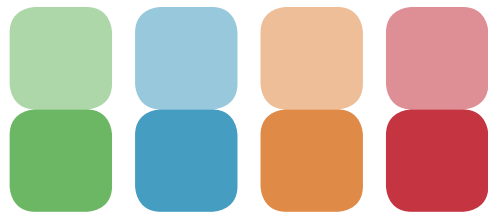


# AskAway

## Online Chat Reference

### Actions & Achievements 2014



You people are made of the AWESOME! I found this service to be extremely pleasant, efficient, and effective. I Love AskAway, it is one of the most helpful tools out there for students! It provides us with live help from experts and for some right from the comforts of their home! I wish this service to run for years and years to come! Very cool little tool, I was very impressed by how it worked! Extremely helpful and the service was very fast! Thank you. I find it helpful and easy to access since it's online and there's no signing up necessary. I am very satisfied with the links they gave me. Totally worth my time. Thanks! The librarian who helped me was extremely helpful and friendly. I really appreciated the service I received. The person who helped me was very helpful in providing multiple links for my inquiries. I really appreciate the effort to exhaust all possible resources to help me find the information I was looking for. This is a very helpful device to have. If a student is stuck and needs a quick answer this is the perfect place. It is also very personal so that your needs are met well. You guys are doing a good job, keep up with it. This feature is very nice and convenient. I like that it is a real person, and not some automatic response system or something like this. I LOVE this service! Thank you for providing it! This service is actually too good to be true. I am so grateful for the help I get every time! Thank you so much my AskAway librarian was superb! They are always quick and helpful. They never make you feel stupid for having difficulty finding things. They were super super super helpful and detailed. I'd recommend any time. Great service - like talking to the librarian without driving to the library. Thank you so much for your help once again. I really appreciate how you 'teach' us students strategies to use rather than just giving us the answer. Proves to be really effective in my learning!

# Contents .....

Message 3

AskAway Benefits 3

2014 Actions & Achievements 4

AskAway Impact 5

Governance & Partner Libraries 6

Financials 7

The Road Ahead 7



March 2015

Front and back cover quotes collected from  
2014 post-usage student surveys

## Message

A recent American study found that students rated chat reference above other forms of virtual reference (i.e. telephone, email, text, or Skype) for effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction, and even above face-to-face help for research questions<sup>1</sup>. Student demand for chat reference has remained strong in BC, establishing AskAway as a core service. Recognizing the importance of AskAway, in 2014 participating library directors stepped up to the challenge of losing external funding and opted to create a fully self-sustaining service. This move ensures AskAway will continue to provide vital academic support to students in BC for years to come. I am proud to share this AskAway *Actions & Achievements 2014* report which describes the many ways AskAway makes an impact in the province.

Melanie Wilke, AskAway Advisory Committee Chair

## AskAway Benefits.....

### For Students...

- **Strengthens key information literacy skills;** including how to evaluate information, how to search for information, and where to look for information
- **Provides seamless, single-click access to online research assistance;** students working off-campus and/or online can easily reach a friendly, knowledgeable AskAway service provider
- **Meets needs of students working unconventional hours;** AskAway later evening and weekend hours mean students can get help when many in-person services are closed

### For Institutions...

- **Reduces costs of offering online chat reference;** institutions save 60% by participating in group licensing of system software and save thousands of dollars in staffing thanks to centralized coordination and a collaborative approach to sharing service providers
- **Maximizes returns on library investments;** by sharing resources across the system, institutions are able to extend services far beyond what each could offer alone
- **Creates an equitable service for BC learners;** thanks to the cost-sharing model supported by AskAway, even the smallest institution is able to provide the same 67 hours of online research assistance that a large institution provides

<sup>1</sup> Chow, A., & Croxton, R. (2014). A usability evaluation of academic virtual reference services. *College & Research Libraries*, 75(3), 309-361. doi:10.5860/crl13-408

# 2014 Actions & Achievements .....

## Achieved Full Service Sustainability

- Enables AskAway to remain open at current levels despite loss of external funding, thanks to partner library contributions
- Removes vulnerability to external funding variables

## Secured Free Institutional Queues for System

- Saves the consortium up to \$30,000; institutions can implement the institutional queue at no cost
- Lets institutions opting for individual queues (currently 20) provide tailored support for their students

## Developed New Tools for Challenging Patrons

- Gives 200+ service providers targeted scripts and strategies, establishing a unified and consistent approach to dealing with patrons displaying disruptive behaviour
- Provides a FOIPPA-compliant model for managing problematic patron access

## Applied New Approaches to Assessing Service

- Informs staffing decisions that have resulted in savings by using a statistics-driven approach to determining needs
- Strengthens understanding of patron expectations and outcomes

## Piloted Software-Driven Scheduling

- Enhances efficiency and flexibility for institutions when setting schedules term-by-term
- Frees up time for the Administrative Centre to devote to other priorities

## Upgraded AskAway Website

- Gives local coordinators direct control over their institutions' information
- Makes the website easier to use (based on user experience testing)

This is a great resource! I was directed to places containing very useful data that I would not have found doing my own research. The librarian was also great! More students should take advantage of this option to help them get started in the right direction of their assignment...

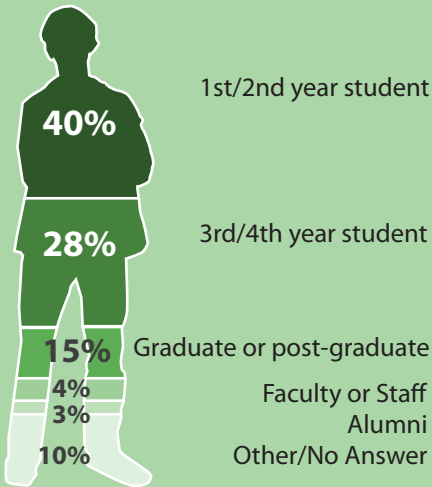
Camosun College  
1st/2nd year student

Thank you so much for your help once again. I really appreciate how you 'teach' us students strategies to use rather than just giving us the answer. Proves to be really effective in my learning!

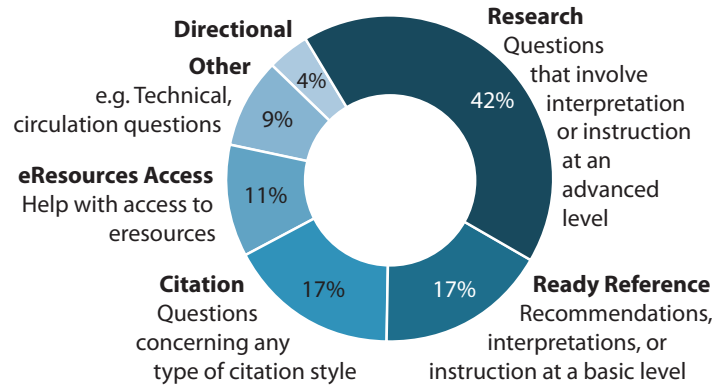
Uni. Fraser Valley  
3rd/4th year student

# AskAway Impact

## Who's Using AskAway?



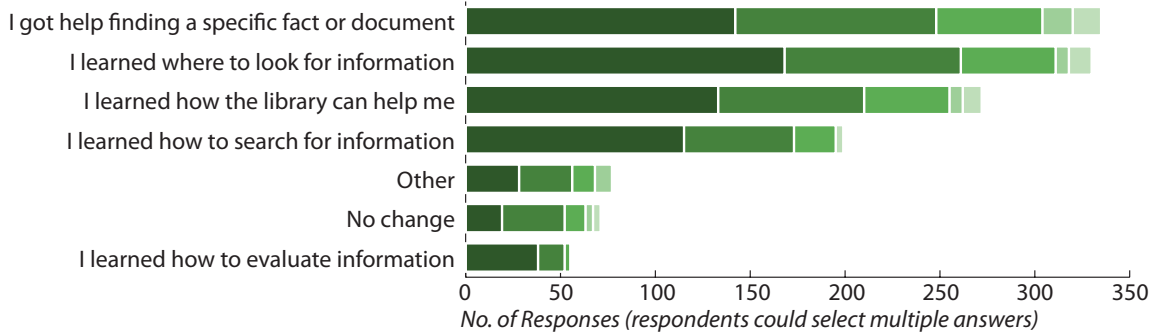
## What Kind of Help are Users Getting?



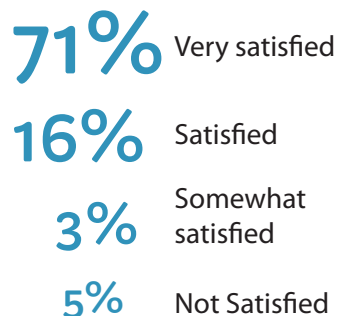
“Helpful”

...is the most frequently used adjective by users in their AskAway post-usage survey comments

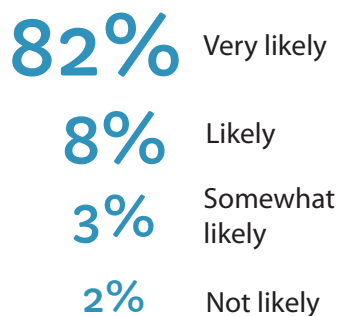
## What is Changing for Users as a Result of their AskAway Sessions?



### Are Users Satisfied?



### Will they Come Back?



There were 22,948 AskAway sessions in 2014, and 814 users filled out post-usage surveys. Data on this page is based on these surveys, excluding “What Kind of Help are Users Getting”, which is based on service provider session coding.

# Governance & Partner Libraries.....

The AskAway Advisory Committee oversees policy development, planning and operation, and reports to the BC ELN Steering Committee. Composed of representatives from a cross-section of AskAway participating institutions, the Advisory Committee reflects the diversity of BC's post-secondary libraries.

## Advisory Committee

(as of December, 2014)

Anita Cocchia, *BC Electronic Library Network*

Lynette Gallant, *North Island College*  
(Member-at-Large)

Marjory Jardine, *Justice Institute of BC*  
(Member-at-Large)

Leva Lee, *BCcampus*

Grace Makarewicz, *Capilano University*  
(Regional Universities and Institutes with 4 year Programs)

Janis McKenzie, *Simon Fraser University*

Simon Neame, *University of British Columbia*

Christina Nilsen, *Thompson Rivers University*  
(Member-at-Large)

Caron Rollins, *University of Victoria*

James Rout, *Emily Carr University of Art + Design*  
(Small Universities)

Debbie Schachter, *Douglas College*  
(Urban Colleges)

Melanie Wilke, *Northwest Community College*  
(Rural Colleges) - Chair

## Partner Libraries

(as of December, 2014)

Alexander College  
British Columbia Institute of Technology  
Camosun College  
Capilano University  
College of New Caledonia  
College of the Rockies  
Columbia Bible College  
Douglas College  
Emily Carr University of Art + Design  
Justice Institute of British Columbia  
Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
Langara College  
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology  
North Island College  
Northern Lights College  
Northwest Community College  
Okanagan College  
Quest University Canada  
Selkirk College  
Simon Fraser University  
Thompson Rivers University  
Trinity Western University  
University of British Columbia  
University Canada West  
University of Northern British Columbia  
University of the Fraser Valley  
University of Victoria  
Vancouver Community College  
Vancouver Island University  
Yukon College

## Administrative Centre

Anita Cocchia  
Brandon Weigel

[AskAway is] a student's refuge!!!  
Best thing out there for university kids who need help!

Kwantlen Polytechnic University  
1st/2nd year student

Wonderful friendly service. Thank you for making it easy to find great help on short notice.

Simon Fraser University  
Grad/Post-Grad student

# Financials .....

BCcampus provided \$25,000 to AskAway in 2014/15 as transition funding. As of 2015/16 AskAway will be fully sustained by partner libraries and BC ELN.

	2014/15 Projected \$	
	Revenue	Expenses
BCcampus Support	25,000	
BC ELN Support	15,000	
Partner Library Service Support and Flex Fees	64,590	
Miscellaneous Revenue (incl. Carryforward, etc.)	10,088	
<b>Total</b>	<b>114,678</b>	
Service Support		88,734
Administration / Communication / Governance		1,079
Technical Infrastructure (incl. platform etc.)		21,713
<b>Total</b>		<b>111,526</b>
<b>Revenue - Expenses</b>		<b>3,152*</b>

\*Targeted 2015/16 carryforward

# The Road Ahead .....

## ■ Selecting Scheduling Software

After piloting software to manage AskAway scheduling in 2014, 2015 will include evaluating software options and selecting a tool.

## ■ Improving Service Provision

The AskAway Administrative Centre will investigate best practices around increasing visibility, Qwidget placement, promotional tactics, and institutional queue implementation to share with institutions.

## ■ Assessing Patron Impact in Depth

The AskAway Administrative Centre continues to mine survey data and other sources of information to develop a fulsome picture of how AskAway is being used by patrons and where service enhancements can be made.

The librarian was extremely helpful and didn't give up on my difficult question. She helped me find exactly what I was looking for.

Langara College  
1st/2nd year student



Great service - like talking to the librarian without driving to the library. I found this service to be extremely pleasant, efficient, and effective. I Love AskAway, it is one of the most helpful tools out there for students! It provides us with live help from experts and for some right from the comforts of their home! I wish this service to run for years and years to come! Very cool little tool, I was very impressed by how it worked! Extremely helpful and the service was very fast! Thank you. I find it helpful and easy to access since it's online and there's no signing up necessary. I am very satisfied with the links they gave me. Totally worth my time. Thanks! The librarian who helped me was extremely helpful and friendly. I really appreciated the service I received. The person who helped me was very helpful in providing multiple links for my inquiries. I really appreciate the effort to exhaust all possible resources to help me find the information I was looking for. This is a very helpful device to have. If a student is stuck and needs a quick answer this is the perfect place. It is also very personal so that your needs are met well. You guys are doing a good job, keep up with it. This feature is very nice and convenient. I like that it is a real person, and not some automatic response system or something like this. I LOVE this service! Thank you for providing it! The librarian was extremely quick to reply and also to follow up and make sure I had the answers I needed. I was impressed by the professionalism. It was a positive experience and I won't hesitate to use the AskAway option again. Thank you for providing this service! This service is actually too good to be true. I am so grateful for the help I get every time! Thank you so much my AskAway librarian was superb! They are always quick and helpful. They never make you feel stupid for having difficulty finding things. You people are made of the AWESOME! They were super super super helpful and detailed. I'd recommend any time. Thank you so much for your help once again. I really appreciate how you 'teach' us students strategies to use rather than just giving us the answer. Proves to be really effective in my learning! Wonderful friendly service. Thank you for making it easy to find great help on short notice. Super fantastic help. Friendly, positive and informative. Exactly what I needed and didn't take much longer than a phone call. Thank you! A students refuge!!! Best thing out there for university kids who need help! Spectacular service--saved me a lot of time and energy. I LOVE this service, it's so convenient when I'm at home and I'm really stuck! The librarian was extremely helpful and gave me 2 different links to proper writing techniques which was greatly appreciated I've used this chat service on a number of occasions and have had EXCELLENT advice and help - not only have I gotten the information that I've needed, but the librarian corresponding with me has not made me feel belittled or ignorant for not knowing something. I appreciate this greatly. Support was awesome! thank you :) Very helpful service to quickly find what I'm looking for. I would use it again, and would recommend it to friends. Super