



Quality Evaluation of Health Answers in Yahoo! Answers: A Comparison Between Experts and Users

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Research Questions

- How do health reference librarians, nurses, and questioners in Yahoo! Answers evaluate the quality of health answers provided in Social Q&A?
- How are their ratings on health answers different from one another?

Method

Questions & Answers Selection

- 400 health-related questions and associated best answers posted in Yahoo! Answers in May 2011

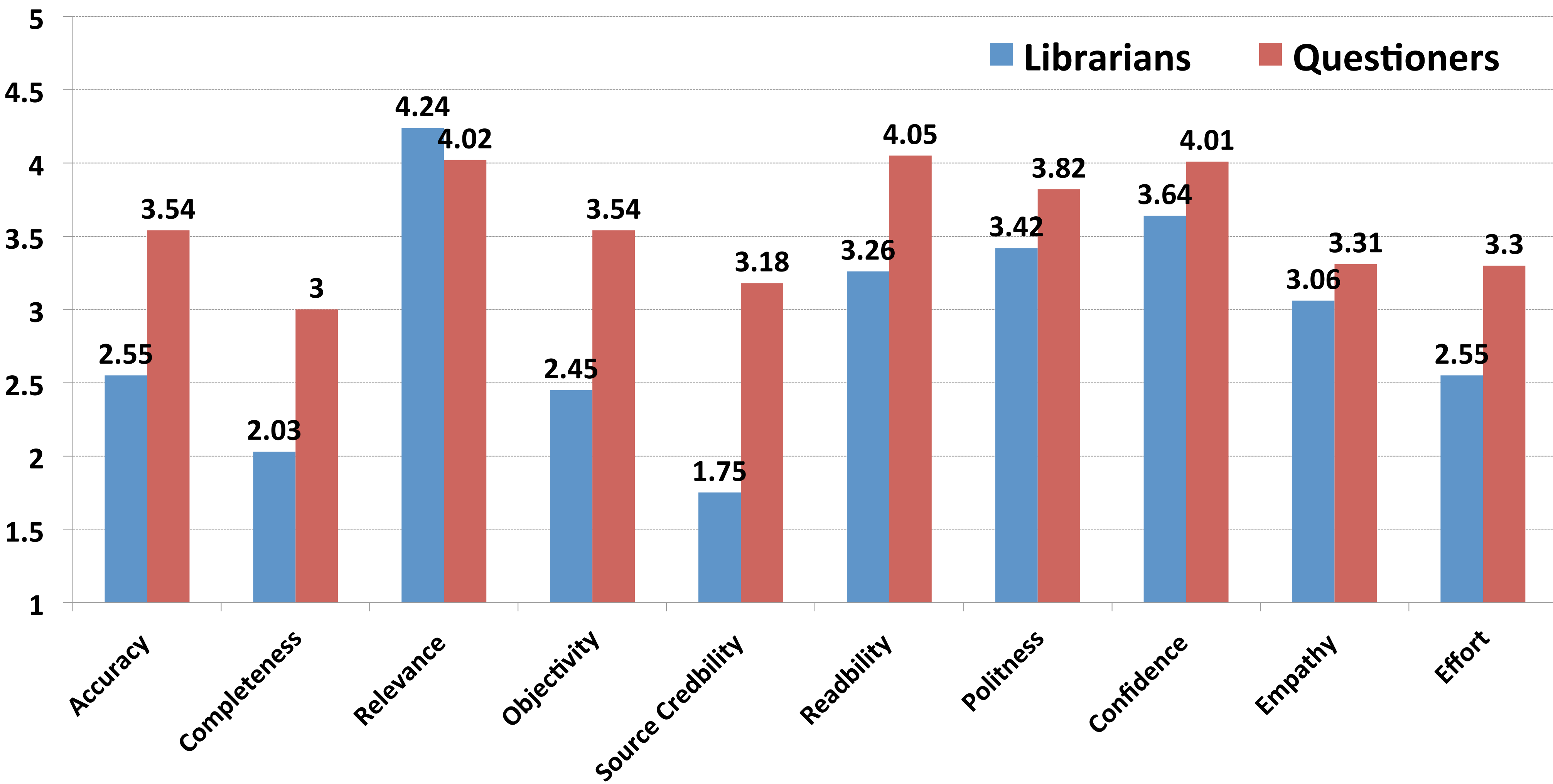
Participants

- 40 librarians who have experiences of dealing with health inquiries
- 40 questioners who posted at least one health question in Y! Answers in May 2011.
- 40 RNs or NPs who are working in hospitals or clinics in Tallahassee, FL (This evaluation will be conducted in the coming month.)
- Each participant evaluated (will evaluate) 10 questions and associated answers.

Compensation

- \$30 for librarians and nurses
- \$10 for questioners

Evaluation Criteria Rating Comparison between Librarians and Questioners



Results

- The average ratings from librarians ($M=2.85$) were lower than those from questioners ($M=3.63$).
- Librarians rated most criteria lower than questioners, except Relevance.
- The independent t-test results indicate that the difference is statistically significant for all criteria.
- Librarians provided helpfulness, authority of answerers, and safety as additional criteria.
- No additional criteria have been addressed by questioners.

Discussion & Conclusions

- Findings can help librarians and nurses better understand how their users and patients evaluate online health information.
- Findings also can help users and patients to see the differences in perceived values of health answers from expert groups and to be critical in using online health information.
- A follow-up study will be conducted to find a way to educate people to be selective in using online health information given by anonymous others in social contexts.

Rate the quality of a health answer here!

Question: I had my wisdom teeth extracted today, and they put me on one pill of Vcodin (I don't know the dosage) every 3-4 hours.... I threw up after taking Vicodin. Do I keep taking it?

Answer: Yes, I would take the next dose. You probably threw up because of getting your teeth worked on. All those solutions they put in your mouth make me sick. Try taking it with maybe some yogurt or pudding. White bread isn't a good choice. You want to coat your stomach. If you have any antacid pills in the house. Take one about an half an hour before you take the Vicodin. Still take plenty of food to coat the stomach.

Criteria Rating	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Accuracy: The answer provides correct information.						
Completeness: The answer includes everything. There is nothing to add.						
Relevance: The answer is relevant to the question.						
Objectivity: The answer provides unbiased information.						
Source Credibility: The sources of the answer are authoritative.						
Readability: The answer is easy to read.						
Politeness: The answerer is polite.						
Confidence: The answerer is confident in knowledge in the answer.						
Empathy: The answerer expresses his empathy to the questioner.						
Effort: The answerer puts a good amount of effort into creating the answer.						