

Digital Reference Services of University Libraries in Japan

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Introduction: What are DRS?

- DRS: Digital Reference Services
- DRS have variable definitions and guidelines
- DRS are deeply concern with digital library
- It's not long since DRS were established

Introduction: Terms of DRS

IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines refer to Virtual Reference Canada:

[<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s36/pubs/drg03.htm>]

“The terms "virtual reference," "digital reference," "e-reference," "Internet information services," "live reference" and "real-time reference" are used interchangeably to describe reference services that utilize computer technology in some way. Whether it is email reference, chat reference or an automated routing system, as is the case with Virtual Reference Canada, virtual reference is significantly influencing the delivery of high-quality library services.”

[<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/vrc-rvc/s34-150-e.html>]

Introduction: Definitions of DRS

ALA Guidelines for Implementing and Maintaining Virtual Reference Services

1. Definition of Virtual Reference

- 1.1 Virtual reference is reference service initiated electronically, often in real-time, where patrons employ computers or other Internet technology to communicate with reference staff, without being physically present. Communication channels used frequently in virtual reference include chat, videoconferencing, Voice over IP, co-browsing, e-mail, and instant messaging.
- 1.2 While online sources are often utilized in provision of virtual reference, use of electronic sources in seeking answers is not of itself virtual reference.
- 1.3 Virtual reference queries are sometimes followed-up with telephone, fax, in-person and regular mail interactions, even though these modes of communication are not considered virtual.

[<http://www.ala.org/ala/rusa/rusaprotools/referenceguide/virtrefguidelines.htm>]

Introduction: Definitions of DRS

Virtual Reference Desk

“What is Digital Reference?

Digital reference, or "AskA", 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. “

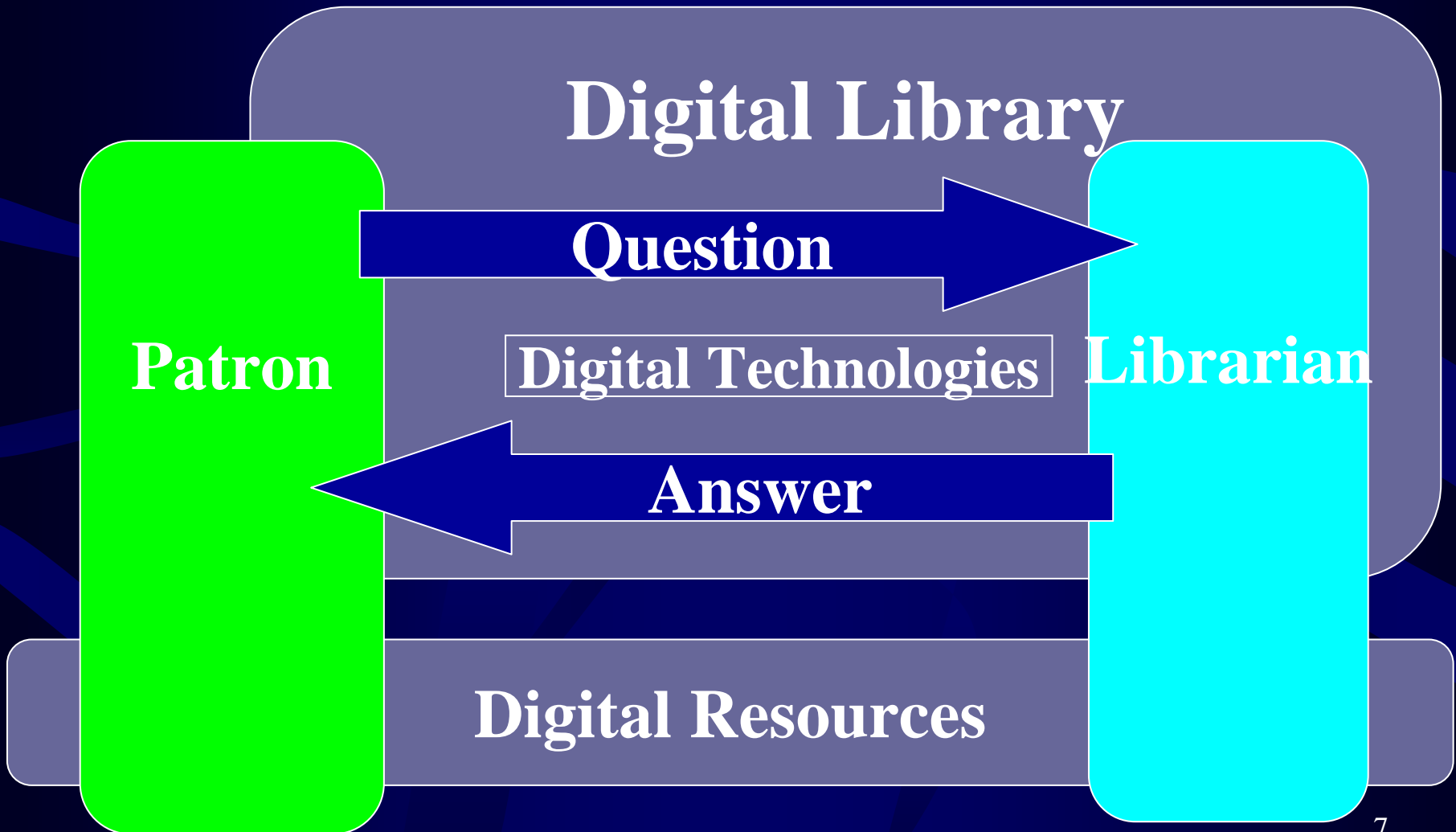
[<http://www.vrd.org/about.shtml>]

Introduction: Concern with Digital Library

“(digital reference) development has been in large part parallel to digital library research and development.”

[Lankes, R. and David. Shostack , Pauline. “The necessity of real-time: fact and fiction in digital reference systems,” *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 41(4), p.350-355, 2002.]

Introduction: Figure of DRS



Introduction: Role of DRS

“The new phrase “digital reference” encompasses two old ideas: that one of the primary professional functions of a library and its staff is to help people find information, and that libraries and librarians should take advantage of new technologies to aid them in their work.”

[Janes, Joseph. and Carter, David. and Memmott, Patricia.
“Digital Reference Services in Academic Libraries.”
Reference & User Services Quarterly 39(2), p.145-150,
1999.]

Introduction: History of DRS

- 1984 first e-mail reference were reported
- **** Grew up with spread of Internet
- 1995 IPL (Internet Public Library)
- 1999 CDRS (Collaborative Digital Reference Services)
- 2002 QuestionPoint
- 2003 IFLA Digital Reference Guidelines

Introduction: Famous DRS

- QuestionPoint
- 24/7 Reference
- Internet Public Library
- Virtual Reference Desk
- Educator's Reference Desk

Introduction: DRS in Japan

- Collaborative Reference Database Project
(National Diet Library of Japan)

<http://www.ndl.go.jp/jp/library/collabo-ref.html>

Introduction: DRS in Library of University

- Function of active support for education and research in university
- DRS are important as intermediately services in digital and hybrid library

Introduction: Purposes of Search

- Importance of DRS were recognized, however, there were not reported DRS in Japanese university's library
- What changes has brought about in reference services by the use of digital technology?

Introduction: Purposes of Search

- Search for state of affairs of DRS in Japanese university library:
- What kind of DRS were supplying?
- How much of DRS were supplying?
- What do librarians think about DRS?

Methods: Questionnaires

Questionnaires were made by based on following Janes's research and preparation search

[Janes, Joseph. Digital Reference: Reference Librarians' Experiences and Attitudes. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*. 53(7), p.549-566, 2002.]

Methods: Questionnaires

- Entire questions were 22
 - Part A: DRS as ways of receiving and answering reference questions. (12 questions)
 - Part B: DRS as information and reference resources. (3 questions)
 - Part C: Profile of librarians. (7 questions)

Methods: Samples

- Librarians in Japanese University
 - All National Universities
 - Large size Public, Private Universities
(that hold 5 or more departments)

Methods: Survey

- Questionnaires were sent to 1,013 librarians in 301 libraries on July 30, 2003.
 - 412 papers were returned
 - Return rate was 40.7%

Results: Detailed return rate

Foundation Departments	National	Public	Private	Total
8 or more	40.9%	0.0%	52.8%	45.3%
5-7	44.2%	26.1%	36.1%	37.1%
2-4	35.3%	-	-	35.3%
1	45.7%	-	-	45.7%
Total	41.4%	23.5%	41.7%	40.7%

(n=1,013)

Results: Part A

- 66.7% of librarians used for digital technologies to receiving and answering reference questions (n=412)

Results: Part A

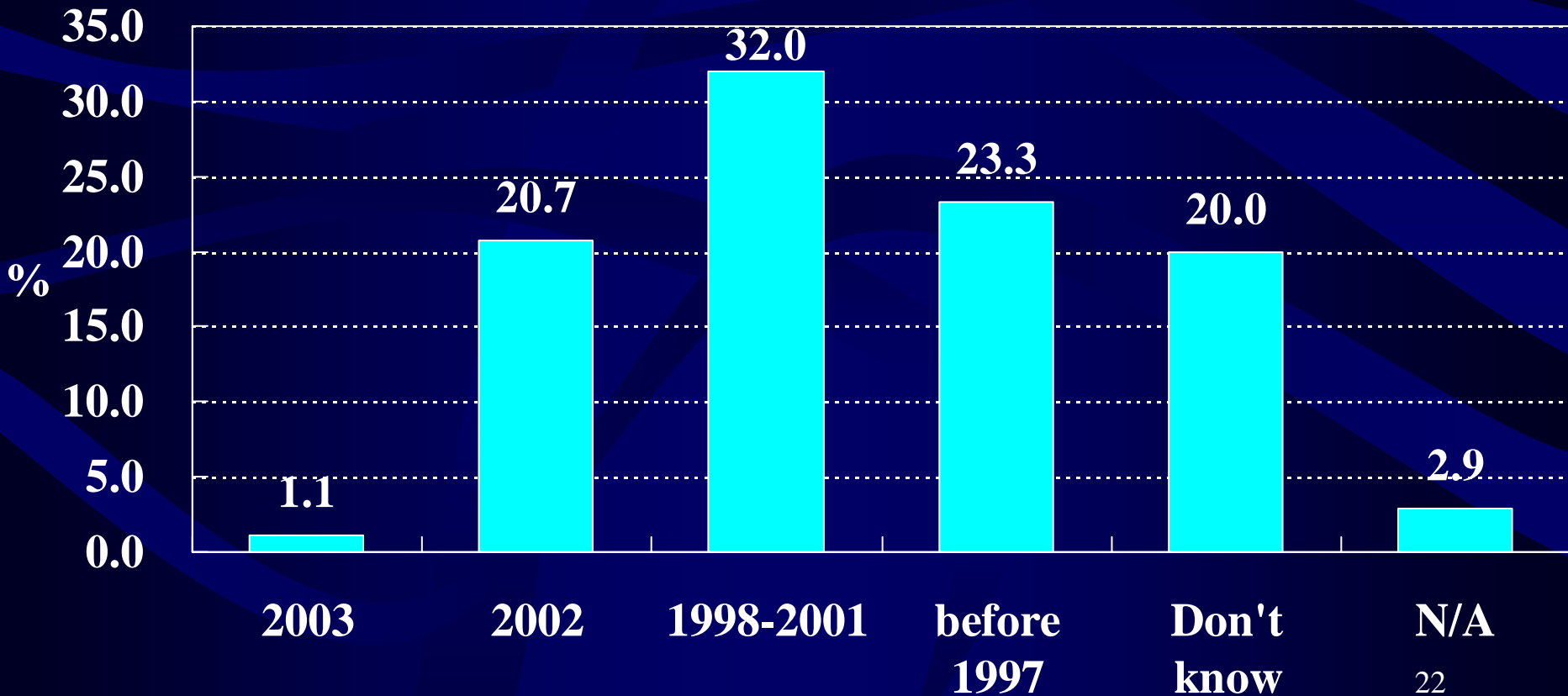
Type of tools to use reference works (n=275)

Tools	%
E-mail	68.6
Web form	22.5
Chat	0.8
Video conference, TV telephone	1.1
Bulletin Board System (BBS)	6.4
Others	0.6

91.1%

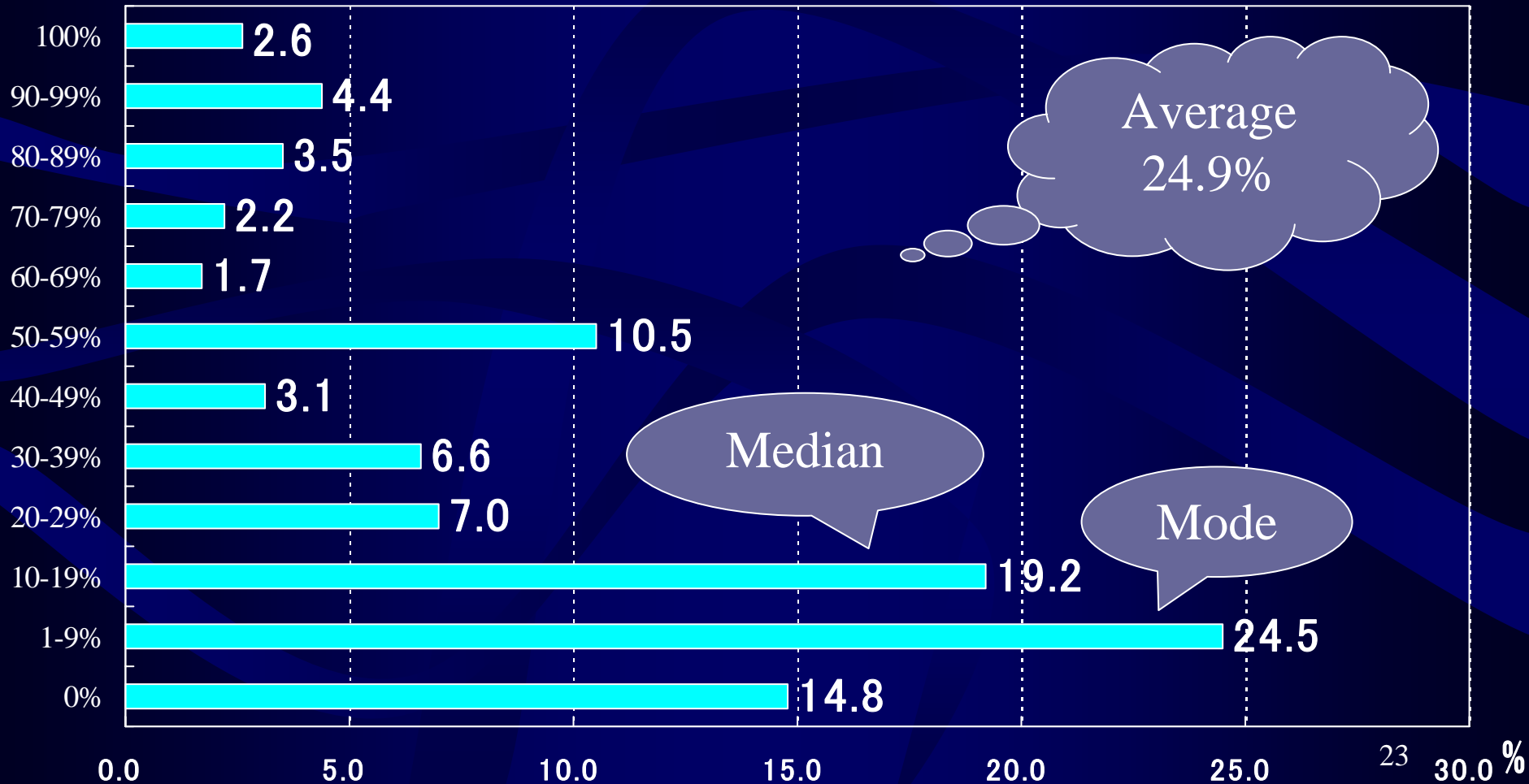
Results: Part A

Year of DRS were started (n=275)



Results: Part A

The ratio of DRS in reference works (n=229)



Results: Part A

Would DRS were getting better to reference works (n=275)

Kind \ (%)	Agree	Disagree	No change	Don't know	N/A
Quick reference	50.9	12.4	26.9	7.6	2.2
Research reference	70.9	1.8	20.0	6.2	1.1

Results: Part A

- 81.8% of librarians stated that reference works were changed by use the digital technologies (n=275)

Results: Part A

What kind of changes were brought about reference works by use the digital technologies? (n=225)

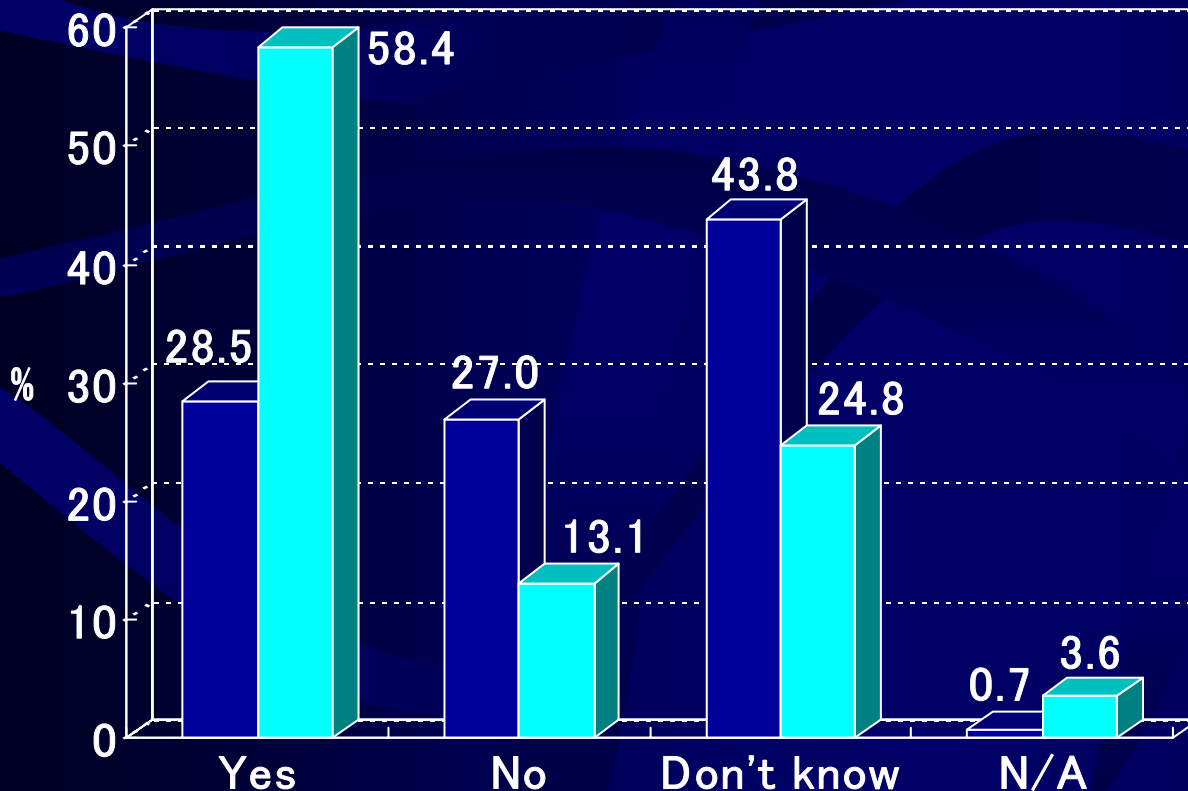
Kind of changes (%)	Agree	Disagree	No change	Don't know
Questions were more difficult	16.9	75.1	5.3	2.7
More times were needed to answering questions	20.0	74.2	3.6	2.2
Less costs were needed to reference works	39.1	42.7	14.2	4.0
More convenience for patrons	96.9	0.9	1.3	0.9

Results: Part A

- 33.3% librarians answered that they were not supplying DRS (n=412)
 - Did their library have a plan for supplying DRS in future?
 - Did they want supplying DRS in future?

Results: Part A

Comparison with plans and hopes of supplying DRS (n=137)



- Do your library has a plan for supplying DRS in future?
- Do you want supplying DRS in future?

Results: Part B

- 96.5% of librarians were supplied digitally resources for patron (n=412)

Results: Part B

Resources of used for reference works (n=412)

Resources	%
OPAC (contained other libraries)	45.0
Digital resources: network	32.8
Paper resources	8.0
Human resources	6.9
Digital resources: package	6.8
Others	0.5

77.8%

Results: Part C

- Working forms (n=412)
 - Full time 89.8%
 - Part time 8.7%
 - N/A 1.5%
- Only reference works or not (n=412)
 - Only reference works 22.3%
 - Reference and other works 74.8%
 - N/A 2.9%

Results: Part C

- They were working as librarian (n=397)
 - Average: 12 years and 11 months
 - Only reference works:
1 year and 0.1 months
 - Reference and other works:
4 years and 2.7 months

Results: Part C

Subjects of reference services (n=412)

Subjects \ Rank (%)	1st	2nd	3rd	total
Science and Engineering	23.0	42.1	24.3	28.3
Human and Social Science	50.6	27.3	20.9	39.5
Medicine and Pharmacy	19.2	26.8	53.9	27.0
Others	7.1	3.8	0.9	5.2

*Choose to three, N/A were omitted

Summary and Conclusions

- Those are found that
 - reference librarians who only reference works were fewer
 - many librarians think that DRS are useful and agreeable
 - most of DRS were using e-mail and web form
- DRS already come into wide use, and more growth with development of digital library

Summary and Conclusions

- The future direction of this study
 - This study take up the side of amount of DRS
 - The study of quality of DRS are needed

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