

July 14, 2011
Minutes for AskUs24/7 Advisory board meeting

--Begin--(10:00 a.m.)

Attendees:

Advisory Board:

Mike Daly - Fulton Montgomery Community College

Colleen Kehoe-Robinson - Mohawk Valley Community College

Joan Pellikka - North Country Library System

Mara Thacker - Paul Smith's College

Bill Drew - Tompkins Cortland Community College

Nora Hardy - South Central Regional Library Council

Jaclyn McKewan – Western NY Library Resources Council, Ask Us 24/7 Project Manager

Also:

Sheryl Knab – Western NY Library Resources Council Director

Maureen McLaughlin – Buffalo & Erie County Library System, co-chair of WNYLRC's Regional Advisory Committee

- **Spanish Queue**
 - Brought up because a public library has a small Spanish speaking population
 - Jaclyn asked Google group who was interested, got no replies
 - Don't have that many participating libraries that have Spanish speaking population
 - In order to participate would need to staff four hours
 - Bill: We have a small Spanish speaking population, but we encourage them to use English for their ESOL
- **Welcome Screen**
 - Jaclyn showed welcome screen, also called patron viewport
 - Any thoughts as to how we should change it? Showed MD welcome screen for comparison
 - People disconnect from service because they don't read disclaimer and are confused that librarian is not local
 - Nora: Too many sentences on page, we should prioritize text by what is most important to users. Who is providing the service is the least important
 - We should look into using a bulleted list
 - Bill: Why should we have more than a logo and widget? We can have a small size pop-up instead of a full size page
 - Jaclyn: Small size of chat box wouldn't work when we are pushing out links to web pages to our users. Users wanting a smaller box should really use the Qwidget
 - If we use bulleted list, the text will take up more space and there will be less negative space on web page
 - Nora: Can we make the "connect" button larger?
 - Jaclyn will look into bulleted list and larger connect button
- **Future of Service**

- Some people are displeased with Question Point's reluctance to integrate text message service into chat
 - Bill: we are going to start implementing an in-house chat service during normal business hours; AskUs will become back-up, after hours service. They are going to look into how to integrate AskUs with the in-house service
 - Colleen: We use Meebo during our open hours
 - Sheryl: We are asking about this because we want to discuss the future of the funding for the program
 - Nora: We participate in MyInfoQuest because providing chat via text message is important, we need to be available in all venues
 - Jaclyn: the value of AskUs is after normal business hours when we wouldn't be able to staff a chat service on our own
 - Bill: Usage would go up if texting was integrated; gives choices as to which venue a patron wants to use
 - Jaclyn: OCLC isn't sure if it can handle increased usage, it depends on OCLC's goals
 - How much are we willing to invest as a state in Question Point?
 - Jaclyn: We could test texting service, but not sure if we could pull it off (staffing, financially)
 - Nora: MyInfoQuest is already a national service, they are very organized but if you want more information about it you should contact Mary-Carol Lindbloom at SCRLC.
 - Mara: We are thinking of dropping AskUs 24/7 due to low usage, cost of program (as relates to low usage), and students reluctance to use it since it is not in-house librarians
 - Bill: Concerned about low number of questions we're getting and whether the staffing schedule is efficient
 - Jaclyn: Seems like it's a marketing problem, we should talk more about it, any ideas?
 - Sheryl: Should we put money towards a statewide campaign?
 - Bill: Seems like the materials available are more oriented towards public libraries, a state campaign won't help us, we need to target academic libraries
 - Sheryl: do you have any ideas? Because the service was originally developed for academic libraries and promotional items designed by academic librarians
 - Bill/Jaclyn: will look into how larger academic libraries publicize their chat service
 - Sheryl: Thinking more along the lines of awareness campaign rather than items, social media? Should we have a conference like the Revved up for Reference Conference in Ithaca?
 - Nora: Yes, SCRLC might have grants, but it should be sooner than Spring
 - Bill: We should make it part of another conference, go to other local, regional or statewide conferences kind of like vendors
 - Jaclyn: So we would be marketing to other librarians
 - Bill: Yes, this is important
 - Sheryl: I think we should focus more on a campaign to the public to increase usage
 - Nora: How do the usage stats between public and academic libraries compare
 - Jaclyn: Usage is fairly even with no major changes from the last year, but will look up who uses service more
 - Nora: That would indicate which marketing efforts are working and let us know where to focus future efforts
- **Twitter Account**
 - Jaclyn: We have a twitter account we use as a marketing tool, have a badge on the AskUs24/7 page [demos page]

- We post general, interesting questions to demonstrate the types of questions we receive, show what users could ask
- Any interest in incorporating onto your own site?
- Will anyone help make Twitter posts to keep the feed active
- Jaclyn shows Hoot Suite interface and how you can send pre-timed posts
- Willing to share log-in information so you can submit your own interesting questions
- Demo how to schedule a message
- Nora: Willing to be back-up but doesn't want to post on a regular basis, interested in putting badge on the council web page
- Bill: Wouldn't it be more important to show the answers rather than the questions?
- Jaclyn: Can't fit both into 140 character limit
- Nora: wants to show questions being answered to demonstrate what we do
- Bill: We could use a service to include link to rest of the answer
- Jaclyn: We borrowed this idea from the Maryland group—idea is to show what kind of questions people ask to demonstrate how/why to use the service
- Mara: Isn't an answer included in some with the tiny url?
- Jaclyn: the tiny urls link to the page that was used to answer the question. If we put answers to all the questions we'd be limited the kinds of questions we could post/use
- Mara: Maybe we could occasionally just post suggested resources then?
- Jaclyn: Maybe when there are no good questions we can post resources
- Sheryl: How about posting resources based on the questions that came in
- Jaclyn: Email me if you are interested in helping out
- **Group Communication**
 - Jaclyn: When I need to get information out to the entire group of participating libraries, I usually use Google Group listserv and post announcements on the My Question Point welcome page. Concerned that people aren't reading/seeing the messages
 - Bill: I don't read messages on QP page, don't have time
 - Mara: Don't use QP page, too much text on page already
 - Nora: Agreed, I just read the emails
 - Jaclyn: So I should just use the QP page as back-up. Does anyone read the emails?
 - Mara, Bill, Nora: Yes
 - Jaclyn: OK, QP as back-up, you read the emails, anything else?
 - Mara: don't like the brackets in the subject line of emails, seems like an impersonal listserv email
 - Jaclyn: The brackets are a policy to let everyone know what the email is in regards to
 - Bill: Brackets are very necessary because some people receive email alerts based on that
 - Bill: Dislikes getting duplicate emails from Question Point and AskUs, says all AskUs members should be subscribed to Question Point listserv
 - Jaclyn: I disagree, can't force people to participate, might give the QP listserv too much traffic and anyway she only reposts things that people really need to know, sometimes it's only source of info.
 - Any other ideas please email Jaclyn

--End--(10:55 am)