

- ◆ Successfully helps public visitors find better information than they could have found on their own 69.7% of the time;
- ◆ Achieves 86.5% visitor satisfaction in the academic service; and
- ◆ Achieves 78.3% visitor satisfaction in the public service.

The evaluation report recommended three areas of further training to improve service – these recommendations have already been implemented and were part of the training received by new staff that came on in September.

### Recommendations lead to tools

Evaluation doesn't stand alone of course. It's a means to building and improving service and supporting staff. Some terrific tools have been built into the services and been improved based on results and feedback.

For instance, askON has a "backchat" which allows the staff covering a shift to check in with each other for suggestions, information sharing and camaraderie. The backchat channel in many ways mirrors the way that libraries and library reference staff have always worked. A similar tool is planned for 4ReSrch.

Another important resource is the Ask Ontario Knowledgebase. Built using del.icio.us, a web-based social bookmarking tool, the knowledge base is available to the staff of both askON and 4ReSrch. The knowledge base is a series of reliable, authoritative publicly-available websites that can be used to help information seekers get started. Organized by subject headings derived from the Ontario curriculum, it is constantly being added to and improved to reflect new sources.

A footnote for researchers, academics and students: askON and 4ReSrch produce thousands of session transcripts requiring analysis. It is one of our goals to have this data analyzed in the coming months. It is our belief that this primary data represents an opportunity to delve into how students understand the research process, how one-on-one tutoring can improve their digital literacy and research skills and could have a potential impact on how these skills are taught to students through the curriculum. We welcome inquiries from those who could benefit from a co-operatively conceived project, perhaps as an academic thesis or project. Please contact Virginia Roy, Ask Ontario Project Manager, at vroy@knowledgeontario.ca. ■

Ask Ontario is a project of Knowledge Ontario, which is funded by the province to unlock digital content.



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