

Overview

The library action plan calls for us to enhance reference services (objective 4.8). One way to do this is to provide reference services on the various floors of the library. Since we do not have the staff to have a reference desk on each floor, we can do this by providing roving reference services. Sending a librarian around each floor allows the reference librarians to answer questions and provide help to those students who are in the library, but have not come to the reference desk. To facilitate this, the librarians would use Apple iPhones in order to answer the phone, answer email and show students elements on the webpage from the stacks of books on the various floors.

Action Plan Goals and Objectives: Proposed Additions

Goal 2: Continue Technology Initiative

Objective 2.5: Advance administrative and service technologies.
(proposed)

Issue 2.5.1: Purchase technologies to allow reference librarians to answer questions and provide help away from the reference desk.
(proposed)

This addition will allow us to improve the technology we use to provide various services to the students and administrative duties in the library we well as allow us to purchase the Apple iPhone as a way to meet this goal and objective.

Goal 3: Provide approachable and comfortable study and work spaces

Objective 3.1: Make the Library more conducive to use by the campus community.

Issue 3.1.10: Increase staff presence in frequently used areas of the library. (proposed)

Most of the issues under this objective focus on the library building, but it could also extend to the entire library experience to include staffing and points of service. This will allow us to expand reference services to other parts of the library like the various study spaces on the 3rd and 4th floor as well as the book stacks on all floors of the library.

Goal 4: Ensure the college community receives appropriate and timely delivery of services

Objective 4.8 Enhance Reference Services

Issue 4.8.3: Explore Roving Reference service (proposed)

Issue 4.8.4: Expand reference services to locations beyond the reference desk (proposed)

As the objective that addresses reference services, this is already very limited to what can be done at the reference desk. While many of our students to come into the library to study and work, many go beyond the first floor to the various

Project Plan

Roving Reference

study spaces and labs on the other floors of the library. By anchoring ourselves to the Reference Desk and limiting ourselves to phone, email and virtual reference services, we are only able to help these students when they seek us out.

Services Offered

Bringing an iPhone into the library allows us various features to be added to an roving reference service. First, this being a phone allows us to transfer calls, from the desk, to the phone in use. So, when Debbie is on shift, the phone gets transferred to her cell phone number and she can answer it no matter where she is in the library. This allows us the flexibility of helping students away from the desk and still being able to answer a phone call.

Second, the phone has wireless internet capabilities. This will allow us to display webpages on the phone for students. We can easily search the catalog from the phone and take it with us when we go to get the book for the student. We can also show the students quick tutorials on our webpage or other features they may need. This also allows us to check reference email account from the phone.

Third, the phone has SMS, text messaging, capabilities. While we have not explored this option for providing virtual reference, many libraries are. Students are highly comfortable with this technology and may be interested in getting reference assistance via a text message. This may also, in the future, allow us to send them messages when their ILL requests have arrived, when book are due, or to provide cold-call reference.

Fourth, this is an iPod and will allow us to show tours, pod casts and videos as well allow students to listen to podcasts from the phone. Finally, while not promoted as a feature of the phone, Cingular's possible service features come with IM and, if this does become a feature of the phone or service, this will allow us to expand our IM/Virtual reference service to the phone. These features are all various aspects of meeting our students where they are rather than forcing them to find us at the desk. With an increasing number of students who never come to the library, this phone makes it easy for us to provide them with the full range of services we offer those who do come into our library. It also prevents us from being tied to the reference desk when we are on our shift and gives us the chance to find more teachable moments.

Project Team

Sara Marks, Information Literacy Librarian
Deb Verhoff, Reference Librarian

Project Timeline

March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Propose changes to the library Action Plan and Strategic Plan• Submit entire proposal with budget to library director for addition to the library budget
Spring 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roving reference is formalized and practiced without the phones.• Investigation into the cost of service for iPhones.• Roving reference best practices are reviewed
July 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• iPhone aspect of project put on hold due to staffing changes.• iPhone aspect of plan put on hold, but increasing roving reference remains a priority.

Project Budget

Apple iPhone:

2 phone @ \$500 each = \$1,000

Cingular Phone Service:

As of March 2007, both Sara and Debbie already have voice service plans with Cingular. Having spoken with the company, Sara has discovered that they are not yet sure what increase in service plans will be required for those wishing to purchase the iPhone. They were able to provide an estimate of what would need to be added to the service through their ultimate service plan:

- \$19.99 a month includes unlimited internet access with AIM and 200 text messages (SMS)
- \$29.99 a month includes unlimited internet access with AIM and 1,000 text messages (SMS)
- \$39.99 a month includes unlimited internet access with AIM and 3,000 text messages (SMS)