



L-net final statistical report 2005-06

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Executive summary

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 2005-06, the total number of visitors asking questions was 16,473, an 80% growth over the last year. By far, most visitors preferred to initiate chat sessions with than to send an e-mail question. Demand for e-mail service even dropped slightly.

L-net’s partner libraries contribute staff time to our reference service weekdays, roughly 10am-6pm. Evenings, weekends and late nights are covered by backup staff. The number of hours Oregon libraries contributed grew by 17% and the number of questions that Oregon libraries answered (as opposed to backup staff) grew by 66%.

	2004-05	2005-06	Growth
All visitors asking questions	9,167	16,473	80%
Chat sessions	7,703	14,249	85%
E-mail questions	1,464	1,337	-9%
Chat sessions answered by Oregon libraries	3,665	6,102	66%
Hours provided by Oregon libraries	2,236	2,626.25	17%

Overall, 51% of L-net’s chat sessions were with K-12 students. L-net is most popular with students in the fourth through ninth grades.

14% of our chat sessions were with people affiliated with an academic institution, and most often these were undergraduate students. Most of the success from academic patrons came from campuses where the library is actively promoting L-net, especially Oregon State University and Portland State University, which operate local L-net queues.

Patrons surveyed about their satisfaction with L-net indicated that they were satisfied with their answer 79% of the time. Patrons would use our service again 94% of the time. These satisfaction ratings are consistent with ones for the previous year.

The rest of this report shows more detailed statistics about who asked questions, when they asked, who answered and how satisfactory the experience was for patrons. Sometimes it is useful to show changes that have happened over time, and graphs and tables are used to demonstrate those changes. Where little change has occurred, only yearly totals are presented.

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How many questions were asked?

This past year, as before, patrons use L-net most during the academic year.

When Oregon librarians are not busy with Oregon patrons, they sometimes answer questions from OCLC 24/7 Reference cooperative member libraries. Likewise, cooperative member libraries answer questions from Oregon patrons at times. We began providing cooperative coverage 35 hours a week in April, 2006. *Cooperative sessions answered* represents the number of chat sessions that Oregon librarians answered from

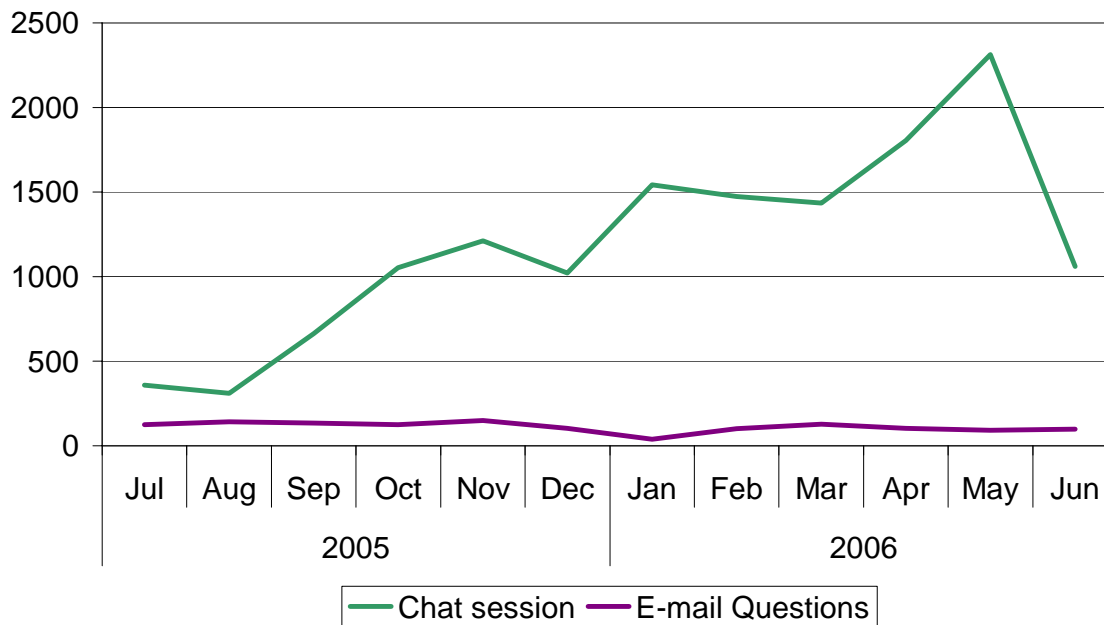
patrons outside of Oregon. We do not count cooperative patrons with the total number of Oregon patrons served.

Chat sessions and *E-mail Questions* represent questions by Oregon patrons, regardless of who answered.

2005	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chat sessions	359	310	663	1,054	1,212	1,022
E-mail questions	124	141	134	126	149	104
Oregon Total	483	451	797	1,180	1,361	1,126
Cooperative sessions answered	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	483	451	797	1,180	1,361	1,126

2006	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
Chat sessions	1,544	1,474	1,434	1,806	2,312	1,059	14,249
E-mail questions	38	100	127	104	92	98	1,337
Oregon Total	1,582	1,574	1,561	1,910	2,404	1,157	15,586
Cooperative sessions answered	-	-	10	302	356	219	887
Grand Total	1,582	1,574	1,571	2,212	2,760	1,376	16,473

Chat sessions and e-mail questions July 2005-June 2006



Who asked the questions?

By response level

Chat sessions by Response Level	1 st Qtr	2 nd Qtr	3 rd Qtr	4 th Qtr	2005-06
None selected	63	23	478	36	600
College/Research	180	543	660	683	2,066
Elementary/Middle (K-8)	185	1,177	1,621	2,697	5,680
General Interest	671	991	944	940	3,546
High School (9-12)	129	363	529	549	1,570
Professional	104	191	220	272	787
Total	1,332	3,288	4,452	5,177	14,249

E-mail questions by response level	1 st Qtr	2 nd Qtr	3 rd Qtr	4 th Qtr	2005-06
None selected	0	0	25	32	57
College/Research	43	46	50	54	193
Elementary School	6	21	17	21	65
General Interest	262	228	117	127	734
High School	9	18	14	22	63
Professional	79	66	42	38	225
Total	399	379	265	294	1,337

On the main L-net queue, patrons are asked to choose one of the above *Response levels*.

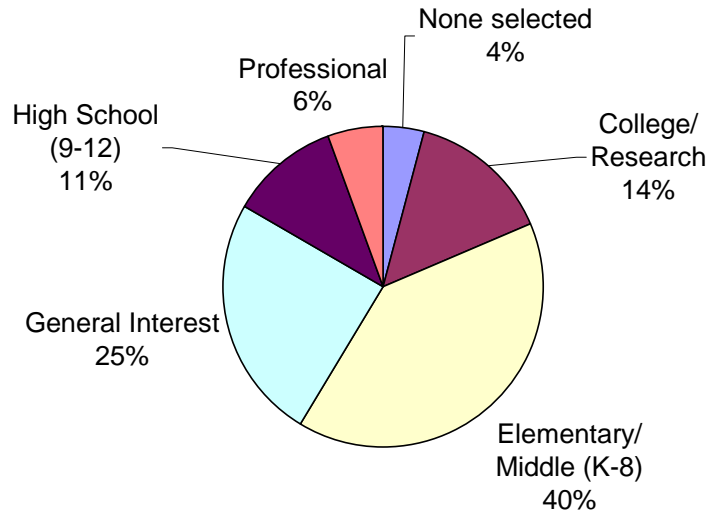
On the schools L-net queue, patrons are asked to choose either a grade or *Educator*. Grades K-8 are included above with *Elementary/Middle (K-8)*, grades 9-12 are included above with *High School (9-12)* and *Educator* is included above with *Professional*.

On the academic L-net 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*.

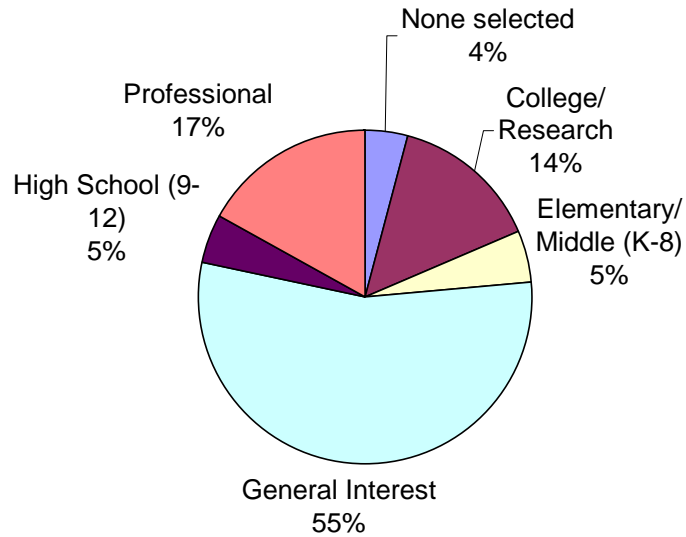
Patrons did not choose a grade, a college or a response level are included in the *None selected* category. This information is usually required before the patron connects to chat, but technical problems sometimes prevent us from enforcing the requirement. This was particularly true during the first three months of 2006, during our initial transition to OCLC/QuestionPoint (see *A note on software providers*, below, page 18 for more information).

Charts: chat sessions and e-mail questions by response level

Chat sessions



E-mail questions



By grade

Patrons coming to our live chat service through our Schools queue were asked to select their grade. Patrons that did not choose a grade probably did not originate in the schools queue and are not included here.

Chat sessions by Grade	1 st Qtr	2 nd Qtr	3 rd Qtr	4 th Qtr	Grand Total
Educator	3	34	55	63	155
Kindergarten	2	8	30	147	187
Grade 1	2	2	6	13	23
Grade 2	0	3	3	11	17
Grade 3	4	7	9	25	45
Grade 4	4	67	96	292	459
Grade 5	19	334	334	573	1,260
Grade 6	16	120	152	267	555
Grade 7	4	114	110	270	498
Grade 8	20	173	229	205	627
Grade 9	32	62	63	115	272
Grade 10	10	33	81	63	187
Grade 11	8	20	34	35	97
Grade 12	13	38	47	43	141
Total	137	1,015	1,249	2,122	4,523

The most popular choices were Grades 4 through 9. This is consistent with usage by K-12 students last year. The relatively high number of patrons choosing *Kindergarten* suggests that a small number of patrons have a desire to remain anonymous.

Based on the results cited in the *Response level* section above, 47% of all L-net patrons and 51% of chat patrons were K-12 students. This rate is consistent with usage last year, when 56% of L-net usage was from K-12 students.

By college and academic status

Patrons that came to our live chat service through our academic queue, Oregon State University's L-net queue, or Portland State University's L-net queue were asked to choose a college and a status, Faculty/Staff, Graduate Student or Undergraduate Student.

In the case of the L-net academic queue, the academic affiliation assigned each patron is based on her choice from a drop-down list of colleges. If no college was chosen, the affiliation assigned her is based on the referring page that the patron clicked on to visit the L-net chat service. For example, if the patron came to L-net from Portland Community College's page but did not choose a college, the patron was assigned PCC as their academic affiliation.

In the case of OSU L-net and PSU L-net, the institution assigned for each patron is OSU or PSU, respectively.

Academic affiliation	Other / Unknown	Faculty / Staff	Graduate Student	Undergraduate Student	Total
Central Oregon Community College	5	8	1	53	67
Eastern Oregon University	0	0	0	5	5
Northwest Christian College	0	2	0	4	6
Oregon Health & Science University	0	1	1	2	4
Oregon Institute of Technology	1	1	1	26	29
Oregon State University	165	31	108	228*	532
Other	7	9	18	46	80
Portland Community College	4	9	0	44	57
Portland State University	17	30	77	228	352
University of Oregon	15	14	30	51	110
Total	214	105	236	683*	1,242

* In OSU's L-net queue, "e-campus undergrad" was selected 4 times.

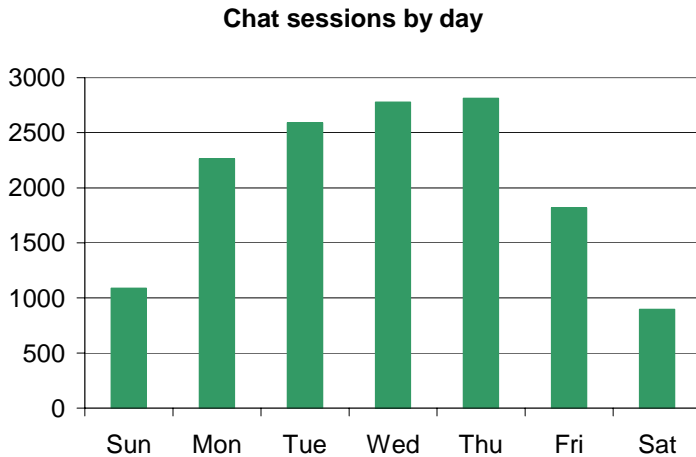
By county

In the main L-net chat queue, the schools queue, and on our e-mail form, patrons were asked to enter an Oregon zip code. Each zip code is mapped to a town and county so that we can present results geographically. Patrons that did not provide an Oregon zip code, or that came in through the L-net academic queue, are included in the *None* category.

County	Chat sessions	E-mail questions	Total	2005-06 Goal	% of goal achieved	2000 Population	Per 1000 capita
None	2,286	414	2,700				
Baker	23	4	27	32	84%	16,741	1.61
Benton	270	39	309	393	79%	78,153	3.95
Clackamas	2,010	69	2,079	2,724	76%	338,391	6.14
Clatsop	17	11	28	27	104%	35,630	0.79
Columbia	120	11	131	34	385%	43,560	3.01
Coos	84	30	114	74	154%	62,779	1.82
Crook	25	2	27	34	79%	19,182	1.41
Curry	4	1	5	20	25%	21,137	0.24
Deschutes	328	23	351	524	67%	115,367	3.04
Douglas	111	20	131	162	81%	100,399	1.30
Gilliam	155	1	156	30	520%	1,915	81.46
Grant	5	0	5	7	71%	7,935	0.63
Harney	264	3	267	8	3,338%	7,609	35.09
Hood River	20	14	34	50	68%	20,411	1.67
Jackson	437	63	500	670	75%	181,269	2.76
Jefferson	10	4	14	23	61%	19,009	0.74
Josephine	49	17	66	117	56%	75,726	0.87
Klamath	33	16	49	108	45%	63,775	0.77
Lake	5	1	6	9	67%	7,422	0.81
Lane	389	85	474	893	53%	322,959	1.47
Lincoln	61	16	77	225	34%	44,479	1.73
Linn	218	17	235	169	139%	103,069	2.28
Malheur	12	7	19	42	45%	31,615	0.60
Marion	263	56	319	277	115%	284,834	1.12
Morrow	4	2	6	3	200%	10,995	0.55
Multnomah	3,378	177	3,555	2,247	158%	660,486	5.38
Polk	44	5	49	29	169%	62,380	0.79
Sherman	20	1	21	8	263%	1,934	10.86
Tillamook	10	8	18	22	82%	24,262	0.74
Umatilla	283	15	298	55	542%	70,548	4.22
Union	12	10	22	18	122%	24,530	0.90
Wallowa	0	1	1	5	20%	7,226	0.14
Wasco	76	33	109	99	110%	23,791	4.58
Washington	2,852	148	3,000	1,488	202%	445,342	6.74
Wheeler	13	0	13	7	186%	1,547	8.40
Yamhill	358	13	371	164	226%	84,992	4.37
Total	14,249	1,337	15,586			3,421,399	4.56

One of our goals was to increase usage by 25% in each county. It was a difficult goal both in places where we had previous success (like Clackamas County) and where we had not (like Wallowa county). We had some surprising successes, and achieved this goal for 19 of Oregon’s 36 counties.

What time of day were chat sessions initiated?

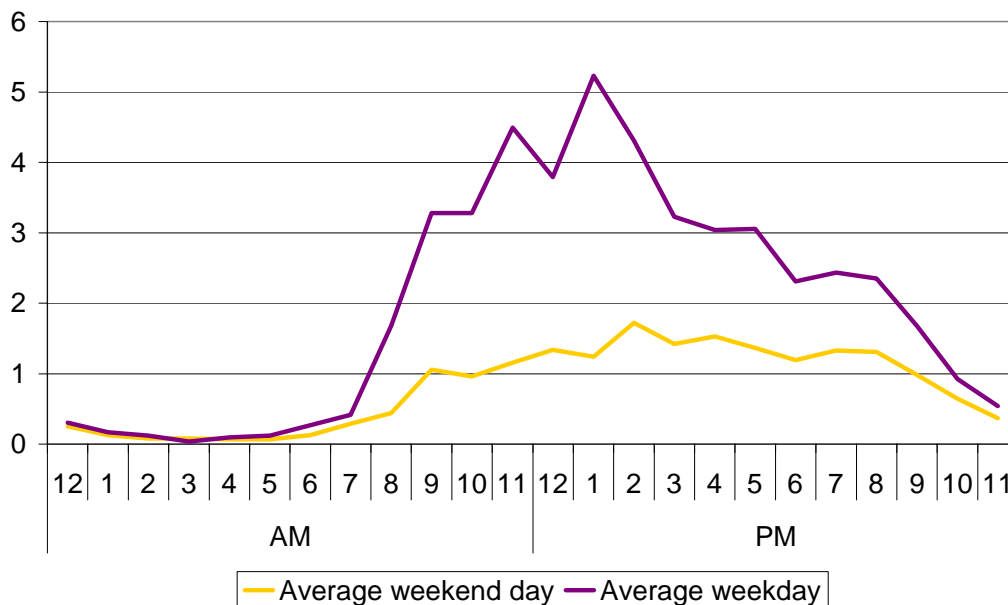


Since our chat service is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, we are very interested in tracking usage by day and time.

In general, weekdays are busier than weekends. Our chat service gets increasingly busier from Monday to Thursday and drops off for the weekend. Sundays are only slightly busier than Saturdays.

On average weekdays, our service is active between 9am to 10pm (averaging at least one question per hour) and busy between 10am and 7pm (averaging at least three questions per hour). In contrast, on average weekend days, our is active from 10am until 11pm but is not busy

Number of chat sessions by hour on average days



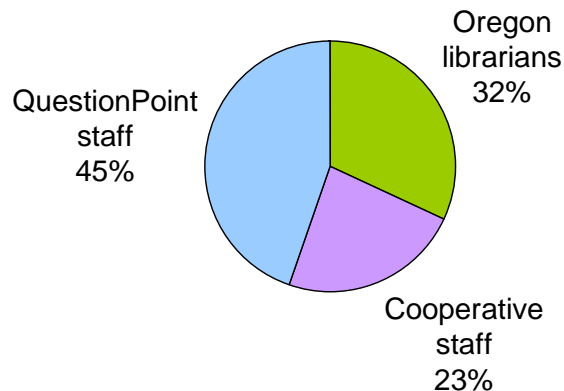
Who answered the questions?

Answering library	Oregon chat sessions	Cooperative chat sessions	All chat sessions	E-mail questions	Average time per chat session	Average time chat patrons waited
Albany Public Library	399	152	551	1	16:24.1	1:09.1
Central Oregon Community College	98	2	100	1	15:24.9	0:51.7
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library	85	23	108	142	19:06.2	1:04.6
Deschutes Public Library System	295	154	449	76	19:30.2	1:40.4
Eastern Oregon University	-	-	-	63	-	-
Eugene Public Library	381	60	441	81	16:06.4	1:14.5
Hillsboro Public Library	104	29	133	1	24:23.3	0:53.7
Jackson County Library System	376	68	444	146	12:32.5	1:21.7
L-net staff	417	21	438	59	4:23.4	0:22.3
Multnomah County Library	728	119	847	258	18:48.4	1:19.4
Newport Public Library	-	-	-	1	-	-
Northwest Christian College	117	-	117	-	13:09.8	0:48.1
Oregon County Law Libraries*	-	-	-	18	-	-
Oregon Health & Science University	-	-	-	13	-	-
Oregon Institute of Technology	207	1	208	3	12:49.7	1:00.9
Oregon State Library	132	14	146	124	19:41.7	0:55.8
Oregon State University (Corvallis)	533	28	561	113	17:09.2	2:46.3
Portland Community College	94	-	94	5	27:08.3	0:43.0
Portland State University	393	40	433	20	16:54.7	0:59.3
Salem Public Library	406	58	464	75	23:58.4	0:45.0
University of Oregon	176	18	194	77	12:39.8	0:54.9
Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS)	174	46	220	33	15:30.2	1:39.0
West Linn Public Library	100	22	122	-	14:29.2	1:51.2
Unknown Oregon	-	32	32	19		
Oregon total	5,215	887	6,102	1,329	16:26.5	1:16.7
Cooperative staff	1,562	-	1,562	-	11:44.2	1:15.0
QuestionPoint staff	4,844	-	4,844	8	13:38.4	2:06.6
Tutor.com	2,628	-	2,628	-	16:00.4	1:06.8
Grand total	14,249	887	15,136	1,337	14:53.6	1:31.7

Oregon chat sessions are chat sessions answered by each library from Oregon patrons. *Cooperative chat sessions* are chat sessions answered by each library from cooperative patrons.

Since switching to OCLC/QuestionPoint's Flash Chat software (see *A note on software providers*, below, page 18), Oregon libraries have answered 32% of questions coming from Oregon patrons. Cooperative staff and OCLC/QuestionPoint backup staff have answered the rest.

Chat sessions with Flash Chat, 3/18/2006-6/30/2006



When Oregon librarians are online

One of the reasons we chose to switch software vendors to OCLC was that we thought the cooperative model would provide more backup staff for our growing service. A side effect has been that a smaller proportion of Oregon patrons are getting connected to Oregon librarians, even during the hours that we are online (Monday-Friday, 10am-6pm).

In the first and second quarters of the year, when we contracted with Tutor.com, L-net librarians answered 82% of the questions that arrived during our regular hours and 42% of questions overall. With the shift to OCLC in the last half of the year, these figures dropped to 59% and 34%, respectively.

OCLC's cooperative model allows librarians from outside of Oregon to pick up Oregon patrons at any time. Cooperative librarians are asked to give Oregon librarians a chance to pick up Oregon patrons first, but this hasn't always happened.

Besides the shift in software, another factor in these results has been that our service has been busier in the second half of the year than it was during the first half. Given the growth in service, it is only natural that Oregon librarians answer a smaller proportion of

the total questions. Though traffic more than doubled, staff only answered 50% more questions per hour that Oregon librarians were online.

Ideally, the growth in the number of questions Oregon librarians answer should outpace the growth in the number of hours that Oregon librarians provide service.

Table: when Oregon librarians are online

	1st-2nd Qtr 2005-06	3rd-4th Qtr 2005-06	Total 2005-06
Total Oregon Questions	4,620	9,629	14,249
Oregon questions answered during Oregon libraries' hours	2,358	5,552	7,910
Oregon questions answered by Oregon libraries	1,941	3,272	5,213
Cooperative questions answered by Oregon libraries		887	887
All questions answered by Oregon libraries	1,941	4,159	6,102
Hours contributed by Oregon libraries	1,190	1,436.5	2,626.25
Number of questions answered by Oregon librarians per hour	1.63	2.90	2.32
% of questions during Oregon libraries hours that Oregon libraries answer	82%	59%	66%
% of all questions that Oregon libraries answer	42%	34%	37%

Partner libraries in kind contributions

Oregon libraries contributed over \$95,000 in staff time to L-net. This figure is calculated at a rate of 37.80 per hour, the cost of salary and benefits for a typical librarian at Multnomah County Library in 2005-06. This figure does not represent what many libraries actually spent on staff while they contributed to L-net. Rather, it represents each library's contribution to the service.

Chat answerer	Chat Hours scheduled	In-kind contribution
Albany Public Library	292	\$11,037.60
Central Oregon Community College	50	\$1,890.00
Corvallis-Benton County Public Library	52	\$1,965.60
Deschutes Public Library System	184	\$6,955.20
Eugene Public Library	190	\$7,182.00
Hillsboro Public Library	92.75	\$3,505.95
Jackson County Library System	230	\$8,694.00
L-net staff	130	
Multnomah County Library	399	\$15,082.20
Northwest Christian College	70	\$2,646.00
Oregon Institute of Technology	98	\$3,704.40
Oregon State Library	102	\$3,855.60
Oregon State University	102	\$3,855.60
Portland Community College	48	\$1,814.40
Portland State University	160	\$6,048.00
Salem Public Library	184	\$6,955.20
University of Oregon	90	\$3,402.00
Washington County Cooperative Library Services	88.5	\$3,345.30
West Linn Public Library	64	\$2,419.20
Oregon total	2,626.25	\$95,078.25

Was our service satisfactory?

This year, we had more than one software provider (see *A note on software providers*, below), and alas, more than one survey method. With Tutor.com/Altarama, we had three versions of our exit survey for chat patrons: a link at the end of the session, a link from the patron's e-mailed transcript and a pop-up survey that appeared at the end of the session. We had only one survey for e-mail patrons, linked from the e-mail answer we sent.

With OCLC/eGain, we had the pop-up survey, the survey link at the end of the session. We had no surveys for e-mail questions.

With OCLC's Flash Chat, we now have a survey linked at the end of the session and one at the end of all answers sent to patrons, either from chat or e-mail questions.

Overall, patrons were as satisfied with our service as they were in 2004-05. This suggests that neither the growth in demand for our service, nor the switch in software has had an adverse affect on the quality of our L-net.

Survey response rate

		Chat session surveys	E-mail question surveys	Total Surveys	Chat sessions	E-mail questions	Chat survey response rate	E-mail survey response rate
2005	Jul	46	13	59	359	124	13%	10%
	Aug	32	7	39	310	141	10%	5%
	Sep	84	7	91	663	134	13%	5%
	Oct	106	5	111	1,054	126	10%	4%
	Nov	103	8	111	1,212	149	8%	5%
	Dec	134	5	139	1,022	104	13%	5%
2006	Jan	241	0	241	1,544	38	16%	0%
	Feb	195	0	195	1,474	100	13%	0%
	Mar	177	1	178	1,434	127	12%	1%
	Apr	89	2	91	1,806	104	5%	2%
	May	117	7	124	2,312	92	5%	8%
	Jun	55	3	58	1,059	98	5%	3%
	Total	1,379	58	1,437	14,249	1,337	10%	4%

When we switched to OCLC/Flash Chat, our survey response rate for chat sessions dropped from 8-16% to only 5%. However, for the size of the population we are sampling, a 5% response rate is high enough to be 95% sure of our survey results within a 2.5% margin of error.

Our response rate for e-mail surveys is too low to be so sure of the results, but answers to those surveys are included anyway.

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

Answer	2005-06 Chat surveys	2005-06 E-mail surveys	All 2005-06 surveys	2004-05 surveys
Very Satisfied / Satisfied	691	38	729	195
Satisfied / Somewhat Satisfied	356	10	366	446
Not Satisfied	292	6	298	169
Blank	40	4	44	13
Total	1,379	58	1,437	823
% Very satisfied, satisfied or somewhat satisfied	78%	89%	79%	78%

From July 2005 to March 17, 2006, the choices for this question were on a three-point scale: Very satisfied, satisfied and not satisfied. From March 18 through June 2006, the choices were on a different three-point scale: Satisfied, somewhat satisfied and not satisfied

The above results combine the two scales.

The 2005-06 results of this measure are very similar to the results in 2004-05. Last year, 23% of patrons said they were “Not satisfied” with the answer they received, and this year only 22% said the same.

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

Answer	2005-06 Chat surveys 2005-06	2005-06 E-mail surveys	All 2005-06 surveys	2004-05 surveys
Yes	791	31	822	479
No	560	26	586	337
Blank	28	1	29	7
Total	1,379	58	1,437	823
% Yes	59%	54%	58%	59%

The 2005-06 results for this measure are nearly identical to those for 2004-05.

Question 3: How did you hear about our service?

For this question, we have to separate the results for surveys taken before and after we switched to OCLC/Flash Chat. From July 2005 until Mar 17, 2006, patrons could choose as many answers as they liked. From March 18 until June 30, 2006, patrons could only give one answer.

Library websites are again the number one place the patrons learn about L-net. Teachers and librarians also play an important role, as does self-discovery, such as from visiting another web site or from “surfing the net”.

Table: chat surveys, July 2005-March 17, 2006

July 2005 – March 17, 2006	Chat surveys	% of all (1065) chat surveys
Library web site	576	54%
Librarian	198	19%
Library	186	17%
School	123	12%
Teacher	113	11%
Other, please specify	112	11%
Friend or relative	108	10%
Bookmark	50	5%
Poster	31	3%
Newspaper article	23	2%
Newspaper ad	22	2%
Radio	18	2%
Public transportation ad	16	2%
Movie theater	12	1%

Table: e-mail surveys, July 2005-March 17, 2006

July 2005 – March 17, 2006	E-mail surveys	% of all (45) surveys
Library web site	16	36%
Other, please specify	13	29%
Librarian	8	18%
Library	8	18%
School	2	4%
Newspaper ad	2	4%
Teacher	1	2%
Poster	1	2%
Bookmark	1	2%
Newspaper article	1	2%
Radio	0	0%
Public transportation ad	0	0%
Movie theater	0	0%
Friend or relative	0	0%

Table: chat surveys, March 18-June 30, 2006

March 18 – June 30, 2006	Chat surveys	% of all (314) chat surveys
Library Website	111	35%
School Teacher/School Librarian	76	24%
Surfing the net	31	10%
Librarian Public Library	22	7%
Friend/Relative	20	6%
Newspaper/Radio/TV/Billboard	15	5%
Librarian Academic Library	12	4%
Bookmark/Flyer	9	3%
No answer	18	6%

Table: e-mail surveys, March 18-June 30, 2006

March 18 – June 30, 2006	E-mail surveys	% of all (13) surveys
Librarian Public Library	6	46%
Library Website	3	23%
Friend/Relative	1	8%
Newspaper/Radio/TV/Billboard	1	8%
Surfing the net	1	8%
No Answer	1	8%

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

Answer	Chat surveys	E-mail surveys	Total surveys	2004-05
Yes	990	54	1,044	646
No	86	0	86	53
Maybe	255	3	258	113
Blank	48	1	49	11
Total	1,379	58	1,437	823
% Yes or Maybe	94%	100%	94%	92%

Again, the 2005-06 results for this measure are nearly identical to those for 2004-05. The biggest change is that *Maybe* responses take up 18% of all surveys, as opposed to 14% in 2004-05.

L-net goals for 2006-07

In October 2005, L-net expressed the following goals in its request for funding for the 2006-07 fiscal year to the Oregon State Library Board of Trustees:

1. Increase usage by at least 10%
2. Receive an overall 80% satisfaction rating from patrons
3. Increase the number of hours Oregon libraries staff L-net to 70 hours per week.

In May, 2006, the L-net advisory board set service goals for 2006-2009, expressed below in annual, monthly and daily totals for 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Questions			
Year	Monthly	Annual	Daily
2006-07	1,620	19,440	53
2007-08	1,860	22,320	61
2008-09	2,083	25,000	68

These figures represent 15% growth in each of the next two years and 10% growth in 2008-09, or about 50% over the next three years.

A note on software providers

For the months of July-December 2005, L-net used software and librarian backup services from Tutor.com for chat services and RefTracker from Altarama for our e-mail questions. Beginning December 27, 2005, we switched to OCLC QuestionPoint for software and backup services for both chat and e-mail service. We refer to this as *OCLC/eGain*, because OCLC's software was based on the eGain software platform.

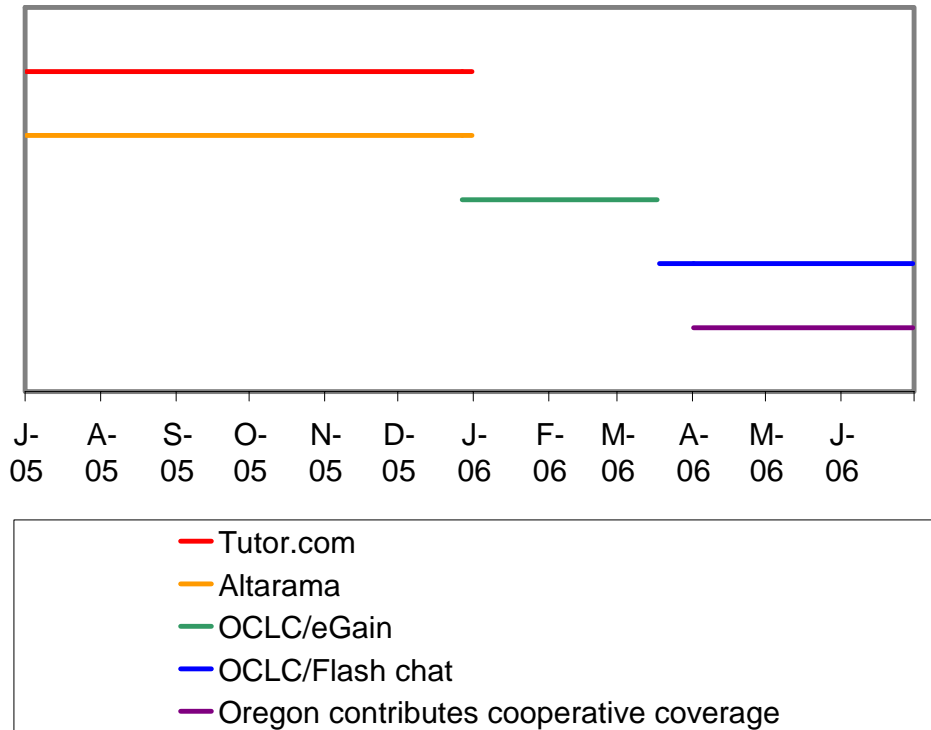
We chose to switch to OCLC/QuestionPoint for three reasons.

1. Tutor.com was releasing new software that did not support co-browsing and did not have an intention of supporting co-browsing library databases with patrons.
2. OCLC/QuestionPoint's cooperative model would allow L-net to increase the overall number of available staff in a more fluid manner. Rather than depending on 2-4 people being available constantly whether we needed them or not, we could depend on 20-30 librarians being available if and when we needed them.
3. Switching to OCLC would save us roughly \$15,000 each year and eliminate the need for a separate system to manage e-mail questions.

On March 18, 2006, OCLC implemented a new software interface, "Flash chat". Librarians from OCLC's 24/7 Reference cooperative started answering some Oregon questions when Oregon librarians were busy.

On April 1, 2006, we started contributing the QuestionPoint 24/7 Reference cooperative, meaning that Oregon librarians, if logged on to QuestionPoint and not busy with Oregon patrons, would be available to answer questions from QuestionPoint member libraries around the world.

Chart: Timeline of software providers, 2005-06



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 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. 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:

1st Quarter: The period from July 1, 2005 to September 30, 2005.

2nd Quarter: The period from October 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005.

3rd Quarter: The period from January 1, 2006 to March 31, 2006.

4th Quarter: The period from April 1, 2006 to June 30, 2006.

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 