



Ideas for promoting virtual reference in academic libraries

Promoting virtual reference is promoting your library. Here are some things you can do to encourage more people to use the human side of your library online. (Thanks to *AskColorado*).

Link to the virtual reference service on your library website.

Tell students and faculty about the service when you meet them one-on-one, at departmental meetings or in classes.

E-mail promotions at the beginning of each school year or semester.

E-mail promotions the last three weeks before final papers are due.

Place articles or advertising in the school newspaper, campus radio and television stations.

For new student and faculty orientations, include virtual reference as part of the library's services.

Display promotional items inside the library.

If your service is 24/7, advertise this where your library hours are posted and outside the library when it is closed.

When the library closes, announce that the virtual reference service is available.

Walk around the library and distribute promotional materials to students using wireless laptops inside the library.

Work with faculty to include virtual reference assignments as part of an assignment.

Demonstrate the service at student events outside the library.

Use the announcement function in your school's course management software (like Blackboard) to promote the service.

List samples of questions your patrons can ask:

I want to cite an article for a paper but I can't remember where I found it.

I know the library has articles on psychoneuroendocrinology, but I just can't find any!

I need a book for a class, but my professor checked it out of the library and says he can't find it in his office.

I need a reliable source for the number of people that died of bubonic plague last year.