

# Establishing a Virtual Reference Desk for Japanese Studies

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# Outline of Today's Presentation

2. History
3. Advantages
4. Concerns
5. What is digital reference services and virtual reference desk (VRD)?
6. Example: What is happening in science and technology publications in general?
7. Library of Congress's role
8. Status of Japanese reference activities
9. What should we do?

# History:

## Changes in recording information

Information was written on:

2. Stones

3. Papers: Scrolls/Books/Newspapers

4. Cyberspace

Digital projects classical materials

Born digital/digital publication

# History:

## Changes in reference sources

- |                            |                                     |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Monographs              | 1. E-book                           |
| 2. Serials                 | 2. E-journals                       |
| 3. Government publications | 3. Virtual white papers and reports |
| 4. dissertations           | 4. On-line dissertation             |
| 5. Newspaper articles      | 5. On-line news                     |

**Databases are now key access points!**

# What are advantages?

1. Saving storage space
2. Accessibility (geographical and time)
3. Cost?

# What are the concerns?

1. Preservation of digital resources?
2. Hardware issues--limited access?

# What are “Digital Reference Services” and VRD?

Digital reference services are Internet-based question-and-answer services that connect users with experts and subject expertise. Digital reference services use the Internet to connect *people with people* who can answer questions and support the development of skills. Points of these activities are called “Virtual Reference Desk” (VRD).

<http://www.vrd.org/about.shtml>

# Methods for Digital Reference are...

1. Ask a librarian

2. Chat reference

(simultaneous connection to the web for  
the librarians and clients)



# Example: What is happening in science and technology publications?

More and more major  
journal articles  
became available  
online

Born-digital/online journal  
gained impact value

# The Library of Congress's Roles in This Change

1. Applications
2. Preservation
3. Development

# Applications

Establishing virtual reference desk  
(American Memory, Reading Rooms)

<http://www.loc.gov>

# Preservation

Collecting and preserving digitalized information

Digital Collection Program

<http://www.loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html>

Digital Preservation Program

<http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/index.html>

# Developments

- Provide funding to develop new tools and methods for digital references
- In-house education and research

# Status of Japanese Reference Activities

1. Digitalization projects
2. Japanese database developments
3. Availability/accessibility of Japanese digital resources
4. Setting up the Virtual Reference Desk (VRD) for Japanese Reference?

“Ask EASL”

# Ask An East Asian Studies Li

*A "virtual reference desk" for East Asian Studies, specially designed for isolated faculty and librarians; a joint project of the NCC and CEAL.*

<http://askeasl.askvrd.org/>

# What should we (DRC or Japanese Reference Specialists) do?

1. Negotiating better access to Japanese databases “Basic Guideline and Requirements for Venders of Japanese Digital Resources in North American Library and Scholarly Community” (DRC website)
2. Organize meetings for Japanese database venders and librarians/information specialists in Japan and elsewhere (9/1/06)
3. Database workshops/improve “Ask EASL”?