

IMPROVING A LIBRARY FAQ: Assessment and Reflection of the First Year's Use

Vanessa Arce, Head of Reference
Michelle Ehrenpreis, Electronic Resources Librarian



LEHMAN
COLLEGE

CU
NY

BACKGROUND

In 2020, the Leonard Lief Library used Springshare's LibAnswers to create a searchable online knowledge base (FAQs) as a complement to virtual reference and an instructional support to students during the library's pandemic-related closure.



QUESTIONS

- What type of information are users seeking in the FAQs?
- Are users finding the information they seek?
- How can the knowledge base be improved?



METHODS

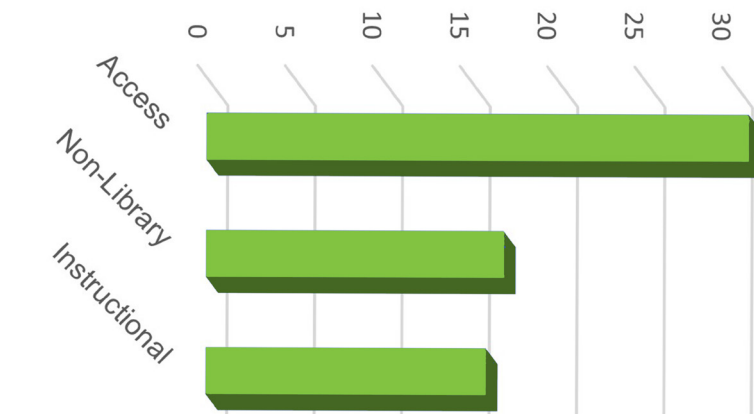
Conducted content analysis of user queries from the online FAQs site during fall 2020 and spring 2021 to learn about the information users are seeking in the knowledge base.

106 queries were coded into ten categories.

Examined the actions taken by users after conducting a search within the FAQs page. Queries that resulted on clicking on a question were considered successful, those that did not were deemed unsuccessful.

FINDINGS

- 49% success rate
- Found unsuccessful queries that had a Q&A pair that would have been a match but were not selected
- Top three query categories



CONCLUSIONS

- Dominance of queries related to access not surprising due to pandemic closure
- Prevalence of non-library category suggests perception of academic library as a source of campus information
- Confirmed potential of FAQ as an instructional tool

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

- Improve discoverability of individual FAQs by including terminology used by users
- Creation of categories will facilitate long-term management of knowledge base - FAQs will be assigned to library departments for maintenance based on categories
- Include information about campus resources and services in the library FAQs