Background Information, Context, and Applications for Developing a Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility

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Introduction: A Short History of Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibilities in Libraries

Librarians today "have a strong sense of service, of social justice, and of defense of human rights, which manifests itself in a variety of ways, including the public's right to know, equitable access to information, freedom of expression, and intellectual freedom," and Haycock and Sheldon (2008, p. xvii) say that this has always been the case. That might be an appealing thought but it is simply not true. During the civil rights era, for instance, most libraries in the American South did not allow African Americans equal access to library resources and those few that did often lost their jobs (LaRue, 2007). During the 1960s and 1970s, many ALA members actually argued *against* including minority voices and for only including easily accessible mainstream material published by the largest companies (Samek, 2001).

Today, librarians "advocate for legislation and funding that assures this access" but this too has not always been so (Haycock & Sheldon, 2008, p. xviii). In the U.S., from the Civil War through World War One, the Cold War, and up to the implementation of the Patriot Act, freedom of expression has been under attack whenever that expression has been anti-war. During World War One, many librarians "acted as 'good citizens' and collaborated in the censorship of German materials" (LaRue, 2007; McCook & Phenix, 2008, p. 26).

In the late 1930s through the 1940s, the ALA adopted the Library Bill of Rights to challenge censorship, among other objectives. According to Colorado librarian James LaRue (2007, p. 14), the U.S. Supreme Court has "clearly upheld that the best response to bad speech is better speech, not silence" and while such leaders as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison as well as many libraries have opposed censorship, there are many political and religious groups throughout the years that have tried to convince governments and their related institutions to enforce it. This has been happening for millennia across the globe from East Asia to the Middle East to Europe and North America (Lerner, 2009). Critical librarianship, which is discussed below and is linked to the values of both intellectual freedom and social responsibility, also began to assert itself, under various names, as early as the 1930s before becoming more culturally important in the late 1960s (Tara, 2007, September 13).

The first and only time Lerner (2009) mentions historical library work as it relates to social responsibilities is when he discusses the earlier twentieth century, contrasting Dewey's managerial opinion of libraries with others' view of the library as a tool for social improvement. While Dewey viewed many of the first female librarians as secretaries doing safe, caring work, many of those librarians viewed themselves as "advocates for the working class" (Lerner, 2009, p. 180). At the same time, the idea that "information is inherently a public good that should be freely available, has come into conflict with the conviction held by many that information is a valuable resource" that should be distributed through the free market (Lerner, 2009, p.181). This desire to improve the problems of society is still a concern for libraries today, a desire which sometimes bumps up against what some people don't consider to be "library issues."

The first time Lerner (2009) mentions intellectual freedom is in relation to the same time period, the early twentieth century, and its attending political, social, and religious debates about access to allegedly radical and inappropriate material. Book burning and book theft, however, have been occurring much longer—the earliest instances that Lerner relates are in the 300-30s BC in Egypt, in the 200s BC in China, later in 1258 AD when the Mongols sacked Baghdad destroying thousands of books, and in 1499

AD when the new Christian rulers of Spain burnt 80,000 Muslim books. Since that time, documented instances of people destroying books have increased.

Toni Samek (2001) documents the debates about intellectual freedom and social responsibility in the U.S. from 1967-1974. She notes that Evelyn Geller documented the shift from censorship to access in librarianship from 1876-1939 and David A. Lincove researched issues of censorship from the 1930s to the Cold War. Michiel Horn (2002) has compiled a bibliography of material on academic freedom. Toward the end of the Civil Rights Era, some librarians within the ALA lobbied to become more socially responsible and critical. Others, notable among them David Berninghausen, argued not only that neutrality should be the primary ethic in librarianship, but that ideas about civic responsibilities actually compromised intellectual freedom; much of this debate occurred within the pages of the *Library Journal*. Many librarians argued that libraries should only concern themselves with library issues and leave concerns about civil rights and other social issues to other civic organizations. Others argued that libraries and the ALA had always taken a stand on certain issues, e.g. concerning copyright legislation, standing against the Nazis, rejecting silent censorship through weeding, and that book selection had always reflected prevailing community values. Those who argued for neutrality often excluded alternate press publications from their libraries while others argued that a socially responsible stance would not mean rejecting the traditional press but would make a collection more inclusive and that neutrality was really just supporting the political and social status quo.

According to Samek (2001), Berninghausen argued that librarians should maintain a strict line dividing their private and professional lives, while others argued that this was not possible since librarians were not machines. Some within the ALA fought against replacing sexist terminology though others fought for equal pay for women. The Library Bill of Rights already encouraged people to make a variety of material accessible but, even recognizing that a library cannot possibly purchase everything, the outright exclusion of the alternate press in libraries compromised the ideal of variety in a collection. Some were also concerned that the ALA would lose its tax-exempt status if it moved from working for professional issues to personal issues, but exactly what could constituted a professional issue has not always been clear. Mary McKinney pointed out that some people didn't argue that the rights of African Americans or women be denied, "'but [that] burying one's prejudices in a bureaucracy does not qualify one as neutral'" (Samek, 2001, p. 143). Arguments for restricting access to alternative material also directly contradicts both the Freedom to Read Statement of 1953, discussed below, and the ALA's Library Bill of Rights which, as of 1980, states that libraries "should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues" (Haycock & Sheldon, 2008, p. 220).

In 1991, the ALA Council passed a resolution condemning the Gulf War but this "provoked strong protest from parts of the ALA membership, many of whom believed the Association should not involve itself in matters of public policy not directly related to library interests and concerns" (Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2010, p. 34). The debate of library versus non-library issues was continued in 1995 when the ALA decided to withdraw a meeting from Cincinnati

> where voters had repealed a gay rights ordinance. Many ALA members felt it would be outrageous to sponsor a meeting in a city that had withdrawn legal protection from discrimination for their gay colleagues. Others felt the ALA was compromising its intellectual freedom principles by taking a political position that implied official disapproval of the opinions of Cincinnati's voters and could have the effect of jeopardizing, in the mind of the library-using public, librarians' neutrality in the provision of information from all points of view on homosexuality and other controversial subjects (Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2010, p. 35).

In 1996, even to those who strove for neutrality, "large publishers were still the primary exhibitors at library conferences and primary advertisers in library periodicals. Because librarians were so familiar with these products, because they seldom asked for alternatives, Peattie argued that the library system continued to be self-reinforcing" making true neutrality difficult and diversity nearly impossible without looking to alternate sources (Samek, 2001, p. 143). In 2004, the ALA "supported IFLA's [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions] call for the elimination of the U.S. embargo that restricts access to information in Cuba…[and] supported the IFLA in urging the Cuban government to eliminate obstacles to access to information" (Office of Intellectual Freedom, 2010, p. 35). These

concerns seem possible to justify as typical "library issues," however, the ALA also expressed concern about the holding of political prisoners and this didn't seem to attract the same objections that issues closer to home did. The ALA lobbied for U.S. government support of the independent library movement in Cuba and part of this movement involves individuals opening their homes to house independent libraries, but this hardly seems to allow for separation between personal and professional issues (American Library Association, n.d.). This leads me to ask two questions. First, if a city had removed protection from discrimination for Jews would a meeting still be held there? And second, why is advocacy within American borders unacceptable while advocating for American values to be ensured in other countries seems to be acceptable?

Intellectual freedom.

The issues of intellectual freedom and social responsibility often overlap. However taken individually, and from "the [American] librarian's perspective, the right of free expression guaranteed by the First Amendment must be accompanied by the complementary right to have unimpeded access to those expressions" and because "people's values, interests, and beliefs can differ substantially, the librarian must accommodate this heterogeneity"; therefore, the ALA's Bill of Rights "exhorts librarians to build collections representing the widest range of points-of-view…and eradicate real or perceived barriers to [patrons] inquiries" (Rubin, 2008, pp. 10-11). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms similarly assures people the freedom of thought and expression (Government of Canada, n.d.). According to Samek, many librarians disputed this idea of providing multiple points of view, at least up to the 1970s, so this may be a relatively new idea in North American librarianship. That said, for distantly historical context, some Ptolemies of Alexandria and later some Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad tried to collect as many different works from as many places around the world as they could possibly manage, though they didn't always do this politely. The monastery libraries in Europe during the Middle Ages were considerably more restricted by political and religious ideals, had many fewer materials available in their collections, and weren't opposed to altering material they disagreed with as they copied it (Lerner, 2009). Today, intellectual freedom could be defined as "the belief in the fundamental dignity of individual inquiry and the right to exercise it" (LaRue, 2007).

When the Patriot Act was introduced in the U.S., librarians could no longer assure the community of their privacy and therefore of their intellectual safety. In 2004, several librarians in Connecticut felt that, in the balance between civil liberties and security, things were shifting too far toward law enforcement and away from freedom and privacy, "and they decided to do something about it: they sued when they got a National Security Letter, knowing full well that they might go to jail for doing so…[T]hey went through the courts seeking… to restore a long-standing balance between disclosure, privacy, civil liberties, and free speech" and they succeeded, so now "[l]ibraries still have to give library user information to law enforcement, but only with judicial oversight" (Lankes, 2012, p. 54). McCook and Phenix (2008, p. 26) point out that the democratic ideals that we promote today are "often different than the 'democracy' promoted by the government at the local, state, or federal levels" and that we should know the history of library challenges to democracy and how those have been handled over the years. I believe that acknowledgment of history is necessary to learn from it and grow, even, or especially, when that history is full of mistakes. To ignore unpleasant realities is to insult the people who have been harmed by them, e.g. the Southern American black communities or the First Nations communities of Canada, and to impede our ability to fulfill the goals of both social betterment and diversity of points of view in materials. Furthermore, we cannot protect something if we don't know its value and we might not think it needs an enthusiastic defense if we are unaware of its recent development and relative fragility in our field (Tara, 2007, September 13).

The Freedom to Read Statement was developed by the ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) in 1953 to "discuss the current wave of censorship and attacks on books and libraries…[and to] help clarify the stand which libraries might take and point to ways in which our own position might be strengthened in the minds of the public" (Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2010, p. 208). Debate "focused on the specific problem areas of obscenity and pornography and disloyalty and subversive materials," the role of publishers, catering to public taste, unpopular views, background of authors, and neutrality (Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2010, p. 209). The resulting statement concluded that "[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" and that "[p]ublishers and librarians 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 the sole standard for determining what books should be published or circulated" (Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2010, p. 211). It further stated that "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" (Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2010, p. 212). In 1968, in reaction to McCarthy's attempts to suppress certain points of view in the United States, the IFC removed the article "urging the vigorous enforcement of 'the present laws dealing with obscenity'" but noted that the statement was still valid. In 1972 the "reference to 'the immature, the retarded, or the maladjusted taste'" was removed, in 1990 the IFC removed gender-specific language, in 1991 they decided against adopting an international focus, in 2000 some terminology was updated and they reaffirmed that freedom to read was essential to democracy, and in 2004, they changed most instances of the word "'citizens' to 'others,' 'individuals,' and 'Americans'" and added clauses relating to government surveillance, censorship, and secrecy (Office for Intellectual Freedom, 2010, p. 214). Side note—The ALA still (as of October 2015) sells a publication called "Guidelines for Library Services for People with Mental Retardation" (American Library Association, n.d.). This could be read as discriminatory, at least in Canada.

Social responsibility.

Rubin (2008, p. 11) asserts that a library's concern for the public good was connected to "the [once] new professions of social work, public education, nursing…[and that] they served as important counterbalances to self-interested, commercial motivations, and unhealthy social byproducts of the industrial revolution" although we should remember that we haven't always succeeded in working for the public good equally and some have argued that these libraries prescribed a certain kind of social improvement (Lerner, 2009). During the 19th century, the idea of education for all regardless of socio-economic status was beginning to spread and since not everyone could afford to buy all the books they might want to read, it became important to find a way to allow them to read more widely than they could afford to, which is why Boston opened the first public library, an idea which spread rapidly across Canada and the U.S. (Tyckoson, 2008). According to McCook and Phenix (2008, p. 29), the ALA "met in cities where some of its members could not walk in the front door. Much was made of the prudent policy of not alienating state chapters who were militantly segregated, as Jim Crow was not a 'library issue'". They do cite some librarians who had the courage to stand up for civil rights but they were not celebrated until years later. Today at least, equitable access to information and diversity of materials are very important library values and librarians generally oppose "the commodification of information" (McCook & Phenix, 2008, p.33). If *MacLean's* magazine can publish a list of corporations in Canada that are working toward social responsibility, then surely libraries can strive for something similar (Macleans.ca, 2012, June 14).

Examples of position statements, the libraries and associations that create them, and their connections to library ethics and values.

The Saskatchewan Libraries website, maintained by Saskatchewan Public Library and Literacy Office (Government of Saskatchewan), briefly discusses intellectual freedom, defines censorship, and provides policy guidelines for libraries and further reading; they say that

> [l]ibraries and library boards have a responsibility to champion the cause of intellectual freedom, including fighting censorship efforts. While this can be a difficult and uncomfortable responsibility to carry out, it is necessary for the proper functioning of the library...Libraries support the belief that educated, free individuals possess powers of discrimination and are to be trusted to determine their own actions. Libraries wish to provide free access to all expressions of ideas through which all sides of an issue may be explored. Intellectual freedom also emanates from the belief that individual choice is basic to the functioning and maintenance of democracy and that only through a thoroughly informed electorate can real choice be made to guarantee the effectiveness and continuance of the democratic process.

They cite the ALA's Library Bill of Rights and Office for Intellectual Freedom, and the CLA's Statement on Intellectual Freedom, which is:

> All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society.
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> Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.
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> It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.
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> It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.
>
> Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.
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> Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles (Canadian Library Association, n.d.).

The CLA also has an Intellectual Freedom Advisory Committee which advises the Executive Council on "the status of intellectual freedom in Canada, including pending legislation and the formation of public policy affecting intellectual freedom in Canadian libraries," provides information about and supports intellectual freedom in Canadian libraries, and supports the Freedom to Read Week (Canadian Library Association, n.d.). The Library Association of Alberta's (2013) Intellectual Freedom Committee has developed a website "to provide information and assistance to library workers and trustees…[and] to support free access to ideas, to promote public information and to foster enlightenment." Their Statement of Intellectual Freedom (same) references the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well as the Alberta Bill of Rights and Alberta's Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Act.

The Lethbridge Public Library (n.d.), the Kitchener Public Library (n.d.), and the New Westminster Public Library (n.d.) all direct users to the CLA's position statement. The Edmonton Public Library (n.d.) issues a brochure about intellectual freedom which states that "[u]nder Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the fundamental freedoms of thought, belief and expression allows every Canadian to explore different ideas, hear all sides of an issue and gather information to make well-educated and informed decisions," in which they suggest that if you dislike library material you could suggest additional material to express more points of view, and in which they provide information about what parents can do if they're concerned about what their children are reading. The British Columbia Library Association (n.d.) does something comparable on their website.

The Ottawa Public Library's (n.d.) Intellectual Freedom Statement defends "the right of library users to freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression as the basis of a democratic society," and references both the CLA's Statement on Intellectual Freedom and the Ontario Library Association's Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual, which details their "commitment to the fundamental rights of intellectual freedom, the freedom to read and freedom of the press, as embodied in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms" (Ottawa Public Library, n.d.). The Niagara Falls Public Library also references both statements and details the responsibilities of the board, the CEO, and Chief Librarian as regards intellectual freedom. The Vancouver Public Library (n.d.) references the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Halifax Regional Library (n.d.) has a Collection Development Policy on their website, the purpose of which is to "to provide staff with the necessary guidelines to assist them in the development of collections to meet library goals and to inform the public about the principles by which materials are

selected for inclusion in the library collections." In it they maintain that the "library attempts to make available, the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which may be regarded as unorthodox or unpopular with the majority," discussing the periodic studies of the community, criteria for selection, weeding policy, how to make a suggestion for purchase, and that while their libraries are always willing to discuss the material in their collection they're "obliged to withdraw only that material judged illegal by the higher courts in Canada" (Halifax Regional Library, n.d.). The Ontario Library Association (1995) hosted a talk on public networks and censorship, during which they discussed the internet, a discussion which is rather dated now, and the barrage of information which would accompany it; the CLA's Intellectual Freedom Statement; the difficulties that arise when the law hasn't caught up with emerging technologies and related content debates, mostly to do with sex and what sorts of pornography are illegal or just objectionable; threats to intellectual freedom and the trouble that can arise when a government tries to define such a subjective idea as "obscenity," for instance; and that Ontario Libraries recognize parents' authority to determine what their children read but refuse to act "*in loco parentis*."

Religious beliefs are often cited when people challenge material, however St. Peter's Seminary's Library (n.d.) has an Intellectual Freedom and Privacy policy, endorsing the CLA and Ontario Library Association's statements as well as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and stating that the "right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society…[and that it] is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable." Ryerson University (n.d.) defines both intellectual and academic freedoms, stating that their policy "is to encourage and foster the above concepts, to actively oppose censorship, and to act in a manner consistent with the Canadian Library Association Statement on Intellectual Freedom, and the Ontario Library Association Statement on the Intellectual Rights of the Individual." King's Western University (n.d.) has a similar Intellectual Freedom and Privacy policy, citing also the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

The American Library Association (n.d.) has an Office for Intellectual Freedom that "is charged with implementing ALA policies concerning the concept of intellectual freedom as embodied in the Library Bill of Rights," educates libraries and the public about intellectual freedom, and supports Banned Books Week and the Freedom to Read Foundation. The ALA also lists links to a variety of resources, including some to social media. They don't publish a separate position statement on intellectual freedom, but reference the Core Values Statement, the Freedom to Read Statement, and the Library Bill of Rights, among others. There is also an Intellectual Freedom Round Table which "provides a forum for the discussion of activities, programs, and problems in intellectual freedom of libraries and librarians; [and] serves as a channel of communications on intellectual freedom matters" (American Library Association, n.d.).

The American Association of School Librarians (n.d.) issues a similar brochure which provides information about how intellectual freedom affects schools and students, specifically how the ALA's Code of Ethics applies to school librarians. The National [American] Council of Teachers in English (2014, February) has developed a Position Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Education, saying that all "students have the right to materials and educational experiences that promote open inquiry, critical thinking, diversity in thought and expression, and respect for others," pointing out that challenges to freedom of expression are no longer limited to books or even to written material, and listing some governing principles including that "[e]ducational communities should prepare for challenges to intellectual freedom with clearly defined policies and procedures that guide the review of classroom materials and resources called into question."

The San José Public Library's (n.d.) Intellectual Freedom Policy states that it "is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause, or movement may be explored" and adopts the ALA's Library Bill of Rights. While most libraries associate intellectual freedom with freedom of expression, the Texas Library Association (n.d.)

> holds that the freedom to read is a corollary of the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press. Freedom of choice in selecting materials is a necessary safeguard to the freedom to read,

> and shall be protected against extra-legal, irresponsible attempts by self-appointed censors to abridge it. The Association believes that citizens shall have the right of free inquiry and the equally important right of forming their own opinions, and that it is of the utmost importance to the continued existence of democracy that freedom of the press in all forms of public communication be defended and preserved.

This association provides links to information on the USA Patriot Act, Children's Internet Protection Act, and banned books.

UNESCO has also published a statement on libraries and intellectual freedom based on a speech by Henrikas Yushkiavitshus (2000), in which he states that intellectual freedom may be the most important freedom because "the road to any other freedom begins with freeing one's mind", references the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which "proclaims the right of everyone to the freedom of expression," but qualifies that saying "that today this universal access is far from being achieved despite the unprecedented technological progress of the recent years." Yushkiavitshus (2000) also references the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto which "proclaims that library 'collections and services should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, nor commercial pressure,'" gives examples of censorship around the world from the 1970s to 1990s, and references both the "the Code of Professional Ethics of the Russian Librarian [which] requires the latter to protect 'the confidentiality of the user's information activity'" and the ALA's Code of Ethics.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (n.d.) lists links to intellectual freedom statements from Australia, Canada, Croatia, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as Codes of Ethics from those countries and Armenia, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China including Hong Kong, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The IFLA (n.d.) also links to a bibliography of "[p]rotocols concerning ethical issues in the handling of information and a range of library/information/archives issues relating to Indigenous peoples" including the oral cultures of indigenous peoples of Canada, the United States, and Australia, among others.

The Turkish Librarians' Association (TLA), for instance, "safeguards and supports the freedom of expression as specified in the United Nations' Bill of Rights, the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Right to Freedom of Expression and Information, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' (IFLA) Statement on Freedom of Expression, and the TLA's Professional Code of Ethics" (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, n.d.). In their Statement on Intellectual Freedom in Libraries, the Japan Library Association (2003) references the 1946 Constitution of Japan and World War Two, and asserts that libraries bear "full responsibility to ensure the freedom to know…because libraries contributed much to the government policy of thought-guidance…[and because a] democratic society is founded on the freedom to know, and censorship has no room in such a society." They also connect freedom to know with freedom in society more broadly and human rights. Unlike the ALA, the JLA has committed, at least in writing, to actively supporting those who have fought to protect intellectual freedom and suffered for it.

Current Significance, Challenges, and Applications

Every few years, the IFLA and FAIFE, an IFLA initiative to support human rights, issue a report on the state of intellectual freedom around the world. The last one available on their website was published in 2010 and 122 countries participated. The report is divided into six sections: 1) country details; 2) estimated number of libraries; 3) libraries and the internet, including the cost of internet access, filtering software, and accessing local content; 4) legal issues, including anti-terror legislation, copyright laws, privacy, and intellectual freedom; 5) social issues, including women's literacy, accessibility, and environmental sustainability; and 6) ethics and IFLA initiatives, including codes of ethics, an IFLA internet manifesto, and an IFLA manifesto on transparency, good governance, and freedom from corruption.

> In assessing Canada for the 2010 report, IFLA and FAIFE (2010) noted that
> the only real challenge to access to information in Canadian libraries, despite the occasional request by parents to have an offensive book banned or withdrawn from library shelves, is the slowness with which the government updates its Internet sites, as well as budgetary constraints and the resulting limited availability of resources. Despite various attempts to block freedom of speech by protest demonstrations on campus or by stopping controversial speakers at the Canadian border, all of which have provoked a healthy outcry, freedom of expression is alive and well as a public value and a legal right in Canada…In this regard, third-party research shows that the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (CJFE) have expressed a number of concerns about freedom of expression, specifically with regard to crime reporting, where journalists were detained and their equipment seized. In addition, the discontinuation of the CAIRS database, which was a vital resource for journalists as well as an important tool for Canadians in having access to information about the government's actions, was thought to be step backwards towards less transparency and openness. Recent incidents pertaining to the matter of freedom of expression and access to information concern border incidents in which journalists attempting to enter Canada to cover protests and other events relating to the 2010 Winter Olympics were detained and interrogated extensively.

> According to one of the libraries at the University of Wisconsin Madison (n.d.),
> [a]mong the biggest challenges librarians and teachers may face in choosing books or other materials for a library collection or for classroom use are their own fears and biases. Self-censorship—when a book or other item isn't purchased or made available due to fears of complaints or other repercussions, or due to personal dislike of the message or content of a work—is something that is difficult to acknowledge and to talk about.

They list several links to resources for those who would like to start such a discussion. Instances of students who self-censor and are attempting to censor faculty members and their fellow students are making some headlines, as when speaking engagements on controversial topics at universities are cancelled or protested with violence so that discussion becomes impossible, or when peoples' social media pages are showered with threats and calls for their employment to be terminated over an opinion voiced on Twitter (Kay, 2014, March 28). A counter-argument is that many controversial speakers already have multiple platforms at their disposal, so refusing them a university one might not be so bad, or that that freedom of opinion doesn't give you the right to either disrupt classes or encourage discrimination (Drache, 2014, March 28).

Political & social significance.

James LaRue's (2007) approach to current challenges of library materials is to listen and connect with dissatisfied community members and then, generally, to leave challenged material in the library but to try to include as many points of view as he can, including those of the upset challenger. This seems to be a more democratic and community-building model than either removing or refusing to remove material without connecting with and trying to understand the people in the community who wanted it removed. In his experience, many in his community don't "like the twin prospects of ideological bullying and public appeasement" (LaRue, 2007, p. 35) but libraries also reflect the values and needs of the community, and two large parts of his Colorado community are the fundamentalist Christian group Focus on the Family (FOF) and the Mormons. The implication of this for the public library is that if he wants to maintain productive and open discussions with these groups then he has decided to do whatever he can to treat them with respect and provide them with the information they need. He also says that sometimes "it is precisely the books that most profoundly challenge the current standards that are the most necessary" (LaRue, 2007, p. 53) which is why he hasn't removed children's books featuring gay characters at FOF's request, for example.

He also finds that while attending the meetings that these groups hold at the library and providing for their information needs he can find common ground with them, as when they all talk about their concerns for their children, which can "break down that dangerous barrier of dehumanization" (LaRue, 2007, p. 56). He's said to them:

> [It's] perfectly reasonable to expect that you will find materials that are sympathetic to your views here. You are a taxpayer, and I take the obligation to be a good steward of your contribution very seriously. But it is not reasonable to forbid other people, also taxpayers, from finding materials that support their views (LaRue, 2007, pp. 43-44).

FOF may argue that books make people make certain choices, which may be a stretch, but fewer people would disagree with the idea that books matter and influence ideas, and further that ideas influence behaviour. LaRue also resists the urge to dehumanize challengers by looking closely at demographics to try to decipher who exactly is making the challenges. He has discovered that his most common challengers are members of his generation, the Baby Boomers, and has looked into why this might be so that he has more context for the challenges. These efforts to understand people who hold different views is one way to become more proactive rather than reactive in the effort to imbed the library as a valuable part of the community. According to LaRue (2007), one important Boomer value is protectiveness, or possibly overprotectiveness, to children which can lead people to attack anything they view as a threat, although even if the Boomers didn't challenge anything, there might always be someone who would. For instance, some university students now expect material to come with "trigger warnings" or object to material such as *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* on religious and political grounds without necessarily having read it (Michael, 2015). A better response to attacking back is to develop understanding and create connections that take advantage of what we have in common and how our differences can complement each other.

Regarding diversity in a collection, Lankes (2012, p.59) argues not only for universality (which I take to mean a wide range of information points-of-view rather than one point-of-view that is seen as universally applicable) but also for "negative examples," in particular to help students distinguish high-quality information from low-quality information. After all, if only the sources that librarians or teachers consider high-quality are available, then how is someone to learn to tell the difference? Or what if someone wants to study a group that uses or supplies unreliable information? Context is important.

LaRue (2007) was careful to note that deliberately not purchasing something is not the same as censorship as no library can hold every item that exists and choices will have to be made to best serve the community. Given this, consortia can perhaps provide broader access to diverse and difficult-to-acquire information than even large individual libraries can do themselves.

Technological significance.

In order to provide equitable access to information, Evans (2008, p. 91) asserts that librarians need to keep whatever "information formats best meet the needs and interests of their service communities." Librarians need to help people understand copyright laws and access commercialized information through the power of collective purchasing (Tyckoson, 2008; Lankes, 2012). Lankes (2012) also reminds us that technology is not always used in exclusively neutral or positive ways, as when "the government of Bahrain [uses] Facebook to find and arrest protestors," and while the Canadian or American governments don't seem to be arresting protestors, at least not *en masse* and as overtly as other countries, based on information found on Facebook, it would be naïve to think that our government agencies aren't aware of their citizens' organization on social media or aren't using that information to their advantage. Lankes (2012) suggests that libraries could move beyond protecting member information within the library computer system to educating members on the ways in which your Internet Service Provider can record your keystrokes or how Facebook can access your internet browsing history. The ALA's (2015) State of America's Libraries Report lists privacy, cybersecurity, and surveillance as issues and trends and if a library can keep government documents for public access it could certainly inform the public about how laws related to privacy and intellectual freedom, among other things, could affect them.

Another issue that Lankes (2012) discusses is that of eBook licensing and the complications that arise when individuals or libraries can't own the material you want to use, which has led librarians to look into other forms of publishing, e.g. self-publishing or open access arrangements, and other types of relationships with eBook publishers. Lankes (2012) also strongly suggests that libraries help people produce their own knowledge rather than just passively consume information and points out that public libraries can sometimes be the only place for people to access the internet for free, which can help

reduce the digital divide between those who can afford to pay for regular access and those who cannot. Social media and blogs are platforms that can be used by libraries to discuss some of these issues.

Library implications: Library issues versus non-library issues.

Community discussions and cultural diversity are especially important in libraries today given that although these libraries have more diverse content than ever before, in 2014 most of the challenges to library material were against books by people of colour and books "with diverse content" (ALA, 2015) such as LGBTQ characters. Libraries exist to serve their communities, primarily through information, and if the community has a need that the library can help with, then why not help, whether it's a traditional library concern or not? According to Lankes (2012, p. 5), libraries "are embraced by the elite and the commoner alike. We find librarianship in jungles and deserts, in schools, corporations, and in government agencies" building communities through knowledge, both its access and creation.

LaRue (2007, p. 46) maintains that librarians are neither smart enough nor should have the authority to determine which views library members should have access to, or to decide what information is true, and that having only innocuous information "would neither offend—nor satisfy—anyone." The reasonable solution then is to "identify some of the representative texts of many perspectives, in the belief that our patrons are smart enough to look at the historical and current cultural evidence and sort it all out for themselves" (LaRue, 2007, p. 46). People may not always act in this way, but freedom of choice, especially as it concerns access to information, is essential to democracy and is no more dangerous than sacrificing freedom for security. These days "librarians profess to be advocates for the minority, the opposition, and the unpopular and difficult voices" and a "'claim to neutrality means simply that one isn't taking a position on that distribution of power and its consequences, which is a passive acceptance of the existing distribution. That is a political choice'" (McCook & Phenix, 2008, p. 25). The ALA's Freedom to Read Statement acknowledges that "[w]e believe…that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society" (Haycock & Sheldon, 2008, p. 228).

Human rights has been a growing concern for many around the world since the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (n.d) which states that "[e]veryone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." In discussing librarianship and human rights Samek (2007, pp. 7-8) tries to "break down the constraints imposed by the myth of library neutrality that divorces library and information work from participation in social struggle, and makes the profession vulnerable to control networks such as economic or political regimes." This idea of neutrality "has drawn a line between professional issues such as literacy and so-called non-library issues such as war. A similar line has categorically divided library advocacy and library activism" but there is a trend toward "the international library movement known in the 21st century as *critical librarianship*, which aims to blur these lines and to expose them as both counter-intuitive and counter-productive to the development of more humanistic (and less techno-managerial) library and information work" (Samek, 2007, p. 7) and which could be defined as "an international movement of library and information workers that consider the human condition and human rights above other professional concerns" (Tara, 2007, September 13). Samek (2007, p. 8) further argues that

> [e]xamining relationships in society among people, information, recorded knowledge and the cultural record exposes local, national and international issues related to the "production, collection, interpretation, organization, preservation, storage, retrieval, dissemination, transformation and use of information" and ideas. Contemporary examples include biometrics, intellectual property, global tightening of information and border controls, and public access to government information,

which means that so-called non-library issues can strongly affect the quality of library information and services making them, at times, library issues.

Internationally, important issues facing librarians include internet access and the digital divide, the use of filtering software, the restrictions and privacy issues related to anti-terror legislation, censorship and restrictions on the press, government surveillance of the Internet, and access to public health

information (Samek, 2007). Toni Samek (2007, p. 12) and Shiraz Durrani (Tara, 2007, September 13) assert that most library associations around the world are "conservative, establishment-oriented bodies" and that perhaps there is a need for more liberal bodies to provide balance, support diversity, and minimize inequality. Samek (same) also says that, as discussed above, historically marginalized people have not been well represented by libraries and other organizations, and that this omission damages the way minority or dissident groups are presented to society at large. She cites Hope Olson who argues that western methods of classification are specific to our culture and cannot necessarily be used by other cultures; standardization is convenient, but if it's standardized in a strictly western fashion it can become a form of cultural imperialism, as when our classification systems and hierarchies are imposed on indigenous cultures' ideas.

Non-business issues in business.

The reason that I include "non-business issues in business" in the discussion is that if libraries are meant to serve their communities by collecting and distributing information, then it stands to reason that they can be anything their communities imagine or require them to be just as business are being pressured to consider non-money-making aspects of business such as how producers overseas are treated. More and more businesses are now becoming more socially responsible (at least allegedly) even though it's not a strictly profit-making issue. Mohammed Yunus of the Grameen organizations along with Groupe Danone and Intel have even developed social businesses that are neither for-profit nor not-for-profit organizations but are a new economic development designed to improve the lives of the poor and help them work their way out of poverty without requiring charitable donations. Poverty isn't usually considered a business issue so much as a charitable issue, but if Yunus can consider it a business issue, then surely we can consider the well-being of our neighbours a library issue as well.

I think it's unreasonable to limit library issues to books and access to information in the same way that it's potentially quite dangerous to limit the potential of business only to generating a profit. If a business is concerned only with profit, then it can become disconnected from the community in a way that not only destroys jobs locally but abuses the poor and non-powerful people elsewhere. If a library is concerned only with the collection then it risks ignoring the people it could benefit the most. The idea of social business arises from the fact that for many people money isn't enough to satisfy them; they want more from life than only money. The idea of a library could be that it can do more than just offer material on shelves or online, that for many, access alone isn't enough anymore. Both social business and libraries, for instance, have the opportunity to help the poor help themselves and to help bridge the digital divide. Both assume that information is power, both value freedom, and both reject the idea that poverty or lack of power over your own life is inevitable or necessary.

Potential Future Applications

Implications for librarians.

It's easy for both librarians and the community to collect and distribute material they approve of; the challenge for both the librarians and the community-at-large is to allow for materials that we disagree with or even think are horribly bad and dangerously prejudiced as Gorman (2008) points out. However, judging by Gorman's (same) language in this article, including his claim that he's absolutist about intellectual freedom and doesn't think it necessary to consider other people's opinions, he seems to be as inflexible in his ideas as the fundamentalists are about their religious views. The ALA's Library Bill of Rights has undergone quite a few changes over the years and people have been challenging material for as long as there has been material available to challenge (LaRue, 2007), but I know of almost no instances when anyone has convinced someone else that they are right by force or insults. I prefer LaRue's tactics for dealing with challenges to Gorman's tactics, which seem to be mostly to shut down challenges without discussion. Violent language from librarians, even if it's in favour of intellectual freedom or social responsibility, may only alienate many members of our communities instead of encouraging them to join in a discussion with multiple points-of-view. Main (2008) discusses an echo chamber that can occur when people only talk with like-minded people and suggests that librarians can provide balance, but librarians are not immune from this echo chamber either and that it puts us in danger

of becoming out of touch with our communities if we are unwilling to listen to other people's ideas when they differ from our own.

McCook and Phenix (2008, p. 23) "assert that a human rights perspective is the way that twenty-first-century librarians must look at the world and practice our craft," encouraging librarians to be familiar with how librarians in the past have fought threats to intellectual freedom. I would add that we should be equally familiar with the ways in which librarians have not fought these threats and have even worked with groups in positions of power to suppress information to the public, so that we can avoid making these mistakes again and to remind us what we lose when we fail to have the courage fight for what we believe. Leaders in librarianship should commit to professional ethics, including social responsibility and developing "the capacity to take a global view" (Sheldon, 2008, p. 63). Lankes (2012, pp. 98-99) thinks that "librarians seek to serve, so the value of their work is measurable only in the impact it has on others… [and that we] cannot be unbiased, but we can be intellectually honest."

In 2015, Queen's University participated in Freedom to Read week by holding a series of readings from challenged books and leading a discussion on intellectual freedom with a member of the faculty of law (Carroll, 2015, February 24). Interdisciplinary discussions could help challenge the idea that some issues should be kept separate as "non-library." Discussions with the law and journalism communities in particular could be particularly beneficial when challenges to intellectual freedom are given through legal channels, as when a publishing company attempted to sue a librarian from McMaster University over comments she made in a blog, which was subsequently reported by Canadian Journalists for Free Expression (Marchildon, 2014, February 28). Threats of lawsuits, like the digital divide, favour those with resources, which makes the stances of community organizations with greater resources than many individuals have, and with collective purchasing power, even more important.

Implications for our communities.

The ALA encourages librarians to help improve society's problems and to help "inform and educate the people…[and] to encourage them to examine the many views on and the facts regarding each problem" (McCook & Phenix, 2008). A human rights perspective could help heal divided communities and encourage people to act on solid information rather than on partisan fears of the people or ideas they don't understand. An intellectually honest discussion of the working of governments, regardless of political party, with open access to government documents could encourage citizens to participate more fully in our democracy. Such a perspective may also lead to more equal access to information and technology, so library websites and other applicable technologies need to be intelligently developed to allow access points for a variety of users (Sheldon, 2008). When public libraries first spread across North America, some people with money and power argued that the library was a "societal luxury—inexpensive enough to maintain at a limited level, but irrelevant to the real needs of those who mattered" (Lerner, 2009, p. 182). Similar arguments are made today about the necessity or lack thereof of libraries, but perhaps they're the most useful to the least powerful in society, and if that's the case, then that might be just the reason to keep them around.

Lawrence Hill (2012), who had people in the Netherlands threaten to burn his novel *The Book of Negroes* and had to change the title for international publication, argues against not only censorship of his book but also against censorship of other books such as the attempt by the Canadian Jewish Congress to remove Deborah Ellis's book *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak* from the Toronto District School Board because one of the children interviewed was the sibling of a suicide bomber. He observes that '[a]pparently, Palestinian and Israeli children are old enough to live through hell, but children in Canada are not old enough to read about it" (Hill, 2012, p. 19).

Toni Morrison argues that writers are dangerous to those who are corrupt or oppressive and that it is

> imperative not only to save the besieged writers but to save ourselves. The thought that leads me to contemplate with dread the erasure of other voices, of unwritten novels, poems whispered or swallowed for fear of being overheard by the wrong people, outlawed languages flourishing underground, essayists' questions challenging authority never being posed, unstaged plays,

> canceled films—that thought is a nightmare. As though a whole universe is being described in invisible ink. Certain kinds of trauma visited on peoples are so deep, so cruel, that unlike money, unlike vengeance, even unlike justice, or rights, or the good-will of others, only writers can translate such trauma and turn sorrow into meaning, sharpening the moral imagination (Morrison, 2009, pp. 3-4).

Morrison has written about the African American experience for decades and has had her books challenged many times over those decades, but they are an important part of a difficult national story about race in the United States. Books like hers should probably be included in collections not because she has won the Nobel Prize for Literature but because she gives voice to an often politically and socially powerless minority. Perhaps libraries can be, or have long been, a place where the powerless can find such stories to identify with before beginning to tell, or change, their own.

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