Best Practices and Topics List for Wayne FAQs

Considerations for FAQ Creation

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Things Every FAQ Needs

1. **A question.** Don't phrase the entry as a title, rather phrase it as a question a patron might ask.

2. **A concise and readable answer.** Keep it short, break up the text, and avoid jargon.

3. **Links and media:** When possible, add links either in-text or in the link box as well as embed videos or other media, especially from [Wayne State's official YouTube channel.](#)

4. **Keywords:** Think of keywords as **single** words or phrases that a user might use to search for the question that are not included in the question itself. These could be synonyms, alternate spellings, nicknames, abbreviations, etc. **Make** keywords single words or short phrases, avoiding putting strings of words together that would not be searched together.

5. **An owner.** Owners are responsible for the upkeep of their FAQs, and should review them about twice a year.

6. **Proper formatting:** FAQs should use the default font and default size for text.

   Headers can be used as well; the suggested size is 3.

Topic List and Definitions

Library Electronic Resources

Library E-Resources includes questions pertaining to any library e-resource and how it can be accessed, if it is available, where to find it, and more. Library E-Resources is not meant to encompass all resources or services at the library, but only those available online. Questions found here may be cross listed.

Onsite Services and Resources

Questions contained in this topic should cover any available services (such as the writing center, tutoring, etc.) and resources (physical books, microfilm, etc.) found within the library. If there is a more appropriate place for the question such as circulation/borrowing or another topic, the question should be placed there. Questions found here may be cross listed.

Research Help

This topic is focused on help for basic research questions. Questions on citations, finding different types of articles, the research process, or questions specific to any one class go here.

Inclusivity, Equity, and Accessibility

Refers to any questions asking about the accessibility of the libraries, accessibility services, gender-neutral restrooms, or any other services or aspects of the library that would allow equitable use of library spaces, materials, and services by any person.

Access to Library Services and Resources

Includes any questions about how to access general library services. For questions about library access, use of resources in-person and remotely, access issues, and more. Unlike in-person resources and services and library e-resources, this topic only covers questions about *access* to or the availability of services or resources for patrons, not about the services themselves. Questions placed here will often be cross listed.

Technology Services and Help

For questions related to the availability of technology, technology assistance and use, printing, computers in the libraries, the tech bunker, and anything else related to library technology services or support.

Circulation/Borrowing and Returns

For all questions regarding the checking in/out of library materials, availability of materials, borrowing issues and concerns, due dates, fines, and more.

Interlibrary Services

For any questions about interlibrary loan, MeLCat, or any other kind of interlibrary service or resources. Also includes information on resources available through the research corridor or other partnerships.

Library Policies

Regards all official library policy such as proper conduct, questions of permitted use, and any other policy related questions. In the Internal FAQ, includes questions about staff-related issues or concerns that do not fit in any other category, such as technology services and help.

Reuther Library and Archives

For questions specifically relating to the Reuther Library.

Shiffman Medical Library

For questions specifically relating to the Shiffman Medical Library.

Special Collections

For questions specifically relating to the Special Collections.

Neef Law Library

For questions specifically relating to the Neef Law Library.

Non-Library/University Questions

For questions about class scheduling, wayfinding to university locations, or other general questions about the university that do not directly apply to the library. For internal FAQ use only.

Guidelines for Text and Readability

FAQs are created mainly for a public audience, and therefore readability is key in any new FAQ entry. **Some things to remember are:**

- Users will have a **short attention span and skim text.**

- Catch the user in the first few words. Think like a journalist and **put the conclusion or quick answer at the top.** In the first few words, try to hook the user. Remember that you're writing for a broad audience.

- **Write conversationally**, mirror how you would talk to a patron in person; use active voice, personal pronouns, and contractions.

- **Use common terms**. Try to avoid jargon and define any you do use. For example, don't say circulation or ILL; say borrowing or borrowing from other libraries. Simpler word choice makes reading faster and easier.

- **Use** consistent punctuation, capitalization, and spacing.

- **Start with a condition,** for example: "If you have not done x" then follow with what they need to know.

- **Use imperatives or commands** to tell them what to do, "go, scroll, click, log in".

- **Use parallelism**: if you are a member of "blank", and if you are not a member of "blank, do x". Can make information easier to digest.

FAQ Formatting

- **Use horizontal lines** to separate sections of the FAQ- allows better section identification. This can be done right in the text editor.

- **Special containers** can surround the text in a shaded box and allow important information to be pointed out. You can also use HTML to change the background color.

- **Take advantage of lists**! Use unordered lists for key points and ordered lists for steps or directions, allowing quick skimming. Instead of writing a paragraph about what peer-reviewed articles are, make a list of their qualities.

- Use **bullet points** to break up information. Ideal for unordered lists. For step-by-step instructions, use **numbered lists** instead.

Headings can help introduce different sections of text and make your FAQ easier to navigate. Use heading three and remain consistent.

Using Images

- Use images that **reinforce the text**, such as screenshots that visualize instructions. Be careful with adding too many images, however, as it can slow loading the page. They're also less useful to those with visual impairments, and harder to skim.

- **Alt text** should be added to images. Meaningful and descriptive alt text added to an image helps screen readers. Keep it accurate and succinct. Alt text is not needed if the surrounding text describes the image. But is very important for images with text and/or images that link to other places.

- Make images **less than one megabyte**, if possible.

- **What value** does the image add? Avoid adding images only for aesthetics. They should help explain or convey your answer.

Using Links

- **Set Links to open in the same browser.** Otherwise, it can be disorienting for users that are using screen readers and don't know how to get back.

- **Use multiple words**, two or more, to create a link. Link in the text.

- **Consider making anchors** to link to other sections within your FAQ answer, especially if the answer is very long.

- **If you add a ticket as an FAQ,** edit them before publishing! Check formatting, word choice, spelling, etc. Needs to be reformatted as an FAQ, since it's no longer a reference question.

Using Keywords

- **For Keywords,** think of abbreviations for services or locations, common synonyms, plural versions of words, misspellings, or words that are not present in the question that might be used to search for the FAQ.

- **Keywords will not show up in the FAQ** on the user side. They are only used to improve searching so use as many as you like.

- **Always** assign keywords to topics.

- Keywords **cannot be duplicated.** So, don't worry about creating keyword duplicates. If one already exists, your FAQ will automatically use it instead of making a new one.

Tips for Accessibility

- **Use proper markup:** Headings should use the heading text, size 3 works well. Lists that are ordered should use numbers and keep the automatic spacing so screen readers recognize the list. Use **Bold** or **Italicized** text as these have HTML markups, **underlined text does not.**

- **Links can go directly in the text or be placed at the bottom.** The Purpose of each link should be understood by the link text and its context.

- **Embedded content** can help support multiple learning styles.

- **Color should not be the sole method to convey content or distinguish links.** Regular text should have a 4.5:1 contrast ratio with background color, large text should have a 3:1 contrast.

- **Explore** the WCAG 2.1 Quick Reference for improvements to web accessibility.

- **Consider** this PDF Techniques guide. It has guides for performing various actions such as providing alt text for images or hiding decorative images from screen readers.

- **Use the** Colorblindly Chrome Extension to view FAQs through different types of color blindness if you have used images.

- WebAIM **Link Contrast Checker** tests link, text, and background colors to see if they meet accessibility guidelines.

- WAVE has different tools such as an **accessibility checker** that you can use.

- Alt text decision tree can **help decide if/what alt text is needed.**

Additional Resources

- [Springshare Best Practices for FAQs Training Video](#)
- [Springshare Accessibility for FAQs Training Video](#)
- [Springshare Embed Chat and Add FAQS Anywhere Training Video](#)
- [Springshare Libanswers Hiding Parts of an FAQ](#)