

## **The Library and the Internet: 10 Good Reasons to Use USA's Libraries**

### **1. Not everything is on the internet.**

There is a lot of useful information out there on the web. Unfortunately, this often leads to the misconception that everything you need to know can be found online. This simply isn't true. There are tons of published materials (books, articles, videos, music, etc) that you won't find using a standard search engine like Google or Yahoo. And even when you do find them, your access may be limited (see #2 below.)

### **2. Not everything on the internet is free.**

Much of the web consists of subscription services that make you pay if you want to get into their website or download their stuff. Before you go and spend your hard-earned money on these services, check out the library's website. We've already paid for many of these services so you don't have to.

### **3. The internet is not very organized.**

How many times have you searched for something on the web and gotten a list of 1.5 million web pages? How are you supposed to make sense of that? Does searching the web feel like looking for a needle in a haystack? Well, library resources, unlike the web, are organized by topic and broken down into different types of information (books, articles, databases, etc.). Library resources have been organized by real people, not by search engine robots.

### **4. There is no quality control on the internet.**

The internet is full of lies, misconceptions, and half-truths. Almost anyone with a computer can put up a website, and they don't have to know what they're talking about. Some sites will deliberately mislead you in order to get your money, change your opinion on a controversial issue, or just to pull your leg. Hoax sites are all over the place, and they often look real. Library resources, on the other hand, have been examined by editors and fact-checkers who make sure you're getting (relatively) reliable information.

### **5. Sources on the internet can be harder to verify.**

When you write a paper, it's important to cite your sources. Some web pages make it difficult to figure out who's telling you what and where they got their information. Library resources, even those in our online databases, will tell you exactly where the information came from.

**6. The internet is too new for some things.**

Are you looking for *Mobile Press-Register* stories from the day you were born? How about speeches from World War I? The web is relatively new, and many sources of information over 10 - 15 years old have not yet been digitized or placed on the web. If you're looking for information on older events, you'll have better luck checking out the library's resources.

**7. USA Libraries' online resources are available 24/7.**

There's more to the library than books these days. Most of our online databases can be accessed 24/7 through the Articles, Indexes, & Databases link on the library's homepage. Although you access these databases through the internet, they are not internet sources. They are as much a part of our library's collection as the books on our shelf.

**8. The internet is a mile wide and an inch deep.**

So you've found 40 websites on widgets, but they all give you the same four or five facts without very much detail. How do you stretch that out to a five-page paper? For a varied and more in-depth analysis of widgets and widgetology, try some of the library's books or article databases.

**9. You're already paying for the library.**

Your tuition and fees help pay for library resources. Why not get your money's worth?

**10. Real live people can help you use our libraries.**

Friendly, helpful, and highly-trained librarians are standing by, waiting to help you find the information you're looking for. Don't spend hours in vain looking for information on the web. Take advantage of our services to point you in the right direction.

This list is adapted from Mark Herring's *10 Reasons Why the Internet Is No Substitute for a Library*, which originally appeared in *American Libraries*, April 2001, p. 76-78, as well as *The Library and the Internet: Ten Good Reasons to Use the Library*, developed by Lake Land College Libraries, online at <http://lakeland.cc.il.us/library/tenReasons.htm>.