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Web site a boon for those curious and questioning

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Answer: QandANJ.

Question: Who has more answers than Ken Jennings, the reigning *Jeopardy!* champion?

The Web site www.QandANJ.org is a godsend to everyone from the perpetually curious to the perpetually procrastinating student holding a late-night vigil over an unfinished term paper. Waiting at your beck and call are 250 librarians from 44 libraries and library systems across the state.

The Web site was launched in October 2001 and is administered by the New Jersey State Library and managed statewide by the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative, the organization that developed the concept. Information is drawn from articles in specialized databases, multimedia files, electronic sources, and library print collections.

This Web site is the best of all worlds. It is free to New Jersey residents, and it is open 24/7. It is a virtual reference desk, where you interact in real time, via the Internet, with a librarian.

You can get up in the middle of night with a burning question that just has to be answered before sleep will come. It's kind of like an all-night diner serving food for thought. And there is no dress code. You can show up in your pajamas and fuzzy slippers if you wish.

As a freelance writer, I've relied on the friendly folks at QandANJ many times to cut to the chase and answer questions that would have taken me hours of roaming through Google. They will try to answer virtually any question you can come up with.

A friend who is a reference librarian tells me that people in her job see each question as a challenge, a mission to accomplish. Finding an answer makes their day.

If you manage to stump the librarian, he or she will give you a list of relevant Web sites to visit or get back to you later with an answer. You don't even need to take notes. If you give the staff your e-mail address, they will send you a transcript of the session.

There is also a special link to Tutor.com at QandANJ. This free, live homework help site is available for 4th- through 12th-grade New Jersey students every day from 2 to 10 p.m. Tutor.com tutors are certified teachers, university professors, graduate school students, and professionals who are experts in their field. They are prepared to help each student with a 20-minute session in math, English, science and social studies. They'll even proofread a short paper for you.

At Tutor.com, you can talk with your tutor if you have a microphone hookup on your computer. You can also receive a transcript of your session for later reference or to share with your parents or teacher. There are also cool links to other sites, such as Bunsen Bob's Science Hunt.

New Jersey college students will soon find an added link on the QandANJ home page. Six New Jersey college libraries recently joined QandANJ. Karen Hyman, executive director of the South Jersey Regional Library Cooperative says, "Even though all of our librarians are qualified to help everyone who contacts us, by adding the college link to our home page, it will increase a college student's chance of reaching a college librarian when using QandANJ."

Here's an answer for you: More than 100,000. Correct question: How many queries has QandANJ fielded since its inception? And for you trivia buffs: So far, the busiest month ever was March 2004. QandANJ answered 7,400 questions during that month.

Take that, Ken Jennings.