

Ask Us 24/7 Information Service

Sound too good to be true? Not so! Patrons from participating libraries can access a librarian 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via chat. Who's doing it? Let us count the names!

- Buffalo State College
- Canisius College
- Lockport Public Library
- Medaille College
- Niagara County Community College
- Richmond Memorial Library
- St. Bonaventure University
- St. John Fisher College
- SUNY Fredonia
- Villa Maria College

Fast Fact

Libraries in Western New York have been participating in *Ask Us 24/7* since 2003.

In addition, we have our own subject specialists that help us out! All but one answer questions for the nation-wide cooperative!

- Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society (Local history)
- Center for Inquiry Libraries (Paranormal)
- Hospital Library Services Program (Consumer Health)
- Multi-disciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research Information Service (Earthquakes)

WNYLRC—

Helping libraries maximize their potential as information service providers for over 40 years

Western New York Library Resources Council

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Ask Us 24/7— Virtual Information Service

*Advancing Information Services
for Libraries*



Thinking about going solo? Think again!

Joining *Ask Us 24/7* can make it easier for you to provide the 24/7 reference service your students or patrons want. Here's how you benefit:

- Free ongoing training
- Free or low-cost marketing materials
- Centralized support
- Retain your library's identity
- Holiday, snow day, and vacation coverage—patrons receive reference service even when your li-

Fast Fact

Almost 6000 questions by WNY patrons were serviced between September 2003 and May 2006.

brary is closed

- Holiday and vacation coverage for librarians both at the local

level and at the nation-wide cooperative

- Budget friendly
- Fewer virtual desk hours required than attempting it on your own
- Use of state-of-the-art chat and follow-up software for conducting the service (not your ordinary instant messaging)
- Use of sophisticated reporting and statistical tools
- Cooperate with colleagues locally, statewide, and nationally

Go Where the Patrons Are Ask Us 24/7

Ten years ago, a library's ability to offer reference services 24 hours per day, seven days per week was nothing but a dream. Today it is a reality with *Ask Us 24/7*. Librarians can offer their patrons the ability to chat with a librarian any time of the day, any day of the week. Here are the tools that help! Librarians have the ability to:

- Push web pages and files to patrons
- Explore web pages and databases with patrons using co-browse
- Follow-up on questions that need additional resources
- Work with multiple patrons at one time
- Interact with patrons at their point of need
- Track patrons' visits utilizing sophisticated reporting tools
- Integrate a library's email reference into *QuestionPoint's* follow-up system
- Refer a patron's question to numerous subject specialists
- Access *Ask Us 24/7 Marketing Toolkit* to help promote the service to patrons

Local? National? Global? That's Ask Us 24/7

- OCLC and 24/7 Reference co-developed the new chat software and integrated it into *QuestionPoint*
- *Ask Us 24/7* participates in *QuestionPoint's* nation-wide virtual reference cooperative
- *Ask Us 24/7* participants answer questions for patrons of other *Ask Us 24/7* participating libraries as well as for other libraries across the country participating in the nation-wide cooperative
- *Ask Us 24/7* participants provide over 40 hours on the nation-wide virtual desk. The remaining hours are covered by librarians from across the country who have joined the nation-wide cooperative.

Fast Fact

Approximately 1000 libraries are part of the nationwide 24/7 Reference Cooperative in *QuestionPoint*. Of those, roughly 70% are public and 30% are academic.

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