

# COMPETENCIES FOR VIRTUAL REFERENCE

## Initial Skills Assessment

Effective delivery of virtual reference services depends on a range of skills and abilities. Some are basic reference skills, other skills are unique to virtual reference. Circle the number that best indicates your confidence in your current ability to demonstrate each skill. (1 is not confident, 7 is completely confident).

1 = Not Confident

7 = Completely Confident

- 1) Communicate clearly, effectively, and professionally in a chat reference transaction, creating and using pre-scripted messages when appropriate.  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7
- 2) Conduct an effective reference interview in a chat environment, clarifying the patron's question before searching.  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7
- 3) Search the Internet quickly and efficiently, choosing the best starting points for answering the patron's question.  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7
- 4) Effectively search, and demonstrate searching of your library databases. Explain any restrictions or technical problems connected with use of library databases.  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7
- 5) During a virtual reference transaction, assist users in applying critical thinking skills to locating, using, and evaluating information on the Internet.  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7
- 6) Effectively guide a patron through a collaborative browsing session, explaining the search step by step.  
1            2            3            4            5            6            7

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7) Evaluate your own virtual reference transcripts, as well as those of your colleagues, and identify improvement strategies.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

8) Manage multiple windows and quickly use Windows keyboard commands and appropriate shortcuts.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

9) Troubleshoot technical problems and clearly explain technical problems to the patron.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

10) Create and apply reference transaction policies in an online environment (e.g., scope of service, time limits, harassment, etc.).

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

11) Identify resources for continuous upgrading of Web searching skills and improvement of skills in all areas of reference services.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

**Please answer these questions about virtual reference at your library:**

1. Are virtual reference services currently offered at your library?

Yes     No    If yes, which is offered?     E-mail     Chat

2. If your library currently offers chat reference, how long has it been available to library users? \_\_\_\_\_

3. If your library plans to offer chat reference, when is implementation scheduled? \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Library \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_