

Summary of NJLA Reference Section JerseyClicks Forums

Several weeks ago I was approached by the NJ State Library to conduct these forums in response to their reevaluation of the JerseyClicks portal. The information gathered from these meetings will help the state library with this process. A summary of the forums follows.

The responses generally fell into five categories.

First, there was almost unanimous agreement that the concept of providing uniform access to state purchased resources is a worthy pursuit. The content of the JerseyClicks portal was regarded as satisfactory; although many suggested that a genealogical database would be a good addition. ReferenceUSA was the favorite database in JerseyClicks and would be the most missed if NJKI were not funded in the future.

Second, many librarians are not regular JerseyClicks users and don't direct their customers there either. Librarians tend to go to their library homepage and use the databases there.

Third, JerseyClicks is described as being "clunky" and hard to use. It is intimidating and would benefit from a tutorial as well as sample searches.

Fourth, some reorganization is necessary. Some felt the quick search page should be eliminated, making the advanced search screen the default. It would be easier to choose from a selection of databases rather than do a quick search which searches *all* the databases. The results can be overwhelming to the general public. An alphabetical listing of databases with descriptions of each would be helpful. Listing subject categories to search but not individual databases would make it more user friendly.

There was a suggestion to have a statewide team control JerseyClicks. Some questioned the need for the portal and whether having the information on the State Library webpage, as many libraries do with their databases, would be a better and less costly solution. The team suggested above could then maintain this.

Lastly, it was also suggested that the state provide more marketing for the product and additional training for librarians.

The committee charged with reevaluating JerseyClicks is moving forward and will use the information provided from these forums to help make a decision as to the future of JerseyClicks.