

Privacy & Access

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Library 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 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.

Information Systems

This policy applies to all users of Kansas City Public Library computers or networks. If you have any questions about the policy or what it means, please contact the Web Librarian for more information.

108 Acceptable Use of Electronic Information Systems

The Library shall provide access to electronic information systems (including computers, computer networks and electronic information resources) to staff members and customers as is sufficient for the fulfillment of its mission. In compliance with the Children's Internet Protection Act, Kansas City Urban Public Library restricts minors from gaining computer access to material that is pornographic in accordance with sections 182.825 and 182.827, RSMo.

All computers shall be equipped with software to limit a minor's ability to gain access to material that is pornographic or to purchase Internet connectivity from an Internet service provider that provides filter services to limit access to material that is pornographic. Use of these systems shall be consistent with the Library's mission, goals, policies and procedures, and with applicable local, state, federal and international laws. The Library also expects that users of these systems shall not interfere with systems operations, integrity or security, or otherwise inhibit normal Library activities. The Library is responsible for systems operations and integrity, and may develop appropriate procedures to ensure systems efficiency, reliability, and security, and legal and ethical system use.

Board Policy 108 (Adopted 12-1995 / Amended 1-04)

108.01 Statement of Responsibility

The Information Technology Services department (ITS) is responsible for all aspects of electronic information systems development, management, and maintenance. As part of this responsibility, ITS is empowered by the Library Director to authorize access to system

elements (including computers and peripheral devices, network components, programs, program elements, files or data), to implement reasonable and appropriate measures to ensure systems reliability, integrity and security, and to enforce related policies and procedures. Attempts to violate or circumvent these policies and procedures will result in disciplinary action, which may include temporary or permanent loss of system access or privileged system use, or civil or criminal legal action.

Administrative Procedure 108.01 (Adopted 11-95)

Guidelines for Using Library Computers and the Internet

The Library is pleased to offer computers and computer-based services as part of our mission to provide materials that “educate, enrich, entertain, and inform” our customers. To provide the best possible services and prevent the abuse of these services, all customers must follow these guidelines.

The numbers in parentheses refer to the portion of the Library’s Acceptable Use of Electronic Information Systems Policy from which the guideline was derived.

1. To ensure access to as many users as possible, customers may not monopolize computer resources. For this reason, the Library may limit the amount of time a customer may use a workstation. (108.04)
2. Customers may not attempt to modify or damage computer hardware or software. If there is hardware or software you feel should be part of the Library’s electronic resources. (108.03)
3. Customers may not use software other than that provided and installed by the Library. (108.04)
4. The Library does not monitor or control information accessible through the Internet and is not responsible for:
 - content outside of Library pages (108)
 - changes in content of the sources to which the Library may link (108)
 - the content of sources accessed through secondary links (108)
 - consequences arising from information obtained from the Internet or any other electronic resource (108.06)
5. Customers may not use Library computers to commit any illegal acts. Such acts may include, but are not limited to:
 - forgery or fraud (108.05)

- libel, slander, or any form of harassment (108.05)
 - an invasion of privacy (108.05)
 - unauthorized access to any computer network (108.03)
 - public display of material from sites that may be deemed unlawful under federal or state statutes (108)
6. Customers are responsible for any consequences of copyright infringement. Additional information about copyright is available here.(108.06) Violations of these policies may result in loss of access to Library computer resources. Unlawful activities will be dealt with in an appropriate manner (108.01)

Website Privacy

This is how we will handle information we learn about you from your visit to the Library's Web site: When you visit our Web site, we collect and store only the following information:

- The address (IP) of your computer or of your Internet provider
- The date and time you access our site
- The Internet address of the Web site which referred you to our site
- We use this information to measure the number of visitors to the different sections of our site, and to help us make our site more useful to you. Web site data is separate from individual users' library account data. In other words, we can't look up your library card number and see where you have been on the Web.

"Cookies" are used in conjunction with our Web2 catalog interface, but they do expire in a timely manner and do not contain personal information.

The Library cannot be responsible for user's privacy when they disclose information to outside Web sites. It is the user's responsibility to protect their personal information. For example, be careful not to allow automatic logins to Web-based e-mail, close the Web browser when finished with a session, etc. (more about protecting your privacy on the Web)

We will not sell, rent, or otherwise distribute or disclose your e-mail address, postal address, phone number, borrower records or other personal information to outside parties unless required to do so by court order.

See Library Policy 105 for more information about Library customers' privacy.

Library Confidentiality

The Library Director shall carry forward the policies, goals and objectives adopted by the Board and shall recommend policies and formulate procedures which, in the Director's opinion, will promote the efficiency of the Library in its services to the residents of the District. (Ref: By-Laws VII3)

The Library specifically recognizes any document, record, or other method of storing information retained, received, or generated by the Library that identifies a person or persons having requested, used, or borrowed library material to be confidential. The Library shall not divulge such information to anyone other than the borrower. Such records shall not be made available to any agency of state, federal, or local government except pursuant to such process, order, or subpoena as may be authorized under the authority of, and pursuant to, federal, state, or local law relating to civil, criminal, or administrative discovery procedures or legislative investigatory power. The Library shall resist the issuance or enforcement of any such process, order, or subpoena until such time as a proper showing of good cause has been made in a court of competent jurisdiction.

Board Policy 105 (Adopted 11-88 / Amended 8-99)

Internet Access by Minors

The Library presents many educational and recreational opportunities for minors including access to the Internet. Just as Library staff select materials for children and young adults, they also select Web sites designed for these age groups.

The Internet provides access to a wide variety of viewpoints on topics of interest. As with other materials, parents may find that some Internet sites may not be appropriate for their children. The Library hopes that parents will take an active role in their children's learning and recreation by helping them select materials and Web sites that are appropriate to their age and interests.

Freedom to Read

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 books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, 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 avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read. We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow-citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. 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.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. 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.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

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 stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which 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 towards 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 which are unorthodox or unpopular with 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 which 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 contained in the books 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 books 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 determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

A book should be judged as a book. 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 which 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 literature 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 taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which 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 with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or 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 the citizen. 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.

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.

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 expended on the trivial; it is frustrated 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 their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens 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 books. We do so because we believe that they are good, 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 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 6-53 / Rev. 1-72, 1-91, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee.

A Joint Statement by: American Library Association and Association of American Publishers

Subsequently Endorsed by:

American Booksellers Association, American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, American Civil Liberties Union, American Federation of Teachers AFL-CIO, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Association of American University Presses, Children's Book Council,

Freedom to Read Foundation, International Reading Association, Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression, National Association of College Stores, National Council of Teachers of English, P.E.N. - American Center, People for the American Way, Periodical and Book Association of America, Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S., Society of Professional Journalists, Women's National Book Association, YWCA of the U.S.A.

Freedom to View

1. It is in the public interest to provide the broadest possible access to films and other audiovisual materials because they have proven to be among the most effective means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. It is in the public interest to provide for our audiences film and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
3. It is our professional responsibility to resist the constraint of labeling or prejudging a film on the basis of the moral, religious or political beliefs of the producer or film-maker or on the basis of controversial content.
4. It is our professional responsibility to contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.