

Exceeding Expectations: E-Reference Excellence in Collaborative VR

Panel: Best Practices in Cooperative Virtual Reference

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Bibliography of Additional Readings

Connaway, L. S. & Radford, M. L. (2007). The thrill of the chase in cyberspace: A report of focus groups with live chat librarians. *Informed Librarian Online*.

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Connaway, L. S. & Radford, M. L. (2007). *Service sea change: Clicking with screenagers through virtual reference*. In: *Sailing into the Future: Charting our Destiny. Proceedings of the Thirteenth National Conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries, March 29-April 1, 2007*, Baltimore, Maryland. Edited by Hugh Thompson, Chicago: ACRL/ALA, pp. 191-197.

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Radford, M. L. & Connaway, L. S. (2006). *Information realities: Shaping the digital future for all*. Paper: Seeking sustainability and singularity: evaluating virtual reference from user, non-user, and librarian perspectives. Online proceedings of The American Society for Information Science and Technology Conference, Austin, TX, November 3-9, 2006. [Available: <http://www.asis.org/Conferences/AM06/proceedings/openpage.html>].

Radford, M. L. (2006). Investigating interpersonal communication in chat reference: Dealing with impatient users and rude encounters. In R. D. Lankes, E. Abels, M. White and S. N. Haque. (Eds.) *The Virtual Reference Desk: Creating a Reference Future*, pp. 23-46. NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers.

Upcoming Presentation

Connaway, L. S., Radford, M. L., & Williams, J. D. "I Find What I Need" Investigating the Behaviors and Information-Seeking Preferences of Non-Users of Virtual Reference Accepted for Presentation, LRRT Four Star Research Program, ALA Annual Conference, Anaheim, CA, June 29, 2008.

PowerPoint Slides and handouts for today's presentation will be available at the *Seeking Synchronicity* web site: <http://www.oclc.org/research/projects/synchronicity/>

This research is one of the outcomes from the project: *Seeking Synchronicity: Evaluating Virtual Reference Services from User, Non-User, and Librarian Perspectives*. It is funded by the Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS), Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, & OCLC, Online Computer Library Center.

Recommendations for Cooperative Reference Services

- **Dazzle 'Em (From a Distance)**
 - Advertise cooperation
 - Promote global/local presence
 - Seize opportunities to build rapport
- **Overcome Boundaries & Heighten Awareness of Remote Access Issues**
 - Don't tease or bait and switch (offer only the resources users are able to access)
 - Guide users beyond consortial limits (suggest in-person visit to library or make referral to other available resources)
 - Don't force instruction
- **Develop & Share Expectations**
- **Exceed Expectations – Aim for Excellent Service & Cultivate Repeat Users**

Recommendations for Individual VRS Librarians/Staff

- **Start Off on the Right Foot!**
 - Minimize number of scripts you send before greeting user personally
- **Accentuate the Positive – Always Put the Cooperative Service in the Best Light**
 - Maintain a professional tone
 - Be yourself
- **Do Not Dismiss Questions Out of Hand**
 - Questions that seem rude or inappropriate may be genuine
- **Clarify the Question**
 - Even if you think you understand, your interpretation may be incorrect
- **Increase Accuracy – Answer the Specific Question**
 - Be sure the pages you push answer the question
- **Provide a Variety of Resources, Citations & Referrals**
 - Give user the option to go beyond initial resources
- **Manage Complex or Multiple Queries**
 - Refer complex questions to the cooperative specialist service or to another mode
 - Use traditional approaches to multiple queries, answer easy ones first, make sure you have answered all parts
- **They Disappeared? Complete the Inquiry Anyway**