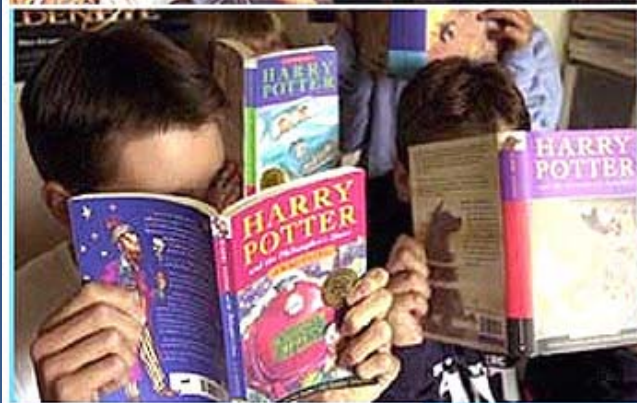


***PROFESSIONAL REFERENCE SERVICE  
ANYWHERE, ANYTIME, VIRTUALLY:  
HELPING REDEFINE THE ROLE OF LIBRARIANS  
AND LIBRARIES IN THE INTERNET AGE***

**Linda J. White  
Digital Project Coordinator  
Library of Congress  
Ontario Library  
Association 2004**





**LIBRARY JOURNAL**

BlackBerry salaries

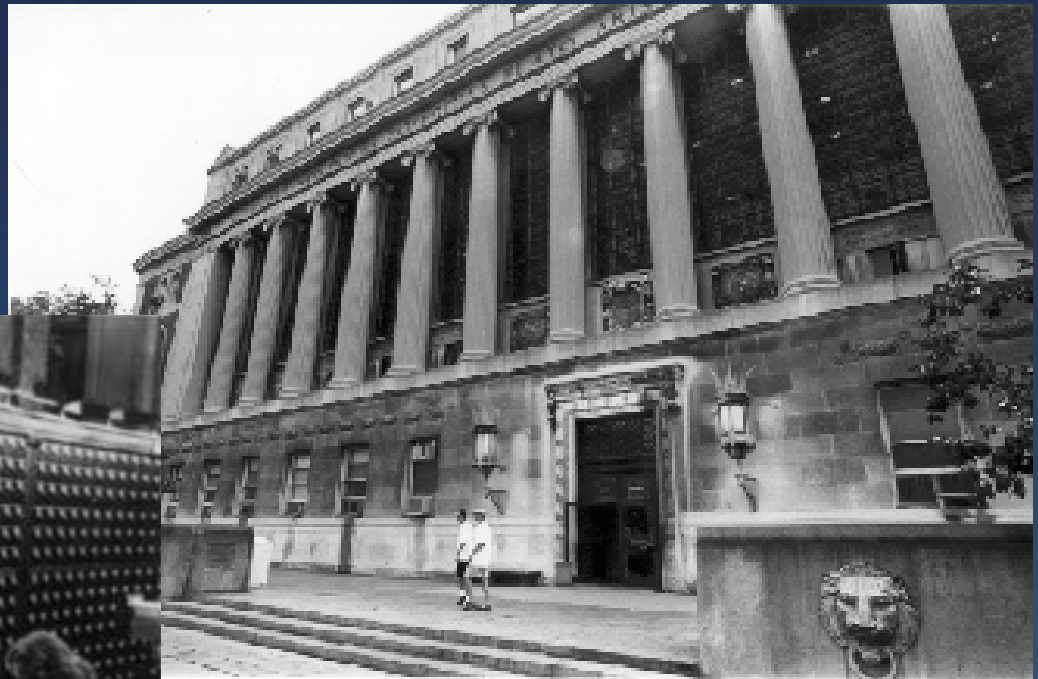
**PLENTY OF JOBS, SALARIES FLAT**

Our Times, They Are A-Changin', but Are We?

COMPUTER BOOKS: PREVIEW Dummies or .NET: Debating User Savvy

Negotiating What You're Worth

JOBS & SALARIES



# Challenges for Libraries

- Image
- Patron desire for instant gratification
- Students and researchers use the Internet instead of libraries
- Satisficing
- Google processes 260 million web searches per day

# While the Tools Have Changed...

- ... fundamental nature of librarianship has not changed
- New technology and tools enhance delivery of information
- New business models needed for the virtual environment
- Skill set evolution necessary ...

# Traditional Librarianship

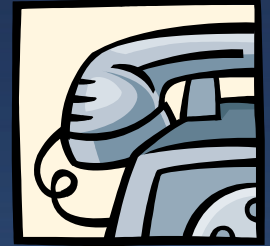
- Collection Development
- Organization and Synthesis of Information
- Networking/Collaboration/Cooperation
- Adherence to Established Standards
- Use of Trusted Sources
- Creation of Products in Anticipation of Needs
- Knowledge of and Ability to Use Tools of the Trade

# So Libraries Must ...

- Redefine the role of librarians and libraries in the Internet age
- Leverage the worldwide community of librarians and libraries
- Use traditional strengths to build new programs

# LC Goes Digital

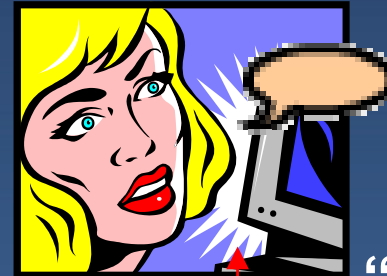
- **1990** - Internet connection established
- **1992** - First online exhibition
- **1993** - Internet access to Online Catalog
- **1993** - Library begins answering email inquiries
- **1994** - First Library of Congress Web Site
- **1995** - American Memory Digital Collections
- **1995** - THOMAS Legislative Web Site
- **2000** - America's Library Website
- **2002** - Ask a Librarian Service



Telephone



In Person

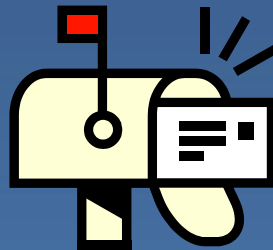


“Live Chat”



“Ask-A” Web forms

Surface Mail/Fax



# E-Reference at LC

- **1994** - Email support for Online Catalog (LOCIS)
- **1994** - Email support for Web site
- **1995** - Online Reference pilot begins
- **1998** - “Reference in a Digital Age” Conference
- **1998** - American Memory Help Desk
- **2000** - Launch of Collaborative Digital Reference Service (CDRS)
- **2001** - Online Chat Pilot
- **2002** - Ask a Librarian Web reference service

# Meeting Point of Need

## LC Web Site Hits

1995: 23,772,545

2003: 181,222,520

2003: **Online Queries**

1995: 2,265

2003: 56,785



# Library of Congress Home Page

## The Library of Congress

  
SEARCH

Get It Online . . . Words, Pictures & Sound



**American Memory**  
US History and Culture



**THOMAS**  
Legislative Information



**International Horizons**  
Gateway to the World



**Exhibitions**  
Online Galleries



**America's Library**  
Fun for Kids and Families

*more than a library*

[More Online Collections...](#)

### Find It ...

- [Search Our Catalogs](#)
- [Advanced Search](#)
- [Research Centers](#)
- [Index A-Z](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)
  
- [Today in History](#)  
September 30

### Especially For ...

- [Researchers](#)
- [Law Researchers](#)
- [Librarians & Archivists](#)
- [Teachers](#)
- [Publishers](#)
- [Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Blind Persons](#)

### Information & Services

- [US Copyright Office](#)
- [NDIIPP](#)
  
- [About the Library](#)
- [Visit / Tour](#)
- [Philanthropy](#)
- [Jobs / Fellowships](#)
- [Shop](#)

### News & Events



[National Book Festival, Oct. 12](#)  
Event celebrates books & authors

**9-11**

[Remembering September 11](#)  
Exhibition, concerts, [Web archives](#)



[New Concert Season](#)  
Classical, jazz, gospel, folk & more

**MORE**

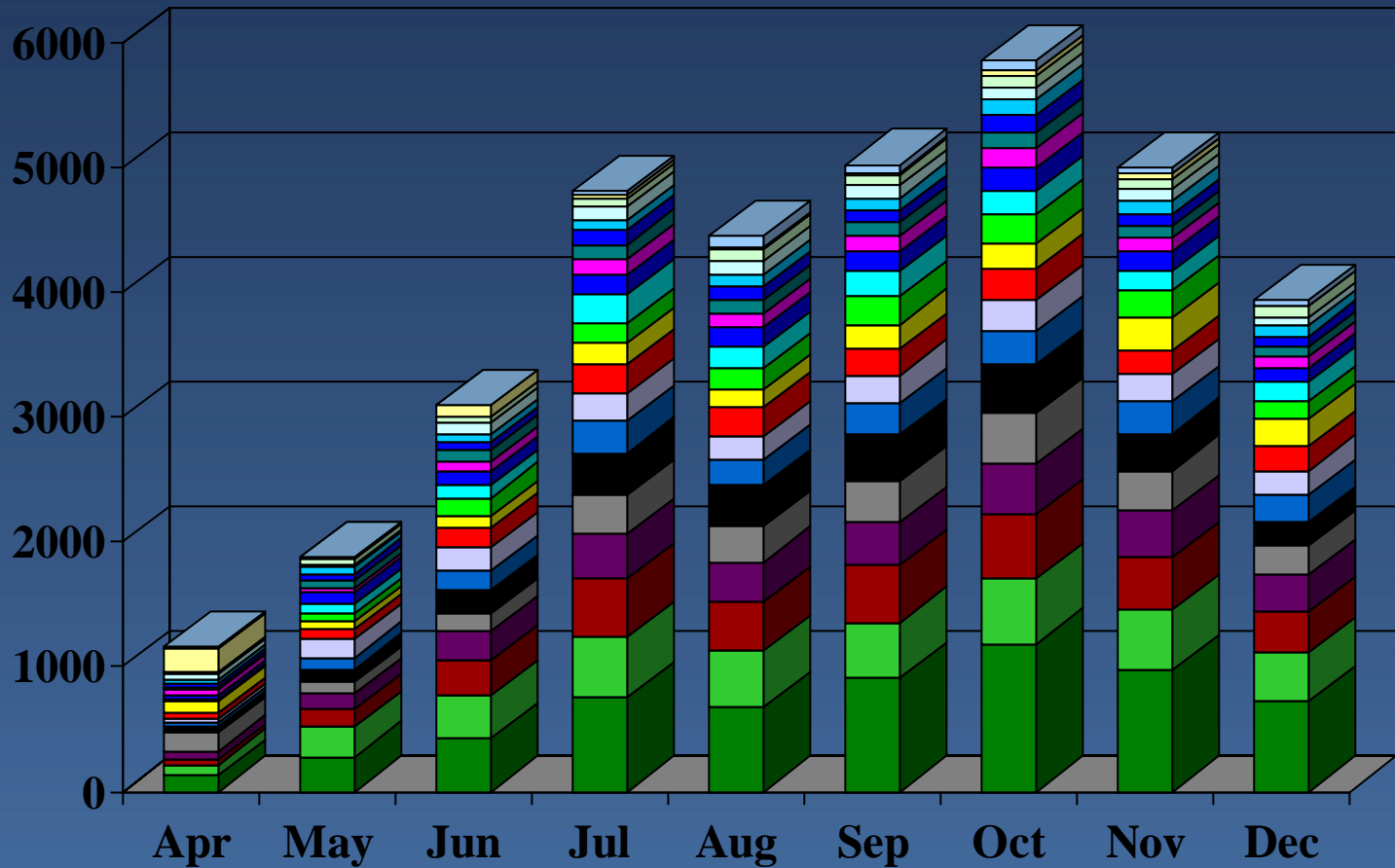
[Complete News & Events](#)

The Library of Congress

[Contact Us](#)

Please Read Our [Legal Notices](#)

# Queries Received via Ask a Librarian Web forms through the end of 2002 (over 35,000 total across the 22 reading rooms)




# Ask a librarian...



*with a Librarian*  
beginning June 24

an online reference service from the Library of Congress

- Try the [Virtual Reference Shelf](#) for quick answers to many general questions.
- [Search the Library of Congress Web Site](#) or [Search the Online Catalogs](#).
-  indicates that **chat service** is available during designated hours (times are noted on each form).
- Select a link below based on the subject of your inquiry.
- Please read our [Reference Correspondence Policy](#)

General Collections	International Collections	Special Formats & Genre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Business</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Humanities/Social Sciences</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Law</a></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Local History/Genealogy</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Newspapers/Periodicals</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Science/Technology</a> </li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">African/Middle Eastern</a></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Asian</a></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">European</a></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Hispanic (select a language):</a><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#">English</a></li><li>- <a href="#">Español</a></li><li>- <a href="#">Português</a></li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">American Folklife Center</a></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">American Memory</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Geography/Maps</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Manuscript</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Microform</a></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Motion Pictures/Television</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Music/Performing Arts</a></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Prints/Photographs</a> </li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Rare Books/Special Collections</a></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Recorded Sound</a> </li></ul>

The Library of Congress >> Ask a Librarian Home  
**Ask a librarian...** an online reference service from the Library of Congress

**Before You Ask**

**Services we provide**

- Assistance using the American Memory collections and Library of Congress online resources.
- Response within 5 business days

**To report errors**

- use our [error report](#) form

 Visit [American Memory](#) and the [Library of Congress Learning Page](#)

**General questions can be answered using**

- [Virtual Reference Shelf](#) - a selected listing of free Internet reference tools


**Or try these Library of Congress resources**


- American Memory [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- LC [Online Catalogs](#) including [PPOC](#) and [SONIC](#)
- [Thomas](#); [LC Online Exhibitions](#); [Global Gateway](#); [Today in History](#); and [Guide to Law Online](#)
- Internet Resources for [Archives and Manuscripts](#)

Search in  for

Note: The above search will retrieve Web pages only.  
[Select this link](#) to search American Memory digital items.

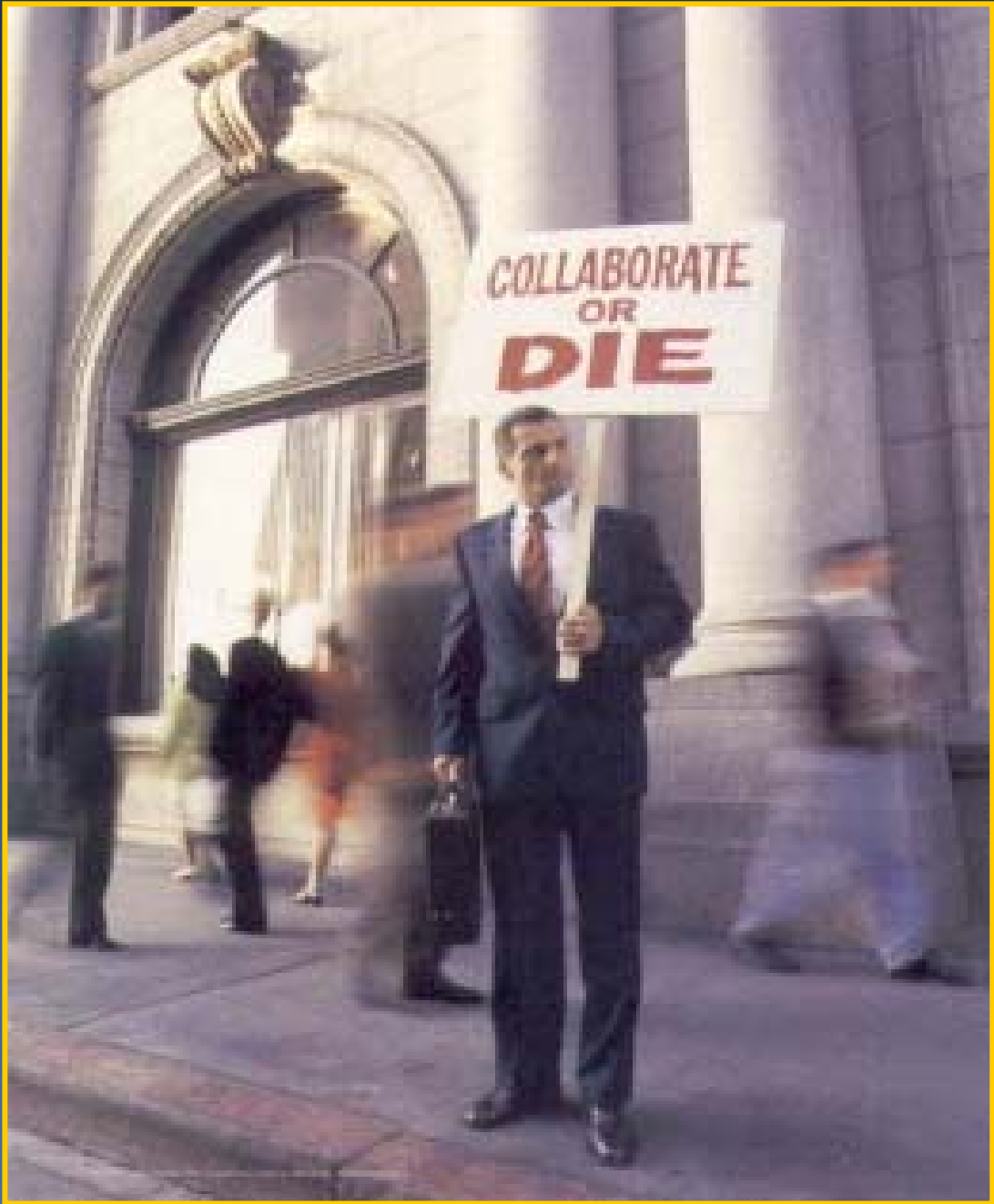
**Getting Answers**

 **Ask a Librarian:**  
If you have a reference question, proceed to the online form; get answers via email

 **Talk One-on-One with a Librarian:**  
Monday through Friday  
2:00-4:00pm, Eastern Time

**Some questions are better directed elsewhere:**

- Local [Public Libraries](#) - most public libraries now offer online services where you may find the information you need.
- Local [Federal Depository Library](#) - for copies of printed government documents and Congressional documents from 1876-1973.
- [National Archives and Records Administration](#) - for census materials, military records, links to presidential libraries and original government



# Why Global Collaborative Reference?

- Libraries have always cooperated
- Meet patrons at point of need
- Gain access to other collections and experts
- Be part of something big
- Address the digital divide

# Biggest challenges to success @ LC

- Culture change
- The “real” researcher
- Getting 500+ staffers on the same page
- Providing the tools and training
- Establishing methods of communication
- Establishing a sense of ownership
- Establishing methods of migration of skills
- Convincing librarians of the value of a global network

# Technology is the Easy Part

- Ensuring accuracy of responses
- Licensed databases and copyright
- Classification vs. natural language
- Who has access?
- Language and cultural context

# Continuing Challenges

- Education and skills
- Copyright and privacy
- Document delivery/Fulfillment
- Standards, systems and software
- Policies and guidelines
- 24/7 Access

# What Our Patrons are Saying....

- I was thrilled with the service and the information I received.
- I am so grateful for this information, which I had tried unsuccessfully to get on my own. Reference librarians to the rescue once again!
- I had given the wrong name of the journal and they figured out the actual name. They also called me at home to let me know. It was the best service I had could have received. Thank you so much.

# And more....

- Wow!! thank you for this wonderful service. Not only did I receive the needed obituary but the librarian found 2 additional new articles for me. Ancestry.com did not have these newspaper articles. Thank you so much.
- I wasn't too satisfied with the response I received, which suggested I go to the Los Angeles Public Library for reference service (which I had already done). I needed government and reputable statistics for my question and did not get a satisfactory answer by being told to go to the Los Angeles Public Library.

# Lessons Learned

- The “Vision thing”
- Staff buy in
- Rethink services and dare to be different
- Identify and overcome barriers
- Test solutions ... be flexible
- Increase professional development
- Find out what the patrons want
- Trust other institutions/partners
- Market services
- Assess constantly



**A Biblioteca Virtual**  
do estudante brasileiro



Lac Courte Oreilles  
Ojibwa Community College  
**Virtual Library**



**Anytime, Anywhere Answers**  
Building Skills for Virtual Reference



[ Virtual Library @ ABERDEEN COLLEGE ]

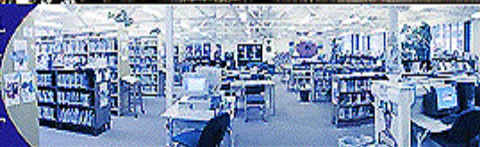


**Hong Kong**  
*Virtual Library*

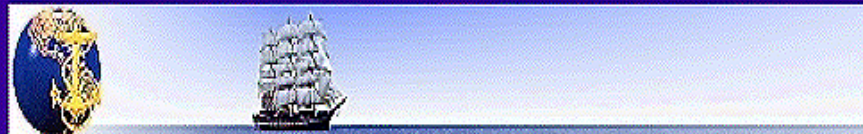


# Ask a librarian

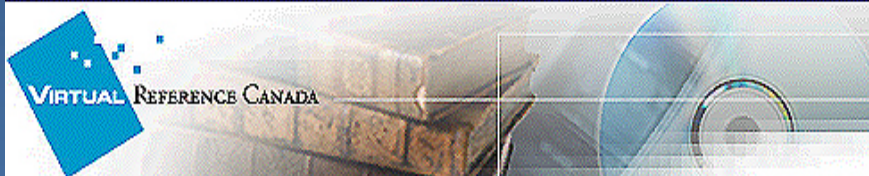
Virtual  
Library  
Media  
Center



an online reference service from the Library of Congress



**The World Wide Web Virtual Library: Naval and Maritime**



**USM LIBRARY NETWORK: Gateway To The Virtual Library**

<http://www.lib.usm.my>

- Malaysian Links
- Reference Resources
- Virtual Subject Libraries
- Inhouse Resources
- Teaching & Learning Resources
- Databases
- Divisions & Units
- Services
- Collections
- OPAC: KRISMALIS
- Branch Libraries
- USM Press



**PERPUSTAKAAN UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA PULAU PINANG**  
Universiti Sains Malaysia Library, 11800 USL, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia

# Think Globally, Act Globally!



**Ask a librarian...**

**[www.loc.gov/rr/askalib](http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib)**



**QuestionPoint**

**[www.questionpoint.org](http://www.questionpoint.org)**

**[Linda J. White lwhi@loc.gov](mailto:Linda.J.White@loc.gov)**