

NEWPORT BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY CUSTOMER COMMENTS
SEPTEMBER 2012 - OCTOBER 2012

COMMENT # Date Received Source of Comment Staff Member Assigned To Staff Member Title Date Responded to Customer	COMMENT	RESPONSE
<u>1</u> <u>9/20/2012</u> <u>Website Email</u> <u>Genesis Hansen</u> <u>Reference / Web Services Manager</u> <u>9/21/2012</u>	Hi, I am curious if you are the person responsible for adding content to the following page: http://www.newportbeachlibrary.org. I am a researcher for an online project that created comprehensive educational resources for those interested in pursuing higher education in the State of California. I strongly believe that it would not only be a great resource but a wonderful addition for all your citizen's to refer to. So far many cities use our directory as a free resource to higher education for their communities. I thought this resource might be of interest to you and I'm curious if you'd like to see it? Please let me know and I'll send it over. Thanks for your time. I hope to hear from you soon!	Genesis Hansen responded via email as follows: I'm sorry, but City Website policy prohibits us from adding links to our site at the request of third parties. You can send me the information and our staff will take a look at it when we do our next review of potential site links, but this is something we only do once or twice a year so it will be awhile before the resource is considered. Thanks.
Customer on Comment #1 Responded to Genesis Hansen as follows:	Thanks for your response. The online project that I've been working on for that past year can be included and shared as a resource for those who use your website. This resource is a compilation of every college program offered online in California that is offered full and part time. For the past year, we've been crawling through thousands of college catalogs to compile this information because many students that visit our website have requested a directory of all college programs that they can take online apart from the more well known online schools. Many of our students didn't even know that their local colleges offer many online programs until this database was built! This database will be updated yearly and will always remain free and open. Higher education for all students is a passion of mine, and passing knowledge to what types of programs exist out there in hopes that students will find a higher education program that excites them is our goal. I hope that your school, counselors, advisors parents and students will find it useful. So far many other cities throughout the nation have added the database as a resource for their community to refer to. If you think it could be of use and value to those who visit your site, I would be honored if you would also add a link to the page for others to refer to. I look forward to hearing from you soon.	
<u>2</u> <u>9/26/2012</u> <u>Website Email</u> <u>Melissa Kelly</u> <u>Support Service Coordinator</u> <u>9/27/2012</u>	I am writing to you in regards to your current policy on Video Game Requests. Currently, you are not allowed to request a hold and transfer the item to one of the surrounding branches. I reside half a block from the Balboa Branch and it is difficult to make it up to the Central Library location. I am hoping that you reconsider the current policy regarding holds, thus allowing individuals to request transfers of Video Games from Central to the surrounding branches. I appreciate your time in reviewing this comment. Thank you so much.	Melissa Kelly responded via email as follows: Thank you for sending your request to extend the circulation of video games. After discussing our current procedures, we find that allowing requests and transfers of video games can now be accommodated. We are glad to make this collection more accessible to all customers. We hope to have this change set up by the beginning of October. Please check the Library catalog for the "PLACE HOLD" button to appear next to your favorite game titles. Thank you for using your Library.
<u>3</u> <u>10/5/2012</u> <u>Website Email</u> <u>Genesis Hansen</u> <u>Reference / Web Services Coordinator</u> <u>10/5/2012</u>	Hi There! I just wanted to send you a quick note on behalf of some of the kids I work with here in our resource room center! We've been going over some study help resources to kick off the school year and have been using your page (http://www.newport.lib.ca.us/teens/homework) quite a bit!! As a Thank You, a couple of the kids also found and wanted to pass along this page about research and resourcing Tips: (http://www.edu-nova.com/students-guide-to-better-research.html) We've actually been using it just as much as your page and thought that maybe you would want to include it on your Homework Help Links page! I was hesitant to email you at first but the kids keep asking if I've talked to you about it yet (they're so cute!) haha. Would you possibly considering including it for them? I would love to surprise them before we finish next Friday, that their research find has actually benefited someone else! They would be so excited!...and I may even surprise them with a pizza party.	Genesis Hansen responded via email as follows: We're so glad your students have found our site helpful. Although City policy prevents us from adding links at the request of third parties, we will definitely take a look at the site recommended by your students during our next review process. Any links we add need to be approved both by our staff and also by the City, so unfortunately there's no way a link would be posted by next Friday. However, please thank your students for the tip and let them know that we really appreciate them passing on their suggestion for our site.

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4 10/7/2012 Website Email Mara Cota Library Assistant 10/16/2012	I am the Founder and Producing Artistic Director of Left Eye Productions, a theatre company based out of New York City. Our goal is to bring Socially Significant and Relevant Plays to people for free throughout the country. Summer 2013 we are touring two plays across the country. They are The Stonewater Rapture by Doug Wright and Speech and Debate by Stephen Karam. These award winning plays both deal with Identity in Teenagers. We are planning to tour to public libraries across the country free of charge (only asking for audience donations after the performance). We plan to present the play to each community and then lead a talk back between the Cast and Audience to discuss the issues and topics brought up in the play. Our plays tour with little to no set and a simple lighting and sound system that plugs into a basic outlet. We take about an hour to set up and a half hour to strike after the performance. Each play runs about 90 minutes. The actors are all professional actors who studied theatre in college and have graduated. We would like to know if you would be interested in having us perform in your location for your community. Please feel free to call me if you would like some more information. Thank you for your time and I hope we can work together to make this happen!	Mara Cota responded via email as follows: Thank you for contacting us. My name is Mara Cota and I coordinate Teen Services for the Newport Beach Public Library. We certainly do appreciate your offer. Unfortunately, I don't think this program would be a good fit for our library. We have found, over the years, that teens in our community do not come to the library for social programs. The only type of programs with which we've had success are practice tests for college entrance exams. Thus, I'm sorry to say that we would not be able to gather an audience for you. In addition, use of the Library's meeting room for outside groups, and groups that are not 501(c)3 organizations, is subject to a specific set of policies. There are considerations for fees, insurance, and equipment. We do appreciate your thinking of us and I wish you the best with your tour.
5 10/7/2012 Website Email Cynthia Cowell Library Services Director 10/9/2012	To Cynthia Cowell: I've read an article recently about certain new rules imposed at the Newport Beach Public Library that are related to things such as patrons hygiene, bikes, shopping carts and 'lounging around' in the library furniture. I understand you deny this has anything to do with trying to keep homeless people out of the library, but do you think people are so dense as to not to realize who these rules are aimed at? Certainly the people you aim them at are not that dense, much as you would like to think otherwise. Orange County is a County that does not provide year round emergency shelter, let alone enough of ANY type of shelter to meet the need there is. Now cities are making it illegal to sleep in your car. If you can't find shelter, pray tell, where you are supposed to go and what you are supposed to do? The library should not be engaging in economic bigotry against the poorest citizens of the county when the county does not even provide a basic level of humane public services for those who become homeless. It/you should not be driving them out from any and every place they can and have a right to go as citizen, in order to find a few moments of peace or quiet or to use the internet to search for options. I grew up in Newport Beach. I'm a college graduate. I've been in the library many times in the last few years although I do not live in Newport. I have also been through homelessness myself, due to marital breakup that coincided with an illness. It's nice to know the city that I grew up in has become exactly the hard and cold place that such affluent cities get a reputation for being. In the case of Newport Beach, I can see, the image is well deserved. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I know that many people's knee jerk reaction is often negative - even revulsion- when seeing people who are that poor. That does not mean you should encourage them in going to the next level - which is to demand that such people be putout of their sight. If your more fortunate patrons do not like looking at the poor around them, then perhaps they ought to donate some money to build shelters so people do not have to go to the library as a last resort to find a place to sit. Is it a crime, is it against the law to be poor? That is exactly the message you are giving. I cannot tell you how much emotional and psychological damage it does to human being to be treated like garbage to be tossed out because they're poor. I've experienced it myself and you would not even have known I was in the situation by my appearance or 'aroma'. It was by the sheer lack of heartless failure to provide services for a middle aged woman with no other options that I was so wounded. I was already wounded going into the situation, I was further wounded by it. You are part of the problem not part of the solution and one day you will have to face up to the heartlessness and selfishness you are promoting in Newport Beach and society at large by these policies.	Cynthia Cowell responded via email as follows: Good afternoon. Your email from late yesterday was forwarded to me just now, and I wanted to take a few moments to respond to the concerns expressed. First and foremost, my primary goal as Director of the Newport Beach Public Library is to provide a quality library experience for every customer who enters our doors. The public library exists to serve every member of the public, regardless of their status. We do not discriminate against any particular group of people nor do we even know whether they are homeless or own the largest home in the area. The recently enacted policy is not, as you state, aimed at homeless people. It has to do with providing quality library experiences for everyone who comes to us expecting to have their information needs met in a courteous and respectful manner. In the recently enacted policy, the only new things to be added address the issues of people lounging on furniture and the parking of wheeled conveyances. The policy concerning lounging on furniture was in direct response to a citizen of considerable financial means and multiple college degrees asserting that we could not keep him from lounging on furniture because nowhere in our policy was there a statement to the contrary. Regarding the parking of wheeled conveyances, this was to prevent people from chaining bicycles, luggage, carts and other wheeled conveyances to garden trellises and doors, leaning them against stone walls and defacing them, or leaving unattended parcels in or around the building. All we ask in the policy is that these items be secured in the bicycle racks provided at each of our four locations. You are absolutely correct in your assertion that there are not enough social service resources in Orange County. Every day as part of their jobs, library staff work with customers who need information about where to go for shelter or food or medical care. We are happy to provide information to help people find jobs, further their educations, learn to read, or any number of other reasons they come to the Newport Beach Public Library. I am proud of our quality resources, a good staff, and our ability to serve the public, and I am pleased to be able to offer them to anyone who enters our doors.

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<u>6</u> <u>10/18/2012</u> <u>Website Email</u> <u>Melissa Kelly</u> <u>Support Service Coordinator</u> <u>10/18/2012</u>	I often study at your facility on the second floor because of how quiet it is. However I find the sound that is made by your computers when checking books upstairs travels more than 100 yards to each end of the library. Is there anything you can do to decrease the beeping noise? If so I, as I'm sure others, would greatly appreciate it.	Melissa Kelly responded via email as follows: Thank you for expressing your concern about the noise made by our tagging workstation. I am sorry that the noise has become bothersome. I am checking with our vendor to see if we can mute the sound that is made by this equipment. If that is possible we will certainly take the necessary steps. We are trying to complete this project as quickly as possible so we can move the equipment out of the public areas. If we are not able to mute the sound, I can tell you that we are only working in one area of the library at a time and we are currently working in the non-fiction section of the Library. Thank you for using your Library.
<u>7</u> <u>10/29/2012</u> <u>Website Email</u> <u>Debbie Walker</u> <u>Youth and Branch Services Coordinator</u> <u>10/29/2012</u>	I have been told to lower my voice while at the Mariner's Branch, and I have followed my orders ... "orders" they were. I just advised the gal at the Information Desk that while I didn't know if she was aware of it or not, her voice was loud and carrying back into where I was sitting at a computer, listening to music! She told me she had to be able to speak so that she would be heard. I told her that I had talked at that same loudness, and she told me once again that she had to speak so that she could be heard. I am now sitting at my computer, and she has not lowered her voice at all! Why is it okay for her to speak loudly, but not for me? I have never had problems at the Main Library Branch, but I have had numerous problems at this Branch (the Mariner's Branch). I have also had some problems with the Manager here, and I stay as far away from her as I possibly can!!	Debbie Walker responded via email as follows: I received your e-mail stating that you had been asked to lower your voice and felt that the library staff person was just as loud. I have spoken to the Library Manager at Mariners. We strive to make sure that all customers using any of the Newport Beach Public Library facilities find their time at the library pleasant and productive. To that end, we do ask that library customers and staff be mindful of loud conversations whether that involves talking on the phone or face-to-face with another person. Heather, the manager at Mariners will remind her staff that the sound can carry when working with customers. Again, as I mentioned above, the goal is for everyone to have a positive experience at the library. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further concerns.
<u>8</u> <u>10/29/2012</u> <u>Website Email</u> <u>Tim Hetherton</u> <u>Library Services Manager</u> <u>10/29/2012</u>	To Whom It May concern, I am furious of how the male staff man wouldn't tell the Mum with her young daughter to please be quiet or leave the adult computer area! I need my computer time undisturbed! If adults cannot mind their kids, then the staff upstairs at the main location need to tell them to either be quiet and/or tell them to leave the premises! I am also fed up with their stupid, lame excuses of how they won't tell people with kids to please be quiet, or they'll ask them to leave! This is a Library and not at all a nursery indeed! I travel 2 and a half hours to enjoy my computer time undisturbed! I don't bother or annoy anyone else here! And I want the exact same respect in return! Good Day!	Tim Hetherton responded via email as follows: I am sorry that your experience at the Library was negative. Staff is instructed to enforce the Library Use Policy, which prohibits Library customers from creating unreasonably loud noise and Interfering with other customers' use of library facilities. I'm not sure what the circumstances were in regard to this particular incident, but I will certainly follow up with staff on the importance of ensuring that all of our customers comply with the Library Use policy. Please accept my sincere apology, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss the issue in greater detail. Thank you.

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<u>9</u> <u>10/15/2012</u> <u>Website Email</u> <u>Tim Hetherton</u> <u>Library Services Manager</u> <u>10/15/2012</u>	To whom it may concern, Not sure who the director is at the Newport Beach Library Mariners branch, but if you could make sure Judy P. gets this as well. I'd appreciate it. Here's what I'd like to address about what happened today – 10/13/2012 at the Mariner's branch. My wife, SR, came to the library today my 2 young boys (as we often do). We have a routine where we'll come into the kids section and the kids have a reading time and then a computer time later. My wife or I sets them up, and then often work at the end of the tables by the graphic comics section. We often choose this area because it's quieter and there is a power plug to use if we're using a laptop. Well today when my wife was there and had the kids set up reading, she was working on a book she's writing in the back section. Our youngest came to her and asked for help with the library computer to look up a book. Since the computer screens there are sometime blurry, and because sometimes my wife gets dizzy looking at those types of screens, she went over and asked Heather (who was subbing in the kids section) to help our son. What happened next was one of the most unhelpful and judgmental experiences my wife has experienced. Here's our Skype chat as this happened. [11:31:23 AM] SR: (Heather) got offended by me [11:31:29 AM] SR: for asking her to help our son. [11:32:03 AM] SR: I said she seemed upset and she said, "You could have helped him." [11:32:23 AM] SR: So, of course I told her that I do help him all the time and that the screen and the system is hard for me to understand [11:32:27 AM] SR: and that the screen makes me dizzy [11:33:04 AM] SR: and that I am so self-sufficient and dealing with some health stuff that requires I ask for help, which is humbling enough without someone being offended by it. And I said, "You don't know every story behind someone asking you for help." [11:33:21 AM] SR: She said, "All right." [11:33:24 AM] SR: Not, "I'm sorry." [11:33:27 AM] SR: Just "all right." [11:33:44 AM] RR: she obviously had an assumption of you and is wrong. [11:33:58 AM] RR: Maybe this is a normal thing that other parents do [11:34:00 AM] RR: I don't know.... [11:34:04 AM] RR: but, dude - taking it out on you – NOT cool [11:34:08 AM] SR: well, I don't understand the computer stuff [11:34:10 AM] SR: and our son was upset [11:34:15 AM] SR: and I say, "Ask the experts." [11:34:17 AM] SR: that's it. [11:34:21 AM] SR: I'm very not happy [11:34:27 AM] SR: and I'm distracted by that conversation. [11:36:27 AM] RR: I'm calling over [11:36:33 AM] SR: to whom? [11:36:40 AM] RR: Heather [11:36:42 AM] SR: good. [11:36:44 AM] SR: thank you. [11:36:49 AM] SR: I almost started crying. [11:37:43 AM] RR: I'm sorry [11:38:11 AM] SR: my heart started pounding and I started feeling dizzy. -----	"Tim Hetherton responded via email as follows: I'm sorry your family had this negative experience. Thank you for bringing this incident to our attention. Your input is truly appreciated, as we rely on customer feedback to improve our services and resources. Library management is committed to working with staff to encourage empathy and sensitivity towards our customers. I thought your statement that a person is not a sum of their mistakes was particularly apt; thank you for taking this enlightened view regarding our staff. I feel that as a staff we owe it to you and your family to learn from this experience and respond to future customer transactions in a more helpful and engaging manner. Please, if you wish to discuss this issue further, do not hesitate to contact me at (949) 717-3819.

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<u>Comment # 9 Continued</u>	This is after I talked to Heather on the phone about this... [11:43:44 AM] RR: I asked her to make it right ----- [11:50:42 AM] SR: Her apology was thin and filled with presumption [11:51:03 AM] SR: it's fine [11:51:07 AM] SR: I will tell you more when we get there [11:51:23 AM] SR: I said, "You made an assumption about me" [11:51:40 AM] SR: She said, "Your children are down there and you are sitting as far away as you possibly can" [11:51:45 AM] SR: I said, "I'm sitting where the plug is [11:52:00 AM] SR: if there was a plug closer to them I'd be happy to sit near by them. I home schooled them for years." [11:52:10 AM] SR: She said, "Well, try to see things from my perspective" [11:52:21 AM] SR: I said, "I'm the customer who was affected by your behavior [11:52:32 AM] SR: and you're asking me to see it from your perspective? [11:52:54 AM] SR: and I'm saying your attitude affected me. So, I'm asking you if you can see if from my perspective" [11:53:04 AM] SR: She said, "Well, that's why I'm here apologizing." [11:53:11 AM] SR: And she was cool [11:53:16 AM] SR: and a little %\$#@*. ----- [11:53:47 AM] SR: I said, "You don't know me. I'm a precious person. [11:53:55 AM] SR: and I treated you like you were a precious person [11:54:11 AM] SR: and you judged me [11:54:17 AM] SR: and we have to see each other a lot. [11:54:26 AM] SR: And I'm going to need your help. [11:54:31 AM] SR: at some point [11:54:38 AM] SR: and don't want to feel weird about asking you for it." So, there you go.... I'm bringing this up, not so I can slam Heather, but to bring to light the judgment and assumptions that were made here. What if someone was constantly asking someone for help from a librarian to walk over and find books and the librarian said, "you're a capable person, go find it yourself – the sections are labeled." And then the person, clearly upset, said the reason they needed help was that they were dyslexic. No one wants to be treated that way. To ASSUME there is a problem and JUDGE that person. I work in custom service and I would never treat someone that way, even if I was upset at them. We're not the sum of our mistakes, and I'm sure Heather is probably a decent, hardworking person. And truly, we love the branch, and the staff is great. But, if you're having a bad day, or are frustrated with dealing with people, maybe it's time for a break rather than to do this to your patrons.	

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