

Libraries should acquire materials using new technologies as soon as they are readily available.

***Remember-we just have to argue that the affirmative team is wrong, and win by default.**

Affirmative Constructive: (4 ½ minutes) One of the affirmative members reads a pre-written statement on why the stated thesis is correct.

Cross Examination: (2 minutes) Members of the **negative** team ask the affirmative questions. Either affirmative member can answer.

Where is the money coming to finance the investment of new technology? If it is a grant (or other) funded, what preparations is the library making to further fund the updates of soft/hardware? Does the library have a contingency plan if the technology fails- replacement or alternative solutions? Why does the library need the new technology? How will you get patrons/staff interested and behind the proposed new technology? What about money to pay for the training of staff and patrons?

Negative Constructive (4 ½ minutes) The Negative reads a pre-written case and can, if it wants, address the Affirmative's case.

Decreasing the digital divide, increasing information literacy, preservation, and patron centered services, these are all things the library strives to bridge through our services, collections and access to information be it either book, magazine, movie or database. The library's mission is to provide equal and equitable access to information regardless of patron's socio-economic status. We are not biased towards technology; we want it to be used efficiently and effectively. There have been too many technological inventions that have been hyped, only to fail with great cost to the library. There are too many unknown factors involved with acquiring new technology as it becomes readily available. First we should consider does the library really need this new technology? How will it benefit our services? Who will be using it? What are the hidden costs (subscription)? Is it replacing a service, or enhancing? What kind of research has been done to see about the longevity of the product in question? Have the cost of training the staff and patrons been taken into consideration? What about the time and cost of hiring the technician or IT staff member to implement the service? Will it be compatible with other technologies both present and future? (RFID Problems Elsewhere (The library documents we obtained also show that BPL staff researched other libraries' experience with RFID and found a host of

problems. The Eugene (Ore.) Public Library reported “collision” problems on very thin materials and on videos as well as “false readings” from the RFID security gates. (Collision problems mean that two or more tags are close enough to “cancel the signals,” according to an American Library Association publication, making them undetectable by the RFID checkout and security systems.)

For example budget problems of the Drain library in Bloomingdale, New York. “Librarians say, is a direct result of a reduction by nearly half in the libraries' budget for materials -- mainly books -- over five years. At the same time, book costs have raced ahead of general inflation. Librarians say books are less well made and wear out faster; computers and new library technology divert money from books, and libraries are suffering from their own shortage of funds.”

-Address Affirmative points-

Furthermore funding for technology such as the internet is often linked to federal or state moneys that are contingent on libraries abiding by rules to keep funding, such as internet filters. In Lauren Barack’s 2005 School Library Journal article “A Digital Divide” the state of Texas brought in lap tops for all students at the cost of the new textbooks, outstanding bill for the books was not paid but all of the laptops were bought and paid for. Should states be able to make these Solomon-like decisions between laptops and books?

The future is not always invested just in technology, but in the staff and services of the library too. As stated in the ALA sponsored “Public Library Internet Services and the Digital Divide” study by Charles R McClure equipment is not enough and maintaining sustainable solutions are key to bridging the digital divide.

Cross Examination: (2 minutes) Members of the affirmative team ask the negative questions. Either team member can ask and answer.

BREAK- 3 Minutes to confer with notes and prepare for the rebuttals.

First Affirmative Rebuttal (2 ½ minutes) The Affirmative addresses both their opponent's arguments and their own.

Negative Rebuttal (4 ½ minutes- notice the longer time.) The Negative gets one more chance at rebuttal, and summarizes the reasons the judges should vote for them

Libraries should proceed with caution before they invest in new technologies because of the expensive implications involved. Given today’s economic status many libraries are already underfunded, their budget stretched to provide services already offered. Think about the impact new technology brings from bugs or glitches

in software/hardware that will take time to resolve. Given the progress of innovation technology that appears to be successful initially, becomes obsolete after a few years. There is all the time and expense involved in training the staff and patron on use and troubleshooting. Is it really worthwhile to invest in soft/hardware that only some patron use? There is the cost in time and money to acquire the soft/hard ware itself but also and the technicians/IT staff to install. Are there going to be limitations or compatibility issues with the other library technology already in use? What are the security risks involved with the new system, have they been carefully considered?

Also consider what that money could be invested in rather than technology (which could potentially prove more disastrous and costly than initially projected). Rather than increase the digital divide, could the money be used to fund more classes/services for patrons, more materials from new books, DVDs, which everyone would have access to? Could we provide more/better services to special populations and/or disability technology? What about more shelves, staff, databases that the money could be earmarked for. Instead of investing money immediately why not wait to see how other libraries apply the soft/hardware to see if it proves to be successful.

Second Affirmative Rebuttal. (2 minutes) The Affirmative may either offer another rebuttal or can summarize the round, but they always give reasons to vote for them.

At this point the debate is completed. (25 Minutes) The members of the class will vote (privately, on file cards) for the team that ARGUED MOST EFFECTIVELY (which is not the same as saying which side they agreed with,) and also state which side they personally agree with.) We will follow the vote (1-2 minutes) with general classroom discussion of the topic for another 25 minutes or so. [The debators are free to stare at the wall glassy-eyed instead of engaging in the general discussion.] Passion and logic are encouraged, bloodshed discouraged.