



## Decision Tree for Complex Questions or Time-consuming Research

<p><b>Scenario 1:</b></p>	<p>The question involves <b><i>time-consuming</i></b> research, but is not very difficult, such as typical term paper topics or the "I have 10 questions" customers.</p>
<p><b>Suggestion A:</b></p>	<p>Get the customer started by suggesting helpful sites, then wish the customer luck.</p>
<p><b>Suggestion B:</b></p>	<p>Provide a few articles, for example, and refer the customer to their library's EBSCOhost login. (Suggest the customer call their library if they do not have Web access to EBSCO.)</p>
<p><b>Suggestion C:</b></p>	<p>Follow the "Rule of 3", i.e., "Because of high traffic, we can only answer 3 questions for you at this time." (You may answer only 1 or 2 questions, if each question is time-consuming.)</p> <p><b>Or</b>, invoke the time-related version of this rule: "Because of high traffic, I can no longer spend any more time on your question."</p>
<p><b>Suggestion D:</b></p>	<p>Suggest the customer go to the library or someplace where their question could be researched or call someone else such as an authority or organization recommended by you.</p> <p>Note: This is not the best choice, but is not bad in combination with other Scenario 1 suggestions.</p>
<p><b>Scenario 2:</b></p>	<p>The question is difficult and <b><i>not yielding results after 20 minutes of searching</i></b>, such as "What does 'Je me souviens' signify on the Quebec license plate? What are they remembering?"</p>

**Suggestion A:**

If the question seems to need just a bit more time, offer to follow up yourself later and email a response.

If there are no customers on hold and your customer is willing to stay longer in the session, you may continue to research the answer in real-time. But let the customer know that this a courtesy you are extending to them, e.g., "As a courtesy I will stay on longer with you."

**Suggestion B:**

Refer the question to Camden County Library/Statewide Reference Center or other specialized libraries like Newark Public as appropriate.

See [Statewide Contract Libraries](#) for a list of specialized libraries, e.g., in areas such as art, music, law, New Jerseyana.

In all cases, exit the session gracefully... when it looks like the customer prefers to remain on the line indefinitely.