



L-net statistics

1st Quarterly report, 2005
July 1 – September 30, 2005

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Introduction

This report is a statistical analysis of the use of L-net, Oregon’s statewide digital reference service, for the first quarter of 2005. L-net includes both chat and e-mail reference service components.

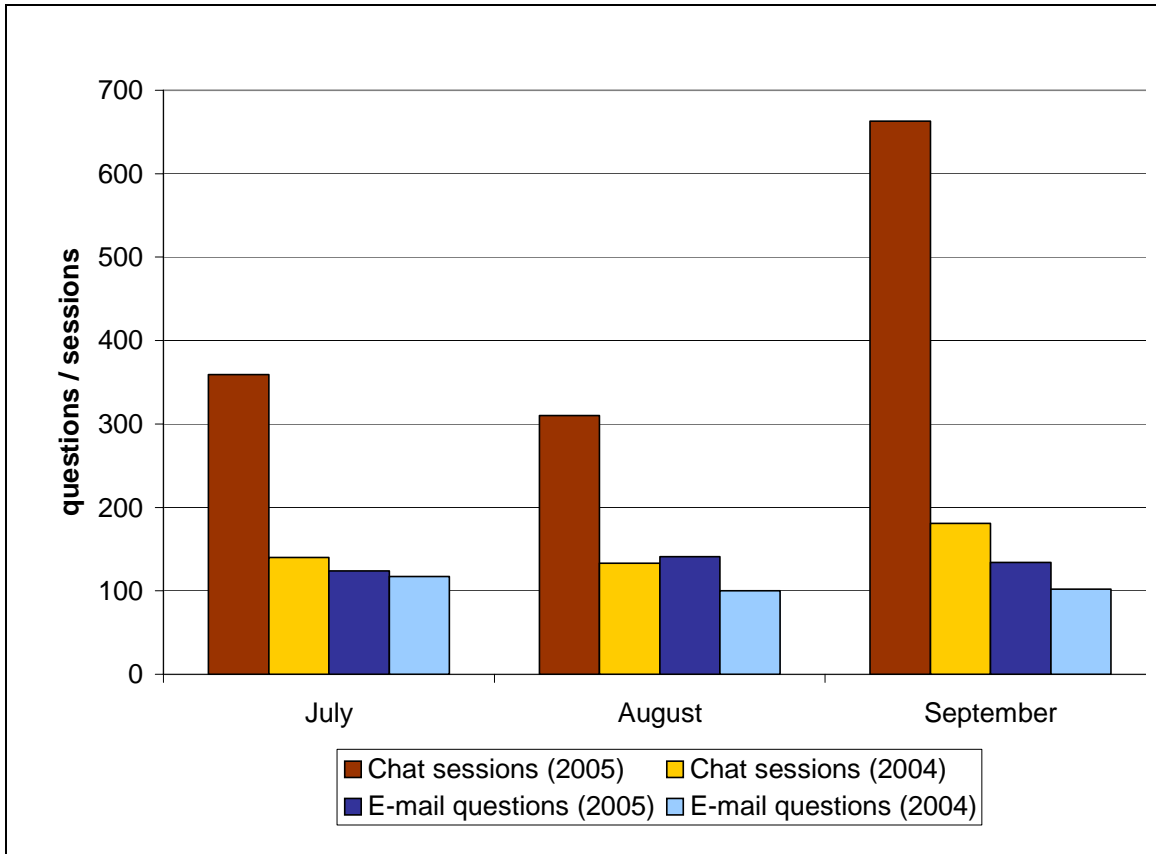
During the time covered in this report, we answered 1,731 questions.

This report includes information about our patrons, where they live, what time they visited our service and what they had to say about our service. Since the creation of an academic queue, we are able to report on usage by academic library patrons for the first time.

The analysis of statistics for this period leads us to ask questions about how we are providing service that we should answer with new or reinforced policies or through further research and observation.

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Overall use

Summer has always been a slow time for L-net, but this past one was our busiest ever. We answered 1,731 questions, compared to 763 for the same period in 2004.

1 st Quarter	July	August	September	1st Qtr
Chat session	359	310	663	1332
E-mail Questions	124	141	134	399
Total	483	451	797	1731

Sessions and questions by response level

We ask patrons, “What level of information do you need?” and give them 5 choices: *General Interest, Elementary/Middle School, High School, College/Research* and *Professional*. This is the patron’s *response level*.

The queues which are set up for working with schools ask for students to select a specific grade. Grades K-8 are included in the *Elementary / Middle School* category and grades 9-12 are included in *High School* category. Patrons that visited our academic queue are included in the *College/Research* category.

Chat	July	August	September	Total
College/Research	63	65	115	243
Elementary/Middle School	53	44	88	185
General Interest	191	144	336	671
High School	22	31	76	129
Professional	30	26	48	104
Total	359	310	663	1332

Though we tend to think that our chat traffic patterns are tied to the academic year, it is noteworthy that every category about doubled from August to September – adults, as well as teenagers follow this pattern.

E-mail	Total
College/Research	43
Elementary/Middle School	6
General Interest	262
High School	9
Professional	79
Total	399

Our e-mail traffic patterns are more consistent from season to season, with the vast majority of our questions have always been categorized as General Interest. Part of the reason for this is a technical glitch.

Librarians on the live chat service have the capability to transfer a question to e-mail for follow-up. The patron’s *response level* is not captured in this process, though other data is. 70 e-mail questions were affected, and almost all were counted as General Interest. This glitch has not been worked out, and is not likely to be.

Response Level	Chat	E-mail	% Use e-mail
General Interest	671	262	28%
College/Research	243	43	15%
Elementary/Middle School	185	6	3%
High School	129	9	7%
Professional	104	79	43%
Total	1332	399	23%

Gathered by *response level*, every group of patrons is more likely to use chat than e-mail to get help from an L-net librarian. We knew this already about K-12 students, where the case is extreme, but given the proliferation of “General Interest” questions, it could be helpful to create new categories for e-mail users.

In live chat, the patron’s response level helps the librarian decide how to serve the patron. It is not clear if this is true for e-mail, as the rationale for setting up identical response levels was to be able to track data for both types of service.

Question 1:

Would new categories for e-mail “response level” be helpful? Are categories necessary at all, or useful to the librarian?

Academic libraries

An academic library queue was introduced this year in mid-August. The queue is different from our K-12 or general queues in that it asks the patron to choose a college and if they are undergraduate students, graduate students, or faculty/staff.

An academic library queue will help us track questions from academic library patrons more accurately, as zip code would not tell us what school a patron attended, only where they lived. We could also not assume that every patron who indicated a “College/Research” response level was indeed associated with an Oregon college or University.

In addition to their contribution to the collaborative effort on L-net, Oregon State University has been using L-net’s software for over a year to offer live chat service to their own patrons, from their own librarians. Portland State University launched a similar service this fall. Data from both libraries’ queues are counted in this report, counted with the Academic Library Queue as “College/Research” in ‘Response Level’, above.

Both OSU and PSU’s queues have now been configured to “overflow” to the Academic queue instead of the General queue when no librarians from their respective institutions are online. This way, we can still these patrons as Academic Library users.

In August, L-net partner libraries linking to our live chat service were asked to switch their link to the academic queue. In September, the queue was placed on L-net’s front page for any patron to find. Though response has been slow this quarter, traffic has already quadrupled in October, 2005.

We also ask the patron to choose a ‘status’: undergraduate student, graduate student or faculty/staff. Many academic libraries include more categories on library forms, and perhaps “status” is not the best choice of words, but this data should give us some insight into who is using the service.

	Undergraduate student	Graduate student	Faculty/Staff	blank	Total
Central Oregon Community College	4	0	0	0	4
Oregon State University	3	7	3	0	13
Portland State University	8	2	2	0	12
University of Oregon	0	1	0	0	1
Other	3	2	1	0	6
blank	0	0	0	1	1
Total	18	12	6	1	37

Not surprisingly, the most popular choices for “college” were the two libraries that are offering and promoting the localized live chat services at their libraries.

Few enough patrons chose ‘Other’ that we were able to look at transcripts to determine where the patron was coming from. Where the transcript was ambiguous, we looked at the referring URL and found that two came from the University of Oregon’s library page and two had no referring URL.

College - Other	Reffering URL	Total
saint joseph college - philipines	University of Oregon	1
Oregon State University	Oregon State University	1
unknown	University of Oregon	2
unknown	none	2

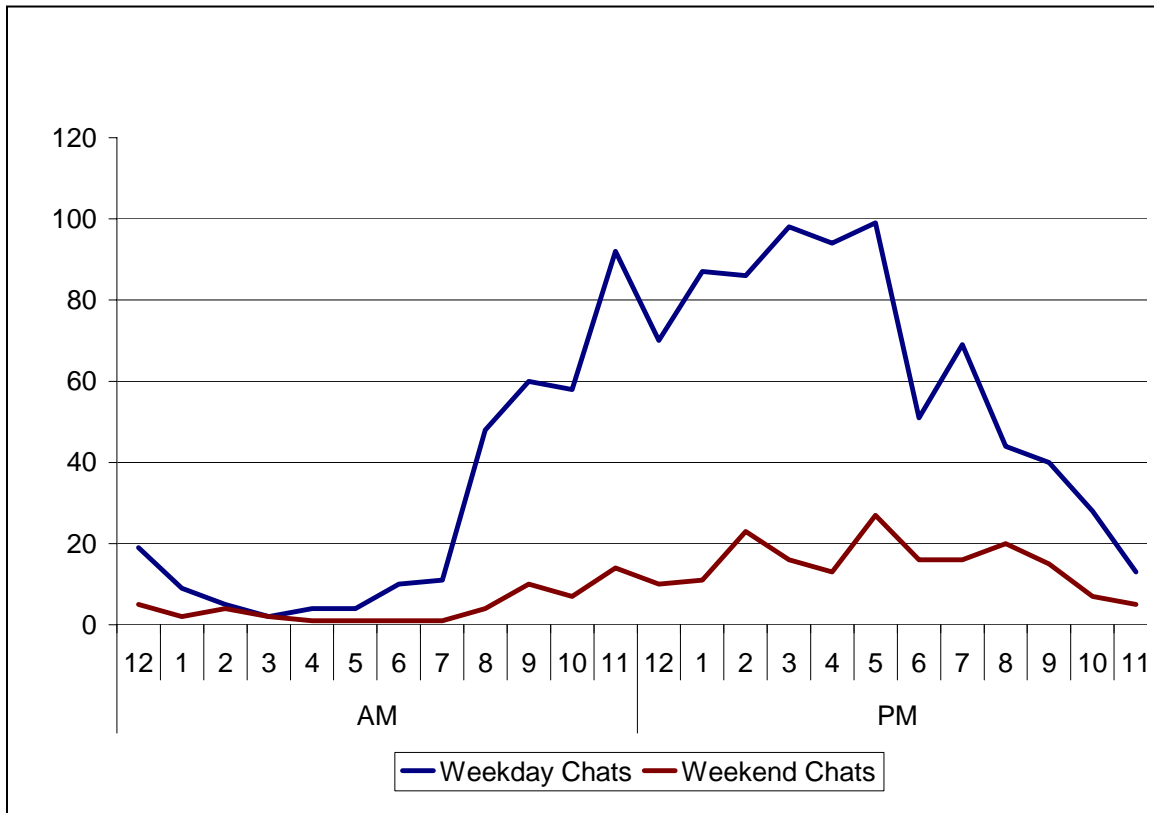
Presently, the “college” drop down only lists partner libraries with L-net. We could alternatively list all colleges that link to our service, or all academic libraries in Oregon.

Question 2:

Which libraries should we list in the ‘college’ dropdown?

Chat sessions by time of the day

Like we found in previous reports, L-net is busier on weekdays than on weekends and most weekday service is between 8am and 9pm. What is significantly different than from those reports is that the busiest weekday times are late afternoon and early evening (2pm-5pm), rather than the workday morning period (9am-11am).



Question 3:

Are students starting to use L-net after school instead of during school?

Sessions and questions by County

We are able to determine each patron's county by interpolating the Zip Code.

	Chat	Email	Total	Goal for 2005-06	% of goal
Baker	1	1	2	32	6.3%
Benton	46	10	56	393	14.2%
Clackamas	143	22	165	2,724	6.1%
Clatsop	6		6	27	22.2%
Columbia	5	3	8	34	23.5%
Coos	15	8	23	74	31.1%
Crook	4	1	5	34	14.7%
Curry			0	20	0.0%
Deschutes	38	9	47	524	9.0%
Douglas	11	11	22	162	13.6%
Gilliam	2		2	30	6.7%
Grant			0	7	0.0%
Harney	3	1	4	8	50.0%
Hood River	6	8	14	50	28.0%
Jackson	56	19	75	670	11.2%
Jefferson	1	1	2	23	8.7%
Josephine	12	7	19	117	16.2%
Klamath	9	5	14	108	13.0%
Lake			0	9	0.0%
Lane	84	32	116	893	13.0%
Lincoln	9	8	17	225	7.6%
Linn	15	6	21	169	12.4%
Malheur			0	42	0.0%
Marion	46	17	63	277	22.7%
Morrow	1		1	3	33.3%
Multnomah	443	59	502	2,247	22.3%
Polk	3		3	29	10.3%
Sherman		1	1	8	12.5%
Tillamook	2	2	4	22	18.2%
Umatilla	3	4	7	55	12.7%
Union	3		3	18	16.7%
Wallowa			0	5	0.0%
Wasco	9	13	22	99	22.2%
Washington	245	40	285	1,488	19.2%
Wheeler			0	7	0.0%
Yamhill	8	7	15	164	9.1%
Unknown	103	104	207		
Total	1,332	399	1,731		

Unknown zip codes

More than a quarter of our e-mail questions came from outside of Oregon. Generally, if these are *about* Oregon – typically genealogy, we answer them. A few are rejected or referred to a patron’s local library.

Email	
Other U.S,	94
Unknown/blank	8
Outside U.S.	2
Total	104

Most of our chat sessions without zip codes came from our academic queue, where we ask the patron to choose a college. In a very small number of cases, the patron was able to enter a blank or Washington State Zip Code into our chat form.

Chat	
OSU	61
PSU	1
Academic	37
Washington State	2
Unknown/Blank	2
Total	103

Staffing

Most libraries staffing our live chat service contribute two hours per week. Deschutes County Public Library, Eugene Public Library, Jackson County Library Services, Multnomah County Library, Portland State University and Salem Public Library all regularly contribute 4 hours per week or more. Corvallis-Benton County Library contributes two hours every other week.

The in-kind contribution is based on a rate of \$37.80 per hour, which amounts to the salary and benefits of a typical librarian at Multnomah County Library. This figure is used to represent the value each library is contributing to the service. Time spent on answering e-mail questions is not yet included.

Library	Chat calls	Chat Hours	Average length of chat sessions	E-mail questions	In-kind chat contribution
Central Oregon Community College	17	6	11:35		\$226.80
Corvallis-Benton County Library	8	12	20:45	60	\$453.60
Deschutes Public Library	60	46	12:33	51	\$1,738.80
Eastern Oregon University				4	-
Eugene Public Library	55	40	18:32	20	\$1,512.00
Hillsboro Public Library	20	24	15:42		\$907.20
Jackson County Library System	57	48	9:14	59	\$1,814.40
Multnomah County Library	88	90	14:26	89	\$3,402.00
Oregon Health Sciences University				2	-
Oregon Institute of Technology	18	24	18:44	1	\$907.20
Oregon State Library	21	26	27:41	28	\$982.80
Oregon State University - local	60		20:14		-
Oregon State University - statewide	24	26	11:46	20	\$982.80
Portland Community College		2			\$75.60
Portland State University - local	1		3:01		-
Portland State University - statewide	39	46	19:22	2	\$1,738.80
Project Coordinator	2		1:10		-
Salem Public Library	53	42	31:15	14	\$1,587.60
University of Oregon	27	22	9:43	24	\$831.60
Washington County Cooperative Library Services	19	18	14:31	6	\$680.40
West Linn Public Library	29	26	16:35		\$982.80
Oregon Libraries Totals	598	498	16:53	380	\$18,824.40
Tutor.com	734		15:50		-
Total	1,332		16:18		\$18,824.40

Patron satisfaction

Question 1: Were you satisfied with the answer you received?

Chat	July	Aug.	Sep.	Total
Very Satisfied	23	15	52	90
Satisfied	17	7	20	44
Not Satisfied	6	10	10	26
Total	46	32	82	160
% Satisfied or very	87.0%	68.8%	87.8%	83.8%

Satisfaction with our chat service dipped in August, but we aren't sure why. Satisfaction with our e-mail service was consistent over the three months.

Email	Total
Very Satisfied	19
Satisfied	4
Not Satisfied	3
Total	26
% Satisfied or very	88.5%

Question 2: Was this the first time you used this service?

Close to 60% of patrons who filled out our survey were first-time users for both chat and e-mail service. The implication for us is that most patrons coming to L-net may not know what to expect from us. At the same time, a growing minority are repeat users, indicating that they were happy with our service.

Chat	Total
No	64
Yes	95
Total	159
% Yes	59.7%

Email	Total
No	11
Yes	16
Total	27
% Yes	59.3%

Question 3: How did you hear about our service? (check all that apply)

Most survey respondents are hearing about us from a library website. Other marketing efforts have had some success, except for our movie theater advertisements. At least one person indicated that they discovered our e-mail service through our brief advertising campaign with Google.

Chat	Total	%
Library web site	102	63.0%
Library	31	19.1%
Librarian	24	14.8%
Friend	16	9.9%
School	8	4.9%
Bookmark	7	4.3%
Newspaper ad	7	4.3%
Poster	6	3.7%
Teacher	5	3.1%
Newspaper article	3	1.9%
Public transportation ad	1	0.6%
Radio	1	0.6%
Movie theater	0	0.0%

Other responses

accidental browsing
 Found it by accident
 from my parents when they heard about it
 on tv
 Guess
 homeschool trade show
 I found it browsing through the net.
 i was browsing the net
 I was surfing Oregon's web site and needed help.
 just did
 Linfield College Librarian
 my own dicoverly
 My sister told me when she was trying L-net.
 Oregon Library Association conference

Email	Total	%
Library web site	10	37.0%
Library	5	18.5%
Librarian	4	14.8%
Newspaper ad	2	7.4%
Newspaper article	1	3.7%
School	1	3.7%
Bookmark	0	0.0%
Friend	0	0.0%
Movie theater	0	0.0%
Poster	0	0.0%
Public transportation ad	0	0.0%
Radio	0	0.0%
Teacher	0	0.0%

Other responses

website appeared when I was investigating in Google
 Web search for Oregon libraries.
 Search engine
 Review of US Government websites
 Oregon Govt website
 Local Library
 Internet search results
 I used to be an Answerland librarian.
 Browsing the web

Question 4: Would you use this service again in the future?

Survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated they would use our service again.

Chat	Total
Maybe	32
No	5
Yes	122
Total	159
% Yes or Maybe	96.9%

Email	Total
Maybe	2
No	0
Yes	25
Total	27
% Yes or Maybe	100.0%

Data collection and conventions

When a patron connects to L-net, they fill out a form that includes their name, e-mail address, library, Zip Code, level of information and question (see right).

For the question “What level of information are your 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 12th 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. We also export this data from our chat reference system and run reports.

E-mail reference questions on L-net are initiated with a web form that collects this same information, but unfortunately, we cannot export the data and run the same reports as we do for chat reference sessions.

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:

- 1st Quarter:* The period from July 1, 2005 to September 30, 2005.
- Sessions:* Chat reference service is counted in sessions. A session may be a new question, continuation of an old question, or may contain several questions.
- Questions:* E-mail reference service is counted in questions. A question may represent several e-mails going back and forth between the patron and librarian.



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](#)