Overview

Faculty, staff and students expect to use instant messaging (IM) on high-tech campuses like UM to solve problems and to get immediate responses.

Benefits of IM Service

- Customers are familiar with IM
- Real time conversations are possible
- Your online availability is clearly indicated in customers' contact lists
- Embedded widget provides immediate contact with your web site visitors
- IM apps exist, making communication easy with mobile device users

Staffing Matters

- Match professional knowledge and skill level of staff needed to provide service
- Provide training and documentation
- Anticipate impact on workflows and on work schedules

Can U Help? How to Deliver an Instant Messaging Service to Improve Communication with Your Customers

Comparison of Recommended Tools

	AIM	Meebo	Microsoft Communicator/ Messenger	Velaro
Cost	Free	Free	$	$$
Software Installation	Optional	No	Yes, with client; no with web access	No
Technical Support	No	No	Yes	Yes
Concurrent Staffing	No	No	No	Yes
Widget	Yes (WIMZI)	Yes	No	No, but customizable chat window
Statistics & Reports	No	No	No	Yes
Ease of Use	Easy	Easy	Moderate	Moderate

MLibrary IM Widget

http://www.lib.umich.edu/ask/
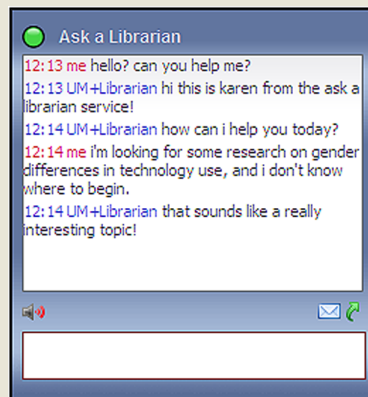
Customer Feedback

"I've never used this help function before, but it is so helpful and efficient!"

"this service is awesome. i've been able to save myself a few unnecessary trips."

"I love the chat... very easy and convenient."

Best Practices & Tips

- Adopt a service goal of answering rather than redirecting inquiries
- Communicate unit-appropriate ethical guidelines to staff (e.g. confidentiality)
- Capture types and frequency of questions for service evaluation
- Provide FAQs or web site content based on questions
- Keep training resources accessible and up-to-date
- Publicize to target customers

Our Ongoing Success

- Reach customers at point of need, regardless of location
- Provide an alternative to email for the growing number of customers who prefer IM
- Support skyrocketing service volume – up 350% since 2006
- Frequently receive highly positive feedback

Contact Information

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