

# Platform Comparison Report

The attached Chat Reference Comparison checklist uses the features in the demonstration checklist to compare features of each vendor reviewed, Altarama, Springshare's LibChat, LibraryH3lp, and OCLC's QuestionPoint. Altarama uses LibraryH3lp as a basis for their service so there are many similarities in functionality.

## ***Third Party Staffing, Texting, and Knowledge Bases***

If third party staffing for 24/7 chat service is a focus going forward, it is important to note that at this time LibChat does not partner with a third party to provide 24/7 coverage. The other three do work with vendors to provide this type of service. Another feature not supported by all vendors is SMS text service, only QuestionPoint does not offer this as part of their platform but it does work with Mosio or Upside Wireless to provide texting capabilities. The knowledge base function works differently in each platform but some kind of knowledge base is available in all four, although for LibChat and Altarama that could require an additional product. Proactive chat is available in all but QuestionPoint. LibChat offers more options than the other platforms for scheduling and queue management and provides very detailed usage information.

## ***Customization available at both the Consortium and Individual Library Level***

Both LibraryH3lp and LibChat appear to be more easily customizable for individual libraries in the consortium. Both have canned message(s) availability in the system but only LibChat provides the ability for customization of canned messages also at the individual operator level. The actual customization and creation of the chat box interface is more easily made in LibChat verses LibraryH3lp.

## ***Chat interface***

All systems have the ability to transfer between and among operators within the individual library system. LibraryH3lp has an optional google voice mail setup that can be activated and used for when chat is off, allowing patrons to leave a voicemail. LibChat simply switches to an email address when offline.

LibChat can be customized to have the chat interface pop up on a site page when a patron has been on a site page for a certain amount of time.

## **Survey Feedback:**

*QuestionPoint: too complicated*

- it might be too complex for smaller academic libraries.
- I think it may offer too much for what my library needs

*Altarama: a con that Reftracker is separate product*

- I gather Reftracker must be a separate purchase. Apparently that is the only way to get a knowledge base or question bank.
- I did not like the fact that RefTracker is a separate product.

*LibraryH3lp: know product, easy to use*

- We have worked with libraryh3lp since Meebo died. We have been pleased with the product and the service.
- SLU already uses LibraryH3lp and have used it for several years. We love it because it is so easy to use.
- Product seems intuitive and easy to use.
- We currently use Libraryh3lp, for 2 years now.
- I have heard only positive comments about LibraryH3lp. We just activated our 90-day trial

*LibChat: Chat integration with LibAnswers*

- It is good as a chat reference system if it indeed could be purchased separately but its real power is as an integrated part of LibAnswers
- I thought how the messages can be turned into a LibAnswer was helpful as well.
- easy to use.