

ASK a Librarian

Annual Report

2006-07

At a glance

By the numbers

- Total usage up 94 percent from last year!
- 105,844 questions answered since 2003
- 43,844 questions answered in 2006-07: 31,359 via live chat; 12,485 via email
- Librarians spent over 10,000 hours staffing the desks
- 169 staff trained in 16 sessions
- Open 84 hours a week: Sun.-Thurs., 10 a.m.-midnight; Fri. & Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. EST

Top 10 academic (determined by patron usage)

1. University of Florida
2. Miami Dade College
3. St. Petersburg College
4. Florida International University
5. Nova Southeastern University
6. Valencia Community College
7. Manatee Community College
8. Palm Beach Community College
9. Florida Community College at Jacksonville
10. Daytona Beach Community College

Top 10 public (determined by patron usage)

1. Orange County Library System
2. Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System
3. Broward County Library
4. State Library of Florida, Div of Library & Info Svcs
5. Miami-Dade Public Library
6. Jacksonville Public Library
7. Sarasota County Library System
8. Pasco County Library System
9. Volusia County Public Library
10. Lee County Library System

Top 10 growth/increase over last year

1. Citrus County Library System
2. St. Petersburg College
3. Bethune-Cookman College
4. Ave Maria University
5. Orange County Library System
6. Delray Beach Public Library
7. Wilderness Coast Public Libraries
8. Tallahassee Community College
9. Everglades University
10. State Library of Florida, Div of Library & Info Svcs

Top 10 use by county (determined by zip code)

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Broward | 6. Palm Beach |
| 2. Dade | 7. Pasco |
| 3. Hillsborough | 8. Lee |
| 4. Duval | 9. Brevard |
| 5. Pinellas | 10. Seminole |

Don't see your library on any of these lists?

Remember - LINK LOCATION MATTERS!

Obvious links (especially our logo) on your homepage and throughout your website directly correlate with higher use in live sessions and email use. Conversely, buried logos or placement on only one page decreases use significantly. Logos are available at info.askalibrarian.org (under promotion).

About Ask a Librarian

Ask a Librarian (www.askalibrarian.org) is a free online service that allows patrons to chat with a librarian for help with homework or general questions. More than 90 libraries statewide collaborate to provide this service to their patrons and the patrons of other participating libraries, creating the largest community of librarians in Florida. Ask a Librarian is a joint project of the College Center for Library Automation and the Tampa Bay Library Consortium. Ask a Librarian is funded as part of the Florida Electronic Library by a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant and is administered by the State Library and Archives of Florida.

Marketing

•Our "Back to School" campaign included simple, colorful posters and bookmarks that target high school and college students. We offer the collateral for free to schools and libraries.

•In September 2006, Ask a Librarian purchased ads in 16 community college and university newspapers throughout Florida. Usage increased 29.4 percent in the colleges where ads were placed, compared to a 17.9 percent usage increase in community colleges in general.

•To promote our service to the business community, we created one-page flyers, which we offered for free to libraries and business centers. We also sent flyers to SCORE, a nonprofit organization that offers free assistance to entrepreneurs, asking them to offer our flyers at workshops and functions.

• We developed a 30-second public service announcement (PSA), which played on several government channels throughout the state and ran for two months on the Florida Department of Education's Knowledge Channel.

Posters and bookmarks may be customized with your library's information. To order any of our marketing collateral, visit info.askalibrarian.org and click on "promotional materials."

Local desk

The local desk lets libraries staff the chat service for only their patrons during the hours they choose, in addition to the hours they staff for the statewide service. In 2006-07, seven libraries chose to staff a local desk to expand local assistance to their users and to offer specialized services such as a genealogy desk.

Academic Desk introduced

In September 2007, Ask a Librarian kicked off its Academic Desk based upon the recommendations of the Ask a Librarian Academic Taskforce, which was created in July 2006. In its first month, the Academic Desk answered 509 questions -- 16 percent of total questions submitted that month.

The desk's kickoff was designed to correspond with the beginning of the academic fall semester. The Academic Desk, or queue, routes live chat questions to either the main collaborative desk or to the academic desk based upon the user's entry point or self-assigned library. The Academic Desk is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday (EST). After 4 p.m., all questions are routed back to a single collaborative desk.



Join us at FLA!

FLA Annual Conference

Tradewinds Beach Resorts, St. Pete Beach, Florida



Join us at 8:30 a.m. on April 24, 2008, for the Ask a Librarian Forum. We also invite you to attend Marie Radford's presentation, "Pls hurry it up thanks!!!" at 3:30 p.m. about generational differences and virtual reference.

The Director's Chair



In October, we introduced The Director's Chair, a contest in which Florida high school students submit commercials via YouTube to promote Ask a Librarian. A panel of judges will determine the top five finalists, and then it will be up to the public to vote for their favorite video from Jan. 27 to Feb. 9, 2008. For more information, visit www.askalibrarian.org/thedirectorschair.

Thanks for the add!

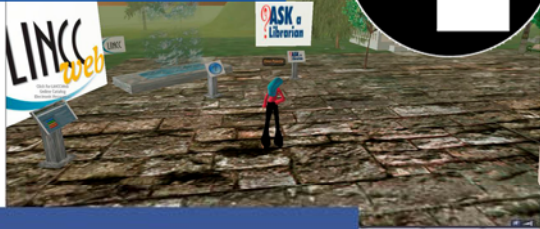
www.askalibrarian.org

Developing a social networking presence

Ask a Librarian joined the MySpace community with an ever-evolving teen-focused page, which can be found at www.myspace.com/askalibrarianfl. We have incorporated a widget which allows patrons to ask questions to our service directly from our MySpace page. Approximately one to four percent of our monthly usage comes from MySpace. To the left is a banner that we use to promote our service to our more than 1,000 MySpace friends.



Staff at the College Center for Library Automation (CCLA) developed a billboard for Ask a Librarian in Second Life, a three-dimensional virtual world entirely created by its 'residents.' The billboard was developed as part of CCLA's larger Second Life presence. Currently, Second Life has about 700,000 to 850,000 residents. Academic institutions are finding the 3-D virtual world to be a strong tool for connecting users to their institution in cyberspace.



Our Facebook page is yet another free promotional tool to help us keep our name and service in front of our target audience. Similar to our MySpace page, we have incorporated customizable widgets that allow patrons to ask questions directly from our page or their libraries' pages.



For more information about widgets, or to have us customize a widget for your MySpace or Facebook page, please contact Diana at (813) 622-8252 (ext. 234) or sachsd@tblc.org.

Quality Assurance

A primary goal of Ask a Librarian is to deliver superb customer service in a digital environment. To assist us in ensuring great customer service, the Quality Assurance Workgroup randomly reads transcripts and accepts nominations for the Exemplary Reference Awards each month. The group recognizes individuals each month for exemplary sessions in the following categories: detailed chat, teaching chat and brief chat. The winner of the detailed Exemplary Reference Award receives a \$20 Borders gift card. In the upcoming year, the award will be a \$20 gift card to Amazon.com.

Congratulations to the 2006-07 Exemplary Chat Award winners: Sonia Alcantara, Sally Bissell, Douglas Black, Krista Branan, Laura Cifelli, Tom Cipullo, Ann Coppola, Adam Davis, Alicia Ellison, Vicki Flora, Marylou Galvin, Lora Glass, Candy Heise, Pammy Herring, Inna Ilinskaya, Brian Jaudon, Steve Kronen, Dani Lichtenberg, Susan Livingston, Deborah Meekel, Courtney Moore, David Parsons, James Paul, Jorge Perez, Michelle Petrin, Meredith Pierce, Regina Seguin, Mike Shell, Andy Todd, Jackie Vargo.

Training

We offer regular training sessions to ensure our participants are knowledgeable and up-to-date on all our procedures. Visit www.tblc.org/training to register for a session. Additional dates for full-day and partial-day workshops will be announced throughout the year. Online practice is also available on the second Tuesday of each month in the Ask a Librarian Training Rooms.

Stay current!
For regular updates on Ask a Librarian, visit our blog at www.tblc.org/askalibrarianblog.

Coming soon!
Be on the lookout for Ask a Librarian MOBILE.

Questions? Comments?
Contact Diana Sachs-Silveira
Virtual Reference Manager
(813) 622-8252 (ext. 234)
sachsd@tblc.org

Thank you to all of our participating libraries

Names in bold represent libraries that joined Ask a Librarian in 2006-07.

- Alachua County Library District • American InterContinental University • Ave Maria University • Barry University • **Bartow Public Library** • Bay County Public Library/Northwest Regional Bethune Cookman • Brevard Community College • Brevard County Libraries • Broward Community College • Broward County Library • Bruton Memorial Library (Plant City)
- Central Florida Community College • Charlotte-Glades Library System • Chipola College • Citrus County Library System • **Clearwater Public Library** • Collier County Public Library
- Daytona Beach Community College • Delray Beach Public Library • Dunedin Public Library • East Lake Community Library • Edison College • Everglades University
- Florida Community College at Jacksonville • Florida Gulf Coast University Library • **Florida International University** • Florida Keys Community College • **Florida Memorial University**
- Florida Metropolitan University • Florida Virtual School • Gulf Coast Community College • Gulfport Public Library • Harold Goldstein Library (FSU – College of Information Library)
- Hialeah Public Libraries • Hillsborough Community College • Hodges University • Indian River Community College • Indian River County Main Library • Jacksonville Public Library
- John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art** • Lake City Community College • Lake County Library System • Lake Sumter Community College • Lake Wales Public Library • Lake Worth Public Library
- Largo Library • Lee County Library System • LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library • Maitland Public Library • Manatee Community College • Manatee County Public Library
- Martin County Library System • Macdonald Kelce Library University of Tampa • Miami Dade College • Miami Dade Public Library • Nassau County Public Library System • Niceville Public Library
- North Florida Community College • North Miami Public Library • Nova Southeastern • Okaloosa-Walton College • Orange County Public Library • Osceola Library System
- Palm Beach Atlantic University • Palm Beach Community College • Palm Beach County Library System • Palm Harbor Library • **Parkland Library** • Pasco - Hernando Community College
- Pasco County Library System • Pensacola Junior College • Pinellas Park Public Library • Polk Community College • Saint Leo University, Cannon Memorial Library • Sanibel Public Library
- Santa Fe Community College • Sarasota County Library System • School District of Palm Beach County • Seminole Community College • South Florida Community College
- Southeastern University • St Johns County Public Library System • St Johns River Community College • St Lucie County Library System • St Petersburg College • St Petersburg Public Library
- State Library of Florida • Suwannee River Regional Library • Tallahassee Community College • Tampa Hillsborough Public Library • University of Florida Libraries, George A Smathers Libraries
- Valencia Community College • Volusia County Public Library • West Palm Beach Public Library • Wilderness Coast Public Libraries • Winter Park Public Library