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The Next Step in IM Reference Service

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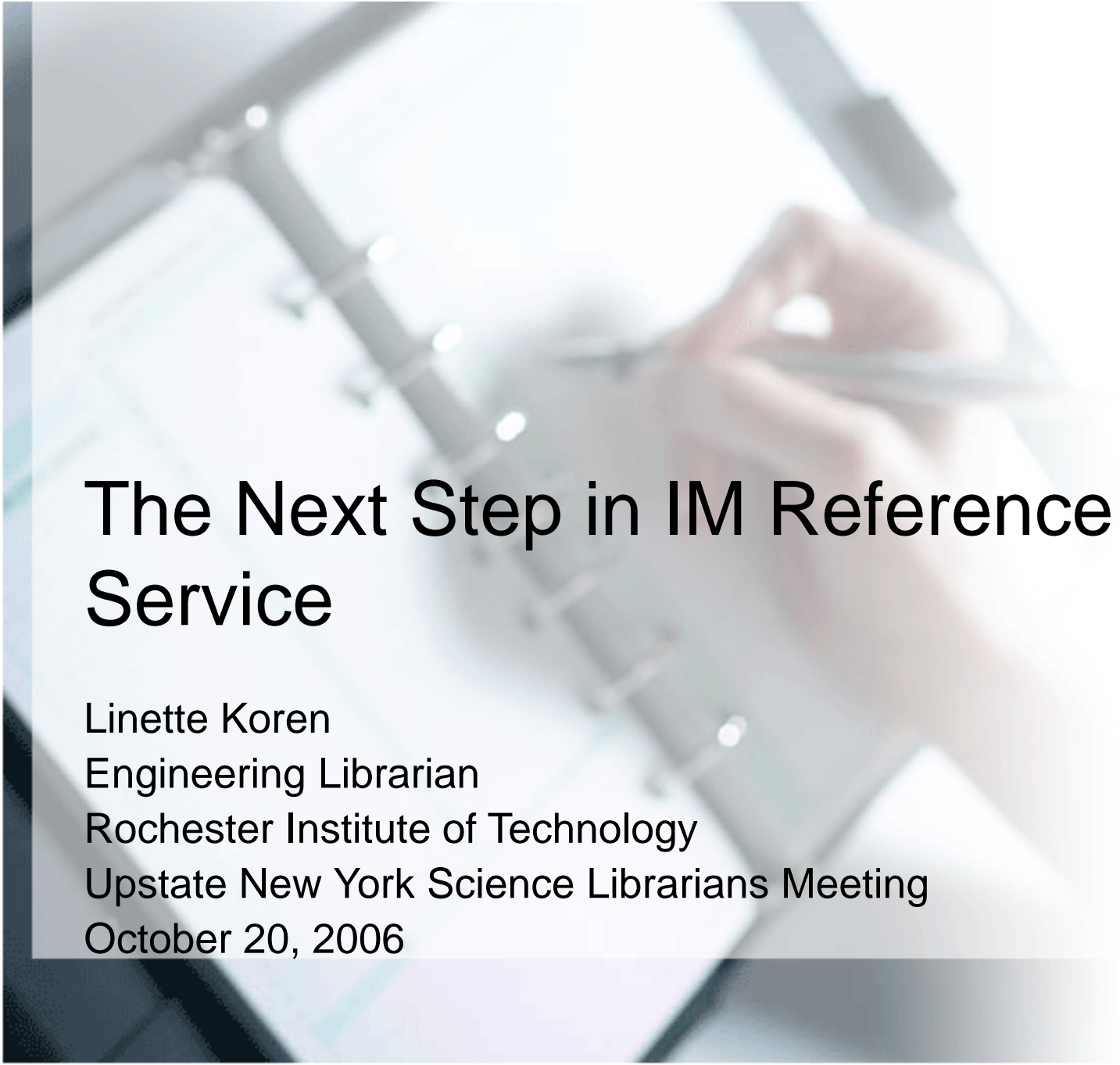
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The Next Step in IM Reference Service

Linette Koren

Engineering Librarian

Rochester Institute of Technology

Upstate New York Science Librarians Meeting

October 20, 2006

IM History at RIT Library

- Began with HumanClick/LivePerson in 2001
 - Wanted authentication
 - Liked auto greeting features
 - Liked ability to push URLs to patrons
 - Liked patrons not having to have a screen name for IM
 - Could embed a HC icon in emails/on web
 - Paid service

History of Librarian IM Accounts

- Dropped HC/LP accounts for librarians
- Got individual accounts on all 3 IM services; consolidated those via Trillian
- Continued using HC/LP at reference desk

Problems with HC/LP

- Shift changes while using
- One simultaneous login
- Activity level did not justify the cost

What Can Migrate To?

- Decided we could live w/o some features
- Library systems dept. started looking for alternative systems
- Could have created accounts and set up Trillian for IM reference
- Decided to go with a web based service rather than install/monitor/upgrade any more software
- <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=afh&AN=19432689&site=ehost-live>

Meebo!



- Meebo.com
 - Web based
 - New to the industry
 - Lots of development
 - Still buggy but have a forum and a blog to interact with the development team and other users

Meebo continued

- Set up accounts for the reference desk on the 3 major IM services
- RITREFDESK on YIM, AIM, MSN/IM
- Can sign on to any one of these accounts or all three at the same time
- Originally posted the IM screen name on the page but then meebo came out with an even better solution

Meebo me widget



- Meebo came out with a widget which once again allowed patrons to IM us without having to have screen names on IM services
- Widget took just a few minutes to configure and embed and is fairly customizable
- <http://library.rit.edu/depts/ref/research/humanclick/humanclick.htm>
- <http://www.meebome.com/>

Meebo me continued

- User can configure the nickname
- The user can turn off the widget

How Meebo Is Used

- Log in at the beginning of desk shift
- Use FF on a machine with sound
- Most use is via widget and we aren't heavily promoting the RITREFDESK name

Pros

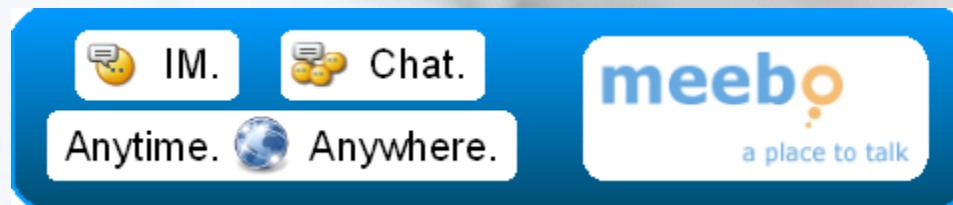
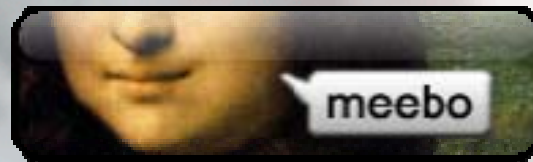
- Free!
- Patrons are not forced to have screen names to contact us
- A browser is all that is necessary
- Widget is customizable
- Patron can edit nickname

Cons

- Staff can forget to log in
- Patrons can unknowingly leave their browser on this page
- Sound is not always loud enough to pick up if you are busy talking to patron or answering a phone reference question
- No chat log history via the widget

Publicity

- None really...
- Graphics
- <http://wiki.meebo.com/doku.php?id=gomeebo>



Questions?

