

CORE COMPETENCIES FOR VIRTUAL REFERENCE

The following were identified by the Washington Statewide VRS Training Committee as critical skills, abilities and aptitudes for staff providing virtual reference.

1. Ability to derive professional satisfaction from virtual reference transactions.
2. Keyboarding proficiency.
3. Online communication skills and etiquette, for chat, e-mail, and other online communication.
4. Ability to conduct an effective reference transaction in online environments, including the creation and use of pre-scripted messages.
5. Internet searching skills, in particular the ability to choose the best starting points for online searches.
6. Ability to effectively search, and demonstrate searching of library databases. Knowledge of licensing restrictions connected with use of library databases.
7. Ability to assist online users in applying critical thinking skills in locating, using, and evaluating information.
8. Ability to effectively conduct a collaborative browsing session with a patron.
9. Evaluation of online reference transactions, and identification of improvement strategies.
10. Multi-tasking and managing multiple windows; effective use of Windows keyboard commands and shortcuts.
11. Technical troubleshooting skills and ability to explain technical problems to facilitate diagnosis and solution.
12. Ability to create and apply reference transaction policies in an online environment.
13. Commitment to continuous learning and motivation to improve skills in all areas of reference services.