

A New Kind of Library

by ReadWorks



New York Public Library's Stephen A. Schwarzman Building

Does your school have a library? It probably does. The first libraries belonged to ancient kings. In the Middle Ages, monasteries and convents had libraries. The books in those libraries were written by hand, and they had pictures painted beside the words.

In the United States, most cities have public libraries. Inside most libraries are hundreds of books-and sometimes more!-many of which are available for taking home. Of course, you have to bring any book you borrow back to the library when you're done.

Libraries help people find information. As the ways people find information change, libraries need to change, too. The Internet is a tool that helps people find information much faster than if they were to look in books, so a lot of libraries have begun using computers and technology to help people keep learning.

The New York Public Library is the most famous library in New York City. When the main branch was opened in 1911, it had a collection of over one million books. Outside this main building, two giant stone lions guard the entrance. Since the library is over one hundred years old, bringing in new technology is not easy.

The New York Public Library now has computers in every building. You can use the computers to go on the Internet or to write a paper. The librarians will help if you have a question and there are even free classes to help people learn how to use new computer programs. But this is only the beginning of how the library wants to use technology.

In the basement of the library, there is a room filled with computer programmers and designers who are bringing new technology to the library. This place is called the NYPL Labs. Ben Vershbow runs the NYPL Labs. He wants to help the library reach more people. Ben runs projects using "crowdsourcing."

"Crowdsourcing" means getting a lot of people involved to help with a project. Ben is currently using the Internet to find people to help with the library's collection of menus. The library has thousands and thousands of old menus. You can see what people ate in the year 1900 and find out how much that food cost.

In the past, only people in New York could use the New York Public Library. Now, the library is online and everyone can enjoy it. Thanks to technology, we have a new kind of library.

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. What do libraries help people find?

- A. computers
- B. information
- C. paintings
- D. other people

2. A lot of libraries have begun using computers and technology to help people keep learning. What is a cause of this change, based on the passage?

- A. the difficulty of finding new books to keep in the library
- B. the fact that books are much less popular today than they used to be
- C. the growing number of people who want to visit libraries in person
- D. the ability of the Internet to help people find information quickly

3. Computers are helpful to have in the library. What evidence from the text supports this statement?

- A. Ben Vershbow runs the NYPL Labs.
- B. You can use computers to go on the Internet or to write a paper.
- C. The New York Public Library now has computers in every building.
- D. The librarians will help if you have a question.

4. Why might the title refer to the New York Public Library as "A New Kind of Library"?

- A. because the New York Public Library no longer has any books
- B. because the New York Public Library has been replaced by a different library
- C. because the New York Public Library is now available online, not just to people in New York
- D. because the New York Public Library has been different from other libraries ever since it opened in 1911

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. how technology and computers changed the New York Public Library
- B. how public libraries in cities across the United States function
- C. how the New York Public Library has changed the way people use computers

D. how crowdsourcing can help many people become involved in a project

6. Read these sentences from the text.

The New York Public Library is the most famous library in New York City. When the main branch was opened in 1911, it had a collection of over one million books. Outside this main building, two giant stone lions guard the entrance.

What does the word "branch" mean as used in this excerpt?

- A. a part of a tree that grows from the trunk
- B. the arm of a record player
- C. a major part of government
- D. a local store or organization

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence.

_____ the Internet, only people in New York could use the New York Public Library. Now, the library is online, and everyone can enjoy it.

- A. Before
- B. Next to
- C. However
- D. According to

8. What is Ben Vershbow, who runs the NYPL Labs, currently using the Internet and crowdsourcing to do?

9. What is one effect the Internet has had on the library? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

10. Explain whether technology has changed the library for the better. Support your answer with evidence from the text.