

Maryland AskUsNow! Liaison Meeting

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Orleans Branch, Enoch Pratt Free Library

10:30am-1:00pm

Attendance

Present

- Cynthia Dennis, Baltimore County Public Library
- Erika Hodge Harris, Community College of Baltimore County
- Robin Jacobsen, Prince George's County Memorial Library System
- Jim Lynch, Baltimore City Community College
- Susan Pluhar, Enoch Pratt Free Library/Maryland's State Library Resource Center
- Laksamee Putnam, Towson University
- Rebecca Starr, Maryland AskUsNow! Support for Operations

Virtually Present

- Sarah Avant, Calvert Library
- Cameron Caswell, Anne Arundel Community College
- Paul Chasen, Maryland AskUsNow! Statewide Coordinator
- Anne Cohn, Montgomery County Public Libraries
- LuAnn Fisher, Hagerstown Community College
- Amanda Gonzalez, MD Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
- Suzie Kuch, Charles County Library
- Metta Lash, Montgomery College
- Theresa Mastrodonato, Frostburg State University
- Catherine McGuire, Maryland State Law Library
- Christy McKinney, Carroll County Public Library
- Kacie Morrell, Frederick County Public Libraries
- Jan Thomas, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Notified Absence

- Suzy Bell, Cecil County Public Library
- Shannon Kraushaar, Washington County Free Library

- Sandy Marinaro, Stevenson University
- Chris McGee, Allegany County Library System
- Karen Neville, Worcester County Library
- Stephanie Petruso, Anne Arundel County Public Library
- Sara Stephenson, St. Mary's County Library
- Pam Williams, Frostburg State University

No Notified Absence

- Joseph Bree, University of Maryland, Eastern Shore

Welcome/AskUsNow! in Review

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

- AskUsNow! saw an increase in over 665 chat sessions compared to December 2015.
- Seven new chat providers were trained in October 2016.
- AskUsNow! increased its student outreach, also attending the Maryland Association of School Librarians (MASL) Conference in October 2016.
- Thank you to Sue Tinanoff (BCPL), Jenny Novacescu (Harford County PL), and James Neal (PGCMLS) for their service as AskUsNow! liaisons.

September 2016 Meeting Minutes

Meeting notes from September were approved with minimal edits. Susan Pluhar motioned, Jim Lynch seconded.

Around the Room Discussion

Service topics addressed during open discussion time:

- Offering database resources vs. “free websites” for students: Choice of resources is dependent on the situation, and should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis with a reference interview.
- Policy pages: Policy page alerts should be timely and reviewed routinely.
- Students asking “moderately inappropriate” questions: Providers should treat inquiries seriously until given clear evidence to prove otherwise. AskUsNow! administration will contact QuestionPoint about the possibility of creating “universal guidelines” to address student behavior during class visits.

AskUsNow! Statewide Schedule

If liaisons need to make updates to their weekly schedule, they should contact Paul by December 28th with changes. Liaisons are encouraged to check the “Shifts Available” page in ShiftPlanning to see if a high-priority time slot may fit into the weekly schedule.

Partners may also create a rotating schedule if desired, and should contact Paul for more information on this option if it is of interest.

QuestionPoint Update

Liaisons discussed [QuestionPoint’s Best Practices for Database Access](#), particularly “Results from the Web-Based Survey” (pp. 1-2) and “Strategies for Chatting Librarians” (p. 4). The document was recently approved by the QuestionPoint Cooperative.

Key discussion points:

- Permalinks and dynamic URLs from databases may not be available later to customers. Providers should send a citation along with the permalink.
- If database access is not available, providers may consult the list of databases to make suggestions. If they have access to a database through their own library, they may elect to recreate a search using their own tools.
- Portions of this document will be discussed during future AskUsNow! training opportunities, including New Staff Training.

Social Media

- In January 2017, Rebecca will create a new batch of social media posts for partner libraries. They will be available on the staff website so partners may incorporate into social media repertoires.
- Social media posts that have performed the best from July-November 2016 focused on specific topics, usually around student and school interest.
- AskUsNow! thanked Towson, Frederick CPL, and Worcester CPL for service promotion on their own social media accounts.
- The Social Media Committee is looking for new members. This opportunity is available to liaisons, providers, and non-providers who are interested in social media. Interested parties should contact Rebecca for more information.

Marketing

Since our increase in direct marketing to students and educators, eleven counties have experienced class visit increases on AskUsNow!. Students of all levels are requesting interdisciplinary research assistance. Academic library customers are asking questions related to English, mass communications, first-year experience, and citation help.

Website Refresh

An updated version of askusnow.info is expected to be released in January 2017.

Statistical Sampling

- During statistical sampling periods in the first half of FY 17, AskUsNow! providers have answered 5,441 questions. This is an increase of 3% from last year.
- At the request of the liaisons, AskUsNow! will confirm if the 14-week sampling period can be adjusted.

Training

- The next in-person New Staff Training will be held on January 17, 2017 at Towson University. Spots are available. Parking will be validated.
- AskUsNow! will conduct refresher training by liaison request. This training may be done virtually or on site, and may be customized based on provider requests.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be held at the Charlotte Hall Library of St. Mary's County Library on March 9, 2017.

Thank You

Thank you to EPFL liaisons Susan Pluhar and Erin Kelly, Branch Manager Zandra Campbell, and the staff of EPFL Orleans Street for hosting our meeting.

Action Items

AskUsNow! Administration

- Update pre-made social media posts on the staff website
- Contact QuestionPoint about the possibility of creating "universal guidelines" to address student behavior during class visits

- Update New Staff Training to include information from the QuestionPoint Best Practices document
- Report on Q2's statistical sampling totals

AskUsNow! Liaisons

- Revise and update policy pages based on any new or upcoming library changes
- Encourage staff interested in becoming AskUsNow! providers to register for our next New Staff Training, 1/17/17 at Towson University
- Contact Paul by 12/28/16 if:
 - Changes need to be made in the statewide schedule
 - Your library chooses to keep its descriptive codes for internal reporting purposes
- Notify AskUsNow! administration if:
 - A site visit is desired in 2017
 - We should reach out to any local educators with more information about AskUsNow!
 - Any providers or staff members in your library wish to be involved with the Social Media Committee (approximate time commitment is 1 hour quarterly)

Minutes taken by Rebecca Starr on 12/7/16