

UC San Diego

Presentations and Posters

Title

Reaching Out Via Chat Qwidget and Text Messaging

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Introduction

Patron questions have been declining for the past several years at the UCSD Biomedical Library (BML). Reference services were being offered via email, chat, Instant Messaging (IM), in-person and telephone. Our students, faculty, and staff were not always able to easily find our Ask a Librarian page that describes our services, so a new graphic was added to the UCSD Libraries homepage. Other solutions to increase usage were investigated.

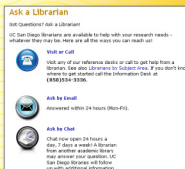
When OCLC QuestionPoint made available their Qwidget (chat widget), we decided to add it to our webpages in August 2008 to see if more questions would be submitted. In September 2008, we also implemented a pilot program for a text messaging option using Meebo and the free AIM Hack. This poster presents the results of adding these two user friendly and more visible choices for our patrons.

Timeline

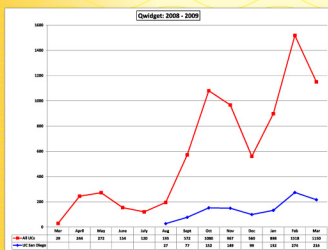
- **May 2004** – UCSD Biomedical Library signs contract with OCLC QuestionPoint (QP) for email virtual reference services.
- **February 2006** – Instant Messaging (IM) via Meebo service is added at the BML Reference Desk.
- **November 2006** – UCSD Libraries join UC-Wide Chat service (with librarians from 6 other UC campuses: UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, UC Los Angeles, UC Merced, UC Riverside, and UC Santa Barbara).
- **August 2008** – The QP Qwidget (chat widget) is added to the UCSD Libraries Ask a Librarian webpage. Several of the UCSD Libraries also added the Qwidget to individual webpages.
- **September 2008** – Text messaging service via Meebo and the AIM Hack is added to the BML Ask a Librarian page, as a 6 month pilot project.
- **January 2009** – The UC-Wide Chat service joins the QP 24/7 Academic Queue.
- **January 2009** – Text messaging via Meebo and the AIM Hack stops working. The pilot project is ended prematurely.



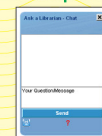
New graphic added to UCSD Libraries homepage.



Qwidget Statistics, 8/08 - 3/09

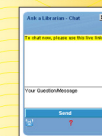


When chat is open

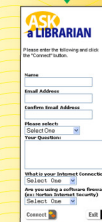


Type question for direct chat

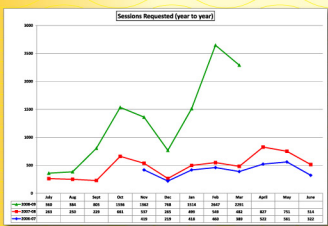
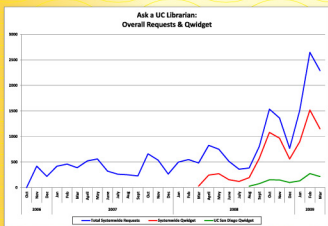
When UC chat is closed



Click link to go to chat form and QP 24/7



UC-Wide Chat Statistics, 11/06 - 3/09



A UCSD Catalog search that produces zero results will offer chat help via the Qwidget.

Text Messaging at BML

Options Considered for Pilot Proposal in 9/08

- AIM Hack – Free SMS provider via Meebo (already being used for IM at BML)
- Altarama – Start up fee, international phone call involved
- Mosio/Text a Librarian – Just getting started during proposal writing
- Upside Wireless – Required a cell phone device for library

AIM Hack was chosen because it was free and also easy to assimilate into the BML Reference Desk procedures with minimal training.

Text Messaging Marketing

- Business cards with Text Us message and logo
- Text BML tents placed around library and in student lounge
- Scratch paper with Text BML Logo at Single Service Desk
- Email announcements to School of Medicine (SOM) students
- Email announcements to all UCSD Libraries staff



Business card design

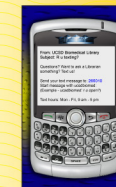


Table tent design

Examples of Questions Received

- What are the library hours during Finals Week?
- How to identify peer-reviewed articles
- Compliant about noise in the study lounge
- When a group study room was due for renewal
- How to use Roger (UCSD online catalog)
- Whether a particular journal was owned by UCSD Libraries

Conclusions

Text messaging at BML was not a success. During the four month pilot, only 12 text messages were received even though the new service was marketed extensively. The pilot was ended prematurely due to SMS problems between the AIM Hack and Meebo.

The Qwidget has been a resounding success. The percent of chat sessions requested via Qwidget is averaging 69% at UCSD and 63% system-wide. Overall chat requests system-wide are up 475% from March 2008 to March 2009.

Text Messaging Service Results

Statistics: 10/08 - 1/09

10/08	- 1
11/08	- 2
12/08	- 7
1/09	- 2
TOTAL	- 12