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Let's Chat: Assessing Virtual Reference Service for Optimal User Experience

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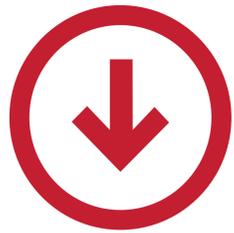
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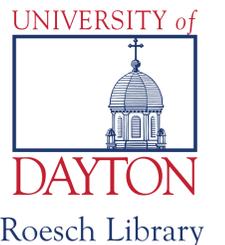


Let's Chat

ASSESSING VIRTUAL REFERENCE SERVICE FOR OPTIMAL USER EXPERIENCE

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PROBLEM STATEMENT

With librarians and student employees staffing our virtual reference service, making sure that our clients receive consistent and quality service is important. In Fall 2014 we evaluated transcript samples against a number of criteria on a 3-point scale. Criteria included communication, reference interview & search strategy, plus sources & session outcome.



METHODS

Sample Size x Question Type		
	FA2014	FA2015
Directional/Policy	20	24
Reference/Research	23	24
Technical	5	11
Sample size	48	59
Total number of chats	193	209

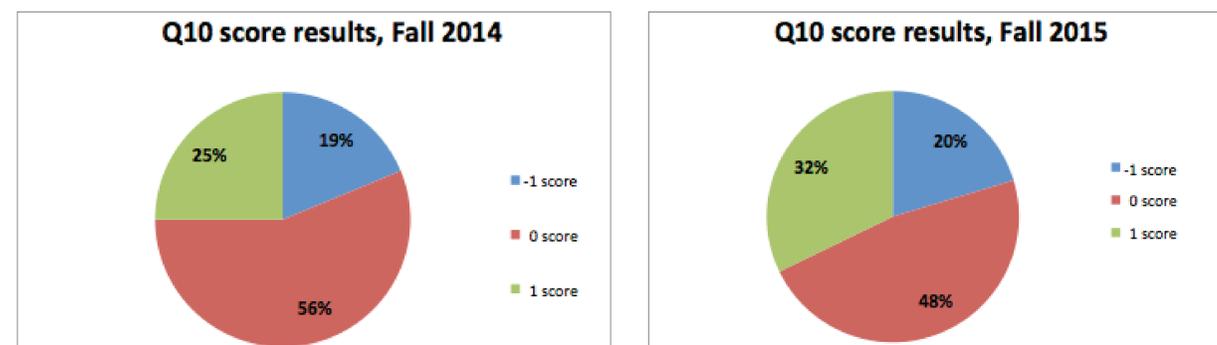


SAMPLE CRITERIA AND EVALUATION SCALE

Q10	1	0	-1
Provided instruction on use of resources	Operator guided patron in using resources	No instruction required	Operator failed to provide instruction



RESULTS



TAKEAWAYS

1. Scale is easy to use.
2. Sampling is recommended.
3. Be prepared to spend some time on analysis.

See the libguide for assessment scale and value descriptions: Libguides.udayton.edu/chat



DISCUSSION

CHANGES MADE

1. Reviewed analysis with Reference Librarians.
2. Additional hands-on training with Student Employees.
3. More instruction in student employee manual.
4. Added "canned responses" for certain questions.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

1. Chat times potentially affected by texting service, may need to consider guidelines for texting separately.
2. Possible coordinated training with the circulation desk, which now does chat. More broadly, consider additional training when new staffing lines are added.
3. Review relevance of all criteria statements, possibly collapse number from 16 to 13



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Robyn Case developed the scale; Carol Williamson conducted the analyses; Carol and Joan Plungis developed training recommendations