

Ask a Librarian Email Reference Service User Feedback Report (2012)

Report Author(s): Barbara Beaton, Lisa Campbell, Karen Reiman-Sendi, Harold Tuckett
Contact Information: karsendi@umich.edu
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Background

In an attempt to learn more about user satisfaction with the Ask a Librarian email reference service, the report authors developed a short feedback survey. This feedback survey was shared with most Ask a Librarian email service users¹, during the Fall 2012 term.

From May 7 - October 24, 2012, the authors of this report beta-tested the process to invite email service users to provide feedback, while evaluating the feedback tool. On October 24, all Ask a Librarian email service providers were asked to include a link to the feedback form within their responses to email service users. The invitation process to provide feedback was concluded at the end of the Fall 2012 semester (December 15). With a simple invitation at the close of every email answer, users were directed to a five-question questionnaire, created with Qualtrics (see Appendix A for the feedback questions and answer options). Sample text used by email service providers as part of the invitation to participate was modeled on this statement:

“If you’d like to, please consider filling out our anonymous feedback form:
http://umichlib.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_a3ley8BQ39gdK4c.

Thank you for using the Ask a Librarian email service at the University of Michigan!”

See Appendix B for instructions to Ask a Librarian email service providers. Appendix C includes all comments submitted by respondents.

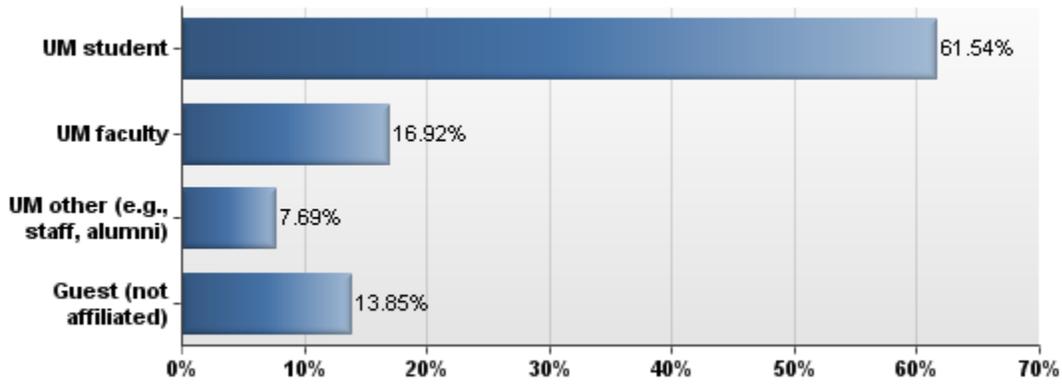
Results

Who Uses the Service?

A total of 66 users responded to our feedback survey; of those, 87% were affiliated with the University in some capacity: 62% of the respondents were students, 17% faculty, and 8% staff

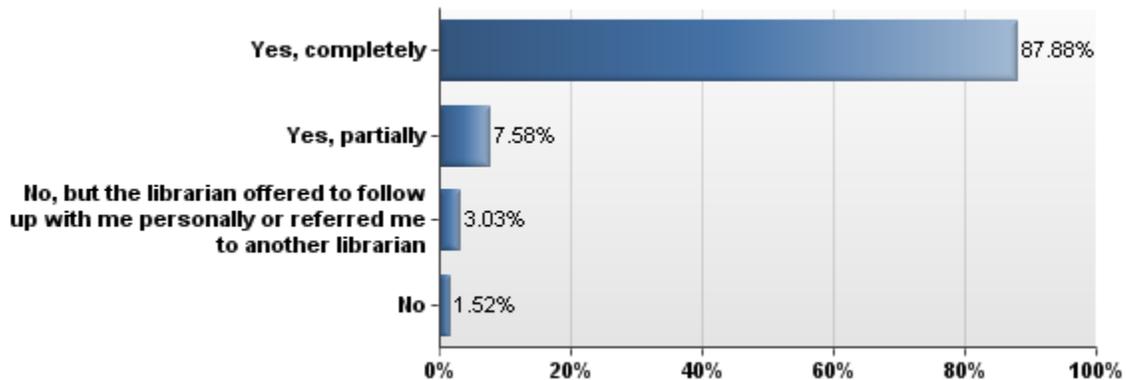
¹ Email questions directed to the Clark Library were excluded from the pool of potential feedback respondents, as well as questions Ask a Librarian email service providers referred to other library units or libraries.

and alumni. (Note: While we do not know how many email service users were invited to participate, we estimate that, based on our monthly usage statistics, we invited 635 users to the feedback survey between October 24 and December 15, 2012.)



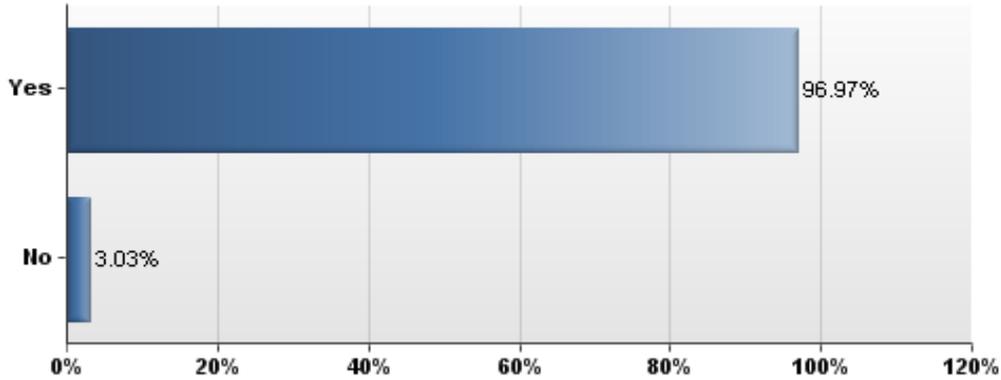
Did Respondents Get What They Needed?

The feedback we received indicated very positive experiences with the email service. When asked whether they “got the information/help they needed,” 88% answered “yes, completely” and only two users said “no”. (One respondent answering in the negative was a guest who indicated s/he *would* use the service again.)



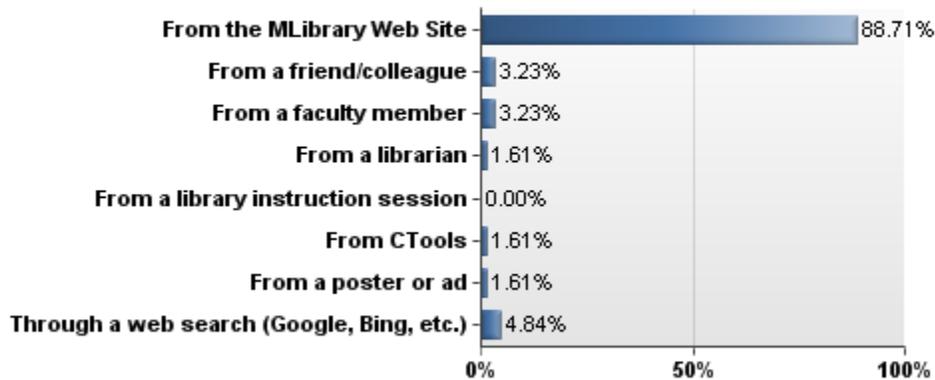
Would Respondents Use the Email Service Again?

Resoundingly, yes! When asked if they would use the Ask a Librarian email service again, only two of the 66 respondents indicated that they would not contact the email service again.



How Did Respondents Learn About the Email Service?

The overwhelming majority of users—89%-- stated that they learned about the Ask a Librarian email service from the MLibrary web site. Significantly smaller numbers cited faculty or colleague recommendation, CTools, librarian/library instruction, web searching, or service advertising.



What Else Did Respondents Want Us To Know?

Thirty-one respondents took the time to give consistently positive feedback; a sample of those comments is below and complete comments are included in Appendix B.

- “Great service, thanks.”
- “Ask a Librarian service is the best. Thank you so much.”
- “The service that I received today was absolutely magnificent.”

- “I am so grateful for the librarian who helped me so thoroughly and efficiently! Thanks so much!”
- “fast and awesome”
- “Thank you for giving me hope in the human race.”

What We Learned/Next Steps

We had a low response rate, so perhaps we cannot know much about user satisfaction with the email service in any statistically significant way. Additionally, feedback submissions can tend to be overly positive, because users who experienced an unsatisfactory interaction with the service may have been hesitant to share negative feedback. However, based on the user-provided comments, we can identify consistent themes: email service users appreciate timely/fast service; helpful steps and thorough instructions; courteous and friendly service; and provision of online articles when library systems fail.

We hope to repeat this feedback mechanism for the Ask a Librarian IM/texting service during a future semester (likely Fall 2013).

Appendix A: Questions and Answer Options for Feedback Survey



We appreciate your comments about the U-M Ask a Librarian service!

1. Please tell us how you're affiliated with the University of Michigan:
 - UM student
 - UM faculty
 - UM other (e.g., staff, alumni)
 - Guest (not affiliated)

2. Did you get the information/help you needed as a result of your Ask a Librarian session?
 - Yes, completely
 - Yes, partially
 - No, but the librarian offered to follow up with me personally or referred me to another librarian
 - No

3. Would you use the Ask a Librarian service again?
 - Yes
 - No

4. How did you learn about the Ask a Librarian service?
 - From the MLibrary Web Site
 - From a friend/colleague
 - From a faculty member
 - From a librarian
 - From a library instruction session

- From CTools
- From a poster or ad
- Through a web search (Google, Bing, etc.)

5. What else would you like us to know about the Ask a Librarian service? (text box)

Your comments are strictly anonymous. However, if you would like us to get back in touch with you about any aspect of this service, please include your preferred contact information here: (text box)

Appendix B: Instructions to Email Service Providers

Gathering user satisfaction feedback from ask a librarian email users

October and November 2012

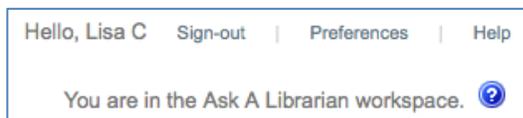
Background

We would like to get some information about email user satisfaction and to that end we have developed a short feedback form. (See Appendix A for feedback form example.) The aim is **to invite all users** of the Ask a Librarian email service, with the exception of Clark Library email users, to complete the feedback form during the months of October and November, 2012. We will share the submitted feedback results with Ask email staff as well as other interested staff during winter term 2013.

The following information explains how to use the FootPrints *Quick Descriptions* feature to insert an anonymous feedback form link into your Ask a Librarian email transactions. This feature in FootPrints will make it easier for busy email staff to include the feedback invitation in all responses.

Create a quick description

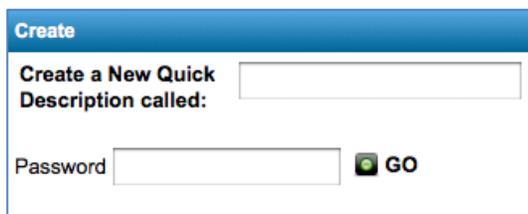
1. From the FootPrints homepage, click on *Preferences*.



2. From the *Question Page* tab, click on *Configure Quick Descriptions/Signatures*.



3. Enter a name for your *Quick Description* (e.g. Feedback Form). Enter your password and press the green GO button.



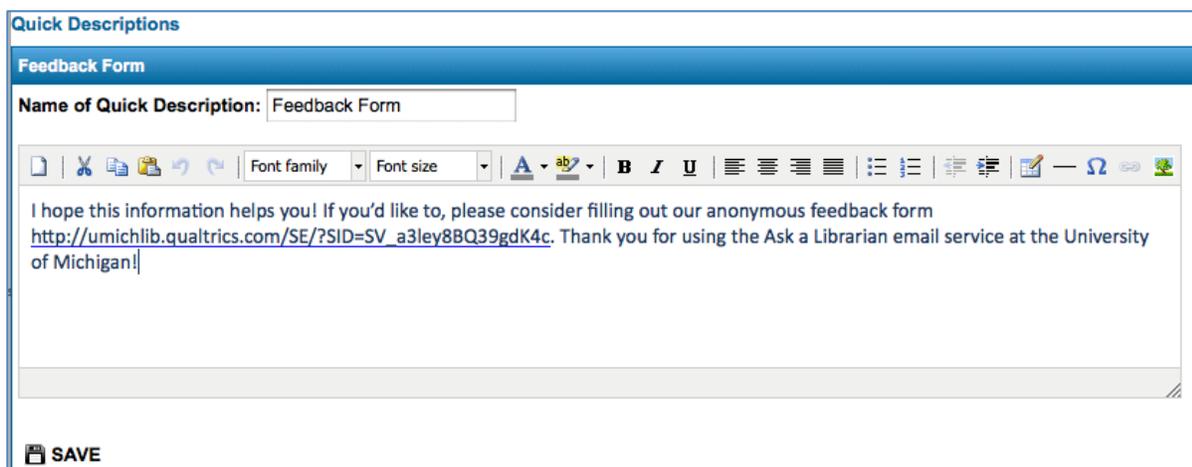
4. Compose a *Quick Description* and click *SAVE*. Recommended text:

"I hope this information helps you.

If you'd like to, please consider filling out our anonymous feedback form

http://umichlib.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_a3ley8BQ39gdK4c.

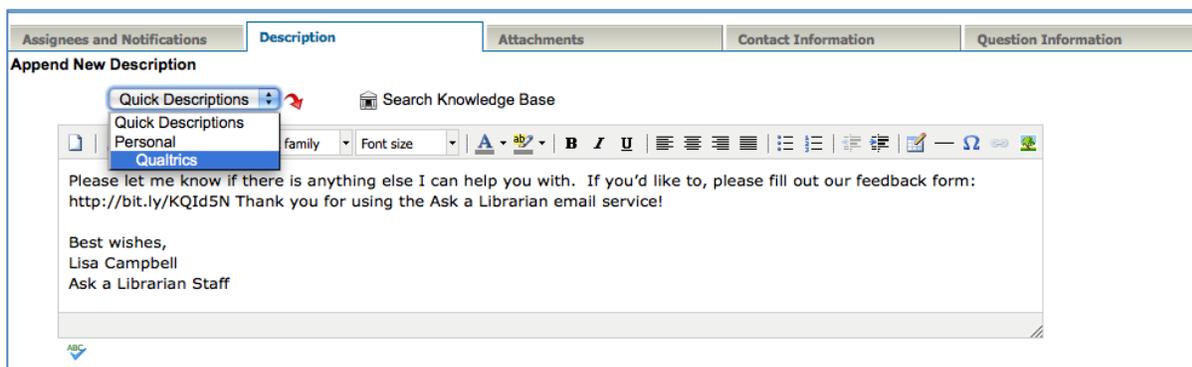
Thank you for using the Ask a Librarian email service at the University of Michigan!"



Adding the feedback form link to your response

When you think you've reached the end of the email reference transaction, include the feedback form with your final response.

In edit mode, under the *Description* tab, use the "Quick Descriptions" drop-down menu to select the Feedback Form *Quick Description*. This will insert the feedback form into your response.



Please include the invitation to complete the feedback form at the end of every response, **except for those questions you refer to other library units or libraries**. For example, if you are moving a FootPrints question to the Grad Circ FootPrints workspace, do not include your quick description text. Another example: if you are referring the user to the Bentley Historical Library in your response, do not include your quick description text. It is not necessary to include the feedback invitation link in every one of your responses to a single individual or within a single conversation thread.

Questions about how to insert a quick description? Contact lisa campbell (lacamp@umich.edu).

Appendix C: Comments Provided by Respondents in Response to Question #5

What else would you like us to know about the Ask a Librarian service?
The response fully answered my question.
They were (It was?) very prompt. I really appreciated the immediate help confirming my suspicions about a source....
excellent. prompt. exceeded expectations - attached PDF same-day when i couldn't access it.
Thank you for the feedback. I was able to access papers from my office. It did not work from home for some reason.
The librarian is super fast and helpful in getting back to me and sending me the paper I was looking for. I've used the service twice and I'm satisfied both times! Great service thanks
Thanks for assisting! I appreciate you both sending me the actual pdf article and telling me how I can find it on my own in the future (so I am self empowered!). Cheers!
Thank you for answering my questions. You provide an efficient and friendly service!
They are fast and awesome. Sent my message at 7:35 pm and had a response by 8:30 pm.
[Name deleted] answered my query promptly and fully. In his reply to me, he even attached the article I had trouble accessing. Service was fast, courteous, and thorough.
Ask a Librarian service is the best. Thank you so much.
[Name deleted] was very fast and helpful, thanks!
This was very helpful to locate the dissertation. The service was not available through my other sources and the UofMich Library was successful in helping me locate this article for my research. Thank you.
I am an emeritus faculty member who wanted to verify that an Islamic version of the Golden Rule did exist. I needed that verification for a book that has been accepted for publication and the editor was getting a bit tense. The only citation I had been able to find was to a publisher in Charleston, S.C.: Forgotten Books, 2008. I was afraid that the "forgotten" part might seem offensive to about a billion followers of that faith, with good reason. Thank you very much for such prompt and complete service.
Generally excellent service.
Responded quickly: awesome. Attached a .pdf of the article I was looking for: even more awesome.
I ABSOLUTELY LOVE IT!!!
Thank you for a very thorough response! I really appreciate the information.
Thanks for getting back so promptly. I really appreciate that.
I have to say that the service that I received today was absolutely magnificent. The librarian that answered my plea for help went way beyond the call of duty to help someone that is half way

<p>round the world from you, and they have my eternal gratitude for doing so. They looked up an ancient periodical for me, gave me links that may help and because of my locale and not wishing to risk that I may not be able to view the material I was after, copied out the passage that I needed, so as I can further my research. That is what I call fantastic service. TY</p>
<p>Fantastic</p>
<p>I submitted a help item regarding an article search I did, and not only did a Librarian ([name deleted]) respond to me, but she also found the article I needed, and emailed it to me. Thank you!</p>
<p>Thanks to [name deleted] for forwarding a copy of the article I couldn't get from JSTOR. U-M librarians are the best!</p>
<p>The librarian "[name deleted]" responded promptly, and gave me alternatives for the information I sought!</p>
<p>The answer was excellent and provided not only the information I requested and needed, but additional information about eBooks that I was unaware of and may prove to be helpful as well!</p>
<p>I just was helped fantastically when I went in all bitter. I'm sorry to the poor librarian that had to deal with my complaint. Thank you for giving me hope in the human race.</p>
<p>[Name deleted] help me immensely in finding peer-reviewed journals on 'green housing.' A big thanks to her!</p>
<p>I am so grateful for the librarian who helped me so thoroughly and efficiently! Thanks so much!</p>
<p>The answer that I received was very thorough and informative, answering my questions and offering additional helpful information. I was very impressed.</p>
<p>A quick and full response to my query--great service, thank you!</p>
<p>Very thorough answer to my problem in a timely fashion--much appreciated. (student)</p>
<p>Awesome, thank you! (student)</p>