"Are Reference Desks Dying Out?" by Scott Carlson

Diverging visions for reference services

Face to face  Versus  Virtual

According to the ARL since the advent of the Internet traffic reference desks has dropped as much as 48 percent since 1991.

Face to face  Virtual reference

Establish relationship with users  Strengthen the virtual reference

E-mail
Instant messages
Social Networking tools
Social blogs
Wireless paging devices
Mobile technologies
With a laptop and a wireless connection a librarian sits a table at a popular coffee shop and invites students to drop by for help.

Web based tools that allow co-browsing in which a reference librarian can take control of the Web browser on a patron’s home computer and guide her or him to various Web sites or resources
What does this source suggest to us about the environment or opportunities for the user services that ULS is offering or could offer to the communities it serves?

- *We have a very solid reference service*
- *We need to expand, diversify and strengthen the virtual reference service*

Given this environment or opportunities, what does the ULS have to do to be successful?

- *Identify, select and experiment with the emerging technologies that could be useful for virtual reference*