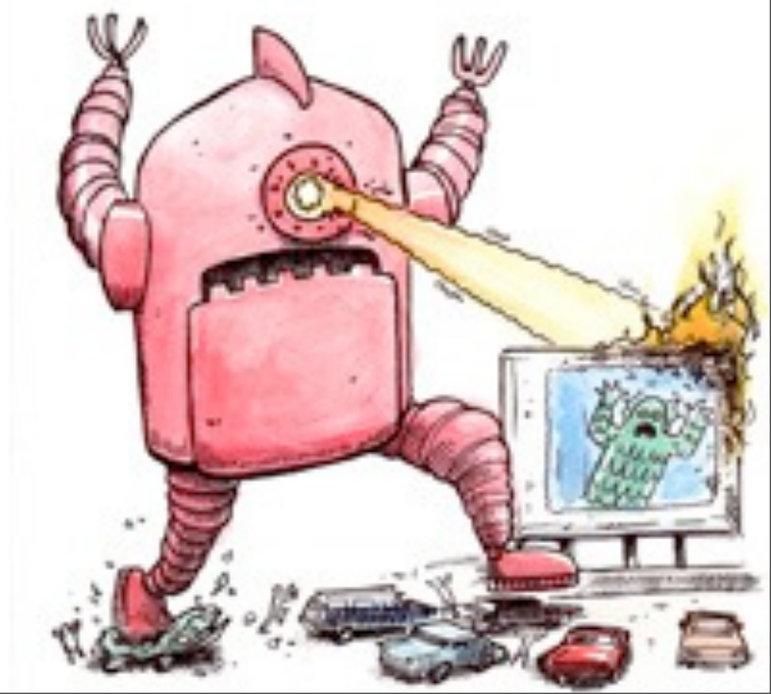
Geek Out

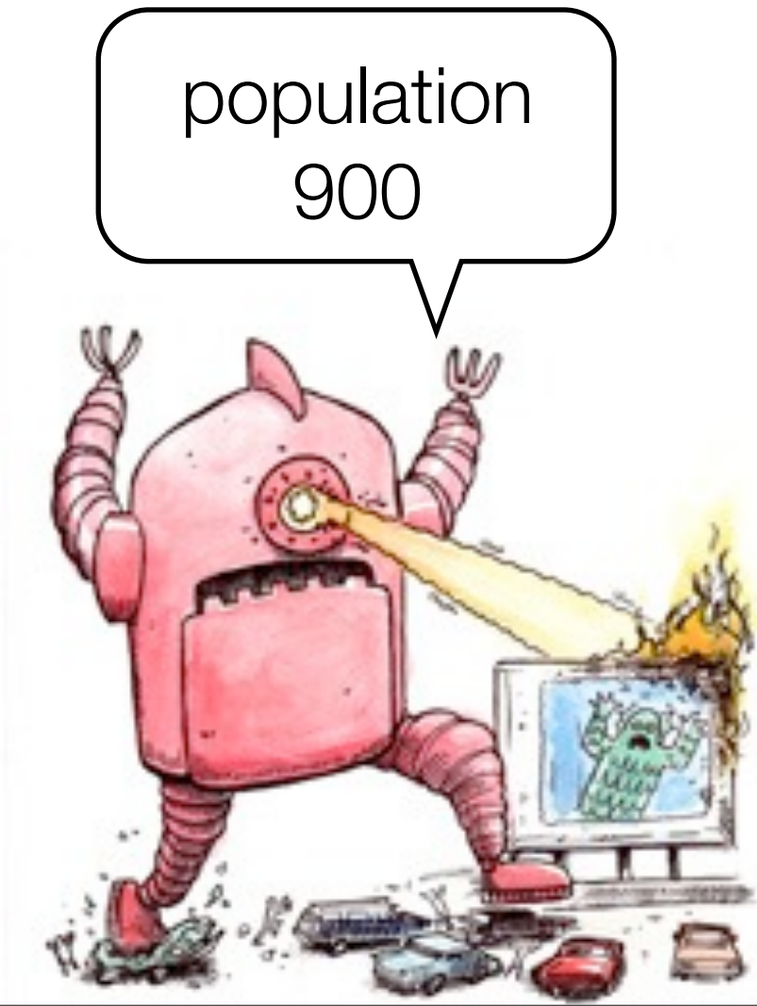
don't freak out

the Digital Divide &
the Library's Mission

<librarian.net/talks/indiana>

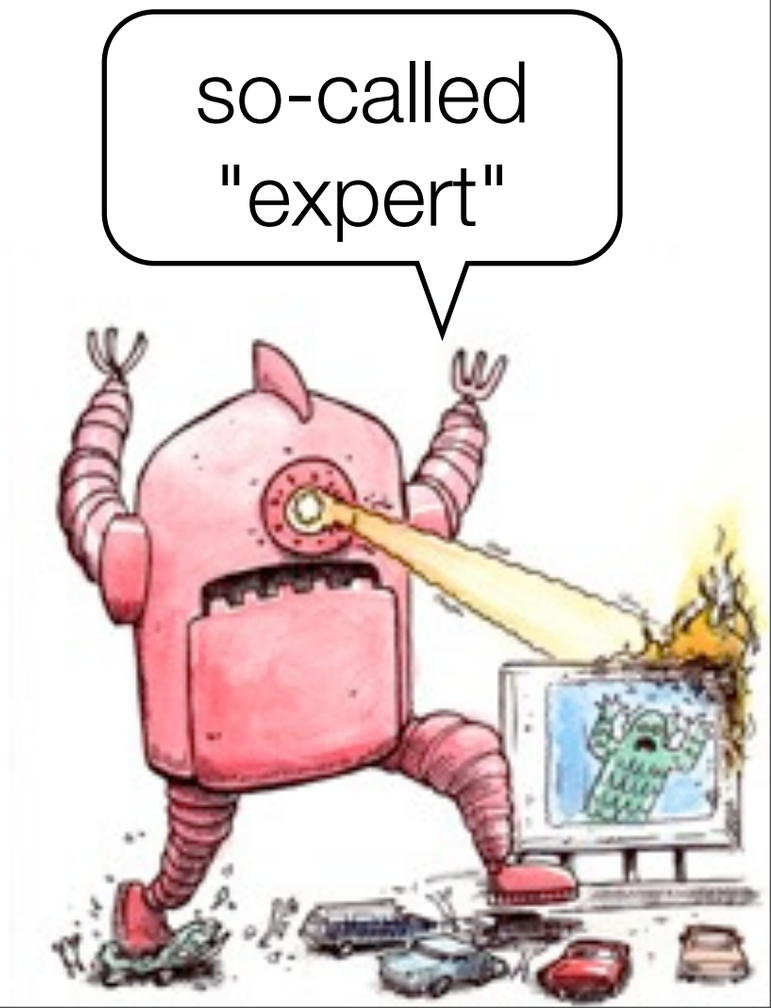


my (former) library



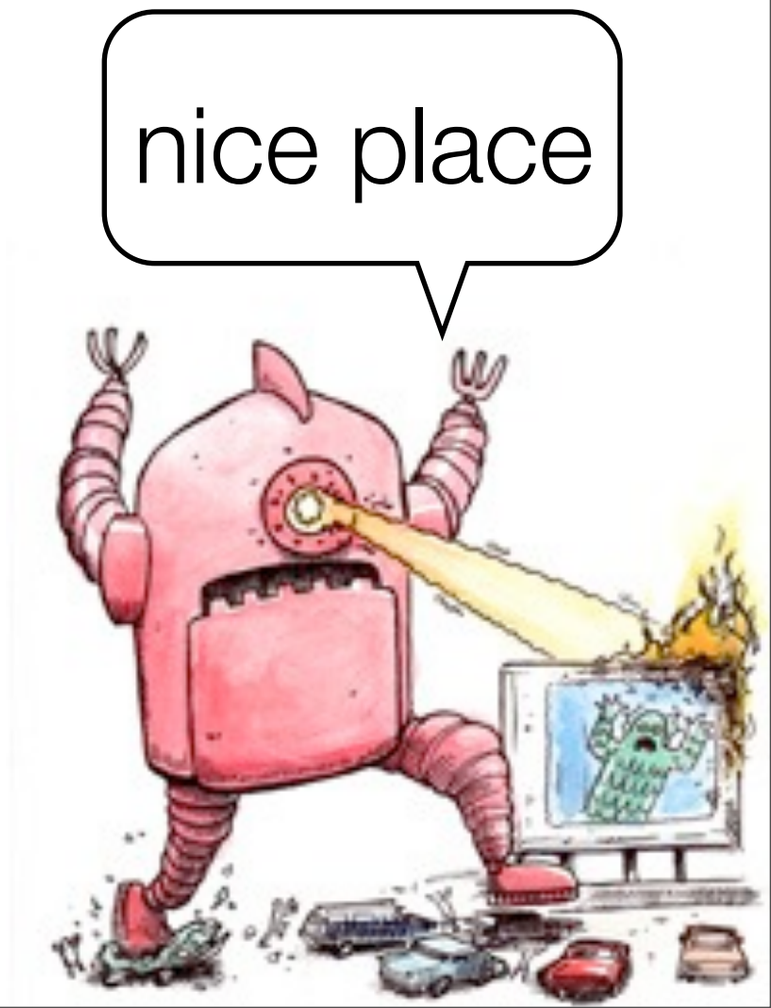
me

- run MetaFilter
- lifeguard
- teach basic computer classes
- “help me buy a laptop” stuff
- just finished a book!
- this sort of thing

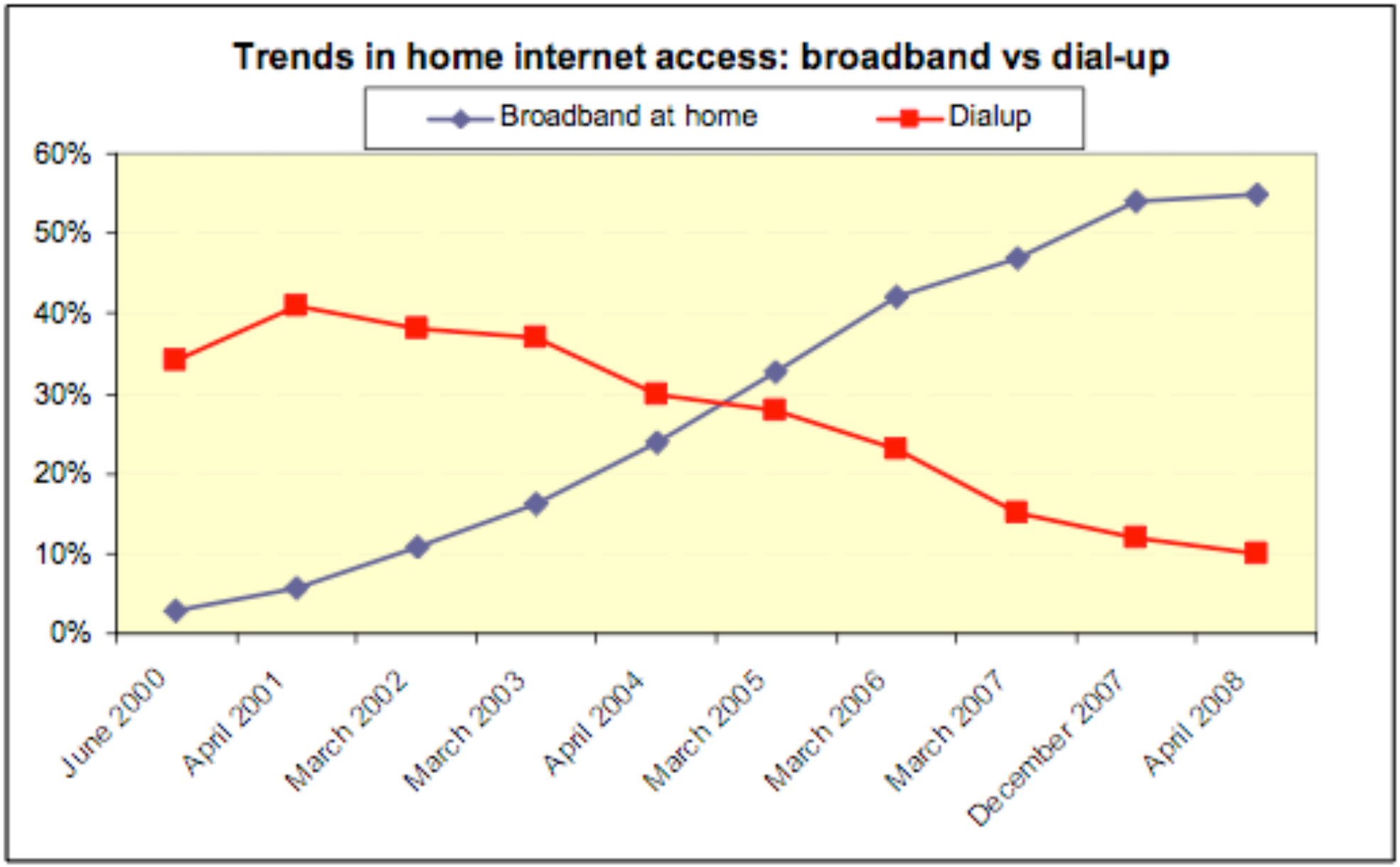


my home

- rural
- very little broadband
- nice people
- strong library support
- far from everything
- including internet



what's wrong with dial-up?



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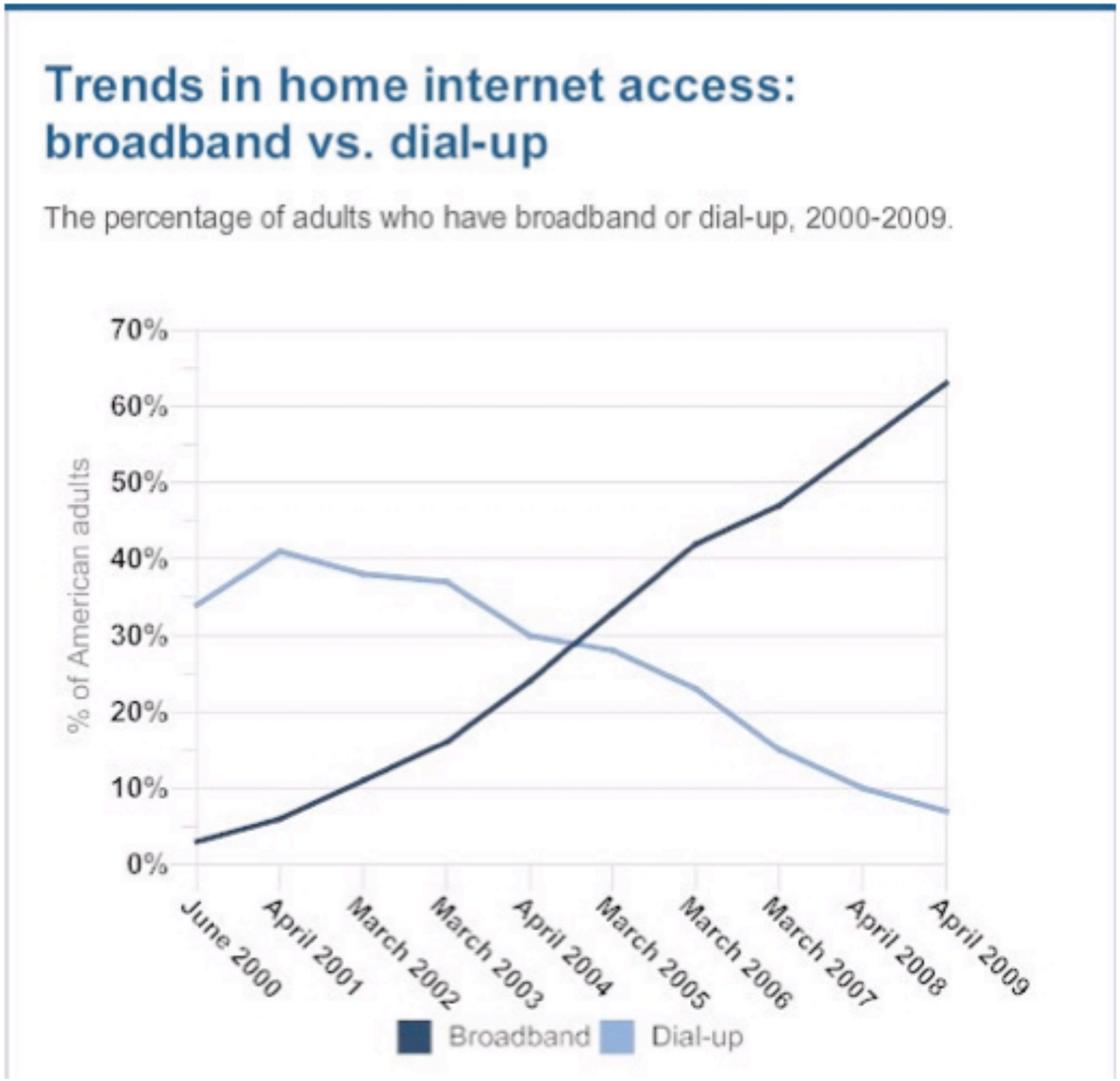
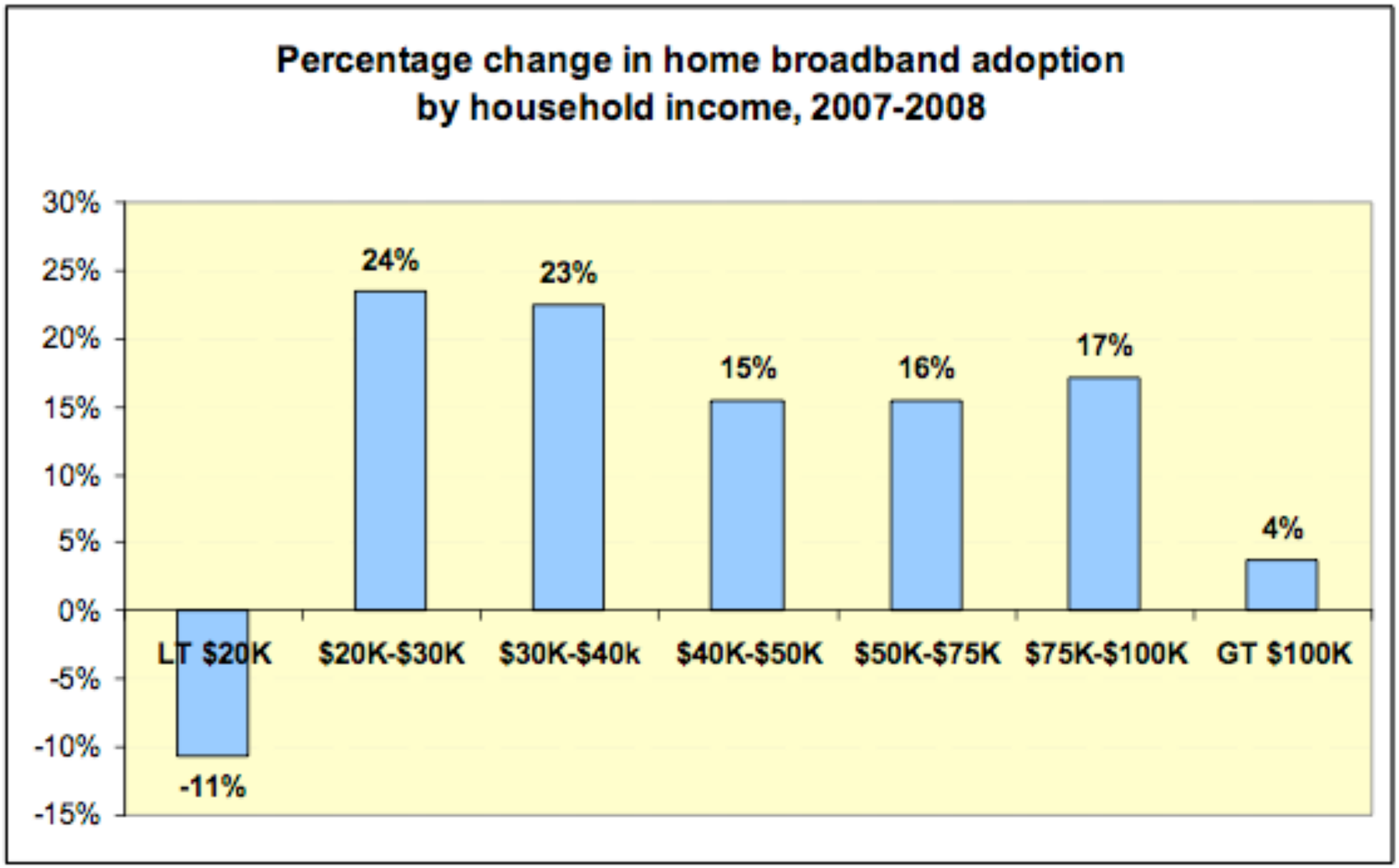


who is not online?

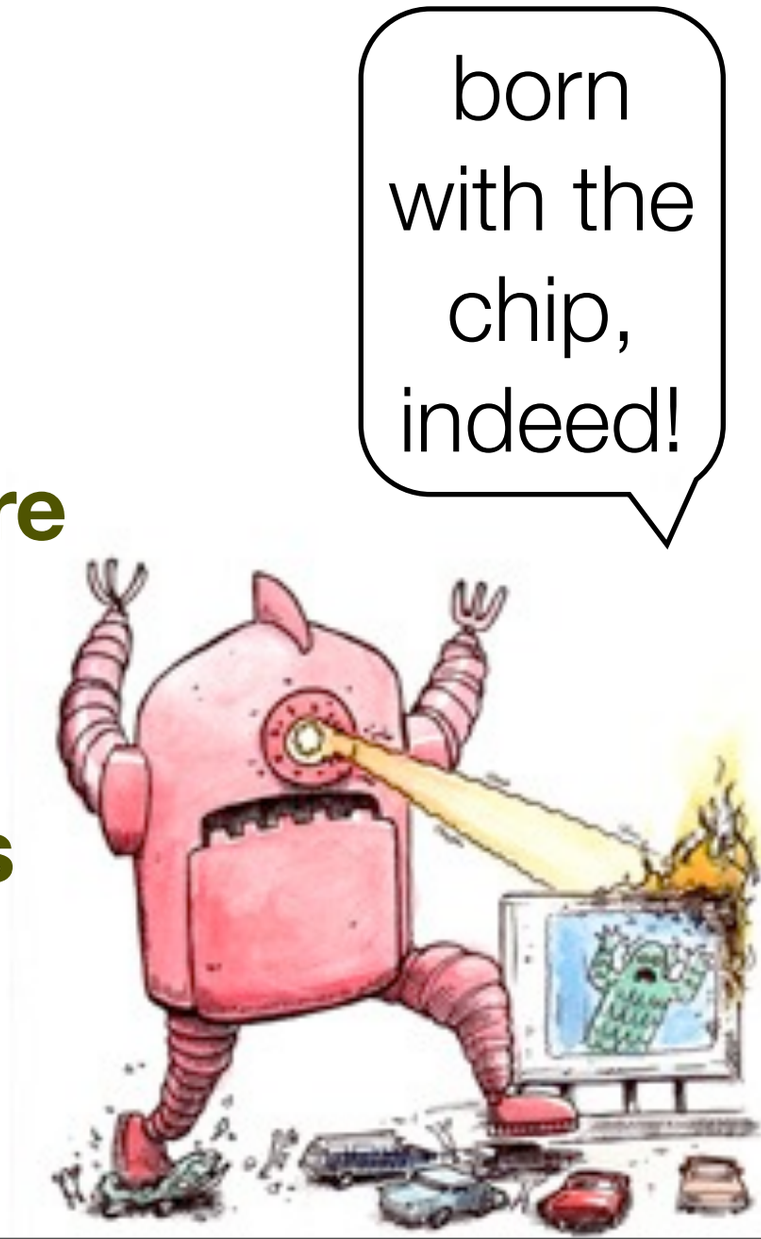


why no internet?

- **19% of dial-up users said nothing would convince them to get broadband.**

- **14% of dial-up users (24% in rural America) say that broadband service would have to become available where they live.**

- **one-quarter (27%) of adult Americans are not internet users**



why no broadband?

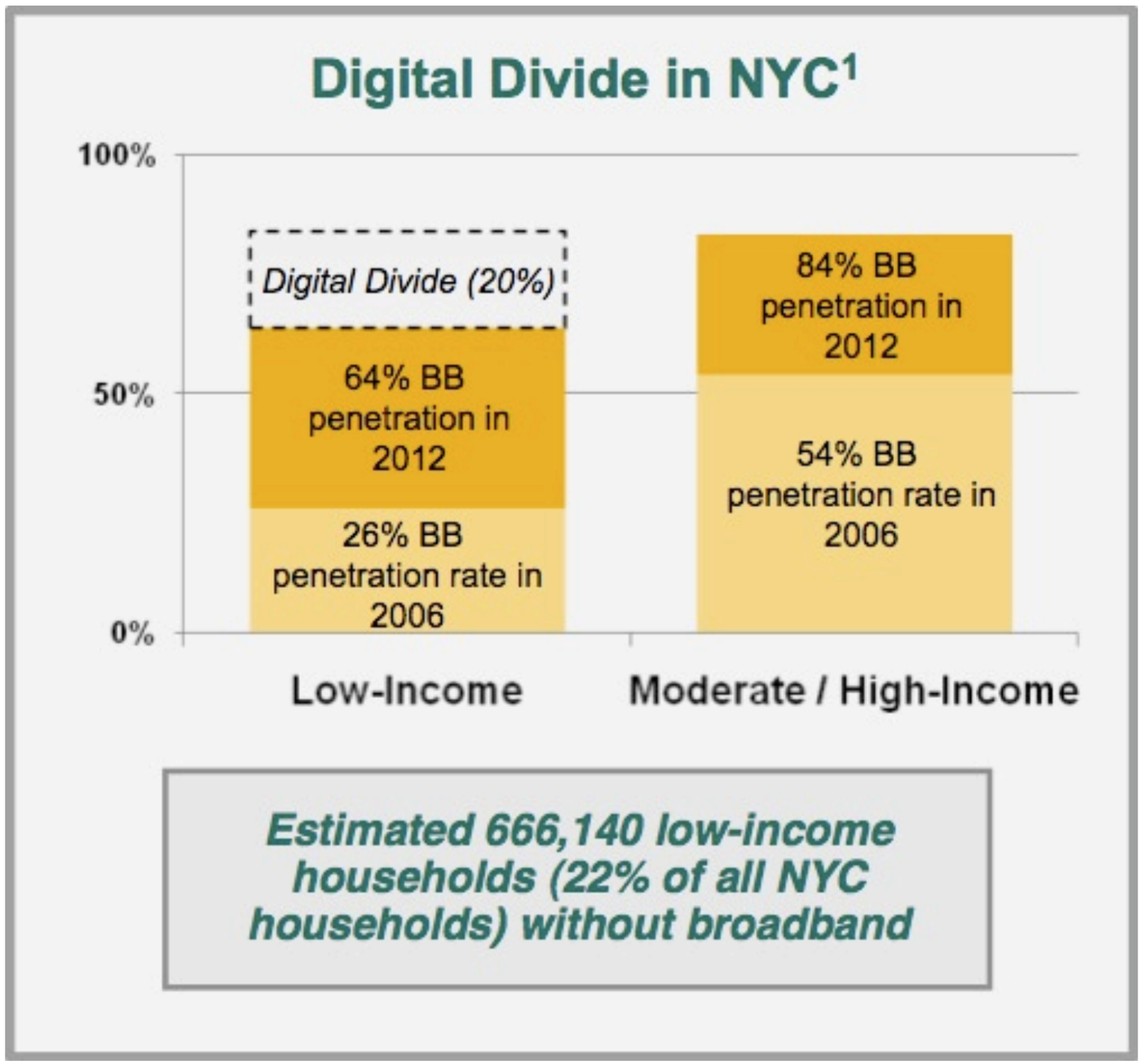
- **Cost.**
- **Lack of digital literacy.**
- **Broadband “not sufficiently relevant for them.”**
- **Frightened.**

why are you a nonuser?

Monthly cost is too expensive	47
I am not comfortable using a computer	46
I am worried about all the bad things that can happen if I use the Internet	45
The activation and installation fee to get service is too much	42
I cannot afford a computer	40
There is nothing on the Internet I want to see or use	35
The Internet is just a waste of time	33
I can access the Internet all I need to at work	14
It's not available where I live	13

Source: Federal Communications Commission survey, October-November 2009; n=1,450 for nonusers.

not just rural



who cares?

"*71 percent of public libraries provide their community's only free public access to computers and the Internet*"

Huh.

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Huh.

How to Work a Cri

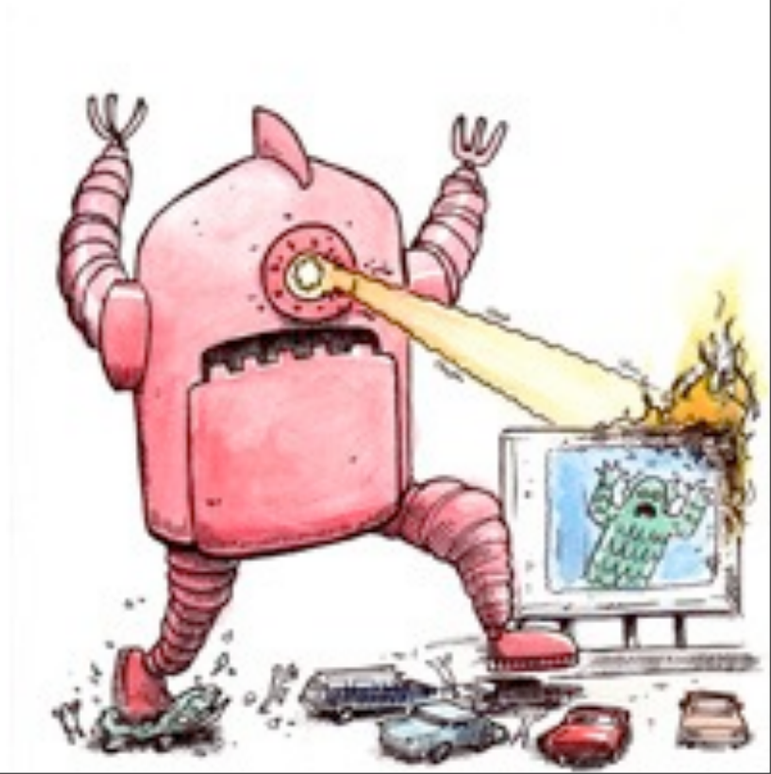
Demonstrating that libraries are a necessity

by

The phrase "never let a good crisis go to waste" rings as true in our nation's public libraries as it does in the government and commercial sectors. On the scale of amenity versus necessity, library technology used for job seeking, continuing education, and e-government boosts our case toward necessity.

To help supply you with ammunition and to inform planning and policy, the *Public Library Funding and Technology Access Study* and its predecessor *Public Libraries and the Internet* have tracked the growth of computer and internet services in public libraries and how these services are funded. By your responses, you have told us:

- More than 71% of libraries provide the only free public access to computers and the internet;
- 90% of libraries offer formal training or information technology assistance to effectively use computers and online resources; and
- There has been double-digit growth in the internet services available in public libraries over three years, including: online homework resources (79.6%), audio content (72.9%), virtual reference (62.4%), e-books (55.4%), and video content (51.4%).



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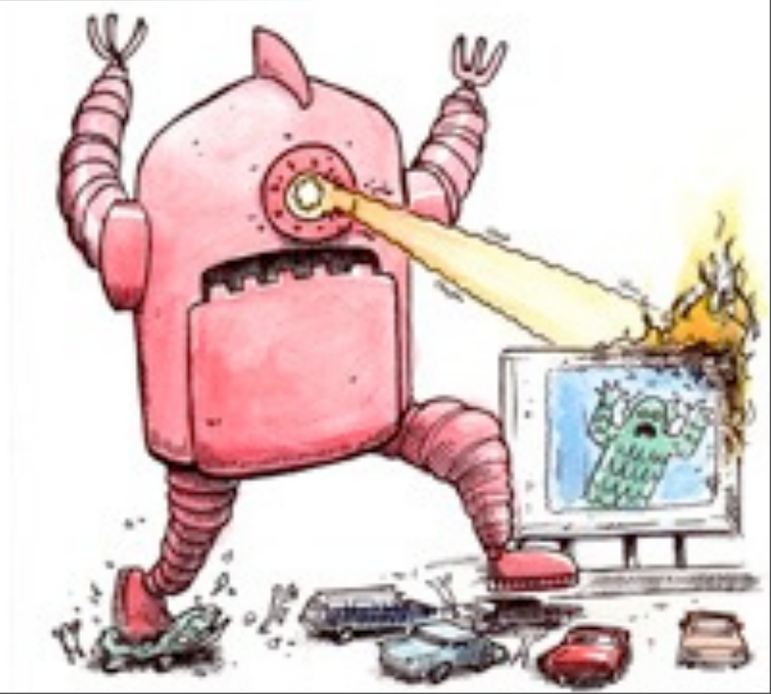
survey says...

Figure 4: Public Library Outlets as the Only Provider of Free Public Internet and Free Public Computer Access by Metropolitan Status

	Metropolitan Status			
Free Public Access	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Overall
Yes	53.6% (n=1,436)	63.8% (n=3,521)	73.3% (n=5,605)	66.6% (n=10,589)
No	30.0% (n=820)	19.3% (n=1,064)	17.6% (n=1,343)	20.3% (n=3,227)
Do not know	13.4% (n=365)	14.5% (n=799)	6.2% (n=471)	10.3% (n=1,635)
Other	3.0% (n=83)	2.4% (n=135)	3.0% (n=230)	2.8% (n=448)
Weighted missing values, n=79				



question actually asked

3. Is THIS LIBRARY BRANCH the only **free of charge public computer and Internet access venue** in the library's service area? (MARK ONE ● ONLY)

○	**Yes**, the library is the only place in the community that provides **free** public computer and Internet access services
○	**No**, there are other places in the community that provide **free** public computer and Internet access services (e.g., community technology centers)
○	Don't know
○	Other (please specify):

Freakonomics

The Hidden Side of Everything

June 15, 2010, 3:00 PM

Should the Digital Divide Be Closed?

By FREAKONOMICS

More evidence that technology doesn't always equal higher test scores: a new working paper by **Jacob L. Vigdor** and **Helen F. Ladd** examines the effects of home computer and internet access on test scores. Consistent with the research of **Ofer Malamud** and **Cristian Pop-Eleches**, Vigdor and Ladd found that "the introduction of home computer technology is associated with modest but statistically significant and persistent negative impacts on student math and reading test scores." The authors also found that internet access had differential effects across student groups: "The evidence is consistent with the view that internet service, and technology more broadly, is put to more productive use in households with more effective parental monitoring of child behavior." Their findings raise questions about policies aimed at closing the "digital divide."

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rural, suburban, urban?

public, academic, special?

academic

"Who is the better doctor—the one who can remember more diagnostic tests or the one who is the quickest and most savvy at online searching for the relevant tests?"

special/legal

"Only a third of newly purchased books are initially bound. 'We'll put a barcode on it, put it on the shelf, and see if people use it,' Palfrey explains. 'If they do, and the book starts to wear, then we'll send it to the bindery.'"

public

"The Howe Library is pleased to announce it has moved its entire bibliographic catalog and circulation system to Evergreen.... Moving to Evergreen will save considerable taxpayer dollars, primarily in annual service fees and upgrades."

GANDHI
INDIRA
CLIVE
THE ROBE
RODDY DOYLE
WORLDS FAIR
SAFER
WINTER ROSE

("Was that me?" said Christopher Robin in an awed voice, daring to believe it.

"That was you."

Christopher Robin said nothing, but his eyes got larger and his face got pinker and pinker.)

So Winnie-the-Pooh went round to his friend Christopher Robin, who lived behind a green door in another part of the forest.

"Good morning, Christopher Robin," he said.

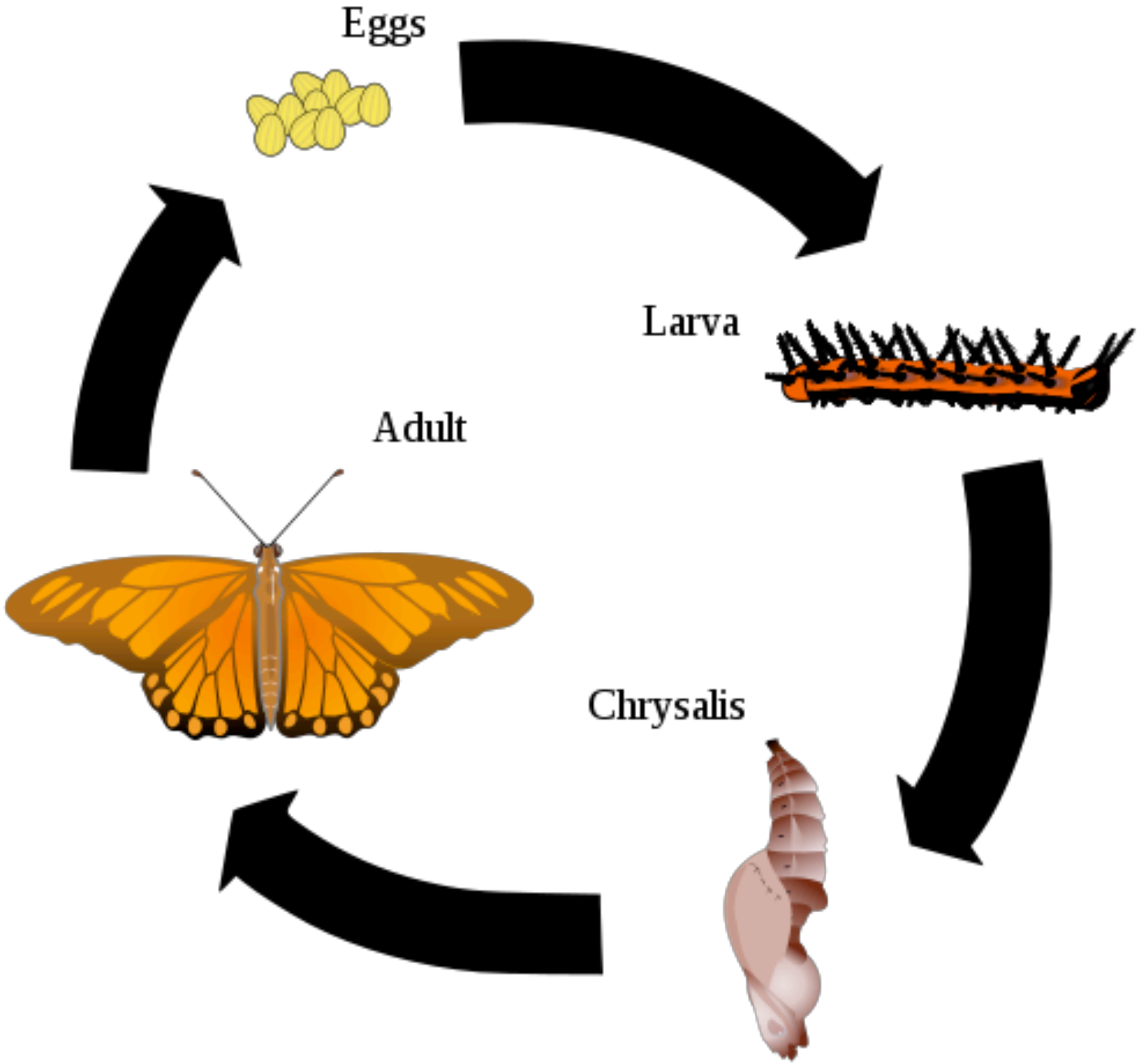
"Good morning, Winnie-*ther*-Pooh," said you.

"I wonder if you've got such a thing as a balloon you?"

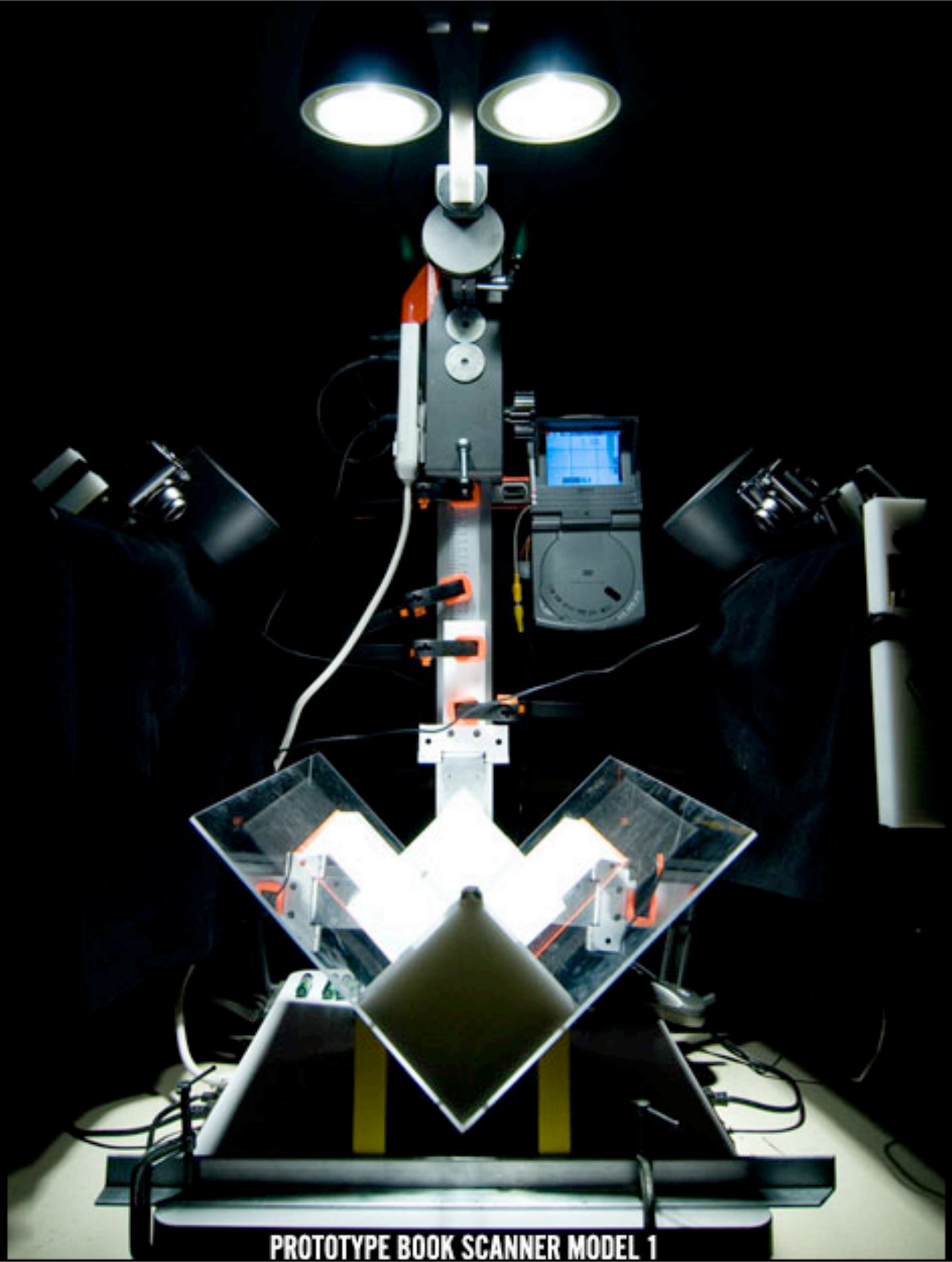
"A balloon?"

"Yes, I just said to myself coming along Christopher Robin has such a thing as a balloon just said it to myself, thinking of balloons, and

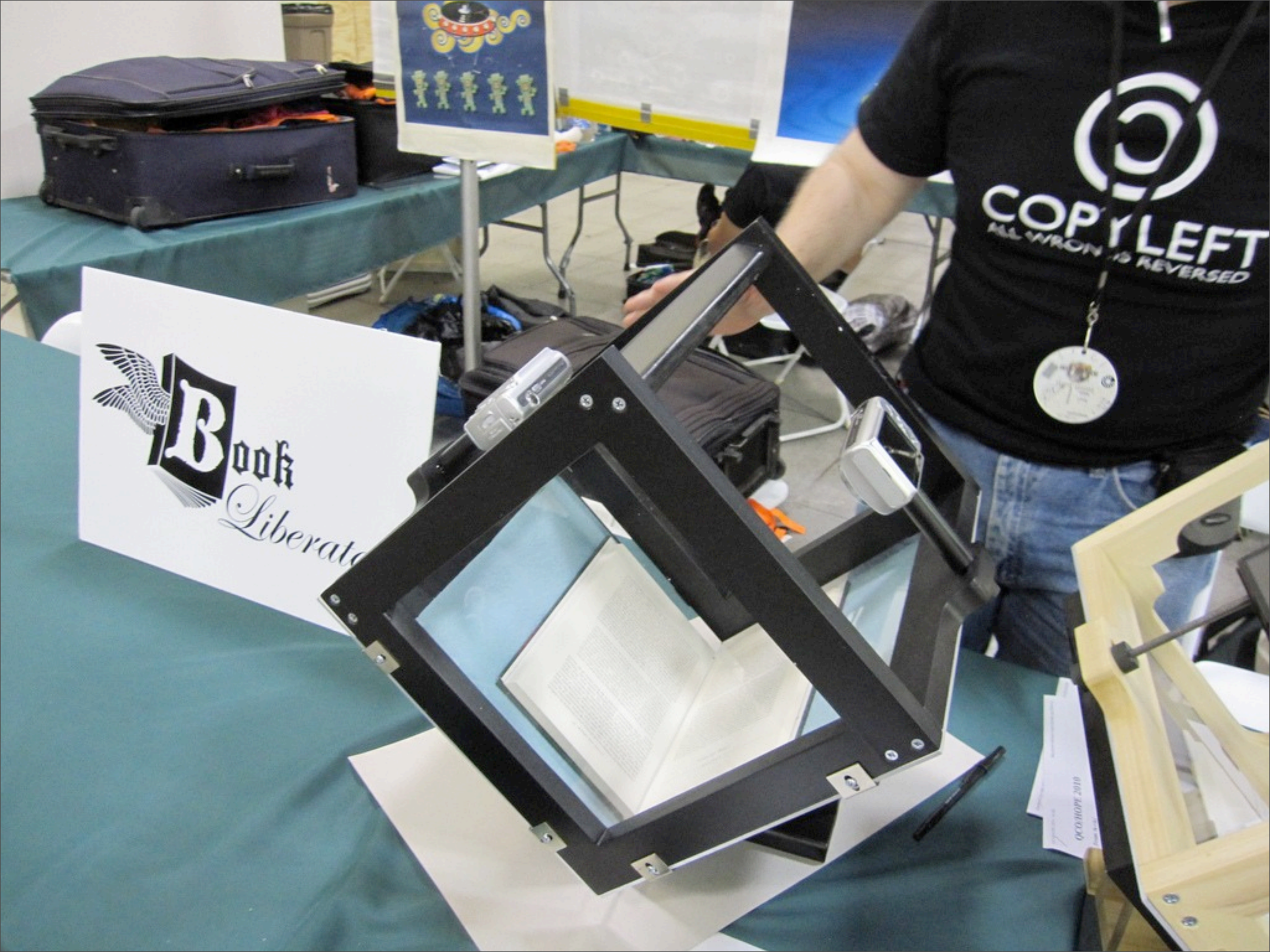
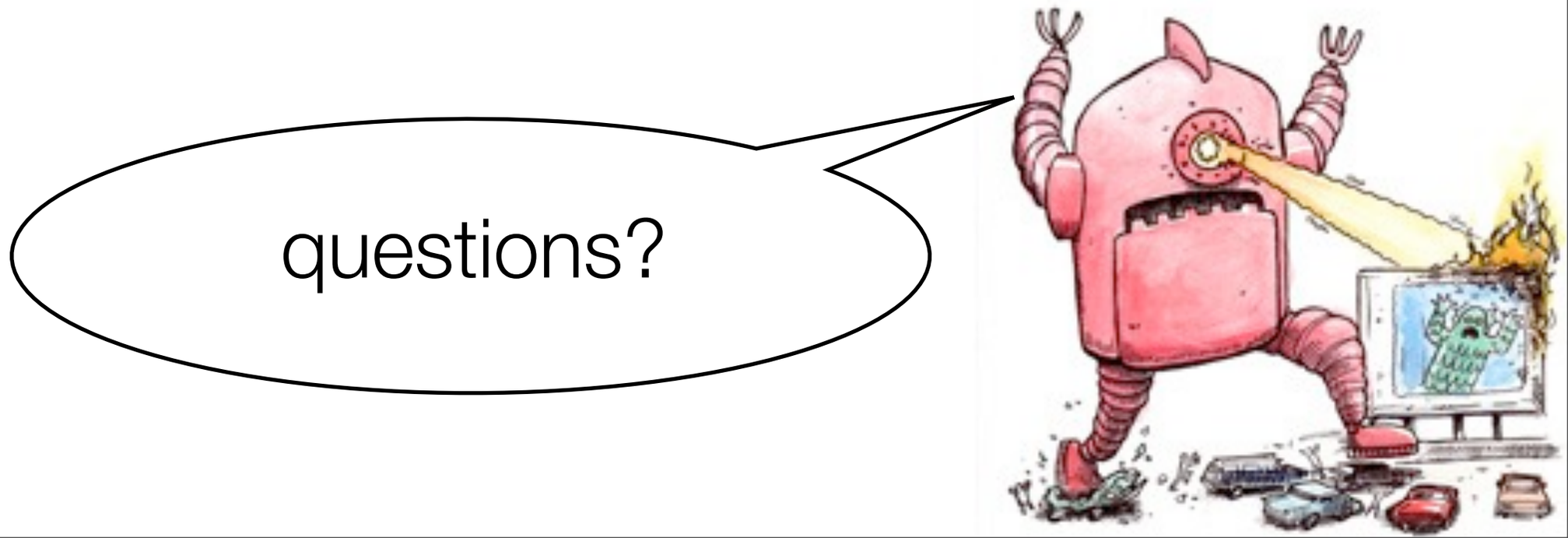
"What do you want a balloon for?" you said


Eggs
Larva
Chrysalis
Adult

networked ⟷ local



PROTOTYPE BOOK SCANNER MODEL 1


Book
Liberated
COPYLEFT
REVERSED

thank you!