

Marisa Billings

Dr. Pope

AP Language and Composition

25 March 2020

### Synthesis Essay

As technology and society have made considerable advancements and growth within our society, learning has made direct and notable growth alongside it. Historically, libraries have served to provide an expansive and consistently updated learning environment to the public -- and have continued from their creation to today. As technology continues to be developed, it is debated as to whether libraries will remain relevant within a world of technology -- or if they will become outdated in favor of internet usage. Although libraries are thought to be archaic and outdated, they have made a cultural shift and integrated the use of technology into their systems. Libraries remain relevant and useful due to the fact they have shifted from simply providing books and research material to providing easily accessible technology, promote community based activities, and provide the underprivileged with internet access.

Historically, libraries have steadily updated their technology and have brought in more technology to keep up to date and maintain relevance and usefulness. Libraries have expanded to integrate technology into their resources, by offering Microsoft Excel classes, computer volunteers, and library Ebooks for Kindle (Source B). The assimilation of technology into libraries has proven their capability to remain up to date and supports the claim that libraries will

remain able to grow alongside technological advancements. In addition, libraries have evolved to become shared study locations with technology provided such as tablets, desktops, and 3D printers (Source E). While some may argue that libraries are becoming outdated in favor of more efficient internet usage, Sources B and E argue that libraries remain useful (despite not being for what they were historically useful for) and are able to keep up with cultural and technological growth.

Libraries do more for their citizens than just provide information for them, allowing them to become active members of their community and become a part of their society through community based activity. Libraries have expanded to include programs such as those involving children in reading at a young age, volunteer experience, exercise programs, and art programs (Source B). While libraries are broadening their community reach, they are also providing opportunities to citizens who can only obtain certain resources via public means. A study on library computer usage has revealed that of communal computer users, 22 percent rely on them as their only way to get internet/computer access (Source C). Some may argue that libraries are straying further and further from their traditional values and purpose of being solely a source of knowledge and research. However, Sources B and C invalidate this claim under the premise that libraries are continually expanding their realm of resources and promoting community activity by getting those involved who rely on public services.

Libraries allow the less privileged to still have access to books and computers, as a large demographic relies on libraries for physical books and internet/computer usage. A recent report has noted that “Hispanics, those without a high school diploma, the unemployed, rural Americans, and those with household incomes of less than \$30,000” are less likely to use

e-books, and therefore rely on public libraries for their resources. Libraries within large cities, such as Philadelphia, Seattle, and Chicago provide underprivileged people with the necessary resources to succeed -- not only books/internet usage, but also with librarians to aid with any questions/help inquiries (Source C). To contrast, some reduce libraries to historical monuments or simply displays of prestige within a society -- and argue that there is no more need for libraries in our communities (Source E). However, the libraries have more purposes other than being aesthetic buildings and aid in serving the public. Separately, sources C and E shed very dissimilar lights on the issue, but taken together, both sources argue the library's importance within our modern society.

Libraries have remained relevant in our society, despite changes in our society prompting changes in the resources provided by libraries and their overall nature. Libraries have adapted over time and historically have provided the public with necessary resources for the advancement of our society -- and they will continue to do so for as long as they are government funded. The technological advances simply are catalysts for change and advancements within the library system.