Maryland AskUsNow! Liaison Meeting

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

South Bowie Branch, Prince George's County Memorial Library System

10:30am-1:00pm

<u>Attendance</u>

Present

- Paul Chasen, Maryland AskUsNow! Statewide Coordinator
- Becca Starr, Maryland AskUsNow! Support for Operations
- Cameron Caswell, Anne Arundel Community College
- James Neal, Prince George's County Memorial Library System

Virtually Present

- Cynthia Dennis, Baltimore County Public Library
- Tom Haney, QuestionPoint
- Erika Harris, Community College of Baltimore County
- Erin Kelly, Enoch Pratt Free Library & SLRC
- Theresa Mastrodonato, Frostburg State University
- Christy McKinney, Carroll County Public Library
- Kacie Morrell, Frederick County Public Libraries
- Karen Neville, Worcester County Library
- Stephanie Petruso, Anne Arundel County Public Library
- Laksamee Putnam, Towson University
- Ellen Ruoff, Calvert Library
- Karri Sites, QuestionPoint
- Jan Thomas, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Sue Tinanoff, Baltimore County Public Library
- Pam Williams, Frostburg State University

Notified Absence

- Suzy Bell, Cecil County Public Library
- Anne Cohn, Montgomery County Public Libraries
- LuAnn Fisher, Hagerstown Community College
- Joyce Garczynski, Towson University
- Amanda Gonzalez, MD Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
- Shannon Kraushaar, Washington County Free Library
- Metta Lash, Montgomery College

- Sandy Marinaro, Stevenson University
- Chris McGee, Allegany County Library System
- Catherine McGuire, Maryland State Law Library
- Jenny Novacescu, Harford County Public Library
- Sara Stevenson, St. Mary's County Library

No Notified Absence

- Jim Lynch, Baltimore City Community College
- Joseph Bree, University of Maryland, Eastern Shore

Welcome/AskUsNow! in Review

Paul shared service highlights that have occurred since our last liaison meeting:

- AskUsNow! welcomed three new library liaisons: Cameron Caswell (AACC), Kacie Morrell (Frederick) and Anne Cohn (Montgomery CPL). Janice Lathrop, Melissa VanShaick, and Dale Pastor were recognized for their strong contributions to the service as outgoing liaisons.
- AskUsNow! chat providers answered over 41,000 questions during FY 16.
- AskUsNow! reached its highest contribution rate in August 2016: chat providers are accepting 75% of chats arriving through AskUsNow!.

Stephanie formally announced that the Anne Arundel County Public Library will be ending its partnership with AskUsNow! on December 31, 2016.

June 2016 Meeting Minutes

Meeting notes from June 2016 were approved. Theresa Mastrodonato motioned, James Neal seconded.

QuestionPoint Update

Tom Haney and Karri Sites from QuestionPoint presented an update on the service, including chat software, branding, and next steps.

The QuestionPoint collaborative – which is made up of 700 institutions -- answered 900,000 chat sessions in last fiscal year. QuestionPoint recently hired new backup librarians; they are scheduled to start in Fall 2016.

Karri demonstrated proactive chat upgrades to the qwidget that are currently in development:

- Exit Intent Popup: Qwidget appears when the mouse moves to close the tab
- Sliding Panel: Qwidget slides into frame on the side of the page after a set period of time
- Sticky column: Qwidget stays above the fold as a user scrolls down the page, so it's always visible.

Tom and Karri discussed additional upgrades and discoveries, including:

- Screenleap: Patrons can share their screen with a chat provider. It requires no download on the patron's end.   The chat provider must download the free program at http://www.screenleap.com/.
- QuestionPoint will bring back email non-delivery reports. Liaisons and chat providers will be able to tell if their follow up email bounces.
- While QuestionPoint is currently ADA compliant, they are working with some partners to create a product that is more accessible (and screenreader-friendly).
- Tom is investigating the software's compatibility to send attachments during chat and send a follow up request to more than one referral partner or email address.
- QuestionPoint will host a software training in early October. They will send a notification of this training to AskUsNow!.

QuestionPoint and liaisons discussed different ways to promote AskUsNow!. Ideas included:

- Adding the Qwidget to social media sites (such as [Facebook](#)) and CMS' (such as Blackboard). More information is available at http://wiki.questionpoint.org/w/page/13839489/Qwidget%20Tips.
- Direct marketing to homeschool communities and teachers.
- Promotion of the service through other library resources, such as LibGuides, EBSCO, and during information literacy class visits
- Suggesting a Qwidget to nontraditional marketing sources, such as the YMCA or government websites.

Liaisons were encouraged to email Karri and Tom directly, http://askusnow.info/staff/contact, with any chat form, Qwidget, marketing, and overall software questions. They will work with individual libraries, and not just through Paul and Becca, to improve chat.

Social Media Update

Becca will update the pre-made posts on the staff website so partners can integrate them into their social media repertoire.

Currently, AskUsNow! chooses three general reference and research topics per month to provide more focus for social media posts. AskUsNow! is also developing a SurveyMonkey for Q3 and/or Q4 to better measure who finds AskUsNow! via social media.

Becca thanked AskUsNow! partners for showcasing AskUsNow! on their library's social media sites. Recent libraries who mentioned AskUsNow! on Twitter include Prince George's, Frederick, Worcester, Towson, and Enoch Pratt. Paul acknowledged the educators in Calvert County who promote AskUsNow! on social media.

Becca also introduced a new initiative to involve AskUsNow! providers in fun social media activities. Providers will be able to participate in polls to share hobbies, reading recommendations, and subject

expertise.   Results will be shared through our social media channels, showing the "faces" behind the virtual service.

Direct Marketing

AskUsNow! increased its direct marketing efforts to students and educators. Private and public school librarians, and professors receive emails introducing them to AskUsNow!. Emails are also sent to school librarians and professors that have been on AskUsNow! to get feedback on the service and encourage future use. In addition to making sure we follow Maryland school librarian and related social media account, we have been increasing our outreach and attendance at conferences. Key outreach initiatives include:

- AskUsNow! will attend MASL and the Maryland Council of Social Studies/Maryland Council of Teachers of English Language Arts Joint Conference, both in October 2016.
- AskUsNow! promoted the service at nontraditional events, such as Balticon (May 2016) and Baltimore Comic-Con (September 2016).
- Paul will be talking to University of Maryland iSchool students about virtual reference.

Liaisons brainstormed different outreach ideas, including:

- Frostburg TASTE conference (May 2017)
- Maryland STEM Festival (November 2016)
- Computers in Libraries (March 2017)

Website Redesign

AskUsNow! has rescheduled the launch of the redesigned askusnow.info site to early 2017. AskUsNow! is continuing to analyze ways to make the website more user-friendly and chat focused. Currently, we are exploring placing one generic chat form and Qwidget on the website in place of individual forms for each partner, streamlining the customer's entry into chat. This change would have no effect on individual chat forms and Qwidgets accessed from a partner's website.

Statistical Sampling Update

AskUsNow! has completed two weeks of statistical sampling in FY 17. AskUsNow! chat providers have answered 5,441 questions. This puts us on pace to answer 38,000 questions, and we have not taken into account the student chat questions from September -June.

Since adding in a "Directional" category, 10% chat questions receive this mark.

Paul thanked liaisons for their feedback and questions on marking questions, and advised we would continue the discussion through email in Q2.

Training Update

New staff training dates continue to be open for registration. They will be held on October 25 and 27 at the Odenton Branch of AACPL. Staff may register through the AskUsNow! staff website: http://askusnow.info/staff/training/registration.

Around the Room

Becca presented revisions to the wording of the seventh point in our Liaison Meeting Ground Rules from "Silence = consent. Please join the conversation" to "Your contribution is important. Please join the conversation." Theresa motioned, Cameron seconded. Becca will update the Ground Rules page on the staff website.

Liaisons posed questions about QuestionPoint:

- Has anyone implemented the updates to the Qwidget as shown on sandbox site?: Some members of the QuestionPoint Cooperative are beginning to test them out. The Schlow Centre Region Library (State College, PA) has an example on their website related to the sandbox. The chat widget is available when a "no results" search is performed on their catalog. Liaisons can view it in action by going to http://www.schlowlibrary.org/ and performing a catalog search that will provide no results.

- How should we be using the recall function for answering chat sessions? Can the recall function be used? Does it take credit away from the original provider? The recall function can be used, and it is an option for answering chat sessions without sending them to follow-up. Liaisons and chat providers can perform the same function by claiming it in their Questions list. Recalling chat sessions will not take credit away from the chat provider, as their screenname will still be listed on them.

Service Announcements

- Sue Tinanoff will be retiring soon after serving as BCPL's liaison for over 13 years. Paul thanked her for her consistent contribution and dedication to the service, and for being a part of AskUsNow! since its inception. Cynthia Dennis will take over as liaison.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held at the Orleans Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library on December 14, 2016.

Thank You

Thank you to James Neal, John Krivak, Robin Jacobsen, and the staff of PGCMLS South Bowie for hosting.

Action Items

AskUsNow! Administration

- In Q2, update social media pre-made posts on the staff website.
- In Q2, decide on a social media initiative involving more chat providers.
- In Q2, add a Quality Review post to the Subscription Group Announcements.
- In Q2, continue to revise content on the new www.askusnow.info website and make a decision on using a single chat form/Qwidget for the new website. In Q3, officially launch the next www.askusnow.info website.
- In Q2, report out the Q1 AskUsNow! Statistical Sampling results to stakeholders of the service. We will also text out "chat question extraction" from offline reports in QuestionPoint.
- In Q2-Q4, continue to market AskUsNow! at outreach events and inquire about new events.
- In Q2-Q4, continue to do direct email marketing to school librarians and professors.
- In Q2-Q4, continue to add posts on the Staff website in the Learning Center.

AskUsNow! Liaisons

- Contact Paul for the password to view and test out Qwidgets from QuestionPoint's Qwidget development site.
- AskUsNow! social media marketing help? Please contact Becca and Paul.
- Remove any past Summer Reading information from the library's policy page.
- Continue to promote AskUsNow! to educators using the new marketing toolkit.
- Continue to promote AskUsNow! online and at outreach events to targeted audiences.
- Email questions and suggestions regarding QuestionPoint software, marketing, and training to Paul and Becca OR directly to Tom and Karri.

Minutes taken by Becca Starr, with assistance from Erika Harris, on 9/21/16.