

ASKAWAY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Friday, April 30, 2010

In Attendance:

Sheryl Adam, UBC co-coordinator
Christina de Castell, Public Library AskAway
Anita Cocchia, BC ELN
Carole Compton-Smith, CPSLD
Erin Fields, UBC co-coordinator
Debra Flewelling, DC/Member-at-large, *Recorder*
Mary Anne Guenther, NIC/Rural Colleges, *Chair*
Leva Lee, BC Campus
Cathy MacDonald, KPU/ Regional Universities
Tod Mundle, SFU
Sunni Nishimura, AskAway Coordinator

Teleconference:

Gohar Ashouglan, UNBC/Small Universities
Jennifer Brownlow, VIU/Member-at-large
Ophelia Ma, UVic
Sally Taylor, out-going UBC coordinator

Regrets:

Sybil Harrison, CC/Urban Colleges

1. Adoption of agenda
2. Minutes from January 29th, 2010 approved.

Business arising from the minutes

Item 3 - The Service Continuity Plan is ready to bring forward to the BC ELN Steering Committee for endorsement. It was suggested that the plan be reviewed regularly every 2-3 years.

Item 4 c – Clarification was needed on UNBC request for additional statistics on what institutions answer questions for their students. Following discussion it was determined that this statistic will be provided to an institution if requested.

Item 7.1 – Security issues script

ACTION - Sunni will provide a security script before the summer semester begins.

3. Items for Decision

A request received by an institution to reduce their required service staffing commitment prompted a discussion on whether a more formal policy/agreement is required. The current Institutional Participation web page may be unclear to some members. It was agreed that a policy, incorporating general procedures, would be useful.

ACTION – Sunni will draft policy and procedures for Committee review.

ACTION – Mary Anne and Anita will follow up on request.

4. Items for Discussion

A. Additional service hours for September – half of the participants responded to the call offering more service hours and Sunni is confident that a few more will come forward.

ACTION – Sunni will send a reminder to institutions.

B. Qwidget – Discussion on level of concern with the potential of Qwidgets being embedded in electronic databases. Will this cause a dramatic and unsustainable increase in service traffic? Committee felt it was important to place Qwidgets at point of need. Libraries should continue to place Qwidgets where they feel would best meet patron needs. Last meeting strategies for coping with increased traffic were discussed. Sunni and Anita reported meeting with Nigel Long, OCLC, who expressed confidence that new QP web infrastructure can handle the expected increases.

ACTION - Sunni will continue to monitor the situation and report back to Committee on potential problems.

C. Patrons in crisis – following a discussion on various options, it was agreed that a script providing the number of a crisis line will be created.

ACTION – Sunni will create a script providing the number of a crisis line.

ACTION - Sheryl will talk with professionals in this area at UBC for their suggestions.

5. Items for Information

A. Private Institution participants - Anita explained that BC ELN was approached by the Ministry in 2007 to explore the concept of including private institutions. Following lengthy discussion with BC ELN Partner Libraries, a set of criteria was created for Associate Membership. The BC ELN Steering Committee approves any institution wishing to become an Associate Member. One of the services Associate Members can participate in, for a fee, is AskAway. Quest University Canada (Squamish) and Alexander College (Burnaby) are participating in AskAway. More information about Associate Membership is available on the BC ELN website:
<<http://www.eln.bc.ca/view.php?id=1822>>

B. Coordinator's Report (Sunni) is available for download:

<http://www.eln.bc.ca/askaway/documents/AACoordRep20100129.pdf>

It was noted that there seems to be a problem with the Qwidget column in the statistics.

ACTION – Sunni will check Qwidget statistics and send out a correction if necessary.

6. Public Library AskAway Update - Christina reported that the Public Library AskAway service will come to an end as of June 30, 2010. Funding for Public AskAway was cut in March 2009. There was some interest on the part of some of the larger libraries, including VPL, to continue with a virtual reference service. This would not be possible until the New Year. Christina will discuss with Anita the details of winding down the public library service as it impacts the Post-Secondary AskAway Service.

ACTION – Anita will report back to Committee.

7. New Business –

Local Coordinators Meeting - Discussion about the need for a meeting of local coordinators. It was suggested that perhaps we contact ALPS to discuss something like a pre-conference meeting for AskAway service providers.

ACTION – Debra will contact ALPS.

Understanding Success – Suggestion that it would be useful to understand why some institutions have more patron usage than others. What are their strategies and can we develop best practices from them?

ACTION – Sunni will follow up with institutions and continue to draft best practices.

8. Next Meeting – will be in late June (25th or 28th)