Why Libraries Are Needed in the Internet Age
Talking Points

Introduction

The following talking points can be used by library staff when faced with the question: *Why do I need the library when I have the internet?* They can easily be adapted to fit any situation that might arise in an academic, public, school, or specialized library.

The talking points can be used separately, or in conjunction with the Elders of the Internet video starring actor Nick Offerman. For example, after each talking point, you can ask if the person you are speaking with has seen the video and invite them to view it on your website, the My Library Is… home page, or on YouTube.

Talking Points

A single Google search can return billions of results with contradictory information. The first items that appear in search results are often advertisements, or sites that pay for that first position. Librarians are trained professionals who can help you find the most trustworthy, accurate information. And librarians will not track your search history to try to sell you things; they value and protect your privacy.

It's difficult to sort through all of the information available via the internet today. Librarians can help you navigate through this information overload. They can also teach you how to evaluate what you find on the internet and lead you to the best source of information to meet your individual needs.

With misinformation and "fake news" so prevalent today, it's hard to recognize valid sources of information. Librarians can help you identify the difference between "real" and "fake" news. And they can teach critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will help you find credible, unbiased sources on your own.

Google isn't always the best source of information and it's certainly not the only source. Libraries offer books, e-books, journals, DVDs, online databases, and other materials not available on the internet. They can help users navigate all these resources, whether in print or online, traditional or electronic.

Much of the specialized information library users are looking for is not available for free on the internet – if it is available at all. Through paid subscriptions, libraries provide access to countless sources of credible data, information, and knowledge—far beyond what is discoverable by any internet search

engine.

For many, the library is the primary or only source of computer and internet access. Over 1 million people In Illinois do not have internet access or only have access to a cellular data plan. Many libraries offer public Wi-Fi and help bridge the digital divide.

Because government forms, health information, and often, employment opportunities have moved online, the library's internet access has become a lifeline for those without access at home.

In a world of technological change, librarians help people learn and adapt to the latest technology tools and advances. They provide training and support for first-time internet and computer users, as well as those looking to improve their skills.

Libraries play a strong role in promoting internet safety for both children and adults. Librarians teach and promote safe and responsible use of the internet and social media.