



NOTE: This is the tenth in a series of articles that were released monthly throughout 2017 as part of the celebration of the NH State Library's 300th anniversary. The State Library was founded in Jan. 25, 1717 and is the first state library in America.

Need information? Don't turn to the web—ask a librarian

October 2017: It would be easy to think that the ability to access information to just about everything via the web means that the librarian's job is obsolete. Nothing could be further from the truth. The overwhelming amount of information available from the internet actually makes it more difficult to make informed decisions, whether you are looking for something to read for fun or you need information to make a major life decision. Turning to the web to find answers can feel like asking for a sip of water and being handed a firehose.

As trained professionals, librarians who know how to help you find the very best information that suits your needs. In a world where Google searches can literally give you millions of options, finding what you want can be overwhelming. A librarian can help you narrow things down.

What if you're not exactly sure of what you're looking for? Ask a librarian! They are professionally trained to listen to your needs and to help you find the best options. Once librarians know what interests you, they may make suggestions about other materials in that category the next time you see them. It's almost like having a personal shopper.

What if an item you want isn't at your library? Ask a librarian! The New Hampshire State Library maintains an InterLibrary Loan system that links our public and academic libraries together, allowing them to share materials among patrons statewide. All you need to do is ask your librarian if the item is part of any collection in the state. If it is, it can be brought to your library by a State Library van and you can check it out just as you would any other item. It's a very useful and popular service: in 2016, the State Library transported more than 500,000 items via InterLibrary Loan request.

Do you have a question about genealogy, car repair, the gross domestic product for a particular country in 1970, how to make switchel or anything else that requires research? Ask a librarian! Reference librarians know how to dig through the clutter on the web and find answers from resources you can trust. Every year, New Hampshire librarians answer hundreds of thousands of reference questions for patrons, providing them with solid, precise answers.

Do you need access to computer technology, or even help using it? Ask a librarian! In addition to maintaining computers for public use, professional librarians make it a priority to know the latest technology and how it can enrich their patrons' lives. Some libraries offer classes on topics like computer basics, getting the most from social media, tips for using specific software and even how to download audiobooks available from their collections.

Want a hand getting your child excited about reading? Ask a librarian! Beginning with story time for infants to learning about authors in grade school to discovering how to use reference materials for high school projects, librarians help young people experience the joys of literacy every day.

Looking for different ways to expand a reading experience? Ask a librarian! They design programs that combine popular topics with lectures, crafts, book groups and more. Programs like these have transformed libraries into vibrant community centers where people connect.

Being a librarian is hard work, but it is very rewarding work. When you visit your library, know that you are not left on your own to work through an overwhelming world of information. A librarian will be happy to help you find your way.

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