

PUBLIC LIBRARIES ARE ESSENTIAL TO COMMUNITY, AND THE ERASURE OF LIBRARIES WOULD BE DETRIMENTAL

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ABSTRACT

This article demonstrates the importance of public libraries and their collections. Their job descriptions include gathering information and searching for books and resources for the patron's professional or personal use. Public libraries benefit everyone regardless of who they are, because of the vast free resources offered, hard work put in by the librarian and staff, and therefore should be protected against the threatening competition.

Key words: Public libraries. History Public Libraries. Communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

As technology continues to advance, there is increased talk surrounding public libraries being wiped out and replaced with internet websites, like Amazon.com, or even existing competition, like Barnes & Noble. Public Libraries are buildings with a collection of books, DVDs, magazines, newspapers, and other like materials, available for patrons to check out for an extended period at no cost to them. Public libraries also generally provide free wireless internet connection and computers with internet access. Programs for all ages that range from toddler story time to adult book clubs are created for inclusivity for everyone. Libraries are run by librarians, who are some of the leading heroes of public libraries. Their job descriptions include gathering information and searching for books and resources for the patron's professional or personal use. Public libraries benefit everyone regardless of who they are, because of the vast free resources offered, hard work put in by the librarian and staff, and therefore should be protected against the threatening competition.

One of the biggest sparks of this debate was a *Forbes.com* opinion piece, "Amazon Should Replace Local Libraries to Save Taxpayers Money", that has since deleted. This article was backed

with little facts and research but had the other gone to a public library he very easily could've used research databases to back his arguments. In his article, Mourdoukoutas argued that local libraries are no longer useful. If libraries closed, he wrote, taxpayers would save money, and Amazon could open bookstores to provide those communities with physical books (Thu-Huong Ha). These claims are largely based on advances in technology, new websites, and the digitalization of most of the physical resources that the library offers. “[Libraries] don’t have the same value they used to,” the article argued. The functions of the library, Mourdoukoutas said, have been replaced: community and WIFI are now provided by Starbucks; video rentals by Netflix and Amazon Prime; and books by Amazon. “Technology has turned physical books into collector’s items, effectively eliminating the need for library borrowing services (Thu-Huong Ha).”

2. HISTORY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The history of public libraries begins with Colonial America when the first library systems were found mostly in higher educational settings, mainly consisted of imported books from England, local documents like pamphlets, newspapers, and legal forms, and were largely male-dominated. From 1890 through 1914, public libraries expanded rapidly in number, collection size, and staff. The role of women grew substantially; by 1878, two-thirds of library workers at the Boston Public Library were female. (Aside: the use of female staff was not done to advance women’s rights, but to subordinate female librarians to male professors and other experts.) Free public libraries were established in cities such as Los Angeles (1889), New York (1895), New Orleans (1896), and Brooklyn (1897) with:

- Long open hours
- A reference department
- A cataloging department
- An author-title card catalog and a subject card catalog
- Arranging books on shelves based on their classification numbers
- Overdue fines
- Circulation records based on slips and classification numbers. (SDStaff, D)

Librarians are arguably underrated in their profession as they tend to be the backbone of a library's daily function. The requirements put in place to be a librarian include receiving a master's degree, which guides them to be the best source for information in the library. Librarians gain a wide variety of scholarly knowledge and public information sources, follow trends related to publishing, computers, and the media to oversee the selection and organization of library materials (Librarians). Librarians go above and beyond what other workers in the library may be able to do because of what a required master's degree in Librarian Science entails. Generally, librarians work well with people, have exceptional written and oral communication skills, are bursting with intelligence and curiosity, know the means to conducting great research because of their computer skills, have a sharp eye for detail, and most importantly have a general love of learning (What Can I Do with an Information).

Without librarians, libraries would not be as useful because of the lack of resources and research libraries may be subject to. Librarians order materials and books that could be essential to the public libraries and for patron's use. They are sharp and creative, organizing events for any range of age or profession. Librarians and what they bring to libraries is a large part of the essence of why bookstores and websites like Amazon.com can't even compare to public libraries.

Libraries cannot merely be replaced by bookstores, like Barnes and Noble, or even electronic books. These arguments stem from the convenience of the internet, by quickly streaming and downloading e-books and movies or, purchasing a physical book online and having it shipped to your home. Other arguments include that taxpayer's money is being put into libraries that they don't even use. The argument in response to that could be shame on them for not taking advantage of what the library has to offer, but even if not for them, shame on them for not understand that plenty of people are using the library because they may not be able to afford what others can. Libraries allow people to borrow reading and entertainment materials at no cost, which is something Barnes and Noble doesn't do.

Barnes and Noble is a business that generates money mostly from the sale of books. While businesses as such shouldn't be knocked, one thing to constantly keep in mind is that everyone is not able to afford the same things. So, in the case of buying books, not everyone can afford to buy books they want to read or can buy the books they are required to read for classes. While yes, some may argue that seating space is available for people to spend hours in bookstores to read the material they need. Considering that they are unable to afford to purchase the book, a large reason

is that they are working to be able to live and therefore don't have the time to sit in a bookstore all day, to read. Electronic books, or e-books, could solve this problem as well but the fault in that theory is that to access e-books a person needs to have access to the internet and either a computer or a tablet that supports the download of the electronic books.

E-books are convenient, and tablets/e-readers are growing more popular. In 2017, 20 percent of people in the U.S. who read books stated they read more e-books than hard copy books (Fuller). Technology is changing and people are responding. Being able to find and download hundreds, all the while, never leaving your home. According to a report from Author Earnings, from 2016 to early 2017 Amazon sold over 487,298,000 Kindle books (Kozlowski). Luckily, e-books can more recently be downloaded through some public library catalogs. These downloads are free and can be done from home, so if the patron has access to the resources that support an e-book download, they can do such from home.

The number of tablet sales is impressive, but what should always be remembered is the fact that not everyone can afford such technology. Depending on the tablet purchased, this more than likely will cost a person \$200 at least. This is not affordable for every person's budget along with the fact that not every household in the US has wireless internet. In 2016, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 81 percent of people in the US had a household with internet access. That is 97,303,800 households with internet access, to the 118,860,100 households in the US (Digest of Education Statistics). E-books aren't always free or cheap. Sometimes they can be a cheaper option, but not always. An example of this is A.J. Finn's book, "The Woman in the Window: A Novel", which can be purchased for \$11.99 as an e-book, versus \$11.59 for the paperback version (Amazon.com).

Another con of e-book reading is technology. The e-readers are always subject to technical issues that can wind up creating more expenses for the user. One of the most popular e-readers on the market, the Kindle Fire, costs (depending on the model) at least \$165 per device (Amazon.com). This could be a reason for declining sales since 2017. According to the Association of American Publishers, E-book sales slipped by 3.9 percent in 2018, according to data, while hardback and paperback book sales grew by 6.2 percent and 2.2 percent. Another factor, in the sale decline and another con of having an e-reader, is to download most e-books an internet connection is required. While most of the US has wireless internet, 10 percent do not use the

internet (Who's not online in 2019). The majority of this population includes 65+-year-old adults, who earn less than \$30,000 annually.

Public libraries don't even compare to websites like Amazon.com or bookstores because simply put; the library is free. The few services that do require payment at the library can often be avoided (with exception). Printing documents, for example, is a low cost. Generally, for black and white printouts, are between 10 and 15 cents per page, and cost a little more for printouts in color. Patrons are responsible for lost library card fees or overdue material fees, but these fees are typically avoidable. Bookstores don't hold as many free and useful services as the library does. Copies can also be made at the library for around the same amount as prints. There can be scanners and fax machines which are convenient for deadlines. Scanning documents is usually free because the scanning machine is typically connected to the computer giving the patron the option of uploading and emailing the documents. Even the cost of making copies can be avoided if the scanner has a photocopying feature, which allows the user to photocopy their documents to a USB or similar memory drive.

A popular free resource the library offers is checking out movies and television shows. Patrons of all ages enjoy having the ability to check out their favorite movies or tv shows, with no cost to them. This is another factor that makes public libraries not comparable to websites and applications that offer similar services. One website that is often compared to the public library rental system is *Netflix.com*. Netflix is a popular media service that offers thousands of popular and original television shows and movies for a monthly fee and has been popular in homes for over a decade. The website changed the at home, movie and television watching game as well as had a hand in putting the nail into the coffin of the once popular movie rental store, Blockbuster. Netflix can arguably be compared to public library's DVDs and Blu Ray disk rental, as being a better option but there are more positives to renting from the library. The biggest reason renting disks from the library is better than watching shows or movies on Netflix is because generally movies can be rented from the library with a library card. This means at no cost to them. In comparison, Netflix costs \$10.99 per month (2018) for a standard account, which has increased from the 2017 \$9.99 price. Besides, not all of the most popular films can be found on Netflix, but most popular titles can be found and many libraries. Some libraries even carry Netflix original series, so those who cannot afford the subscription don't necessarily have to miss out. There are movies and television shows for younger kids and older, more mature audiences.

In regard to age groups, there are activities and events to support all. Starting with babies and toddlers, there are events crafted to entertain and support their literary and imaginative development skills. Storytime, playgroups, interactive toys, picture books, and puppet shows are some of the many baby and toddler activities. The early childhood years, birth to age 5, have long been accepted as the most critical point in neurological or brain development. Studies by the National Science Teachers Association show that young children learn through active exploration—and the drive to observe, interact, discover, and explore is inherent in their development (Issues). The public library is a space that parents can take their children for several hours, to further encourage this development. The library could be a fundamental experience in a young child's development. Parental reading to children increases the child's reading and other cognitive skills at least up to the age of 10–11. This is an early-life intervention that seems to be beneficial for the rest of their lives (*Reading to Young Children: A Head-Start in Life*). Just simply reading to a baby or toddler can build greater fundamental learning skills, which is an advantage they could have when the time comes to start schooling. In a study with interesting results, Senechal et al. (1996) reported that other aspects of the home literacy environment (e.g., number of books in the home, library visits, parents' own print exposure) were related to children's vocabulary skills; however, only the frequency of library visits was related to children's vocabulary after controlling for the effects of children's print exposure. Payne et al. (1994) found that adult literacy activities (e.g., the amount of time a parent spends reading for pleasure) were not significantly related to children's language (Lefevre).

For older kids, they can begin using computers that are programmed with educational games. there are chapter books, toys and games, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) activities, and arts & crafts. Teens, who often begin losing interest in the library, are provided with help from information tables library workers with resume making, college fairs and tablings, job applications, FAFSA, and community outreach. All of these materials and resources are important for kids and teens throughout the entire year. While school is in session, lower level education students have a reliable and safe place to go, to help them complete their school work. While of course, their school will have a library and librarian of its own, the library will close shortly after the completion of the school day. The public library hours, however, typically extend hours past the time school libraries close and are open at least one day of the weekend. This is also especially important during the summer when kids are on summer vacation. During this time, if

they aren't receiving a sort of educational lessons or material, they may have a harder time readjusting back into academic studies when school is back in session. Many students lose the equivalent of one to two months of reading and math skills during the summer and do not score as well on standardized tests as students who continue to learn during the summer (GreatSchools Staff). Public libraries offer meeting spaces for after school tutors as well as carry examination books like the SAT and ACT exam books.

Adults have access to the same resources along with networking opportunities and assistance with tax filing. These are resources that aren't offered at chain bookstores, so how can Barnes and Noble replace the public library? Some patrons, regardless of their age, are not computer savvy and can't simply jump on to a computer at the library. The library system is aware of this so many branches have computer training classes, among the other resources offered, to help patrons learn basic computer functions and programs. This often includes programs like Microsoft Office, Internet Explorer, and Google Chrome. This can help younger generations who haven't begun learning and also adults and the elderly who never learned. Today, the ability to use most of these applications is a requirement for most jobs. If an adult is in the job searching process, there is a great chance they're unable to afford to pay someone to teach them how to use a computer or these applications, so instead, they're able to learn at a public library, for free.

Seeing that public libraries carry a grand collection of books, there are typically books for all, which fosters a more diverse environment. These books include subjects about language, family life, race, gender, immigration, and disability among many other important topics. As the social climate of our country changes, the public library reflects this shift by introducing books and resources that better connect with the identities of its patrons and their families. As the need for these materials changes, the librarian will reference that change and the library collection will be a reflection of it. For example, in a community that is gaining refugees, the public library might be commonplace for them to go. Depending on their English proficiency, they could go to the library with their caseworker or children that are more fluent in English and request books in their native language. If the library doesn't have the book they're looking for, the book can either be ordered from a different library branch that does have it, or the librarian can buy the book and have it for circulation at that branch. This can be fulfilled for other intersections of diversity.

The seemingly simple equipment found at libraries is royally helpful for patrons to use. Some libraries have computers that come equipped with webcams. A webcam can be useful for

many reasons. Some patrons have computers at home but their computers don't have web cameras, so they have to go to the libraries. Not everyone has a home computer, but they can rely on using the computers at the library with or without a library card. Often a guest pass can be obtained for use of the computers for those patrons that may be from out of the area, or those unable to be granted a library card. Today, some companies require video interviews for jobs, and they can still have a chance of getting the job because the library equipment is available for their use. Other reasons people can make use of the webcams is to communicate with loved ones who may be far away. Library computers and internet access aid communication for anyone that knows how to use a computer.

A non-physical resource that is often taken for granted by people is the quiet environment in the library. A place with low noise makes for a good place to study, concentrate and get work done with little distractions. People often go to coffee shops with their laptops to study, complete homework, hold meetings, use their free WIFI, and charge their devices. Public libraries have free meeting rooms, like coffee shops, but often are required to reserve to ensure a private room. This is better than having a meeting in a busy and noisy coffee shop or paying to rent a space. Renting spaces can be pricey and the public library system is considerate of this. Electrical outlets, and more recently, charging stations are a simple yet highly needed feature in a public space where people will spend substantial time, or just need a place to rely on to have a power source. People can rely on public libraries to be spaces where they can charge their cellphones, without having to purchase a drink (like they would at a café) or be watched with judging eyes, like they would at a bookstore (some of which don't have outlets in plain sight).

What also sets the library apart from its "competition", especially considering the monetary gain differences, is that there is a sense of trust set up between the patron and the library. The borrowing system gives patrons the sense that they are trusted enough to be responsible for the materials they are checking out and will return them in the allotted time they have with them. This is important because a lot of people will feel more inclined to bring the items back. Even if the item is lost or never returned, the patron isn't barred or completely loses their library privileges. Depending on the library, the patron can still check books out, use the computers, and browse the library's catalog as much as they want. Along with this, patrons will also go to the library to feel safe. Some of the material people go to the library for includes information on sensitive issues, like domestic violence, divorce, and different forms of abuse. The library is a great place to find

books on sensitive subjects that they may not be able to bring into their home or keep there for a long period of time. This also includes a teen who may be questioning their sexuality or may be pregnant and can't be open with their parents.

Libraries are such sacred spaces that they can be compared to museums, and even to some, actually second as museums. According to, *museumplanner.org*, a museum is “a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment.” The definitions of a museum and a library can be interchangeable. The collections in public libraries are vast and diverse, leaving bookstores behind. While libraries hold the same books that can be found in bookstores, what's different is the historical resources that can be found in libraries. A large reason people of all ages go to the library is that they are looking for physical historical material that often can only be found in a public library.

Some examples of this are the historical books and documents that can be found in several Buffalo and Erie County Public Library Branches. The Central Library located in downtown Buffalo, NY has a room dedicated to the famous author, Mark Twain. In the early 1930s, the Buffalo Public Library (a predecessor of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library,) began to build a unique collection of special English and foreign language editions of the novel. Through the years, this collection has continued to grow. These remarkable items, Twain ephemera, and other collectibles, currently number more than five hundred, filling the bookcases lining the walls (Buffalo & Erie County Public Library).

Bulkley Southworth Griffin Collection: Griffin was a Washington DC newspaperman and avid Twain collector. In 1967, he donated his collection of over 1200 items relating to Mark Twain to the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library. The collection primarily consists of various editions of Twain's published works.

English and Foreign Language Editions: In the early 1930s, the Buffalo Public Library (a predecessor of the BECPL) began to build a unique collection of special English and foreign language editions of Huck Finn. Throughout the years, this collection has continued to grow. We now have over 220 significant English language editions this collection has continued to grow. We now have over 220 significant English language editions and over 150 editions in more than 30 languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish.

Games and Novelties: Twain was also an inventor. Included in this collection is an original, unique, and somewhat convoluted memory builder game he created based on the royal families of England. It is said that "by the time he stopped, the game looked like a cross between an income tax form and a table of logarithms." Novelties include Twain cigars and collectible plates.

Illustrations: His collection includes original Norman Rockwell lithographs (signed by the artist) from the 1940 edition of Huck Finn, as well as a collection of Barry Moser woodcuts created for the 100th anniversary Pennyroyal edition.

The William A. Miles Center for African and African-American Studies is the largest resource center in Western New York for information on African American history. This unique and outstanding collection was established in 1965 by now-retired B&ECPL Assistant Deputy Director William A. Miles, and in 1975, the Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier began to incorporate microfilms of primary source material on the history of African Americans in the Western New York area. The Grosvenor Room (located at the Central Library in downtown Buffalo) is the premier genealogical destination in Western New York and holds a wealth of information on all things Buffalo and Erie County. The focus of the collection is on Buffalo and Erie County; however, it includes resources related to other New York counties, states, and foreign countries. The collection is composed of the following resources:

- 25,000 local history volumes
- 5,500 genealogies
- 850+ census microfilms for Erie County, Western New York, and a few other states
- Local history scrapbooks and vertical files
- 100s of city directories and phone books
- The New York State Vital Records Index and a limited collection of local vital records

All of these searches and records are each important to study and can lead people to answers about who they are. Locating genealogy records, marriage records, death certificates, maps, and city grids are all important and serve their specific purposes. Some of these purposes include finding the validity of passed down family stories, learning about historical events, tracing medical conditions that could have been or can be passed down, tracing land ownership, seeing the land before the effects of environmental issues, finding birth parents, learning community history, and just completing general historical studies. Most of this information, outside of the library, can be found, but typically with a price. Information like marriage certificates and death records are can

be obtained at the City Hall Clerk's office, but often require specific identification for access. Other information like genealogy requires a paid subscription to websites like Ancestry.com, which some are unable to afford.

If not seen as educating young students and adults about important historical figures, this can at least be seen as beneficial from an economic/financial gain point of view. People globally know Mark Twain for his famous novels like *Huckleberry Finn* and study him and his work. These Twain scholars are recognized and awarded for their studies and even have dedicated scholarships in place for their studies. These students have the option to visit a public library to learn more about the works of Twain, but more importantly, actually be able to see his original work which can help them better understand Twain as a person, inventor, and author.

Those who want to know more about African American history that isn't always told as it happened, or are curious about their family genealogy are in luck as well. Just like people travel to cities and include visiting museums on their list of things to do, the same could be done for libraries. If more information was shared with other cities about the historical resources they could find in Buffalo, there's no doubt more travelers would make a point to visit the Buffalo and Erie County Public Libraries. People already do this in bigger metropolitan cities like New York, Washington D.C, and Boston. In Buffalo, for example, an increase in travelers would be a great benefit for the economy. This could even attract new residents and homebuyers because of the community feeling libraries bring.

Often forgotten about patrons in the library include the ex-convicted. The difficulty of re-entry into society for ex-cons is not often thought about when a person has no direct relation to one. This process is difficult for a variety of reasons that feed off of each other. Some of the largest reasons include not being able to land a job, and the second reason being that they cannot function normally in society. According to the National Institute of Justice, within the first three years of being released from a criminal justice facility, two-thirds of former inmates are rearrested. Within five years of release, three-quarters are rearrested. (*Keeping Inmates on the Outside*). When a person knows prison more than they know the outside world, living among people who haven't been in prison or just not living in prison anymore can be difficult. As a result of this, some ex-cons will be released from prison just to find themselves back inside.

Some ex-cons will attempt to find jobs upon being released and when they're unable to, they will turn back to the crime that landed them in prison in the first place. For example, people

convicted and imprisoned for the distribution of drugs can attempt to search for jobs on their own but will find looking for an employer willing to hire them, with a criminal background, hard. This is stacked with looking for adequate housing, transportation, and of course without money they can't afford groceries. Eventually, they may go back to their old habit of selling drugs because they don't have to go through the ins-and-outs of the job-seeking process with the high possibility of rejection.

The Hennepin County Library is one of several libraries attempting to tackle this issue. The library created a reentry program by first creating a newsletter that turned into a pocket guide called Going Home. This guide contains information on how local institutions, including the library, could help with housing, jobs, education, and more. An area map delineating Hennepin County Library's 41 locations, hotlines, and websites for shelters, legal resources, addiction, and self-care support, are included (Keeping Inmates on the Outside).

3. PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND THEIR SOCIAL ROLE

Public libraries often serve as a place for refuge for the homeless in cities. The homeless go to libraries to stay warm in the winter, cool in the summer, use the restrooms, but above all else, use the library's resources like anyone else. Public libraries are ideal for the homeless to spend the day because unless they need papers or documents printed, they don't have to worry about needing money while being there. Homeless people are often forgotten about as being human, sometimes because of the mental illness that can be associated with the homeless population (usually as a result of being homeless).

The thought of homeless people wanting to use the computers seems absurd, but there's no difference between them and other patrons in a different economic standing. Public libraries also house information tables for organizations that assist homeless patrons. Just like ex-cons, or non-homeless adults and teens, the homeless population can still benefit from the resume organization assistance to help them land a job. In places with extreme weather conditions, the library will either come to their aid by being a place for them to stay until the weather gets better or provide information about where they can go for shelter. An example of this is the Buffalo and Erie County

Central Library opening on a Sunday in the summer of 2018 when they're normally closed, for the homeless population to go into because of the record high temperatures.

On the other side of the spectrum, libraries offer programs and space in general to serve small and large businesses. Most libraries have meeting spaces and the research that is at the fingertips of a librarian, to help improve the health of their business. Large businesses are often unaware of the services they could receive from libraries, for free, as they instead pay for the same services. Libraries could play a greater role in supporting grant applications if researchers knew that support was available and if library involvement was more formalised [formalized]. Libraries have an opportunity to use their skills to help researchers improve the quality of their grant applications, and increase the institution's success in winning research income (*The Value of Libraries for Research and Researchers*). With help from librarians, large businesses could benefit from the costly resources and computer programs they would otherwise be paying a lot for. "Librarians can serve as an extension of your staff and will help you harness the power of these resources to grow your business" (Any Library Initiative Anywhere for Every Library Everywhere).

Librarians can assist business owners with research, which some (arguably a lot) don't know how to conduct. This is fundamental for business because research is essentially what keeps their clientele, and brings more in. Business research can assist in determining what potential customers want, identify problems within the business, how these problems can be resolved, and finding new ideas to expand the business.

While there are professional consulting and public relations firms that specialize in this form of assistance specifically, businesses are still going to have to shell out money to these companies. Libraries have access to some of the same information and websites consultants use via the online databases they are granted access to. Business resources from a public library are essential to the growth of the business because simply put, the public library is a huge part of communities. With that being said, resources from a library can help build community relations. Since time is being spent in the library by business owners, they can get an idea of the patrons in the library who could be their future clients. Librarians can help businesses build relationships with the community, and community relations are more likely to support these businesses.

An example of libraries helping businesses grow and become more in touch with the community is the Cecil County Public Library located in Elkton, Maryland. After realizing there

was a greater need for research and assistance for business, in 2003 they applied for a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant to launch the Small Business Information Center (SBIC) and hire a full-time business librarian. This helped dozens of business owners start-up or their business. “I met multiple times with the Office of Economic Development and literally had to take my computer and show them how to access Reference USA, Demographics Now, Lynda.com, Gale Courses and the Small Business Resource Center. I gave their employees a tutorial of how to use them and even had testimonials/success stories of patrons that used our resources to start their business.” Peacock Training Institute, LLC is one example:

While visiting the library, Alan Pfau, a veteran who served his country for 14 years with multiple deployments, learned about the Small Business Information Center, made an appointment, and discussed how the library could help him become his own boss and start a firearms training business, Peacock Training Institute, LLC. By providing relevant demographic and competitor information related to his industry. He also received referrals to the Cecil Business Resource Partners (CBRP), which he describes as a real turning point for his business. CBRP is a partnership of Cecil County's education entities and non-profit organizations that have joined together to share information about free resources for small businesses. These connections fostered growth for his business (Testimonials).

Online databases are made up of many different components such as a reference database, an article database, and even the library's online catalog. An online resource that contains a wealth of information and articles in the form of print sources like newspapers, magazines, journals, and reference materials can also be called a library database (Base, Q). Library computers have access to databased, that often require payment to use, for free. These databases can be useful to all demographics. Some of these online databases include Reference USA, which helps users make marketing plans, find jobs, create competitive analysis, and locate addresses of people among many more useful tools. General education databases like ProQuest and EbscoHost also exist and are especially helpful to students seeking scholarly articles that may be mandatory for their written work. These databases have almost an infinite amount of information that can be categorized into sections like; social sciences, law, regional, and cultural studies with detailed subcategories.

Opposing views of public libraries can't be ignored. There are ways to improve libraries so they won't disappear anytime soon from being swallowed into the capitalist world. This includes an increase in funding. A great deal of the money that goes toward libraries comes from

taxpayers and different levels of government. The lack of patrons using the public library for its resources may and probably has caused the closing of several library branches. If big businesses would use the library for their free services to replace the service they currently pay for, they could place that money into the library via donations. This would tremendously help many public libraries. Another way, which requires the least amount of money, is by just more people going into public libraries more often. This is basic supply and demand. If more people go into libraries, the sources of the majority of the money that is put into the libraries will likely be more inclined to continue funding the branch. The percentage of general revenue that is appropriated to public library service is typically small at all levels of government, tends to vary widely among jurisdictions, and is largest at the level of government which has the most restricted sources of revenue-local government, primarily cities (CiteSeerX).

Some people don't go to the libraries as often because they're unaware of what libraries are offering. This could be partially the fault of the people in charge of advertising and media for the library, but what also must be considered is that advertising is rarely free. When it comes to having social media promotion or flyers, someone will more than likely need to be paid for creating the content. So that goes right back to libraries needing more funding. Amazon's growth in the physical store game also cannot be ignored. According to Michael Browne, of *Supermarketnews.com*, sales at the company's physical stores — which include about 500 Whole Foods stores, as well as a growing fleet of Amazon bookstores, pop-ups and cashier-less Go convenience stores — grew just 1% to \$4.3 billion from \$4.26 billion a year ago. It's clear that Amazon's bookstores and pop-up stores are at least piquing the interest of people, but the true interest will be clear in the coming years since the Amazon bookstores and pop-ups are fresh to society (Browne).

4. CONCLUSION

Public libraries are safe places that welcome and encourage any and everyone, who brings peace, through its doors. There are valuable resources and materials made available for anyone in the community or even people who aren't from the area. The library is led by educated librarians, who serve to help patrons with their needs. People of all ages have activities and interests that can

be filled by going to the library. In recent years, talk about doing away with libraries has been circulating because of the ever-growing technological world. These conversations aren't as valid as they are made out to be because as the tech world grows and shapes society, libraries grow and evolve as well to fit in. The struggles that some libraries are facing involve residents being unaware of the extremely helpful free resources that are available in their city. This is causing libraries to not get the funding it deserves. As a result, some libraries are being closed people are missing out on information, books, and resources that could help their everyday lives.

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