Evaluating Point of Care Tools: Dollars & Sense

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Introduction:

Meeting health information needs at the point of care is vital. However, selecting the point of care tool that meets those needs is increasingly complicated and expensive. The clinical information needs of students and clinical faculty are varied, and Libraries are increasingly pressured by fiscal restraint. In order to ensure the information needs of students and faculty in their clinical education settings are addressed, while balancing a need for fiscally responsible selection, a point of care tool review was undertaken at the Northern Ontario School of Medicine.

Method:

To conduct the Point of Care (POC) tool review, a Working Group was struck with the following mandate:
① Reviewing the evidence/literature to select possible tools for review
② Reviewing criteria to evaluate the selected tools
③ Reviewing the results of user evaluations
④ Recommending the necessary point of care tool

Point of Care Tool Working Group:
o Membership of key stakeholders: Executive Group (budget control), Undergraduate & Postgraduate Programs, Postgraduate resident, Undergraduate student, Clinical Faculty, Library Director
o Chaired by the Associate Dean Research (Library is a direct report)
o 6 month timeframe (July – December 2015)
o Teleconference meetings as needed
o Goal: To make a recommendation for a POC tool to the Chair of the Working Group / Budget Committee

① Step 1: Selecting the POC tools for review

o Collections Librarian reviewed the literature and produced an annotated bibliography to identify POC tools that could be compared to each other based on scope and depth of coverage, as well as usability
o Working Group selected: UpToDate, Dynamed Plus and BMJ Best Practice

② Step 2: Evaluating the POC tools

ONLINE SURVEY:
o Drafted an electronic survey using Qualtrics
o Possible survey questions were reviewed by working group, agreed to 10. Examples:

PROMOTION:
o Webpage crafted that was emailed to user groups. Notices posted to library website & social media.
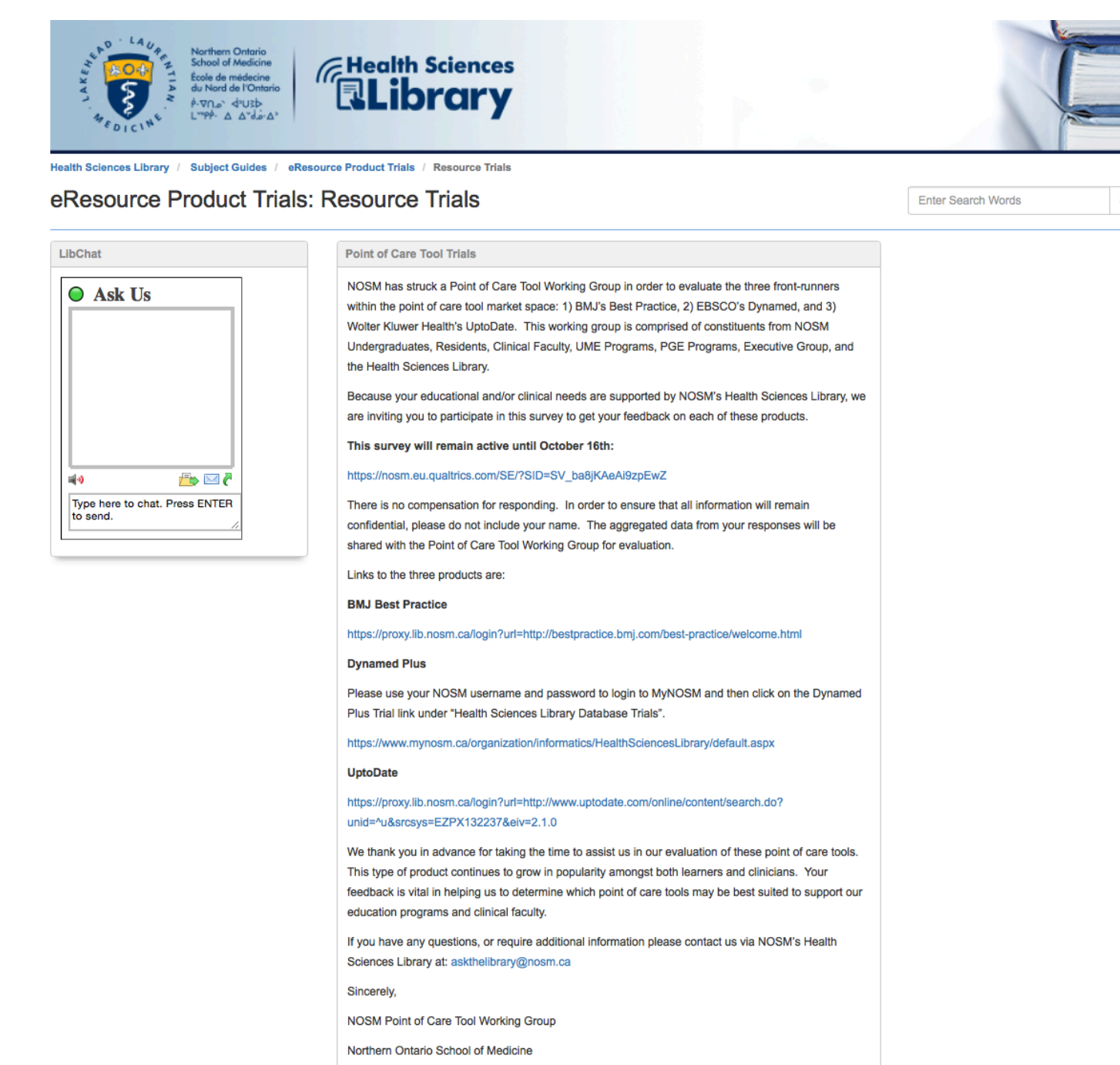
o Online survey open from Oct 5 – Dec 15th; received 78 responses
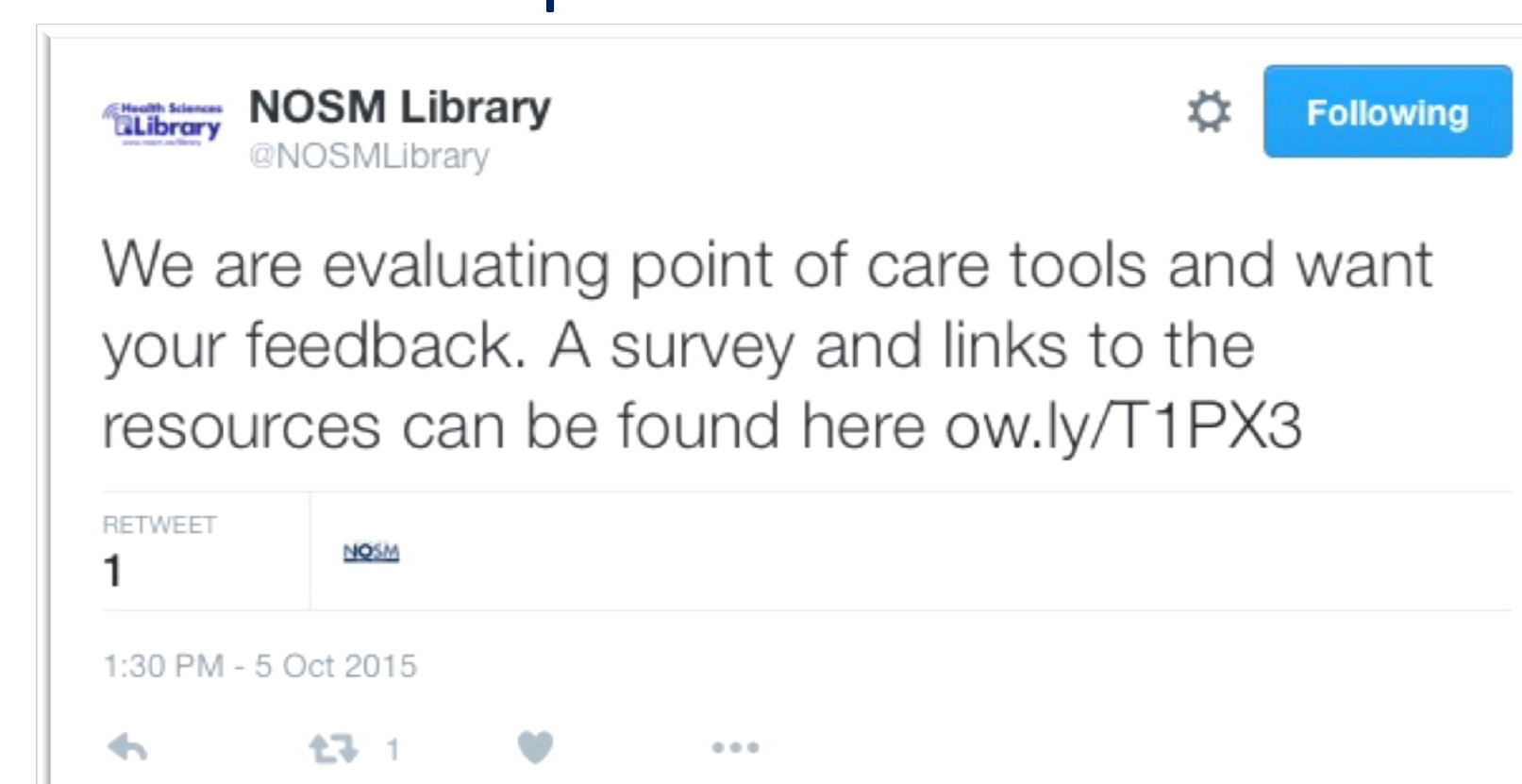
FOCUS GROUP OF POWER USERS:
o 27 Power users selected: 8 students, 8 residents & 11 faculty
o Provided pointed questions such as:
  o Are recommendations easy to understand and clearly graded?
  o How well does each tool's summary and recommendations meet your needs for a clinical decision aid at the point of care?
o Online survey template for collecting responses

③ Step 3: Results of user evaluations

o Review of the online survey data suggested UpToDate and Dynamed Plus both met the needs of the users. To fully assess the best tool, the working group decided to select power users from faculty, residents and students to take a deeper dive with the products.
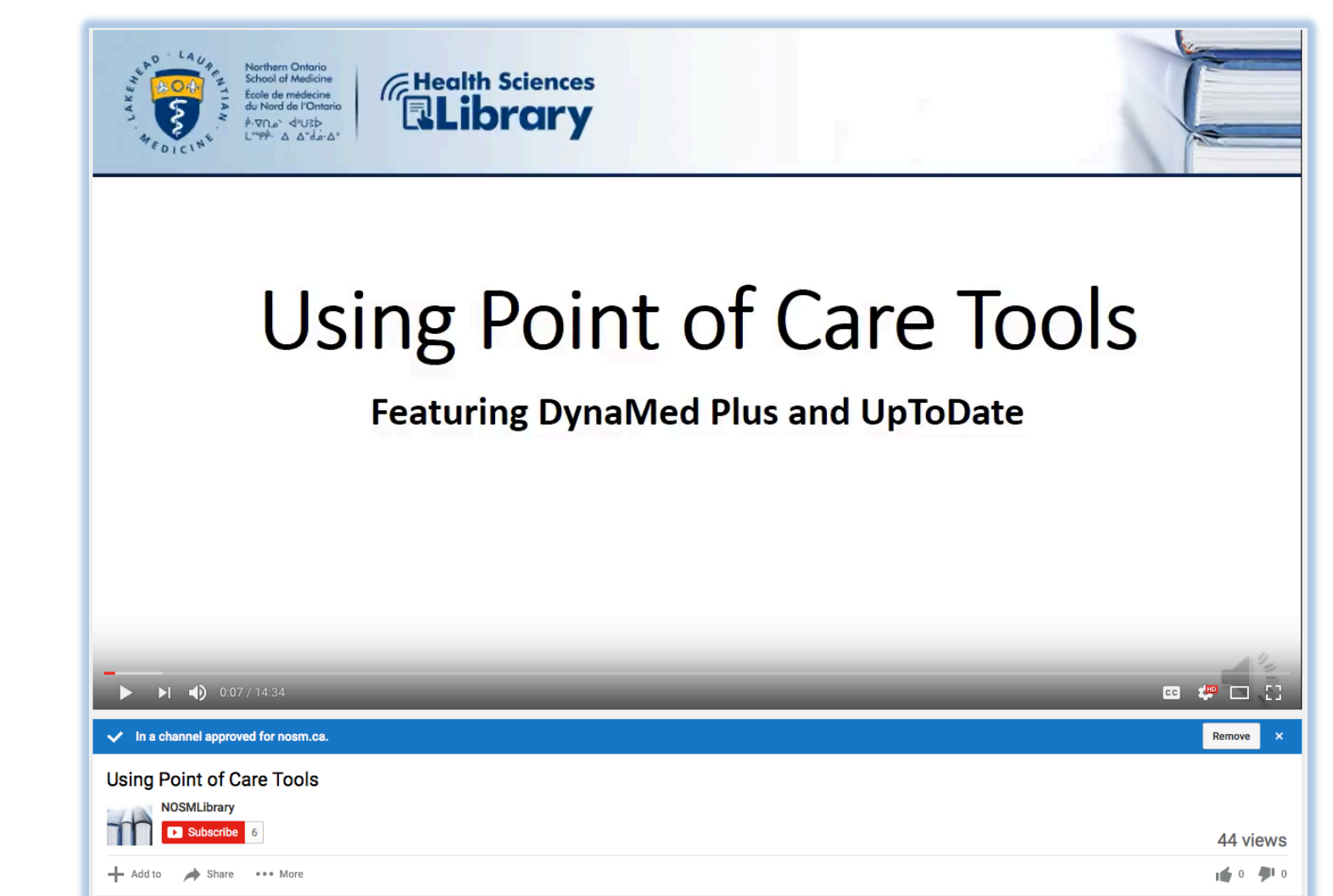
o The Power Users were provided with pointed questions, and a tutorial featuring UpToDate and Dynamed Plus hosted on YouTube.

④ Step 4: Recommending the POC tool

o The feedback from power users, combined with the online survey data, painted a clear picture that UpToDate was the product that best met user needs.
o Usability played a huge role. Our users felt that UptoDate had the most intuitive interface and was faster to use. They gave this factor great weight when comparing the 3 tools.
o Scope of coverage was also a major consideration. Our users could find things in UptoDate that they could not in Dynamed Plus or BMJ Best Practice.
o The Working Group recommended to the Chair / Budget Committee funding UpToDate as the preferred POC tool.

Challenges:

o User Bias towards UpToDate - as a product already heavily used by stakeholders
o Online survey was not sufficient to fully assess the products – deeper dive with power users provided robust and useful detail
o The disparity in pricing creates a budget pressure that may not allow for the licensing of the product that best meets user needs