

Calling Yesterday, Texting Today: Starting a *Text a Librarian* Reference Service

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Introduction

- 96% of students have a cell phone, according to a 2010 PEW study
- Large percentage of these students use texting to communicate
- Libraries wanting to meet users where they are need to use texting
- UC San Diego Libraries pilot Text Reference program used Mosio's *Text a Librarian* via QuestionPoint

Policy & Staffing

UCSD Libraries Text Reference

Policies and Procedures

Introduction

The UCSD Libraries launched our new Text Reference service in September 2010. This service uses the Mosio "Text a Librarian" system (<http://www.textalibrarian.com/>) with the QuestionPoint interface (<http://www.questionpoint.org/>) for responding to our patrons' text messages.

The Libraries' Reference and Information Services Committee (RISC) was responsible for evaluation, selection, and setup of the service. RISC members, and public services staff volunteers, formed the *Lib-Texters* email group to respond to patron text messages received in the QuestionPoint (QP) queue.

Policy

- On weekdays, between the hours of 10 am and 4 pm, the turn-around time for responding to text messages is 15 minutes, with optimal response time being around 5 minutes, and latest response time being 15 minutes.
- Afterhours, before 10 am and after 4 pm, on weekdays, and weekends & holidays, the patrons receive an automated response stating: "Welcome to the UCSD Libraries. Messages sent before 10 am or after 4 pm on weekdays, and anytime on weekends & holidays, will be answered the next business day."
- Responding to text messages during afterhours is encouraged, if you are able to, but is not under our "15 minute response time" rule.

- Libraries' Reference Committee drafted policy for Text responders
- Volunteers, 20 librarians and staff, recruited & trained to respond to Texts
- Email list was set up to facilitate text pickup and response

Successes

Number of Texts Sent During Service Hours

Service Hours: 10am - 4pm Monday - Friday



% of questions answered within 15 minutes

- 92% during our service hours
- 83% Monday - Friday, excluding holidays
- 74% including weekends and holidays

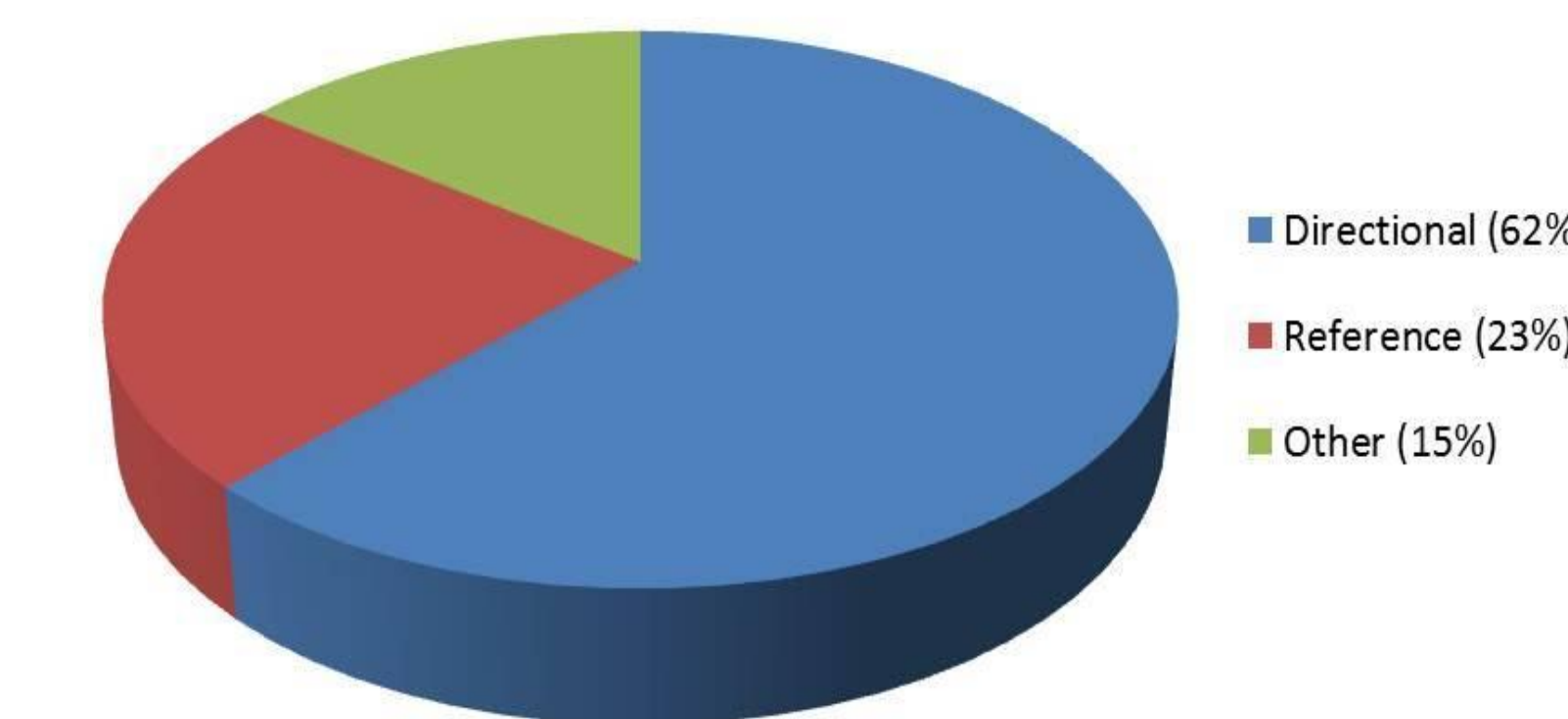
Process

Marketing



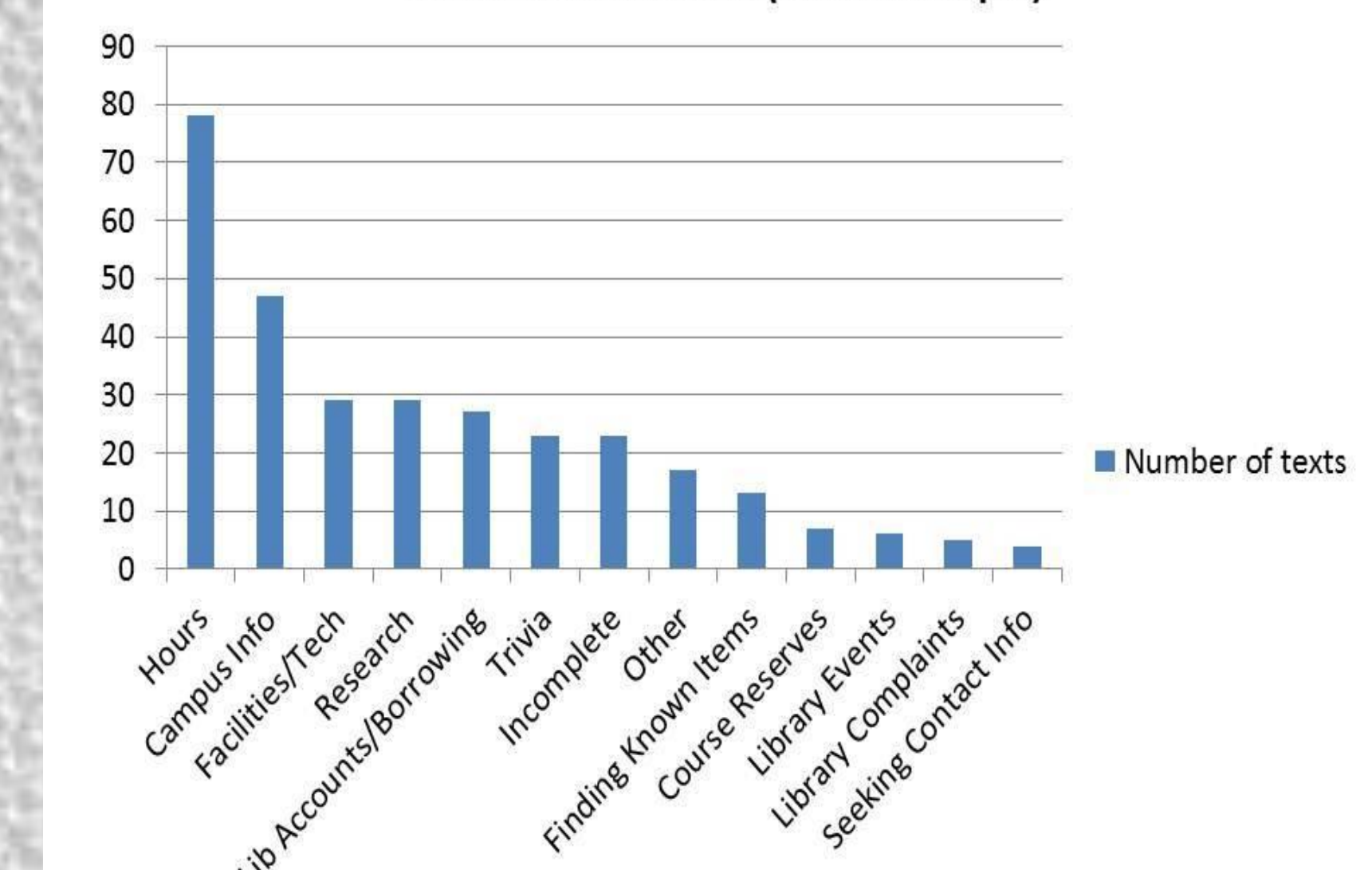
Types of Questions Asked

Text a Librarian (308 transcripts)



Detailed Types of Questions

Text a Librarian 2011 (308 transcripts)



Conclusions

- Pilot was a success.
- Texting service extended for 2 more years
- Plans for further promotions to expand user base using exhibits in campus student center & gift incentives

Singh, Gayatri	got it RE: Text a Librarian - Question Posted
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UCSD Text a Librarian



10am-4pm Mon-Fri. Text "askucsd" followed by your question to 66746. For example: askucsd when does geisel close today?

