

## An Evaluation of askON Ask Ontario's Virtual Reference Pilot Project



### Public Service Highlights – by the numbers

#### Who

- **40.4%** K-12 students, **33.7%** general public, **6.0%** business people

#### What

- Questions were **31.7%** research-based, **27.3%** about library services/policies, **31.7%** fast fact, **.05%** directional
- **29.9%** - took 10 to 20 minutes; **28.1%** - 5 to 10 minutes; **15%** - 20 to 30 minutes

#### How well

- **69.7%** resulted in visitors receiving better information than they could on their own
- **78.3%** indicated visitor satisfaction

#### Skills measured against RUSA guidelines for virtual reference success

- **91.6%** displayed askON staff enthusiasm
- **76.8%** demonstrated good/excellent listening/inquiring skills
- **87.5%** demonstrated confirmation of visitor's information needs
- **80.5%** demonstrated good/excellent skills at citing authoritative sources
- **55.3%** demonstrated good/excellent ability to explain and/or use resources
- **97.0%** confirmed that questions were answered before ending interaction

#### Training requirements

- **18.4%** demonstrated a need for askON service policy training
- **28.3%** demonstrated a need for RUSA guideline training
- **21.5%** demonstrated a need for training on the resources of participating libraries

Results derived from an analysis of a random sample of 167 public transcripts from the askON pilot service (Jan-March, 2008).

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