



For Immediate Release

For more information, contact:

Vince Mariner
Statewide Coordinator, Ask a Librarian
(850) 922-6044
vmariner@cclaflorida.org

Growing Number of Floridians Turn to Internet Librarians

December 7, 2005 – Tallahassee, FL

A growing number of Floridians are finding authoritative, reliable answers to their questions online using a free reference service, Ask a Librarian. The service extends the reach of traditional library reference services by linking Internet users to live, one-on-one librarian assistance. Ask a Librarian features live chat and the ability to navigate the web together. Usage of the service is rapidly increasing, topping 2,000 sessions each month and growing.

“Ask a Librarian is a great service for anyone who has a question or who needs help finding information on the web,” notes Vince Mariner, the service’s Statewide Coordinator. “There is no cost to use the service, and it’s staffed by librarians who are skilled in finding information. Students, small business owners, seniors, home schoolers, teachers, *anyone* can benefit from this invaluable resource.”

Librarians from 88 public, academic and special libraries throughout Florida are available for live chat at www.askalibrarian.org, between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., Sunday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. Without ever leaving their homes, schools or offices, Floridians with Internet access can ask a librarian almost any question imaginable. In addition to live chat, users can submit questions via e-mail 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Ask a Librarian is part of the Florida Electronic Library, which is a collection of free databases and live reference services available to all Florida residents. Ask a Librarian is a collaborative service jointly administered by the College Center for Library Automation (CCLA) and the Tampa Bay Library Consortium (TBLC). It is funded through a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant administered by the Florida Department of State Division of Library and Information Services.

About CCLA and TBLC

CCLA operates the statewide Library Information Network for Community Colleges (LINCC) and the associated Web-based information portal, LINCCWeb, from its headquarters in Tallahassee, Florida. As an administered program of the Florida Department of Education’s Division of Community Colleges, CCLA serves 28 community

colleges and 73 campus libraries in 60 cities throughout Florida. On the Web at: www.cclaflorida.org and www.linccweb.org.

TBLC is a nonprofit multi-type library cooperative comprising 97 member libraries serving 12 west central Florida counties. TBLC member libraries include 6 community colleges, 5 State University System libraries, 27 private academic colleges and universities, 4 public school systems, 41 public and 13 special libraries. TBLC's Anywhere-Anytime virtual library includes Alleycat, a virtual union catalog with interlibrary loan management capabilities serving 44 libraries through 103 outlets in southwest, west and central Florida. On the Web at: <http://www.anywhereanytimelibrary.org/>.