

**Los Angeles City College
Martin Luther King, Jr. Library**

**COLLECTION
DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

**UPDATED 2021
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Los Angeles City College Library Collection Development Policy

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Collection Development Policy Los Angeles City College Library

Updated 2021

INTRODUCTION

The MLK Jr. Library of Los Angeles City College provides resources and services to support the mission and goals of the College and to support student learning and achievement. This collection development policy includes general guidelines for the selection of library materials and criteria for withdrawal of materials from the collection.

Los Angeles City College Mission Statement

Los Angeles City College empowers students from the diverse communities it serves to achieve their educational and career goals by providing pathways to support their completion of associate degrees, certificates, transfer requirements, career and technical education, and foundational skills programs.

Los Angeles City College Library Mission Statement

The mission of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Library is to provide user-oriented quality services, instruction, and resources to support the mission and goals of the College and the curriculum, and the educational and research/information competency needs of students, faculty, staff, and administration.

Intellectual Freedom

The Los Angeles City College Martin Luther King, Jr. Library (MLK Library) strongly supports the American Library Association's *Bill of Rights* (Appendix A), its statement of *Intellectual Freedom Principles of Academic Libraries* (Appendix B), its statement of *Challenged Materials* (Appendix C), and its statement of *Diversity in Collection Development* (Appendix D). The MLK Library selects materials without partisanship regarding matters of race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, religion, politics, or moral and artistic philosophy. Should the suitability of particular materials be questioned, the specific objections must be submitted in writing to the Library Department Chair who will follow the process outlined in **Appendix E**.

Collection and Policy Rationale

The Library is committed to providing materials in different formats in support of the mission and goals of the College, the Library, and its users. The guidelines used by the MLK Library in its acquisition, maintenance, and de-selection of materials are presented in this policy. The Collection Development policy will be reviewed, evaluated, and revised as necessary by the Library faculty.

Collection Philosophy

Collection development at the Los Angeles City College Library is an ongoing, fluid activity that evolves with the ever-changing needs of the Library and the College. Guided by the College's *Educational and Strategic Master Plan*, the Library's *Mission Statement*, and such statements by the American Library Association which include the *Library Bill of Rights* (Appendix A); *Diverse Collections* (Appendix D), *Freedom to Read* (Appendix H); *Labeling and Rating Systems* (Appendix I); and *Access to Digital Resources and Services* (Appendix H), the Library selects and de-selects materials based on the Library's assessment of the purposes the materials either serve, will serve, or no longer serve.

Controversial Issues: The Library asserts its duty to keep a representative selection of materials reflecting a variety of political, social, economic, religious, and artistic viewpoints on subjects of interest to its users as appropriate with the library's materials selection guidelines. It asserts this duty without any intention of becoming a proponent of a particular viewpoint.

Library Collection Mission/Goals/Objectives

The major purpose of the library collection is to have materials that support the information needs of the Los Angeles City College community.

The Library participates in the educational program of Los Angeles City College in a variety of ways. This policy sets forth certain goals. One is providing supplemental materials to augment the college curricula. The aim/goal of the Library collection is to have a wide variety of materials. Coverage of a field shall be of a general nature, not comprehensive, except as noted. To these ends, collection development objectives shall be:

- *To provide materials that will support the curriculum*
- *To provide materials needed to support college/instruction-related faculty, staff, and administration needs*
- *To provide materials in various formats*
- *To provide materials representing all reasonable sides of issues*
- *To provide materials representative of subjects of interest to the College community, including materials on all aspects of controversial matters. No material shall be excluded from the collection because of the race, nationality, gender or sexuality of the author, or the political, moral, social, or religious views expressed therein*
- *To provide materials representative of many religious, ethnic, cultural, and other diverse groups*
- *To provide materials at appropriate levels for each area of the collection*
- *To provide materials or services in all appropriate formats*

The Library recognizes the importance of current interest materials as well as materials which have a basic and permanent value. The Library believes that the maintenance of a free society requires free access to all points of view on all public

issues. To this end, the Library affirms its acceptance of the principles enumerated in the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association.

Guidelines for Selection and Evaluation of Materials

Collection Scope and Coverage

The Library supports the educational, research, and information needs of:

- *Los Angeles City College students*
- *Los Angeles City College faculty, staff, and administration*

Materials for the Library will be selected in the following order of priority:

- Curriculum support. The collection is developed to support the curricular needs of our students in a manner to make the best use possible of the funds allotted, with particular attention paid to appropriateness or lower-division college use.
 - Primary consideration is given to the development and maintenance of subject collections to support the instructional programs at Los Angeles City College. Attention is also given to the changing emphasis of the curriculum and the development of new courses and programs. Materials that provide background and collateral information, as well as those that relate directly to assignments and term paper research topics are included.
 - Materials will be selected if they contribute to the general education of the student and may be useful to students pursuing research topics not specifically mentioned in a course outline.
 - High priority will be given to maintaining a strong and current electronic collection in support of the curriculum and for general information. The print collection of books and periodicals will be continued with materials selected for updating subject areas based on student use of the materials or for departmental accreditation needs.
 - Materials chosen need to be relevant to current issues and problems. Both print and non-print materials are selected to present opposing sides on issues to encourage exploration, discovery, growth, and change.
 - Materials are also chosen for personal enrichment and for instilling in the user an awareness of libraries and their potential as a lifelong source of information, recreation, and personal development.
 - Materials are selected to assist faculty in preparation for teaching and for general research in their subject areas.
 - Priority will be given to replacing basic materials missing from the collection as determined through usage, inventory, and overdue files.

- The following specific criteria are applied to the selection of individual titles:
 - Relevance of the subject matter to the above objectives
 - Appropriateness to a community college collection in terms of academic level
 - Timeliness or permanence of the materials
 - Reputation of the author or publisher
 - Availability of material on the subject
 - Inclusion of the title in recognized bibliographies and indexes
 - Soundness of scholarship
 - Cost
 - The holdings of nearby libraries may also be considered in cases where items are expensive, may be used infrequently, and may be available at nearby libraries, including those in the Los Angeles Public Library system.
 - *The Library recognizes the importance of current interest materials as well as materials which have a basic and permanent value.*
- Materials for *professional* growth of faculty, staff, and administration.
 - Other materials as needed.

Relationship to Other Libraries

Although no library collection may be expected to meet all demands, the Library makes every effort to see that students should not have to go to other libraries for material that should be available in the MLK Library. When needs require resources beyond the scope of our Library, students are *appropriately* referred to other collections whenever possible.

Responsibility for Selection

Library Staff

Selection of books *and continuations* is the responsibility of the Collection Development Librarian, with the participation of other Library faculty and classroom faculty actively encouraged. The Collection Development Librarian is responsible for general guidance on the selection of materials, the review of faculty recommendations, and designation of suggested areas needing special emphasis or development.

Selection of periodicals is the responsibility of the librarian assigned to this task by the Library Department Chair. Selection of electronic resources will be done collectively by the faculty librarians.

Final decisions on materials to be acquired and responsibility for the collection rests with the Library Department Chair. The Library Department Chair will be involved with challenges to the collection.

Faculty Recommendations

Primary consideration for the selection of library materials is given to the development and maintenance of subject collections to support the instructional programs at the College. Library materials primarily include books, periodicals, and subscription databases/electronic resources. To ensure a vital, active, and current collection, the Library encourages faculty recommendations in support of their curricular areas. Requests are reviewed to ascertain that they meet budget and collection development guidelines.

Recommendations by Non-Library Staff

Faculty, administration, and staff recommendations are given consideration when they meet budget and curricular standards.

Any student may request materials to be considered for purchase.

Submission of recommendations does not bind the Library to acquiring them. In order for the Library to attempt to acquire recommended materials, the materials must meet guidelines for selection, appropriateness, relevance, and cost as determined by the Library.

Discarding

The removal of obsolete, irretrievably damaged, or ill-suited materials for the purpose of discarding shall be considered an integral part of the total organized effort to study and develop the collection. Discarding shall be done by the Library faculty, with the advice of classroom faculty as necessary. De-selection criteria shall parallel the selection criteria.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Selection Criteria for Electronic Resources

“Electronic resources” refers to categories of materials or services which require computer access. Examples include online databases, electronic books, and interactive media. The MLK Library generally does not purchase electronic resources other than online databases. Supplemental digital materials and DVDs may be packaged with other materials such as books, but are not purchased separately.

Online Databases

Among the criteria to be considered in the purchase of online databases are:

- Relevance to the curricula
- Relevance to the College's needs
- Accessibility, including compliance with ADA, Section 508 and WCAG guidelines, and in coordination with District and College accessibility processes
- User-friendliness
- Frequency of updates
- Availability of equipment and memory required to support the product
- Impact of the product on the Library system
- Degree of technical support required
- Product reliability
- Cost
- Number of simultaneous users allowed
- Campuses' accessibility

Trials of Databases

The Library may decide, from time to time, to evaluate a new database on a trial basis prior to deciding whether or not to purchase. The presence or availability of a database does not necessarily mean that the Library will ultimately acquire the resource.

License Agreements

Copies of all licensing agreements will be maintained by the Library.

Continuations

The ever-changing technologies in the area of electronic resources demand an annual review of the appropriateness of the collection.

BOOKS

Selection Criteria for New Books

The Library collects books in three principal areas:

- **Main Collection**
The principal circulating collection. Consideration is given to authoritativeness, reading level, appropriateness for and support of curriculum, and faculty, staff and administration needs.
- **Reference**
In addition to the standards for the Main Collection, reference resources are also acquired according to need and according to authority, scope, cost, treatment, arrangement, and format of the resources.
- **Reserve Materials/Textbooks**

LACC Library Collection Development Policy

The Library does not generally purchase copies of the textbooks currently used in classes, since the primary purpose of the Library is to supplement and augment the College curricula. Exceptions may occur if the text is considered useful to the general College community, if the materials have already been acquired in the normal course of collecting for the Library, or there is an exceptional situation, such as the textbook not being available at the campus Bookstore and demand is great. When the Library discovers that a title in the Main Collection is currently being used as a textbook, the Library staff will place the item in Textbook Reserve.

Faculty, staff, or other College agents are currently the primary suppliers or donors of classroom or text materials. Suppliers and donors are responsible for making sure that applicable copyright laws are followed.

Faculty Reserve Materials are supplemental reading materials supplied by the instructor for use by the entire class.

Among the criteria to be considered in the purchase of books for the Library's collections are

- Format
- Relevance to the curricula
- Relevance to the College's needs
- Authoritativeness
- Literary quality
- Availability of materials on the subject
- Reviews in the professional literature
- Reputation of the author or publisher
- Inclusion in recognized bibliographies and indexes, including those of accreditation agencies
- Cost

Books considered for addition to the collections will also be evaluated with attention given to

- Written reviews by reputable library- or publishing-field reviewers
- Written reviews by reputable authors or other knowledgeable individuals
- Size and adequacy of the current collection
- Potential use of materials by students and faculty
- Appropriateness for lower-division college use
- Recency (current material is given high priority)

Format

In the acquisition of new book titles, the selected format (print, electronic, hardcover, paperback, etc.) will be determined based on anticipated frequency of use, duration of usefulness, and price differential. In general, preference will be given to paperback books over hardcover format because of their cost.

Multiple Copies

The Library purchases multiple copies of a title only in cases of demonstrable need.

Out-of-Print Books

Efforts to obtain materials on the out-of-print market shall be made if it is decided that the materials are of enough importance to justify these efforts.

Replacement of Books

Lost or stolen books will be replaced on a case-by-case basis if their continued inclusion in the collection is warranted.

PERIODICALS

Selection Criteria for Serials/Periodicals

Definitions

- **Serial**—A publication in any medium issued in successive parts bearing numerical or chronological designations and intended to be continued indefinitely. Serials include periodicals (magazines, journals); newspapers; annuals (reports, yearbooks, etc.); the journals, memoirs, proceedings, transactions, etc., of societies; and numbered monographic series.
- **Periodicals**—Publications issues in successive parts bearing numeric or chronological designations and intended to be published indefinitely. Generally, these are publications issued and received on a regular basis and placed into the periodical collection, including journals, magazines, and newspapers.
- **Continuations**—Publications received on a regular basis that are classified and placed in collections other than the periodical collection.
- **Indexes**—Regularly-published lists of periodical article citations.

The selection of periodicals requires a more specific selection process than for other media. When a periodical is selected, a continuing commitment has been made for the base cost of the title, including subscription maintenance, shelf integrity and storage. The rapidly expanding periodicals market requires that care needs to be exercised in reviewing periodical titles before purchase for the collection occurs. Online databases will be a factor in periodical selections.

Collection of serial publications to support the academic programs is important for providing current research information. Access to current and timely information is best accomplished with serial publications. Selection decisions for serials are made by these criteria:

- **Priorities**
 - Curriculum support for students
 - General education and news coverage
 - Faculty support

- **Recommendations**

Recommendations for the selection and review of the serial collection may be made by the following:

- Faculty and academic staff
- Students
- Library faculty

- **General Selection Criteria**

Periodicals are selected to support the continuing information needs of the college community. General factors to be considered are:

- Academic programs
- Mission relevance
- Majors
- Certificate programs
- General education need
- Undergraduate research level needs
- Enrollment size in programs or departments
- Student population needs
- Specific collection needs

- **Specific Criteria for Periodicals and Continuations**

Selection of specific titles will include a careful evaluation of the following:

- **Indexing**—what indexes provide access to the contents of the periodical title? Does the Library own any of these indexes?
- **Abstracts**—does the Library own any of the abstracts that provide access?
- **Electronic Access**—what is available in the Library or by remote access to provide online access to the contents of the periodical?
- **Projected Use**—for unindexed titles, will use of title be encouraged by specific class assignments or research topics?
- **Review in the Literature**—how is a title reviewed by a subject expert?
- **Cost**—what is the specific cost of the subscription? What is the cost per issue?
- **Frequency**—does the periodical title meet stated research needs of students or faculty?
- **Format**—newsletter, newspaper, electronic journal?
- **Subject content** of the periodical?
- **Subject coverage**—how in-depth, scholarly, technical, etc., are the articles?
- **Audience**—for what audience is this periodical intended?

- **General Newspapers**

The Library acquires general newspapers on a current basis to meet the teaching and general information needs of the College community. In selecting new subscriptions, the relevance of the newspaper to courses, current coverage of local, national, and international geographical areas, and representation of diverse political and social viewpoints are considered.

- **Online Databases**

In addition to the criteria for selecting periodicals, the following is considered for online databases:

- Subject coverage in relation to the College's programs and collections
- Currency—speed with which the index includes current articles
- Cost
- Database accessibility and compatibility
- Reputation of database vendor
- Estimated patron use
- Duplication with print version

Exclusions

Titles requested by faculty for research not directly related to teaching, especially those that are highly specialized and of no continuing value to the collection will be discouraged. Titles related to an individual's avocation or personal interest will not be purchased.

Replacement

The Periodicals staff will make every effort to obtain replacement pages and/or a replacement issue.

Discarding

The Library faculty, under the direction of the Library Department Chair, will regularly undertake a systematic review of the periodical collection, including the category of standing orders, to ensure that the present collection meets the standards set forth in this policy. Academic department heads and faculty are part of the process of review and their recommendations will be solicited.

Decisions for the ordering and cancellation of periodicals are made by the Periodicals librarian, with appropriate consultation/advice of faculty and head of the Library.

GIFTS

Selection Criteria for Gifts

Gift material is accepted through MLK Library as appropriate. The Library acknowledges receipt of gifts by providing a letter with the number of items donated, but does not place a value on the material. The Collection Development librarian will help determine if materials donated meet the collection development criteria. Donors also agree that the items donated become the property of the Library, to be disposed of as the Library sees fit, including allocation to Library collections, to book sales, to other individuals or organizations, and/or to de-selection.

- Materials received as gifts will be evaluated by the same criteria as those for new book or periodical purchases.
- The Library at all times retains the right to dispose of gifts at any time and in any manner deemed appropriate.
- The Library will accept those materials that contribute to its overall missions and objectives.
- Materials received as gifts will be evaluated for condition (underlining, missing pages, yellowed pages, mold, etc.).
- The Library retains the right to dispose of duplicate and other unneeded materials as it wishes.

COLLECTION MAINTENANCE AND EVALUATION

The best utilization of Library space requires continuous evaluation of holdings. Evaluation shall be a continuous process involving considerations such as use and condition of material. Outdated materials shall be withdrawn from the collection unless there is some indication that they have historical significance or that they are needed for a particular and unique reason.

Withdrawal of obsolete materials shall be considered an integral part of the total effort to assess and develop the collection and shall reflect the Library's selection policy. Faculty advice will be solicited when appropriate.

De-Selection

De-selection (weeding) is an important aspect of collection development. The same criteria for selection will be used for discarding materials. General criteria for de-selection include the following:

- Value to the collection
- Physical condition
- Duplicates
- Coverage of the subject by other materials
- Age or obsolescence
- Use

Another way of thinking about de-selection is through the acronym MUSTIE:

M = Misleading—factually inaccurate

U = Ugly—worn beyond mending or rebinding

S = Superseded —by a new edition of by a much better book on the subject

T = Trivial—of no discernible literary or scientific merit

I = Irrelevant to the needs and interests of the library's community

E = Elsewhere —the material is easily obtainable from another library
(coined by ALA in cooperation with the Texas State Library back in 1976)

De-selection is done by Library faculty, with appropriate input from other faculty as needed in their subject area. Systematic de-selection may take place concurrent with an inventory of the entire collection, or on an ad-hoc basis in specific subject areas as gift or new material is added, or as space becomes limited.

Criteria for Keeping Materials

Typical criteria for keeping materials include:

- **Strong local interest.** Many libraries keep materials that have a local interest. For example, libraries may keep books that are written by authors from their state, city or college, or they may keep materials that are about the local area, even though they do not keep these as a special collection.
- **Outstanding literary, historical, or scientific value.** Some books or other materials may be kept because they are simply very important. Some of these books may have achieved classic status. An example might be Michael Faraday's *Chemical History of a Candle* or William James' *Pragmatism*. Other books, while not classics, appear in lists of recommended titles, which indicate that experts in the field feel that they are especially valuable.
- **Older edition of a current textbook.** Students often check out older editions of current textbooks. If the older editions still contain correct information, they should be kept. If they are outdated and could cause a student difficulty in class, they should be discarded.
- **Special collections.** If a library has a special collection in a specific subject area, materials that are part of this collection may be kept, even if they would otherwise be removed. The MLK Library does not have any special collections at this time.

APPENDIX A: ALA Bill of Rights

American Library Association Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; January 29, 2019.

Inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996.

Source link: www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill

APPENDIX B: ALA Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries

American Library Association Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

A strong intellectual freedom perspective is critical to the development of academic library collections, services, and instruction that dispassionately meets the education and research needs of a college or university community. The purpose of this statement is to outline how and where intellectual freedom principles fit into an academic library setting, thereby raising consciousness of the intellectual freedom context within which academic librarians work. The following principles should be reflected in all relevant library policy documents.

1. The general principles set forth in the [*Library Bill of Rights*](#) form an indispensable framework for building collections, services, and policies that serve the entire academic community.
2. The privacy of library users is and must be inviolable. Policies should be in place that maintain confidentiality of library borrowing records and of other information relating to personal use of library information and services.
3. The development of library collections in support of an institution's instruction and research programs should transcend the personal values of the selector. In the interests of research and learning, it is essential that collections contain materials representing a variety of perspectives on subjects that may be considered controversial.
4. Preservation and replacement efforts should ensure that balance in library materials is maintained and that controversial materials are not removed from the collections through theft, loss, mutilation, or normal wear and tear. There should be alertness to efforts by special interest groups to bias a collection through systematic theft or mutilation.
5. Licensing agreements should be consistent with the *Library Bill of Rights*, and should maximize access.
6. Open and unfiltered access to the Internet should be conveniently available to the academic community in a college or university library. Content filtering devices and content-based restrictions are a contradiction of the academic library mission to further research and learning through exposure to the broadest possible range of ideas and information. Such restrictions are a fundamental violation of intellectual freedom in academic libraries.
7. Freedom of information and of creative expression should be reflected in library exhibits and in all relevant library policy documents.
8. Library meeting rooms, research carrels, exhibit spaces, and other facilities should be available to the academic community regardless of research being pursued or subject being discussed. Any restrictions made necessary because of limited availability of space should be based on need, as reflected in library policy, rather than on content of research or discussion.
9. Whenever possible, library services should be available without charge in order to encourage inquiry. Where charges are necessary, a free or low-cost alternative (e.g., downloading to disc rather than printing) should be available when possible.

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10. A service philosophy should be promoted that affords equal access to information for all in the academic community with no discrimination on the basis of race, age, values, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural or ethnic background, physical, sensory, cognitive or learning disability, economic status, religious beliefs, or views.
11. A procedure ensuring due process should be in place to deal with requests by those within and outside the academic community for removal or addition of library resources, exhibits, or services.
12. It is recommended that this statement of principle be endorsed by appropriate institutional governing bodies, including the faculty senate or similar instrument of faculty governance.

Approved by ACRL Board of Directors: June 29, 1999

Adopted July 12, 2000, by the ALA Council.

Amended July 1, 2014

Source link: www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/intellectual

From a letter dated November 15, 2000, to Judith F. Krug, director, Office for Intellectual Freedom, from the *American Association of University Professors*:

A copy of the new ACRL/ALA statement on Intellectual Freedom Principles for Academic Libraries: An Interpretation of the 'Library Bill of Rights' was forwarded to one of our Council members and considered by the AAUP Council in its meeting on November 11, 2000.

The AAUP Council is pleased to endorse the statement, but wishes to preface that endorsement with the following language from the Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians, as contained in AAUP: Policy Documents and Reports, 1995 edition:

“College and university librarians share the professional concerns of faculty members. Academic freedom, for example, is indispensable to librarians, because they are trustees of knowledge with the responsibility of ensuring the availability of information and ideas, no matter how controversial, so that teachers may freely teach and students may freely learn. Moreover, as members of the academic community, librarians should have latitude in the exercise of their professional judgment within the library, a share in shaping policy within the institution, and adequate opportunities for professional development and appropriate reward.”

Please convey to the members of the ACRL Board and ALA Council our concern that college and university librarians are designated the same rights afforded to other faculty in regard to intellectual freedom.

APPENDIX C: ALA Challenged Resources

American Library Association Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

“Libraries: An American Value” states, “We protect the rights of individuals to express their opinions about library resources and services.”¹ The American Library Association declares as a matter of firm principle that it is the responsibility of every library to have a clearly defined written policy for collection development that includes a procedure for review of challenged resources. Collection development applies to library materials and resources in all formats, programs, and services.

Article I of the American Library Association’s *Library Bill of Rights* states, “Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.” Article II further declares, “Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.”

Freedom of expression, although it can be offensive to some, is protected by the Constitution of the United States. The “Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*” states: Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user’s right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator’s viewpoint or personal history. Library workers should not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection-development decisions.²

This applies with equal force to library resources and services provided to students and minors.³

The Supreme Court has held that the Constitution requires a procedure designed to critically examine all challenged expression before it can be suppressed.⁴ Therefore, libraries should develop a procedure by which the governing body examines concerns and challenges about library resources. This procedure should be open, transparent, and conform to all applicable open meeting and public records laws. Challenged resources should remain in the collection, and access to the resources remain unrestricted during the review process. Resources that meet the criteria for selection and inclusion within the collection as outlined in the institution’s collections policy should not be removed. Procedures to review challenges to library resources should not be used to suppress constitutionally protected expression.

Any attempt, be it legal or extralegal, to regulate or suppress resources in libraries must be closely scrutinized to the end that protected expression is not abridged. Attempts to remove or suppress materials by library staff or members of the library’s governing body that are not regulated or sanctioned by law are considered “extralegal.” Examples include actions that circumvent library policy, or actions taken by elected officials or governing board members outside the established legal process for making legislative or board decisions. Actions taken by library governing bodies during official sessions or meetings pursuant to the library’s collection development policy, or litigation undertaken in courts of law with jurisdiction over the library and the library’s governing body, and actions taken by legislative bodies are considered a “legal process.”

Content filtering is not equivalent to collection development. Content filtering is exclusive, not inclusive, and cannot effectively curate content or mediate access to resources available on the internet. Filtering should be addressed in an institution's policy on acceptable use of the internet. Acceptable use policies should reflect the *Library Bill of Rights* and "Internet Filtering: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*," and be approved by the appropriate governing authority.

¹ "[Libraries: An American Value](#)," adopted February 3, 1999, by the ALA Council.

² "[Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*](#)," adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 *under previous name* "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 25, 2019.

³ "[Access to Library Resources and Services for Minors: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*](#)," adopted June 30, 1972, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991; June 30, 2004; July 2, 2008 *under previous name* "Free Access to Libraries for Minors"; July 1, 2014; and June 25, 2019.

⁴ *Bantam Books, Inc. v. Sullivan*, 372 U.S. 58 (1963).

Adopted June 25, 1971, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; January 28, 2009; July 1, 2014; and January 29, 2019.

Source link: www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/challenged-resources

The quoted language in this interpretation from "Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" (adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 under previous name "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 25, 2019) was updated to reflect the June 2019 revision. This change was voted on by the Intellectual Freedom Committee.

APPENDIX D: ALA Diverse Collections

American Library Association Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Collection development should reflect the philosophy inherent in Article I of the *Library Bill of Rights*: “Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.” A diverse collection should contain content by and about a wide array of people and cultures to authentically reflect a variety of ideas, information, stories, and experiences.

Library workers have an obligation to select, maintain, and support access to content on subjects by diverse authors and creators that meets—as closely as possible—the needs, interests, and abilities of all the people the library serves. This means acquiring materials to address popular demand and direct community input, as well as addressing collection gaps and unexpressed information needs. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be proactively inclusive in collection development and in the provision of interlibrary loan where offered.

A well-balanced collection does not require a one-to-one equivalence for each viewpoint but should strive for equity in content and ideas that takes both structural inequalities and the availability of timely, accurate materials into account. A diverse collection should contain a variety of works chosen pursuant to the library’s selection policy and subject to periodic review.

Collection development, as well as cataloging and classification, should be done according to professional standards and established procedures. Developing a diverse collection requires:

- selecting content in multiple formats;
- considering resources from self-published, independent, small, and local producers;
- seeking content created by and representative of marginalized and underrepresented groups;
- evaluating how diverse collection resources are cataloged, labeled, and displayed;
- including content in all of the languages used in the community that the library serves, when possible; and
- providing resources in formats that meet the needs of users with disabilities.¹

Best practices in collection development assert that materials should not be excluded from a collection solely because the content or its creator may be considered offensive or controversial. Refusing to select resources due to potential controversy is considered censorship, as is withdrawing resources for that reason. Libraries have a responsibility to defend against challenges that limit a collection’s diversity of content. Challenges commonly cite content viewed as inappropriate, offensive, or controversial, which may include but is not limited to prejudicial language and ideas, political content, economic theory, social philosophies, religious beliefs, scientific research, sexual content, and representation of diverse sexual orientations, expressions, and gender identities.

LACC Library Collection Development Policy

Intellectual freedom, the essence of equitable library services, provides for free access to varying expressions of ideas through which a question, cause, or movement may be explored. Library workers have a professional and ethical responsibility to be fair and just in defending the library user's right to read, view, or listen to content protected by the First Amendment, regardless of the creator's viewpoint or personal history. Library workers must not permit their personal biases, opinions, or preferences to unduly influence collection development decisions.²

¹ [“Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*,”](#) adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council under the title "Services to Persons with Disabilities"; amended June 26, 2018.

² *ALA Code of Ethics*, Article VII, adopted at the 1939 Midwinter Meeting by the ALA Council; amended June 30, 1981; June 28, 1995; and January 22, 2008.

Adopted July 14, 1982, by the ALA Council; amended January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; July 1, 2014 *under previous name* "Diversity in Collection Development"; and June 24, 2019.

APPENDIX E: ALA Guidelines for Reconsideration Committees

American Library Association Guidelines for Reconsideration Committees

Under the best professional standards, reconsideration policies ask those charged with reviewing a challenged book to set aside their personal beliefs and evaluate the work in light of the objective standards outlined in the library's materials selection policy. Listed are some best practices for reconsideration committee members.

- Bear in mind the principles of the freedom to read and base your decision on these broad principles rather than on defense of individual materials. The freedom to read is essential to our democracy.
- Read all materials referred to you including the full text of the material in question and read available reviews.
- Review library mission statement, policies, and professional guides.
- The general acceptance of the materials should be checked by consulting standard evaluation aids and selection policies.
- Challenged materials should not be removed from the collection while under reconsideration.
- Passages or parts should not be pulled out of context. The values and faults should be weighed against each other and the opinions based on the materials as a whole.
- In order to prevent a tie, the library director should recruit an odd number of members for the committee.
- While it may be prudent to state what area/role a committee member represents in the makeup of the committee (i.e., teacher, librarian, community member, administration, parent, etc.), the personal identification should remain anonymous to protect the objectivity of the deliberation.
- While there may be a need for public comments to be heard, the reconsideration committee meeting should be closed. Public Comments can be directed to the director or governing body.
- The committee's recommendation is to be an objective evaluation of the material within the scope of a library's collection policy.
- The report, presenting both majority and minority opinions, should be presented to the governing body with a recommendation to retain the material in its original location, to relocate the material to an advisory location, or to remove the material.
- Establish a procedure for communicating the committee's recommendation to the governing body and to the person who made the formal reconsideration request. For example, the committee communicates its decision to the director, who then communicates the decision to the person who make the challenge as well as to the library's governing board.

Sample Reconsideration Committee Report [[PDF](#)]

- Title:
- Author/Producer:

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- Has every member of the committee read the material entirely? If not, why?
 - Resources consulted: (include policies, articles, reviews etc.)
 - Reconsideration committee recommends:
 - Justification and comments: (include majority and minority positions)
 - Signatures of Reconsideration Committee Members:
 - Date:
-

Selection & Reconsideration Policy Toolkit for Public, School, & Academic Libraries

Garnar, Martin, and Trina Magi. *Intellectual Freedom Manual*. Tenth Edition. Chicago: ALA Editions. 2021

Source link: www.ala.org/tools/challengesupport/reconsiderationcommittees

Updated 2021

APPENDIX F: ALA The Freedom to Read Statement

American Library Association The Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that

publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of

life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of

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expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers for Free Expression](#)
[The Association of American University Presses](#)
[The Children's Book Council](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)
The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression

APPENDIX G: ALA Labeling and Rating Systems

American Library Association Labeling and Rating Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, the ability for library users to access electronic information using library computers does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library.

Labeling System

The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access. Libraries do not advocate the ideas found in their collections or in resources accessible through the library. The presence of books and other resources in a library does not indicate endorsement of their contents by the library. Likewise, providing access to digital information does not indicate endorsement or approval of that information by the library. Labeling systems present distinct challenges to these intellectual freedom principles.

Labels may be a library-sanctioned means of organizing resources or providing guidance to users. They may be as simple as a colored dot or strip of tape indicating reference books or fiction or as elaborate as the Dewey Decimal or Library of Congress call number systems.

Labels as viewpoint-neutral directional aids are intended to facilitate access by making it easier for users to locate resources. Users may choose to consult or ignore the directional aids at their own discretion. Viewpoint-neutral directional labels are a convenience designed to save time. These are different in intent from attempts to prejudice, discourage, or encourage users to access particular library resources or to restrict access to library resources. Labeling as an attempt to prejudice attitudes is a censor's tool. The American Library Association opposes labeling as a means of predisposing people's attitudes toward library resources.

Prejudicial labels are designed to restrict access, based on a value judgment that the content, language, or themes of the resource, or the background or views of the creator(s) of the resource, render it inappropriate or offensive for all or certain groups of users. The prejudicial label is used to warn, discourage, or prohibit users or certain groups of users from accessing the resource. Such labels sometimes are used to place materials in restricted locations where access depends on staff intervention.

Directional aids can also have the effect of prejudicial labels when their implementation becomes proscriptive rather than descriptive. When directional aids are used to forbid access or to suggest moral or doctrinal endorsement, the effect is the same as prejudicial labeling. Even well-intentioned labels may have this effect.

Prejudicial labeling systems assume that the libraries have the institutional wisdom to determine what is appropriate or inappropriate for its users to access. They presuppose that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. The

American Library Association opposes the use of prejudicial labeling systems and affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read, view, listen to, or otherwise access.

Adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council.

Source Link: www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretation/labeling-systems

Rating Systems

Libraries, no matter their size, contain an enormous wealth of viewpoints and are responsible for making those viewpoints available to all. However, libraries do not advocate or endorse the content found in their collections or in resources made accessible through the library. Rating systems are tools or labels devised by individuals or organizations to advise people regarding suitability or content of materials. Rating systems appearing in library catalogs or discovery systems present distinct challenges to intellectual freedom principles.

Creators of rating systems assume that individuals or groups exist who can determine what is appropriate or inappropriate for others. They also assume that individuals want or need direction in making decisions about the materials or resources they use. While the creation and publication of such systems is protected by the First Amendment's right to free speech, the American Library Association also affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about the information that they consume.

Libraries' explicit or implicit adoption, enforcement, or endorsement of any of these rating systems violates the *Library Bill of Rights* and may be unconstitutional if used to prevent an individual's access to materials or resources. If enforcement of rating systems is mandated by law, the library should seek legal advice regarding the law's applicability to library operations.

Libraries often acquire resources, such as DVDs and video games, that include ratings as part of their publication materials. Library workers should not endorse the inclusion of such rating systems; however, removing or destroying the rating placed on the original item by the publisher, distributor, or copyright holder could constitute expurgation.¹

Because cataloging standards provide an opportunity for libraries to include ratings in their bibliographic records, many libraries have chosen to do so—some by acceptance of standard records containing such ratings and others by a desire to provide the maximum descriptive information available on a resource. Libraries are not required by cataloging best practices to provide this information. If they choose to do so, for whatever reason, they should cite the source of the rating and indicate that the library does not endorse external rating systems.

The inclusion of ratings in bibliographic records within library catalogs or discovery systems may be interpreted as an endorsement by the library. Therefore, without attribution, inclusion of such ratings is a violation of the *Library Bill of Rights*.

If libraries include information about rating systems on items or records, this information should not be used to restrict access to those materials based on the age of library users. Such a restriction may violate minors' First Amendment rights.²

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That libraries do not endorse or advocate for the use of rating systems does not preclude them from answering questions about such systems. It is appropriate to provide access to sources containing information on rating systems in order to meet the specific information-seeking needs of individual users. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read or view.

¹ “Expurgation of Library Resources: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*,” adopted February 2, 1973, by the ALA Council; amended July 1, 1981; January 10, 1990; July 2, 2008; and July 1, 2014.

²*Engahl v. City of Kenosha*, 317 F. Supp. 1133 (E.D. Wis. 1970); *Motion Picture Association of America v. Specter*, 315 F. Supp. 824 (E.D. Pa. 1970); *Swope v. Lubbers*, 560 F.Supp. 1328 (W.D. Mich. 1983); and *Rosen v. Budco*, 10 Phila. 112 (1983).

Adopted on June 30, 2015, by ALA Council; amended June 25, 2019.

Source link: www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/rating-systems

APPENDIX H: ALA Access to Digital Resources and Services

American Library Association Access to Digital Resources and Services: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

The fundamental mission of libraries is to provide access to information, regardless of content or format, to everyone. Digital resources and services, or resources and services made primarily available online or on digital devices, are integral to libraries' mission in the twenty-first century. Libraries are important points of access to many digital resources and services, including, but not limited to, computers, the Internet, and digital resources and tools. In order to provide access to digital resources and services while upholding the *Library Bill of Rights*, libraries must consider intellectual freedom principles and issues of equity to ensure that access to information is enhanced, not restricted, by digital technology.

Libraries should regularly review issues arising from digital creation, distribution, retrieval, and archiving of information. Any review of these issues should consider users' First Amendment rights, rights to privacy, and the core values of librarianship as expressed in the *Library Bill of Rights* and the *Code of Ethics of the American Library Association*. Many people lack access or the capability to use or create digital resources effectively. There is a need for places where people can access, use, or create information without impediment. It is the responsibility of libraries to provide access to digital resources and services and to mitigate all barriers, whether they are economic, educational, or political. The provision of access does not imply sponsorship or endorsement by the library. Libraries should resist all attempts by individuals, governments, and private entities to censor or limit access to digital resources or services.

In making decisions about how to offer access to digital resources, services, tools, physical equipment, and networks, each library should consider intellectual freedom principles and issues of equity in the context of its mission, goals, objectives, cooperative agreements, and the needs of the entire community it serves.

The Rights of Users

All library policies, procedures, or regulations relating to digital resources and services should be scrutinized for potential violations of user rights. User policies should be developed according to the policies and guidelines established by the American Library Association.¹

Users' access to digital resources and services should not be restricted or denied for expressing, receiving, creating, or participating in constitutionally protected speech. If access is restricted or denied for behavioral or other reasons, users should be provided due process, including, but not limited to, formal notice and a means of appeal.

Information retrieved, utilized, or created digitally is constitutionally protected unless determined otherwise by a court of competent jurisdiction. These rights extend to minors as well as adults.² Libraries should use technology to enhance, not deny, digital access. Users have the right to be free of unreasonable limitations or conditions set by libraries, librarians, system administrators, vendors, network service providers, or others. Contracts, agreements, and licenses entered into by libraries on behalf of their users should not violate this right. Libraries

should provide library users the training and assistance necessary to find, evaluate, use, and create information effectively.

All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use.³ The library should uphold these rights by policy, procedure, and practice in accordance with Article VII of the *Library Bill of Rights*. The library should regularly maintain its systems and networks in order to protect users' rights to privacy and confidentiality. As libraries increasingly provide access to digital resources through third-party vendors, libraries have a responsibility to hold vendors accountable for protecting patrons' privacy.

Equity of Access

The digital environment provides expanding opportunities for everyone to participate in the information society, but individuals may face serious barriers to access. These barriers, often referred to as the digital divide, may include a lack of infrastructure for Internet connectivity, lack of tools (hardware or software), and lack of skills, knowledge, or means necessary to access digital resources.⁴ Libraries should be cognizant of the digital divide and work to minimize it as they provide access to digital resources for their communities.

Digital resources, services, training, and networks provided directly or indirectly by the library should be readily and equitably accessible to all library users. American Library Association policies oppose the charging of user fees for the provision of information services by libraries that receive support from public funds.⁵ Libraries should develop policies concerning access to digital resources. These policies should be consistent with ALA's policies and guidelines. When new digital resources are provided to library users, libraries have an obligation to provide equitable training opportunities to library users and workers in using those new resources. Training should also address privacy and security issues that accompany the use of digital resources and services.

Information Resources and Access

Libraries, acting within their mission and objectives, should support access to information on all subjects that serve the needs or interests of each user, regardless of the user's age or the content of the material. In order to preserve the cultural record and to prevent the loss of information, libraries may need to expand their selection or collection-development policies to ensure preservation, in appropriate formats, of information obtained digitally. Libraries have an obligation to provide access to government information available in digital format.

Providing connections to global information, services, and networks is not the same as selecting and purchasing materials for a library collection. Some information accessed digitally may not meet a library's selection or collection-development policy. It is, therefore, left to each user to determine what is appropriate. Libraries and library workers should not deny or limit access to digital resources because of their allegedly controversial content or because of a library worker's personal beliefs or fear of confrontation. Furthermore, libraries and library workers should not deny access to digital resources solely on the grounds that they are perceived to lack value. Parents and legal guardians who are concerned about their children's use of digital resources should provide guidance to their own children.

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Publicly funded libraries have a legal obligation to provide access to constitutionally protected information. Federal, state, county, municipal, local, or library governing bodies sometimes require the use of Internet filters or other technological measures that block access to constitutionally protected information, contrary to the *Library Bill of Rights*.⁶ If a library uses a technological measure that blocks access to information, it should be set at the least restrictive level in order to minimize the blocking of constitutionally protected speech.

Adults retain the right to access all constitutionally protected information and to ask for the technological measure to be disabled in a timely and confidential manner. Minors also retain the right to access constitutionally protected information and, at a minimum, have the right to ask the library or librarian to provide access to erroneously blocked information in a timely and confidential manner. In order to ensure user privacy and confidentiality, records of these requests should not contain personally identifiable information. Libraries and librarians have an obligation to inform users of these rights and to provide the means to exercise these rights.⁷

Digital resources and services allow libraries to significantly expand the scope of information available to users. Like all resources and services provided by the library, provision of access to digital resources and services should follow the principles outlined in the *Library Bill of Rights* to ensure equitable access regardless of content or platform.

¹ "[Guidelines for Library Policies](#)," approved June 28, 1994 by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee; revised January 19, 2005; March 29, 2014 *under previous name* "Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities"; June 24, 2019.

²*Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969); *Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School District No. 26 v. Pico*, 457 U.S. 853, (1982); *American Amusement Machine Association v. Teri Kendrick*, 244 F.3d 954 (7th Cir. 2001); *cert.denied*, 534 U.S. 994 (2001).

³ "[Privacy: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted June 19, 2002, by the ALA Council; amended on July 1, 2014; June 24, 2019.

⁴ Martin Hilbert, "The End Justifies the Definition: The Manifold Outlooks on the Digital Divide and Their Practical Usefulness for Policy-Making," *Telecommunications Policy* 35, no. 8 (2011): 715-736. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.telpol.2011.06.012>

⁵ "[Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted June 30, 1993, by the ALA Council and amended June 25, 2019.

⁶ "[Internet Filtering: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)," adopted June 30, 2015, by the ALA Council.

⁷ "If some libraries do not have the capacity to unblock specific Web sites or to disable the filter or if it is shown that an adult user's election to view constitutionally protected Internet material is burdened in some other substantial way, that would be the subject for an as-applied challenge, not the facial challenge made in this case." *United States, et al. v. American Library Association*, 539 U.S. 194 (2003) (Justice Kennedy, concurring).

Adopted January 24, 1996 by the ALA Council; amended January 19, 2005; July 15, 2009 *under previous name* "Access to Digital Information, Services, and Networks"; and June 25, 2019.