Asked and Answered – Online
How Two Academic Medical Libraries are Using OCLC’s QuestionPoint to Answer Reference Questions

Mount Sinai School of Medicine (MSSM) Levy Library (New York City), and New York Medical College (NYMC) Medical Sciences Library (Valhalla, NY) have been using OCLC’s QuestionPoint since its inception in June 2002, and before that its predecessor Ask A Librarian. These two libraries were the only identifiable medical libraries participating in QuestionPoint as of Spring 2003. QuestionPoint is a collaborative reference service that enables libraries to respond to, track and manage reference questions from patrons via the Web. QuestionPoint also allows librarians to refer questions to other libraries within the library’s cooperative or to a global web-based network.

Currently there are over 100 library systems from more than 12 countries that make up the Global Network. Both NYMC and MSSM have responded to questions referred from this network. QuestionPoint also offers a searchable Global Knowledge Base to which librarians can submit completed questions.

Virtual reference is assuming a prominent and vital role in medical libraries. With the proliferation of online journals, databases, textbooks, and web sites in the biomedical field, library users need to become accustomed to an online research environment. Implementing OCLC’s QuestionPoint has been a successful and simple solution to providing online assistance to our users.

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