

AskAway Chat Reference *ACTIONS & ACHIEVEMENTS 2018*



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



The big project for 2018 was the investigation of software options to sustain and expand the service. We also worked on new supports for institutions, like citation best practices and new promotional materials. AskAway user feedback tells us that service providers continue to provide excellent and much appreciated point of need assistance to students and researchers. I'm looking forward to seeing where the new software platform takes us in 2019.

- Gregg Currie, AskAway Advisory Committee Chair, Selkirk College

VALUE FOR PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS



31 BC university and colleges participate

Regional expertise is leveraged across the system; committee members are drawn from participating institutions; everyone has a say



\$2,000,000 saved across the province

By working collaboratively instead of offering solo comparable services, institutions across BC collectively save ~2 million dollars



50% - 210% Return on investment of staff hours

Based on student enrollment, institutions contribute from 3-34 hours of staffing per week, while the AskAway service is available 67 hours per week to all students

VALUE FOR ASKAWAY USERS



64% of users* chose AskAway because they are off campus

AskAway is accessible online from anywhere, a huge bonus for users who are unable to come to campus for library support



85% of users* achieve one or more learning outcomes as a result of their session

AskAway service providers teach users where and how to search for resources, and how to evaluate them – key information literacy skills



93% of users* say they'll use AskAway again

AskAway users consistently report high levels of satisfaction with the service, a testament to its value and the professionalism of providers



“ All my coursework is done online, at a distance. I was having trouble doing a search so I thought instead of calling, I would try the AskAway button. It was totally effective. The AskAway Librarian was very helpful by confirming there was a problem, and she figured out an alternative way for me to do the search so I got access to the materials I needed. I would definitely use the service again.

- Elizabeth Close
Completing a Graduate Certificate in Rehabilitation at the University of BC

“ I am pleasantly surprised that AskAway runs on the weekend. I found it very useful and convenient. Keep up the great work!

- British Columbia Institute of Technology AskAway User

*AskAway users who complete exit surveys

2018 ACHIEVEMENTS

Strengthened Technological Infrastructure

- Formed the AskAway Software Evaluation Committee to evaluate chat reference software for the operation of the service:
 - established timelines
 - developed functional requirements for proposed software
 - issued a Request for Quote (RFQ) to selected software providers and managing subsequent communications
 - developed tools and criteria to facilitate the evaluation of RFQ responses

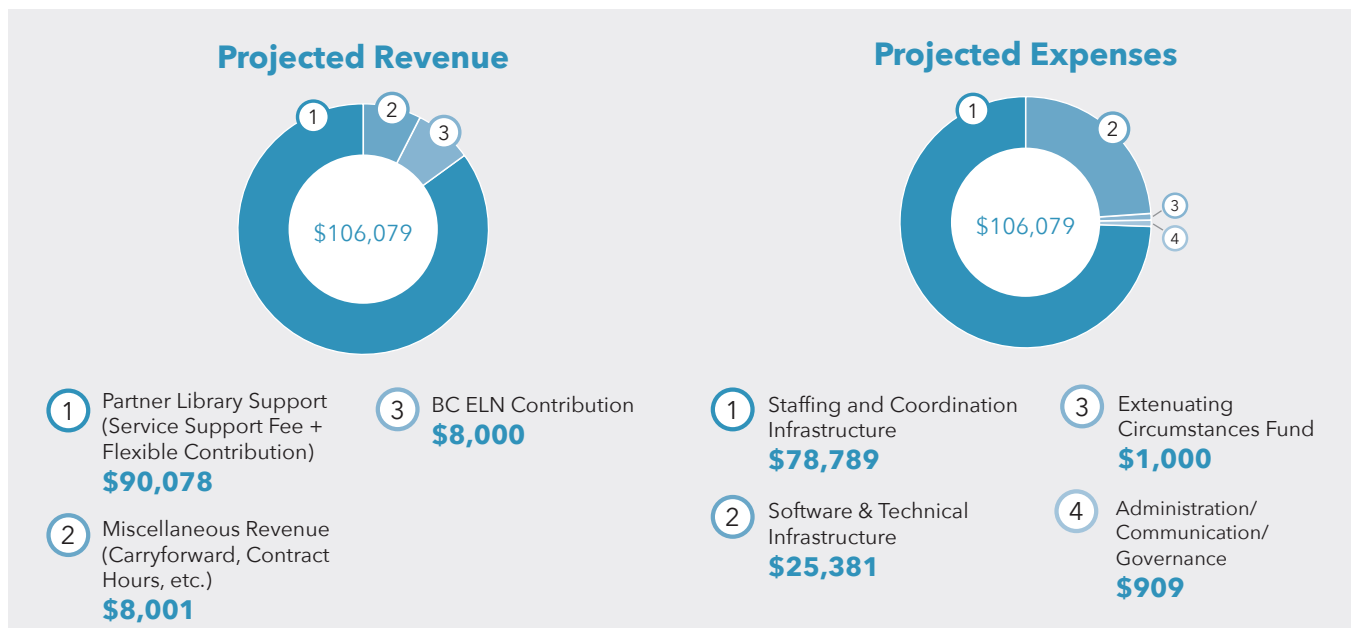
Developed Service Enhancements

- Created and shared Best Practices: Handling Citation Questions, the third in a series of best practices, to provide guidance and consistency in how citation questions are handled: <https://askaway.org/staff/handling-citation-questions>
- Designed and shared new AskAway promotional material to support the promotion of AskAway at partner libraries
- Refreshed and created new AskAway scripted messages to create efficient workflows for staff, and to foster more proactive and user-centered communication with users
- Launched "The Chat Box", a newsletter that channels service updates, valuable initiatives, tips and more to the AskAway community

Nurtured Communities of Practice

- Hosted a virtual Local Coordinators' meeting to discuss recent service developments and ideas for raising AskAway visibility at partner libraries
- Hosted a virtual meeting with collaborative virtual reference colleagues across North America and participated in additional meetings to share information and ideas

ASKAWAY 2018-19 FINANCIALS





ASKAWAY AND THE ART OF BALANCE

An interview with Deanna Hutchings
Instructor in the School of Nursing at the University of Victoria

I've been teaching distance education courses for twenty years, most of the time while also balancing an active work schedule in the field of palliative care. While teaching online provides flexibility for busy schedules, it can also mean working in isolation, often on the weekend when there are fewer support services available.

Fortunately, the University of Victoria has technical help on the weekend for Distance students and instructors, and library services like AskAway are also there for us. That gives me a great sense of assurance. There are times when I need to do revisions on my course as I'm teaching it, which means I need to make updates quickly. While I often know exactly what the holdings are at the library related to my field, if I can't find something, I can easily contact a librarian on the weekend via AskAway – and presto – they find it for me!

Many of our students are already working in the field, they are Registered Nurses; they have families and busy work lives and have a limited amount of time to get their course work completed. Because I had such a great experience with AskAway, I wanted to let my students know that there is support for them. I let my distance students know that UVic has a librarian dedicated to distance education, and I put in a link to AskAway.

AskAway facilitates asynchronous teaching like mine, that's the beauty. It's there for those of us who are teaching and learning in between the times when we are at work, focused on our families, or busy with other obligations. Many of our students are accustomed to immediate service via chat lines, so, I'm able to inform them that UVic is up to date with rapid library service through AskAway. In short, I'm delighted with the AskAway service!

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A LOOK AHEAD TO 2019...

- Licensing software for the service, as recommended by the AskAway Software Evaluation Committee
- Investigating a proactive chat option, a top priority that emerged from recent action planning
- Refreshing AskAway communication, including logo, website, promotional materials and communiqués