Cooperative, around-the-clock reference services and integrated online management tools

“Having this chat reference service available to them around the clock gives them a lifeline to the library whenever they need it.”

NEWMAN LIBRARY, BARUCH COLLEGE, NEW YORK

We are a worldwide library cooperative, owned, governed and sustained by members since 1967. Our public purpose is a statement of commitment to each other—that we will work together to improve access to the information held in libraries around the globe, and find ways to reduce costs for libraries through collaboration.
QuestionPoint is a reference management service that provides libraries with the tools they need to interact with their users in multiple ways, using both chat and e-mail. Libraries may opt to participate in the 24/7 Reference Cooperative™ to provide live reference service around the clock to their communities.

Reference Management Service

Front-end systems for communicating with users in a virtual environment (chat, widget, e-mail, Web forms, page push, cobrowse); no client-side downloads or additional applications are required; in addition, QuestionPoint™ offers:

- Online management of reference transactions that can include walk-up and phone activity enables you to handle follow-up tasks, question assignments and referrals using a single, integrated, Web-based interface
- Administrative and reporting tools with statistical reports and customizable surveys
- A local knowledge base that you customize to your library and your users’ needs, and access to the Global Knowledge Base, built by contributions from all QuestionPoint member libraries
- Cooperative tools that enable librarians to work collaboratively, including increasing coverage through shared staffing and building referral networks

The Knowledge Base... because information is power

QuestionPoint’s Knowledge Base is a database of questions and answers added by member libraries. Each library can maintain a local Knowledge Base, controlled by the subscribing library or library group. This local Knowledge Base becomes a key reference source customized to your library and its users’ needs, saving time for the reference staff. Specialized local information or questions unique to your users grow into an invaluable archive. Libraries can also contribute to (and use) the Global Knowledge Base, a resource for reference support and discovery work, cooperatively built by all QuestionPoint members. And libraries can make both the Global and local Knowledge Bases available to users, right from the library website.

“...this kind of service increases a library’s image in the community.”

NORTHERN KENTUCKY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Global Reference Network... broaden your answering power

This worldwide community of libraries, museums, archives, historical societies and others provide a global referral network, available to QuestionPoint subscribers. Librarians participating in the network share their expertise in a multitude of subjects in 26 languages.
24/7 Reference Cooperative

Provide reference service around the clock, right from your library Web page, with QuestionPoint’s 24/7 Reference Cooperative. Staffed by participating QuestionPoint libraries, the Cooperative provides trustworthy, real-time one-on-one reference assistance from professional librarians. And the service is available whenever your users need help: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, including holidays.

- Membership in the Cooperative means expanded hours of coverage without increasing staff—libraries can participate with only a modest weekly contribution of staffing to the Cooperative.
- Flexible group membership options allow libraries to belong to multiple reference groups simultaneously (such as a library system, local consortium, statewide initiative or a subject-specific group).
- Cooperative libraries may refer questions to subject expert librarians in areas such as art, business and science. The Global Reference Network provides a second referral option for the Cooperative.

Implementation Services

Enjoy a single point of contact throughout the project. Your implementation manager partners with you to set milestones, define key tasks, design workflows and educate library staff.

Receive ongoing technical support during and after the implementation to help resolve any technical issues or questions that arise as you use the QuestionPoint service and participate in the 24/7 Reference Cooperative.

Why your library needs QuestionPoint

QuestionPoint combines an infrastructure of software and communications tools with a global network of cooperating libraries worldwide. Consider these important advantages for your library:

- Raise the visibility of your library. Reach out to users with real-time assistance at their point of need, anywhere from your library’s Web page.
- Reach Web users of familiar resources such as Google and Yahoo! Search through links from the WorldCat® Web interface.
- Be there on the Web with quick, trustworthy answers—no downloads or special software needed.
- Refer questions to a network of subject specialists with access to extensive resources, available throughout the world and in many languages.
- Keep the door to reference services open around the clock by participating in the 24/7 Reference Cooperative, with only a modest contribution of staffing.
- Gain better control over reference. QuestionPoint tools give deeper insights into user needs and staffing requirements.
- Save money—QuestionPoint is much less expensive and easier to implement than building your own around-the-clock staffing solution from scratch.
- Take advantage of customized implementation services that simplify your library’s start-up.
- Eliminate barriers to service with QuestionPoint’s lightweight patron interface, which works with screen readers and other assistive devices.

“We know that QuestionPoint helps us equalize and narrow the digital divide.”

THE BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY,
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

“A major advantage of QuestionPoint is that it is open to the rest of the world and cooperative.”

THE LIBRARY OF PUBLIC INFORMATION, BIBLIOTHÈQUE PUBLIQUE D’INFORMATION (BPI), PARIS, FRANCE
Reference Management Features

- Web-based chat, cobrowse and cooperative reference tools require no special software or browser plug-ins. Librarians can transfer sessions and send messages to other librarians online using the built-in Instant Messaging component.
- Unique, customizable messages allow a library to add its own individual scripted messages, which appear when one of its customers comes into the queue.
- Lightweight user interface is designed to allow users to access QuestionPoint in a variety of ways, and is accessible to users with screen readers and other assistive technologies.
- Reach out to users from every Web page with “Qwidget,” QuestionPoint’s chat widget. Qwidget combines the simplicity of a chat widget (on the user side) with the full features of QuestionPoint’s reference management system. Embed the link to Qwidget anywhere on the library website, in social networking spaces—anywhere you want to reach out to your users.
- Reporting tools in QuestionPoint help libraries manage both online and in-person reference transactions. Statistical reports based on the type and level of your reference activity demonstrate trends and measure library user satisfaction. The Knowledge Base is carefully reviewed and maintained by Cooperative contributors.
- Subject referral through the Global Reference Network provides access to libraries worldwide.

The QuestionPoint library user interface can be configured in any language. The QuestionPoint administrative (librarian-facing) interface is currently available in English, German, Spanish, French, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Dutch, Korean and Slovene. The end user interface is available in additional languages.

Belong to several groups simultaneously, such as a local consortium and a subject-specific group. A library can belong to a regional or statewide group, as well as to the international 24/7 Reference Cooperative.

24/7 Reference Cooperative Features

- Meet users at their point of need by providing reference service around the clock with trustworthy, real-time, one-on-one reference assistance from professional librarians, right from your library Web page.
- Expand your reference desk hours without increasing staff. For a modest weekly contribution of staffing to the Cooperative, you can provide fail-safe coverage 24 hours a day, week to your customers.
- The QuestionPoint library user interface can be configured in any language. The QuestionPoint administrative (librarian-facing) interface is currently available in English, German, Spanish, French, Chinese (simplified and traditional), Dutch, Korean and Slovene. The end user interface is available in additional languages.
- Belong to several groups simultaneously, such as a local consortium and a subject-specific group. A library can belong to a regional or statewide group, as well as to the international 24/7 Reference Cooperative.

Higher visibility on the Web

WorldCat is the world’s largest database of bibliographic and library ownership information. The shared data in WorldCat supports broader exposure of library resources by bringing together people with library holdings. Through search sites such as Google and Yahoo! Search, people can link to WorldCat.org and locate a library’s virtual reference services, physical and electronic content. WorldCat helps your library become a primary source of trustworthy information and helpful personal assistance. Learn more about WorldCat at www.oclc.org/worldcat/.

To learn more

For more information on QuestionPoint, including further benefits to libraries and users, visit the OCLC Web site at www.oclc.org/questionpoint/

To discuss pricing and place an order

Call OCLC Library Services at 1-614-764-6000, or contact your OCLC regional service provider. Find yours at www.oclc.org/contacts/regional/ Call OCLC Library Services at 1-614-764-6000, or contact your OCLC regional service provider. Find yours at www.oclc.org/contacts/regional/