References


Academic libraries are experiencing numerous changes in their services due to high demands for digital resources and changes in users' information needs and expectations. Many academic library users give preferences to Google, Google Scholar and other search engines on the internet when they search for information. As reference transactions are decreasing in many academic institutions, this paper aims to investigate the continuing need for mediated reference services in the technology-driven environment in academic libraries.


Proper planning and assessment surveys of projects for academic library Web sites will not always be predictive of real world use, no matter how many responses they might receive. In this case, multiple-phase development, librarian focus groups, and patron surveys performed before implementation of such a project inaccurately overrated utility and positive impact. The Web Site Support Team of Texas Tech University Libraries conducted post-assessment usage of a locally developed reference tool using Google Analytics, which revealed a significant disparity between expectations and results. Web analytics tools, while not able to predict users' needs, are adept at describing users' behavior. This user-provided evidence is invaluable for informing the decisions that academic libraries make about their Web sites. While the initial incarnation of the reference tool failed to provide the intended service, Web analytics allowed the team to refine, modify, and integrate elements of the tool into other areas of the Web site, saving the project from being completely scrapped. Other academic libraries and libraries in large organizations are encouraged to use Web analytics and click analytics tools to assess the outcomes of Web projects. Such data can reveal blind spots in predictive usage, which may originate even in the patron base, and can allow modification of projects based upon real user behavior.


The purpose of this study is to examine shifts in the volume and complexity of reference questions received at a small liberal arts college following the implementation of a Web-scale discovery service.

This article describes an online system to collect, store, analyze, and report reference statistics. Information is entered at the point of service in a Web-based interface located on the computer desktop of each librarian. When record keeping and reporting processes were customized, automated, and made accessible to librarians, the data collected proved invaluable in tracking trends in reference service, monitoring library initiatives, and providing reference librarians information for analyzing and assessing their professional activity.


This paper aims to provide a holistic view of the current practice of chat reference evaluation and to suggest a framework that could help reference practitioners evaluate chat reference services in multiple contexts.


There has been longstanding debate about whether the level of complexity of questions received at reference desks and via online chat services requires a librarian’s expertise. Continued decreases in the number and complexity of reference questions have all but ended the debate; many academic libraries no longer staff service points with professional librarians. However, convenient, proactive online chat services could reverse the trends. This paper provides results of a study of reference question complexity following implementation of a proactive chat service. The study reveals changes in the complexity of chat questions that may have implications for staffing online reference services.