ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS ROLE PLAY

1. Why should we pay for library staff when I can find everything I need on the Internet or at the bookstore?

BAD ANSWER: Libraries have almost all the same things that super-bookstores have. And most libraries don’t allow coffee or food. But then, most bookstores don’t have the Internet. I guess it depends on what you want.

BETTER ANSWER: First, libraries offer a wider range of materials than most bookstores could ever offer. Bookstores specialize in what’s current and what’s popular.

Second-- Libraries aren’t trying to sell you anything. If you can’t find a book at a bookstore, chances are it’s at the library--or the library can get it for you. Plus there are librarians to help you find exactly what you’re looking for, whether it’s in print, online or video. Libraries are a great bargain. All you need is a library card!

2. Why do we need librarians at all when we have Google?

BAD ANSWER: We need librarians to run libraries--but maybe we won’t--if we don’t get our act together

BETTER ANSWER: There are a number of ways I could answer your question--First, the digital library is a marvelous thing but it’s no substitute for a good library, or more importantly, the librarian.

Second --Librarians are the ultimate search engine. They guide and teach students how to find the best sources of information sources, whether they’re in print or online.

Third --It will be a long time—if ever—before all the world’s knowledge is available electronically. In fact, most information published before 1970 doesn’t appear on the Web. Having access to the full range of resources the library offers is critical if to America’s right to know. Libraries have always invested in the future, while preserving the past.
3. Libraries are nice—but don’t we really need police and health care workers more?

BAD ANSWER: I guess you’re right. But we have bills to pay too.

BETTER ANSWER: (soundbites) Librarians are highly trained information professionals who provide essential services in our information society. They deserve to be fairly paid. Information is an important component for dealing with problems of crime and disease—and librarians are the ultimate search engine.

4. Won’t the Internet make libraries and librarians obsolete?

BAD ANSWER: Well—I don’t think the Internet will make librarians and libraries obsolete. You just don’t understand what we do!

BETTER ANSWER: Absolutely not! In fact, if we didn’t already have libraries, we’d have to invent them. Libraries are twenty-first century centers for information, for education, literacy and culture. The library has two very important things the Internet doesn’t have. One is quality control. The other is the librarian. The Internet is a vast resource and great convenience but it can be very confusing and has a lot of junk. Librarians are the ultimate search engines. They save time and money by helping to find the best, most accurate and complete information, whether it’s in print, online or video.

5. Why are you spending all that money on computers?

BAD ANSWER: Well—we now have at T 1-line, 250 megahertz computers and 6 gig hard drives…

BETTER ANSWER: (hook) I am really glad you asked. I hope you will come to the library and see the many how technology is enhancing our services. For example we have a web page that can lead kids and parents to incredible information. We can offer access to databases around the world almost instantly, and…