



Not Your Mother's Librarian

Libraries in the 21st Century



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before we begin...



what lisa's shirt says. she got it at raygunsite.com. it is no longer available.



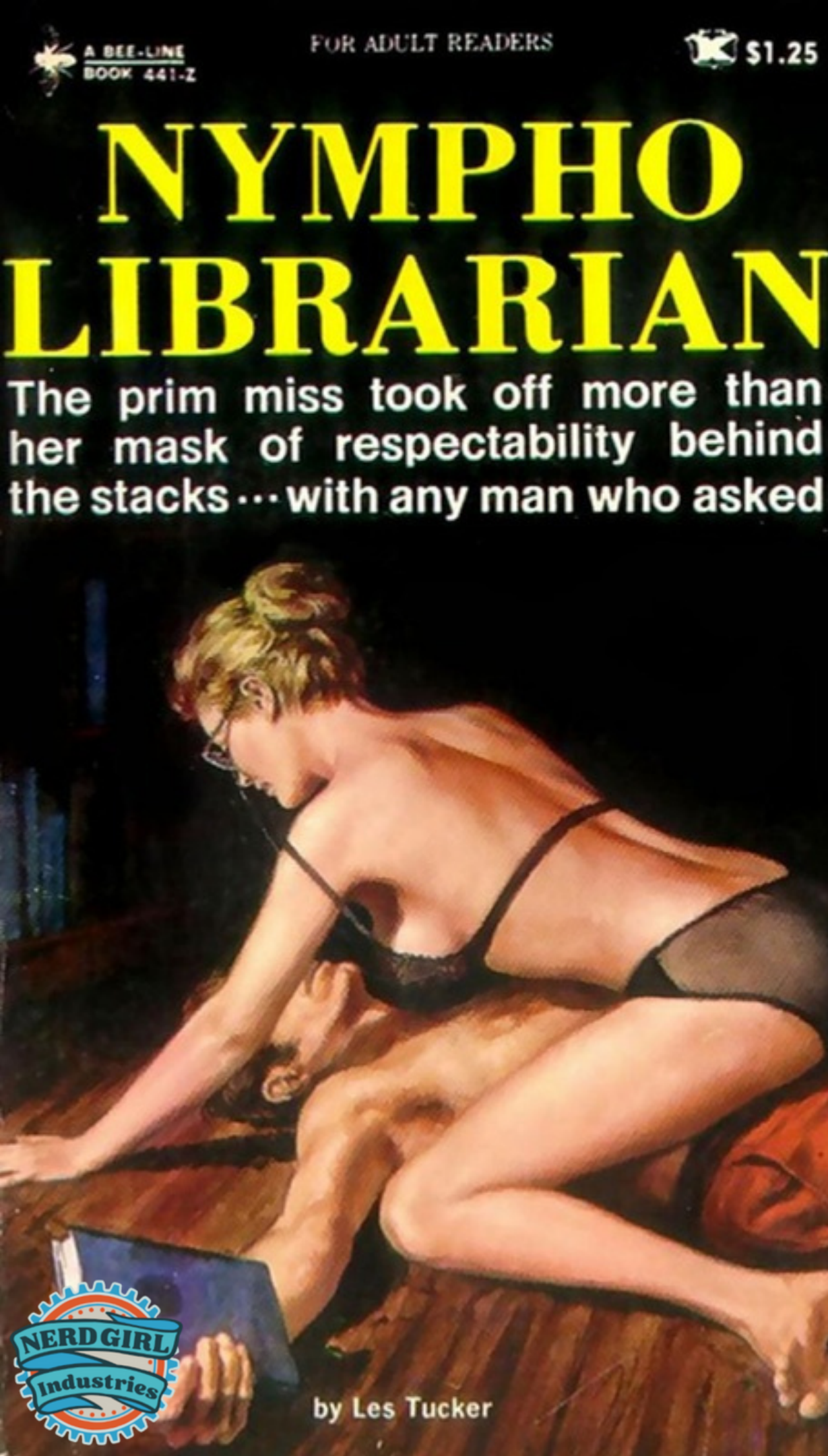
Nitro

Fox News' recent description of libraries may lead to a spike in visits!

RAYGUN

about lisa and nerd
girl industries





Who is your hostess with the mostess?

- Overly educated (two Bachelor's and three Master's degrees)
- Nerd Girl Industries is my side-hustle
- Enjoys heaving bosom books, sometimes her husband and her pug, trashy TV, Guinness, Jane Austen, and European football (go Nottingham Forest!)
- Has nearly 30 tattoos
- Works at one (possibly three) libraries in the area
- Previously worked as a digital archivist, academic librarian, and special collections librarian

Previous occupations

- Manager of a liquor store
- Network engineer
- Factory worker
- Senior Content Developer
- Bookseller
- Virtual assistant
- Tech support
- Customer service agent



where to find...

Lisa Rabey

Website <https://lisarabey.com>

Newsletter [A Most Unreliable Narrator](#)

Instagram [@heroineinabook](#)

Facebook [A Most Unreliable Narrator](#)

Bluesky [@pookiebear.net](#)

TikTok [@heroineinabook](#)

Jane Austen Empire

<https://linktr.ee/excessivelydiverting>

Nerd Girl Industries

Website <https://nerdgirl.net>

Email hithere@nerdgirl.net

Newsletter [Nerd Girl Industries Presents](#)

Instagram [@nerdgirlindustries](#)

Facebook [Nerd Girl Industries](#)

LinkedIn [Nerd Girl Industries](#)



librarianship is the 3rd
oldest profession*

*probably



the first recorded library in history (668 to 627 BCE)

Ashurbanipal had many titles. He was the :

- King of Assyria
- King of Sumer and Akkad
- King of the Lands
- King of the Four Corners of the World
- King of the Universe

He was a very busy man! But for librarians, he is known for creating the profession of librarianship and for his Library of Ashurbanipal (668 to 627 BCE). The Library held over 100,000 texts (of which 30,000 still survive today). It is considered one of the richest sources of history on Mesopotamia.

The Library was not suppressed in size until the Library of Alexandria was established nearly four centuries later.

(Both libraries were created to hold all of the knowledge known at that time.)



Ashurbanipal (685 BCE - 631 BCE)

skipping ahead
nearly four centuries...



the first subject catalog

After nearly four centuries of organizing chaos, Callimachus comes along and creates the first subject catalog. Containing over 120 scrolls, the catalog contained a list, organized by subject and then by author. It also included the author's bibliographic details.

Callimachus referred to his subject catalog as the "pinakes," Greek for subject or list.



"The Great Library of Alexandria"
by O. Von Corven (19th C)

now skipping ahead
six centuries (give or
take)...



ingenia hominum rem publicam fecit*



Basilica Ulpia, the Ulpian Library, and the Column of Trajan by
Pablo Cabezos, 2015

During the height of the Roman empire (27 BCE to 473 CE), libraries played a huge impact on how the government worked with the population. Public libraries were not uncommon, and many Roman emperors, such as Julius Caesar, Tiberius, Vespasian, and Trajan, also constructed public libraries during their reign.

The first known instance of a public library was based on the vision Caesar had but was not completed until his death by Gaius Asinius Pollio as the Atrium Libertatis.

But, it was the private libraries of the Roman elite that made the biggest impression.

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Christian monasteries took over as “keepers of learning.”

“He made men’s talents a public possession.” -Pliny the Elder

(lots of things
happen)



libraries during the
medieval period
(476 CE to 1500 CE)



rise of monastic libraries and the birth of university libraries

- After the fall of Rome, monastic orders took over the care of libraries and the creation of books
- Books were lent to other monastic orders and the public
- Unlike libraries before them, monastic libraries were filled mainly with spiritual books and fewer secular ones
- With the creation of the first university, the University of Oxford, in 1046, monks would take their notes on science, medicine, philosophy, and more back to the monasteries
- The Duke of Humfrey's reading room at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, (image right) is the oldest reading room still in use since 1447
- Private libraries were on the rise in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries
- The first library catalog became available in 1595



(By Diliff - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=39687711>)

renaissance to
america



libraries come to america



On March 18, 1918, ALA sponsored a fund for books for WWI servicemen.

- The first book on modern library practice, “*Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*” (“Advice on Establishing a Library”) by Gabriel Naudé was published in 1627.
- Harvard University’s library system, created in 1638, is the oldest continuous library system in the US
 - It holds 16,832,952 volumes, 180,000 serial titles, 400 million manuscript items, 10 million photographs, 124 million archived web pages, and 5.4 terabytes of born-digital archives and manuscripts
- 18th C France saw the formation of *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (National Library of France), which held over 300K books and manuscripts
- In 1731, Benjamin Franklin founded the Library Company of Philadelphia, the first subscription library in the US (forbearer of the public library system)
- In 1876, the American Library Association, the largest professional organization for libraries, was founded
- In the early part of the 20th C, due to changes in the job force, women are allowed to become librarians (men had traditionally held this role since the days Ashurbanipal)
- In 1931, S. R. Ranganathan introduced the five laws of library science
 - Books Are For Use
 - Every Reader His/Her Book
 - Every Book Its Reader
 - Save The Time Of The Reader
 - The Library Is A Growing Organism
- In 2023, 83% of librarians were women
 - But the majority of librarians in administrative capacity were men
- In 2025, there are 124,903 libraries (public, academic, and special) in the US

wait. there are more
than one type of
library?



yep!

Public (17,278 in the US)

Libraries that are open to the general public. Residents can typically obtain a card for free, and non-residents can obtain a card for free or for a low cost. Patrons can check out materials and use digital resources.

Special (5,422 in the US)

Libraries that cater to a specific topic (art, health, government, etc) and may be open to the general public. Some may allow you to check out materials, but most will allow library use only. Types of materials to be checked out vary.

Academic (102,203 (including school libraries) in the US)

Academic libraries are libraries at colleges and universities. Their collections are geared toward their academic community and may not carry general fiction and non-fiction titles. Some academic libraries may allow you to check out materials, but most will only allow library use only. Types of materials to be checked out varies.



do you need a degree
to become a
librarian?



depends on who you ask!

There are undergrad degrees that offer library studies, but that is geared for library staff who do not plan on going into librarianship. Many feel that you must have the advanced degree (Masters in Library Science (MLIS) or Masters in Information Science (MIS)) from an American Library Association (ALA) approved school. MLIS degrees take between 18-24 months to complete. There are also PhD programs that specialize in library science.

However.

I personally believe that you don't need an advanced degree to become a public librarian. Now, if you're going into something specialized or in academia, you do need an advanced degree. Yet, my belief system is from years on the job: each public library does things differently and some undo the academic training to fit their purposes. One of the best librarians I know is an assistant director at a rural library and does not have an MLIS. (Nor does the director for that matter.)

The problem is that by not having a MLIS degree, you get paid lower wages for the same work as someone who has the degree. Public libraries are recognizing that MLIS is “preferred but not required.”



what kind of
background do you
need to become a
librarian?



i was curious about this myself so I asked my statewide library mailing list and these are the answers that I got:

- Managing a funeral home
- Run a soup kitchen
- Blog editor
- Tarot card reader
- Football coach (Big Ten)
- Playing in a string quartet
- Community organizer
- Mixologist
- Band leader
- 911/police dispatcher
- Degree in Marketing
- Air Force veteran
- Brazilian Jiu Jitsu
- Rock climbing
- Seamstress
- Stain glass
- Weaver
- Farmer
- Scuba diving
- Degree in Fashion Merchandising
- Degree in Information Security and Intelligence
- Certifications in horticulture
- Metal shop production line
- Comedy writer
- Degree in Math
- Shooting
- Degree in Chinese Literature
- Environmental specialist
- Bronze casting sculpture foundry worker
- Mortgage officer
- Commercial banking
- Insurance underwriter
- Lifeguard
- Tax preparer
- Professional figure skater
- Degree in Asian Studies
- Degree in Biology
- Janitor
- Degree in Middle Eastern Studies
- Thrifting and antiquing
- Degree in Linguistics
- ASL interpreter
- Paddleboarding
- Surgical technician
- Mixed martial arts
- Video games
- Wood carving
- Degree in Social Work
- Degree in Zoology



(i also asked them what they did in their spare time, too!)

- Homesteader
- Runner
- Thimble collector (digitabulist)
- Stockbroker
- Civil War era antique gun competitor
- Restaurant manager
- Medical records clerk
- Jump from airplanes
- Degree in French
- Rally car driver
- Bass guitar
- Pokemon fan
- Makes fan art
- Dog sledding
- Farmer
- Secretary to FBI Agents
- United States Marine Corps
- Community Nutrition Instructor
- Software engineer
- Online gaming
- Greenhouse hydroponic grower
- Carpentry
- Day Laborer
- Radio DJ
- Kayaking
- Boy Scout leader
- Lawyer
- Bank teller
- WWE fan
- Web developer / web design
- Gardner for a cemetery
- Professor of Microeconomics
- Admin for a roofing company
- Server / busser / restaurant host
- Civic leadership
- Degree in Political Science
- Web director
- Degree in Anthropology
- Degree in Theater
- Weapon fighter
- Foraging for food in the wild
- Detective agency clerk
- Navy submariner
- Degree in Cell Pathology
- Home brewer
- Society for Creative Anachronism
- Taxi cab dispatcher
- Metal detecting
- Cybersecurity
- Industrial Engineering Manager
- Ice hockey (women and co-ed teams)
- Degree in Engineering
- Mid-century Modern design
- EMT
- Poker player
- Maple syrup producer
- Curling
- Jewelry store clerk
- Engineer
- Degree in Religious Studies
- Degree in Archeology
- National Park Ranger
- Hotel night auditor
- Punk rock band singer
- Weight lifter
- Degree in Chemistry
- Realtor
- Degree in Criminal Justice
- Longboarding
- Ordained Minister
- Cyclist
- Public radio announcer
- Vet tech
- Professional musician
- Football
- Sculpture
- Photography
- Skateboarder
- Garden center clerk



how do I find my local
library?



easy!

Google the following: “Name of town” +library.

Google

“Detroit, mi” +library

✕ | 🔊 | 🔄 | 🔍

AI Mode

All

Images

Maps

Videos

Shopping

News

More ▾

Tools ▾

Open now

Results for **Detroit, MI** · Choose area

Places

Main | Detroit Public Library

Public library

5201 Woodward Ave · (313) 481-1300

Open · Closes 6 PM

Website

Directions

Duffield | Detroit Public Library

Public library

2507 W Grand Blvd · (313) 481-1710

Open · Closes 6 PM

Website

Directions

Jefferson | Detroit Public Library

Public library

12350 Outer Dr E · (313) 481-1760

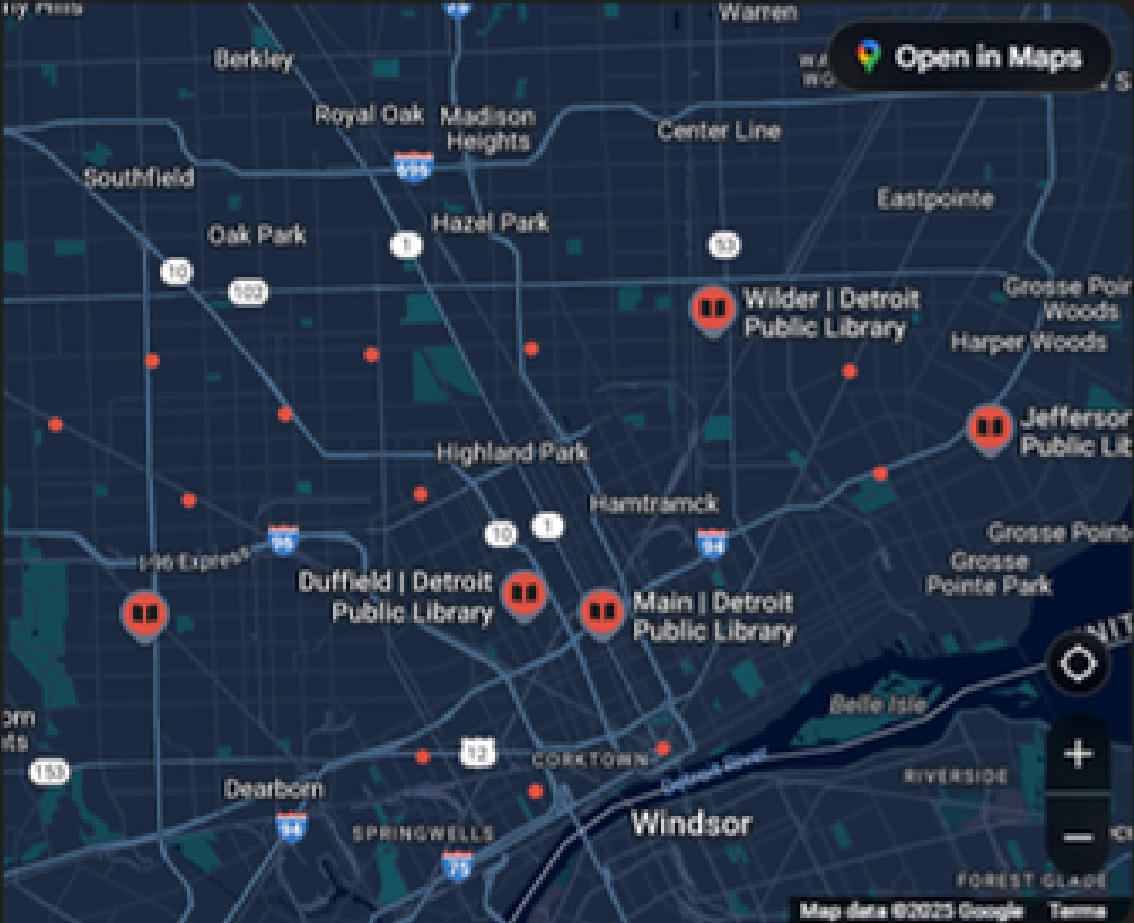
Open · Closes 8 PM

Website

Directions

More places >

Open in Maps



The logo for NERD GIRL Industries is a circular emblem. It features a blue gear-like border. Inside the circle, the words "NERD GIRL" are written in a stylized, bold, blue font, and "Industries" is written in a smaller, blue font below it. The background of the inner circle is white.

Page 26 of 84

how much are library
cards?



free!

Typically, most libraries require one (or more) the following to get a library card:

- State ID of some sort
- Passport
- Bill with your address on it
- Mail with your address on it

In short, proof you live in that community.

Why?

Library funding is based on its service area. Most are supported by millages, fundraising, Friends' groups, and other sources of income. For some of that funding, they may need to prove that they are serving their local community, and they do so by providing statistics (number of library patrons per day, circulation statistics, programming attendance, and more) to the library board and other entities.



my public library is too
far away/not open
when i need
it/something else. how
do i get a library card?



you can still get a library card!

If you're unable to get a library card in person, no worries! Most libraries will issue you a temporary card online that allows you to access the digital services for a short time until you can get in and get your physical card.

Keep in mind the temporary cards do have a shelf life so hustle in when you can!



can i get a card at a
library outside of my
community?



yes! The following libraries offer digital services for a small fee.

- [Queens Public Library](#)
 - \$50/year and gives you access to their online resources.
- [Orange County Library System](#)
 - \$75/3 months or \$125/year, and gives you access to their online resources.
- [Royal Oak Public Library](#)
 - \$100/year and gives you access to their online resources
- [Fairfax, VA County Public Library](#)
 - \$50/year and gives you access to their online resources.
- [Siouxland Libraries](#)
 - \$63/year and gives you access to their online resources.
- [New York Monroe County Library System](#)
 - \$25/year and gives you access to their online resources.
- [Salt Lake City Public Library System](#)
 - \$80 / year and gives you access to their online resources
- [Chapel Hill Public Library](#)
 - \$65/year and gives you access to their online resources.



wait! i thought you said
library cards are free!
why do i need to pay?



you caught me!

Library cards are paid for by your tax dollars so they are not really “free.” Such as the previous slide where I discussed how libraries account for their services, non-residents pay a fee that is typically equal to what a resident pays via their taxes/millages. (Don’t quote me on 1:1 as each library system does their calculations differently.)

(And no, you can’t get a refund on your taxes if you don’t use your public library!)



what do i get with my
library card?



(are you ready?)



this is just the tip of the iceberg on what your local library does:

- Lend books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, newspapers, audiobook, ebooks, and Library of Things
- Notary Public
- Tech support
- Mobile library
- Wifi
- Access to databases and newspaper repositories
- Makerspaces / STEM
- Author readings
- Small business services
- Exhibits
- Film screenings
- Talks
- Community outreach
- Clubs (anime, book, graphic novels, etc)
- Home delivery
- Job search
- Classes (tech, art, yoga, and more)
- Programming for all ages
- ESL interpreters
- Adult literacy and GED classes
- Printing/copying/faxing (printing may cost 10¢ to 50¢ per page)
- Meeting rooms
- Public computers
- Archives
- 3D printing
- Interlibrary loan
- Community support
- Passport applications
- Curbside pickup
- Language groups
- Escape rooms
- Writing groups

This is just some of what a library system local to me has for its 15,000 residents.



i had no idea!



i know, right?



how many items can i
check out and for how
long?



that depends on the library system!

The library I work at is in a rural area with about 4,000 residents. I can check out up to 70 physical items which includes:

- Books
- DVDs
- CDs
- STEM kits
- Musical instruments
- DVD player
- Telescopes
- Magazines
- Games

and more!

(Digital items have their own limits.)

Our due dates are three weeks from day of check out for books and kid's DVDs and CDs. The library of things (musical instruments, DVD player, and more) are one week as are magazines, DVDs, and CDs. Patrons get one renewal before the item is due back.



what about fines?



most libraries have done away with fines!

Why?

Fines were seen as a barrier to access for those with lower income. Without fines, libraries continue to provide services for the community as well as to continue to provide free and equitable use of the library. Plus, fines are not a reliable source of income.

My library has a volunteer fine jar that patron's can use if they are wrecked with guilt about not paying fines.

Now, we do charge for lost and damaged materials. So, if you return a book that cannot be recirculated, you're charged the price of the item on your account. In my library, once you hit \$50 in fees, you cannot check-out any more items until the fees have been paid.



wow, my local library
does a lot! now, what
does the non-resident
card get me?



lots of things!

If you live within driving distance of that library, you will more than likely get check our privileges which means access to the library's thousands of physical materials like books, DVDs, albums, library of things, and more!

But in reality, most people want non-resident cards to get access to digital services such as:

- Ebooks (Libby, Hoopla)
- Magazines
- Audiobooks (Libby, Hoopla)
- Movies (Hoopla, Kanopy)
- Databases
- Newspapers

and more!

The holdings on the digital services are in the tens of thousands. One library card I have has over 50,000 ebooks and audiobooks in their collection. Who doesn't like finishing a book at 1 a.m. and being immediately able to check out another? (Me. I like doing this.)



i'm a big fan of using
libby and hoopla. but
since they are digital,
why are there wait
times?



blame the vendors!

Vendors charge libraries cost per item for their digital collection with a check-out threshold. This means that once a library has reached that threshold, they have to re-buy the book to keep it in their collection. This is also why digital materials have smaller check-out limits than physical holds.

How do vendors base the limit on check-outs? By what they think how long a physical copy of the book will last in circulation.

The thing is, this number is false! Libraries go to great lengths to preserve their physical collections by covering the books in clear plastic to lessen wear and tear of the covers, enforce books to keep the bindings in place, and repair books as needed. Physical materials, even ones that are checked out hundreds of times, have a much longer life than before.

In the end, the vendors are evil and full of ?!%#!



shout out to interlibrary
loan (ill)!



what is ill?

ILL allows libraries to borrow books from other libraries. Say you live in Detroit and DPL doesn't have a book you want to read. You can request the book from over 400 other libraries in Michigan that participate in ILL. It typically takes 5-7 business days for the book to get to you at your home library. You pick up the book at your home library and you can check it out for four weeks with one renewal before the material needs to be returned.

ILL items are typically books, DVDs, CDs, and audiobooks.

Michigan's ILL system is called MeLCat and our patrons are heavy users (you know, we're a small library with one branch, we can't get everything!). You can check out up to 70 items via MeLCat. Once I had over 40 items checked out!



how do libraries acquire
materials?

acquiring materials is known as collection development

- Patron suggestions
- Book reviews
- Industry news
- Advance reader copies
- Community needs



how do libraries decide
to remove materials?

removing materials from the collections are known as weeding or deselection

- Condition of the books
- How many times the book has been circulated
- Outdated information
- Limited space
- Connection to the community
- Availability



what do libraries do with
discarded materials?

libraries are probably the #1 entity that destroys books*

- Little free libraries
- Book sales (local and online)
- Donations
- Destroyed



*It's the message, not the medium!

things found in
bookdrops

yes, these are real things people have left in book drops

- Animals (living and dead)
- Drug paraphernalia
- Bodily fluids (diapers, used tampons/pads)
- Weapons (guns, knives, bullets)
- Food (chicken bones, ½ eaten ice cream cone, etc)
- Sparklers
- Framed photos
- Birth control (pills, patches, and condoms)
- Pet waste
- Materials chewed by animals
- Cannabis leaf
- Tennis racquet
- Garden hose (turned on)
- Can of unopened beer
- Shoes
- Bottle of unopened wine
- Clothing
- Puke
- Water lily plants
- Tools



things people use for
bookmarks

be honest: you've used something like this as a bookmark

- Leaves
- Pressed flowers
- Money
- Photos
- Notes and letters
- Food (wrapped American cheese slices, bacon, ½ onion, and more)
- Greeting cards
- Receipts
- Tin can lids
- Film negatives
- Crochet hooks / knitting needles
- Clothing
- Condoms (packaged)
- Gift certificates
- eReader
- Hair (strands and packages)
- Hygiene product wrappers
- Trading cards
- Checks
- Pouch of baby teeth
- Scissors
- Sandpaper
- Ceramic coasters
- Tickets
- Paint sample cards



libraries are not afraid
of technology!

In fact, libraries are on the forefront of technology by providing services such as public computers, faxing, printing, 3D printing, Makerspace, tech support, technology training, and more.

Even the card catalog is online!

(My local library system has Tech Tuesdays where lectures are given on everything from AI to how to use podcasts to iDevices and more!)



what libraries absolutely,
positively do not want

please do not think you are being helpful donating the following*

- Encyclopedias
- Magazines (especially National Geographics)
- Church cookbooks (unless specifically requested)
- DVDs, CDs, VHS tapes
- Books*
- Religious materials
- Computer software
- Travel guides
- Dictionaries and thesauruses
- Health and self-help books
- Advanced Readers Copies (ARCs)
- Abridged books
- Outdated books
- Calendars and planners
- Toys

*Libraries do not want donated books due to excessive wear, mold, water and other fluid damage, smoke, rodent droppings, outdated, limited space, or not worth selling at a sale. Those books may also already be in the collection.



what libraries absolutely,
positively do want

Vote **YES** to millages.

Money.

Volunteering.

Patrons.

That's it.



what people think
librarians do all day



what librarians actually
do all day

- Collection management
- Reader advisory
- Plan and run programs
- Reference
- Maintain website and social media
- Teach classes
- Introduce new technologies and services
- Research
- Marketing
- Graphic design
- Tech support
- Community relations
- Notary
- Write grants
- Customer service
- Outreach
- Janitor
- Management
- Meetings
- Maintain electronic resources
- Maintain displays and exhibits



librarians in pop culture





In the 1957 movie "Desk Set," Katherine Hepburn plays a librarian who is at odds with Spencer Tracy's character who is convinced his computer is more reliable and accurate than a librarian!
(He was wrong.)

more librarians in pop culture!

- Dr. Barbara Gordon aka Batgirl
- Evelyn Carnahan from the 1999 film, The Mummy
- Librarian (Ook!) from Terry Pratchett's Discworld series
- Lucien from the graphic novel, The Sandman
- Rupert Giles from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer
- Urag gro-Shub, the librarian in The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- Parker Posey in the 1995 film, Party Girl
- Stan Lee as the Unidentified Librarian in The Amazing Spider-man
- Cheshire Cat from the Thursday Next series by Jasper Fforde
- Mr Ambrose from Bob's Burgers
- Bunny Watson in the 1957 movie, Desk Set
- Conan the Librarian from UHF
- Twilight Sparkle from My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic
- Wong from Doctor Strange
- Belle from Once Upon a Time
- Flynn Carsen from the TV series, The Librarians*

*Librarians love to argue that Flynn is an archivist and NOT a librarian.



shushing is a myth!



yes! you can talk in libraries!

Libraries provide meeting spaces and study rooms. You can carry on conversations, answer your cell, and listen to music (with headphones on) in the library's main areas.

Just be mindful there are other patrons around you!



and lastly...



book bans and book censorship



Libraries are political.

And yes, it's complicated.



really, the last thing...



what does the future of libraries look like?

Libraries are more than just a book repository! They are also:

- Community hubs
- Community focused
- Centers of learning
- Service orientated
- Media and digital literacy
- Co-working hubs
- Meeting spaces
- Accessible digital spaces
- Safe space (Everyone is welcome at the library!)



bibliography*



*MLA 9th Edition

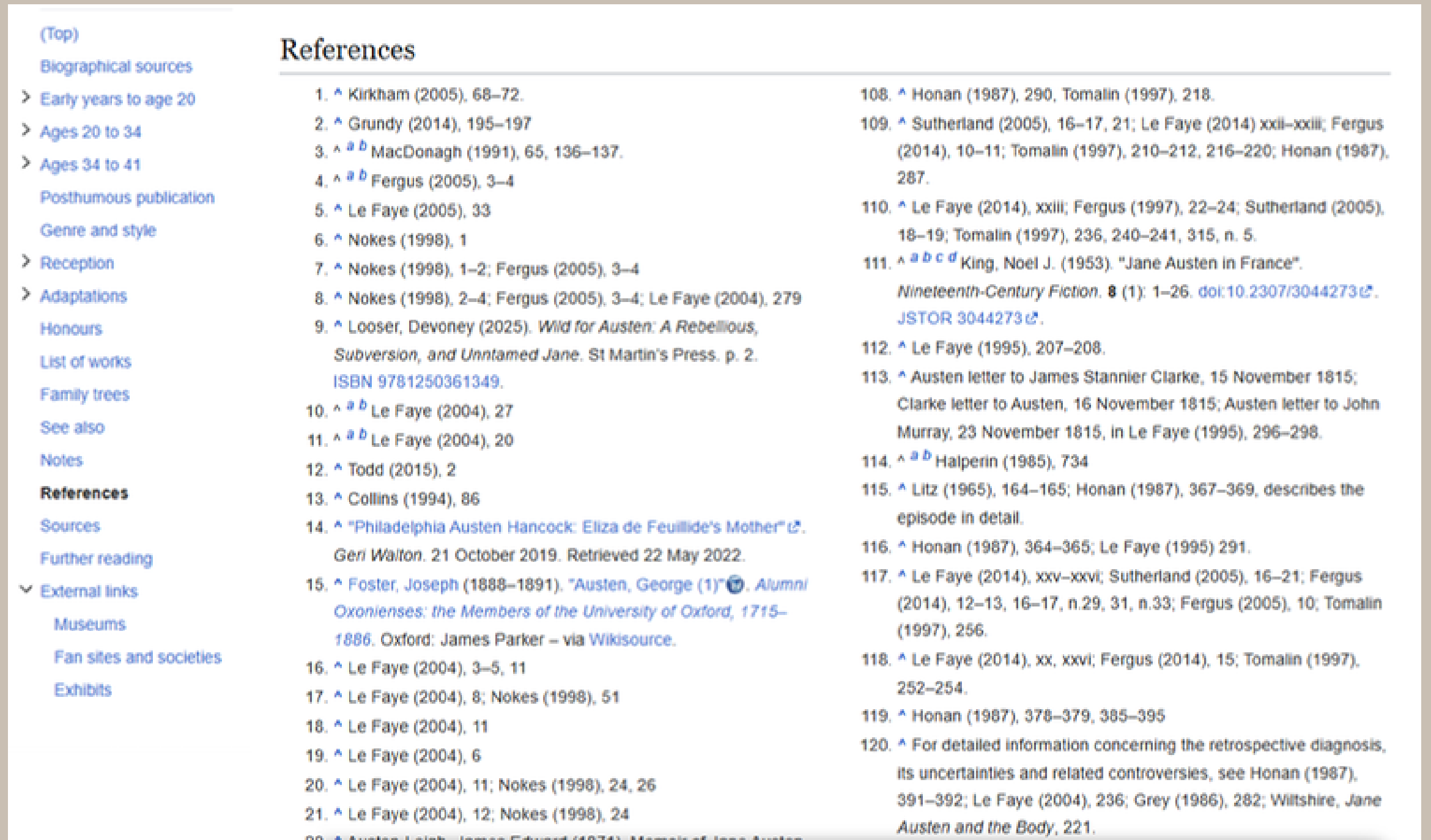
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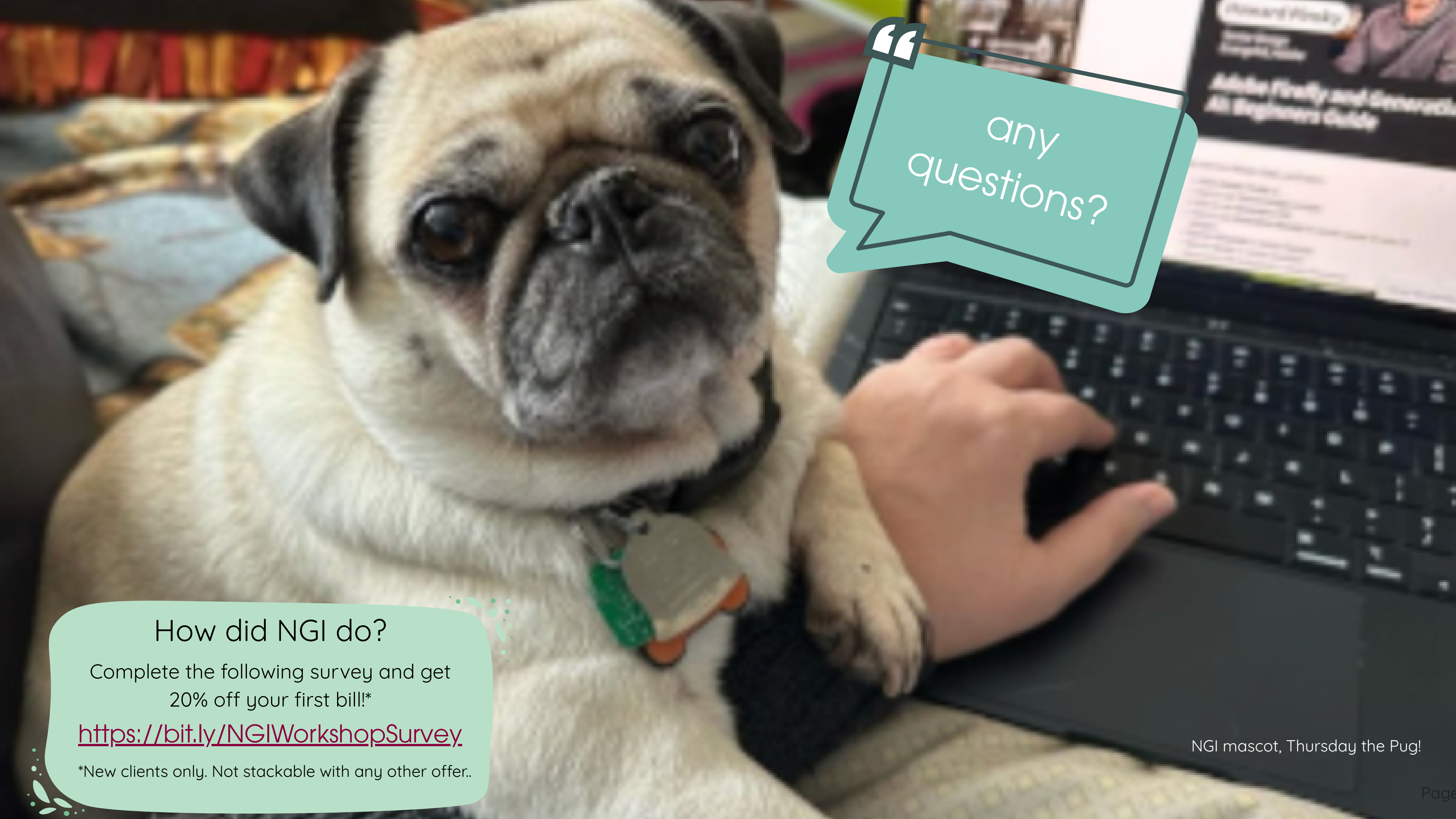
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Page 83 of 84



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