

# Ask Rita

## Resourceful



We welcome any questions you may have for Rita Resourceful. To protect Rita's identity, please email them to [tingleditor@gmail.com](mailto:tingleditor@gmail.com), with the subject Ask Rita, and we'll be sure to pass them along!

### *Dear Rita Resourceful:*

Since this issue is all about power, I thought I'd send you an email about the power that Wikipedia's recent blackout had in our library. The recent protest "Stop Online Piracy Act" (SOPA) and the "Protect IP Act" (PIPA) launched my students into a group howl of complaining. You'd think that Wikipedia was their only research source! I took the opportunity to show them what exists on our library's shelves. Are there some other "teachable moments" that you could suggest from this experience?

*Signed,  
Wowed by Wikipedia*

### *Dear Wowed:*

The Wikipedia blackout has provided many teacher-librarians with teaching opportunities. You yourself mentioned that it prompted you to take your students back to the shelves...and what an excellent way to provide students with an overview of a topic. What about reacquainting students with the many online databases and subscriptions to which you have access? I also think that the issues around PIPA and SOPA can begin valuable conversations with students about censorship and copyright infringement. It might also be an opportunity to help students understand the Creative Commons.

### *Dear Rita Resourceful:*

About half of my students use Twitter on a regular basis. I'd like to capitalize on the power of this product in the computer lab I have in my library. I'm not a tweeter myself so I was hoping that you might be able to offer me some teaching suggestions.

*Signed,  
Sweet Tweet*

### *Dear Sweet Tweet:*

You are right about Twitter being powerful. Just last year the U.S. Library of Congress acquired the entire archive of Twitter messages back to March of 2006. I'm not sure what will be done with all these tweets but once added to the biggest library in the world, they'll no doubt lead to some academic research on the patterns of social interaction.

So, what can you do with Twitter in your library? How about getting students to

write a book summary or review in 140 characters? Set some parameters like making the review concise, linking to the Amazon book listing, adding a rating and stating its appeal or flaw.

### *Dear Rita Resourceful:*

I'm a vampire-lovin' librarian but my circulation statistics tell me that interest in young adult series like L. J. Smith's "The Vampire Diaries" and even Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight" saga is waning. I'm saddened by this trend and need you suggest some other teen series.

*Signed,  
The Vampire-lovin' Librarian*

### *Dear Vamp:*

I know this will feel like a stake in your heart but the trend towards borrowing fewer vampire books has been observed in many school libraries. Instead, students are taking out books with supernatural beings like zombies and angels. There's also a shift towards dystopias and steampunk ("steampunk" is a genre with elements of science fiction, fantasy, alternate history, and speculative fiction that came into prominence during the 1980s and early 1990s.)

Here are some Vampire-alternative picks:

- *The Hunger Games* (Scholastic) by Suzanne Collins
- *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* (Hyperion) by Rick Riordan
- *Wolves of Mercy Falls* (Scholastic) by Maggie Stiefvater