

# Carrying the Torch for Users in an On-Demand World: Premier Reference Service for our users

GOLD/Gallileo

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Susan McGlamery

24/7 Reference Director

[susan@247ref.org](mailto:susan@247ref.org)

877/247-7331



# Cooperatives Work!

- Resource sharing networks
- OCLC shared cataloging
- Shared databases
- Consortial purchases
- Training and other programs
- Reference Referral and 2<sup>nd</sup> level reference

Strength in Numbers: Accomplish  
together what you couldn't do alone

# Library Users?

- Self-sufficient
- Convenience
- Seamless interfaces

# Popular information tools

- Google: over 250 m searches/day
  - Simple interface
  - Search engine does all the work
- Amazon
  - Readers' Advisory + Catalog
  - "Search Inside"
- The Library?

# Why Virtual Reference?

Go where the users are, on the Web

Redefine and reassert the role of librarians and libraries in the Internet age

# Virtues of Virtual Cooperatives

- Expanded coverage  
(even to 24/7)
- Seamless access to subject specialists
- The “killer app” for libraries
- Sharing = Cost savings

# There's no desk

Librarians monitor queues, they don't staff a desk

## Coverage:

- A few librarians can staff many libraries
- More efficient use of librarians' time
- Bunny slipper librarians (more staffing options)

## Network:

- Tap into subject expertise worldwide
- Access to subject experts/language beyond what individual library can offer

# Cooperative VR Benefits

- Expanded hours = increased usage
- Shared publicity, branding
- Shared training, Best Practices
- Networking, collegiality
- For just a few hours a week of existing staff time, increase service exponentially
- Size doesn't matter

# Case Study: 24/7 Reference

- 2 24 hour cooperatives: 1 public and 1 academic
- Subject experts
- Each library agrees to:
  - Submit a policy page, included in the library policies database
  - Cover a specified number of hours per week for the group
  - Review session transcripts for quality control
  - Assist with Follow Up

# 24/7 Reference provides:

- Network for academic and public libraries
  - Scheduling
  - Matchmaking for special libraries
- Technical support with software
- Back-up after-hours staff for 24 hour coverage
- Quality Control process
- Resources
  - Databases
  - Training

# What's in it for the community?

- Assistance from trained reference librarians, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Available from the web: patrons can be at school, at home, or anywhere there is web access
- Access to subject expert/language referral network
- Guided assistance to quality information resources, such as databases, not found via usual search engines

# What's in it for Librarians?

- For minimal time commitment per week, provide 24 hour service to community
- Use “co-browsing” to instruct patrons how to use library resources
- Access the “Meeting Room” feature for distance learning
- Expand reference skills of online librarians
- Collegial/networking opportunity
- Shared publicity: power of a brand
- Best practices: reference, resources, web design

# It's All Reference...

Los Angeles Public Library - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites Media

Address <http://www.asknow.org/portal.cfm?lib=LAPL> Go Links

Google odc Search Web AutoFill Options odc

**ASK NOW**

When you click the "start now" button you may receive assistance from a librarian from any of our participating libraries in California or other libraries throughout the US. This makes it possible for us to offer you assistance **24 hours a day 7 days a week.**

**start now**

- Browser Requirements
- Privacy Policy
- About AskNow

For information about your patron record or circulation questions (e.g. problems with renewing or placing a hold on an item), please call infoNow at 213 228-7272 or your local library branch.

To contact local librarians at Los Angeles Public Library:

**Los Angeles Public Library**

- 213/228-7000
- [e-mail us](#)
- 630 W. 5th Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90071

**Browser Requirements:**  
The AskNow service works best when using Internet Explorer for your browser, whether or not you are a Mac or PC user. If you are an AOL subscriber, please exit the AOL browser and use IE. [More>>](#)

**Privacy Policy:**

Done Internet

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# Issue #1: Think Global, Act Local

- Approx 30% of questions are local – harder for non-local library to answer:
  - Library policy database
  - Scripted messages
  - Referral via Conference/Transfer, scripted messages, E-mail
- Library user assumes librarian is from their local library
  - Scripted messages; web page

# Issue #2: Quality Control

- Quality control: other librarians may not answer the question the way you would
  - Transcript review = opportunities for training
  - Development of Best Practices guidelines
  - Each library can follow up with its own users
- Trust issues

# Issue#3 New Skills for VR

- Importance of being Web savvy
  - More reliance on online/web-based resources
  - For print, follow up or scan
- Chat etiquette
- Cooperative skills: answering Qs for “their” patrons
- Transcript Trauma? Raising the bar on reference
- Training issues

# 24/7 Reference-QuestionPoint

- 24 hour managed cooperative
- QP reference management tools
- Global Reference network
  
- Transition Task Force
- Get involved!
- Integrated platform: available Jan 2005

# Questions, Comments?

Susan McGlamery

24/7 Reference

OCLC Cooperative Reference Services

[susan@247ref.org](mailto:susan@247ref.org)

[mcglames@oclc.org](mailto:mcglames@oclc.org)

877/247-7331