TITLE: Cooperative Reference
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ABSTRACT: Discussion of cooperative digital reference and its potential for the Agricultural Network Information Center
KEYWORDS: digital reference
Cooperative Reference

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Corporative Reference by Any Other Name

The use of human intermediation to answer questions in a digital environment

- Purpose
- Community of Experts
- Process
- Enabling Software
Purpose, General

• Answer the Needs of the Constituency
• Know the Needs of the Constituency
• The Rise of Self-Help
  • Resistance to External Help (Perception of Status)
Purpose, Internal

• Consortial Development and “Bonding”
  • Develop Group Identity
  • Common Policies
  • Provide Even Service Distribution
  • Provide Innovation Opportunities
  • Training
Purpose, External

- Raise Visibility
- Demonstrate Innovation
- Provide Expanded Service
  - Time: Use Time Zones to Your Advantage
  - Expertise: Disconnect Reference from a Physical Collection
AskERIC and ERIC

In response to questions we've received at AskERIC, our network information specialists have compiled over 3000 resources on a variety of educational issues. This collection includes Internet sites, educational organizations, and electronic discussion groups.

**Counseling**
- Peer Education Programs, Therapy, more...

**Education Levels**
- K-12 Education, Higher Education, more...

**Educational Management**
- Scheduling, Education Reform, more...

**Family Life**
- Home Schooling, Child Care, more...

**General Education**
- History, Comparative Education, more...

**Librarianship**
- School Libraries, Librarian Education, more...

**Specific Populations**
Community of Experts

- Expertise Exists Along a Continuum: Process to Subject
  - Both are Needed
- Key Decisions
  - Volunteer/Paid
    - What is the Incentive/Reward
  - Uniform/Differentiated
  - Training
    - Pre-Answer, “In Situ,” None
Tips and Scars on Experts

- Excellent Opportunity to Include Key Stake Holders
- Faculty Answer Question
- Make it Part of an Existing Process
Process

- Match to Existing Process
- Overview of All Activities
- Underlies Software
- Realize Reference as an Authoring Process
Software

- No Cost Options
  - Instant Messaging
  - E-Mail
  - Web Forms
- Home Grown
  - Open Source Content Management Systems
- Digital Reference Packages
  - QuestionPoint, Docutek, Tutor.com
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- Learning Disability
  - Dysgraphia (writing), Dyslexia (reading & math)
- Mental Retardation/Cognitive
- Other
- Physical
- Psychological
- Research
- Transition
- Visual
- Vocational Rehabilitation
Why AgNIC Should do Collaborative Reference

- Consortial Bonding
- Raise Visibility
- Expand Service Offerings
- Engage Experts
- Produce New Offerings
- A Constant Source of Quality in a Good Enough World