Project Cover Sheet

Project

"Ask Us" Service

Comparison of Label Terminology & Graphics

Ask Us is a service present on the Library's Gateway page (www.lib.umich.edu) that leads to methods (email, chat/IM, phone, in-person) for contacting library staff.

Committee & Members

Usability Working Group

Kat Hagedorn (chair), Suzanne Chapman, Mike Creech, Karen Downing, Anne Karle-Zenith, Shana Kimball, Gurpreet Rana, Robert Tolliver

Report Info

Report Authors: Suzanne Chapman & Shana Kimball

Contact Information: ul-usability@ctools.umich.edu

Report Date: October 2007 Last Revised: October 2007

Objectives

The goal for this study was to conduct a simple comparison of how some other libraries link to their electronic reference services to inform & inspire changes for the MLibrary gateway.

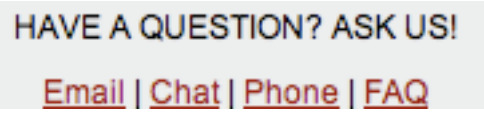
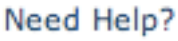
Methodology

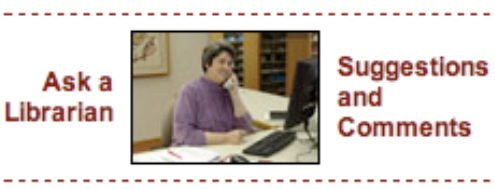
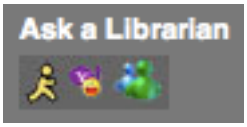
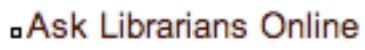
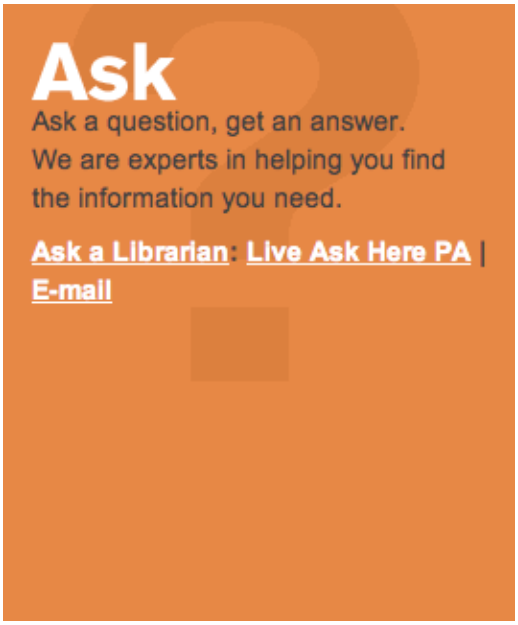
Method – (Informal) Comparative Analysis / Comparison

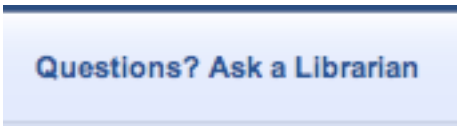
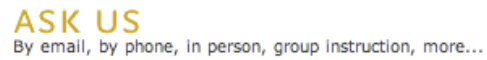
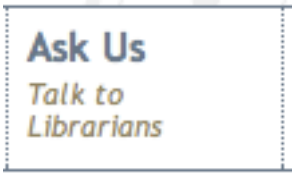
Dates of study: October 2007

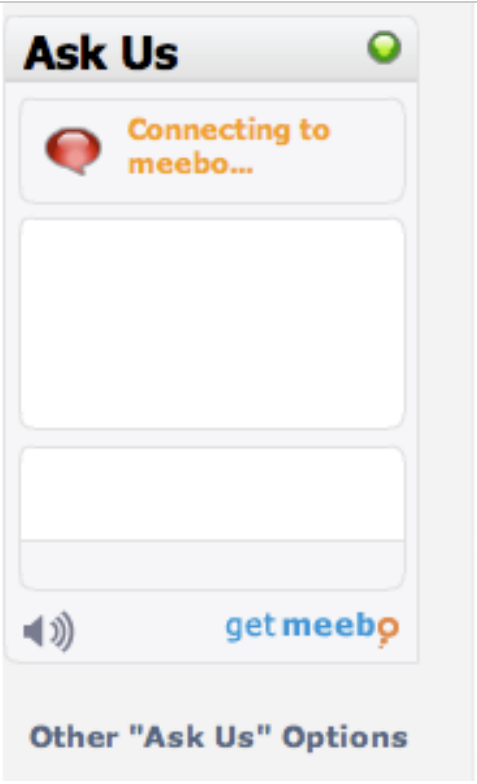
Results & Analysis

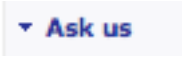
The label "Ask Us" is seldom used in isolation – it is usually accompanied by descriptive text ("email, phone, chat" or "Have a Question?"). However, most common terminology of sites assessed is "Ask a librarian."

Library	URL	Wording	Graphic & location
University of Minnesota	www.lib.umn.edu/	HAVE A QUESTION? ASK US! Email I Chat I Phone I FAQ	Home & 2nd: Top of left side navigation 
University of North Carolina	www.lib.unc.edu/	Ask a Librarian Email I Chat I Phone I IM 2nd level – Need Help?	Home: content area under "Research Help"  2nd level: top nav banner 
Yale	www.library.yale.edu	Ask! A Librarian	Home: Top of right side navigation  2nd level: top sub navigation 
Stanford University	http://www-sul.stanford.edu/	Ask us	Home & 2nd: Top navigation 
Northwestern University	www.library.northwestern.edu/	Ask a librarian (homepage)	Home: content area (under "research assistance")  2nd level: no direct link
Arizona State Libraries	www.asu.edu/lib/	Ask a Librarian (with icons for email, phone, chat)	Home & 2nd: Left side nav 
Cornell University	www.library.cornell.edu/	Ask a Librarian email I chat I phone	Home & 2nd: Left side nav

			
University of Chicago Library	www.lib.uchicago.edu/	Ask a Librarian (w/ photo of a real librarian)	Home: content area not under heading  2nd: top nav banner 
UNLV	www.library.unlv.edu/	Ask a Librarian (w/ icons)	Home & 2nd: Left side nav, near bottom 
NYPL	www.nypl.org/	Ask Librarians Online	Home: Main content area under "Find Books & Do Research"  2nd level: Top navigation (rest of links are white so it does stand out some) 
Free Library of Philadelphia	www.library.phila.gov/	Ask (w/ links to options)	Home: takes up 1/3 of main content area 

			2nd level: 1 of 3 blocks on left side nav & correspond to 3 main content areas from home page. 
Duke	http://library.duke.edu/libraries/	Save Time Ask Us	Home & 2nd: Very top, right of search box 
Ohio State Health Sciences Library	http://library.med.ohio-state.edu/	Ask A Librarian	Home & 2nd: top navigation 
University of Virginia	www.lib.virginia.edu/	Questions? Ask a Librarian	Home: Top navigation  2nd level: top navigation 
MIT Libraries	http://libraries.mit.edu/	Ask Us (in sidebar and as section header w/links)	Home: main content area.  2nd level: in top navigation 
CalPoly	http://lib.calpoly.edu/	Ask Us Talk to Librarians	Home & 2nd: top main navigation 
Saint Benedict Library	www.csbsju.edu/library/	Ask Us (w/ chat widget on homepage)	Home: Meebo box located on left side

			 2nd level: top navigation Ask a Librarian
North Carolina State University			Home: main content area under “Services”  2nd level - Sub nav area 
University of Western Ontario	www.lib.uwo.ca	Ask Western Libraries	Home: main content area 
University of Toronto	http://main.library.utoronto.ca/	Contact a Librarian (icons with In Person, Phone, Chat,	Home: main content area, lower banner

		email)	
McGill	http://www.mcgill.ca/library/	Ask a librarian –FAQ, Chat, Email, Telephone, In person,	Home: main content area (clicking item expands to reveal info)  2nd: side navigation that expands to show contact options 
Georgetown	http://library.georgetown.edu/	Ask a Librarian (with links, button, etc)	Home & 2nd: top of left side navigation 