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Every librarian has a favorite "you won't believe this reference question" story—and those who work for chat-based reference services might be able to claim several stories per shift. In this issue, Nicolette Warisse Sosulski looks at how the prank phone calls of my generation have morphed into prank chat reference sessions. We also feature a quick look at the 2016 Dartmouth Medal winner and Honorable Mention title; offer up a must-know resource for business reference questions; and our sponsor, Gale/Cengage, offers insight into its new partnership with Google.

If you have any suggestions about what you'd like us to cover—or would like to contribute a feature article—feel free to e-mail me at rvnuk@ala.org.

—[Rebecca Vnuk](#), Editor, Collection Management and Library Outreach, *Booklist*

Real Life Reference: Do You Have Prince Albert in a Can? or, When Bored Tweens Use Chat Reference

by Nicolette Warisse Sosulski



The greatest hazard to chat librarians might be bored tweens. During the week, they—and sometimes their accompanying parents—are scarily focused on school projects for geography, History Day, and the science fair, as well as finding a book to report on that is not lame. But on the weekends, things change. With a nod to Thomas Paine, "These are the times that try librarians' souls."

Weekends often bring sleepovers, which seem to be more common than they were during the antediluvian period, when I was a tween. Sometimes this group spends a long weekend in migrating sleepovers that seem to last two to three days, changing venue from one kid's basement to another. The second night, once the pizza has been eaten and the first movie watched, what you have are a bunch of 11- to 13-year-olds who are pumped up on Mountain Dew Voltage, Skittles, and hormones, with nothing to do. Bored, they want to reach out and touch someone. So they log into their local public library's chat space.

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"If it isn't on Google, it doesn't exist." Wikipedia cofounder Jimmy Wales's famous quote about Google rings true for many teachers, professors, and librarians. For years, educators mourned this trend, judging general website searches too limiting to support comprehensive research. But those concerns dissipate when quality content becomes accessible through Google. It's a case of moving the proverbial mountain to Mohammad—putting authoritative content into the workflow of information seekers.

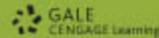


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Reference Site to Remember: Business Research Assistant

by Rebecca Vnuk

The Business Research Assistant page on the [University of Vermont Libraries Bailey/Howe Library website](#) is a terrific starting point for librarians who need to answer business reference questions but aren't confident in their ability to do so.



Aimed at student researchers, the site performs an online reference interview and drills down to just what kind of information the user is looking for.

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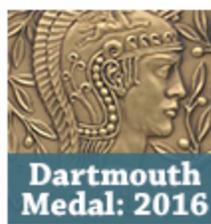
Dartmouth Medal: 2016

by Rebecca Vnuk

Established in 1974 and administered by the Reference and User Services Association, the Dartmouth Medal honors the creation of a reference work of outstanding quality and significance, including but not limited to writing, compiling, editing, or publishing books or

electronic information. The 2016 winner was announced January 9, 2016, during the American Library Association Midwinter Meeting.

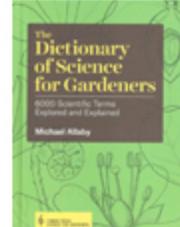
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Featured Reference Review: *The Dictionary of Science for Gardeners*

by Nancy Cannon

Written for the layperson with an interest in understanding the scientific terminology used in books and articles related to modern gardening, *The Dictionary of Science for Gardeners* provides 6,000 definitions from 16 branches of science.



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#twitterreference

by Rebecca Vnuk

Librarians rarely just sit there while out at the reference desk. Even when there's not a patron in front of them, they're often furiously typing away at something on their computers. It's likely that they're searching for the answer to a previous question, working on the latest collection report, tweaking a new public desk schedule . . . or perhaps they're tweeting. Let's take a peek.



Lousy Librarian
@LousyLibrarian

Harper Lee: towering literary figure, smallest "In Memoriam" library book display ever. #SaturdayLibrarian

8:28 AM - 20 Feb 2016

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Fake Library Stats
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78% of librarians have given their library's ILS the middle finger

11:17 AM - 26 Feb 2016

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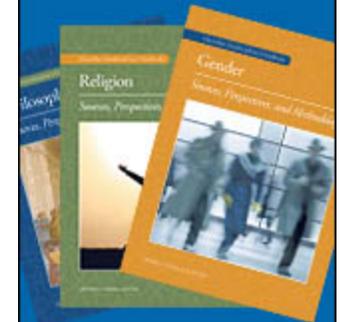
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@librarycop

Does it count as a reference question if a student asks how to play Minesweeper?#librarylife

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Can't believe Obama has the nerve to nominate a new Librarian of Congress during an election year

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72 120



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8. [Gale Encyclopedia of Genetic Disorders, 4th ed.](#)

9. [World of Forensic Science, 2nd ed.](#)



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I treat cataloging like electricity. It's very important and I don't quite understand how it works; so I do not touch it.

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