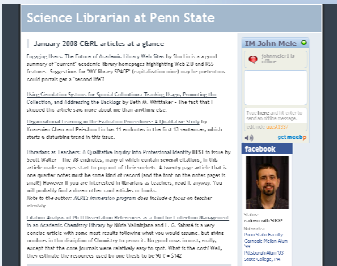


# Instant Help : Creative Approaches to Chat Reference

John Meier, Science Librarian and Acting Head  
PAMS Library, University Libraries at Penn State

## Embedded Widgets



Screenshot of my blog

## Personal Account



Meebo™ me widget

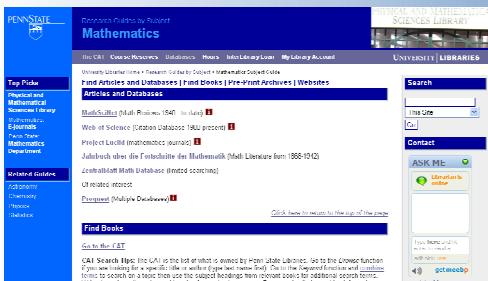
**Science Librarian example:**  
A personal account widget on research guides  
**Frequency?** "one or two a week - maybe clustered around assignments"  
**Science/subject related?** "they all were... students in the classes I taught, or grad students (a couple of faculty) in the departments."  
**Problem?** "staffing them... I don't think they are useful if the librarian is always "offline".  
- Helen Smith, Agricultural Science Librarian

**Science Library example:**  
A shared account widget linked from the homepage  
"Some of the questions were not science specific"  
"Less traffic... because the widget doesn't display on our main page"  
- Helen Smith on the Penn State Life Sciences Library

**Humanities Librarian example:**  
A personal account widget on every research guide  
"... [questions] average about 1 a week (more when history assignments are due)"  
"... people who do use it are most appreciative of the 'instant help'"  
"My main problem has been... how often I am out of my office."  
-Eric Novotny, Humanities Librarian

**Similarities**  
Questions 1-2/week  
Staffing is difficult  
Positive user experience  
**Additional Result**  
Increase in communication between librarians using chat

## Linked Widgets



Screenshot of a subject guide

## Shared Account



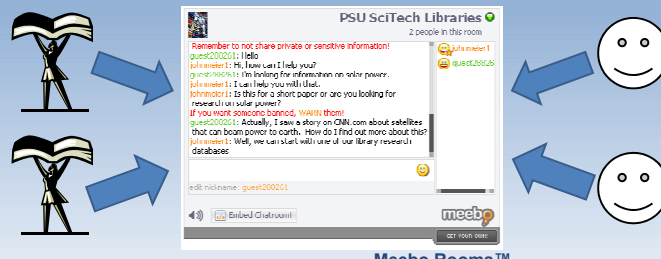
Meebo™ me widget

## Pop-up Widgets



Screenshot of a library homepage

## Chat Room



Meebo Rooms™