



DECIDING ON YOUR SERVICE MODEL

Will you “go it alone”?

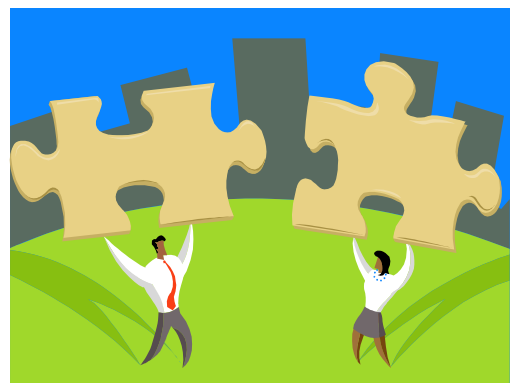
King County Library’s [Ask A Librarian](#) service is an example. The service is staffed by KCLS Answer Line during its normal open hours (over 70 hours per week). After-hours service is provided by contract librarians at Tutor.com.

For your library, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES

Will you form a consortium?

The [Sound Libraries Information Consortium](#) is an example. SLIC provides general and specialized reference services to Puget Sound residents via a shared e-mail and chat reference service. Partners are Seattle Public Library, UW Health Sciences



Library, King County Law Library, Washington State Law Library, and the Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library.

For your library, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES



Will you join an existing consortium?

The Sno-Isle Regional Library joined the 24/7 Reference consortium. Their chat reference service is staffed by Sno-Isle librarians four hours per day, Monday to Friday, with questions forwarded to the 24/7 librarians during all other hours.

For your library, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES



Some resources to help:

[Collaborative Networks](#), a look at the questions to ask and resources available for developing cooperative chat reference services. Compiled by Stephen Francoeur.

[Washington Statewide Virtual Reference Project, Links and Contacts](#), compiled by project director Buff Hirko.

Steve Coffman. *Going Live: Starting and Running a Virtual Reference Service*. ALA Editions, 2003, chapter two—"Getting Started."

[Bernie Sloan's Digital Reference Pages](#), extensive bibliographies of articles, Web sites, case studies, and reports on real-time online reference.