



**L-net 2006-07 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter statistics**  
 July 1-September 30, 2006  
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## Introduction

L-net is Oregon’s statewide virtual reference service. The service is funded by a grant from the Oregon State Library under the Library Services and Technology Act. The fiscal agent for the grant is Multnomah County Library. L-net connects all of Oregon’s citizens, students and workers to Oregon librarians 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through live chat and e-mail reference service.

In the first quarter of 2006-07, we had 2,282 questions. 1,961 were chat questions and 321 were e-mail questions.

L-net participates in OCLC's 24/7 cooperative reference service. Oregon librarians answer reference questions for cooperative member libraries in exchange for those members answering questions for us.

Unless noted, all statistics reported represent Oregon patrons asking question, regardless of who answered.

Summary	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q1
Chat	466	682	813	1,961
E-mail	108	108	105	321
Oregon Total	574	790	918	2,282
Chat sessions answered for cooperative libraries.	262	253	340	855
Grand Total	836	1,043	1,258	3,137
Total Chat	728	935	1,153	2,816

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## **This quarter compared to last year**

In 2006-07, the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter showed a 32% increase in usage overall from the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of the previous year, including a 47% increase in chat and a 20% drop in e-mail service.

About one-third of our patrons were K-12 students, even though schools were closed for the months of July and August.

The popularity of a library chat service with our younger patrons is related to an overall trend towards that group's use of instant messaging, as reported by The Pew Internet & American Life project reported in 2005 (Teens and Technology: Youth are Leading the Transition to a Fully Wired and Mobile Nation, [http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/162/report\\_display.asp](http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/162/report_display.asp))

## **Progress on goals for 2006-07**

L-net set 3 specific goals for the 2006-07 fiscal year.

*Increase usage by at least 10%*

Usage increased by 32% over the same period in 2005-06. This goal is on target.

*Receive an overall 80% satisfaction rating from patrons*

85% of patrons in the first quarter reported they were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with our service. 94% said they would use our service again. This goal is on target.

*Increase the number of hours Oregon librarians staff L-net to 70 hours per week*

In the last week of September, L-net was staffed by Oregon librarians 56 hours. To meet this goal, we should increase service hours by 5 hours each quarter, but it is too early to measure this goal as of yet.

## Who asked the questions

On the general L-net chat queue and e-mail service, patrons are asked to choose one of five *Response levels*: *General Interest*, *Elementary/Middle School (K-8)*, *High School (9-12)*, *College/Research* or *Professional*.

On the schools L-net chat queue, patrons are asked to choose either a grade or *Educator*. Students are also counted in the *Response Level* table in the appropriate grade category. *Educator* is included above with *Professional*.

On the academic L-net chat queue, patrons are asked to choose a college. All questions from the L-net academic queue, the OSU L-net queue and the PSU L-net queue are included with *College/Research* on the *Response Level* table.

Patrons did not choose a grade, a college or a response level are included in the *Response Level* table in the *None selected* category. This information is usually required before the patron connects to chat or sends an e-mail message, but technical problems sometimes prevent us from enforcing the requirement.

## Response level

Chat	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q1	%
None Selected	-	1	2	3	0%
College/Research	133	137	91	361	18%
Elementary/Middle (K-8)	51	64	271	386	20%
General Interest	215	363	238	816	42%
High School (9-12)	28	63	158	249	13%
Professional	39	54	53	146	7%
Total	466	682	813	1,961	

E-mail	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q1	% of known
None Selected	26	39	25	90	
College/Research	13	11	17	41	18%
Elementary/Middle (K-8)	0	3	3	6	3%
General Interest	54	47	42	143	62%
High School (9-12)	3	1	3	7	3%
Professional	12	7	15	34	15%
Total	108	108	105	321	

## Grade

Grade	Jul	Aug	Sep	Q1
blank	433	635	563	1,631
educator	2	5	11	18
grade k	-	-	10	10
grade 1	1	1	1	3
grade 2	-	-	1	1
grade 3	-	-	1	1
grade 4	-	-	-	-
grade 5	6	2	16	24
grade 6	8	12	49	69
grade 7	2	3	21	26
grade 8	1	2	47	50
grade 9	6	8	47	61
grade 10	6	5	8	19
grade 11	-	2	8	10
grade 12	1	7	30	38
Total	466	682	813	1,961

## Academic Status

College and Status	Other / unknown	Faculty / Staff	Graduate	Undergraduate	Total
None selected	15	9	18	25	67
Central Oregon Community College	2	1	1	11	15
Eastern Oregon University				1	1
Klamath Community College				1	1
Oregon Institute of Technology				1	1
Oregon State University	4	5	11	20	40
Other	4	2	6	7	19
Portland Community College	1			8	9
Portland State University		1	17	16	34
University of Oregon			2		2
Western Oregon University				2	2
Total	26	18	55	92	191

## Where do the question-askers live?

County	Chat	E-mail	Q1
Unknown	530	152	682
Baker	1	1	2
Benton	31	2	33
Clackamas	143	10	153
Clatsop	1	2	3
Columbia	19		19
Coos	5	1	6
Crook	1	2	3
Curry	2	2	4
Deschutes	39	2	41
Douglas	45		45
Gilliam	10		10
Grant	2		2
Harney	31	2	33
Hood River	29	4	33
Jackson	46	8	54
Jefferson	4		4
Josephine	7	2	9
Klamath	1	3	4
Lake	2	1	3
Lane	61	12	73
Lincoln	10	8	18
Linn	6	2	8
Malheur	3		3
Marion	24	2	26
Morrow	4	4	8
Multnomah	459	41	500
Polk	8	2	10
Sherman			0
Tillamook	1	1	2
Umatilla	16	3	19
Union		3	3
Wallowa			0
Wasco	1	1	2
Washington	407	44	451
Wheeler			0
Yamhill	12	4	16
Total	1,961	321	2,282

We record a Zip code for each patron who submits a question to our e-mail service, general chat queue or schools chat queue. We interpolate a County for each Zip Code.

### Unknown locations

We record a Zip Code for each patron, but since changing software in January 2006, we no longer restrict the service to patrons with Oregon Zip codes.

We have recorded many Zip Codes for areas outside of Oregon, as well as postal codes for other countries, usually Canada.

We have also recorded a few Zip Codes that appear to be inside the state of Oregon but do not match the United States Postal Service records.

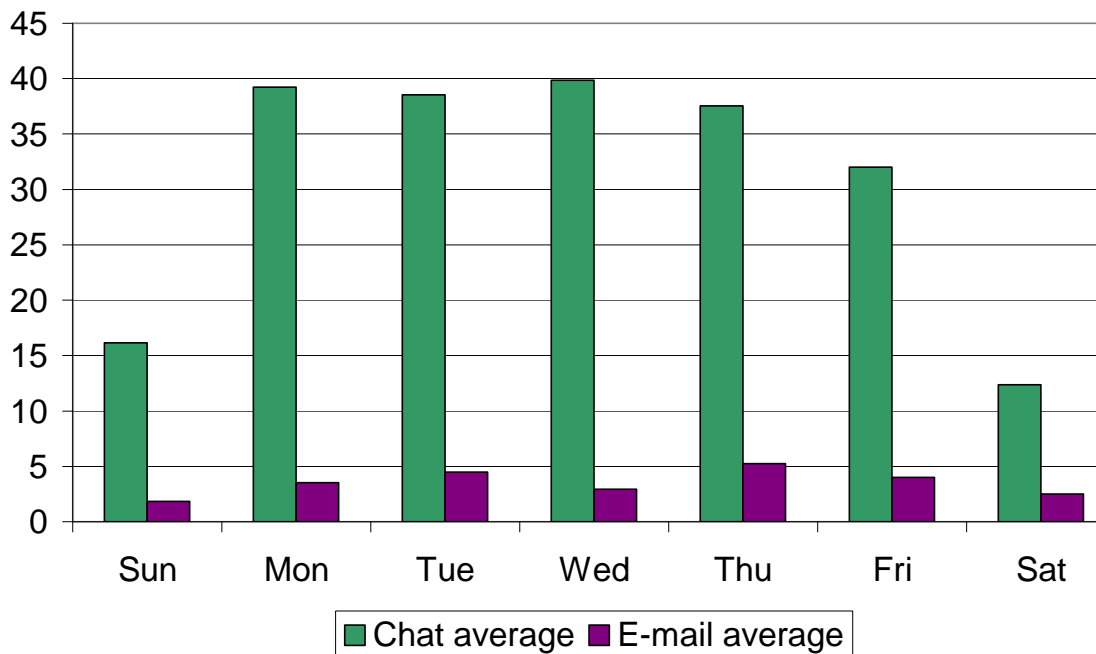
We are now requiring that the patron enter something so the Zip Code field cannot be left blank.

Unknown locations	Chat	E-mail	Q1
Outside Oregon	297	32	329
Oregon Unknown	5	0	5
Outside United States	35	15	50
Blank	2	105	107
Academic Queue	191	0	191
Total	530	152	682

## When were questions asked

In the first quarter, chat sessions arrived at an even rate from Monday-Thursday, dropping off slightly on Friday and more dramatically over the weekend. E-mail questions were too few to generalize.

**Average questions asked, by day of week**



## Who answered the questions

Library	E-mail questions	Chat sessions (including cooperative)	Average session length	Average patron wait time	Hours staffed	In-kind contribution
L-net staff	99	54	03:45	0:09		
L-net volunteers		1	46:50	0:20	1	\$ -
Albany Public Library	1	73	14:34	1:10	52	\$ 2,086.24
Central Oregon Community College		11	17:47	0:34	4	\$ 160.48
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library	13	25	14:25	1:07	12	\$ 481.44
Deschutes Public Library System	4	115	15:14	1:13	48	\$ 1,925.76
Eastern Oregon University	3					
Eugene Public Library	10	95	14:00	0:58	50	\$ 2,006.00
Hillsboro Public Library		38	12:50	0:35	18	\$ 722.16
Jackson County Library System	25	106	10:53	0:51	48	\$ 1,925.76
Lane County Law Library	3			0:00		
Multnomah County Library	72	261	14:45	0:55	96	\$ 3,851.52
Newport Public Library	1	116	11:38	0:38	36	\$ 1,444.32
Oregon Health & Science University	1					
Oregon Institute of Technology	3	17	15:42	0:41	12	\$ 481.44
Oregon State Library	33	54	13:19	1:00	25	\$ 1,003.00
Oregon State University	23	73	10:34	1:17	22	\$ 882.64
Portland State University	2	74	10:48	0:44	30	\$ 1,203.60
Salem Public Library	5	95	11:21	0:57	34	\$ 1,364.08
Southridge High School		23	16:30	0:31	6.75	\$ 270.81
Tigard Public Library		15	24:59	0:34	4	\$ 160.48
Tualatin High School		22	11:41	0:32	10	\$ 401.20
University of Oregon	2					
Washington County Cooperative Library Services	15	72	09:29	0:51	22	\$ 882.64
Washington County Law Library	4					
West Linn Public Library		21	13:24	1:41	14	\$ 561.68
Western Oregon University	2	15	27:32	0:37	10.5	\$ 421.26
Oregon total	321	1,376	12:59	0:53	555.25	\$22,236.51
Cooperative Staff		633	12:38	0:57		
QuestionPoint Staff		807	15:21	1:45		
Total	321	2,816	13:35	1:09		

In-kind contributions are calculated at \$40.12 per hour scheduled. This represents the salary and benefits for a librarian at Multnomah County Library.

Included in the table above are summary statistics for chat sessions answered by cooperative and QuestionPoint back-up staff, who are online when Oregon librarians are not.

## Was our service satisfactory?

Every question ended with the option to complete a survey, so survey responders were self-selecting. Based on our sample size and rate, we can calculate a confidence interval of 6.1% for chat session exit surveys and 27.8% for e-mail question exit surveys.

That is to say, there were too few e-mail question exit surveys for us to take much meaning from the results. The results are presented anyway.

	Surveys answered	Sessions or Questions	Response Rate	Confidence Interval
Chat sessions	229	1,961	12%	6.1%
E-mail questions	12	321	4%	27.8%
Total	241	2,282	11%	6.0%

1. Were you satisfied with the answer you received to your reference question?

Chat session exit surveys	Answers	E-mail question exit surveys	Answers
Blank	19	Blank	1
Not Satisfied	31	Not Satisfied	0
Satisfied	156	Satisfied	10
Somewhat Satisfied	23	Somewhat Satisfied	1
Total	229	Total	12
% Satisfied or somewhat satisfied	85%	% Satisfied or somewhat satisfied	100%

We set the goal that 80% of our patrons should say they are satisfied or somewhat satisfied. We are meeting that goal.

2. Is this the first time you have used this service?

Chat session exit surveys	Answers	E-mail question exit surveys	Answers
blank	0	blank	1
No	74	No	5
Yes	155	Yes	6
Total	229	Total	12
% Repeat visitors	32%	% Repeat visitors	45%

The number of repeat visitors is slightly lower than what we have recorded in the past. The number of questions asked has certainly increased, so it is not likely that patrons are not returning out of dissatisfaction. It is more likely that repeat visitors are less likely to fill out this survey.

3. Will you use this service again?

<b>Chat session exit surveys</b>	<b>Answers</b>
blank	2
Maybe	29
Never	14
Very Likely	184
<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>
% Maybe or Very Likely	94%

<b>E-mail question exit surveys</b>	<b>Answers</b>
blank	1
Maybe	2
Never	0
Very Likely	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>
% Maybe or Very Likely	100%

These responses are consistent with what we have recorded in the past.

4. How did you find out about this service?

<b>Chat session exit surveys</b>	<b>Answers</b>
Library Website	134
Surfing the net	28
School Teacher/School Librarian	26
Librarian Public Library	17
Friend/Relative	13
Librarian Academic Library	4
Bookmark/Flyer	3
Newspaper/Radio/TV/Billboard	1
blank	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>

<b>E-mail question exit surveys</b>	<b>Answers</b>
Library website	5
Librarian Public Library	3
Surfing the net	2
blank	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>

These responses are consistent with what we have recorded in the past. The vast majority of patrons find us through a library's website.

## Data collection and conventions

When a patron connects to L-net through our main chat queue or e-mail service, she fills out a form that includes their name, e-mail address, library, Zip Code, level of information and question (see below).

For the question “What level of information are you looking for”, the patron is allowed to choose *General Interest*, *College/Research*, *Elementary/Middle School (K-8)*, *High School (9-12)*, or *Professional*.

The patron’s name, Zip Code, level of information and question are required.

In our schools queue, instead of asking for a *response level*, we ask “What grade are you in”, with a range of Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, plus *Educator*.

In our academic queue, we ask the patron to indicate which college they are associated with and if they are undergraduate students, graduate students for faculty/staff.

This information is used by the librarian to quickly determine where their home library is, and how best to serve them. L-net administrators also use this data to create reports.

E-mail reference questions on L-net are initiated with a web form that collects this same information. Patrons are also allowed to choose which library to send their question to.

Chat reference is counted in *sessions*. A chat session may contain more than one question, or it may contain none. A future study of a sample of chat reference questions could help determine a general ratio of reference questions per session.

E-mail reference is counted in *questions*, with the assumption that each question submitted is unique, even though several e-mails may be exchanged between the librarian and patron to answer it.

We refer to them as e-mail reference because the answer is sent to the patron over e-mail.

We use the following conventions in this report:

*1<sup>st</sup> Quarter*: The period from July 1, 2006 to September 30, 2006.



Please enter your name (required):

To receive a transcript of this session, please enter your email address:

Which library do you regularly use?

Please enter your zip code (required):

What level of information are you looking for (required)?

How may we help you (required)?

To remain an anonymous user check this box:

Connect 

Exit 

Click here to view a session that you have had in the last 7 days.

Old Transcripts 