

Research Help Now Michigan Virtual Reference Collaborative: *Why not?*

researchhelpnow
MICHIGAN VIRTUAL REFERENCE

www.researchhelpnow.org

Why not offer your users real-time, online, one-on-one, research assistance right at their points of need?

You are cordially invited to join our Collaborative to extend Virtual Reference Service to your students!

Research Help Now is a collaboration of reference librarians from 14 Michigan Community Colleges, the Library of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, and Michigan State University.

Current Research Help Now participants:

- Eastern Michigan University
- Jackson Community College
- Kellogg Community College
- Lansing Community College
- Library of Michigan
- Macomb Community College
- Michigan State University
- Mott Community College
- Muskegon Community College
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Oakland Community College
- St. Clair County Community College
- Washtenaw Community College
- Wayne County Community College District

The service is also provided for students and instructors in the Michigan Community College Virtual Learning Collaborative (MCCVLC).

researchhelpnow
MICHIGAN VIRTUAL REFERENCE

What help can users expect from Research Help Now?

Clicking on Research Help Now connects a user to a professional Michigan librarian who in real time provides assistance as if they were both at the library's reference desk. The librarian and student exchange dialogue, view web pages and online articles together, and discuss how to do library research. The only difference is the reference desk comes to wherever the student is, home or school!

A Research Help Now user can learn:

- How to search the libraries' online catalogs for relevant books
- How to look up the full text of magazines, newspapers, books, and other online resources in research databases
- How to find a useful, authoritative web site
- How to find and evaluate information
- How to search the statewide MeLCat book catalog
- How to find and use specialty search sites

Research Help Now is now using QuestionPoint 24/7 Reference librarians to extend hours of coverage on Sundays. More hours may be added in the future.

Usage: The collaborative is averaging more than 1,300 sessions per month, with the larger libraries having the most traffic. And with QuestionPoint's Qwidget, your patrons can access RHN directly from your library's homepage or wherever you'd like to target exposure. Placing the Qwidget in prominent locations results in increased usage.

FAQs on Research Help Now

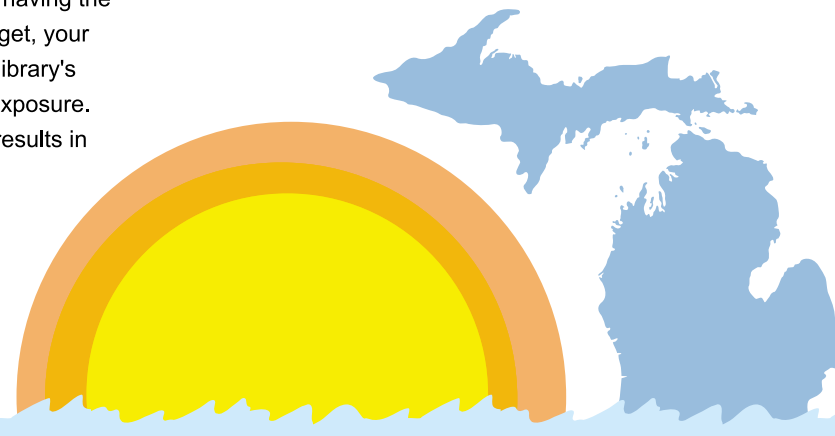
Which Virtual Reference software are you using?
OCLC QuestionPoint software.

How much will it cost to participate?
The collaborative is self-funded with costs divided up between the members depending on the size of your institution's population. Contact MLC for details and a price quote.

How many hours will we need to monitor the virtual reference queues?
Each institution contributes a minimum of 3 hours per week, with larger institutions staffing more hours. Scheduling is coordinated centrally.

Is training provided?
Yes. QuestionPoint has online training modules which are supplemented with training by experienced Research Help Now librarians.

How much local control will we have?
Each Library designates a Manager who makes local decisions and acts as local administrator. Collaborative decisions are made by an Advisory Group with a representative from each member institution.



Who to Contact for More Information

Diana Mitchell
Michigan Library Consortium
Phone: 517-394-2420 x112
Email: mitcheld@mlcnet.org

Sandy McCarthy
Washtenaw Community College
RHN Co-Administrator
Phone: 734-677-5293
Email: mccarthy@wccnet.edu

Ann Walaskay
Oakland Community College
RHN Co-Administrator
Phone: 248-522-3612
Email: aawalask@oaklandcc.edu

Lauri McIntosh
OCLC QuestionPoint Contact
Phone: 866-284-4895
E-mail: lauri_mcintosh@oclc.org

A collaborative is a convenient, cost-effective way to offer Virtual Reference services. Contact the Michigan Library Consortium for more details on cost and joining.

The logo for researchhelpnow, featuring a blue silhouette of the state of Michigan on the left, the text 'researchhelpnow' in a blue sans-serif font in the middle, and a yellow sun rising over a blue horizon line on the right. Below the sun, the text 'MICHIGAN VIRTUAL REFERENCE' is written in a small, blue, all-caps sans-serif font.

What's in it for YOU?

Q & A