

2-23-2011

Reference is Neither Here Nor There: Connecting Through SMS

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Reference Is Neither Here Nor There

A New Point of Need for Libraries

Amy Vecchione, Assistant Professor/Librarian, Boise State University

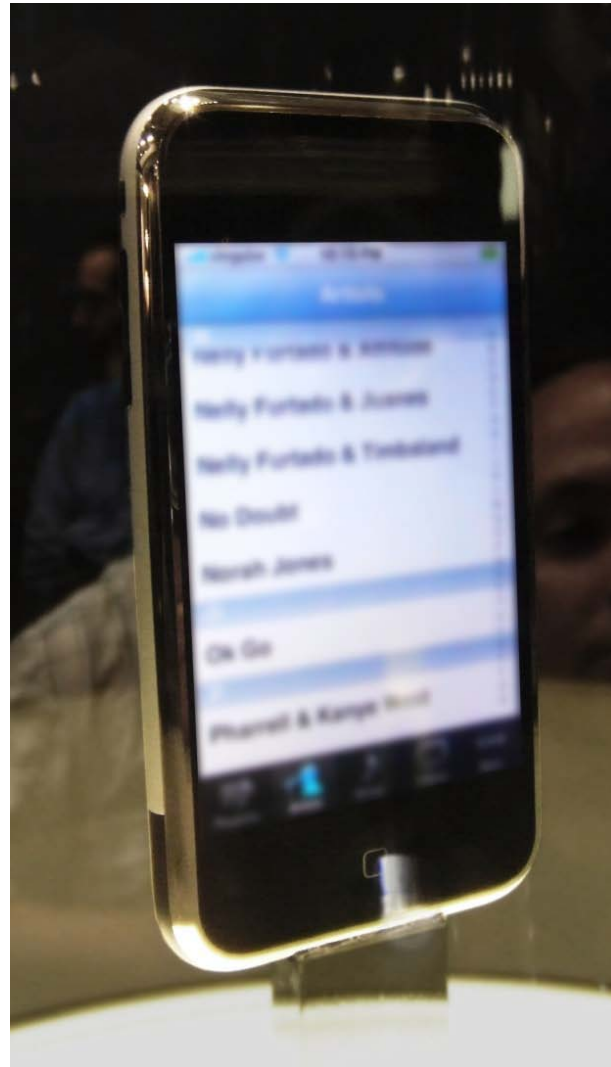
Margie Ruppel , Assistant Professor/Librarian, Boise State University



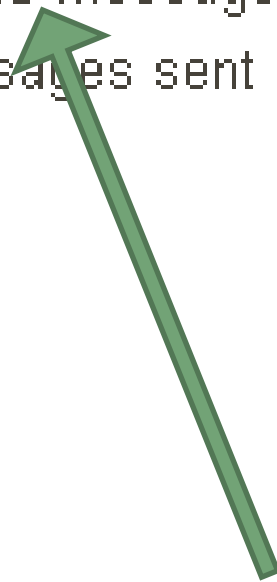
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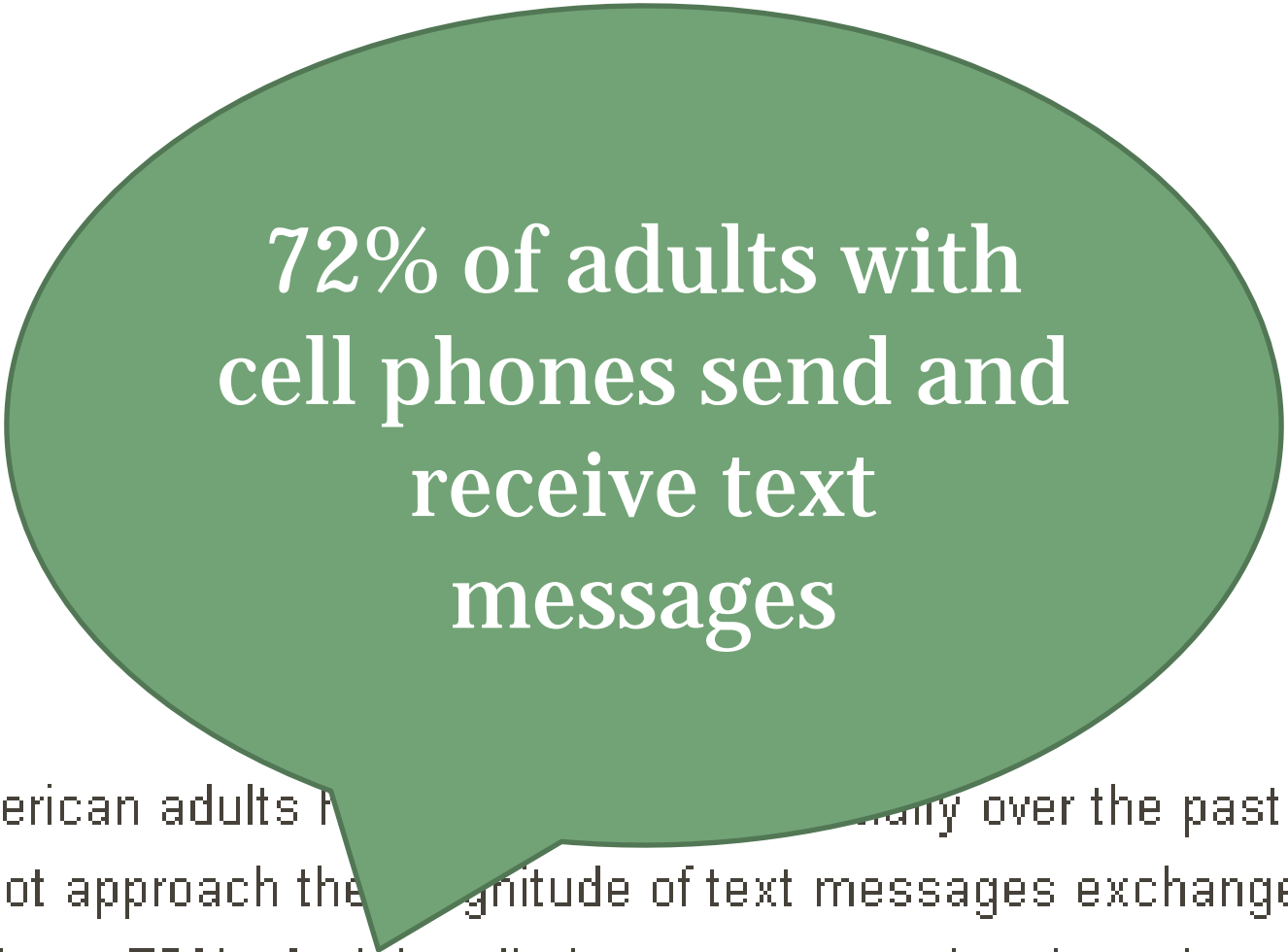


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Texting by American adults has increased substantially over the past year, but still does not approach the magnitude of text messages exchanged by adolescents. Some 72% of adult cell phone users send and receive text messages now, up from 65% in September 2009. Fully 87% of teen cell users text. Teens text 50 messages a day on average, five times more than the typical 10 text messages sent and received by adults per day.





72% of adults with
cell phones send and
receive text
messages

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“SMS services are an opportunity to reach new users; reference is neither here nor there”



Always
texting

It's easy

Libraries
do it better

**Google
Answers
466453**

Competitors

**ChaCha
242242**

**KGB
542542
(fee)**

Google Answers

How many slices of bacon are in a package?

Google Answers

How many slices of bacon are in a package?

Sorry, “how many slices o...” did not return any results

KGB

\$0.99 per question asked

KGB

\$0.99 per question asked

Cha Cha

Not available for all plans

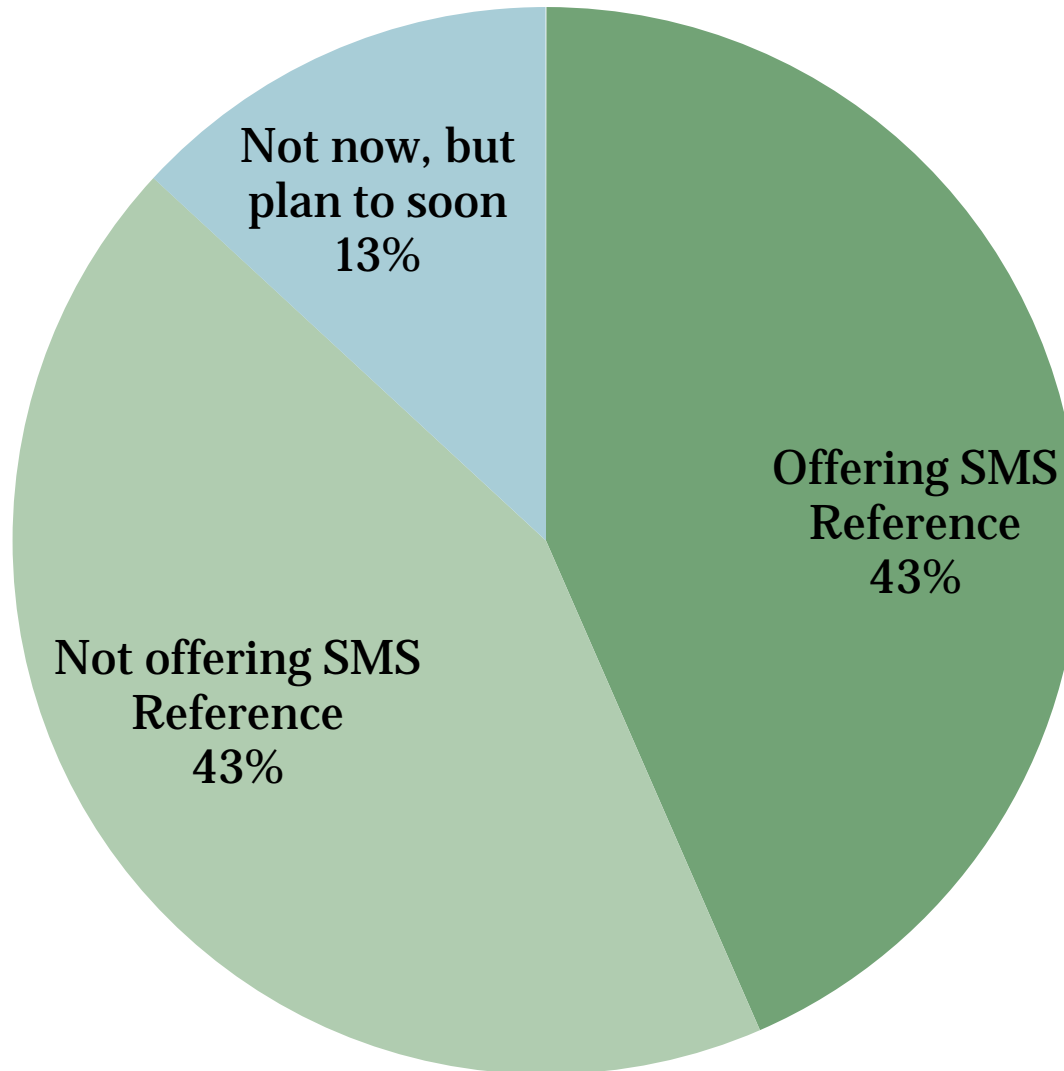
Human powered answers

Flawed answers

Does your library offer SMS reference?

Percentage of Respondents

N=231



A large, dark green thought bubble with a thin black outline is centered on a white background. Inside the bubble, the text "What are they asking?" is written in a white, serif font. The bubble has several smaller, overlapping circles at the bottom left, suggesting a trail of thought.

What are they
asking?

Why are freshmen required to take a library orientation?

Why are freshmen required to take a library orientation?

To help acquaint students with the resources available at an academic library which is different than public or high school libraries.

**on average how many slices of bacon
are in a package...**

**on average how many slices of bacon are
in a package...**

Cooks Illustrated says that regular sliced $\frac{1}{16}$ th of an inch usually contains 18-22 slices per pck per lb, & thick-cut aka country has 12-16 slices per pck per lb. Thick cut is $\frac{1}{8}$ inch slices.

<http://www.cooksillustrated.com/tastetests/overview.asp?docid=9874>

**How late is the library open? [BSU
Broncos]**

**How late is the library open? [BSU
Broncos]**

until midnight! w00t!

**Do you have any books about
constucting poems?**

**Do you have any books about
constucting poems?**

Lots! 3rd floor PN1042-PN1064.

**Who was the first U.S. President to
meet the Pope?**

Who was the first U.S. President to meet the Pope?

The first U.S. president to visit the Vatican was Woodrow Wilson, who met with Pope Benedict XV in 1919 after WWI.

If u get fitted for a bra and it fels to tight or uncomfotable, should you overlak the fitters advice?

If u get fitted for a bra and it fels to tight or uncomfotable, should you overlak the fitters advice?

I certainly would.



Privacy

**If you offer SMS Reference which tool
do you use?**

Top Tools



1 ABC

2 DEF

3 GHI

SEND

My Info Quest

www.myinfoquest.info

[Home](#)

Welcome to My Info Quest!

On the go and need an answer? Text your question to an My Info Quest librarian and have the answer delivered to your phone within minutes!

- Text 66746 and enter your library's keyword (see list of library keywords below)
- Text your question
- Our goal is for a librarian to text an expert answer within 10 minutes during the hours of service
- It's easy and accurate!

My Info Quest is brought to you by your library and other participating libraries across the U.S.!

If you are a library that would like to join, we are accepting new members. Please contact [Lori Bell](#) or [Mary-Carol Lindbloom](#).

Hours of Service

Central Time Monday - Thursday 8:00 A.M. - 10:00 P.M.

Friday 8:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.

Saturday 9:00 A.M. - 6:00 P.M.

Sunday 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.

1 ABC

2 DEF

3 GHI

SEND

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Sunday 2:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.


Search

 Call  Text

Archive Report Spam Delete More Actions [Refresh](#)

- Inbox**
- ★ Starred
- Spam
- Trash
- Contacts 
- History 
-  **Voicemail (73)**
-  **Text (1)**
-  Recorded
-  Placed
-  Received
-  Missed
- Calling Credit **\$8.70** 
- [Add Credit](#) | [Rates](#) | [History](#)

[Invite a friend](#)

 **+14062050477** [Add](#) - Great Falls, MT
 1/11/11 1:07 PM 2 minutes ago

+14062050477: Hi there. What's the capitol of Idaho? - amyvecchione@boisestate.edu 1:06 PM

Me: It's Boise. 1:06 PM

+14062050477: What is the capitol of the United States? - amyvecchione@boisestate.edu 1:07 PM

Me: It's Washington, D.C. 1:07 PM


+14062050477: Do you have any books on Boise or Washington D.C.? - amyvecchione@boisestate.ed

160

Tip: Tag annoying callers as spam and their calls will go s


Viewing private question #13880

[Return to My Admin page.](#)

 **Does the library have computers with scanners?**

[Edit Question](#)

Asked on Jan 10 2011, 05:10pm from SMS by Anon

 We have two computers with digital microforms scanners on the 1st floor and two multimedia creation stations with flatbed scanners on the 2nd floor.

[Edit Answer](#)

Answered on Jan 10 2011, 06:54pm by Reference Department askus@boisestate.edu


[Change Owner](#)

[Make Public](#)

[Send follow-up SMS](#)

[Delete Q/A pair](#)

Albertsons Library SMS Reference

A-Z Index Search Directories● This Site ● all Boise State

ALBERTSONS LIBRARY OPEN 7 AM - 12 MIDNIGHT TODAY, TUESDAY 2/8/11.

FIND ✉ SERVICES ✉ HELP ✉ ABOUT ✉

[Help](#) > [Chat](#) • [Email](#) • [Phone](#) • [Text](#)

CHAT • EMAIL • PHONE • TEXT

Ask a Librarian 24/7

Your Question/Message

Type your question here.

Send

Chat Available

CHAT. Chat with a librarian. Available 24/7. (The person assisting you may not be located at Albertsons Library.)

EMAIL. Ask a question and you'll receive a response by email (responses take longer on weekends and University holidays).

PHONE. Call (208) 426-3301 to speak to someone at the Reference Desk during hours that the reference desk is staffed (7am-10pm M-F, 10am-7pm Sat, 10am-10pm Sun during the semester; limited hours during intersession). [Library Hours](#)

IN PERSON. Visit the Library Reference Desk. [Campus Map](#)

CONTACT YOUR LIBRARIAN. Get in touch with the librarian who specializes in resources in your subject.

SCHEDULE A RESEARCH APPOINTMENT WITH A LIBRARIAN. Get individualized help with your research project.

TEXT A LIBRARIAN. Send a text message to us at (208) 546-9982 and a librarian will get back to you as soon as possible. We staff this service during hours that the reference desk is staffed (7am-10pm M-F, 10am-7pm Sat, 10am-10pm Sun during the semester; limited hours during intersession).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. View questions and answers or ask your own question.

Participants

49% Freshman

27% Sophomores

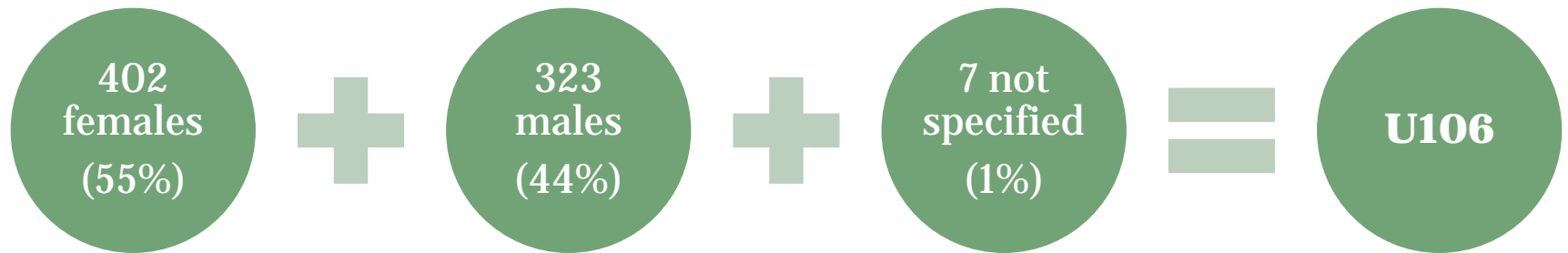
11% Juniors

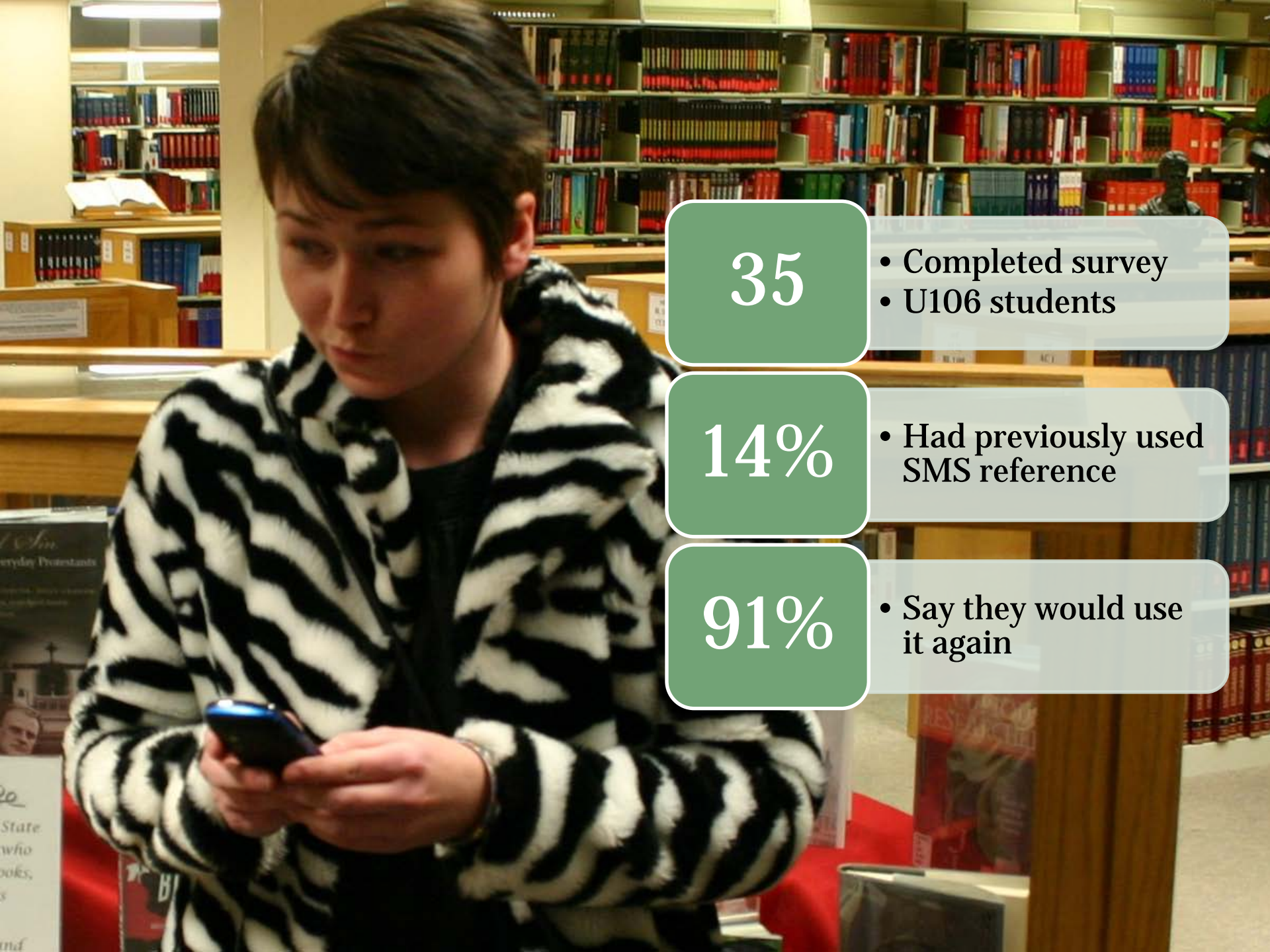
12% Seniors

1% Post-Baccalaureate Undergrads

Participants

n=732





35

- Completed survey
- U106 students

14%

- Had previously used SMS reference

91%

- Say they would use it again

CALLS TWOPEN



How much did you like using the SMS Reference service?

91% Positive

8 loved it
12 liked it a lot
12 liked it

6% Neutral

2

3% Negative

1 disliked it
1 disliked it a lot
0 hated it

Rate the quality of the help you got from the librarian.



94% Positive

10 loved it
12 liked it a lot
10 liked it

6% Neutral

2

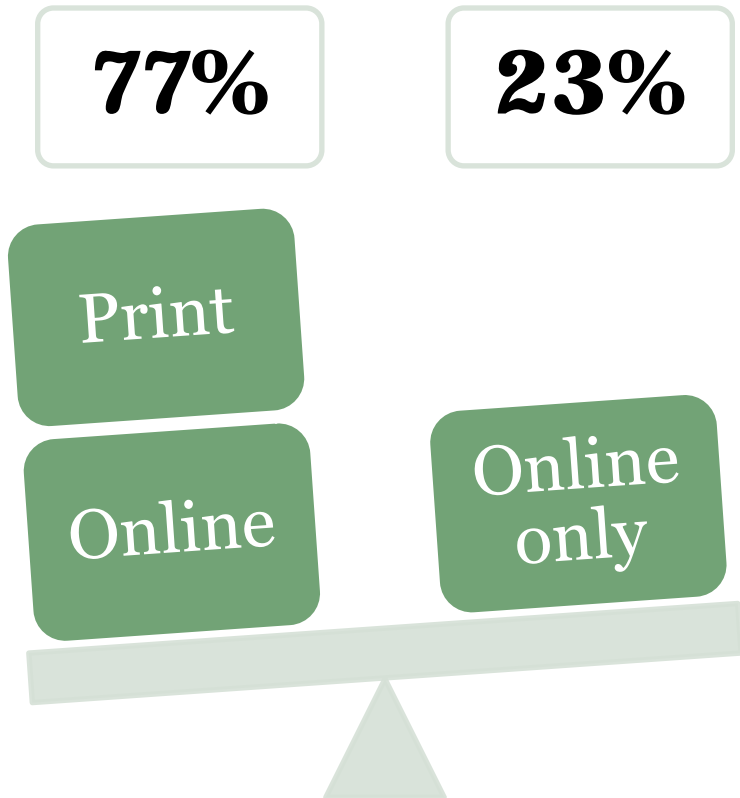
0% Negative

0 disliked it
0 disliked it a lot
0 hated it

**When you use Text
Messaging Reference, do you
want library staff to tell you
about both print and online
sources or just online
sources?**



When you use Text Messaging Reference, do you want library staff to tell you about both print and online sources or just online sources?



29%

Frequently ask
for help at Ref.
desks

58%

Rarely ask or **never** ask
for help at Ref. desks

1 frequently

9 somewhat
frequently

9 somewhat
rarely

10 rarely

1 never



20%

- Desk person does not look like they will know the answer
- 23% = SMS problem

20%

- Desk person does not look like they will know the answer
- 23% = SMS problem

49%

- Do not want to get up from their computer
- 6% = SMS problem

20%

- Desk person does not look like they will know the answer
- 23% = SMS problem

49%

- Do not want to get up from their computer
- 6% = SMS problem

51%

- Feel stupid for not already knowing
- 9% = SMS problem

20%

- Desk person does not look like they will know the answer
- 23% = SMS problem

49%

- Do not want to get up from their computer
- 6% = SMS problem

51%

- Feel stupid for not already knowing
- 9% = SMS problem

54%

- Do not want to bother going to the library building
- 9% = SMS problem

20%

- Desk person does not look like they will know the answer
- 23% = SMS problem

49%

- Do not want to get up from their computer
- 6% = SMS problem

51%

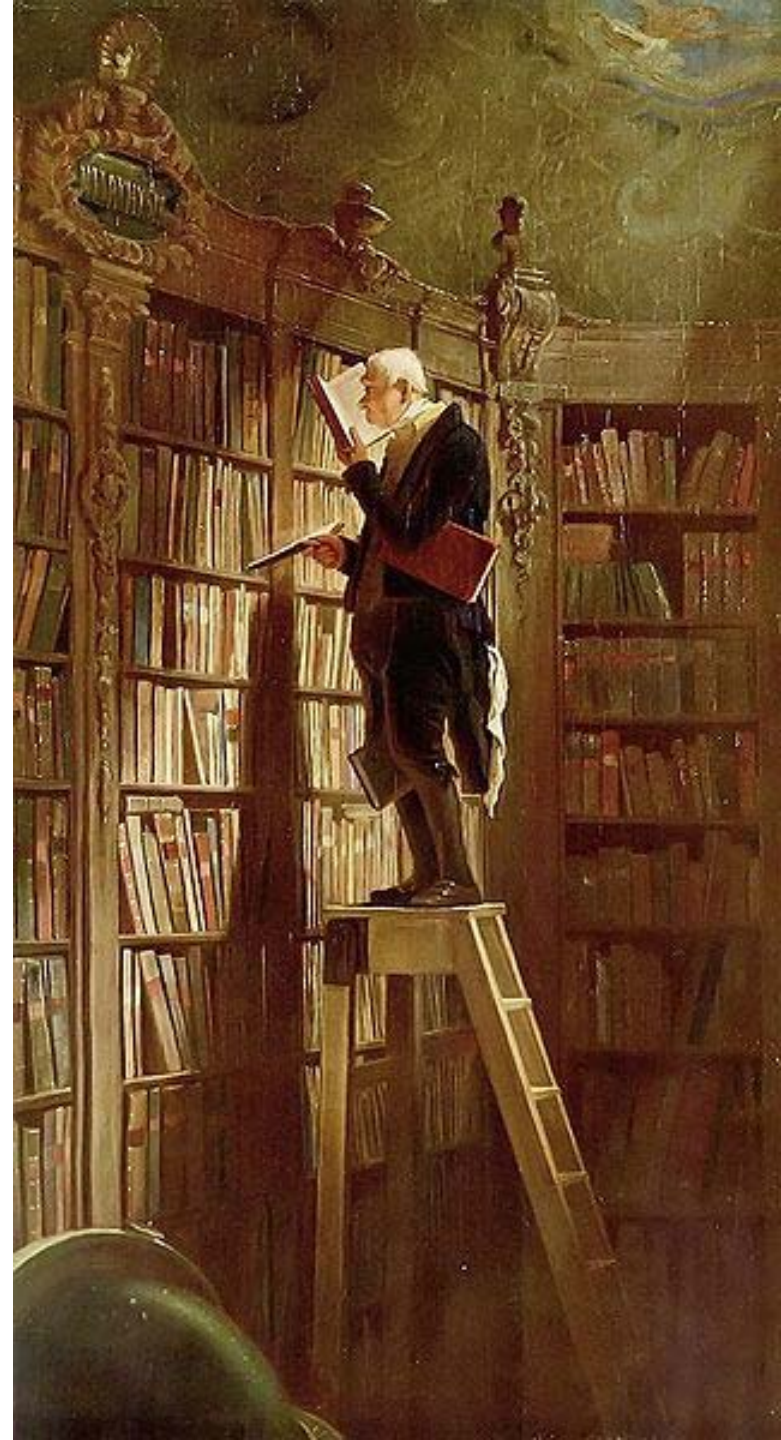
- Feel stupid for not already knowing
- 9% = SMS problem

54%

- Do not want to bother going to the library building
- 9% = SMS problem

57%

- Desk person does n't look like they want to help or they look too busy
- 9% = SMS problem





**57% will
increase**

23% will not
change

20% will
decrease

“..can help students who rely heavily on their cell phone usage.”

“If you feel like your question is silly, it doesn't matter because the texting makes it confidential in a way.”

SMS Advantages

“..don't have to worry about situational factors, like is that person looking at me, do i smell ok, did I word that question correctly, etc.”

“Don't have to wait for help.”

“Sometimes it's easier for the librarian to physically show me where something is.”

“Limited answers. The answers are short and to the point, no elaboration of suggestions.”

SMS Disadvantages

“might be hard to explain exactly what you need”

“there really isn't any. “

“I have had people make me feel dumb before and now will not ask. So for me there is no advantage.”

“they can show you books“

Ref Desk Advantages

“You can get better details”

“Social interaction, more elaboration on answers and suggestions, no wait time.”

“there could be long lines, the librarian may not be competent .”

“Sometimes I don't trust their knowledge or expertise or it is hard to tell if someone is a worker, or a credible enough worker, to offer advice.”

**Ref Desk
Disadvantages**

“I feel dumb and like I am bothering them.”

“none”

73%
conducted
training







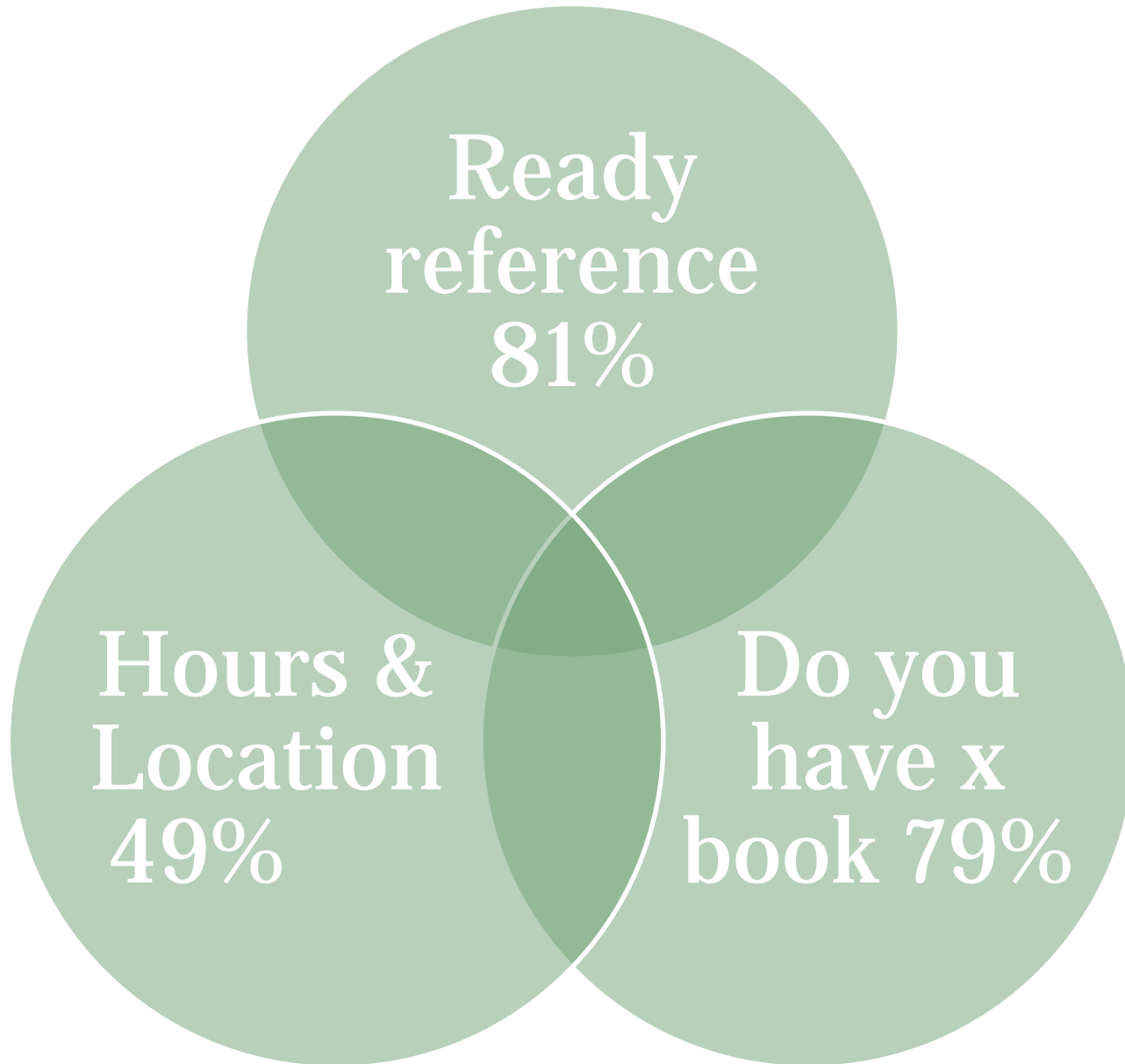
**Unsure....
(14%)**

**Just started
(12.5%)**

**10 or less
(40%)**

**10-100
(28%)**

**Over
100(6.3%)**



Ready
reference
81%

Hours &
Location
49%

Do you
have x
book 79%

**Attract a new user base
and make us attractive to
those who use SMS as
their primary
communication tool**

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their primary
communication tool**

**Convenience to
the patron,
using
technology most
students prefer**

**Attract a new user base
and make us attractive to
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**It's
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**It's
another
form of
reference**

**It is easily
implemented**

**Attract a new user base
and make us attractive to
those who use SMS as
their primary
communication tool**

**Provide
patrons
with as
many ways
to reach us
as we can**

**It's
another
form of
reference**

**Convenience to
the patron,
using
technology most
students prefer**

**It is easily
implemented**

Attract a new user base and make us attractive to those who use SMS as their primary communication tool

Easy way to provide quick answers

Convenience to the patron, using technology most students prefer

Provide patrons with as many ways to reach us as we can

It's another form of reference

It is easily implemented

**Afraid of
technology**

**Afraid of
technology**

**We don't even use the
word reference
anymore**

**Afraid of
technology**

**Not
enough
time or
staff**

**We don't even use the
word reference
anymore**



**We don't offer
text messaging
reference
because we are
behind the
times**

Why not?

Why?

No staff

No time

Decrease library anxiety

Provide many points of reference

It's cutting edge and innovative

Reach users with technology they use

CHAT • EMAIL • PHONE • TEXT

Ask a Librarian 24/7

Your Question/Message

Type your question here.

[Send](#)

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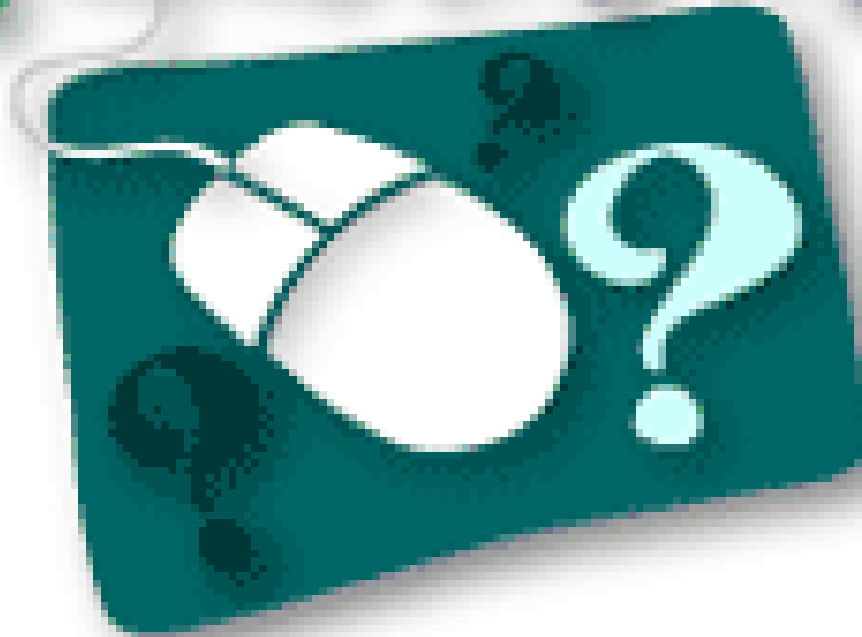
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. View questions and answers or ask your own question.



Ask A Librarian Day

In Florida the statewide texting consortium held an Ask A Librarian day where participating libraries coordinated blogposts, cookies, cakes, and question booths like this one.

Q and A NJ.org



Q and A NJ

They have put together a checklist for marketing virtual reference :

http://www.qandanj.org/description/marketing_ideas.pdf



www.knowitnow.org

Get live help from a librarian for finding resources for homework, suggestions for good books to read, or answers to satisfy your general curiosity...

**24 hours a day,
seven days a week**

Know It Now Ohio

From bookmarks to posters to power point presentations in the schools – this consortium has a comprehensive list of marketing materials on their website: <http://provider.knowitnow.org/content/marketing-materials>

Choose which way you want to connect to KnowItNow24x7:

- ⇒ Go directly to **www.knowitnow.org**
- ⇒ Look for our logo on your library's website
- ⇒ Send a question with your cell phone by texting **knowitnow** to **66746**

Text and data rates apply.



QR Codes

Scan the QR code to text a librarian a question. Put QR codes with posters on your bus system, or coffee shops. Any advertisement for SMS reference is an advertisement for the whole library.

KnowItNow24x7

[back to shop](#)[View Larger](#)

Front Back Additional Views

Lightweight for summer comfort or winter layering, our Men's Organic T-shirt is one of our most popular fine tees. It's what to wear when you care about having 100% organically-grown cotton next to your skin. The next best thing to nothing, naturally.

Organic Cotton Tee

\$19.99

Fit: [Fitted](#)



Smaller cut, designed to fit tightly. **Size up for a looser fit.**

Fabric Thickness:



1. Size: [Size Chart](#)

2. Qty:

AVAILABILITY: In Stock.
Product Number: 030-254614996

[Share](#) | [my](#) [k](#) [G+](#) [✉](#)

Other items by [KnowItNow24x7](#):



[KIN Mug](#)

[White T-Shirt](#)

CafePress

Mugs, t-shirts, polo shirts...



Lesson Plan

Introducing Students to Ohio's Statewide Online Reference Service

Notes to Teachers

This outline can be used alone or in conjunction with the PowerPoint "Introduction to KnowItNow24x7" available at the following address:

http://provider.knowitnow.org/KINdocs/marketing/KnowItNow24x7_Lesson_Plan.ppt

Entire classes logging into KnowItNow24x7 can quickly overwhelm librarians staffing the service. Please choose one or two students at most to access the service during a class demonstration and allow other students to watch their interaction. This will provide a much better experience for both the students and librarians. Encourage students to access the service during other times in school, at home, or in their school library or local public library. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Instruction

Use SMS reference when talking to any class you are teaching. Check out the lesson plan for Know it Now Ohio:

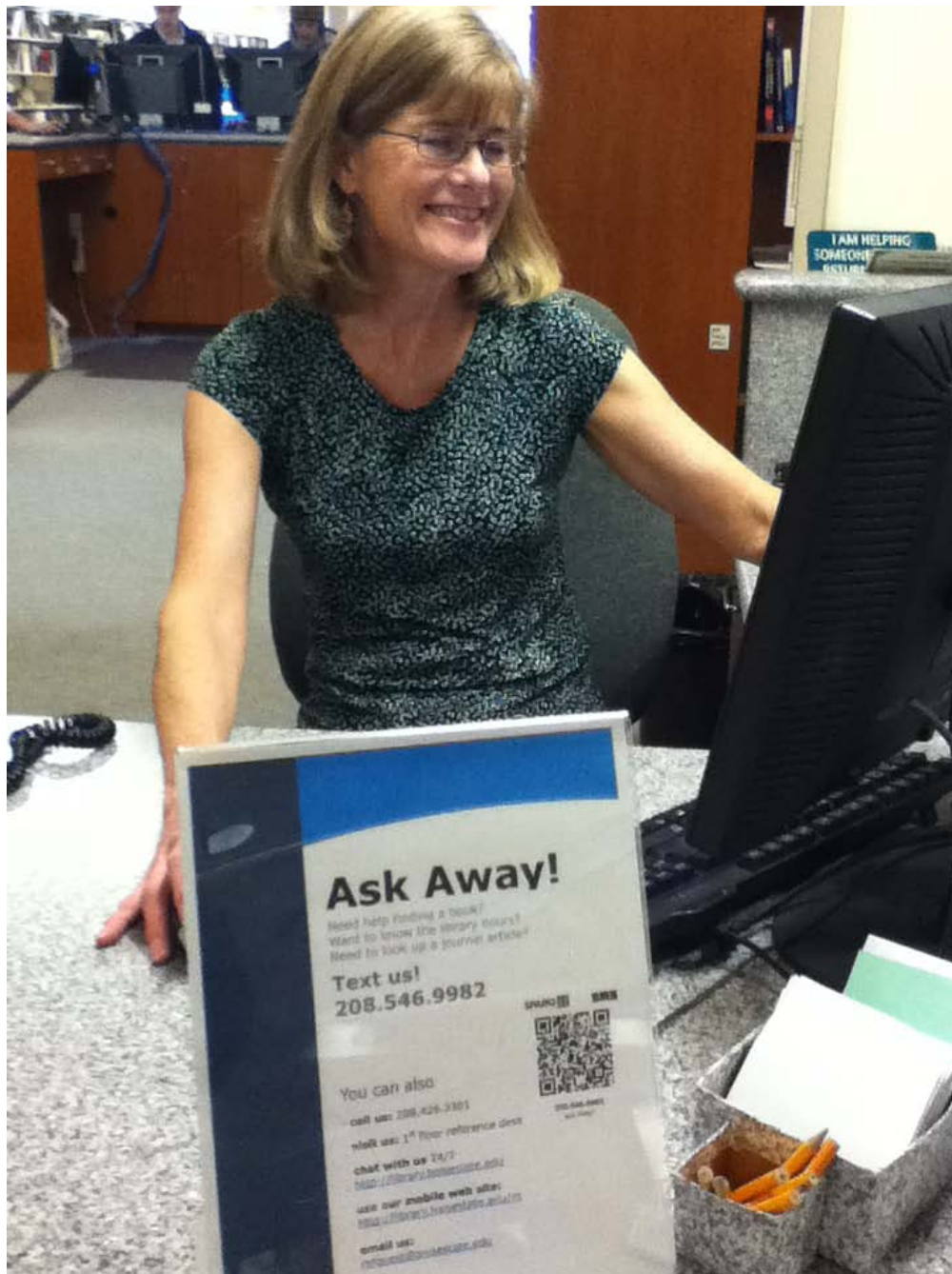
http://provider.knowitnow.org/KINdocs/marketing/KnowItNow24x7_Lesson_Plan.pdf



Instruction

Teaching students to communicate with librarians will engage them in the classroom and beyond!







Numbers H-J-K-L-M-N-P

Faculty, Graduate & Honors
Study Room
Group Study Rooms

1ST FLOOR

Browsing Books & New Book Shelf
Reference
Government Documents

2ND FLOOR

Call Numbers A-B-C-D-E-F-G
McCain Collection

4TH FLOOR

Call Numbers Q-R-S-T-U-V-Z

Semester Hours

Monday-Thursday 7:00-12:00
Friday 7:00-7:00
Saturday 10:00-6:00
Sunday 10-12:00

Ask Away!

Text us!
208.644.6002



IN CASE OF
FIRE
EVACUATE
AND GET OUT
OF SERVICE



UP
DOWN



STEP IT UP!
TAKE THE STAIRS.

Ask Away!

Need help finding a book?
Want to know the library hours?
Need to look up a journal article?

Text us!
208.546.9982

SPARO  SMS



208-546-9982
Ask Away!

You can also

- call us: 208.426.3301
- visit us: 1st floor reference desk
- chat with us 24/7
<http://library.boisestate.edu>
- use our mobile web site:
<http://library.boisestate.edu/m>
- email us:
reference@boisestate.edu



Questions



Contact Information

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