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Virtual Reference Service: A Case Study of QuestionPoint Utilization at the Gallagher Law Library

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Virtual Reference Service:
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Library

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I.   Introduction

Virtual reference services have been a frequent topic of discussion in the field of library and information science generally and among law librarians for many years. The focus of most past articles on this topic have related to implementation of virtual reference services and best practices. Few empirical studies have been conducted with respect to the use of virtual reference services in law libraries. This lack of empirical research was identified in a literature review and case study of chat reference services at the Georgetown Law Library conducted by researchers in 2010.[1] Empirical studies about virtual reference services are an important way for law libraries to evaluate how well they are meeting their users' needs and to identify areas for improvement. Publication of studies examining virtual reference services at law libraries assist others with implementing new virtual reference services and identifying potential areas for improvement.

This paper examines the use of OCLC's QuestionPoint ("AskUs") reference service by the Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library ("Gallagher Law Library") at the University of Washington School of Law ("UW Law"). It considers the types of patrons who use the service, where they access the service from, and the content of their questions. This study is different from the Georgetown Law Library study in several respects. First, Gallagher Law Library reference inquiries are submitted via a QuestionPoint web form accessible from the library's website.[2] The Georgetown Law Library study focused on chat reference. Therefore, this case study presents insight into the content of questions received through an asynchronous form of virtual reference in academic law libraries. Second, the instant study analyzes the use of virtual reference by UW Law students, *others members of the UW community* (*e.g.* undergraduates), UW Law alumni, and on *non-affiliated* (public) patrons.[3] In contrast, the Georgetown study only reviewed transcripts of chat reference transactions involving Georgetown Law Center faculty members, students, or alumnus.[4] As a result, this study examines the place of virtual reference services in serving an academic law library's secondary user groups. Finally, this study examines the geographic location of individuals utilizing the service, including how many individuals

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[1] Yasmin Morais & Sara Sampson, *A Content Analysis of Chat Transcripts in the Georgetown Law Library*, 29 Leg. Ref. Servs. Q. 3, 165-166, 167 (2010) [hereinafter Morais & Sampson, *Georgetown Study*].

[2] Gallagher Law Library Home Page, http://lib.law.washington.edu/. See also Appendices A and B, respectively, for the service description and Web forms in effect as of April 22, 2012. Although OCLC's QuestionPoint offers a chat module, Gallagher limits its use of the product to the asynchronous web form.

[3] Gallagher Law Library has a dedicated e-mail address for faculty members. Faculty is encouraged to and does typically use this e-mail address for reference assistance. Therefore, faculty requests are outside the scope of the instant study.

[4] Morais & Sampson, *Georgetown Study*, *supra* n. 1, at 174. The researchers excluded transcripts of transactions involving individuals who did not self-identify as Georgetown Law Center faculty, students, or alumni. In fact, Georgetown's website explains that chat service ("Live Help") is limited to these three user groups. *Id.* at 169–70. Thus, as a practical matter, only nine chat transcripts were excluded from the Georgetown study. *Id.* at 169, 174.

utilize the service from within the law school. This aspect of the study provides insight into how offering virtual reference services in academic law libraries expands the library's reach.

II.   Background and Literature Review

The Evolution of Virtual Reference Services

The provision of reference services by libraries dates back to the late 19th Century.[5] In 1876, a paper by Samuel Swett Green of the Worcester Public Library identified four components of reference services: (1) instruct the reader in how to use the library and its resources; (2) answer readers' questions; (3) aide the reader in the selection of good works; and (4) promote the library within the community.[6] Reference services have been defined in various ways over the years.[7] In 2008, the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), introduced two definitions intended to better describe the role of the 21st Century reference librarian. RUSA defines "**reference work**" as "reference transactions and other activities that involve the creation, management, and assessment of information or research resources, tools, and services.[8]   "**Reference transactions**" are defined as "information consultations in which library staff recommend, interpret, evaluate, and/or use information resources to help others to meet particular information needs."[9] Comparing Green's 1876 definition to RUSA's 2008 definition demonstrates that reference work remains the same at its core—reference services are about connecting people with the information they need.

For over a century, the physical reference desk served as the central point of reference services and patron interaction.[10] Librarians met with patrons face-to-face and conducted a "reference interview" to determine the user's information need and match that need with the information sources available in the library.[11] The reference interview provided librarians the opportunity to clarify the user's information needs by eliciting information about what the user needed to know,

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[5] Linda C. Smith, *Reference Services*, Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science (3d ed. Taylor & Francis NY), at p. 4485, published on-line 09 Dec. 2009 (citing K.A. Cassell, *Reference and Information Services in the 21st Century: An Introduction,* 2d Ed.; Neal-Schuman Publishers: New York, 2009) [hereinafter Smith, *Reference Services*].

[6] *Id.*

[7] A paper prepared for the RUSA Evaluation of Reference and User Services committee provides a quick overview of how reference services have been defined since the concept was first introduced by Green in 1876. Lanell Rabner and Suzanne Lorimer, Definitions of Reference Services: A Chronological Bibliography (2004), http://www.ala.org/rusa/sites/ala.org.rusa/files/content/sections/rss/rsssection/rsscomm/evaluationofref/refdefbibrev.pdf (last accessed May 17, 2012).

[8] RUSA, Definitions of Reference (2008), http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/definitionsreference (last accessed May 17, 2012).

[9] *Id.*

[10] Smith, *Reference Services*, supra*, n. 5 at p. 4487.

[11] *Id.* at p. 4485, 4487-88.

how the user planned to use the information, the level of detail that would be useful, the preferred format of information, and any other restrictions (such as time limits or deadlines).[12]

Rapid developments in technology have, however, changed the way librarians think about reference services and how to meet their users' information needs.[13] Today, the proliferation of information available on the Internet has made it much easier for users to find information on their own.[14] Many users view the Internet as a more convenient way to attempt to satisfy their information needs.[15] As a result, today's reference librarians are more likely to spend time providing guidance to users in choosing among and using available resources (digital and print) rather than serving as an intermediary between users and information.[16] Further, librarians must respond to the contemporary users' values and expectations of immediacy, interactivity, personalization, and mobility.[17]

These changes in user behavior and expectations have lead most libraries to implement a virtual presence. E-mail, web forms, Facebook, chat, instant messaging (IM), and virtual worlds such as Second Life have become popular ways for reference librarians and users to communicate. Thus, the physical reference desk is no longer necessarily the focal point of interaction between libraries and their patrons. Instead, reference services are increasingly provided "virtually." Proponents of virtual communication tools have often disagreed on what constitutes "virtual reference" services.[18] Some definitions of virtual reference exclude asynchronous forms of virtual reference, such as the QuestionPoint web form utilized by the Gallagher Law Library.[19] RUSA defines virtual reference as follows:

> Virtual reference is reference service initiated electronically where patrons employ computers or other technology to communicate with public services staff without being physically present. Communication channels used frequently in virtual reference include chat, videoconferencing, Voice-over-IP, co-browsing, e-mail, and instant messaging.[20]

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[12] *Id.* at 4488.

[13] *Id.* at 4486.

[14] *Id.*

[15] *Id.*

[16] *Id.*

[17] *Id.*

[18] *See* Courtney Selby, *The Evolution of the Reference Interview*, 26 Leg. Ref. Servs. Q. 1/2, at p. 43-44 (2007) [hereinafter, Selby, *Evolution of the Reference Interview*].

[19] *See, e.g.*, Morais and Sampson, *Georgetown Study*, *supra* n. 1 at p. 167. "Virtual reference service [is] defined as 'synchronous, online, interactive (chat) reference and excludes asynchronous modes of digital reference, such as e-mail or Web forms." *Id.* (citing Julie Arnold & Neal Kaske, *Evaluating the Quality of a Chat Service*, 2 Portal: Lib. Acad. 177 (2005)).

[20] RUSA, Guidelines for Implementing and Maintaining Virtual Reference Services (2010), http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/virtrefguidelines [hereinafter, "RUSA Virtual Reference Services"].

RUSA's definition of virtual reference is broad and includes both asynchronous and synchronous and forms of reference. It has been adopted by ALA[21] and is widely cited in literature.[22] Therefore, within this paper virtual reference includes any service that meets RUSA's definition.

Have Academic Law Libraries Embraced Virtual Reference?

Although law librarians have been discussing virtual reference services for over a decade,[23] the successful implementation of virtual reference services in law libraries is largely anecdotal. Indeed, in 2007 the Collection Development/ Instructional Services Law Librarian for the Mabee Legal Information Center, at the University of Tulsa College of Law, observed the lack of hard data to support the assertion that academic, public, and firm law libraries are widely using virtual reference.[24] She noted, "Despite the prolific writing on the subject of virtual reference in the in the library literature, there is surprisingly little information about the use of virtual reference outside the realm of general public and academic libraries. Special libraries, and particularly law libraries, are practically unexamined on any level beyond the individual library."[25] More recently, the researchers involved with the Georgetown Law Library case study, noted the lack

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[21] *See, e.g.*, ALA, Virtual Reference: A Selected Annotated Bibliography, http://www.ala.org/tools/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet19 (last accessed April 22, 2012); ALA, Virtual Reference from Professional Tips, http://wikis.ala.org/professionaltips/index.php?title=Virtual_Reference (last accessed April 22, 2012).

[22] *See* Audio CD: 98th AALL Annual Meeting and Conference: Improving Your Virtual Reference Service (San Antonio, Texas July 16-20, 2005), at 05AALL/CD-C-4.

[23] Bernie Sloan, editor of the *Digital Reference Services Bibliography*, wrote an article in 2006 to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the publication he believes to be the first journal article devoted to virtual reference. Bernie Sloan, *Twenty Years of Virtual Reference*, 11 Internet Ref. Servs. Q. 2, 91(2006). I conducted a number of searches in attempt to determine the earliest discussion of virtual reference services in law library specific literature. A keyword search of the AALL Library on Hein Online for the terms "'virtual reference" OR 'digital reference'" returns 49 results. According to these search results, the first use of the term "virtual reference" appeared in the law library literature in 1995. In the context of this first 1995 newsletter, the term was used to refer to resources available on AALLNET. Kathie J. Sullivan, *From the Chair*, 27 AALL Newsletter 3 (November 1995) ("Many have found the virtual reference aspect of AALLNET to be valuable; we think the CRIV materials would be useful to many in an electronic format."). I conducted the same search in the HeinOnLine Law Journal Library . That search returned 111 results. Again, the first relevant result (one referring to library services or the dissemination of information as opposed to something like "virtual reference point") was the November 1995 AALL Newsletter written by Kathie Sullivan. I conducted the same search in Legal Reference Services Quarterly using Taylor and Francis On-line. That search returned just 16 results with the oldest reference to "virtual reference" in a 2001 article that refers to a website entitled "My Virtual Reference Desk" as a good source of non-legal information for lawyers. *See* W. David Gay & Jim Jackson, *Creating and Using Web Resources to Train Attorneys*, 19 Legal Ref. Srvcs. Q. 1-2, at p. 64.

[24] *See* Selby, *Evolution of the Reference Interview*, *supra* n. 18, at p. 43-44 (2007).

[25] *Id.*

of empirical studies examining the use of chat reference at law libraries.[26] In short, it is not clear that law libraries have uniformly embraced virtual reference and it is unknown how widespread certain forms of virtual reference may be.

Contrary to what the dearth of empirical data might suggest, law librarians appear interested in learning more about virtual reference and their colleagues' experiences with it. The AALL Annual Meeting regularly offers sessions about virtual reference services, including a panel where the Georgetown researchers presented their findings.[27] The Academic Law Libraries – Special Interest Section (ALL-SIS) included questions related to the provision of virtual reference services at academic law libraries in a draft 2009 Supplemental Annual Questionnaire.[28] The proposed supplemental questionnaire has not, however, been distributed.[29]

To obtain a sense of the scope of virtual reference services offered by academic law libraries, I examined the library websites for the U.S. News and Word Reports Top 50 Law Schools.[30] I inspected the homepage of each library website, as well as examined links I could find for information about the library's reference or research services. Based on what I could discern from the portions of the websites available for public viewing, 16 libraries (32%) offered some form of

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[26] Morais & Sampson, *Georgetown Study*, *supra* n. 1 at 165-66, 167.

[27] *See, e.g.*, Audio CD: 102nd AALL Annual Meeting and Conference: Chat 2.0: renovating virtual reference (Washington D.C. July 25 – 28, 2009), at 290725-E2 [hereinafter AALL 2009, Chat 2.0].

[28] ALL-SIS Statistics Committee 2009 Supplemental Annual Questionnaire (2008-2009 Fiscal Year) (Draft 06-30-08), *available at* http://www.aallnet.org/sis/allsis/committees/statistics/all-sis_survey-063008.pdf. The draft questionnaire included the following questions in its section on "Reference Transactions": (1) Does your library promote e-mail reference?; (2) Does your library promote IM (instant messaging); (2) Does your library promote IM (instant messaging) Reference?; and (3) Does your library promote reference other than in person, phone, e-mail and IM?" *Id.*

[29] One of the 2011-2012 "Committee and Task Force Charges" for the Statistics Committee is to "Review the *ALL-SIS Statistics Committee 2009 Supplemental Annual Questionnaire* (Draft dated 6/30/08) at: http://www.aallnet.org/sis/allsis/committees/statistics/all-sis_survey-063008.pdf; solicit membership input regarding modifications to the survey and integrate those modifications into an updated draft; evaluate the survey for validity and reliability; administer survey to a test group of the ALL-SIS membership; administer survey to the ALL-SIS membership; analyze the results and publish analysis on the Statistics Committee website." *See* ALL-SIS, Committee and Task Force Charges (2011-2012), http://www.aallnet.org/sis/allsis/committees/charges/index.asp#statistics (last accessed April 22, 2012). The Chair of the ALL-SIS Committee, James Donovan, Director of the University of Kentucky Law Library, has, however, stated that the committee does not have current plans circulate this survey. E-mail from James Donovan to Christina Luini (May 17, 2012) (on file with author).

[30] U.S. News and World Report, Best Law Schools (2012), *available at* http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools/law-rankings (last accessed April 2, 2012). See **Appendix D** for a chart summarizing the websites surveyed and findings.

asynchronous virtual reference only (*i.e.* a central e-mail address[31] or Web form), 2 libraries (4%) offered a form of synchronous virtual reference (chat or text message) only, and 20 libraries (40%) offered both asynchronous and synchronous virtual reference services. Twelve libraries (24%) did not publicize any form of virtual reference service on their website.[32] Although this survey was hardly scientific, I believe we can conclude from it that academic law libraries have not uniformly embraced virtual reference. Further, my observations indicate that academic law libraries still have much they can learn from each other about what forms of virtual reference work best in this setting.

The Georgetown Chat Reference Study

To date, the only published empirical study analyzing the use of virtual reference services in an academic law library setting was conducted by researchers at the Georgetown Law Library.[33] Although the Georgetown Law Library had offered chat reference since January 2005, it had never formally evaluated the types of questions asked by users until this study was conducted in 2009.[34]

For the study, researchers retrieved, coded, and analyzed 1,320 transcripts for the time period of January to December 2008 to determine how students, faculty, and alumni use the chat reference service.[35] Each transcript was analyzed to determine patron type (student, faculty, or alumni)[36] and question type.[37] Questions were classified as (1) policy questions, (2) technical questions, (3) known-item question, or (4) ready-reference, extended reference, or instructional questions.[38] A single transcript could contain more than one question.[39] The review of 1,320 transcripts yielded 2,303 reference queries.[40] Overall, 64% of the queries were identified as ready-reference, extended reference, or instructional,

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[31] A number of libraries listed the individual e-mail addresses of their reference staff in the "contacts" area of the website. Although plausibly someone could contact a reference librarian via these individual accounts, I did not count this as a form of virtual reference unless the website encouraged patrons to contact the librarian via e-mail for reference assistance.

[32] It is possible that these twelve libraries simply do not market their virtual reference services on their website or use forms of virtual reference that are only visible/ accessible to members of the law school community. For example, at the 101st AALL Annual Meeting & Conference, librarians from Harvard law school described a newly implemented program called "InfoAdvantage." where, among other tools, the librarian chat function is embedded within course webpages. Audio CD, 101st AALL Annual Meeting & Conference, Exploring Library 2.0, at 08AALL/CD-G5 (July 12-15, 2008).

[33] Morais & Sampson, *Georgetown Study*, *supra* n. 1.

[34] *Id.* at 167.

[35] *Id.*

[36] Nine queries submitted by non-affiliated patron types were excluded from analysis, resulting in a revised total of 1,311 transcripts reviewed. *Id.* at 174.

[37] *Id.* at 169-70.

[38] *Id.* at 170.

[39] *Id.*

[40] *Id.* at 166, 174.

25% as known item inquiries, 6% as policy questions, and 5% as questions related to technical problems with library resources or services.[41]

Based on the results of study, the researchers concluded that overall, as a service, chat reference was meeting the information needs of students, faculty, and alumni of the Georgetown University Law Center and complemented the reference services provided at the reference desk via e-mail or telephone.[42] It also alleviated a major concern of the Head of Reference that the chat service was being used largely for getting answers to directional and policy questions (*e.g* Where is the bathroom? How late is the library open?).[43] Prior to the study, she thought that perhaps chat should be staffed with circulation staff, not reference librarians.[44] The study's determination that the majority of chat reference questions were quite sophisticated alleviated this concern.[45] The library also discovered that known-item queries received through chat provide insight into the types of resources that users are seeking, as well as the research interests of the faculty.[46] This information is useful to collection development.[47]

The study also helped the library identify areas where change could improve services.[48] For example, transcripts revealed that librarians often answer similar questions with different tools. Reference meetings where librarians share sources that they find particularly helpful are now scheduled, allowing librarians with a print preference to learn about online sources and vice versa.[49] Researchers also observed that instructional type inquiries and research consultations did not really work well over chat.[50] As a result, librarians have experimented with other solutions for providing that service virtually.[51] For example, librarians have used Jing to send short tutorials to students.[52] Given the competing demands at the reference desk, the library has also experimented with taking chat reference off-desk."[53] In short, virtual reference transactions are more easily captured and evaluated than in-person or telephone reference transactions. Thus, they provide a valuable tool for training and professional development.

The Georgetown study concluded with several recommendations for future areas of research, including an examination of how many students in the library used chat instead of coming to the reference desk and the number of unaffiliated

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[41] *Id.* at 165, 175-76.

[42] *Id.* at 176.

[43] *Id.*

[44] AALL 2009, Chat 2.0, *supra* n. 27.

[45] *Id.*; *see* Morais & Sampson, *Georgetown Study*, *supra* n. 1, 175–76.

[46] *Id.* at 176.

[47] *Id.*

[48] *Id.* at 176–77.

[49] *Id.* at 177.

[50] AALL 2009, Chat 2.0, *supra* n. 27.

[51] *Id.*

[52] *Id.*

[53] *Id.*

users who are seeking virtual reference help.[54] These issues are examined in the instant study.

Why Are Additional Empirical Studies of Virtual Reference Important?

Proponents of virtual reference expound its virtues.[55] Personal, work, and family obligations may make it difficult for some patrons to visit the library during regularly scheduled reference hours. Virtual reference services allow law librarians to provide assistance to users anywhere in the world, at their point of need. Some patrons may simply feel more comfortable communicating electronically rather than in-person or by telephone.[56] Indeed, the relative anonymity provided by virtual reference services may encourage some information-seekers who would not otherwise seek help to do so.[57] As the Georgetown researchers discovered,[58] transcripts of virtual reference assistance can also provide a valuable training tool from which library services can be improved.

Virtual reference services are not without critics.[59] Some view virtual reference as inefficient and expensive.[60] One study of chat reference services at the Grand Valley State University in Michigan estimated the price of a librarian answering a chat question as ranging from $37 to $439 per inquiry.[61] Critics also argue that virtual reference services undermine the quality of the reference interview.[62] Visual and oral cues that assist with understanding a patron's need are absent in the virtual reference environment.[63] Asynchronous forms of virtual reference also lack the back and forth exchange between the librarian and the patron that occurs during the reference interview.

Despite potential pitfalls, well-rounded law libraries will offer some form of virtual reference. As exemplified by the Georgetown study, empirical studies by law libraries of their virtual reference services are important to evaluating whether the services provided promote the positive aspects of virtual reference, enhancing the user experience. On the other hand, case studies also provide insight as to how services may be improved or streamlined so as to minimize the potential negatives. Publication of case studies conducted by individual law

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[54] *Id.* at 177-78.

[55] See Selby, *Evolution of the Reference Interview*, *supra* n. 18, at 41–42 for a discussion of commonly cited benefits of virtual reference.

[56] *Id.* at 41.

[57] *Id.* at 41.

[58] AALL 2009, Chat 2.0, *supra* n. 45.

[59] See Selby, *Evolution of the Reference Interview*, *supra* n. 18, at 42–43 for a discussion of common criticisms of virtual reference service.

[60] *Id.*

[61] Colleen Lyon and Anthony Molaro, *Should Staff Chat Reference Be Staffed By Librarians? An Assessment of Chat Reference at an Academic Library Using LibStats*, 16 Int. Svcs. Q. 111, 124 (2011).

[62] Selby, *Evolution of the Reference Interview*, *supra*, n. 18, at 42.

[63] *Id.*

libraries are also an important way for the community to share information about what works and what does not with respect to virtual reference. One law library's conclusions about the success of their virtual reference services may encourage other libraries to consider their practices more closely. With these goals in mind, I developed a utilization study of the Gallagher Law Library's QuestionPoint web form.

III. The Gallagher Law Library

The Gallagher Law Library is the largest law library in the Northwest.[64] Its collection exceeds 672,000 volumes and volume equivalents,[65] and includes an extensive East Asian Law Collection.[66] It operates autonomously from the University of Washington Libraries.

Gallagher's Patrons

The Gallagher Law Library is open to the public, but its primary users are the faculty and students of the UW Law School. Gallagher supports 62 full-time faculty members and approximately 52 part-time and adjunct faculty members.[67] Each fall, UW accepts an entering class of approximately 180 J.D. students.[68] The law school also offers LLM programs in Asian Law, Global Business Law, Health Law, Intellectual Property Law and Policy, Taxation, and Sustainable International Development Law, as well as a PhD in Asian and Comparative Law.[69] Thus, Gallagher typically supports a student population of approximately 670.[70]

Gallagher Law Library's Mission Statement, adopted in 1992, guides the library's provision of services.[71] It states: "The primary purpose of the Marian Gould Gallagher Law Library is to support the curricular and research needs of the *University of Washington School of Law*."[72] The Mission Statement acknowledges that "the law library's collections and services are available to the University of Washington community at large,"[73] as well as the general public.[74]

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[64] UW Law, 2011-12 Quick Facts, http://www.law.washington.edu/About/SchoolFacts .aspx (last accessed May 17, 2012) [hereinafter "UW Law Quick Facts"].

[65] Penny Hazelton, Associate Dean for Library & Computing Services (April 24, 2012).

[66] UW Law Quick Facts, *supra* n. 45.

[67] *Id.*

[68] About the UW School of Law, http://www.law.washington.edu/About/default.aspx (last accessed May 17, 2012).

[69] UW Law Quick Facts, *supra* n. 45.

[70] Penny Hazelton, Associate Dean for Library & Computing Services (May 23, 2012).

[71] Gallagher Law Library Mission Statement, http://lib.law.washington.edu/dir/mission.html (emphasis added).

[72] *Id.*

[73] *Id.*

[74] *Id.*

The Mission Statement notes, however, that "[f]inancial resources and academic priorities may limit services and materials to *secondary patrons*."[75]

Gallagher's Reference Services

Gallagher's hub for patron services is the Reference Office.[76] The Reference Office is staffed by the full-time equivalent of 4.4 professional law librarians[77] and the students of the University of Washington's Law Librarianship Program.[78] Beginning in July 2009,[79] students and public patrons also have the option of submitting reference inquiries virtually using the OCLC QuestionPoint web form.[80] Patrons access the web form by clicking on the "Ask Us!" button prominently displayed on the library's home page.[81] Patrons are advised that a professional librarian or law librarianship student responds to reference inquiries submitted via QuestionPoint during regular Reference Office Hours, within two days working days of submitting the inquiry.[82] Patrons agree that by submitting their question, they agree to the "QuestionPoint Patron Terms of Service."[83] The service terms advise patrons that their question, the library's answer, and any demographic information may be used to analyze usage, evaluate service effectiveness and provide training material, and to facilitate library research.[84]

Impetus for Study

I was introduced to QuestionPoint in October 2011 as a University of Washington law librarianship student. As part of my internship at the Gallagher Law Library, I regularly respond to inquiries submitted by QuestionPoint. It seemed that the majority of the questions I responded to came from secondary users and largely related to legal advice oriented questions that resulted in

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[75] *Id.* (emphasis added).

[76] During the regular academic year, Reference Office is staffed Monday through Thursday from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Fridays from 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM, Saturday 1:00 PM-4:00 PM, and Sunday 1:00PM -6:00PM. Law Library Hours, http://lib.law.washington.edu/hours/hours.html (last accessed May 17, 2012). Hours are more limited during the summer term and between academic terms. *Id.*

[77] M.G. Gallagher Law Library Organization Chart (September 19, 2011) (on file with author).

[78] Law Librarianship Program – University of Washington, http://lib.law.washington.edu/lawlibrarianship/ (last accessed May 24, 2012).

[79] Prior to July 2009, students and public patrons could submit reference inquiries to a centralized e-mail address. Use of the QuestionPoint service has the advantage of allowing for reporting and archiving that made the instant study possible.

[80] See **Appendix A** for a sample of Gallagher's QuestionPoint web form. Although QuestionPoint offers a chat reference tool, Gallagher has chosen not to implement this tool. Further, the library does not participate in the QuestionPoint 24/7 Cooperative.

[81] Gallagher Law Library Home Page, http://lib.law.washington.edu/ (last accessed May 17, 2012).

[82] See **Appendix B**.

[83] *Id.*

[84] QuestionPoint Patron Terms of Service (Feb. 26, 2008), http://www.questionpoint.org/ordering/pdfs/patronterms.pdf. The patron's agreement to these terms of service allow for the instant study.

providing referrals to legal aid services and basic self-help resources (*e.g.* Nolo Press Guides). As someone who prefers to work remotely, particularly when researching and writing, it surprised me that it seemed few students were utilizing the service. Even if on campus or in the library, I could see advantages to law students submitting inquiries via the web form. For example, it can be difficult for students to pack up their belongings and, perhaps, wait in line at the Reference Office. I was also surprised by what appeared to be a substantial number of inquiries from individuals outside the state of Washington.

I developed the following study in an effort to determine whether my observations were correct. If law students are not widely using the QuestionPoint service, in keeping with the library's mission, it is important to consider why not and how the library might better to serve them. Likewise, if secondary users are primarily using the service, it is important to consider whether valuable library resources are being used to serve these users at the expense of service to primary patrons. Although the results of this study are particular to the Gallagher Law Library, other academic law libraries can benefit from considering whether some of the issues this study raises are also pertinent to the provision of virtual reference services at their institutions.

IV.   Methodology

Process

For this study, I examined transcripts of reference interactions received by the Gallagher Law Library through via the QuestionPoint web form for four months over a one year period (April 2011, July 2011, October 2011, January 2012).[85] I

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[85] Although I would have liked to analyze the transcripts for a one year period to obtain a larger sample, this did not seem realistic given limited time and resources. I chose these four months in order to obtain a sample of queries from one month of each quarter of the academic year. It is difficult to get a good sense of what percentage of total inquiries received by Gallagher that these represent. In early April 2012, I ran institutional reports to obtain statistics on the total number of inquiries received via QuestionPoint for the entire time period that the service has been used. I hoped to be able to observe trends in usage over time. The results of these reports are reflected in **Appendix C**. The problem with the raw totals reflected in these reports is that they include inquiries not relevant to the study (*e.g.* responses to walk-up/ telephone inquiries and SPAM). In months where the library experienced problems with the SPAM filter the totals are skewed substantially. For example, in October 2011, a month chosen for review for the study, the institutional report reflects a total of 576 inquiries received. After eliminating SPAM, responses to walk-ups and telephone inquiries, and transcripts where the patron declined to have the question archived, I only had 77 transcripts to code for the study. Although there is no way to determine the exact amount of SPAM without reviewing the transcript, it is probably fair to assume that librarians answered to all legitimate inquiries submitted via the web form. Therefore, a rough estimate of the number of legitimate inquiries received by web form can be obtained by subtracting the total number of "questions received via direct entry" (usually a walk-up/ telephone) from the number of total number of "answers sent." In October 2011, this would result in an estimate of 72 total queries initiated by users via the QuestionPoint web form. This is fairly close to the set of 77 transcripts I selected review. The difference indicates that I may have

obtained the transcripts by running offline reports for the relevant time period using QuestionPoint's "Review Transcripts" function.[86] I then reviewed each transcript for the relevant time period and classified it per the parameters described below. I recorded my conclusions in an Excel spreadsheet.[87]

I eliminated several types of transcripts from my review. First, I did not analyze transcripts that indicated they were a follow-up to a walk-up or telephone inquiry.[88] Because the RUSA definition of virtual reference focuses on the act of the patron "initiating" the reference transaction through the virtual reference service, these were not appropriate to the data set. Second, I excluded transcripts where the patron answered "no" on the web form in response to "Can we archive your question?." For these inquiries, the librarian response was archived, but the patron question itself was not. Therefore, I was unable to categorize it. Finally, I eliminated transcripts that reflected obvious SPAM. For three of the four months analyzed, this resulted in the exclusion of a minimal number of transcripts (3-4). In October 2011, however, Gallagher experienced a problem with its SPAM filter. As a result, hundreds of transcripts reflecting nothing but gibberish were eliminated from the study.[89]

User Classification

First, each transcript was analyzed for user type. Users were classified into one of the following groups:

- UW Law Student – Primary/ Target User Group
- UW Community (UW staff, UW students (non-law), non-law faculty)

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mistakenly concluded that some walk-ups/ telephone inquiries had been submitted via the online web form.

[86] *See* Question Point, Review Your Transcripts Offline, *Quick Reference* (Feb. 2012), available at http://www.questionpoint.org/support/documentation/gettingstarted/qp_reviewoffline_ref.pdf (last accessed May 17, 2012); *see also* Question Point, General Review of Your Transcripts, *Quick Reference* (Feb. 2012), available at
http://www.questionpoint.org/support/documentation/gettingstarted/qp_generaltranscriptreview_ref.pdf (last accessed May 17, 2012). Print copies of the transcripts that served as the data set for this project are on file with the author.

[87] The data sheets are on file with the author.

[88] Sometimes librarians follow-up with telephone or walk-up patrons via QuestionPoint with the answers to complicated or time-consuming questions received that were difficult to answer on-demand in the reference office. Currently, Gallagher does not request that librarians track the transcript as a response to a walk-up or telephone inquiry when communicating with patrons this way. Therefore, I had to look for clues from the transcript suggesting the response was to a walk-up or telephone patron. Some librarians write in the notes the "question" or "answer" field indicating the response as such. Other times, I inferred that the transcript was a response to a walk-up or telephone inquiry based on the lack of data normally collected when the query is submitted by the web form (*e.g.* patron "location" and "status") and the fact that the question field contained a short paraphrase of the inquiry to which the librarian was responding.

[89] SPAM is another potential disadvantage for some forms of virtual reference service. Problems with SPAM may take several days for the IT team to analyze and fix. In the meantime, librarians must sort through and remove SPAM to reach the legitimate inquiries. This hidden expenditure of resources must be considered in the cost-benefit analysis of the virtual reference service.

- UW Law Alumni
- Other – Non-Affiliated User/ Public Patron

To classify the user type, I largely deferred to the self-identified "status" information that the patron provided at the time of submitting the QuestionPoint web form. If, however, users identified themselves clearly in the transcript as belonging to a user group outside of how they self-identified on the web form, I reclassified them for purposes of my study. For example, one patron self-identified as "UW Law" on the web form. But in his question he noted that he had graduated from the UW Law LLM program and was now enrolled in a UW PHD program working on his dissertation. Thus, I classified this patron as "UW Community."

Location Classification

The next factor I considered was the users' location at the time they submitted the QuestionPoint web form. I reviewed each transcript and classified the user location as one of the following:

- UW Law (within IP range for William H. Gates Hall)
- Seattle (outside of the UW Law IP range)
- Washington State (outside of Seattle)
- United States (outside United States)
- Outside of the United States

Again, I largely classified the users' location based on information self-reported on the QuestionPoint web form. I was, however, interested in whether students were using the QuestionPoint service to seek reference services from *within the library*. This is not an option on the web form. During the course of my study, I noticed that QuestionPoint transcripts contained IP address information below the self-identified "location." I consulted with UW Law's Senior Computer Specialist about whether I could determine whether the user had submitted the web form from within the library using this information. He was able to provide me with a range of IP addresses that would indicate that the user was located somewhere in the *law school building* (William H. Gates Hall) at the time the form was submitted.[90] I classified transcripts reflecting the UW Law IP range accordingly.

Content Classification

Finally, I reviewed the substance of each *question* for its content. A single transcript could contain more than one type of question. These transcripts were

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[90] The Gallagher Law Library is located on the lower two floors of William H. Gates Hall. The law library and the law school share an IT Department. Accordingly, the law school and law library share the same IP range.

coded as containing multiple content types. Content was classified into the following six categories:[91]

- REFERENCE – Known Item
- REFERENCE – Traditional Legal Research Oriented
- REFERENCE – Legal Advice/ Analysis Oriented
- REFERENCE – Citation Help
- REFERENCE – Research Help (Non-Legal)
- NON-REFERENCE – Administrative/ Directional/ Technical

I classified the question as a **"Reference –Known-Item"** category if the user was seeking information about the location or availability of a particular source or document. **Table 1** provides examples of questions I classified as known-item inquiries.

Table 1. Examples of "Reference – Known-Item" Inquiries

I am looking for a copy of "Arbitration in Indian Country: Settling Business Disputes with Native American Tribes," 116 Am. Jur. Trials 365. Do you have a copy or access to a copy?
I am looking for a copy of the 1973 Oregon Safe Employment Act. I don't want the current updated version. Would you have a copy?
Do we have subscription access to either one of the following database service? http://www.lawinfochina.com/ http://www.lexicn.com/ I'd like to access one article from either of them.
I have a question of whether UW Law Library can find a copy of this dissertation: Regional Arrangements for Transboundary Atmospheric Pollution in ASEAN Countries (2007) by L.M. Syarif, Ph.D. dissertation.

I classified the question as **"Reference –Traditional Legal Research Oriented"** if it involved questions about which legal sources to consult, how to craft searches in legal databases, or how to find particular *legal* information. Inquiries classified in this category included questions about locating cases, statutes, or law journal articles regarding a particular subject, researching legislative history, and determining if a case was good law. **Table 2** provides examples of questions I categorized as "Reference – Traditional Legal Research Oriented."

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[91] I reviewed a number of the QuestionPoint transcripts and considered the content classification systems utilized by the Georgetown study and a study of faculty requests conducted several years ago by a former University of Washington law library student prior to deciding on the classification scheme for the instant project. Morais & Sampson, *Georgetown Study*, *supra* n. 1, at 170-72; Jackie G. Woodside, *Interdisciplinary Trends of Law Faculty: Possible Implications for Law Librarians* (unpublished Law MLIS culminating experience paper, University of Washington) (June 23, 2009), *available at* http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1424287 (last accessed May 28, 2012).

Table 2. Examples of "Reference –Traditional Legal Research Oriented" Inquiries

I am having difficulties researching the Cairo Guidelines and Principles for the Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes, which was adopted by the UN Environmental Program in 1987. I am especially interested in the original text, and any legislative history regarding the definition of hazardous wastes. Can you help me?
I am searching for legal precedents in which the doctrine of res judicata was defeated in the Federal Court of Appeals. Can you teach [sic] me several such cases?
What is the seminal treatise on Legal Malpractice in Washington?
Where can I find the Endangered Species Act?
I am currently searching for articles regarding The Inter-American Court of Human Rights – San Pedro. Do you have any ideas?
How do I find information on SEPA? It's not coming up with anything when I search, I'm trying to find out how it treats marine animals.
[Do] you have any ideas about how to craft a Westlaw search that might [help me find case law where a court has applied the RAP to superior court appeals cases to expand the record].

I classified the question as **"Reference–Legal Advice/ Analysis Oriented"** where the inquiry suggested the patron hoped to obtain an answer to a specific *legal* question involving a particular factual situation (as opposed to an inquiry seeking assistance with identifying legal resources that might assist the user in determining the answer for him or herself). In other words, questions classified in this category were the type that a person might pose to an attorney in the context of seeking legal assistance—questions which require some degree of legal analysis to answer.

Admittedly, inquiries falling into the "Reference – Traditional Legal Research" and "Reference - Legal Advice/ Analysis Oriented" were the content classifications most difficult to code. For example, the question: "What is the seatbelt law in Texas?"[92] may be interpreted two ways. The patron may be requesting guidance about resources where s/he can learn whether Texas has laws about seatbelts. Alternatively, the question could be viewed as a request by the patron for the librarian to research and provide an interpretation about what Texas law requires. Under the latter interpretation, the response the patron expects from the librarian is similar to the response a client would expect to obtain from an attorney.

A journal article discussing the provision of legal information to *pro se* patrons by academic law libraries argued that law librarians cannot be held liable for the unauthorized practice of law as the result of information conveyed on the library's website.[93] The author reasoned that "no analysis is possible because the Web site user is not able to convey facts of a case or a problem to a librarian. Legal analysis and practice of law occur when there is an application of law to fact." She further noted, "[P]*ro se* Website users are going to be sufficiently sophisticated that they understand that the Web site is not a practicing attorney

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[92] This question was posed in one of the Gallagher QuestionPoint transcripts that I reviewed. Ultimately, based on the cues explained herein, I classified this as a "Reference – Traditional Legal Research Oriented" inquiry.
[93] Lee Sims, *Academic Law Library Web Sites*, 23 L. Ref. Svcs. Q. 4, at p. 13.

and that the content of the site is only providing access to legal information and not legal advice." This limitation does not exist in the case of an interactive virtual reference service such as QuestionPoint.

Despite disclaimers prominently displayed on Gallagher's website about the scope of reference services, users who submitted queries via the web form often phrase them in a manner calling for legal analysis and conclusion. Thus, in distinguishing between Legal Advice/ Analysis Oriented and Traditional Legal Research Oriented I considered content in the question indicating that the patron hoped to obtain an answer to a personal legal problem. This included use of the words like "I" and "my," and/or a description of a specific factual scenario (sometimes posed as a hypothetical). I also considered the librarians' response to the inquiry. Questions that prompted the librarian to preface the response with the library's standard disclaimer regarding legal advice[94] suggested that the question should be coded as "Reference – Legal Advice/ Analysis Oriented." Another clue that the question should be coded this way was when the librarian referred the patron to resources for finding an attorney. **Table 3** provides examples of questions I classified as "Reference–Legal Advice/ Analysis Oriented."

Table 3. Examples of "Reference – Legal Advice/ Analysis Oriented" Inquiries

Is there common law marriage in Washington state and, if so, is my boyfriend of 4 years entitled to my assets?
I live in Snohomish, WA. My house is in a "squished" area where 4 houses have "interesting" property lines. [10 sentence long paragraph describing the property and issues with neighbor.] Are there laws governing the use of the street access in front of one's property like this?
What do I need to do to gain power of attorney for my sister who has been hospitalized due to hullinations [sic]? She has bills to be paid and we don't have the money to pay them and she is not of sound mind. . . .
How does one handle false protection order filed against me. The mother did this in order to prevent me from having visitation with my son.
I'm looking for the answer to a legal question regarding carrying a fixed blade knife with a 6 inch blade. I've read all the RCWs I could find on it, but it still seems obscured by "legal speak." From what I understand this knife would be considered a "deadly weapon" not a dangerous weapon and that means I could carry it unconcealed, please correct me if I am wrong. Also, is it considered unconcealed if someone can only see the handle and not the blade? . . . PS . . . I'm not looking to carry it as a weapon but as a tool. If I feel I need a weapon for protection I have a CPL, and a perfectly legal handgun, knives are tools.

Questions classified as "Reference- Citation Help" were generally straightforward. As indicated by the classification's title, these questions typically related to how to cite a source in proper Bluebook or other citation format. **Table 4** provides examples of questions I classified as "Reference-Citation Help."

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[94] The standard disclaimer that may be automatically inserted when appropriate states, "While we cannot answer specific legal questions we can provide direction to resources. Please "

Table 4. Examples of "Reference –Citation Help" Inquiries

How does one cite to legislative history materials? For example, I have a legislative report for SSB 2092 (1975) and a Final House Bill Report on SHB 1117 (2001) and have no idea how to cite them properly.
I am a librarian and have been asked how to cite the Blood Transfusion Act using USCA and proper blue book formatting. . . . I'm not certain if you cite the copy right year of the USCA? Or if you only cite to the U.S.C.A. and NOT the Statutes at Large cite? . . . Do I need to cite to the revisions [to this law] somehow? Can you help guide me?
I am revising a writing sample from the past academic year for my OCI materials and, based on my professor's old comments on a brief, I am confused about how to properly cite case law according to the Washington Style Sheet. . . . Please help!!

The category **"Reference–Research (Non-Legal)"** was intended for reference questions that did not require the use of or referral to traditional legal information sources (*e.g.* cases, statutes, legal treatises, law journal articles). Questions classified in this category included things like locating statistics, verifying factual information, directory/ contact information, and obtaining biographical or historical information.[95] **Table 5** sets forth examples of questions I classified as "Reference–Research (Non-Legal)."

Table 5. Examples of "Reference –Research (Non-Legal)" Inquiries

Can you please tell me how the [XXX] scholarship fund came to begin there? He is my [ancestor] and I am fascinated to find a fund named after him.
Need A database that lists active businesses by county in WA State. (The existing WADOR search requires a name or UBI#) *Problem . . . We do not know who these businesses are. (thus we do not have a name to use in search function. . . . Any assistance in identifying these businesses would be appreciated.)
Where is the best place to research an out-of-state attorney for someone without access to Lexis or Westlaw?
I have 2 law books, on published in 1677 and the other in 1666. They need to be repaired. Any assistance you can provide regarding their preservation would be greatly appreciated.
How many inches of snow is on the ground outside of the law library?
I am currently working on the International Human Rights Project . . . . I will specifically be writing about children detained in Guantanamo. I need information on how many are detained, the conditions of their detainment, really any and everything having to do with children in Guantanamo.
I'm trying to find information on animal cruelty cases in Washington state. I've heard the court of appeals has some statistics yet I don't know how to get them. Do you keep databases like that?

Finally, the "Non-Reference – Administrative/ Directional" category was a catch-all classification for requests about library services, policies, and technology, as well as other administrative queries. Many of the questions classified in this category could be answered just as easily by a member of the circulation staff as by a professional law librarian. **Table 6** sets forth examples of questions classified as "Non-Reference."

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[95] I would have classified interdisciplinary research questions in this category (*e.g.* articles from social science journals on a particular topic), but I did not identify any such questions.

Table 6. Examples of "Non-Reference – Administrative/ Directional/ Technical"
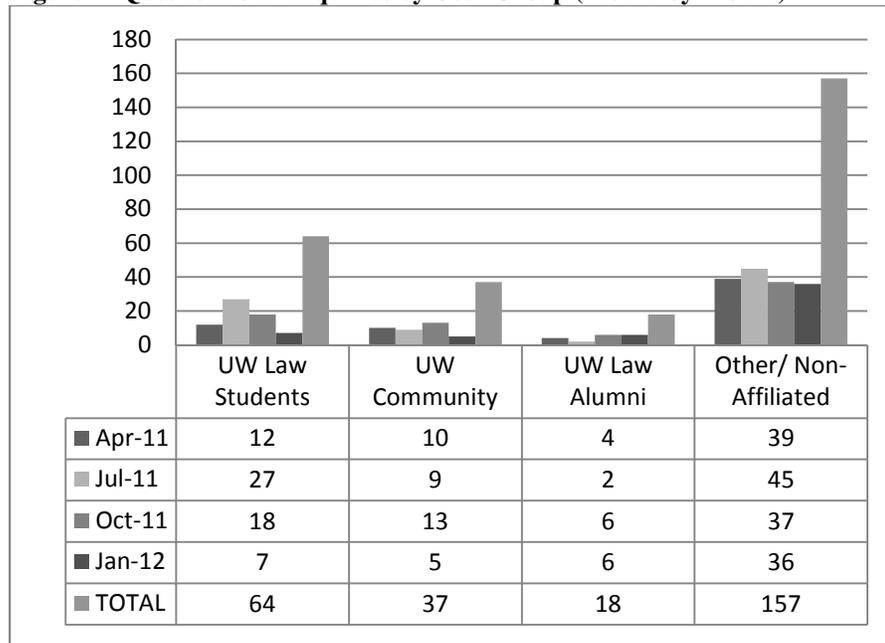
The law library appears to subscribe to a Japanese newsprint online, but I was unable to access the contents reserved for those with subscription. Let me know how we can log into the newspaper's website.

I am looking for a flash drive that I might have left in one of the computers on the first floor. It says "Westlaw" on it. Thanks.

Could you kick out the girl on L1at the law student tables who is wearing a black jacket and a pink scarf who does not appear to be a law student? Thank you.

What is your mailstop # for campus mail?

If non student, but interested in law, am I allowed to view the books in your library and/or check them out?

I am on the Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal. I would like to meet with a librarian to discuss possible topics for my comment.

One of my [] sons graduated from [] law school about five years ago and left a bunch of textbooks that he doesn't want in my house. I don't want 'em either but think it would be a shame to throw them away. If you could use them and could figure a way to retrieve them, I'd be happy to donate.

We noticed you are linking to [XXX] as a source of freely available aggregated public records data, ... If possible we would appreciate a link to another one of our sites, [YYYY] . . . .

V. Snapshot of Gallagher QuestionPoint Inquiries

Number of Inquiries by User Group

In total, 276 transcripts provided information identifying the patron type. **Figure 1** summarizes the number of inquiries received by each user group per month and in total. **Figure 2** provides the overall percentage of inquiries received from each user group for all months included in the study.

Figure 1: QuestionPoint Inquiries by User Group (Month by Month)

	UW Law Students	UW Community	UW Law Alumni	Other/ Non-Affiliated
Apr-11	12	10	4	39
Jul-11	27	9	2	45
Oct-11	18	13	6	37
Jan-12	7	5	6	36
TOTAL	64	37	18	157

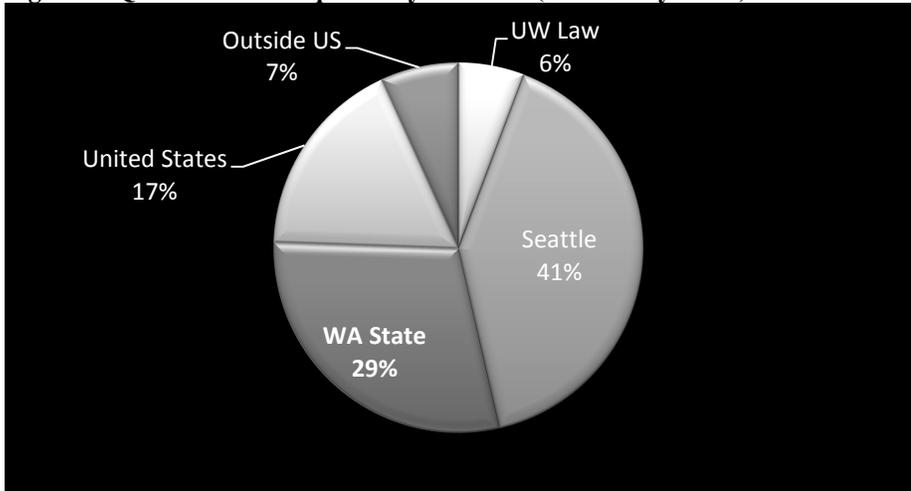**Figure 2: QuestionPoint Inquiries by User Group (Case Study Total)**
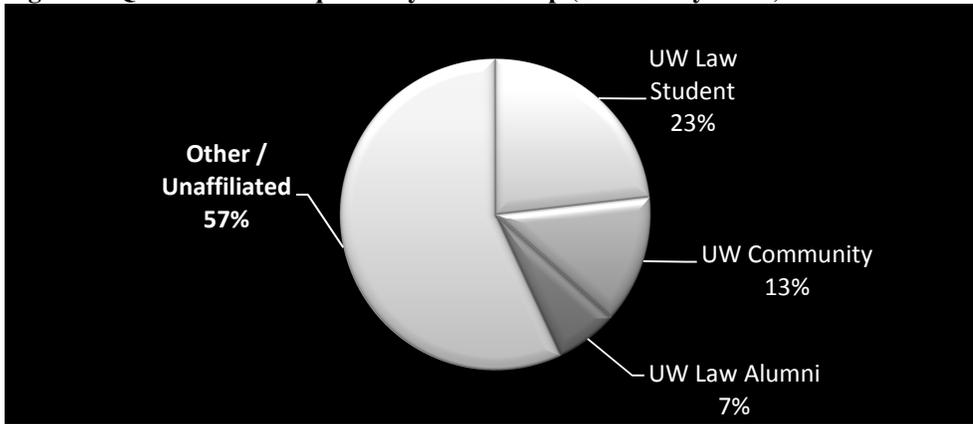
Number of Inquiries by Location

A total of 278 transcripts contained sufficient information to identify the patron location. **Figure 3** shows the breakdown of inquiries by location for each month of the study and in total. **Figure 4** provides the overall percentage of inquiries by location received for all months included in the study.
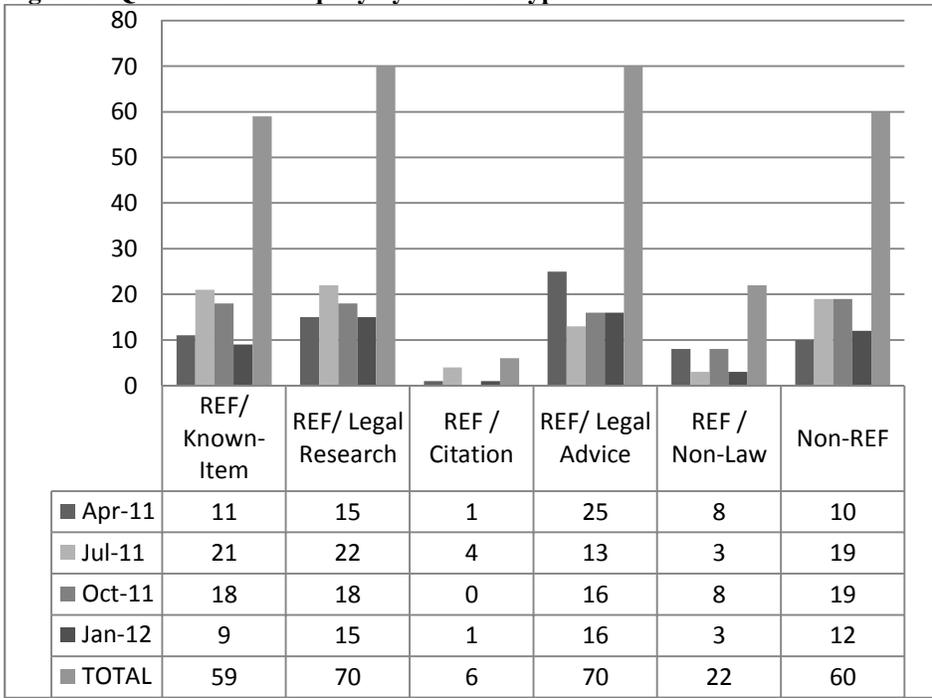
Figure 3: QuestionPoint Inquiries by Location (Month by Month)

	UW Law School	Seattle	WA State	United States	Outside US
Apr-11	2	23	25	12	4
Jul-11	6	30	14	23	9
Oct-11	6	33	27	2	6
Jan-12	2	27	15	12	0
TOTAL	16	113	81	49	19
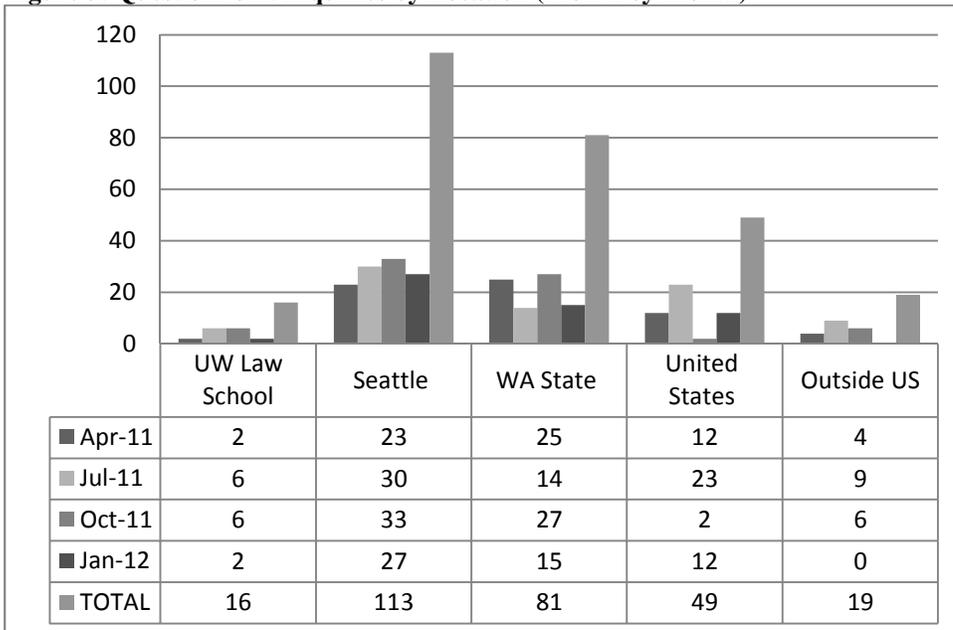
Figure 4: QuestionPoint Inquiries by Location (Case Study Total)

Content Type

A total of 287 distinct question types were coded. **Figure 5** summarizes the content of questions received by month and in total. **Figure 6** provides the overall percentage of inquiries received in each question type. **Figure 7** shows the types of questions received from Gallagher's target/ primary user group—UW law students.

Figure 5: QuestionPoint Inquiry by Content Type

	REF/ Known-Item	REF/ Legal Research	REF / Citation	REF/ Legal Advice	REF / Non-Law	Non-REF
■ Apr-11	11	15	1	25	8	10
■ Jul-11	21	22	4	13	3	19
■ Oct-11	18	18	0	16	8	19
■ Jan-12	9	15	1	16	3	12
■ TOTAL	59	70	6	70	22	60

Figure 6: QuestionPoint Inquiry by Content Type (Case Study Total)
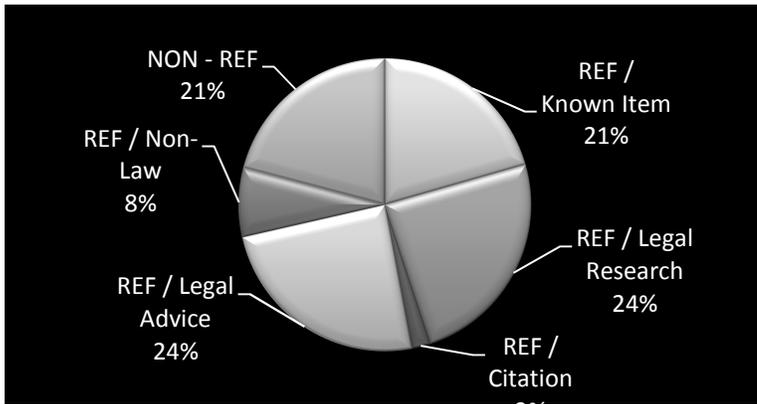
Figure 7 – UW Law Student QuestionPoint Inquiries by Content Type
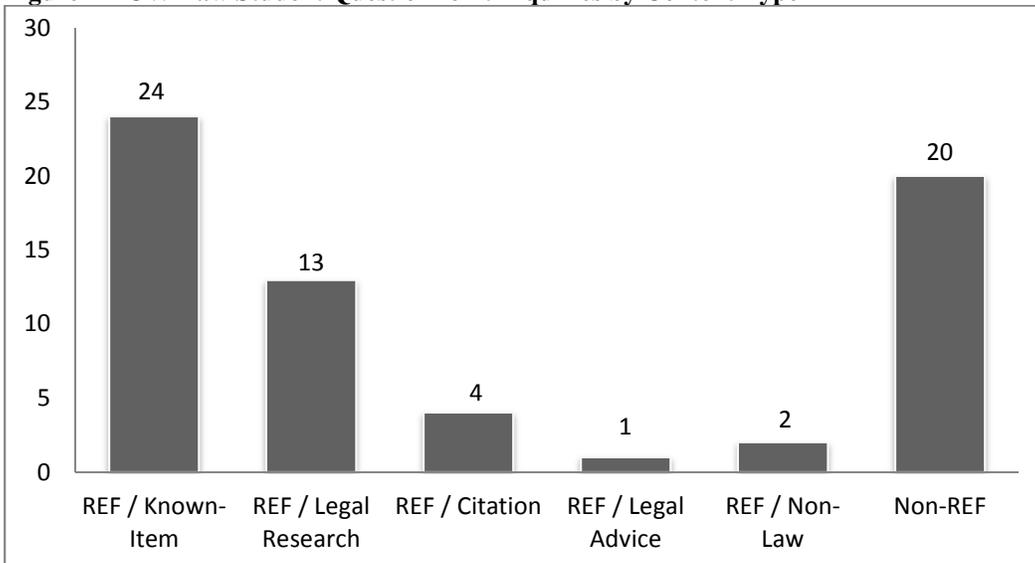
VI.   Discussion

User Group Analysis

The most significant aspect of the user group analysis is that only 23% of the inquiries Gallagher receive via its QuestionPoint web form come from Gallagher's primary user group (UW law students). Indeed, the inquiries received by patrons not affiliated with UW (57%) outnumber the combined total of inquiries received from the three UW-affiliated user groups (43%). Further, questions received from secondary user groups (UW Community, UW Law Alumni, and unaffiliated users make up over three-fourths (77%) of the inquiries received through the QuestionPoint.

The reason why relatively few UW law students use the service may be the result of several factors. It is quite possible that the reference needs of UW Law students are satisfied through the traditional live reference services offered in

the Gallagher Reference Office. In fact, Gallagher Law Library has the advantage of being in a location and space that law students frequent. It is a fairly new building with comfortable study areas, light, fantastic views of the Seattle skyline, and serves as a center for many law school activities. Not all academic law libraries are created equal and one that is less heavily used by students might benefit more from offering virtual reference services.

An alternative explanation for the relatively low use by UW law students of the QuestionPoint web form may be that law students are unaware of it or do not find it easy to access. It is possible that secondary users tend to be seeking out information about law library services. As a result, they reach the Gallagher Law Library homepage and its prominent "Ask Us" function. On the other hand, UW Law students may be more likely to use course websites, clinic websites, and/or student organization websites as the primary vehicle for fulfilling their information needs. They may not have the same awareness of the Gallagher Law Library's virtual presence as secondary users because they can stop by the library between classes to obtain general information about the library's services (*e.g.* hours of operation) rather than by visiting the library's website. Perhaps embedding the QuestionPoint web form into course web pages would raise awareness of the service, create a more effective access point for students, and increase the number of student inquiries via the service.[96]

Yet another possible explanation for the low percentage of student inquiries is that students view the asynchronous QuestionPoint web form as antiquated. They might prefer forms of virtual reference that are more interactive, such as chat or regular virtual "reference office hours" with librarians. Periodic user surveys exploring students' awareness of current virtual reference services and desires with respect to such services may be necessary for academic libraries to ensure they are adequately serving this group's needs.

Another interesting aspect of the user group analysis is that of the four different user groups, the number of UW law student inquiries fluctuated the most from month to month. The lowest number (7) were received in January 2012 and the peak number (27) were received in July 2012. **(Figure 1)** In contrast, the number of inquiries received from the other three user groups remained relatively steady from month to month. **(Figure 1)** The particularly low number of inquiries received from students in January 2012 likely results from two factors: (1) January is the beginning of the quarter, so UW law students are not yet fully

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[96] During a panel at the 2008 AALL Conference, a speaker from Harvard Law described its "Info Advantage" program where links to library resources specific to the course and chat modules were embedded into the course web pages. Audio CD: 101st AALL Annual Meeting and Conference: Exploring Library 2.0 – Stretching the Boundaries of Virtual Reference (Portland, Oregon July 12-15, 2008), at 08AALL/CD-G5. The speaker viewed this program as a successful way of reaching students. *Id.*

entrenched in assignments; and (2) due to a snow storm in Seattle the week of January 16th, the UW campus was closed for three days.[97]

The reason for the spike in inquiries from UW law students in July 2011 is less clear. Most students are not taking classes in July. They are out in the field gaining practical experience by working at law firms, courts, non-profits, government agencies, and other legal settings. The increase in inquiries suggests that students are having some difficulties translating the legal research skills they have learned in school to their real-life work experiences. Although providing reference service to law students at their summer jobs (some at prestigious law firms with their own library support) does not *per se* support the primary mission of "support[ing] the curricular and research needs" of the law school, encouraging the use of virtual reference services for this purpose has the potential to be beneficial to the law school and the library over the long-term. A successful summer experience often leads to full-time employment following graduation. Students who move onto illustrious legal careers may one day want to give back to the institution that helped them achieve their career goals. From a short-term perspective, students who receive help via virtual reference services during the summer months may continue to seek out the help of reference librarians during the school year. Indeed, Gallagher law librarian Mary Whisner observed that many students who used e-mail reference in summer when they had a particularly strong need became convinced of the utility of reference help and continued to use it during the school year.[98] To this end, developing programs that raise student awareness that librarians are available to assist them virtually during the summer months is a powerful marketing tool for academic law libraries.[99] Further, law libraries should analyze this type of data for longer periods of time to determine trends and identify when staffing may be needed.

The high use of the QuestionPoint service by secondary user groups also has several implications. Each reference transaction with a secondary user takes valuable time and resources away from the academic law library's service to its primary patrons. In the survey I conducted of the top-50 ABA approved law school library websites, several schools blocked non-affiliated users from accessing the virtual reference service.[100] Although placing the virtual reference

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[97] Although not demonstrating quite as significant a drop, January 2012 was also the lowest month for questions received from the larger UW Community. **(Figure 1)** There was no similar effect for UW Law Alumni or Non-Affiliated users. This makes logical sense because inquiries from user groups outside the UW community would not be affected by the start of the quarter. Further, individuals from outside the UW Community might not be aware of the campus closure due to the snowstorm and/ or are more likely to be contacting the library service from outside of the area.

[98] Mary Whisner, *Practicing Reference . . . The Pajama Way of Reference*, 99 Law. Lib. J. 4, 849-50 (2007).

[99] Gallagher Law Library has developed a "Bridge the Legal Research Gap" program for 2012 and will be offering a "Summer Legal Research Refresher" course twice this summer. This course will promote additional inquiries. 2012 Bridge the Legal Research Gap, http://lib.law.washington.edu/btg/2012/2012btg.html (last accessed May 28, 2012).

[100] *See, e.g.* Fordham University School of Law, Leo T. Kissam Memorial Library, http://lawlib1.lawnet.fordham.edu/ (last accessed May 24, 2012). Clicking on the "Ask a

service behind a virtual curtain provides an effective way to ensure allocation of resources to primary users, it may be inconsistent with the overarching goals of the profession and the law school to do so. Many law schools seek to develop leaders who will work for the common good. Offering the services of the law library to non-affiliated users, particularly underserved public patrons in the library's region, is in keeping with this goal. Similarly, an overarching goal of law librarianship is to provide "open and effective access to legal and related information."[101] Although the AALL ethical code recognizes that library services should focus on service to their primary "clientele,"[102] a balanced approach may be to streamline responses to the questions posed by secondary user groups. This, of course, requires some work up front. The law library must first conduct some form of review or content analysis to determine the types of questions that the library receives repeatedly and then develop standard responses to the most common questions. Once in place, however, this solution allows academic law libraries to efficiently serve the greater community's legal information needs without jeopardizing service to primary users.

Location Analysis

Given Gallagher Law Library's status as the largest law library in the Northwest, it is not surprising that the overwhelming number of inquiries (76%) came from patrons accessing the QuestionPoint web form from within the state of Washington. **(Figure 3)** Moreover, of the 210 Washington state inquiries, 129 (62%) came from users accessing the service from within Seattle (where Gallagher is located) and 81 (38%) accessed the services from elsewhere in Washington State. **(Figure 3)**

These numbers suggest that the geographic proximity of the user to the library is not the most important factor in determining whether the user visits the library or relies on the virtual reference service. Rather, it appears, the virtual reference service is just as convenient and desirable to those accessing it from Seattle where the library is located as to those living further away. Indeed, the results of this study show that sometimes users contact the library through QuestionPoint even when on the law school premises. **(Figures 3 and 4)** Again,

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Librarian" link from the library's homepage navigates to a screen where users are required to enter their last name and Fordham identification number. *Id.*, https://lawpac.lawnet.fordham.edu/validate?url=http%3A%2F%2F0-150.108.66.249.lawpac.lawnet.fordham.edu%3A80%2Fvirtref (last accessed May 24, 2012). Berkeley Law, a large public institution similar to UW Law, also restricts its chat reference service to students. *See* Berkeley Law, Library News, *Chat Reference: A New Service for Boalt Students* (last edited June 13, 2011), *available at* http://www.law.berkeley.edu/library/dynamic/news.php?view=html&item=134 (last accessed May 24, 2012).

[101] AALL Ethical Principles (approved by the AALL membership, April 5, 1999), http://www.aallnet.org/main-menu/Leadership-Governance/policies/PublicPolicies/policy-ethics.html (last accessed May 24, 2012).

[102] *Id.*

it appears that virtual reference services, in fact, offer a convenient and desired mechanism for seeking assistance, notwithstanding geographic proximity.

That said, only a modest number questions (16 / 6%) were submitted by patrons accessing the QuestionPoint web form from within the library. (**Figures 3 and 4**) If issues of anonymity and "fear of talking to the librarian" often cited as reasons for implementing virtual reference services, were significant, one would expect the number of inquiries submitted on the law school premises to be more significant.

On the other hand, a fairly significant number of inquiries come from users outside of Washington State (81 / 17%) and outside of the United States (19 / 7%). **(Figures 3 and 4)** This demonstrates how virtual reference has great potential to increase access to legal information around the globe. Providing virtual reference services across a wide geographic area is in keeping with "one of [the] basic tenets of [law librarianship], open access to information for all individuals."[103]

Nevertheless, providing virtual reference services to anyone, anywhere, for any type of question may distract law librarians from serving their primary users. An interesting area for future study would be to focus in on the content and context of inquiries received from out-of-state or out-of-country users. While it may be appropriate for a law library to answer questions about resources in which the library has an area of expertise, in many cases the most appropriate response for out-of-area users may be to refer the inquiry to a different law library. For example, it makes sense for someone living in Nebraska to contact the Gallagher Law Library for assistance with researching Washington law. A person from Nebraska needing assistance with researching California law would, however, be better served by referral to a California law librarian. Law libraries who offer their virtual reference services to a broad geographic audience should look closely at the number of inquiries from out-of-state and out-of-country users and set protocols for responding to inquiries from secondary users[104] about matters that are outside of the library's expertise.[105] It would also be interesting to ask patrons on the QuestionPoint web form about how they learned about the service and analyze the results of this survey by user location.

Content Analysis

Of the 287 distinct question types coded, questions received via the QuestionPoint web form were fairly evenly distributed among Non-Reference-

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[103] *Id.*

[104] Presumably, the law library would desire to provide the reference service to, for example, a law student studying or working abroad regardless of whether the type of question relates to a subject matter within the library's expertise.

[105] At the Gallagher Law Library, for instance, librarians often refer non-local patrons to readily known internet resources (*e.g.* lawhelp.org) but also research and refer the patron to law libraries closer to where they live for additional assistance.

Administrative, Directional, and Technical queries (60 / 21%) and among three types of reference questions—Known-Item (59 / 21%), Traditional Legal Research Oriented (70 / 24%), and Legal Advice Oriented (70 / 24%). **(Figures 5 and 6)** Citation and non-law reference questions each made up only a small portion of the total number of questions received at 2% and 8% respectively. **(Figures 5 and 6)**

The number of "Legal-Advice Oriented" questions is not surprising given the large number of unaffiliated, non-academic users who utilize Gallagher's Question Point service. Although this study's sample is relatively small, the large number of Legal Advice Oriented questions suggests that academic law libraries that open up their services to individuals without formal training in the law should develop an arsenal of self-help type resources that can easily be accessed and used to respond efficiently and effectively to these types of reference questions.

The more surprising aspect of the content analysis is that a fairly significant number (21%) of questions submitted via QuestionPoint involved non-reference (*i.e.* policy, directional, and technical) issues. In comparison, only 11% of the chat transcripts in the Georgetown study were classified as technical or policy related.[106] The reason for this relative difference is unclear. It could have something to do with the difference between asynchronous and synchronous reference services. Many of us have become accustomed to submitting inquiries about customer service related issues via an asynchronous e-mail or web form on the service provider's website. Patrons with administrative, technical and directional related questions may go to Gallagher's homepage, view the AskUs button, and believe it serves this function.

There are a number of things a library can do to cut down on the number of non-reference inquiries received from a virtual reference service. In Gallagher's case, it might be beneficial to include some basic information about the library's access policy on the page users are taken to after clicking on the AskUs button. It might also be worthwhile to develop a set of "Frequently Asked Questions" to common non-reference inquiries and link to it from that same page. All law libraries should evaluate the types of non-reference questions repeatedly received through their virtual reference service because they provide insight into what information the library is and is not effectively communicating to patrons.

VII.   Conclusion

Virtual reference is here to stay. As new technologies are developed the ways in which virtual reference is provided will continue to evolve. Regardless of the form in which virtual reference services are provided, it is important for law librarians to pause from time to time and evaluate whether the virtual reference services offered by their law libraries are enhancing services to patrons in the manner imagined when they were implemented. No two law libraries are exactly

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[106] Morais and Sampson, *Georgetown Study*, *supra* n. 1, at 174.

the same, but the more data and information on this topic that is shared between libraries will assist in the decision-making and evaluation process with respect to virtual reference. This study offers one example of factors that other law libraries may want to evaluate in order to better understand whether virtual reference services are working at their institution.

Appendix A

AskUs!/ QuestionPoint Service Instructions from the Gallagher Law Library Website, *available at* http://lib.law.washington.edu/questions.html (last accessed April 22, 2012)

Appendix B

AskUs!/ Question Point Web form Utilized by the Gallagher Law Library,
available at http://www.questionpoint.org/crs/servlet/org.oclc.admin.BuildForm?
&institution=13017&type=1&language=1 (last accessed April 22, 2012)

"Status" Drop Down Bar Options:

Appendix C
Institutional Usage Reports (originals on file with author)

2009

Daily/Monthly Breakdown Stats:

All statistics here are reported in Eastern Time (-5 GMT)

Time Period	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Questions Referred to Subscription Partner**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Questions Rejected**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Questions/Chat Transcripts Deleted	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Questions Assigned to Librarian	0	0	0	8	6	7	71	25	12	12	11	13	165
Questions Referred via E-mail	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
Questions Recalled via E-mail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Number of Clarifications	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	1	2	0	0	7
Number of Patrons Logon	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	15	9	13	6	9	63
Questions Received via Patron Form	0	0	0	4	4	0	59	59	60	71	63	64	384
Questions Received via Direct Entry	0	0	0	5	3	5	62	19	2	6	1	0	103
Answers Sent	0	0	0	6	3	4	108	81	68	74	64	60	468
Questions Received via Referral**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	2	1	1	12
Questions (Total) Received**	0	0	0	9	7	5	121	81	67	79	65	65	499

2010

Ask Service

Monthly Report 2010 (UNIV OF WASHINGTON, GALLAGHER LAW LIBRARY)

Daily/Monthly Breakdown Stats:

All statistics here are reported in Eastern Time (-5 GMT)

Time Period	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Questions Referred to Virtual Partner**	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Questions Assigned to Librarian	22	33	11	23	19	8	9	9	7	16	9	5	171
Questions Referred via E-mail	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Questions Claimed by Librarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	7	5	1	1	0	18
Number of Clarifications	3	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	1	12
Number of Patrons Logon	11	20	22	13	13	6	8	8	20	23	12	13	169
Questions Received via Patron Form	92	92	87	80	94	64	71	66	69	102	79	66	962
Questions Received via Direct Entry	0	1	2	9	2	2	1	11	3	0	7	2	40
Answers Sent	87	90	98	90	92	67	79	77	73	110	95	60	1018
Questions Received via Referral**	6	2	3	1	3	2	4	1	2	1	5	0	30
Questions (Total) Received**	98	95	93	90	99	68	76	78	74	105	92	68	1036

2011

Institution Report

Ask Service

Monthly Report 2011 (UNIV OF WASHINGTON, GALLAGHER LAW LIBRARY)

Daily/Monthly Breakdown Stats:

All statistics here are reported in Eastern Time (-5 GMT)

Time Period	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Questions/Chat Transcripts Deleted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	173	0	173
Questions Assigned to Librarian	12	5	9	7	9	8	12	12	9	29	34	12	158
Questions Referred via E-mail	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Questions Claimed by Librarian	2	3	4	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	6	2	22
Number of Clarifications	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
Number of Patrons Logon	9	16	15	6	12	8	25	22	18	9	3	4	147
Questions Received via Patron Form	67	95	111	74	80	80	84	92	67	558	357	45	1710
Questions Received via Direct Entry	7	2	4	9	1	3	0	6	10	15	8	6	71
Answers Sent	78	91	96	79	85	79	80	95	84	87	63	54	971
Questions Received via Referral**	6	1	3	3	0	0	2	0	6	3	4	3	31
Questions (Total) Received**	80	98	118	86	81	83	86	98	83	576	369	54	1812

2012

Monthly Report 2012 (UNIV OF WASHINGTON, GALLAGHER LAW LIBRARY)

Daily/Monthly Breakdown Stats:

All statistics here are reported in Eastern Time (-5 GMT)

Time Period	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Questions/Chat Transcripts Deleted	0	0	103	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	103
Questions Assigned to Librarian	24	61	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	102
Questions Claimed by Librarian	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Number of Clarifications	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Number of Patrons Logon	7	17	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
Questions Received via Patron Form	64	565	182	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	811
Questions Received via Direct Entry	16	13	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
Answers Sent	85	75	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	220
Questions Received via Referral**	1	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Questions (Total) Received**	81	587	196	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	864

Appendix D

Table of ABA-Approved Law School Websites surveyed for virtual reference offerings.

	Library	Library Website	Last Access	Virtual Reference Types
Yale University	Lillian Goldman Law Library	http://library.law.yale.edu/	3/30/12	Central E-Mail (lawref@pantheon.yale.edu), Text Message, Chat powered by Olark
Stanford	Robert Crown Law Library	http://www.law.stanford.edu/library/	3/30/12	Central e-mail address (reference@law.stanford.edu), Chat through yahoo messenger, aol instant messenger, msn/windows live messenger, google talk, + meebo.
Harvard University	Harvard Law School Library	http://www.law.harvard.edu/library/index.html	3/30/12	Central E-Mail (research@law.harvard.edu), WebForm ("Ask A Librarian!"), Chat powered by Meebo
Columbia University	Arthur W. Diamond Law Library	http://www.law.columbia.edu/library	3/30/12	E-Mail for individual librarians listed on website but no centralized reference service.
University of Chicago	D'Angelo Law Library	http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/law/index.html	3/30/12	WebForm (Powered by Knowledge Tracker), Chat, Text
New York University	NYU Law Library	http://www.law.nyu.edu/library/index.htm	3/30/12	E-Mail for law library, but not reference service specific .
UC - Berkeley	Berkeley Law Library	http://www.law.berkeley.edu/library.htm	3/30/12	Chat - "Ask Us" Requires Authentication, Individual Reference e-mails listed
University of Pennsylvania	Biddle Law Library	http://www.law.upenn.edu/bll/index.html	3/30/12	Individual librarian e-mails only
University of Virginia	Arthur J. Morris LL	http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/librarysite/library.htm	3/30/12	E-Mail (lawlibref@virginia.edu),
University of Michigan	UMLS Law Library	http://www.law.umich.edu/library/info/Pages/default.aspx	3/30/12	E-Mail (askalawlibrarian@umich.edu), Chat (powered by meebo)
Duke University	Goodson LL	http://www.law.duke.edu/lib/	3/30/12	E-Mail REF@law.duke.edu, "dukelawreference" - Click to IM with AOL, Yahoo, & MSN A reference librarian is available during Reference Desk hours on the AOL, Yahoo, and MSN IM
Northwestern University	Prtizker Legal Research Center	http://www.law.northwestern.edu/library/	3/30/12	E-Mail (law-reference@law.northwestern.edu)

	Library	Library Website	Last Access	Virtual Reference Types
Georgetown University	Georgetown Law Library	http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/	3/30/12	Central E-mail (libref@law.georgetown.edu), Web-Form (http://www.ll.georgetown.edu/services/ref_email.cfmf), Chat
Cornell University	Cornell U LL	http://library.lawschool.cornell.edu/	3/30/12	Central e-mail (<lawlib@cornell.edu>), Chat (Powered by Com100)
UC - Los Angeles	Hugh & Hazel Darling Library	http://www.law.ucla.edu/library/Pages/default.aspx	3/30/12	Central e-mail (password restricted for students only http://www.law.ucla.edu/library/generalservices/Pages/reference.aspx)
UT - Austin	Tarlton LL	http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/	3/30/12	Chat reference (UT ID required), WebForm (states just for short questions), http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/reference/index.html
Vanderbilt University	Alyne Queener Massey LL	http://law.vanderbilt.edu/library/index.aspx	3/30/12	No Virtual Services Listed on Reference Policy page: http://law.vanderbilt.edu/library/research-services/index.aspx
University of Southern California (Gould)	Barnett Info Tech Ctr. & Asa V. Call LL	http://lawweb.usc.edu/library/	3/30/12	No Virtual Ref Listed on "Ref Assistance" page - http://lawweb.usc.edu/library/services/refassist.cfm
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities	UMLL	http://library.law.umn.edu/	3/30/12	Live Chat (http://library.law.umn.edu/referenceaskus.html) + Central E-Mail (law-ref@umn.edu)
George Washington University	Jacob Burns LL	http://www.law.gwu.edu/Library/Pages/Default.aspx	3/30/12	E-Mail ereference@law.gwu.edu (http://www.law.gwu.edu/Library/Research/Pages/Default.aspx); Chat powered by Meebo (attached to OPAC - not obvious from research page)
University of Washington - Seattle	Gallagher Law Library	http://lib.law.washington.edu/	3/30/12	WebForm (AskUS!/ Question Point)
University of Notre Dame	Kresge LL	http://law.nd.edu/library-and-technology/	3/30/12	E-Mail: askus@nd.edu
Washington University (St. Louis)	WULL	http://law.wustl.edu/library/index.aspx	3/30/12	Central E-mail ("Washington University Students, Faculty and Staff only") http://law.wustl.edu/library/pages.aspx?id=1466

	Library	Library Website	Last Access	Virtual Reference Types
Emory University	Hugh F. MacMillan LL	http://library.law.emory.edu/library-home-page/	3/30/12	Generic e-mail address only. No discusion of reference hours specifically. Students can use a web form to set up a live "research consultation."
Washington & Lee University	W&L LawLib	http://law.wlu.edu/library/	3/30/12	Central e-mail (http://law.wlu.edu/library/page.asp?pageid=736)
Arizona State University (O'Conner)	Ross-Blakley LL	http://www.law.asu.edu/Default.aspx?alias=www.law.asu.edu/library	4/2/12	Chat (powered by Meebo), E-Mail Web-Form (Similar to UW)
Boston University	Pappas LL	http://www.bu.edu/lawlibrary/	4/2/12	Chat, E-Mail Web Form, Text, Chat powered by Comm100 for "member of BU Community" (http://www.bu.edu/lawlibrary/services/reference/livechat.html) - E-mail for students only - http://www.bu.edu/lawlibrary/research/help/
Indiana University - Bloomington (Maurer)	Maurer School of Law - LL	http://www.law.indiana.edu/lawlibrary/index.shtml	4/2/12	Webform available at http://www.law.indiana.edu/lawlibrary/services/ask.shtml
Boston College	LL at BC	http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/library/	4/2/12	e-mail (central - lawref@bc.edu), text, chat (connected by meebo) http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/schools/law/library/research.html; QR Code available for texting librarian - http://www.bc.edu/schools/law/library/services/reference/text.html
Fordham	Leo T. Kissam Memorial Library	http://lawlib1.lawnet.fordham.edu/	4/2/12	Chat (password protected) & Central Email (refdesk@law.fordham.edu)/ dedicated students area (http://lawlib1.lawnet.fordham.edu/services/main_serv_stud.html) - password protected area for faculty as well
University of Alabama	Bounds LL	http://www.library.law.ua.edu/	4/2/12	None noted from Reference area of website (http://www.library.law.ua.edu/info/reference.php), Individual e-mail addresses only listed in directory (http://www.library.law.ua.edu/info/directory/index.php)
UC Davis	Mabie LL	http://www.law.ucdavis.edu/library/	4/2/12	General e-mail: lawlibref@ucdavis.edu. http://www.law.ucdavis.edu/library/Services/ask-a-librarian.html
University of Iowa	UI College of Law Lib	http://www.law.uiowa.edu/library/	4/2/12	Central e-mail. Restricted to "members of the UofI community" http://www.law.uiowa.edu/library/ref.php
University of Georgia	Alexander Campbell King LL	http://www.law.uga.edu/law-library	4/2/12	Central e-mail (lawref@uga.edu), http://www.law.uga.edu/reference-services
College of William & Mary (Marshall Whythe)	Wolf LL	http://law.wm.edu/library/home/index.php	4/2/12	No e-mail or chat listed in research services ares of website. http://law.wm.edu/library/services/researchandinstructionalservices/index.php. Under visitor info it says public patrons

	Library	Library Website	Last Access	Virtual Reference Types
				may access in person or phone only. Individual e-mails listed under staff directory.
University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign	Albert E. Jenner, Jr.	http://www.law.illinois.edu/library/	4/2/12	States that reference assistance is available via e-mail to "college of Law community only". E-mail address not prominently listed on students section of service page. http://www.law.illinois.edu/library/for-students. Central reference e-mail displayed on faculty service page.
University of Wisconsin - Madison	U Wis LL	http://library.law.wisc.edu/	4/2/12	Web-Form & Chat. http://library.law.wisc.edu/help/research.html
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill	Katherin R. Everett LL	http://library.law.unc.edu/	4/2/12	E-Mail (web-form), Chat & IM (AIM, MSN or Yahoo), text, http://library.law.unc.edu/research/ask/default.aspx
Brigham Young University (Clark)	Howard H. Hunter Library	http://lawlib.byu.edu/	4/2/12	For students - none. http://lawlib.byu.edu/page.aspx?id=56. Faculty does appear to have a central e-mail address.
George Mason University	GMU LL	http://www.law.gmu.edu/library/	4/2/12	Individual librarian e-mails only- no Reference e-mail listed on general library numbers http://www.law.gmu.edu/library/staff or on reference policy page. http://www.law.gmu.edu/library/about
Ohio State University (Moritz)	Michael E. Moritz LL	http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/library/	4/2/12	E-mail (lawlibref@osu.edu/ Chat powered by meebo (see homepage/ http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/library/IM/index.php) - chat not advertised in "service area of website
University of Maryland (Carey)	Thurgood Marshall LL	http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/	4/2/12	Chat powered by Meebo ("for members of the UM School of Law Community Only") - http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/services/chatreference.html; no obvious central e-mail. Individual e-mails are listed. http://www.law.umaryland.edu/marshall/aboutlibrary/contact.html
Univeristy of AZ (Rogers)	Daniel F. Cracchiolo LL	http://www.law.arizona.edu/library/	4/2/12	Web-Form (pasword protected) http://www.law.arizona.edu/Library/Students/researchreferencesvcs.cfm
UC - Hastings	Hastings LL	http://library.uchastings.edu/library/index.html	4/2/12	E-Mail Web-Form ("http://library.uchastings.edu/library/forms/refemail.html"), Chat Reference http://library.uchastings.edu/library/ask-a-librarian/index.html chat reference
University of Colorado--Boulder	William A. Wise	http://www.colorado.edu/Law/lawlib/	4/2/12	Chat powered by Meebo (on home page) - central e-mail (lawref@ colorado.edu).

	Library	Library Website	Last Access	Virtual Reference Types
Wake Forest University	Professional Ctr. Library	http://pcl.wfu.edu/	4/2/12	No virtual reference noted on reference services page - http://pcl.wfu.edu/PCL-Services/Reference/reference.htm or in contact page. http://pcl.wfu.edu/PCL-Services/Circulation/contacts.htm
University of Utah (Quinney)	SJ Quinney College of Law	http://www.law.utah.edu/library/	4/2/12	Individual librarian e-mail, but it is described under "Ask a Librarian" service. http://www.law.utah.edu/library/ask/,
University of Florida (Levin)	Legal Info Center	http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/	4/2/12	Reference page gives phone number only: http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/reference/index.shtml. Individual e-mails only on contact page: http://www.law.ufl.edu/lic/general/contact.shtml
American University (Washington)	Pence Law Library	http://library.wcl.american.edu/	4/2/12	Central e-mail address - Chat through yahoo messenger, aol instant messenger, msn/windows live messenger, google talk, + meebo. (See http://library.wcl.american.edu/ask.cfm) Link to "ask a librarian" from homepage.
Pepperdine University	Harnish Law Library	http://law.pepperdine.edu/library/	4/2/12	"Ask a librarian" Web-Form - available from research services page or home page: http://law.pepperdine.edu/library/research/.