



Virtual Dave Lankes

Presentation

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ABSTRACT: Call it digital reference or call it virtual reference. Libraries are taking reference to the web and library assistants are taking an increasing role in this transformation. This workshop will cover the basics of virtual reference, virtual reference tools, current trends, and a little crystal ball gazing into the virtual reference future. Presented to the New York State Library Assistants' Association.

KEYWORDS: Virtual reference, digital reference, libraries, paraprofessional



Virtual Reference

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Overview

- *Fad or Fundamental*
 - *Definitions*
 - *Service Components*
 - *Future Trends*
- 

Fad or Fundamental

- Cons: Low Numbers, Expensive, It's Just Reference Anyway
- Big Numbers in Consortium, Do it for Free, Making Reference Relevant Again



Digital Reference by Any Name



Email Reference

Online Reference

Digital Reference

Live Reference

V_Ref

Ask A

QuestionPoint

Virtual Reference

Tutor.com

Docutek

eReference

Chat Reference

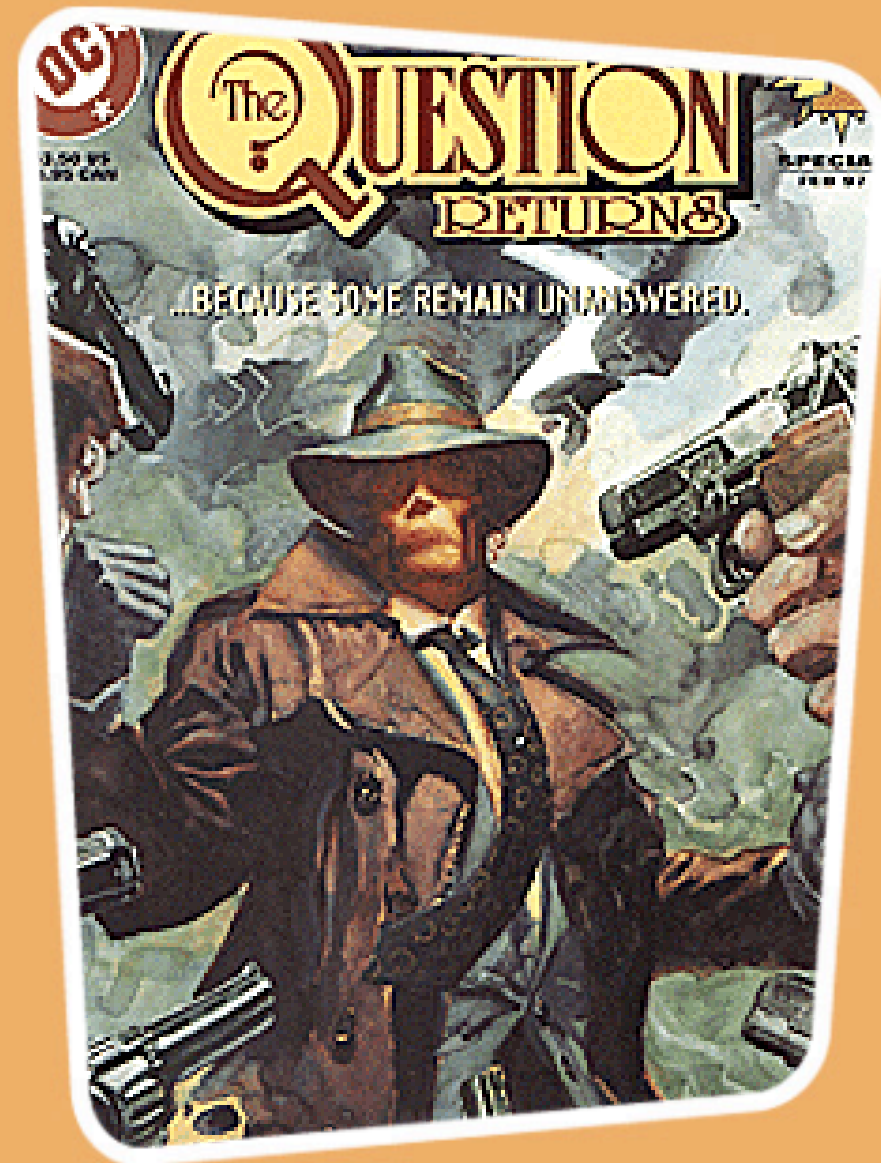
Dig_Ref



Definition

*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

- *Bring Staff Skills Up to Date*
 - *Show the Value of Library Assistants*
 - *Penn State Staff Development Example*
- *Collection Development*
- *Functional Integration*






Purpose, External

- *Raise Visibility*
 - *Library, Reference*
 - *A Human Face to the Digital Library*
 - *Demonstrate Innovation*
 - *Provide Expanded Service*
 - *Time: Use Time Zones to Your Advantage*
 - *Expertise: Disconnect Reference from a Physical Collection*
- 



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, "Hidden Shopper"*
- 



Software

- *No Cost Options*
 - *Instant Messaging*
 - *E-Mail*
 - *Web Forms*
 - *Home Grown*
 - *Open Source Content Management Systems*
 - *Digital Reference Packages*
 - *QuestionPoint, Docutek, Tutor.com*
- 

Fad or Fundamental



- *It's Just Reference...*
- *But Reference is the Heart of the Library*
- *Digital Reference Makes the Library Dynamic!*



Future Trends

- *Cheaper Software Options*
- *More Integrated into Reference as a Whole*
- *Reference Authoring*



Reference Authoring

- *Digital Reference is Different: Reference Artifacts*
- *Making Reference Output into New Products and Services:*
 - *Training, Knowledge Bases, Text Books*



Reference Authoring

Reference EXTRACT

BETA SITE

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Inductive & Dynamic Libraries

- *Libraries are Deductive and Static*
- *Catalog - Indexing Ignores Use (Circulation)*
- *Web Sites Hide the Action*





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