

MetaFilter & Online Communities

librarian.net/talks/txla14

Jessamyn West
@jessamyn

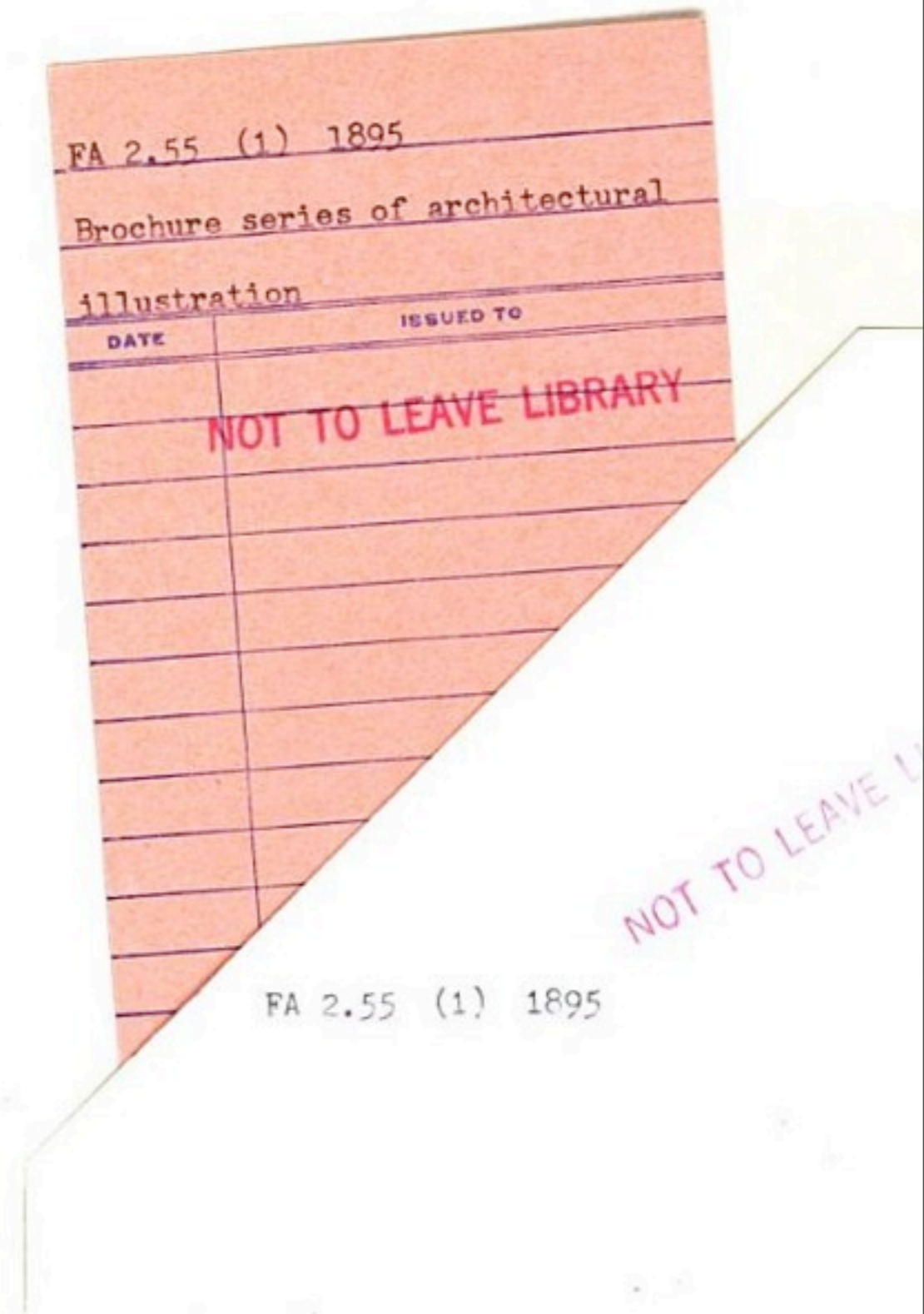


MF

I'm one of those people who gets asked "Do you work here" a lot. I used to think it was because I had what I like to call "the open face of reference" but lately I think it's because people can TELL that I like to help, and am passably good at it. The question asking/answering thing is in my blood for good or bad and I have a job where I get to do a lot of it and manage still more of it. This talk is about that job.

I am not
really a
librarian.

or am I?



First off, I have an MLib from UW and I've done various library jobs, but really my main love is working with computers and this is not enough for a library job in Northern New England, so I do a lot of technology instruction. I live in Randolph VT, I mostly work at the vocational high school staffing a drop-in time and teaching adult ed classes at night. I teach someone to use a mouse once or twice a month. It's a balance, if I lived someplace more urban, I'd have lots of computer/library work. I help out at Open Library (which I'll talk about later)

MetaFilter

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Ask MetaFilter

Sunday, April 6, 2014 16:21

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8 questions and 156 answers posted since your last visit

April 6

Where to go for tax advice online or irl?

Where do I go online or irl to get specific federal income tax questions answered? [\[more inside\]](#)

posted by [vincele](#) to [Law & Government](#) at 16:10 - [0 answers](#) +

Best compact camera for a senior citizen friend with vision problems?

What compact camera would you recommend for a senior citizen who uses reading glasses and just doesn't have the greatest eyesight overall? Any specific features to look for, especially in terms of the viewfinder?

posted by [Seeking Direction](#) to [Technology](#) at 15:54 - [0 answers](#) +

Finding an apartment without the nasty trash compactor odors

This is a question about NYC real estate, specifically about a building maintenance issue. After many years of renting, I am in the market for a co-op apartment in the five boroughs of NYC. There is a problem with my current building that I am willing to tolerate as a tenant that would be a complete deal-breaker as an owner The issue is this: [\[more inside\]](#)

posted by [jason's_planet](#) to [Home & Garden](#) at 14:37 - [2 answers \(2 new\)](#) ✓ +

What to attack first when getting out of debt? (Ramsey baby step 2)

I get it: never lease a car. Well, we have two. Following Dave Ramsey's money makeover, we've got more than our 1,000 emergency fund, so how do we start attacking our debts? He says start with the smallest and just start knocking them out.

So...how does a car lease factor in there? [\[more inside\]](#)

posted by [Admiral Sock](#) to [Work & Money](#) at 14:25 - [16 answers \(16 new\)](#) +

20 most popular **tags** in the past month:

[resolved](#) (191) [music](#) (47) [travel](#) (35) [work](#) (31) [books](#) (27) [career](#) (24) [job](#) (22) [food](#) (21) [nyc](#) (20) [car](#) (18) [dating](#) (18) [education](#) (18) [anxiety](#) (17) [android](#) (16) [clothing](#) (16) [jobs](#) (16) [relationships](#) (16) [taxes](#) (16) [apartment](#) (15) [health](#) (15)

Posts by category in the past month:

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Since 2004 I've also had one of those online jobs people covet so much. I am the Director of Operations for a group blog called MetaFilter.com It's a big group blog where people share neat stuff they found on the web. Think something like LISNews or maybe BoingBoing that anyone can post to. We have more registered users than live in any one city in Vermont, about 62K. Ask MetaFilter is the part of the site where I spend the most times. It's a "Q&A site" like ones you may have heard of: Yahoo Answers, Quora, Askville. 259,833 questions asked since the site opened in December 2003. About 2K questions a month.

MetaFilter

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[New Question](#) [My Profile](#) [Preferences](#) [Recent Activity](#) [Favorites](#)

[Recent Posts](#) [My Favorites](#) [Popular Questions](#) [Answered](#) [Unanswered](#) [My Ask](#)

8 questions and 156 answers posted since your last visit

259,833

April 6

Where to go for tax advice or help
Where do I go online or irl to
posted by [vincele](#) to [Law & Gov](#) - 0 answers

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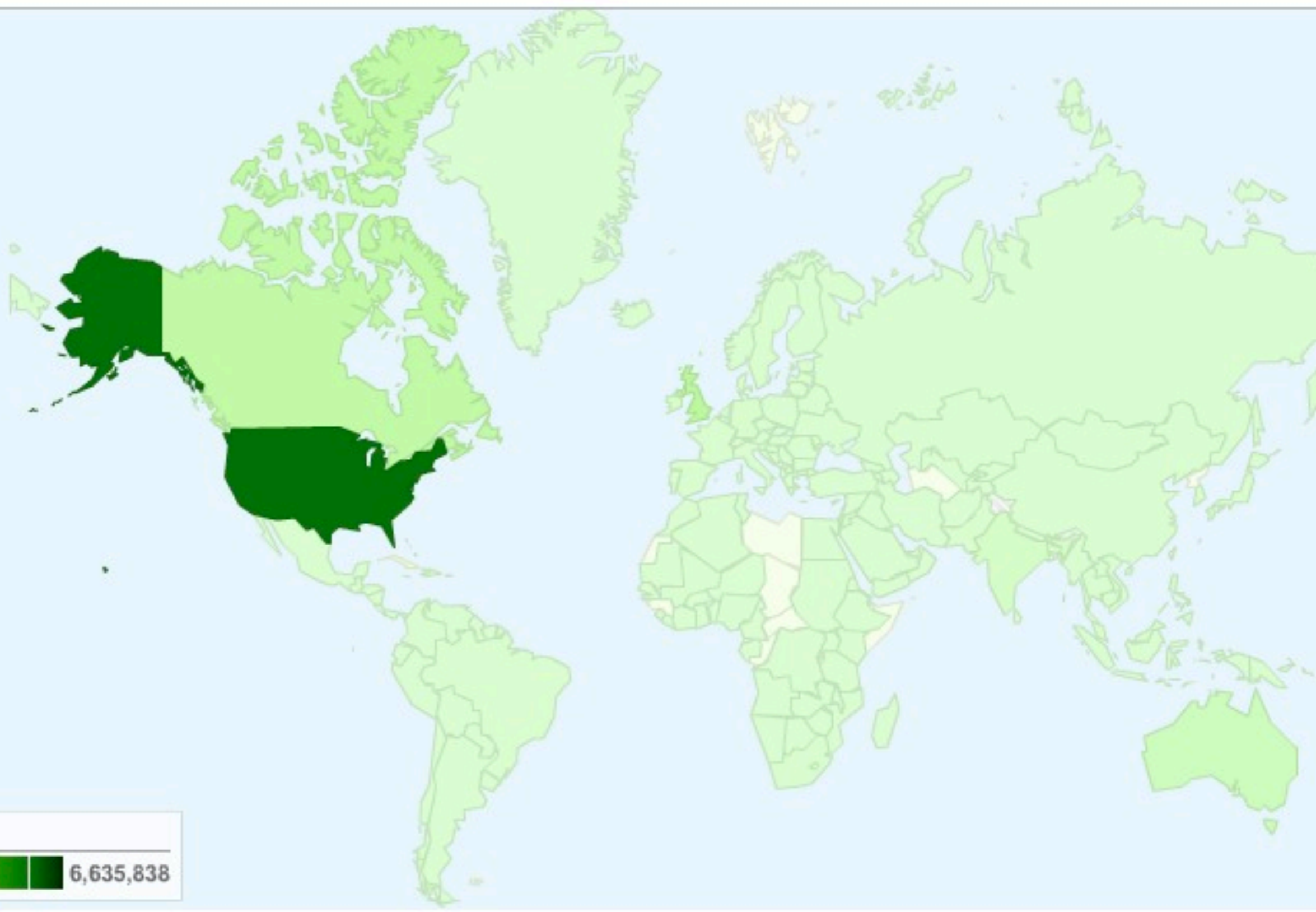
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Visits ▾



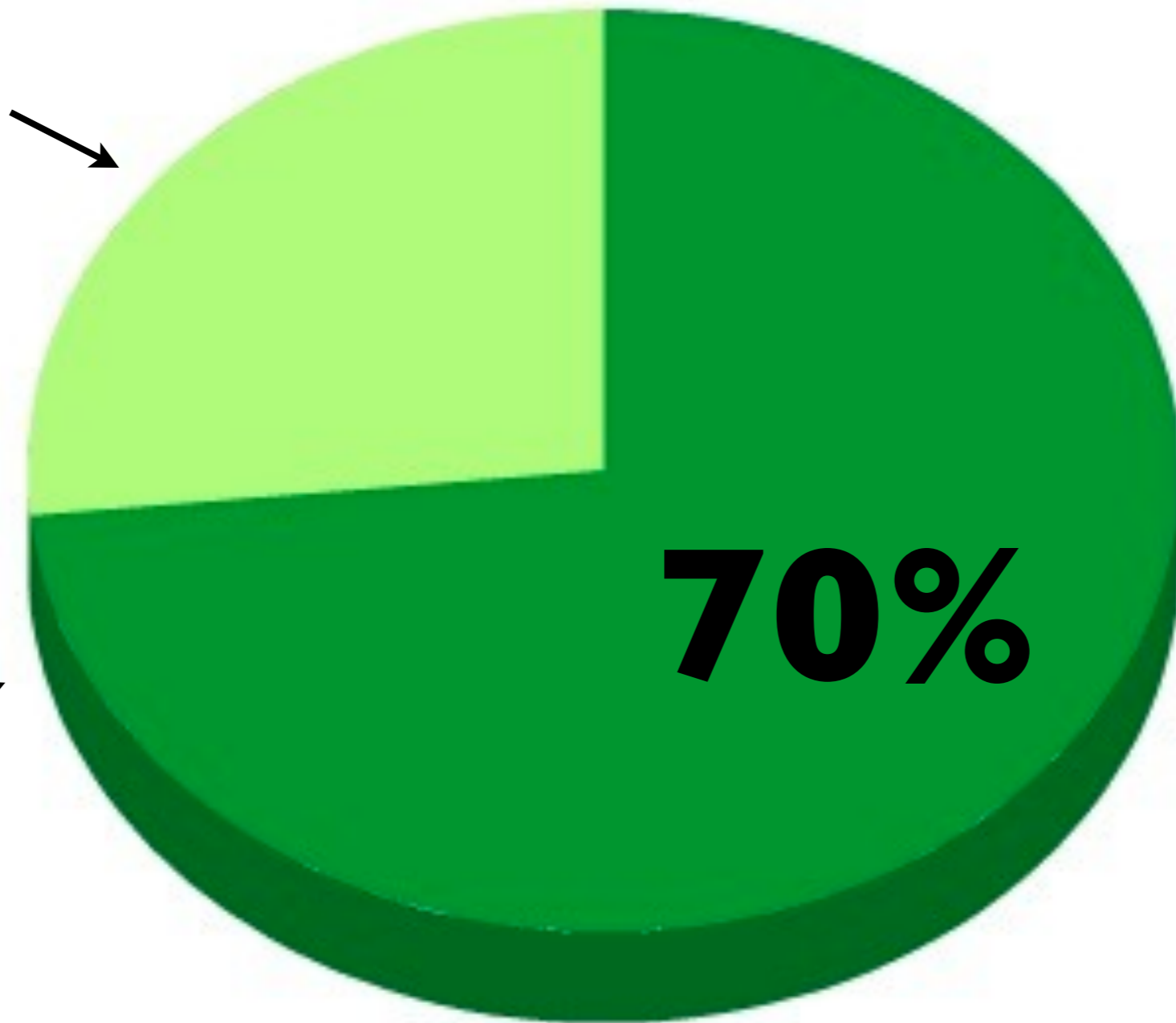
10,288,782 visits came from 196 countries/territories in the "Ask" segment

Detail Level: [City](#) | [Country/Territory](#) | [Sub Continent Region](#) | [Continent](#) Dimension: ▾

We have a lot of "viewers" too, or lurkers. That is, unlogged in users who find us through Google. Here's a month's worth of visits. 8 million unique visitors looking at about 18 million pages. And in case you were wondering Google's ad sense provides almost all of our income. Enough to support five full-timers and three part timers.

AskMe by the numbers

have not
asked a
question




have
asked a
question



We have data. Numbers galore. We make all of our non-personal data available via a tool called the InfoDumpster, sort of an API but not really. We have also extracted the text from the site into a nearly 500 million word corpus. Want to do research? We'll help you out. 200 million words of Q&A. Here's a few numbers to start: of the 30,849 people who have used the AskMe part of the site, 21,487 have asked a question.

Sample question

A dance show called Joe

April 6, 2014 0:48  Subscribe

I'm trying to find anything about this group dance performance.

A few years back- it might have been around maybe 1999 or 2000- I caught part of an amazing dance performance on PBS (Great Performances maybe?) featuring a huge troupe of dancers, all dressed in men's business suits and wearing, if memory serves, fedoras. I don't think there was any music and it was all incredibly stomping, percussive and athletic and they mostly moved in a sort of unison. I THINK it was called "JOE," but as that's not the greatest search term and every combination I can come up with of dance, suits, Joe, PBS, etc is turning up nothing. I am hoping somebody can tell me that I didn't dream this up and can push me in the direction of, I hope, finding a video or better still an opportunity to see it live.

posted by [ethnomethodologist](#) to **Media & Arts** (4 answers total) [[edit](#)] [[note](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[add to favorites](#)] [!]

Might it have been Joe Goode performance group (Joegoode.org - sorry, can't link from phone)? They're a very dynamic group and have had performances aired on PBS, including one called Effeminate Gestures.

posted by [jasper411](#) at **1:12** on April 6 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[user info](#)] [+] [!]

Nope- there must have been at least 50 dancers on stage. Not a Joe Goode project- the dance itself was called "Joe," like the title of a ballet.

posted by [ethnomethodologist](#) at **1:21** on April 6 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[user info](#)] [+] [!]

Joe was the most notable work of Quebec choreographer Jean-Pierre Perreault.

Some info from a revival.

Some rather low-rez video: [1](#), [2](#)

Perrault's bio is on French Wikipedia. He died in 2002.

posted by [zadcat](#) at **1:22** on April 6 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[user info](#)] [* +] [!]

— edited by user (distance: 66)

Tags:

[dance](#) [x]

[resolved](#) [x]

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Here's what "asking a question" entails. I know what people say a lot "But yeah look at Yahoo answers, those answers are terrible" and I agree it's hit or miss. But here's a good example. Note this question was asked at 12:48 am (my time) on a Saturday night and answered correctly at 1:22. Here are some of the features we've built over the years: tags, rss feeds, best answers, comment by the "OP", favorites, social sharing. And since we use a blog format, the q&a aspect is iterative. Questioners can take the answers they get and add more information. We try to keep this from getting too chatty.

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[dance](#) [x]

[resolved](#) [x]

[Add tag](#)

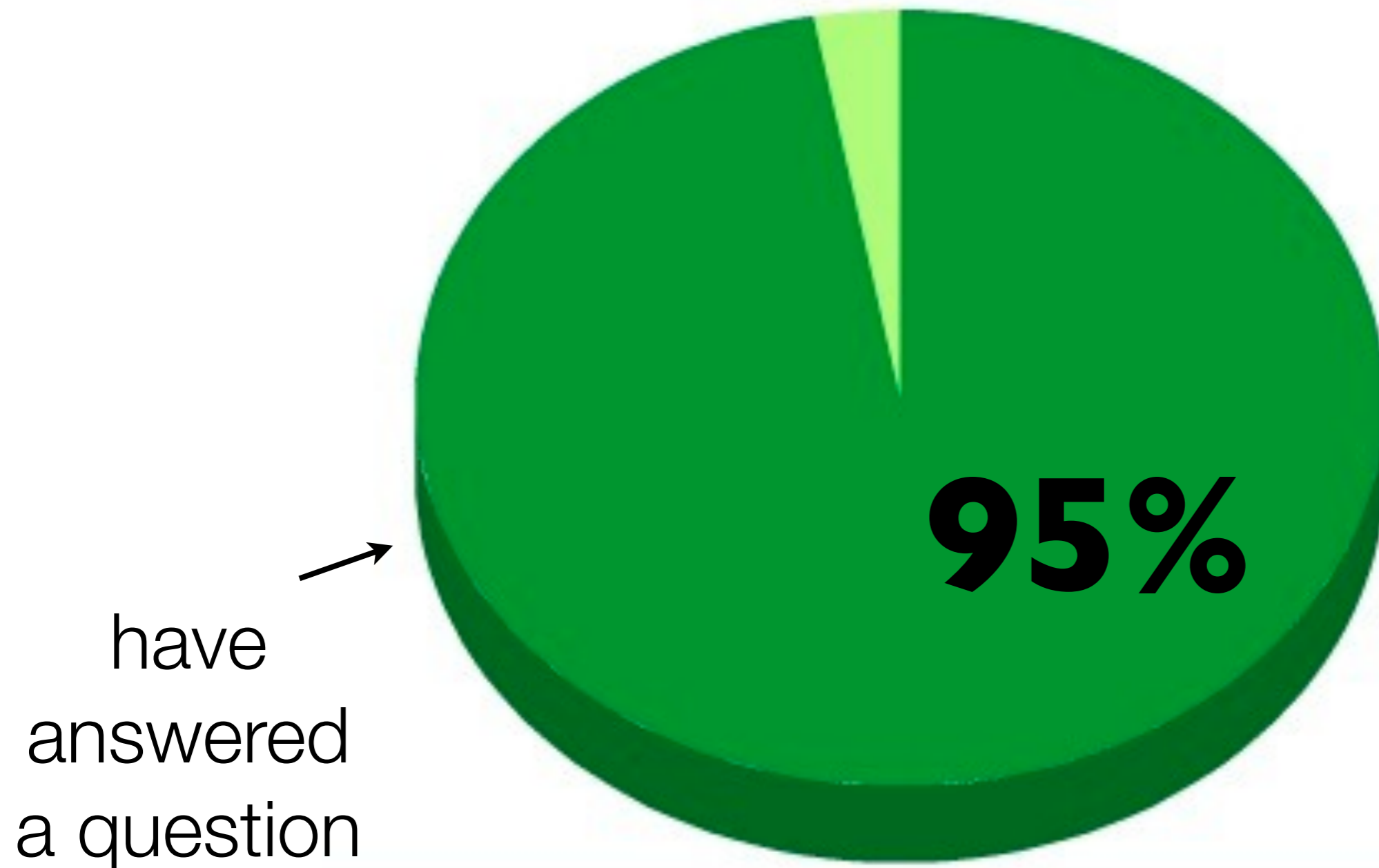
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AskMe by the numbers



have
answered
a question

MF

Here's one that's even more interesting, to me. Out of these same people, 29,247 have answered a question. 95%

Find questions you want

My Ask MeFi Preferences

Choose your favorite categories:

- clothing, beauty, & fashion
- computers & internet
- education
- food & drink
- grab bag
- health & fitness
- home & garden
- human relations
- law & government
- media & arts
- pets & animals
- religion & philosophy
- science & nature
- shopping
- society & culture
- sports, hobbies, & recreation
- technology
- travel & transportation
- work & money
- writing & language

Enter a list of your favorite tags separated by spaces:

library rural vermont family anarchist technology internet jokes

Suggestions: relationships sex travel dating relationship books health marriage music work love food family internet etiquette money law women library car book anxiety children history job

1. categories

2. tags

3. suggestions



MyAsk is a feature where people can enter a few categories and it will deliver a custom view of the questions so you can see what interests you, and get an RSS feed if you want. Discovery layer stuff.

Find questions that need you

Recent Posts

My Favorites

Popular Questions

Answered

Unanswered

My Ask

8 questions and 170 answers posted since your last visit

The logo consists of the letters 'M' and 'F' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'M' is blue and the 'F' is yellow.

We also have a few “special” tags like the stumped tag and the resolved tag if you’re someone that just likes answering toughies, or if you want the feed of things that all turned out okay. ten questions were marked “stumped” in 2013.

Find questions that need you

Recent Posts

My Favorites

Popular Questions

Answered

Unanswered

My Ask

8 questions and 170 answers posted since your last visit

April 3

Woodcut-Style Tattoo Artists in British Columbia

I'm interested in ultimately getting three woodcut-style tattoos (one of them a cover-up). I've checked out the portfolios of several local artists but have yet to find someone who knocks my socks off. I'm in Victoria but would be willing to travel to Vancouver for the right artist. Any recommendations for people working in black ink?

posted by [northernish](#) to [Shopping](#) at 1:07 - **0 answers**

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My "social" work

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[MetaFilter](#) [AskMeFi](#) [Projects](#) [Music](#) [Jobs](#) [Podcast](#) [IRL](#) [Chat](#) [MetaTalk](#) [Admin](#)

MetaFilter

Sunday, April 6, 2014 17:03

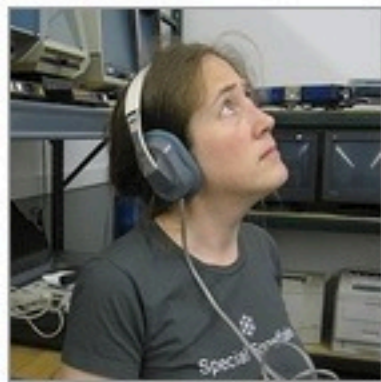
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[jessamyn's profile \(website\)](#) [edit profile](#) [\[edit account\]](#)

[search activity](#)

Info



Name: [jessamyn charity west](#) [staff](#)

Email: jessamyn@gmail.com

Birthday: **September 5**

Location: [vermont](#)

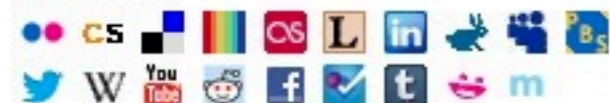
Occupation: [librarian superhero](#)

Gender: [thundersweater](#)

Joined: [January 28, 2000](#)

IM: [AIM](#) [G+](#) [S](#) [Y!](#)

Also On:



Contributions

MeFi: **111** posts, **5356** comments

MetaTalk: **78** posts, **17439** comments

Ask MeFi: **51** questions, **12215** answers

Music: **5** posts, **152** comments, **2** playlists

Music Talk: **1** post, **5** comments

Projects: **4** posts, **85** comments, **153** votes

Jobs: **2** posts

IRL: **5** posts, **162** comments

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Favorites: **3417**

Favorited by others: **87584**

Social

Links to: **893** users

Linked by: **825** users

MeFi tags: [obit](#) (7) [obituary](#) (7) [history](#) (5) [art](#) (4) [music](#) (4) [poetry](#) (4) [vermont](#) (4) [birding](#) (3) [birds](#) (3) [libraries](#) (3)

Ask MeFi tags: [software](#) (5) [travel](#) (4) [email](#) (3) [apps](#) (2) [Australia](#) (2) [blog](#) (2) [calendar](#) (2) [camera](#) (2) [excel](#) (2) [exercise](#) (2)

Nearby users: [FauxScot](#) (5 miles) [Mblue](#) (5 miles) [terrapiin](#) (6 miles) [turtlegirl](#) (6 miles) [merelyglib](#) (15 miles) [SirStan](#) (23 miles) [youcancallmeal](#) (24 miles) [deCadmus](#) (24 miles) [VTscapes](#) (25 miles) [billtron](#) (25 miles) and **790 others**

(this is my profile page) As an aside: We're sort of a social network in that people can "friend" each other and there's a heavy meetup component to what we do, so much so that we launched a part of the site called IRL helping people plan over 100 meetups per month. This is my profile page, it links to my profiles on other social networks, shows who I am linked to. I've met over 800 users of the site. Not much as a percentage, but not bad. My feeling about social technology is that if it's not helping you do something in your "real life" [if you'll excuse my slang: "get laid or get paid" as the kids today say] it's maybe not solving a problem for you. It's easy to hide from the offline world in the online world. I think about this a lot.

A lot of what keeps people coming to the site is the reputation they've established. All this Q&A is categorized, tagged and archived. I've answered about 8800 questions (actually fewer because I'm also the mod so some of those numbers are "stop hollering at each other" comments) and you can click through and see all of my answers. I'd love it if my library could do that. Here's a quick look at the categories.

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[jessamyn's profile \(website\)](#) [edit profile](#) [\[edit account\]](#) [search activity](#)


Info	Contributions	Social
 Name: jessamyn charity west staff Email: jessamyn@gmail.com Birthday: September 5 Location: vermont Occupation: librarian superhero Gender: thundersweater Joined: January 28, 2000 IM: AIM G S Y! Also On:	MeFi: 111 posts , 5356 comments MetaTalk: 78 posts , 17439 comments Jobs: 2 posts IRL: 5 posts, 162 comments View all activity Favorites: 3417 Favorited by others: 87584	Links to: 893 users Linked by: 825 users Ask MeFi tags: software (5) travel (4) email (3) apps (2) Australia (2) blog (2) calendar (2) camera (2) excel (2) exercise (2) Nearby users: FauxScot (5 miles) Mblue (5 miles) terrapin (6 miles) turtlegirl (6 miles) merelyglib (15 miles) SirStan (23 miles) youcancallmeal (24 miles) deCadmus (24 miles) VTscapes (25 miles) billtron (25 miles) and 790 others

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Gamification

What is a "breakdancing outfit" for a kid?

April 6, 2014 7:57  Subscribe

Okay, so a young lady I know is coming up on her 7th birthday; she's emailed me that she'd like clothes for her breakdancing class.... what the heck constitutes breakdancing outfits for a kid?

I have **no** intention of getting her anything unsuitable for her age --- i.e., nothing sexy or with suggestive words/phrases. From photos (she's halfway around the world from me) she seems to wear a lot of leggings and oversized t-shirts or tunics. She also likes K-Pop boy bands, if that helps, but I have no idea of her favorites. I'll gladly take any suggestions of where shop, either online or bricks & mortar in Northern Virginia.

Please help an auntie out!

posted by **easily confused** to **Clothing, Beauty, & Fashion** (14 answers total) [\[edit\]](#) [\[note\]](#) [\[IP:whois|search\]](#) [\[add to favorites\]](#) 2 users marked this as a favorite [\[!\]](#)

Tags:

[dance](#) [x]

[Add tag](#)

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The logo consists of the letters 'M' and 'F' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'M' is blue and the 'F' is yellow.

And we have a gamification aspect. Favorites and best answers. We try to downplay these, but they're like the food pellets that keep the site going, keep interest high and allow positive feedback in a limited way. 4,118,190 favorites given in AskMe. The thing that amazes me the most is how all these people do all this work for free. 96,717 questions have at least one best answer. 257,376 best answers have been given overall.

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Adidas. Kinda the b-boy/b-girl uniform, so not particularly inspired, but won't go wrong.

B-girls Eddie and Terra (skip to one minute in).

Eddie and Terra on Ellen.

posted by **snuffleupagus** at **9:39** on April 6 [\[edit\]](#) [\[x\]](#) [\[IP:whois|search\]](#) [\[user info\]](#) [\[2 favorites +\]](#) [\[!\]](#)

— edited by user (distance: 8)



And we have a gamification aspect. Favorites and best answers. We try to downplay these, but they're like the food pellets that keep the site going, keep interest high and allow positive feedback in a limited way. 4,118,190 favorites given in AskMe. The thing that amazes me the most is how all these people do all this work for free. 96,717 questions have at least one best answer. 257,376 best answers have been given overall.

Gamification

What is a "breakdancing outfit" for a kid?

April 6, 2014 7:57  Subscribe

Okay, so a young lady I know is coming up on her 7th birthday; she's emailed me that she'd like clothes for her breakdancing outfit.

I have
From
She a
shop,

Please
posted

Favorites: **16885**

Favorited by others: **12237**

Tags:

[dance](#) [x]

[Add tag](#)

Share:

 Twitter

 Facebook

[Write](#) [!]

[B-girls Eddie and Terra](#) (skip to one minute in).

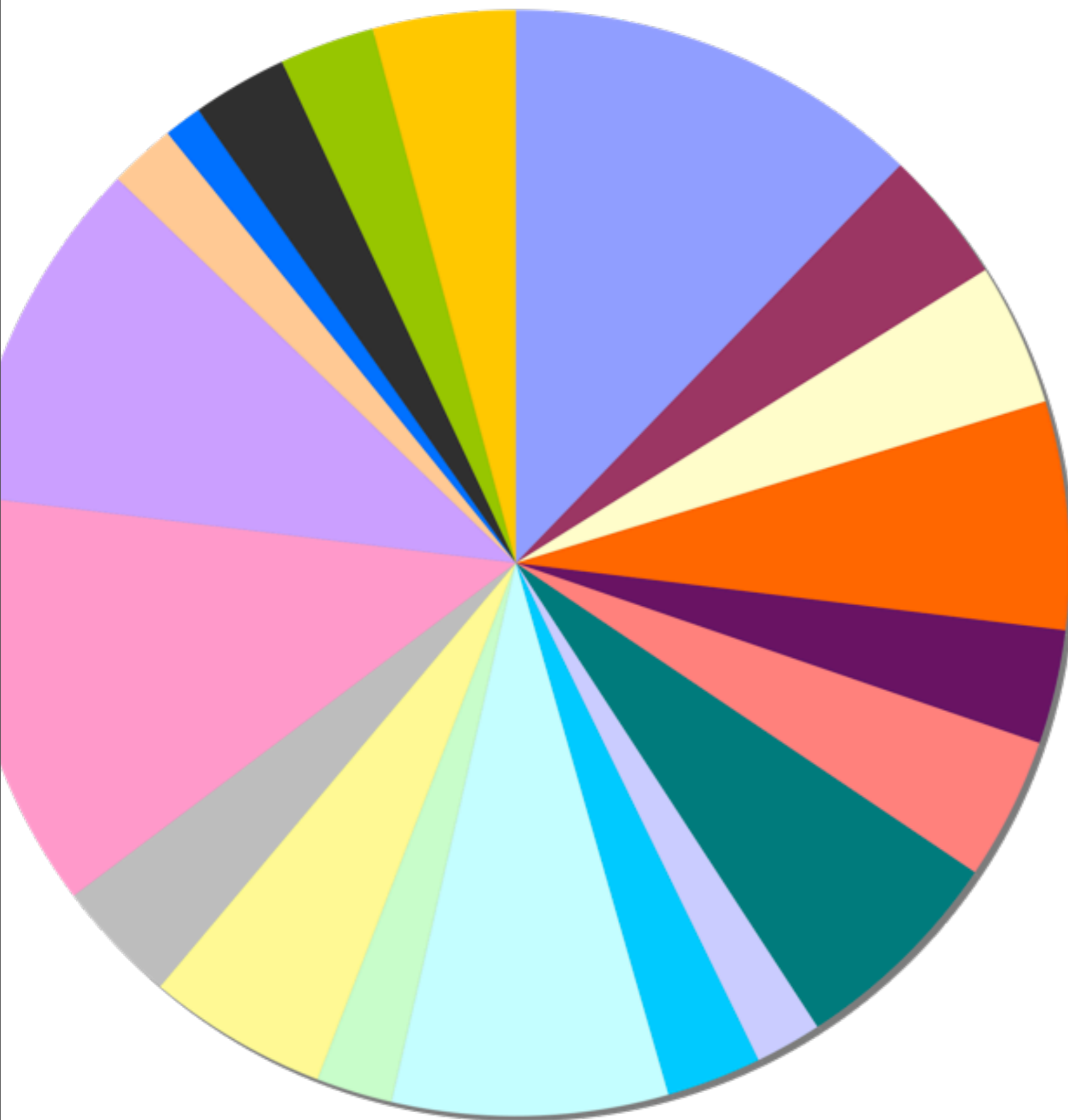
Eddie and Terra on Ellen.

posted by [snuffleupagus](#) at **9:39** on April 6 [\[edit\]](#) [\[x\]](#) [\[IP:whois|search\]](#) [\[user info\]](#) [\[2 favorites +\]](#) [\[!\]](#)

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- computers & internet
- technology
- home & garden
- work & money
- sports, hobbies & rec
- society & culture
- travel & transportation
- science & nature
- education
- health & fitness
- shopping
- food & drink
- writing & language
- human relations
- media & arts
- pets & animals
- religion & philosophy
- clothing, beauty & fashion
- law & government
- grab bag



We set up our categories when we set up the site in 2004 [with the help of an information architect you might have heard of: Jesse James Garrett] and they've stayed more or less the same the whole time. I think we added fitness to the health category. You can tell you're doing categories okay if the "grab bag" one isn't overflowing.

My toolbox

MetaFilter AskMeFi Projects Music Jobs Podcast MetaTalk

MetaFilter Admin

<3 you are the smiling buddha

- [EDIT MALL](#) | [CHARTS](#)
- [last 100 flags](#)
- [charts](#)
- admin: [activity](#), [notes](#), [labs](#)
- [post to sideblog](#), [music challenge](#)
- [MeMail search](#)

Pending: [anon askmefi](#), [projects](#)

FAQ: [Add a question](#) | [View submissions](#)

THINK SAFETY

0

days

since a
bannin'

flag hotspots [\(last 100\)](#)

2 mefi	97274	[x]	other
1 mefi	97254	[x]	breaks guidelines, other
1 mefi	97273	[x]	other
1 mefi	97264	[x]	other
1 mefi	97271	[x]	fantastic post, other
1 mefi_comment	3357530	[x]	offensive/sexism/racism
1 mefi_comment	3357508	[x]	noise
1 mefi_comment	3357500	[x]	noise
1 mefi_comment	3357438	[x]	offensive/sexism/racism
1 askmefi	169517	[x]	display error

good spots

3 mefi_comment	3356727	[x]	fantastic comment
3 mefi_comment	3356320	[x]	fantastic comment
2 mefi_comment	3355605	[x]	fantastic comment

Search for:

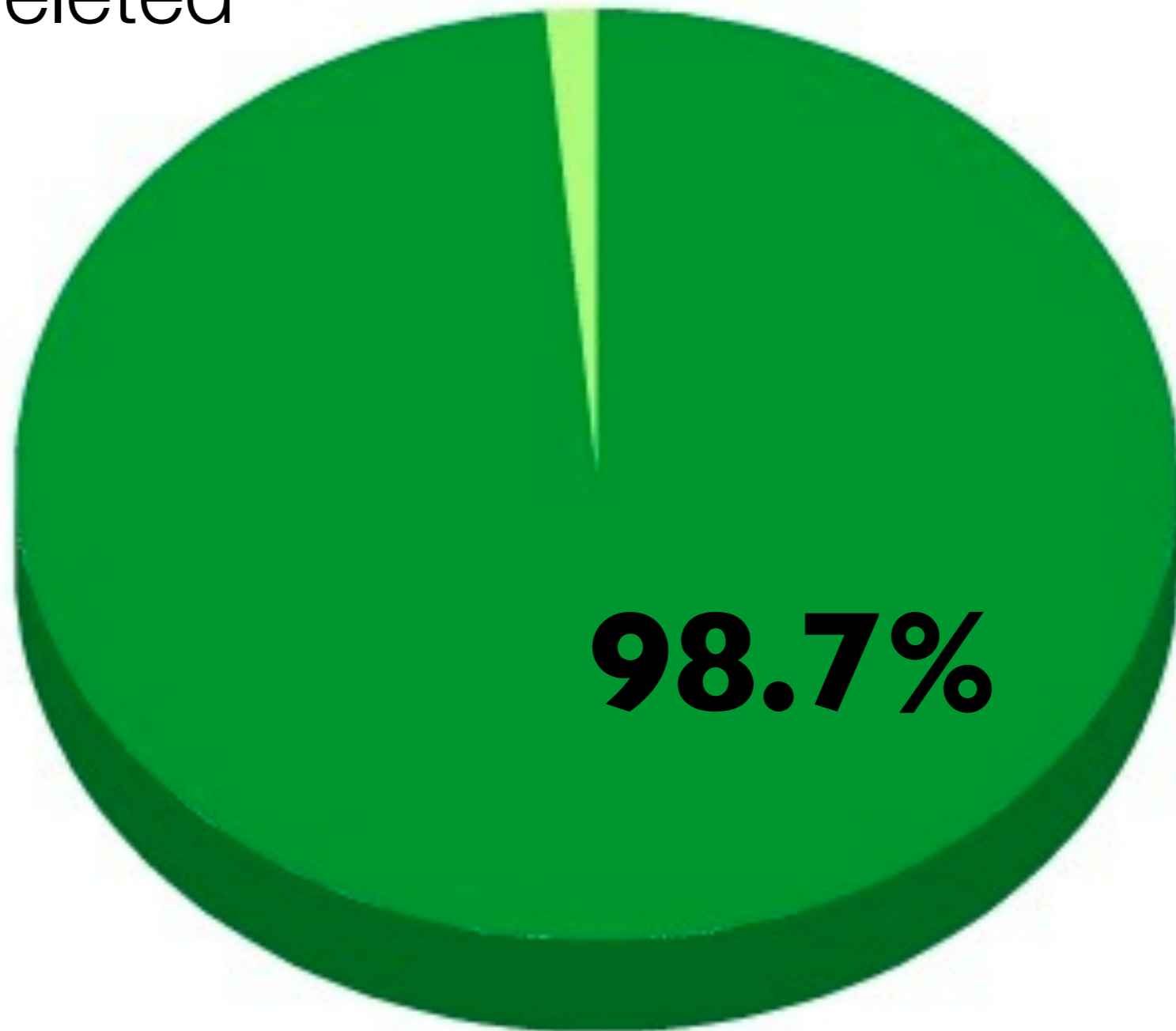
cf uptime: 1 day, 8 hours, 42 minutes.

main free: C: 23%, D: 84% | db free: C: 44%, D: 88%

So that's great, a big question archive. But that's not really what I *do*. I check in via a web interface and answer emails, fix people's comments, chime in on policy issues with my co-moderators and occasionally time people out or ban them. The place is really part Craigslist and part Yahoo answers. Our main admin page has a lot of searching tools and a few other things. We call the place "self-policing" and there are a few ways that works. People can flag things that break the guidelines and there's a whole part of the site dedicated to policy issues.

AskMe by the numbers

questions
deleted

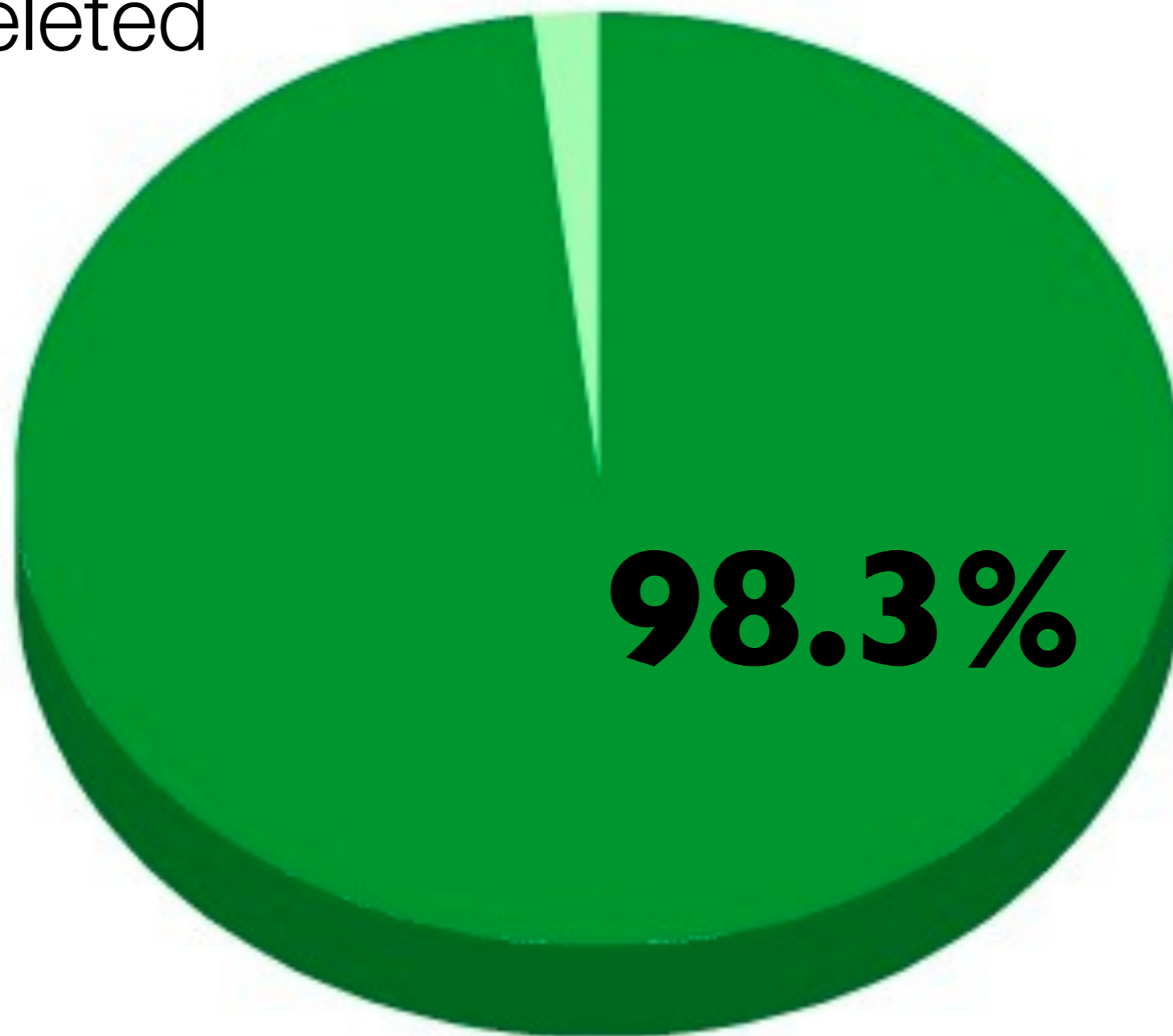


We don't have a lot of tools. It's basically delete a thing, leave a note, write an email to someone, time someone out, ban them.

In MetaFilter proper we mostly just don't let people use racial slurs, make rape jokes or "out" each other. We disallow misgendering and "ironic" racist and sexist comments. In AskMe the moderation is a little heavier. We occasionally delete questions for being chatty, hypotheticals, non-questions, rants disguised as questions, revenge questions, illegal questions and questions about suicide.

AskMe by the numbers

comments
deleted



The number of comments deleted is similar 64,795 out of 3,775,536. You can get your answer deleted for not answering the question, for calling someone an asshole, for making a joke, for going after someone [you see this a lot in pet and parenting threads] lots of reasons. A little under 2%. We don't do much of it, but enough that people notice and enough that that part of the site is called "heavily moderated"

What's the problem to be solved?

- * "Does someone feel like I do?"
- * "Am I correct in this argument I am having?"
- * "Is there a way out of this mess?"
- * "Am I being unreasonable?"
- * "Is this person acting crazy?"



The bulk of the deletions are in the "human relations" category. Human relations questions are often tricky because while they seem to be about something, they're often about something else. "How do I get my friends to split the bill evenly" when the question is "Are my friends jerks?"

Astute readers, like good librarians, will often address the hidden questions which is good news or bad news depending. No one wants the answer to "Am I being unreasonable?" to be "yes" but sometimes... people are being unreasonable... in their relationships, at their jobs, with their bowling league. Often it's as simple as them saying something like "therapy is not an option" when maybe that's what they need. We try to keep people being concrete. Here are a few favorites....

Management

the punchclock

viewing: jessamyn, restless_nomad

current time: portland (14:47) austin (16:47) vt/md (17:47) london (22:47) the hague (23:47) athens (0:47)

the water cooler

sent yet another note telling her to ease off. Jesus this gal.

posted by [jessamyn](#) about [redacted](#) on March 25, 2014 at 14:07 [x]

Ran into him yesterday on Alberta Street, turns out he's good friends with my old friend Mary.

posted by [cortex](#) about [MonsieurBon](#) on March 25, 2014 at 11:27 [x]

Obvious typo.

posted by [goodnewsfortheinsane](#) about ask mefi post [Cutting a hole in foundation wall](#) on March 25, 2014 at 10:42 [x]



I don't deal with the money issues as part of my job which is a blessing (google ads). But I do have a staff of five moderators, the site owner and the site programmer to manage/interact with. We're in five time zones (midnightmod is in london and fills in sometimes) and cover the site 24/7. We answer all email and deal with all flags within 15 minutes. Those are the promised metrics and since we all share an email list, it's pretty easy to know if people are on top of it or not.

Questions are professional

Tracking Down An Address In 1939 Vienna

October 18, 2005 10:22  [Subscribe](#)

How can I get my hands on a Vienna phonebook from circa 1938? I will be spending a weekend in Vienna next month, and I would love to see the apartment where my late grandfather lived before fleeing the Nazis. Unfortunately, nobody in the family knows the address, and there aren't any letters or other documents to provide it. Things are also complicated by the fact that I won't be visiting on a weekday, so any archives that might have this information will presumably be closed. Plus, I don't speak German. Am I out of luck, or is there any way to track this information down in the next few weeks?

posted by [yankeefog](#) to [human relations](#) (39 answers total) [[edit](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[add to favorites](#)] 87 users marked this as a favorite [!]

— flagged 1 time

— 4 comments with 5 flags

Tags:

[vienna](#) [x]

[phonebooks](#) [x]

[history](#) [x]

[geneology](#) [x]

[resolved](#) [x]

[metafilterhisto...](#) [x]

[Add tag](#)


Share:

 [Twitter](#)

 [Facebook](#)

I just spke with a researcher here (I work at the Holocaust Museum in Washington) and I think we might be able to get the street address for you. Let me look into is a little bit...

Send me an e-mail with all the info you have (name, birthdate, occupation, etc): [rcoleman \(AT\) ushmm.org](mailto:rcoleman@ushmm.org).

posted by  [arco](#) at **10:54** on October 18, 2005 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[user info](#)] [[+](#)] [!]

(To more specifically answer your question, we have the Vienna telephone books from the 30s on microfilm, but we also have several other resources that might be useful.)


posted by  [arco](#) at **11:11** on October 18, 2005 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[user info](#)] [[1 favorite +](#)] [!]

The logo consists of the letters 'M' and 'F' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'M' is blue and the 'F' is yellow.

Sometimes questions are more like reference questions. And sometimes they're answered by reference librarians. The guy who answered here, Ron Coleman, is the librarian at the Holocaust museum in Washington DC. See the little book by his name, I'll get back to that.

and personal...

So... I'm fat! Still wanna meet up?

December 6, 2008 9:38  [Subscribe](#)

I need to gracefully let someone I've spoken with on the phone, and who I'm developing feelings for, know that I'm kind of fat before we meet in person. How can I do this? Please AskMe help me work out what to say and how to say it.

Backstory

I'm a girl, he's a guy. A mutual friend introduced us and we've been chatting on the phone. I definitely did not expect to develop feelings for him other than friendship. As far as I know, neither did he. So when we started talking appearance wasn't really an issue. But we unexpectedly hit it off and gradually, over a couple of weeks, feelings have developed.

It's only gradually dawned on me that he likes me as more than a friend. Long conversations and texts have escalated into jokes about what are you wearing and, uh, jokes about phone sex and how much he likes my voice and wants to meet me. In fact, he's said about four times now that he really wants to meet me. Now it's hit me, hard, that I do like him a lot 'like that' and would like to meet him too.

Complications

Despite the strong indications that he also likes me a lot, it's still at that awkward stage where everything has been implied and nothing has been said outright. Complicating things even further, we can't meet face to face for at least another three months. We live about 1800 miles apart and for a variety of reasons neither of us can travel for a while.

I know being overweight can be a deal breaker and I need to let him know that I'm, well, fat, before spending weeks talking with him on the phone, both of us getting attached and then him being (possibly) horrified when he meets me.

He's seen pics of me (Facebook) so he knows what my face looks like. You can tell I'm not, you know, Jessica Alba. You can't tell that I'm quite fat. I'm 5'3 and 163 pounds. None of it is muscle. Quite a bit of it is boobs. And bum. And belly and thighs. I don't need to be levered out of the house by crane and I shop in the normal sizes part of the store, but I am definitely hefty.

Halp

I just... can't think of a way to bring this up that's not hideous awkward. Everything I think of to say is just so cringe-y. And makes me sound like I'm really insecure about how I look. (Which, I kind of am, truthfully.) And now that I've realised I LIKE him, I feel very awkward too, which isn't helping.

Tags:

[fat](#) [x]

[love](#) [x]

[conundrum](#) [x]

[resolved](#) [x]

[Add tag](#)


Share:

 [Twitter](#)

 [Facebook](#)

Sometimes questions are super personal. We have a capacity for asking "anonymous" questions. People can email the mods with follow-up responses. The questions are anonymous even in the database, though we can figure out who asked them if there is a real problem. This question is a classic anon question [explain story]

My subset of the Library of Congress

October 1, 2010 10:32 PM  [Subscribe](#)

I'd like to put a personal library of around 200 books in order by **the Library of Congress Classification System**. I plan to take them off my shelves then scan all of their ISBNs for inclusion on **LibraryThing**... Then what? How do I get LCC numbers from ISBN numbers for ordering/labeling? How should I label them?

FWIW, I own an inkjet printer.

posted by [phrontist](#) to [computers & internet](#) (5 comments total) [[edit](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[add to favorites](#)] 9 users marked this as a favorite [!]

How old are your books, many include the Call Number on the verso page, the page after the title page with other cataloging information, and where you'd likely look for the ISBN in the first place.

posted by [dipolemoment](#) at **10:39 PM** on October 1 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[+](#)] [!]

LibraryThing will probably recognize all of your books if they have ISBNs, and the details pages for them will include the LC numbers. LibraryThing searches hundreds of libraries around the world to find details and grabs LC and Dewey numbers. The Cataloging-in-Publication data on the title page verso is the easiest place to find LC numbers, and most new North American books have that. You can always search **the Library of Congress catalogue** yourself, too.

As for labelling, I did it by hand with Avery 02207 labels. They look fine. You could always use a label template, though. If you get dust jacket protectors from Brodart or a similar library supplies company then your books will look all the nicer, and you can tape the labels on.

posted by [wdenton](#) at **10:49 PM** on October 1 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[+](#)] [!]

Oddly, the **export** option doesn't seem to return LCC numbers, but they can be seen in the **details view**.

posted by [phrontist](#) at **10:52 PM** on October 1 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[+](#)] [!]

LibraryThing puts books into your library by matching the provided info (like the ISBN) against a data source (amazon, libraries, the library of congress), grabbing all the fields from the record found in that data source (title, author, LCC, etc.) and then using those fields to make a LibraryThing record.

When you enter your books, use a reputable library (LoC, even!) as the data source (the *Search Where?* bit in the *Add Books* page). Amazon does not track LCC numbers, so if you use that as a source, your books will not have that info.

Once your books are in, complete with LCC, edit your view style to include LCC numbers, sort by LCC, and shelf accordingly.

posted by [zamboni](#) at **11:01 PM** on October 1 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[+](#)] [!]

You can also look at worldcat.org for the loc number, and I also have used openlibrary.org but they don't have the range of books that worldcat does.

In one of the school libraries I worked at I used a ptouch labeler for labeling my books. It was quick and easy.

posted by [momochan](#) at **6:45 AM** on October 2 [[edit](#)] [[x](#)] [[IP:whois|search](#)] [[+](#)] [!]

Tags:

[lcc](#) [x]

[isbn](#) [x]

[library](#) [x]

[organisation](#) [x]

[personal](#) [x]

[Add tag](#)

Not surprisingly, we have a lot of librarians that interact there. Thanks to a script that works in conjunction with Firefox and Greasemonkey, you can tell who they are when you browse the site. This is a real "outside the box" sort of thing and it makes me happy to see so many librarians, over 230 librarians, library workers and library students. If you're interested, drop me an email, I'm always trying to sneak more librarians in. Free accounts to librarians. You have to put up with a lot of internet people, they're usually not any worse than your standard patron, but they have their own quirks.

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LibraryThing will give you hundreds of libraries to choose from, the easiest place to find a library.

As for labelling, I used a [Brodart](#) or a similar labeler.

posted by [wdenton](#) at **11:01 PM** on October 1 [\[edit\]](#) [\[x\]](#) [\[IP:whois|search\]](#) [\[+\]](#) [\[!\]](#)

Oddly, the [export](#) feature in [LibraryThing](#) is broken.

posted by [phrontist](#) at **11:01 PM** on October 1 [\[edit\]](#) [\[x\]](#) [\[IP:whois|search\]](#) [\[+\]](#) [\[!\]](#)

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Tags:

[lcc](#) [\[x\]](#)

[isbn](#) [\[x\]](#)

[library](#) [\[x\]](#)

[organisation](#) [\[x\]](#)

[personal](#) [\[x\]](#)

[Add tag](#)

hing searches
erso is the
yourself, too.

protectors from

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AskMe's Soliciting book recommendations

especially loved AskMes of the broadest sort

- [universal books](#)
- [how did you find your favorite book?](#)
- [what single book is the best introduction to your field](#)
- [vacation reading, but not too light](#)
- [perfect non fiction books](#)
- [books every girl should read](#) (and the ultimate result of the question)
- [books for boys](#)
- [great books](#) [more great books](#)
- [a novel from every country](#)
- [fantastic books for 2007](#) [for 2006](#)
- [all time favorites](#)
- [must reads](#)
- [a book everyone should read, and why](#)

And there's a posse. As I said earlier I'm interested in the conversion factor. People make assemblages of our questions and put them on the wiki. We have a wiki where people create Frequently Asked of MetaFilter lists. Here's a page from the wiki that shows off questions about what to read. It has a thousand booklists. One thousand. Booklists. I am not one of those people like Library Thing or the Internet Archive who is all "Hey we're just as good as a library with no books!" but there are some aspects to what we do that are similar.

Some real statistics

- * 60/40% women/men
- * 55% are 18-55 years old (avg = 31)
- * 90% visit once a day or more
- * 21% “bloggers”
- * 38% own cats



[federated media and user survey data here]

Some overgeneralizations

- * Social anxiety
- * Nerdy/High IQ
- * Overthinkers
- * Rule followers or benders
- * Witty/Verbal

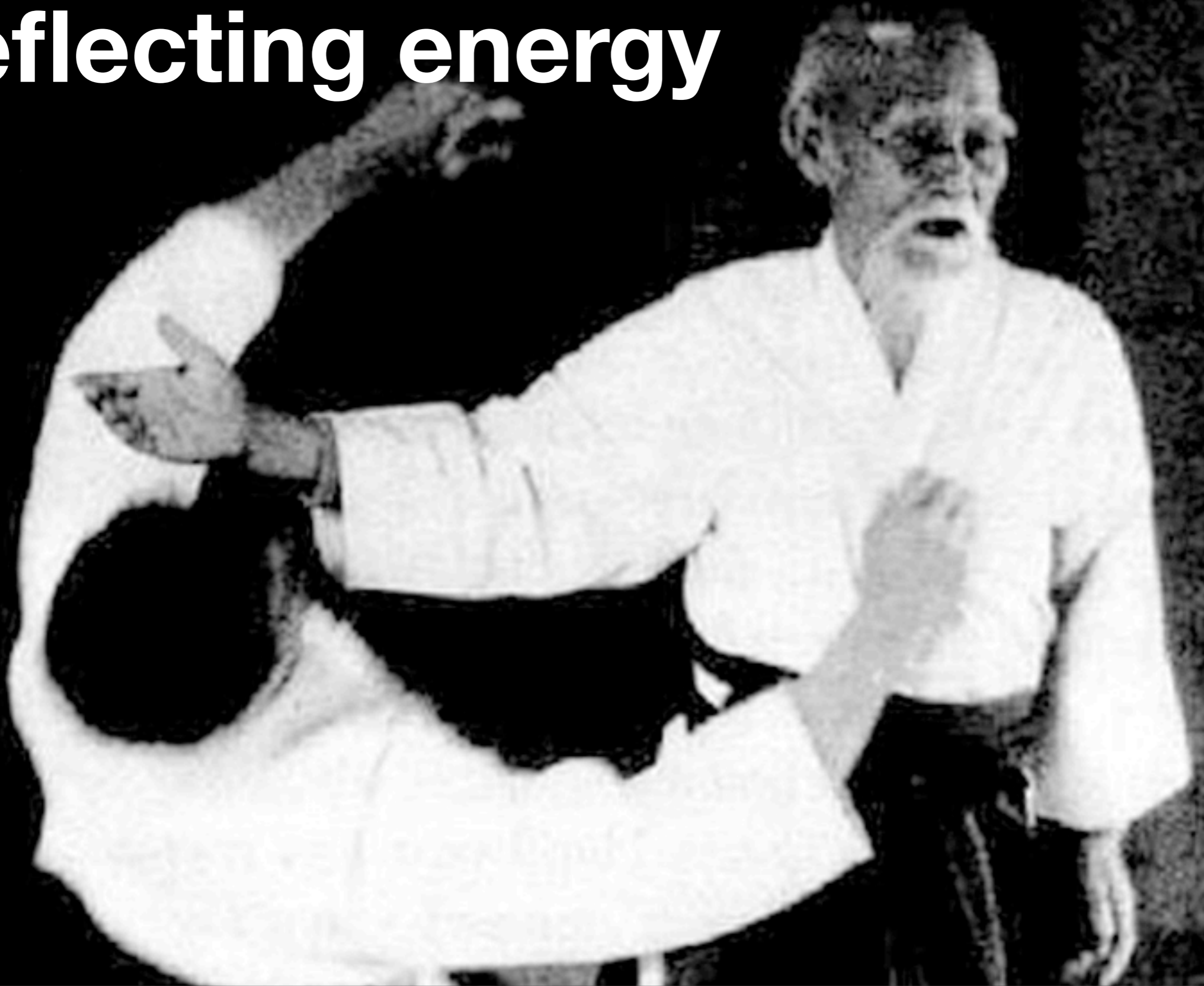
Internet People!

KEYBOARD CAT



One of my favorite classes in library school was services to special populations and I put “internet people” into a special population category. Here are a few differences that I've observed. These are some of the things we deal with doing online Q&A. Many of these attributes are real good news/bad news situations. If you have a question about Ativan, we're great. A question about opera, maybe. A question about owning a fast food franchise, maybe not so much, but you might be surprised

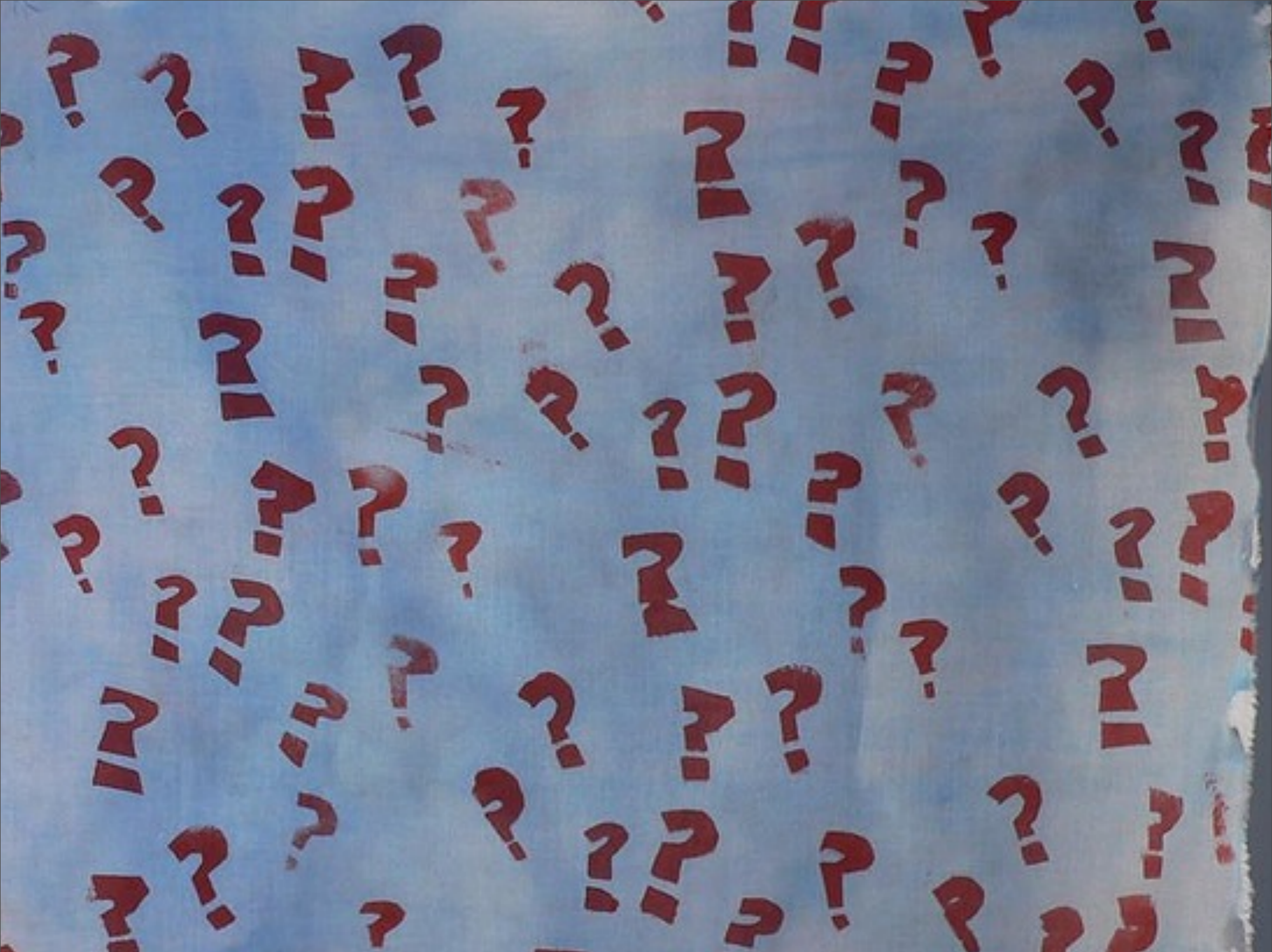
Deflecting energy



I find that unlike the traditional reference desk, I spend a lot of time telling people not to be angry, or not to let their feelings get hurt. I spend a lot of time teaching people how to ask a good question, or talking to them about why their question maybe didn't go so well. I think a lot of us have a certain "What makes a good question" sense after years of doing reference, but it's rarer, I think, that we get to



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I am confident and comfortable that the world is not going to run out of questions and I'm tickled that there are so many ways to connect people and questions and answers and people. Thanks.

