

If we build it, will they come?

Understanding reference users
in the age of texting

Lili Luo, Aug 13, 2012



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SERVICES



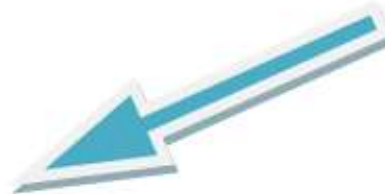
*Do you own a cell
phone?*

Do you text?

According to the Pew Internet & American Life Project:

- In 2011, 83% of American adults own mobile phones and 73% send and receive text messages.
- Those between the ages of 18 and 24 exchange a daily average of 109.5 messages

Text A Librarian – how text reference works



1 ABC

2 DEF

3 GHI

SEND

My Info Quest

www.myinfoquest.info

[About the Service](#) [Information for Librarians](#) [MIQ in the News](#)

Welcome to My Info Quest - Txt 4 Answers!

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

Text your library's keyword (see *list of library keywords below*) to 66746 for instructions. It's easy and accurate!

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

We are accepting new members; if your library would like to join, please email [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.**

Library Codes

Include the code for your library in your text message:

**Arkansas River Valley Regional Library - AVR
Black Hawk East LRC - BHC
Bradley University Library - BUL
Brazosport College - BCL
Broome County Public Library - BROOME
College of San Mateo Library - CSM
College of Westchester Library - CWL
Colorado Mountain College - CMC
Contra Costa County Library - CCC
Frontier Community College - FCCC**

Text Reference Question Types

Question Category	%
Local Library Related	13.3
Non Local Library Related	
Ready Reference	69.8
Specific-search	9.2
Personal Knowledge Related	1.3
About My InfoQuest	2.4
Out of Service Scope	1.5
Unclear Questions	2.5

• *A sample of questions.*

- What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen european swallow?
- wut does comme d'habitude mean in French
- what is the weather forecast for portland, oregon?
- What is the reason for each country having its own currency?
- Why are so manny players in the world

How teen library patrons perceive text reference service

Only 1/36 was aware of the service

Participants' willingness to use the service was evenly split among: willing to use it, it depends, and would not use it

They would be seeking help primarily for school or library related information needs

Response time: expectations ranged from three to twenty minutes.

Librarians' use of texting abbreviations: only use it reasonably to shorten a message (e.g. USA).

Constraints of texting: character limit and cost: should not be a concern

Use/non-use of text reference service among library patrons

Among the 303 respondents, 255 (84.2%) never used the service, and 48 (15.8%) did.

59.8% -- were not aware of it

22.5% -- were not texters

22.5% -- considered their information needs adequately met via other reference venues

15.7% -- were self-sufficient information seekers

How users discovered text reference service	%
I found it on the library Website.	41.7
I learned about it in the library promotional material/events.	16.7
I heard about it from someone I know.	6.3
I heard about it from a library staff member.	37.5

What users liked about text reference service	%
It's easy to use.	77.1
It's convenient.	66.7
It's fast to get an answer.	52.1
I'm comfortable with it.	47.9
Librarians are a reliable source of information.	4.2
It's cool and fun.	4.2
It is useful when I have an idea of the question I want to ask but cannot form it into a specific Google search.	2.1

Implications for Best Practices



Marketing



User
Satisfaction



Training

Questions/Comments?

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