

Sharing the virtual workload

Chat Reference in Canadian Consortia



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Collaboration in Virtual Reference

Virtual Reference

- Computer mediated library reference service
- Real-time (chat, IM) / asynchronous (e-mail)
- Convenient, timely assistance for remote users

Collaboration among libraries

- Staffing
- Hours of service

Chat Reference Libraries



Collaborative Virtual Reference in Canada

Survey of CARL Libraries 2004

18 of 27 offering chat reference

6 in collaboration

Ask Away BC



Ask Ontario



Novanet



Research Interests

Virtual Reference practice

- Adaptation, communication, clients
- Grassroots level

Coordination

- Funding, training, support, negotiation

Professional

- Attitudes changing over time
- Workload, learning opportunities, career

Sustainability

- Measuring usage
- Growth and Size

Research Project

“The qualitative research interview is a construction site for knowledge”

(Kvale, Steiner. Doing interviews. Sage, 2007)

7 steps of the interview process

- Thematizing, Designing, Interview, Transcribing, Analyzing, Verifying, Reporting

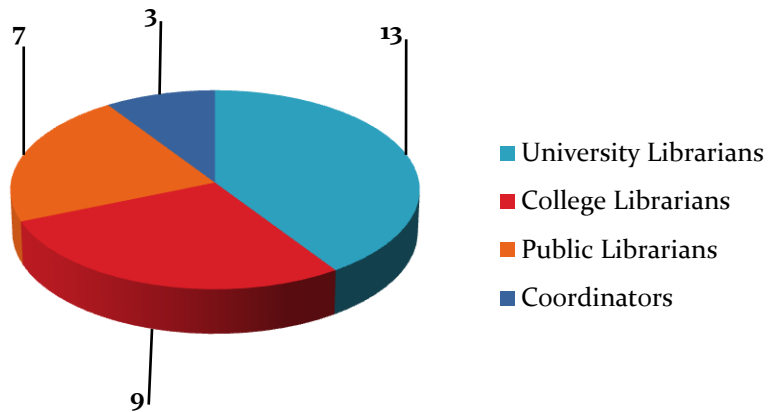
Certification of ethical acceptability for research involving human subjects

Recruiting participants

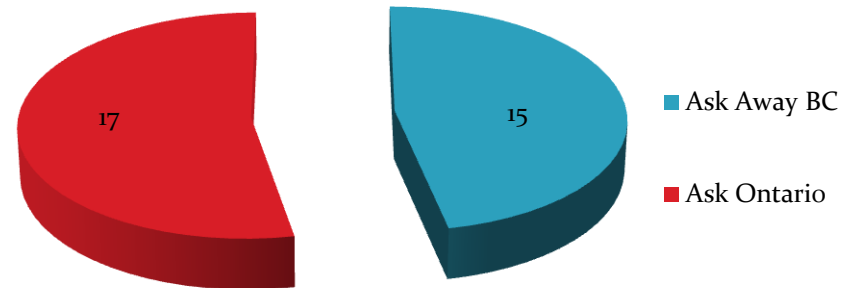
Question script

Interview Participants

Type of Library



Consortium





Virtual Reference Practice

Libraries

- Academic - university, college / Public
- Institutional knowledge

Interaction


- Constraints
- Communication strategies 
- Chat interface
- Transcript 

Virtual Reference in Collaboration

Infrastructure

- Coordination
- Policies and portals
- Back chat
- Training

Professional issues

- Enthusiasm
- Quality of service 
- Professional development

Clients

- Client behaviour
- Usage & resource sharing
- Privacy

Research Challenges

Completing the 7 steps

- Analyzing
- Reporting

Why is reference practice important?