staffing schedule for hours, etc.

Start Up

- AskAway.
 - New name possible later to fit marketing needs.

- WiLS will
 - create the group
 - negotiate with LibraryH3lp
 - bill members
 - administer initial service setups and patron interfaces
 - train library administrators
 - establish a training system for virtual reference librarians.

Continuing

- WiLS will work with the consortium members to establish a self governed and - as much as practical - a self-run group framework to continue AskAway.
- WiLS would continue to be the central point for the consortium functions.

New Approaches

- New Service = New Ideas = New Possibilities
 - A holistic to patron reference service
- Examples:
 - Widget based, easier to cover more time in background, as reasonable for local situations of course
 - Coverage expands naturally to meet patrons at demand, similar to desk times and open hours
 - Someday expanded hours through contracts, or interns, or library students
 - Someday expanded agreements with other consortium, such as NC
 - Text message service

Essential Questions

- Requires serious soul searching about what your library believes your reference service should be delivering
- Problems and solutions are not rooted in technology, it's the social interactions that either create or solve them.
- “it's not the tech, it's the social problems”

Planning Questions

- Is the reference really busy constantly?
 - Circ desks gave away to patron self-check
- What does your library think is it's role in:
 - Curricular support
 - Research support
 - Life skills support

Planning Questions

- What does library think is the role of reference?
- Is it important for you library to be where your patrons are?
- Is point of need service a priority?