

BC Library Trustees' Assoc.

From: BC Library Trustees' Assoc. [admin@bclta.org]
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2006 12:22 PM
To: BCLTA - Library Board Chairs (lib-bd-chairs@interchange.ubc.ca); BCLTA-Liaisons (bclta-liaisons@interchange.ubc.ca)
Subject: BC Virtual Reference Service - August Update

To: Library Board Chairs and BCLTA Liaisons

Please pass along to your boards.

The email note below is an excellent summary of the Virtual Reference Service that will be launched in September. Virtual Reference is one of the initiatives of the provincial government's strategic plan "Libraries without Walls".

Regards,

Maureen Black

Executive Director - BC Library Trustees' Association

----- Original Message -----

From: "Michele Pye" <michepye@vpl.ca>

To: <bcla-list@moon.bcpl.gov.bc.ca>

Cc: "Virtual Reference Committee (PLSB)" <vrcommittee@moon.bcpl.gov.bc.ca>; "Deborah Hutchison" <dhutchison@westvanlib.org>

Sent: Friday, August 04, 2006 11:40 AM

Subject: BC Virtual Reference Service - August Update

The BC Collaborative Virtual Reference Service will build a network of public libraries across BC that connects all British Columbians with the broad array of remotely accessible, web-based information resources available through their local libraries.

When does it Start?

The service will be launched in two phases. September 5th will be the soft (or technical) launch, which will give us a couple of weeks to work out the bugs. The official launch for the public will be September 26th, so mark your calendars!

What Software was Selected?

After an extensive evaluation and RFQ process, a joint team of public and post-secondary library staff selected OCLC's virtual reference software, QuestionPoint. Already used by Douglas College and Vancouver Public Library, QuestionPoint software is used by many collaborative virtual reference services around the world.

Who's on Board?

The response has been great. Forty-six public libraries have signed up to

cover hours on the service - either individually, like Prince George, Salt Spring Island and Lillooet - or collectively, like the North Coast Library Federation. Smaller libraries with insufficient staff to cover hours are on board to promote the service to users - at the reference desk, during programs and on their website.

Can I Still Join? Yes!

And it's not too late to join. Contact Phil Hall at 604-331-4123 or philhall@vpl.ca

What's Happening Now?

We have selected 12 library staff from across the province as Supplementary Staff to cover the hours that libraries can't. Training sessions have taken place in Fort St. John, Kamloops, Kelowna, Victoria, West and North Vancouver and Surrey already. More sessions are underway.

Who Will Tell Users? We All Will!

We are working with a marketing consultant from Bloom Communications and a graphic designer, Stephen Dancey, to craft a communications plan and design promotional materials. Bookmarks, posters, magnets, stickers, etc. will soon be available for libraries to distribute. And, we've tentatively chosen a name for the service - watch for an upcoming announcement!

Are the Post-Secondary Libraries Participating? Yes!

BC post-secondary libraries are collaborating with public libraries to provide virtual reference services to learners across the province: we plan to use the same software and collaborate on training and evaluation. Beginning at the end of September, twenty-one of 27 BC ELN partner libraries will be participating, with an additional 6 coming on board in January.

The fall schedule for the service is currently being finalized, training will begin in late August, and a staff support site will soon be in the works. For questions about this service, please contact Anita Cocchia at anitac@eln.bc.ca or visit the BC ELN Virtual Reference web site at <http://www.eln.bc.ca/view.php?id=1324>.

Remind Me. How Will the Service Work?

* Live chat reference will be available Sunday through Thursday, 10 am - 10 pm, and Friday and Saturday, 10 am - 5 pm.

* Patrons will be able to access live chat seamlessly through their local library's website.

Still Have Questions?

For general information, contact our project managers:

Deb Hutchison

West Vancouver Memorial Library

604-925-7443

dhutchison@westvanlib.org

or

Michele Pye

Vancouver Public Library

604-331-4058

michepye@vpl.ca

For questions about scheduling, staffing or training, contact our coordinator:

Phil Hall
Vancouver Public Library
604-331-4123
philhall@vpl.ca

BCLA is a member of The Partnership,
Canada's national network of provincial and territorial library associations