

## What can libraries do?

- Encourage individuality! – offer programming and resources that teach teens how to make their own clothes, create music, write etc.
- Money management – offer books and programmes that support proper money management, i.e. teen investing books/clubs, budgeting seminars
- Being careful about who we sponsor/partner with – understand motives/advantages/disadvantages of any partnership so we are not promoting one company/product
- Support local organizations/activities like Buy Nothing Day
- Support local small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Encourage and participate in active recycling and resource sharing
- Feature guest speakers on investing, smart consumerism, eco-consumerism, and child labour
- Create book displays and visual displays about consumerism, child labor (sweatshops), and global consumerism

## Recommended Sites for teens

### **About Face**

**<http://www.about-face.org/>**

About Face is a non-profit organization that aims to promote positive self-esteem and self-image for females by dispelling distorted and negative media portrayals. The website features information and action plans, and offers resource lists for parents and educators. The most popular feature of this site is the list of “offenders,” or advertisements which offer negative or otherwise dishonest images of women and girls. There is also a section for winners honouring advertisements presenting positive female images. The site is enlightening and useful for teen girls, as well as for parents, educators, and librarians.

### **Center for Media Literacy**

**<http://www.medialit.org/>**

This website has a wealth of information for educators, librarians, and parents to help foster proactive media literacy in young people. The site offers free access to archived lesson plans from *Media & Values* magazine that help teach media literacy and media awareness. Sample topics include global consumerism, analyzing advertisements, and decoding jargon. *Media & Values* ceased publication in 1993 so the lesson plans are not current, but most are applicable or adaptable for today’s climate.

### **Consumer Reports Online 4 Kids**

**<http://www.zillions.org/>**

Like the PBS Kids site, this site is designed for tweens, pre-teens, and younger teens. This site helps kids and teens become aware, smart consumers. It contains information on products (product testing, quality control), money matters, and

advertising. The homepage is poorly designed, but the rest of the pages would appeal to kids and teens. The site is very interactive, with plenty of graphics, games, and activities. There is an additional section for teachers.

**Enough: An Anticonsumerism Campaign**

<http://www.enough.org.uk/>

Enough is an initiative out of the UK. It criticizes rampant global consumerism based on the negative social, environmental, and economic consequences of this trend. The site contains statistics and anecdotal information about the effects of consumerism, and offers strategies for change. There is an extensive list of suggested readings which will be of use to librarians and to young adults interested in the anti-consumerism movement.

**Maryland Attorney General – Wise Buys for Teens**

<http://www.oag.state.md.us/WiseBuys/shop.htm>

This site is loaded with tips on how to spot advertising scams and sales gimmicks, how to manage a credit card effectively, and how to safely shop online. Although it is an American site, there is a tremendous amount of useful information for teens and for adults alike. There are excellent examples and quizzes, so teens can test their knowledge and understanding of consumer issues.

**PBS Kids: Don't buy it! Get Media Smart**

<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/>

Don't buy it! is a fun and informative site for tweens and young teens. Topics include tricks used by advertisers, smart shopping tips, and ideas for how teens can become involved in anti-consumerism campaigns. The site is visually appealing, with

interactive games and quizzes. There are separate sections for parents and teachers with useful resources, activities, and general information.

**Street Cents**

<http://www.cbc.ca/streetcents/>

Street Cents is a terrific show produced by the CBC that offers consumer information, product testing, and money advice to teens. The accompanying website has lots of information from the episodes, as well as extra features. This site is highly recommended for its honest, and often sarcastic, approach to consumerism and money matters. Street Cents has a distinctly Canadian slant, which makes the information much more accessible for many teens. Both the show and the website are great resources with straightforward information and entertaining presentation.

**World Wildlife Foundation – I Buy Different**

<http://www.ibuydifferent.org/>

This site focuses on the environmental consequences of over-consumption. There is information on biodiversity, and the damaging effects of excessive packaging and production. This site contains information that isn't readily available on some of the other "smart consumer" sites for young people, including a section on the hidden connections between products and the eco-system. Teens can find out what kind of shoppers they are, and find out why we buy the things we do. There are lots of statistics and factoids, as well as quizzes, activities, and action plans. Also contains resources for educators.