

## The Library: Empowering YOU the Patron

In this day and age when everyone is so busy that you need to take advantage of every minute of the day (and sometimes night), wouldn't it be nice not to have to wait until the library is open to take advantage of its myriad resources? Just think if you could sit at home and search the library catalog, request books, do research for your next term paper, trace your family's genealogy, find how to replace the timing belt in your 1996 Pontiac Grand Am, or prepare for an upcoming GRE exam 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and from anywhere in the world. What a wonderful world that would be!

Well, it is a wonderful world and here at the library we are trying to make it even better. You can do all of these things and much more right from the comfort of your own home, even while wearing those pajamas and fuzzy bunny slippers (don't worry we can't see you!).

All that is needed is that magical piece of plastic known as a library card. Magical, you ask? Yes, it can open a new world of information available to YOU, the residents of Bartholomew County. Books, movies, CDs, newspapers, magazines, programs, computer classes, and online databases and services all become available with your library card.

I know what you are thinking... "Why do I need the library, I already know how to use Google. If I need an answer in the middle of the night, all I have to do is turn on the computer and surf until my problems have been solved." The majority of the world would agree with you. According to a survey done by OCLC, the Online Computer Library Center, 80% of respondents said that a search engine would be their first choice when it comes to finding information. Only 11% would start at the library and only 6% would start with an online library. Also intriguing is a NEC Research study that found that the search engines with the largest number of Web pages indexed (such as Google) each index no more than 0.03% of the web- that's only 1 in 3000 pages available. Just think of everything you're missing!

While we here at the library would agree that the internet has made searching for information much easier, it cannot be solely relied on for your information needs. Not only are you missing a great deal, but you risk finding outdated, misleading, or just plainly incorrect information. Anyone can create a web page and bill it as correct. How are you to know the difference?! Enter the librarian, A.K.A. Information Professional. Through our web site we have done the hard part for you. We found reputable sources, obtained the licenses to use it, and organized it in an easy to find manner. All you have to do is use it!

Librarians used to be "information gatekeepers" where the information was so hard to find or impossible to access that patrons had to ask a librarian for help. While we are still available for help (remember we like to be disturbed!), technology has allowed us to open the gates and let the information be freely accessed by all. We can now use our skills and knowledge to become "information tour guides" to help YOU find what you need, when you need it...now that's what I call empowerment!

Remember to visit us 24 hours/7 days a week at <http://www.barth.lib.in.us>

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