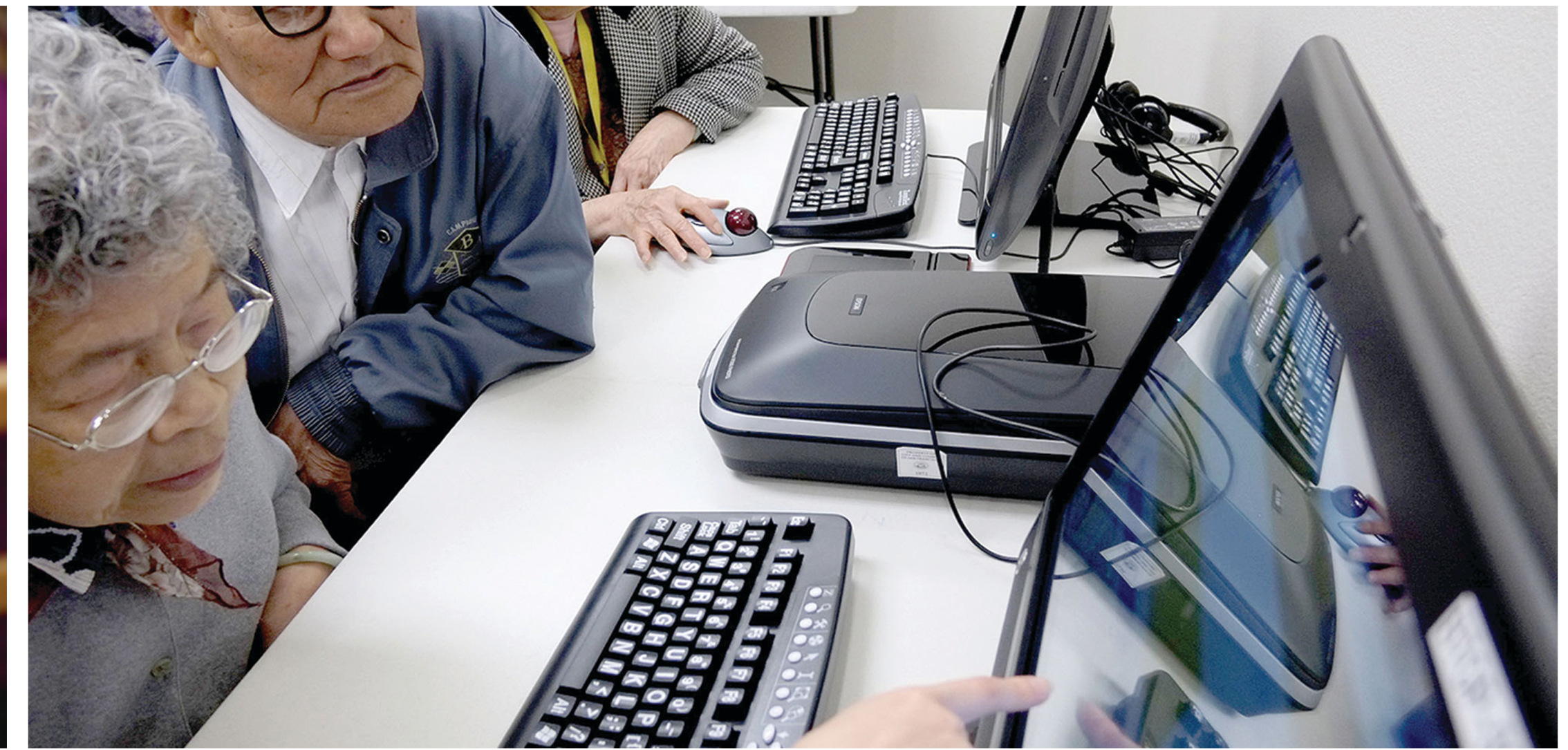


# WHY DO LIBRARIES MATTER?

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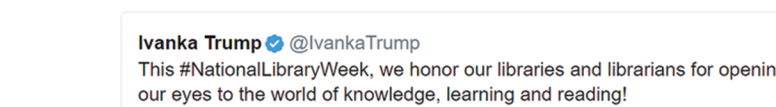
Timothy Snyder, in his latest work titled *On Tyranny*, states that we must both "defend institutions," and "believe in the truth." Libraries are a critical American institution in dire need of defense, but one that shares the mission of promoting truth through access to information and a deep historical memory. Libraries, like other point-of-need community institutions are, however, under threat. This is not the first time, nor will it be the last, but in this current moment, we in the information field are seeking partners to help combat the growing disdain for and increasingly privileged access to accurate and trusted information.

## Discussion Topics

The coming years will be a test of our resolve and our professional ethics, but this is not the first time. The passing of the wide-sweeping Patriot Act during the long tail of the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks, for example, created direct practical and ethical dilemmas for librarians across the country. Some librarians such as the so-called "Connecticut Four" stood up for the rights of their users and defied the federal government's order seeking records that, if obeyed, would have conflicted with professional ethical standards.

We are aware today of the aphoristic and perhaps hyperbolic claims against of the creeps to authoritarianism as evidenced by the recent change to the motto of the Washington Post ("Democracy Dies in Darkness"), and others but there are real threats to the crucial institutions that provide both non-partisan information and support for sensitive populations. Libraries are a broad-church but one with enduring values and ethical codes to protect our users no matter their background, legal status, or ideology. We need your help, however, how can your work interact and utilize the services provided by libraries in your community, workplace, research areas, or other contact point?

- Information value and partisanship
- Vital community services
- Endangered data
- Commodification of education
- Cuts to IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) and other related institutions (NEH, NEA, etc.)
- Ivanka Trumps Twitter gaffe. Silly, but illustrates the gap in understanding how libraries are supported



### Community Public Libraries

- Access to vital legal information
- Accessible information for sensitive populations
- Help with resume prep, job (re)training, technology skills
- Imagination, exploration, and learning space for children

### Academic Libraries

- Vital resources for curriculum and teaching support
- Professional framework for information literacy and critical thinking development
- Safe space for students to explore and learn
- Support network for students

### Business, Law, & Government Libraries

- Ethical and professional standards
- Community of practice outside of the individual work setting

## What are some ways you can support libraries?