

Virtual Reference Adventure: Choose Your Own Experience

Here's a "what if" scenario to think about as you plan the marketing for your chat reference service.

WHAT IF usage of your chat service falls off six months after a major marketing effort?

Your library's chat reference service was widely promoted in April. Radio public service announcements, bookmarks, posters, and bus banners were used, with immediate increase in usage as a result. The number of new chat users more than doubled during the promotion period and use remained high throughout the month of May. However, after this spike, usage has steadily declined until six months later it is back to pre-promotion levels. Although creative and effective, this initial marketing effort was not part of a long-range marketing plan.

What can your library do to develop a comprehensive, long-range marketing plan?

What can you learn from the initial promotional efforts?

Here are some resources that may help:

Olson, Chris. "Marketing Treasures Newsletter," monthly online publication available at <http://www.chrisolson.com/marketingtreasures/>

"Marketing the Library," Ohio Library Council, 2002-2005. A complete set of tools available at <http://www.olc.org/marketing/>

"Marketing," WebJunction. A wide variety of links at <http://webjunction.org/do/Navigation?category=393>