



QuestionPoint

Delivering point-of-need learner support



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Connected.

QuestionPoint is a virtual reference management service that enables academic libraries to respond to enquiries in real-time using online chat and co-browsing. The flexible nature of the solution means that it can be used within a single organisation or by a cooperative of libraries working together to provide an around-the-clock, 24/7 reference service.

Why virtual reference?

In an effort to reach users accessing the library via their computers, many libraries are extending their reference service to include virtual reference. Technology now allows users to submit their queries to the library at any time from any place in the world. Virtual reference is a response to users' need for convenient access to reference service.

Furthermore, QuestionPoint

- allows for real-time interaction with your library users;
- provides a remote reference service to part-time and distance learners;
- provides guidance to students on appropriate resources at their point-of-need;
- offers quick turnaround to simple enquiries;
- enables statistical reporting on the usage, quality and impact of your reference service.

QuestionPoint—the best option for individual libraries

A real-time response

Many reference and enquiry services support questions submitted by e-mail and Web forms, with no opportunity for real-time communication. With QuestionPoint, students choose the enquiry method best suited to their needs. With the option to enter into an online chat with the reference librarian and obtain an immediate response.

“ Chat is an excellent solution for handling low-level enquiries where a quick response is needed ”

Andy Dodd, Birmingham University

Meet users wherever they are

The student's use of academic libraries can no longer be restricted to the physical space, as the number of part-time and distance learners increases. The need to meet users, wherever they are, has become of vital importance. Where electronic access takes resources to the user, the QuestionPoint service does the same by mobilising the expertise of the reference librarian.



User guidance and education

The wealth of electronic resources such as databases, eJournals and eBooks can be overwhelming, both in terms of which resources are most appropriate and how best to use them. QuestionPoint offers cobrowsing functionality that enables reference librarians to guide users to the best resources and to demonstrate how to get the best results. Students not only benefit from locating appropriate information but from receiving “training” in how to use the online resources available to them.

Deliver a valuable knowledge base

QuestionPoint’s Knowledge Base feature allows you to offer a searchable database of all responses authorised for publication and is a valuable reference tool for students and staff alike. As reference expertise is a valuable commodity, the Knowledge Base component of QuestionPoint enables you to ensure that reference staff can be focused on providing responses to new and more complex queries.

A better understanding of service performance

Standard reports allow you to produce quality management information that may be used to review service performance and produce key performance indicators.

QuestionPoint also offers tools to develop user surveys to help provide deeper insights into user needs and satisfaction levels. Such information is vital to ensuring your service develops to meet ever changing user requirements.

With minimal set-up cost

QuestionPoint is a hosted solution that requires no investment in hardware or technical staff to manage it. It simply requires a standard Web browser and a connection to the internet with a trained administrator who is responsible for managing user profiles, organisational preferences and rules.

And multiple points of entry

Access to your service may be placed anywhere that users are likely to look for help, from the library homepage, the library catalogue, or from the course management system.

Implementation made easy

Your decision to purchase can be made with the full assurance that implementation support and training is available. We can help with the critical stage of informing staff on how to get the best out of the system to ensure that virtual reference becomes fully embedded within the service.



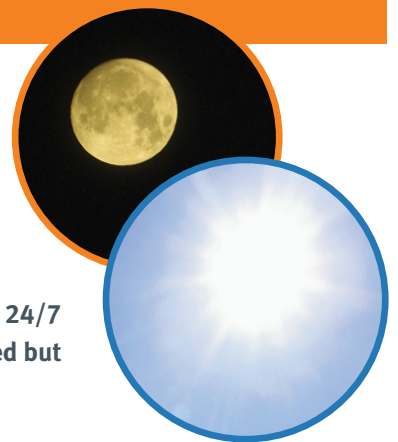
QuestionPoint—the best option for a collaborative service

Offer a 24/7 service

The QuestionPoint 24/7 Reference Cooperative provides a round the clock reference service. For a modest weekly contribution of staffing, participating organisations can together offer a 24/7 service to their users, enabling reference services to not only be delivered at the point-of-need but also at the time of need.

Providing subject expertise

Collaborative professional networks of subject specialists from multiple institutions can be developed to provide high levels of service to student users with specific subject enquiries.



Benefits

Raises awareness of your library beyond library walls

Offers a fast response to users accustomed to the immediacy of Web search engines

Meets the information needs of part-time and distance learners

Users receive practical tips on information-seeking as they browse alongside staff

Cuts time and effort spent on seeking answers to frequently asked questions by utilising a shared knowledge base

Ensures key performance indicators are met through the generation of quality management information

Provides a practical way forward for cross-collaboration with other institutions wishing to offer the same service

For further information contact your local OCLC office or e-mail: uk@oclc.org

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At the University of Wolverhampton, students find our chat service quick, convenient and easy-to-use. QuestionPoint chat enables us to give friendly, on-the-spot assistance with anything from renewals to referencing, databases to dissertations.

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Wendy Haynes, Resources Librarian, Virtual Reference Project, University of Wolverhampton



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