

## **Summary of NMRT February 2016 Discussion: A Dying Profession: The Library in the Information Age**

### **Ideas on what librarians can do to advocate libraries and their resources:**

- Pursue professional development opportunities to evolve skill sets: webinars, conferences, scholarly literature on emerging educational technologies.
- Take opportunities to teach patrons/communities about the importance of the profession
- Similarly, understand why people don't use libraries, such as because of ignorance of library resources, and have facts and statistics on library usage, programs/services offered, etc.
- Provide those who haven't been to a library in a long time an opportunity to visit a modern library to change dissenters' mental image of what a library is or should be.
- Accept that there will always be dissenters, regardless of what facts or information you provide. They can only discover how vital libraries are with personal experience that you may or may not be able to provide.

### **Ideas on changing the stereotype of the "shushing librarian":**

- Remember that this stereotype isn't representative of most librarians.
- Have patience that the stereotype will change over time/generations.
- Allow ourselves to be seen by the public for how unique and diverse we are as a profession. For example, photographer Kyle Cassidy's "This is What a Librarian Looks Like" project:

[http://www.slate.com/blogs/ behold/2014/02/11/kyle\\_cassidy\\_photographs\\_librarians\\_at\\_the\\_american\\_library\\_association.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/ behold/2014/02/11/kyle_cassidy_photographs_librarians_at_the_american_library_association.html)

### **Elevator speech topics when hearing people talk about how libraries are obsolete:**

- People have speculated the death of books whenever some new technology comes along, but books have never disappeared because of these technologies.
- Pre-Internet information isn't available online as readily as current information due to copyright restrictions, privacy concerns, of lack of digitization resources.
- Despite how connected we all are because of the Internet, people still crave in-person social interactions.

-Computers are only as smart as the people who use it, and cannot think for itself or do things beyond what it's programmed to do.

-While anybody can access information online, finding correct or quality information is more difficult. Patrons need librarians to guide them through all the information resources available to them.

-Librarianship is complex, from quasi-social work to computer programming to the organization of information. As technology changes, librarianship changes.

-Libraries are neutral areas that have been proven to be places of refuge in times of strife and uncertainty, and can help communities thrive and learn new skills amid chaos.

-Technology and internet access is an expense that not everyone can afford or justify compared to the cost of food, shelter, electricity, heating, etc. Libraries offer a place where patrons, regardless of economic status, can use technology for free.