

# The digital Reference Service

## An essential element of the virtual library

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# Summary

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- Objectives
- Methods and materials
- Results
- Conclusions
- Recommendations

# Objectives

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Our two main objectives are:

- Survey the current status of the Reference Services in the major Spanish Virtual Health Libraries.
- Analyze the used tools and the services provided by these Virtual Libraries.

# Regional Virtual Libraries in Spain



# Methods and Materials

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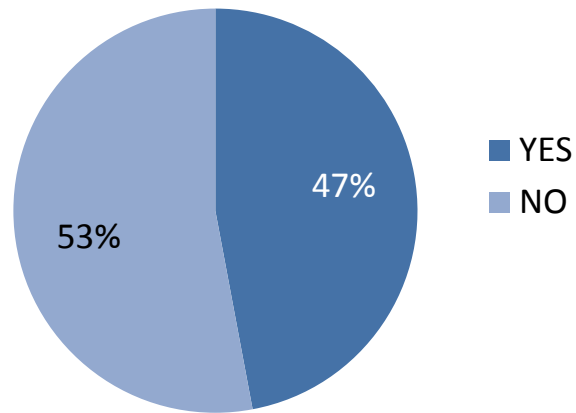
- Study of the regional virtual health libraries websites to verify the access to the resources, services, availability, etc.
- In addition, questionnaires were sent to the library managers of the main virtual libraries in Spain in order to complete the information

- Questionnaire was sent to 19 organizations: the main regional virtual health libraries + BNCS
- We received information from almost 60% of the libraries.
- Data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

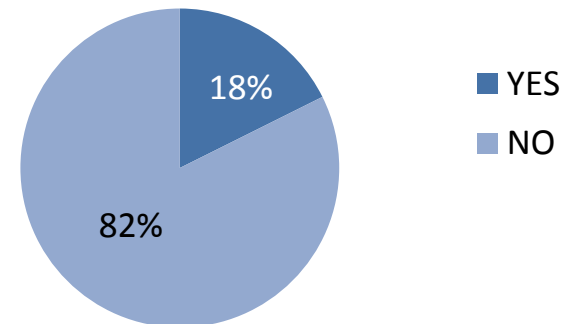


# Results obtained from the web sites analysis

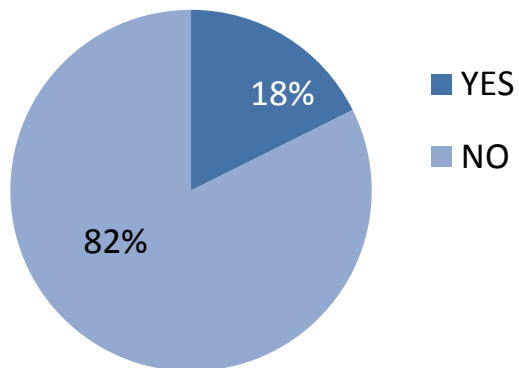
Contact by e-mail/form



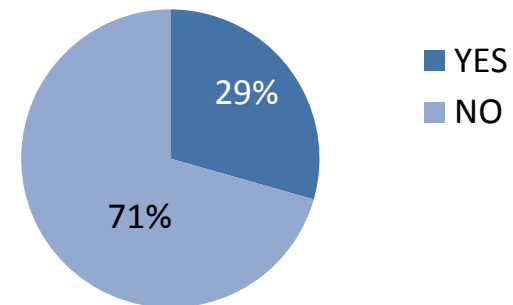
Specific Requests by e-mail/contact form



Authentication required to access resources or contact

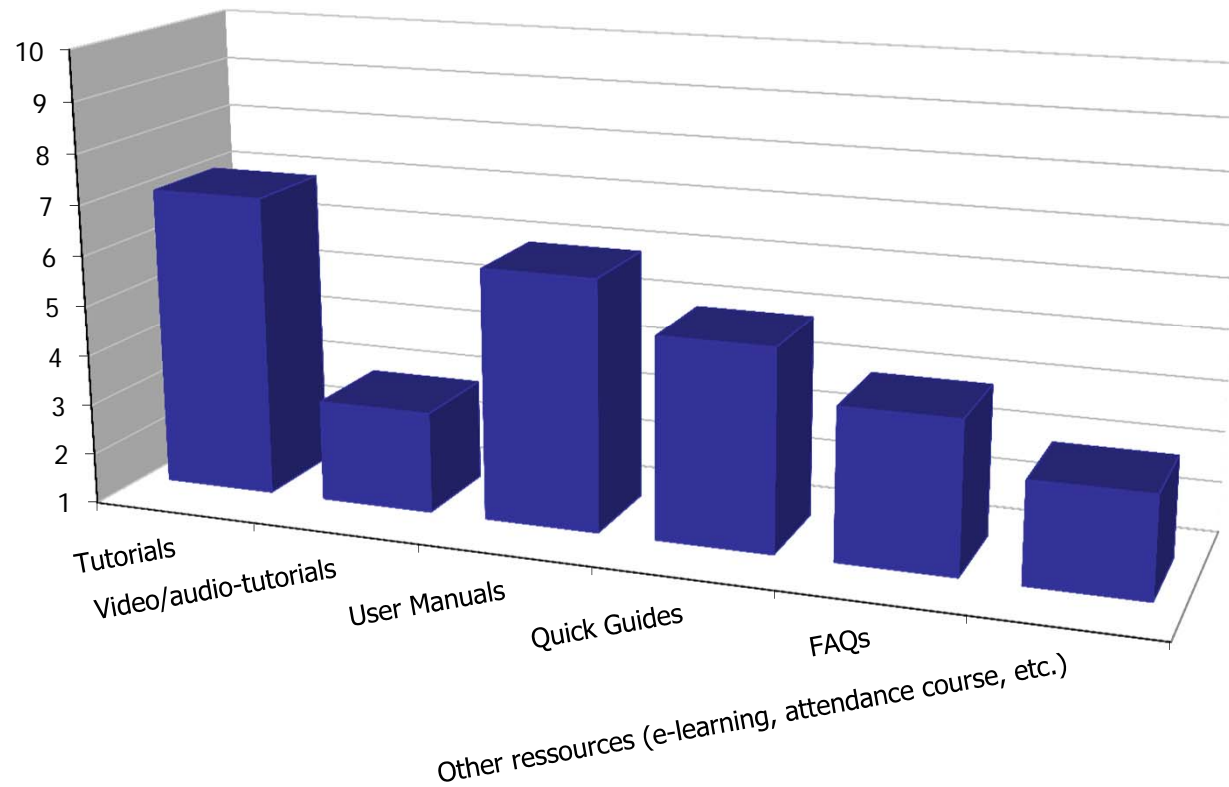


FAQ's section



# Survey results: Resources for the users

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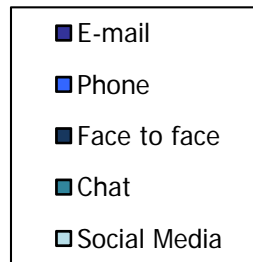
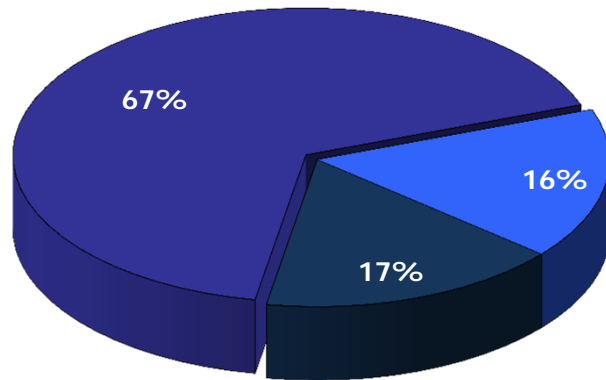




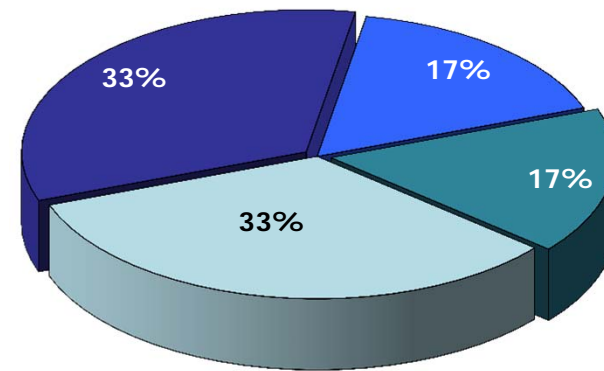
# Survey results: Users tools to make questions

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## Traditional Reference Service

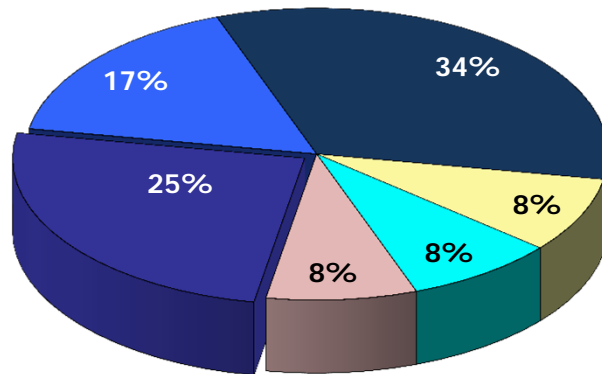


## Structured Reference Service

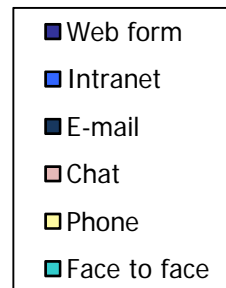
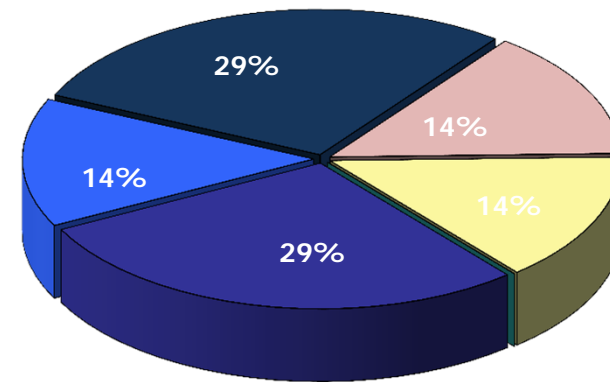


# Survey results: Librarian tools to answer

## Traditional Reference Service



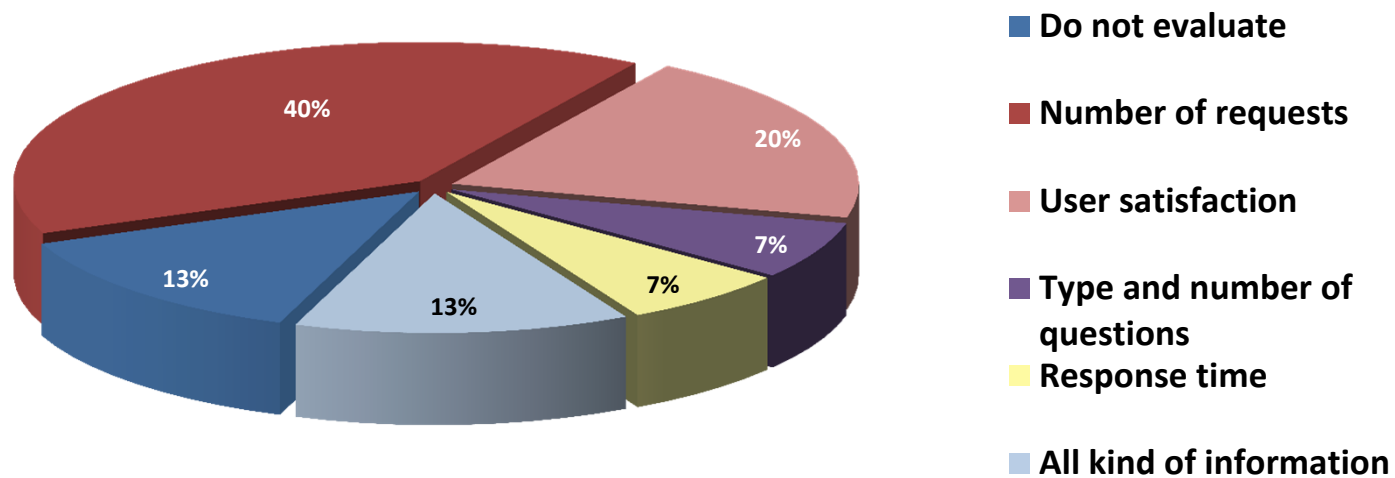
## Structured Reference Service



# Survey results: Evaluation

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## What do libraries evaluate?



## Other results

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- Only one region has a specific budget for the Reference Service
- Only 2 use specific software, both free software (one of them pointed out that they use HESK, a helpdesk free software, not specific for libraries)
- The data treatment is very different: no storage of the dates to the storage of all transactions and conversations.
- No uniformity either in the time of data storage and monitoring of the data protection policies.

# Conclusions

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- The **development of an independent Reference Service** in the Spanish Regional Virtual Libraries **is quite uneven**
- Nevertheless all of them **have focused their efforts on providing other services**, such as the remote access of electronic resources (databases, publications) to all users from any computer connected to the web
- The **Reference Librarian profile** is not really developed
- **Reference Service is mostly still developing**, although big advances are being made by regions such as Andalusia, Balearic Islands or Galicia, which are pioneers in the implementation of this kind of service.

# Recommendations

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- The introduction of a digitalized Reference Service in a virtual library would be essential in order to centralize the work done by librarians
- Evaluation should be done, in order to better quantify the library work
- A Virtual and structured Reference Service could have a marked positive effect on user satisfaction

The results show that **there is still a lot of work to do** in the Regional Virtual Libraries in Spain

# Acknowledgements

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**Thank you for your attention!**

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