



Ask a Librarian DE Report

September 15, 2011

Highlights for Summer (June, July, August) 2011

Usage

- Steady and consistent increase over last year's chat sessions requested.
 - June 2010 = 178 June 2011 = 212
 - July 2010 = 143 July 2011 = 192
 - Aug 2010 = 174 Aug 2011 = 260
 - (note that September 2010 use was 350)
- Thanks to all the library webmasters around the state! This summer saw changes to library web sites to include the Ask a Librarian Delaware logo and specific links to each providing library's chat form.

Since July, we are seeing that patrons are beginning to use their library's site to access the service. Prior to linking to specific chat forms through libraries' sites, which connects patrons directly to their 'home' library, all questions were funneled to the Delaware Division of Library's account. Outside of DDL, the highest use was in August through New Castle County's site, with 25 chat sessions requested. Others seen are Del Tech, Sussex County Dept. of Libraries, Lewes, and Dover. Now that chat forms are directly linked on library web sites, follow ups and library policies are easily accessed, too.

- Total number of chat sessions requested for 2011 to date (Jan-Aug) = 1,645.

Staffing and Training

- We now have 23 hours covered per week. The schedule is primarily during the busiest times.
- Next training is scheduled for Thursday, September 29 at the Seaford Library. Pre-class training began 9/14/11. New providers from Delmar and Wilmington University will be joining.
- New Castle County Adult Services librarians have scheduled a presentation and meeting with Ask a Librarian Delaware for Tuesday, September 20, at the W
- Woodlawn Branch Library. Staffing and training will be determined after this meeting.

Staff Support Site

- DDL has provided online web presence for the Ask a Librarian Delaware service as well as an online, central location for all providers. This staff support site will contain information about:
 - Delaware's Ask a Librarian service, including how it is organized

- Training
- Scheduling
- Contact and support information
- Quality tips and procedures
- Marketing to the public and schools
- I'd also like to use this space for
 - collaborative work, especially among the group's liaisons
 - Ways to offer information for teachers, such as how to use the service as part of a class assignment
- The site is created and I'm putting in content now. We'll begin using it by October 1st. No login will be required. The URL will be sent out to providers later this month for their input.

QuestionPoint updates

OCLC/QuestionPoint/WorldCat have made their first move to mesh services through the WorldCat registry and in QP's policy pages. We now have a Maps feature, an ebook area, and instructions for policy page edits/information are listed.

If a library is registered with WorldCat and updates their information there, certain fields in the policy pages will also update. Many academic libraries have a WorldCat registry, but many public libraries do not. However, if you are a provider of the Ask a Librarian Delaware service, you can become a member for no charge. If interested, please let me know.

Liaisons

Each participating library will have a representative, called a Liaison, who will take on some administrative duties, including quality reviews and follow ups for their library, closing questions, reports, accounts for their library, keeping policy pages up to date, marketing and more. If only one person provides service for their library, they are automatically appointed this position. Otherwise it is up to the library's administration and team to select a liaison, and perhaps a back-up liaison. These representatives will have a direct effect on shaping the service.

The first liaison meeting will be the end of October or beginning of November. A Doodle scheduler was sent out and most libraries have responded, but I'm waiting a few more days for more responses.

The location will probably be at DDL, in the training room. This first meeting will include training on these administrative duties as well as meeting about ways to best meet each library's needs.

Meetings will be quarterly, with locations to be varied (hosted by libraries around the state); yet this will be determined by the liaisons as well.

Marketing idea from Enquire (UK)

The 247 Cooperative service, of which Ask a Librarian DE is a participant through QuestionPoint, includes the UK's service, called Enquire. They shared some ideas for how they used the chat service outside the regular question-answering process.

One idea was to include the chat service as a way for participation during a regular program, such as an author program. They created a separate queue and during the author's program (which was broadcast), remote listeners could log on and ask a question. Librarians staff the service on this separate queue to field the questions to the author, and relayed the responses back to the patrons.

Patron surveys and comments

We received 26 surveys in June, 25 in July, and 34 in August. Here are some top comments:

"It was great, I got an answer very quick and helped me a lot. Excellent!"

-from a K-12 student

"This is a valuable and resource, that should remain free to all library patrons and non-patrons. The response I required was answered quickly and respectfully.

Thank you. "

-Customer's mother lives in Delaware and wanted to know if she could get a library card

"the chat was very helpful and fast."

- Patron needed account and PIN help

"This service saves everyone a lot of time, and is always worthwhile. Thank you, again."

-Customer wondered if we would be ordering Michael Savage's novel, 'Absence of Justice'

"Excellent service. Excelent staff. Excelent response."

-Patron was seeking help about how to search for a series on the catalog

"Very helpful and specific information provided. Good service. Probably saved me a lot of time, phone calls, and searching the internet."

-DTCC student looking for a way to find out about how to volunteer to meet education requirement

"it was frustrating using the website to try to log in to my account.. i never knew i had a password... but i guess i did... the chat person michelle was great and found my password so we would renew our books easily... the chat part was wonderful... i talk on the phone and avoid it as much as possible at home.. i love chat!"

-Customer needing help with logging on and placing holds from home

"they were quick to respond even at the early hour of the day."

-Student needed to find a specific DVD for school assignment