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A declaration for all seasons: The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

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Abstract

A quarter century after the momentous establishment of IFLA's Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression is an appropriate time to reflect on the landmark IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. The Statement consciously broadened IFLA's remit, locating intellectual freedom as a fundamental human right and a core responsibility of the library profession that operates within libraries' commitments to diversity and plurality. As the examples discussed in this essay illustrate, the Statement continues to be relevant and is truly a declaration for all seasons. The concerns to be addressed encompass an extensive range of social justice concerns – concerns that are global and cover all elements of the library and information sector. Addressing those concerns and promoting intellectual freedom demands the intervention of trusted information agents to assist communities to use the Internet wisely and for the widest possible benefit. It demands the profession's concerted action, coupled with regular reporting and discussion in the library and information science literature. The profession has a challenging but vital role in preserving one of humanity's most precious rights: intellectual freedom.

Keywords

Intellectual freedom, censorship, principles of library and information science, FAIFE, post-truth, history of libraries and library science

A quarter century after the momentous establishment of IFLA's Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) is an appropriate time to reflect on one of FAIFE's first actions: the landmark IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. This special issue of *IFLA Journal* presents this introductory essay and a number of articles considering the IFLA Statement from various contemporary perspectives.

Origin of the IFLA Statement

The IFLA Council established FAIFE in 1997, with members appointed from countries across the globe. Together with the Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters, FAIFE was established outside the usual structures of IFLA as a high-level committee reporting directly to the Governing Board and the Council. The creation of both FAIFE and the Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters represented a commitment to active engagement by IFLA

and its member associations and institutions with societal issues that are critical to the operation of libraries and information services and the practice of librarianship. Embracing a more activist stance was a revolutionary step for a long-established international professional organisation, which was not without criticism at the time (Byrne, 2007).

The Committee on Copyright and Other Legal Matters provided a strong counter-voice to aggressive tactics by rights-holders and a means to address emerging issues for the library and information sector during the switch to the digital economy, which were becoming increasingly evident. FAIFE articulated the crucial importance of intellectual freedom both within the profession and more broadly. It was especially influential in regard to the newly democratising

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nations that had formerly been in the European communist bloc, and in leading IFLA's interventions in the World Summit on the Information Society.

Following the Council's decision, a FAIFE office was rapidly established in Copenhagen, thanks to generous Danish support (Byrne, 2000). Staffed by talented and committed professionals, the office provided resources – albeit slim – to prosecute FAIFE's programme to an extent that would not have been possible if it had depended only on the voluntary efforts of Committee members spread around the world.

One of the first acts of the Committee and office was to draft the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom as a high-level policy statement for IFLA, its member library associations, libraries and related institutions, and individual professionals. The Statement consciously broadened IFLA's remit when addressing intellectual freedom from the focus of the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (UNESCO, 1994) to include all libraries and information services. It locates intellectual freedom as a fundamental human right, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948), and recognises that it has two sides – the right to know and freedom of expression – both of which must be upheld by libraries. It firmly asserts that intellectual freedom is a core responsibility of the library profession. And it situates that responsibility within commitments to diversity and plurality.

The need for such a strong statement was emphasised by its ready endorsement and rapid translation into many languages. It was increasingly used in fighting abrogations of intellectual freedom. Many other statements and declarations followed – some dealing with specific issues, such as Cuba, and others of global significance, such as the IFLA Internet Manifesto (IFLA, 2014), originally proclaimed in 2002. The 2002 Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom took the commitment further when it was adopted by the IFLA Council on the Federation's 75th anniversary (IFLA, 2003). These documents created a policy framework at the highest level of librarianship to inform and lead global practice.

While policy work continued, FAIFE turned to implementation issues, including reports on national issues and experiences, responses to individual incidents and – most importantly – encouraging the adoption or improvement of codes of ethics by all library associations, particularly those of nations that had been in the former Soviet bloc.

Context of the IFLA Statement

As with all revolutionary initiatives, FAIFE had a long gestation. Meeting in Paris during the

bicentennial of the French Revolution and the adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the IFLA Council approved a resolution proposed by the French library associations that called on library associations and librarians worldwide to mobilise in favour of Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (IFLA, 1989).

They were momentous times. The Cold War stand-off that had very largely shaped international relations since the end of the Second World War was coming to an end. *Perestroika* ('openness') foreshadowed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, and instilled hope for a more open and constructive world. Economies were also changing as information technology, supply chain management and greater human mobility transformed industries and nations. China had emerged as a major economic player, and geopolitical relationships were being reshaped.

Those forceful trends were reflected within IFLA as the tacit understandings of the Cold War period were abandoned and it became possible to extend the Federation's concerns beyond the practices and operational standards of librarianship to consider engaging with the big issues that shape our work, including copyright and human rights (Byrne, 2007). Some felt that such issues were beyond IFLA's remit and should be left to other international organisations, such as UNESCO. Others felt that engagement with the human right to know was central to our profession, providing the impetus for the important work on standards, policies and practices to which IFLA's divisions and sections devote themselves.

Post-truth and 'fake news'

Ironically, one of today's greatest challenges – the challenge of dealing with a 'post-truth' global political environment – first manifested at the same time as FAIFE was beginning to have an impact. While national leaders and politicians have lied throughout history, the denial of truth reached a millennial threshold in 2003. Smarting from the unprecedented attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001, the USA and its allies first invaded Afghanistan and then Iraq. The USA, UK, Australia and other allies pretended that there were weapons of mass destruction, which justified an invasion of Iraq, despite authoritative evidence to the contrary (Betts, 2007). In doing so, they followed the example of Hitler's manufactured border incidents justifying the German and Russian attack on Poland in 1939 (Godson and Wirtz, 2002), and anticipated President Putin's mendacious justification for

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, to achieve the 'demilitarization and de-nazification' of that country (Afinogenov, 2022).

Such behaviour perhaps reached its apogee when people around the world watched with horror as the President of the USA from 2017 to 2021 shamelessly lied before, during and after his presidency (Lee, 2020). The *Washington Post's* Fact Checker counted a total of 30,573 false or misleading claims made by President Trump during his White House tenure (Kessler, 2021). His critics and even a number of his supporters say that Trump used misinformation or even lies to achieve his goals. The president repeatedly attacked established media organisations for reporting what he called 'fake news'. He attacked and sometimes dismissed administration officials whose statements conflicted with his own, and ultimately denied the veracity of the election that ended his presidency.

President Trump's behaviour and similar disdain for the truth by the leaders of other nations has challenged the principles on which liberal democratic governments are based (Casabó, 2018). Labelled a 'post-truth' environment, similar behaviour has been evident in the widespread denial of climate change, even after the evidence has become overwhelming (Björnberg et al., 2017). Echoing the denial of the dangers of smoking by tobacco companies over decades, companies and governments have rejected and undermined the evidence-based projections of climate scientists since at least 1981 (Hansen et al., 1981). Both follow patterns of suppressing, denying and misrepresenting inconvenient knowledge.

With the rise of social media, 'post-truth', 'alternative facts' and conspiracy theories spread even more rapidly, and authority is more trenchantly challenged. These trends have been evident in popular responses to the COVID-19 pandemic from its initiation in late 2019 to the present. They have been particularly evident in the reactions to the rapid invention and distribution of vaccines, and in the promotion of alternative therapies as well as scepticism about the virus itself. Germani and Biller-Andorno (2021) identify that anti-vaccination supporters, in comparison with pro-vaccination supporters, share conspiracy theories and make use of emotional language. They demonstrate that the anti-vaccination movement's success relies on a strong sense of community, redistributing the views of a small number of influencers.

All of these examples are our business because of our commitment to intellectual freedom and our neutral stance. Supporting intellectual freedom and eschewing partisan views does not mean that we endorse any views. We stand for well-founded

research and writing, and, in serving our communities, we endeavour to counter wrong and potentially dangerous opinions by making available reliable sources and developing our clients' capacity to assess the veracity and value of information.

Denial and obliteration

The denial of inconvenient facts and the manipulation of truth to serve political, ideological and commercial ends is paralleled by the obliteration of community memory through deliberate suppression, misrepresentation or unwillingness to confront unpalatable facts. A local community may deliberately forget terrible events, such as lynchings. A company or other organisation may seek to cover over environmental disasters, and a nation may choose not to remember its discriminatory and oppressive policies and practices.

In a recent example, the centenary of the Tulsa Race Massacre in 1921 brought the USA to remember those horrific events: 'America's worst "race riot" [which] remained a taboo topic for decades' (Hill, 2021: 670). Misleadingly labelled a 'race riot', the destruction of the prosperous African American quarter of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and many killings were almost expunged from history and popular knowledge until determined historians and journalists recalled the events.

My own country, Australia, is very slowly coming to understand the brutality and continuing trauma of the colonisation of our continent and its impact on our Indigenous peoples. Many Australians continue to reject discussion of the issue, often exclaiming, 'It was a long time ago. Get over it!' The brutal history of our Black Wars, which included massacres that extended to at least 1930 (Centre for 21st Century Humanities, 2022), was mirrored across the world under colonialism, through pogroms, and by the forced removals and killing of unwanted inhabitants in many regions.

Intergenerational trauma continues in many nations, as, for example, in Namibia, following the genocidal attacks on Herero, Namaqua and San by German troops from 1904 to 1907 (Morgan, 2010). Some nations have attempted to enable and accelerate the process of coming to terms with traumatic histories through truth and reconciliation commissions and special commissions of inquiry into particular events or issues. Inquiries, apologies and reparations can help, but trauma lingers, as we see in the enduring pain caused by the administration of the mother and baby homes in Ireland (Commission of Investigation, 2021).

I have recalled these horrors because, beyond their brutality, their common characteristic is that they have been hidden and largely forgotten by mainstream communities and nations while painfully recalled within the communities that were attacked, and especially among the descendants of those who suffered the attacks. To take a single historical example, the Black Wars in Australia were widely reported in the newspapers at the time but, within a generation, were forgotten by the general community, even in the areas where the repression was most widespread and fierce (Rose, 1991). A more recent example lies in the crushing of dissent in Tiananmen Square in Beijing on 4 June 1989. Many people outside the People's Republic of China remember those brutal events. Within China, remembrance is punished and, since the assertion of China's rule in Hong Kong, even the solemn lighting of candles in that city on the anniversary is forbidden. Many in China, especially younger people, do not know of the events of 1989 (Wang, 2007). As the Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2015: xxiii) has written: 'History is the fruit of power... [and t]he ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility'.

Obliteration of memory should be our concern. We – and our colleagues in archives – have a profound duty to keep the record and make it available. That duty is most obvious when we have responsibilities for primary records, as in government and organisational archives. The patchy records uncovered by the Irish Commission of Investigation after very extensive searching are unfortunately only one example of an all too frequent failure to collect and maintain records diligently. Failure to maintain and make available comprehensive records by those responsible for creating them and those responsible for keeping them is to become complicit in the suppression of unpalatable histories and can perpetuate continuing trauma.

While regretting failures to keep the record, we should celebrate the generations of librarians and archivists who dedicated themselves to keeping the record, sometimes at great risk and personal cost. The Soviet-era librarians of the Lenin Library are one example, collecting samizdat when possession of such counter-revolutionary publications could have one sent to the Gulag (Byrne, 2007: 27). Those collections enabled researchers to plumb the depths of Soviet policies until access was again restricted by successor governments. Similarly, the records in Australia's libraries and archives enabled historians from Reynolds (1981) onwards to recover the memory of the Black Wars. We must preserve the records we collect

and redouble our efforts to ensure comprehensiveness and availability.

These examples refer to deeply unpalatable events, but the concerns apply as well to scientific and technical knowledge and to the experiences of all peoples, including the most marginalised. To complete the Trouillot (2015: xxiii) quotation: 'The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots'.

Presenting diverse voices

Exposition is our duty. Even when we do not have responsibilities for primary records, we must present as comprehensive a range of publications as we can within the areas of focus of our libraries and our clients' interests. We must collect as widely as we can, including well-considered views that challenge accepted truths and contemporary orthodoxies. We use our long-established strategies of collection, inter-library loan, licensing, linking and so on to offer our clients rich resources that will satisfy their needs and interests, and extend their knowledge. Through our skills in description and classification and our harnessing of ever more sophisticated enquiry systems (including publicly available platforms such as Google and its specialist tools such as Scholar and Maps), and our skills-development initiatives, we enable clients to discover richer resources, including those that challenge them to learn and reassess assumed knowledge.

Recognising the dangers of confirmation bias – that people tend to accept evidence which confirms previously held views – we must go beyond collecting to draw our clients' attention to issues of importance, such as reports by inquiries, information on climate change, and matters of health and well-being. Again, we use our tried-and-tested techniques to draw clients' attention to information that is relevant.

These are not new responsibilities but are inherent in the idea of the library. They require us to offer the means to question both accepted orthodoxies and misinformation by making available publications and information that question them and present alternative and well-founded understandings and data. In doing so, we support diversity and pluralism. We offer avenues for all people to tell their stories, including stories that have been suppressed.

The presentation of diverse voices is especially important for those who have been marginalised and oppressed, including Indigenous peoples, people of colour, LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning/queer, intersex, asexual, other) people, and linguistic and religious minorities. Our

libraries should present their stories – fiction and non-fiction – in their words, not through depictions by others. We must be ever conscious of the oppression caused by unthinking adherence to norms of identity, behaviour and appearance – norms that exclude those who do not or do not wish to match popular expectations.

Censorship and avoidance of offence

Calls to support diversity and inclusiveness are often, perhaps increasingly, matched by calls to avoid causes of offence through the removal of racist, sexist, prejudicial and otherwise demeaning comments and content. This rhetoric can extend to silencing individuals, especially contrarians. While intended to prevent the voicing of hurtful and antagonistic views, this so-called ‘cancel culture’ can have a chilling effect on free speech and intellectual freedom (Bestgen, 2020). It can lead to self-censorship when individuals hesitate to share their opinions and knowledge. In a wide-ranging study, Norris (2021) found that scholars may be less willing to speak up to defend their beliefs if they believe that their views are not widely shared by colleagues or the broader society to which they belong.

In the library context, the equivalent is the removal or restriction of materials that are considered offensive. I am troubled by such calls for two reasons. One is that removal does not counter the views; it tends to drive them underground with the airy dismissal by the holders of those views that ‘It’s just political correctness’. Such views – mistaken, hurtful or downright dangerous – fester away from the light of libraries and an informed gaze. They persist in blogs and chat groups that feed extremism. Unchallenged, such ill-informed views and conspiracy theories can be dangerous, as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The other concern is that calls to restrict or remove constitute ideological censorship. We can see the dangers of partisan calls by looking at US public and school libraries as documented in the annual lists of ‘most frequently censored books’ published by the American Library Association. Besides books that are challenged because of racist content, the list includes books that are challenged because of ‘profanity’, ‘sexual content’, ‘anti-police views’ and so on. Libraries are more often challenged in the USA because of the existence of school and library boards, which reflect the attitudes of their communities, or at least the vocal members of their communities. Recent lists of challenged books include a title by Toni Morrison and Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*, and in top place

in recent years has been *George* by Alex Gino, which has been challenged because it includes a transgender character and is considered to promote LGBTQIA+. Contrary to such censorship, we need to curate our collections responsibly, removing outdated and incorrect publications, and bringing in those that provide better informed views and meet the needs of the communities we serve, including inchoate needs.

In countries that are subject to more authoritarian and fundamentalist rule, censorship is used to bolster regimes and suppress dissent. A recent case in point is the imprisonment for 24 years of Mubarak Bala, the president of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, after he plead guilty to blasphemy charges. An outspoken religious critic in a staunchly conservative region, Bala faced death threats and was arrested after he posted comments that were critical of Islam on Facebook in April 2020 (Akinwotu, 2022). In its early years, FAIFE investigated and commented on many such cases, some of which directly affected libraries, with others, like Bala’s, having a more indirect effect through the drive to suppress dissenting views (Byrne, 2007).

The threat of suppression and censorship is the reason why libraries must stand firmly against calls to ‘cancel’ or ban opinions and facts that are inconsistent with mainstream understanding or offensive. Our support for the marginalised must include support for the unpleasant and the unpopular or we become tools of oppression, as we have been in the past. Our failure to hold and make available LGBTQIA+ content, to actively seek out the narratives of Indigenous peoples, and to seek to hold and present the truth about slavery and those who have benefited from it is our history. We must own that history and do our best to ensure that we never again become a tool of oppression by refusing to hold and make available views, however unpopular.

Our response must be to counter ill-founded and objectionable views. The utterly repugnant views that continue to be expressed about LGBTQIA+ and the racism that is all too common in most nations must be opposed by resources that celebrate all people in their individuality and diversity.

We achieve more change through challenging people to review views expressed in publications – and their own views – than through suppressing offensive views. Supporting intellectual freedom wholeheartedly demands our full support for social justice, including initiatives to counter marginalisation, racism, sexism, hate speech, and the consequences of colonisation and slavery. To do so is to embrace risk – the risk that we will be condemned by those who hold or sympathise with discriminatory views. It

is a risk that we must manage as we endeavour to bring our communities with us.

COVID-19, conspiracy and community

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started in late 2019, offers a powerful illustration of the challenges we face in upholding our principles. From the first outbreak in Wuhan, China, to the early and rapid outbreak in northern Italy and subsequent spread across the world, COVID-19 became a subject of conspiracy theories.

Early theories included suggestions that COVID-19 was caused by 5G (fifth-generation) mobile telephone electromagnetic radiation, Bill Gates in a plot to vaccinate the world's population, an error in a Wuhan virology laboratory, Chinese biological weapons research, US military imports into China, genetically modified crops, the American 'deep state' elite or Big Pharma, and claims that COVID-19 death rates were inflated and that the disease did not exist (Lynas, 2020).

The theories have varied psychological and social determinants, which appeal to different audiences but can all lead to poor public-health behaviours, including an unwillingness to wear a face mask, follow social-distancing measures or accept a vaccination (Hartman et al., 2021). Pertwee et al. (2022) argue that the epidemiological and social crises brought about by COVID-19 have magnified widely held social anxieties and trust issues, exacerbating vaccine hesitancy and resistance to public-health measures. They suggest that trust is the key to overcoming that resistance.

Waning confidence in science, government and institutions underlies this loss of trust. However, many studies demonstrate that libraries are still among the most trusted institutions. Putnam (2018), for example, reports on Pew Institute research showing that libraries have maintained their positions as highly trusted institutions. We can, and should, use this position of trust to offer reliable information to our communities, thereby countering conspiracy theories and misinformation. But, as Lor (2018) warns, this project demands conscious strategies in a time of 'fake news' and 'post-truth'.

Changes in the landscape since 1997

Most of the issues mentioned above were evident at the establishment of FAIFE and the formulation of the IFLA Statement. We are more conscious of some, including the rights of Indigenous peoples (at least since the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007) and the dangers of tendentious and biased political claims and media

reporting. The most dramatic change over the quarter century has been the rise of social media.

Dimly perceived at the end of the 20th century, social media is now pervasive. From blogs and websites with limited reach to the behemoths of Twitter, Meta/Facebook and Instagram, the multifaceted Google and the labyrinths of the dark web, all populations are influenced by social media. Active participation includes the benign sharing of family and personal interests, access to useful techniques through YouTube, ready access to reliable medical information and many other resources that enrich our lives. But the Internet and social media also provide ready platforms for the spread of misinformation, malinformation and propaganda.

Many researchers and journalists have pointed to the role of the platforms' algorithms in reinforcing 'bubbles' and 'echo chambers' (Spohr, 2017). However, as Lim (2020) has noted, social media users have agency in using the platforms, with a resultant complex interplay between users' choices and algorithmic selection. In this way, the proliferation of social media and Internet-enabled tools in a crowded and highly interconnected global population of 7.9 billion has become a vast extension of Marshall McLuhan's 'global village', replete with gossip, fantasy and falsity.

As in the past, we librarians need to focus on users' information-seeking behaviours. Those behaviours determine whether users engage critically with what they view and whether they choose or are trapped into residing in 'bubbles' and 'echo chambers' (Dubois and Blank, 2018). This brings us back to libraries and librarians as trusted information agents. We have the standing and the skills to assist our communities to use the powerful platforms wisely and for the widest possible benefit. That challenge is the core challenge for our sector in pursuing our commitment to intellectual freedom today.

The articles in this anniversary issue

As I wrote at the time of the adoption of the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom:

Libraries should resound with many contending views, including the unacceptable, and indeed that which many might find hateful. . . . In making such [controversial and contentious] materials available, even those that library staff members may find repugnant or just nonsensical, libraries are not endorsing their argument, but upholding the essential principle of intellectual freedom. (Byrne, 2000: 63)

As some of the articles in this special issue note, the IFLA Statement upholds this principle in the following phrases:

- libraries shall acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society.
- Libraries shall ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views.
- Libraries shall acquire, organize and disseminate information freely and oppose any form of censorship. (IFLA, 1999)

The articles in this special issue demonstrate that the IFLA Statement continues to be a powerful expression of the library community's commitment to intellectual freedom. The Statement continues to offer moral force and guidance to library associations, institutions and individual professionals. It is truly a declaration for all seasons.

With one exception, the articles emanate from the USA and Canada, one with a co-author from the UK, and thus do not adequately reflect contemporary international views and research on intellectual freedom and libraries. This is disappointing as IFLA, in its operations and through its statements and declarations, aims to reflect and lead the global library community.

Nevertheless, the seven articles provide interesting insights into some current perceptions of the continuing relevance of the IFLA Statement. Writing from and about three Anglo-American nations – the USA, Canada and the UK – Shannon M Oltmann, Toni Samek and Louise Cooke explore the gap between library rhetoric and professional practice in regard to intellectual freedom as proclaimed in the IFLA Statement and congruent statements and policies of their three nations' national library and information associations. They identify an increasing tension between professional ethical responsibilities and personal moral persuasions. Increasingly, vocal concerns about marginalisation, diversity, racism, sexism, hate speech and decolonisation have become evident and, from more conservative perspectives, we hear again concerns about the protection of children, excessive liberalism and pornography. The authors note that tensions have been increased by professional and economic pressures on libraries, especially in the UK.

Alison Frayne pursues a similar theme, using a rhetorical analysis methodology to consider the framing and expression of the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. She situates the

Statement as a strong affirmation of the role of libraries as promoters and facilitators of intellectual freedom – a role that powerfully positions libraries as justice-enhancing institutions. Extending her argument from that analysis, she states a need to understand how libraries 'have, or have not, perpetuated injustices, discrimination and racism', and to re-envision the library on a foundation of social justice, recognition of rights, trust, dignity, integrity and collective reconciliation, especially in the recognition of Indigenous rights.

Some evidence of what is perceived as a tension between intellectual freedom and those other concerns is provided by Gabriel J Gardner. His investigation of the library and information science literature as recorded in the Web of Science and Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts databases juxtaposes intellectual freedom against a range of current professional and societal concerns. Using bibliometric techniques, which he acknowledges to be a 'crude' methodology, he compares the frequency of use of the terms 'intellectual freedom' and 'neutrality' with the use of terms that he labels as 'alternative' and signifying 'wokeness', including 'terms broadly grouped under a rubric of social justice or diversity, equity, and inclusion'. His research demonstrates that both topics continue to be represented in the library and information science literature, with 'a tepid increase in intellectual freedom and neutrality usage, while the alternative priority terms experienced a boom in usage' since 2015. His conclusion is that it remains to be seen whether this change represents diminishing professional support for intellectual freedom and neutrality.

Taking a philosophical approach, Sarah Hartman-Caverly identifies an 'epistemic crisis' in contemporary communications and information flows resulting from changes in media and the pervasiveness of the Internet, content considerations and shifting knowledge frames. Among content considerations she includes conspiracy theories, disinformation, distraction through attention engineering, 'fake news', information overload, malinformation, manipulation, misinformation, polarisation, propaganda and surveillance. She concludes that due to their exceptional commitment to intellectual freedom and public trust, libraries have a 'unique opportunity' to counter the epistemic crisis of 'doubt, distrust, manipulation, suppression, and censorship' by nurturing the consideration of alternative viewpoints, attention to new information, and critical examination and updating of assumptions.

A specific example of the consequences of that 'epistemic crisis' can be seen in the response to

COVID-19 vaccines in some nations. Kate Mercer, Kari D Weaver and Khrystine Waked offer an illustrative case study of the mishandling of scientific information through considering Canadian responses to the safety and efficacy of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. Ineffective communication, inconsistent messaging and rapidly changing information in an atmosphere of general lack of public trust led to widespread doubt about AstraZeneca and failure to employ the vaccine fully. They argue that librarians should contextualise information appropriately so that people can be informed when accepting or rejecting misinformation.

The other two articles look at particular considerations relating to intellectual freedom. Adopting the IFLA Statement as a touchstone, Catherine Smith considers a specific aspect of the tension identified in the previous articles in examining the potential of artificial intelligence to enhance library patrons' intellectual freedom by improving discovery. She notes that all description and classification of library materials 'inherently imposes certain values and judgements', and that this 'bias' can be exacerbated by the use of artificial intelligence drawing uncritically on a language corpus. Biases can be magnified, with harmful effects, particularly on marginalised groups. Smith argues that librarians must continue to safeguard patrons' interests through an ongoing commitment to intellectual freedom when adopting artificial intelligence, especially via applications provided by commercial services.

Alonso Estrada-Cuzcano and Karen Lizeth Alfaro-Mendives look at a crucial aspect of library practice: the maintenance of client confidentiality. They demonstrate that the constitutions of eight selected Ibero-American nations – seven in South America plus Spain – include provisions for protecting confidentiality, often called 'professional secrecy', ranging from the narrow protection of journalists in Argentina to the broad protection of all citizens in Peru. However, few library and information associations in those nations have translated the constitutional protections into their professional fields, leaving professionals with no ongoing protection against pressures to violate confidentiality. Estrada-Cuzcano and Alfaro-Mendives indicate the potential for the associations to more fully translate IFLA guidance on ethics and professional practice into national statements.

Several of these articles present a false dichotomy between intellectual freedom and social justice. Social justice concerns are not an 'alternative' range of concerns opposed to intellectual freedom and the principle of unbiased service (neutrality). Social justice is one of the principal motivations for advancing

intellectual freedom as one of the most important human rights. Without freedom of information and freedom of expression, our other fundamental rights are in jeopardy. Neutrality as a professional stance is one of the key means we employ to support intellectual freedom. By putting our own moral, religious and ideological views to one side when we focus on our clients, we ensure that their intellectual freedom is respected and enabled. When we don our professional mantle, we are bound by the ethics and aspirations of our profession, including our core commitment to intellectual freedom. We cannot deny that commitment or its inextricable relationship with social justice.

Conclusion

IFLA's bold initiative in establishing FAIFE 25 years ago continues to be relevant and very necessary to the library profession, its institutions and its associations. The articles in this special issue of *IFLA Journal* demonstrate that the Federation's endorsement and ongoing support for the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom and subsequent statements and declarations continues to offer leadership.

As the examples discussed in this essay illustrate, the concerns to be addressed encompass an extensive range of social justice issues, including those labelled 'alternative' by some authors in this issue. And the concerns are worldwide. They demand our concerted action and regular reporting, as was done in the IFLA/FAIFE World Reports from 2001 to 2006. Our commitment and actions should now be reported and assessed in the library and information science literature, including *IFLA Journal*. They demand our intervention as trusted information agents to assist our communities to use the powerful Internet-enabled platforms wisely and for the widest possible benefit. In doing so, we should rejoice in our challenging but vital role in preserving one of humanity's most precious rights.

La libre communication des pensées et des opinions est un des droits les plus précieux de l'homme; tout citoyen peut donc parler, écrire, imprimer librement, sauf à répondre de l'abus de cette liberté dans les cas déterminés par la loi [The free communication of ideas and of opinions is one of the most precious rights of man. Any citizen may therefore speak, write and publish freely, except what is tantamount to the abuse of this liberty in the cases determined by law]. La déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen [The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen], Article 11, 26 August 1789. (Assemblée nationale, 1789)

Author Note

The author Alex Byrne is now affiliated with Sydney, Australia.

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Author biography

Alex Byrne AM FALIA was the foundation chair of FAIFE, 1997–2003, and subsequently IFLA President 2005–2007. A retired librarian, university vice president, researcher and writer, I now focus on printmaking – my work can be seen at alexbyrne.com.au. My rich career in library and information took me to leadership roles at universities across Australia, culminating as the CEO of the State Library of New South Wales in Sydney. Internationally I contributed in various ways especially to the establishment of FAIFE, through IFLA's advocacy at the World Summit on the Information Society and in facilitating the consideration of Indigenous matters, a lifelong concern. I have been fortunate to participate in a profession that is so vital to the global community and to work with so many dedicated colleagues in Australia and across the world.



Intellectual freedom and alternative priorities in library and information science research: A longitudinal study

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Abstract

This article presents a bibliometric analysis of the library and information science literature to trace the emphasis that intellectual freedom and neutrality have received relative to an index of alternative and possibly competing topics. Emphasis is captured longitudinally by recording the number of results for various search terms associated with intellectual freedom, neutrality, diversity, equity, and inclusion in Web of Science from 1993 through 2020 and Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts from 1970 through 2020. The results show that the number of works mentioning intellectual freedom and neutrality has increased only slightly over the study period, in sharp contrast to many entries on the diversity, equity, and inclusion index. With research interests being partially indicative of personal beliefs and professional activity, the impact of this relative change in emphasis on professional practice is discussed. Public controversies regarding library neutrality, intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression in libraries are summarized.

Keywords

Library and information science, bibliometrics, intellectual freedom, censorship

Librarianship is a profession that draws on and requires multiple ethical commitments. These ethical commitments are embodied at their highest level in the profession's organizational codes of ethics, such as the American Library Association's (ALA's) Code of Ethics (American Library Association, 2008), and formal position statements, such as the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (IFLA, 1999). Intellectual freedom is one such value, dating back to the formation of the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom in 1967; neutrality has historically been another (Scott and Saunders, 2021; Wenzler, 2019). Yet there are also many alternative priorities referenced in the professional codes of librarianship—these are also long-standing and necessary. Value pluralism is a metaethical theory which asserts that morality encompasses multiple values that are incomparable or incommensurable; by contrast, value monism asserts that there is one ultimate ethical value (Mason, 2018). Librarianship, as a practical endeavor, is fundamentally pluralistic in the sense that its codes of ethics and position statements do not speak of “the good” but rather of multiple specific values which we

work towards (e.g. equitable services, user privacy and confidentiality, suitable conditions of employment, etc.). An underappreciated fact of work that draws on plural ethical commitments is that those commitments can conflict when abstract principles are forced to grapple with concrete reality.¹ This article studies the fortunes of various topics as priorities as expressed in the library and information science (LIS) literature.

Intellectual freedom is only one of several priorities advocated by librarians and library organizations. The value is best explained in the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom but is also included in the ALA's Code of Ethics, where it is placed in opposition to “efforts to censor library resources” (American Library Association, 2008). Contained within the Code of Ethics are competing

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value claims which have obvious possibilities of conflicting with each other—for example, privacy has the potential to conflict with providing “the highest level of service” as there are a great many personalized services which libraries might offer but do not because it would require collection and maintenance of data on users; “respect [for] intellectual property rights” often results in libraries maintaining convoluted discovery systems which do not provide “the highest level of service” or equitable access; and the so-called “balance between the interests of information users and rights holders” results in conservative interpretations of intellectual property case law and legislation rather than proactive pushing of the envelope (American Library Association, 2008). Notably, intellectual freedom as a value does not have *prima facie* conflicts with the other values. This may explain why it has endured as a professional lodestar and secured enduring attention via the Office of Intellectual Freedom (note, however, that not all values get such attention—for example, there is no ALA Office for Intellectual Property). Neutrality has also been a professional priority, though unenumerated. It is arguably implicit in Principle 1 (“accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests”) and Principle 7 (“We . . . do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access”) of the ALA Code of Ethics, as well as the fifth principle listed in the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (“Libraries shall ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views”) (American Library Association, 2008; IFLA, 1999). Yet our professional value structure is not some crystalline Platonic form but depends on larger societal forces. This article demonstrates via bibliometrics that larger societal shifts are impacting the LIS literature. These shifts may alter the relative emphasis that practitioners place on which of our values take precedence. Three episodes involving the ALA are discussed in detail below to illustrate the real-world effects of the shift manifest in these bibliometric findings.

A review of the literature

The literature on the meaning and practice of intellectual freedom and neutrality is vast; because of the bibliometric nature of this study, this review is therefore focused on how these topics manifest in the LIS literature. Recent work by Winberry and Bishop (2021), on the subject of the influence and frequency of conceptions of social justice in the LIS literature,

has documented a sharp rise in works using that terminology beginning in 2014. It is also important to note that many of what this study classifies as “alternative priorities” fly under the flag of “critical x” approaches. Tewell (2018) recently noted that the critical information literacy literature in particular has blossomed and matured since 2006 when a seminal text of that approach appeared. The impact, measured via citation analysis, of French theorists associated with postmodernism and “critical” paradigms on the LIS literature was studied by Cronin and Meho (2009) over a decade ago. They found that LIS was 24th out of all Web of Science (WoS) subject categories in the prevalence of French theorist citation and that the overwhelming majority of citations occurred post-1980, with the largest percentage change happening between 1980 and 1989. More recently, a convenience sample survey with a large response rate found that two-thirds of the respondents self-assessed as having very, somewhat, or passing familiarity with critical theory. Sixty-eight percent of those familiar with the concepts learned about them during their higher education, although the results indicated that their graduate LIS education was not responsible for their familiarity (Schroeder and Hollister, 2014). The change that Cronin and Meho (2009) documented appears not to have had an impact on LIS education as of the mid-2010s.

Neutrality is conceptually and operationally distinct from intellectual freedom. Despite seeming nebulous, recent empirical research by Scott and Saunders (2021) reveals that neutrality has a clearly consensus definition: being objective in providing information. However, there are hard cases (e.g. white supremacists using a community room to meet) that fall outside of the consensus (Scott and Saunders, 2021). Neutrality has a different, more important, and legally binding notion outside of the library in the context of the USA. In that context, it refers to governmental regulation of speech in various forums, where the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the US Constitution underlie the judicial analysis (Vile et al., 2009c). Although both the librarian and legal definitions of neutrality are not enumerated in the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom, they are arguably implicit in that document’s fifth and seventh affirmations: “Libraries shall ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views” and “Libraries shall make materials, facilities and services equally accessible to all users. There shall be no discrimination due to race,

creed, gender, age or for any other reason,” respectively (IFLA, 1999).

Three common critiques of neutrality are that it is apolitical, ahistorical, and impossible. Wenzler (2019) has deftly refuted the first two charges, demonstrating that the governmental neutrality doctrine (of which library neutrality is a subset) is an explicitly political project of liberalism and one with deep roots in the European Enlightenment. Far from being something transcending politics, political liberalism and governmental neutrality act as mutually reinforcing systems, the departure from which is justified only for circumstances when parties fail to play by the rules of liberal discourse and liberal democracy. The impossibility critique is true insofar as libraries are finite collections accumulated with finite budgets. A common rhetorical move (used, for example, by both Jones and Drabinski in 2018) is to note the impossibility of neutrality and then assume that power analysis should guide librarians as they navigate collection development and space-usage policies; this is a non sequitur (*American Libraries*, 2018; Jones, 2018). It is also impossible to square the circle and express pi as a rational number; simply because a project is technically impossible is no strike against it when useful approximations are available.

What this present study classifies as alternative priorities to intellectual freedom and neutrality is a constellation of efforts broadly grouped under both social justice and equity, diversity, and inclusion. Nothing pejorative is intended by the use of “alternative”—that definition is only adopted as a shorthand to emphasize that the priorities are not random but belong to a family of coherent political and philosophical thought. In assessing the prevalence of alternative priorities, the current study draws on two recent studies that used similar methodologies with a focus on mainstream newspapers in the USA. First, Rozado (2020) used word frequency analysis in the *New York Times* to chart concepts having to do with negative aspects of human life and behavior, such as prejudice and victimization. He found that the phenomenon known as concept creep, wherein concepts originally used to mark harm or pathology have their meanings stretched and diluted as they are used in more colloquial contexts, was clearly at work. This shift coincided with broader cultural events that were symptomatic of increasing identity politics and victimhood culture, wherein personal or group marginalization is emphasized because such marginalization confers stature in some communities. The causal question—that is, whether journalists at the *New York Times* were echoing changing social attitudes or

whether they contributed to driving the changes—was unaddressed.

Later, and independently of Rozado, Goldberg (2020) used a similar word frequency analysis to examine the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Wall Street Journal*. The words analyzed by Goldberg (2020) were indicative of a sensibility he abbreviated as “wokeness”, informally defined as “the sensibilities of highly educated and hyperliberal white professionals with elements of Black nationalism and academic critical race theory.” There was very little overlap between Goldberg and Rozado among the terms used. The results showed that the terms analyzed exploded across all four publications around 2014 and beyond. This analysis was supplemented by an analysis of the changing media consumption patterns of white liberals, white moderates, and white conservatives. As “wokeness” increased from 2014 through 2019 in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal*, white liberals reported higher percentages of receiving political news from those outlets—a pattern that was not nearly as pronounced for moderates or conservatives (Goldberg, 2020). While the data does not definitely prove any causal relationship, it is clear that the racial attitudes of white liberals very closely follow the narrative and trends present in the aforementioned four newspapers. Lest readers think that the research by Goldberg and Rozado is confounded by the election of Donald J Trump as president of the USA in 2016, both articles documented increases in their indicator terms by 2013. To ascribe Goldberg’s and Rozado’s findings to a nebulous “Trump effect” is to commit the fallacy of reverse causation. The present study employed both Rozado’s and Goldberg’s term indices to measure the incidence of the concepts they studied in the LIS literature.

Methods

Simply counting the number of results for a given query in a library catalog or database is a long-standing, though crude, bibliometric technique. Far more sophisticated methods exist to measure impact or gauge the sentiment behind usage or citation, but an assessment of term frequency is sufficient to detail mere mentions of topics and their relative frequency to each other. The first step in data collection was the creation of a list of query terms. The term chosen to represent intellectual freedom was “intellectual freedom” (queried always in double quotes to ensure a phrase search). The query chosen to represent neutrality was a Boolean logic query that was created to remove any mentions of the much-debated Federal

Communications Commission policy named Net Neutrality: neutrality NOT “net neutrality.” To obtain the data representing the alternative priorities that the profession might have around social justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion, two previously created indices were used.

As noted above, two studies using annual result counts in publications as indicators of social change were published in 2020 (Goldberg, 2020; Rozado, 2020). Rather than create an index from scratch, Goldberg’s 15-term Woke Term-Usage Index (hereafter Goldberg’s Index) and Rozado’s 45-term unnamed index (hereafter Rozado’s Index) were used. There was little duplication or overlap between the two. Goldberg’s Index contained the following terms: bias OR biases, hierarchies, inclusiveness, marginalized, overrepresented, privileged, “racial disparity” OR “racial disparities,” “racial inequality” OR “racial inequalities,” stereotypes, stereotyping, “systemic racism,” underrepresented, victimhood, vulnerable, and “white privilege.” Rozado’s Index contained the following terms: abused, activism, “anti-semitism” OR antisemitism, bigotry, bullying, “cultural appropriation,” discrimination, diversity, equality, feminism, “gender discrimination,” hate, hateful, “hate speech,” homophobia, hurtful, inclusion, intersectionality, islamophobia, kkk, marginalization, marginalized, misogyny, multiculturalism, offended, oppression, patriarchy, racism, racist, “safe space,” sexism, sexist, “social justice,” stereotypes, stigmatized, subjugation, tolerance, transphobia, traumatized, traumatizing, triggering, “trigger warning,” victimization, “white supremacy,” and xenophobia.

Each term was queried in WoS and Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts (LISTA), and the annual result counts recorded; a “blank” query was conducted for each year and the total number of entries indexed also recorded. LISTA was chosen because it has served as the main subject database for LIS research. WoS was included because it is widely used in bibliometric studies and it provided a glimpse at the higher-tier LIS literature; it also increased robustness and confidence in the results by showing that they hold under different indices. WoS coverage extended back to 1993, and the years 1993 through 2020 were queried; LISTA coverage was greater and so, to get a longer historical perspective, 1970 was chosen as a beginning year because that was the same cutoff point used by both Goldberg (2020) and Rozado (2020). WoS is an interdisciplinary database so, to narrow down the queries to only those coming from LIS journals, a subject query was performed with each index term (i.e. SU=(Information Science & Library Science)).² Because LISTA, by its nature,

is confined to LIS topics, there were no additional subjects or modifications made to the queries. Annual tallies were recorded directly from WoS, which provided an interface for examining sets of results. The LISTA data was accessed using the EBSCOhost search interface and the results were exported in RIS format to the Zotero citation management software to calculate annual tallies. To capture the total relevant entries indexed in LISTA via the EBSCOhost platform, a blank search with the appropriate publication date From: and To: fields for each year was executed. Annual counts of the total relevant items indexed by WoS were obtained by performing year queries combined with the subject SU=(Information Science & Library Science) string to identify all LIS literature. No deduplication correction was done for publications that might display in multiple sets of result lists due to the fact that they may have used more than one of the terms on either the Goldberg’s Index or Rozado’s Index (or have mentioned intellectual freedom or neutrality).

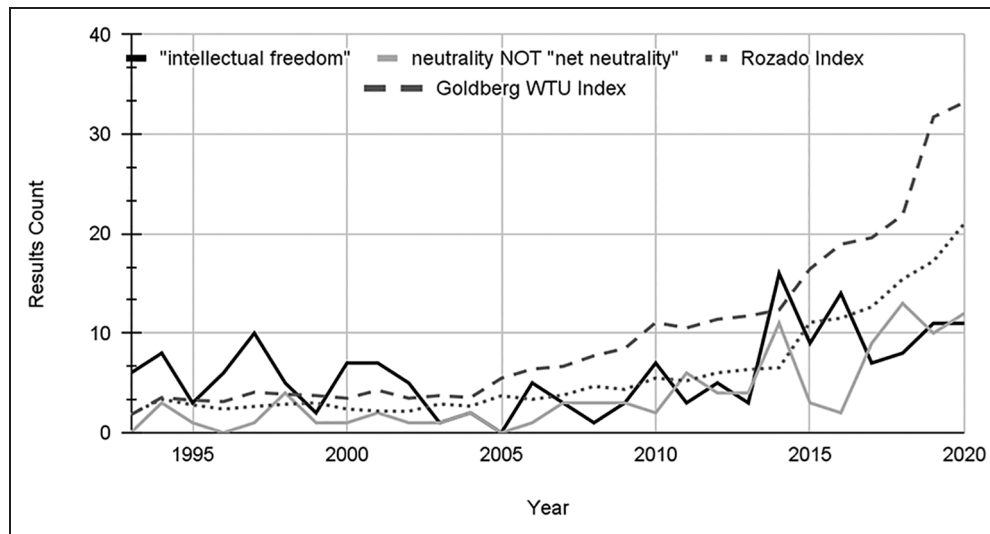
Lastly, Google Scholar was used to get a picture of the prevalence and influence of the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (IFLA, 1999). Use of WoS or LISTA for this was not possible as the document was not indexed in WoS and returned an insufficient number of results in LISTA. Google Scholar casts a much wider net than WoS or LISTA (via proprietary opaque methods), and therefore provides a broader measure of the document’s impact from a wide variety of scholarly sources (Roemer and Borchardt, 2015). The query “statement on libraries and intellectual freedom” was used to locate results and record annual citation counts. Data on the document was collected from 1999 (the date of publication) through 2020.

Analysis of the collected data took the form of charting the results and the calculation of the descriptive statistics required for simple linear regression. Charting all the terms on Goldberg’s Index and Rozado’s Index simultaneously was unwieldy and confusing. Annual counts of the indices were therefore calculated by summing the annual results for all terms on each index and dividing by the number of terms on each index (15 and 45, respectively). Descriptive statistics were calculated for each term’s annual result counts, which was modeled as a dependent variable, in relation to time, which was modeled as an independent variable. The following statistics were calculated for all terms: covariance, simple linear regression slope, y -intercept, a bivariate correlation coefficient (Pearson’s r), p values for each respective Pearson’s r value,

Table 1. Descriptive simple linear regression statistics for topics.

Term/document	Source index	Slope	Pearson's <i>r</i>	Standard error of the estimate	<i>r</i> ²
IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom	Google Scholar	0.43	.59	3.85	.36
	WoS	0.18	.38*	3.72	.14
	LISTA	3.39	.64**	61.36	.41
Neutrality	WoS	0.34	.74**	2.60	.51
	LISTA	0.42	.84**	4.07	.71

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

**Figure 1.** Result counts per year for topics from WoS.

standard error of the estimate for the regression line, and the coefficient of determination (r^2).³

Results

The variables under analysis were result counts for keywords in WoS and LISTA and time, measured by calendar year. Obviously, the mere passage from one year to the next has no causal bearing on the number of articles published which use specific terminology. Rather, there are broader cultural trends toward the themes identified by the alternative priority keywords that have positive covariance with time. Analyzing the prevalence of the terms can inform us as to whether the broader cultural trends are competing with or otherwise affecting the amount of attention paid to intellectual freedom or neutrality. The results are presented primarily in visual form with two multiple line graphs, one simple line graph, and eight histograms. One table is included to present context for the figures.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics on the annual result counts of queries for intellectual freedom and

neutrality drawn from WoS and LISTA, as well as annual citation counts for the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom drawn from Google Scholar. Included in the table are values for the linear function slope, correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) with associated statistical significance, standard error of the estimate, and coefficient of determination (r^2). These values are presented explicitly and in tabular form as baselines, which readers may then use to evaluate the data on the alternative priority keywords. Rather than present lengthy tables detailing slopes, Pearson's r , and r^2 values for each term in the Goldberg's Index and Rozado's Index, graphical summaries in the form of histograms of each measure are presented below. What is ultimately of importance is not the descriptive statistics for any one keyword (other than intellectual freedom or neutrality) but the general trend for the alternative priority terms.

Figure 1 displays the annual result counts for intellectual freedom, neutrality, and the computed Goldberg's and Rozado's indices from WoS. Figure 2 depicts the same information from LISTA. As can

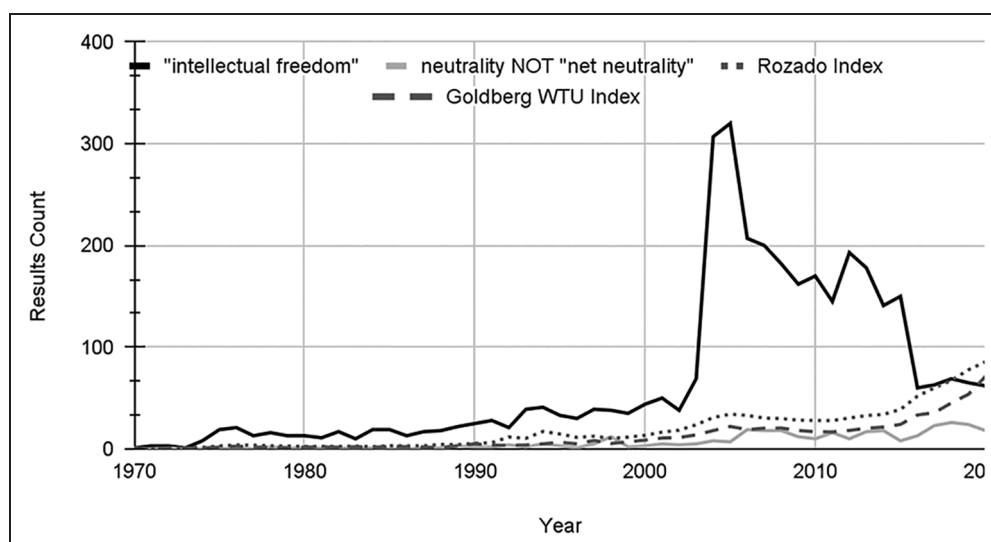


Figure 2. Result counts per year for topics from LISTA.

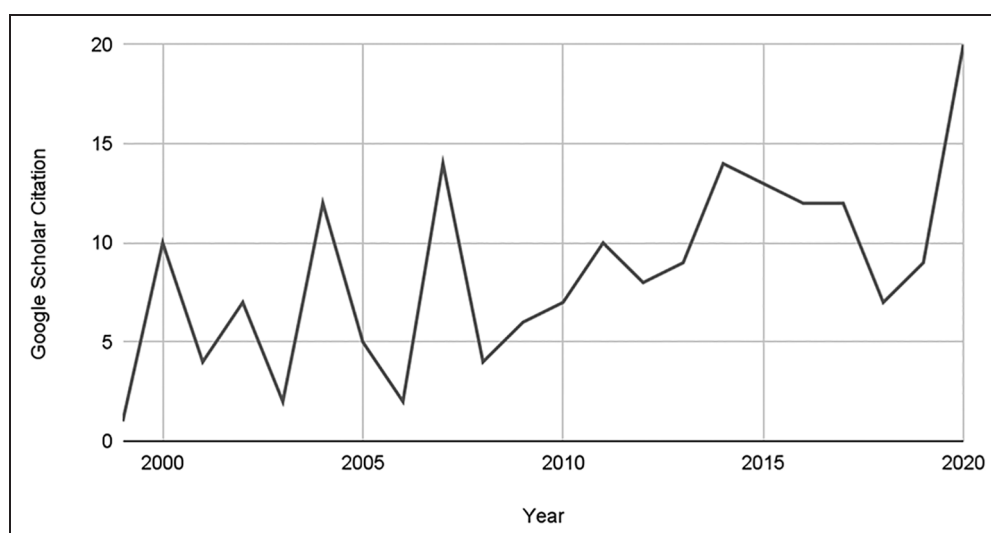


Figure 3. Google Scholar citations per year for the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom.

be seen in Figures 1 and 2, both the Goldberg's Index and the Rozado's Index show marked increases in 2015 that alter the trajectory of the charted lines, and both indices increased over the 2015 baseline each subsequent year. Both indices have supplanted intellectual freedom and neutrality since 2017, and have held their position relative to those core priorities since.

Figure 3 shows annual citation counts for the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom as indexed by Google Scholar. This figure should be interpreted in accordance with the values for the IFLA Statement presented in Table 1. The slope of the simple regression line is .43; the correlations of coefficient and determination were not statistically significant. Comparing the annual document citations

to annual result counts in other databases, over different timescales, is an analogy too strained. It should suffice to note that, by slope alone, the IFLA Statement is similar but slightly higher than many slopes for the alternative priority keywords. To the extent that slopes for a query and citation are proxies for professional interest, few of any of the alternative priorities supplant the IFLA Statement.

Figures 4 through 11 are histograms. Figures 4 and 5 present simple linear regression slope values for all the alternative priority terms; Figure 4 shows the results from WoS and Figure 5 shows the results from LISTA. The slope of a simple linear regression line indicates the steepness of the trendline. In this context, it indicates how much change in annual result counts coincides with the increase of one year. The

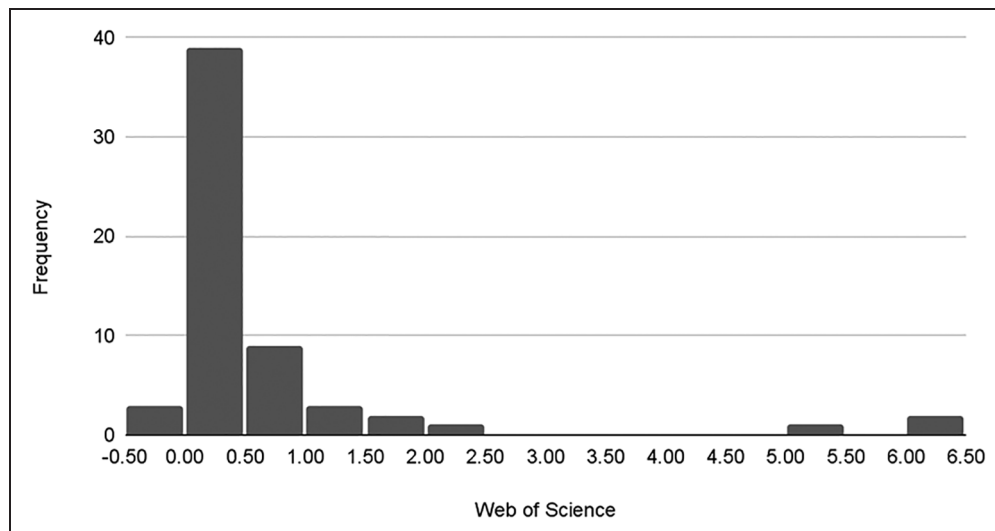


Figure 4. Alternative priority term slope values from WoS.

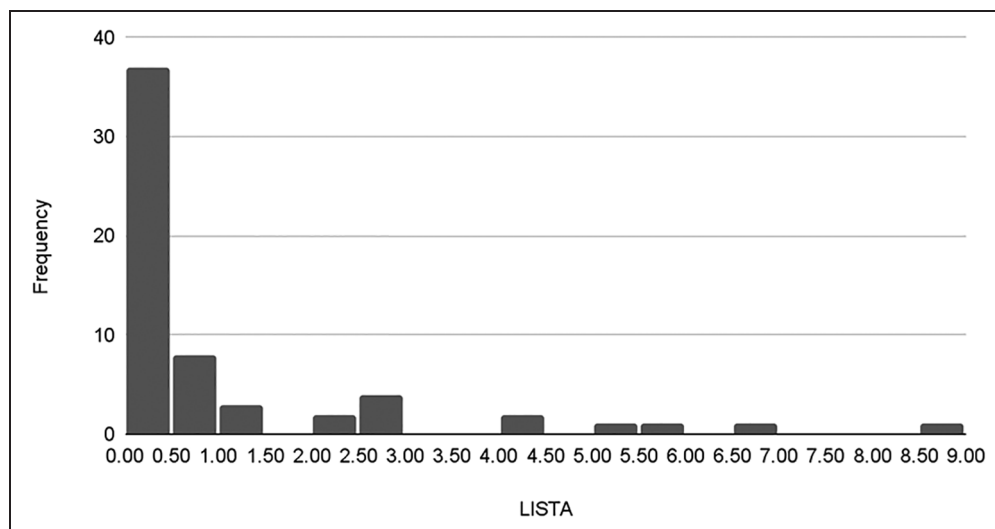


Figure 5. Alternative priority term slope values from LISTA.

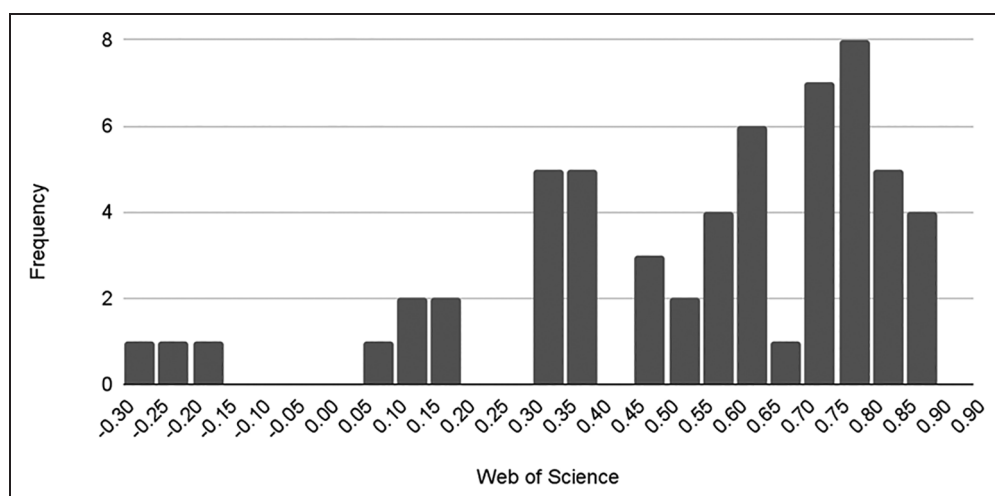


Figure 6. Alternative priority term correlation values from WoS.

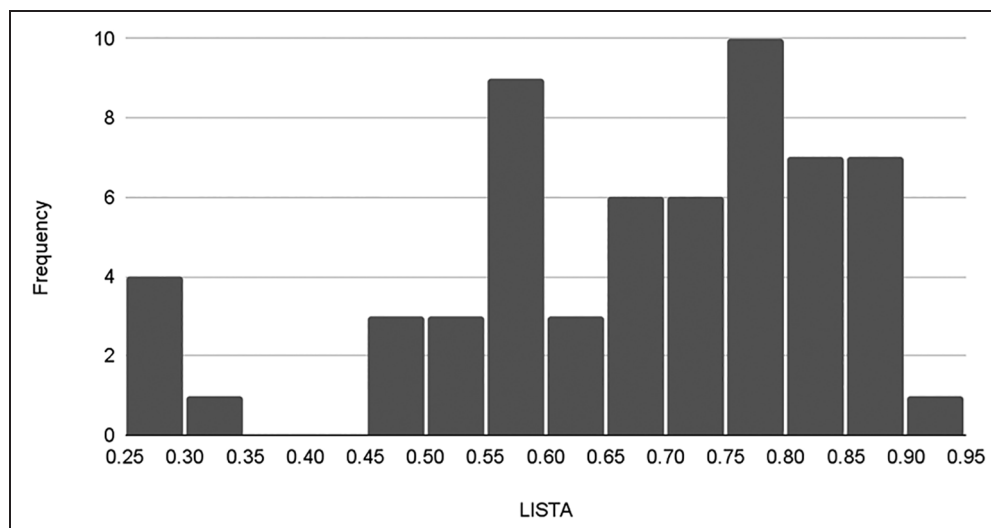


Figure 7. Alternative priority term correlation values from LISTA.

results from WoS show that 34 of the alternative priority slope values were less than the slope value for intellectual freedom. A minority (26) of the alternative priority slope values were greater than the intellectual freedom slope. In LISTA, the intellectual freedom result counts had much greater variance: 6 of the alternative priority slope values were greater than that for intellectual freedom and 54 were less. Looking at neutrality, the pattern of a majority of the alternative priority slopes being less steep than the two core priorities held. In WoS, 20 of the alternative priority slopes were greater than neutrality's slope and 40 were less. In LISTA, 28 of the alternative priority slopes were greater than neutrality's slope and 32 were less. The five terms with the highest slopes in WoS were diversity, bias(es), inclusion, triggering, and vulnerable. The five highest slopes in LISTA belonged to diversity, bias(es), inclusion, discrimination, and racism.

Figures 6 and 7 present Pearson's r bivariate correlation coefficients for all the alternative priority terms; Figure 6 shows the results from WoS and Figure 7 shows the results from LISTA. Pearson's r , implying a straight line, is an imperfect measure for this study. As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, the indices capturing the alternative priorities exhibit more of an upward curve since 2015. A nonparametric measure of correlation would be superior but because all the other analyses used simple linear regression, Pearson's r is presented here so that all of the measures can be better understood conceptually and be subject to the same criticism. A higher correlation reveals a stronger amount of covariance between the terms queried and time.

The five terms with the highest correlation coefficients in WoS were hierarchies, bias(es), inclusion, vulnerable, and diversity. The five strongest linear relationships in LISTA were diversity, stereotypes, inclusion, feminism, and underrepresented.

Figures 8 and 9 present the p values of the correlation coefficients for all the alternative priority terms; Figure 8 shows the results from WoS and Figure 9 shows the results from LISTA. Plotting the p values of the correlation coefficients gives an indication of how likely the correlations between time and annual result counts would be obtained by chance. The p values are occasionally misunderstood in multiple ways; an easy misunderstanding to fall into is the idea that p values give the probability that the null hypothesis is true given the data. However, the correct definition is the probability of getting results at least as extreme as those observed, assuming the null hypothesis were true. Setting aside definitions, a very small p value indicates that the observed test statistic would be extremely unlikely under the null hypothesis. If the null hypothesis were true—that is, each alternative priority keyword were not dependent on the year variable via some chain of causality (omitted variables having positive covariance with time)—the p values would have a uniform distribution (Breheny et al., 2018). The results from WoS show that 42 of the correlation coefficients of alternative priority terms were statistically significant at the conventional $p = .05$ threshold. The remaining 16 of the correlation coefficients of the WoS data were not statistically significant. The results using the LISTA index were more skewed, with 59 of the correlation coefficients of the

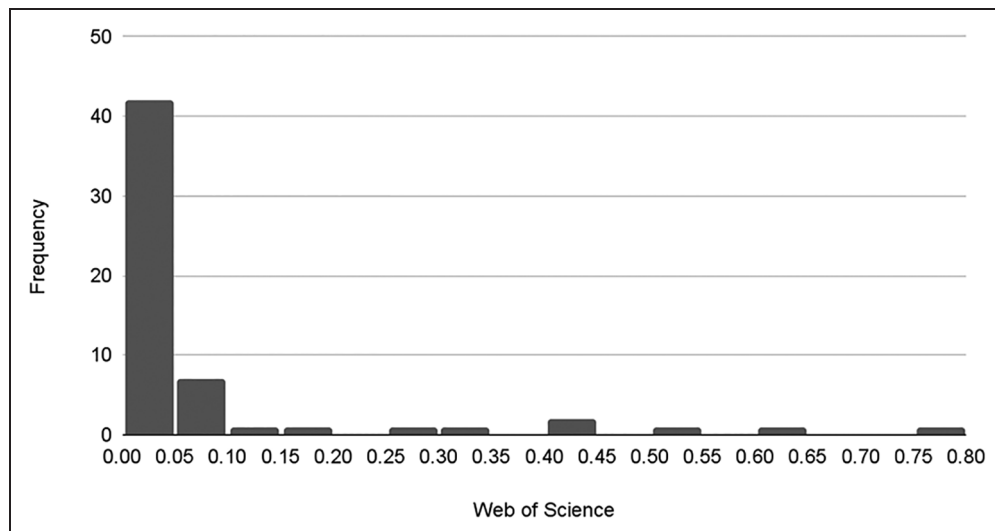


Figure 8. Alternative priority term p values from WoS.

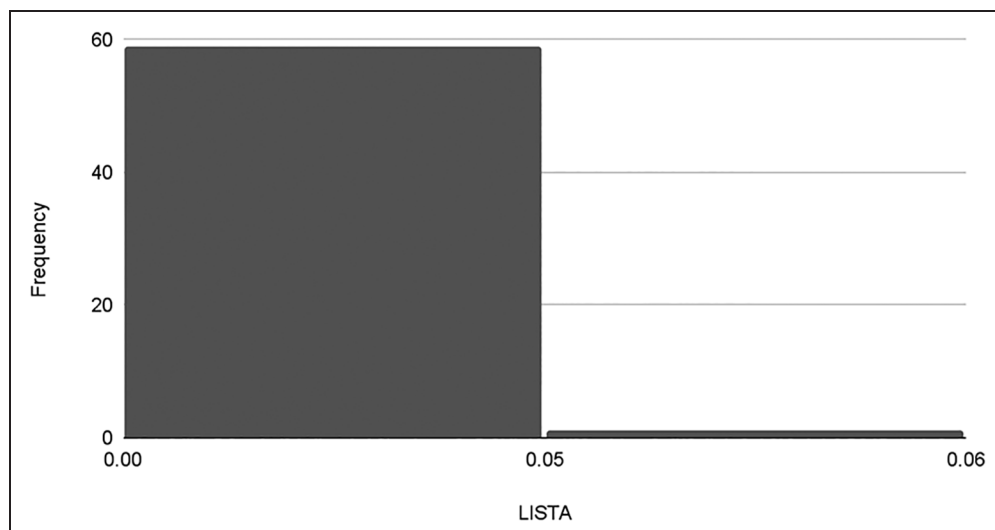


Figure 9. Alternative priority term p values from LISTA.

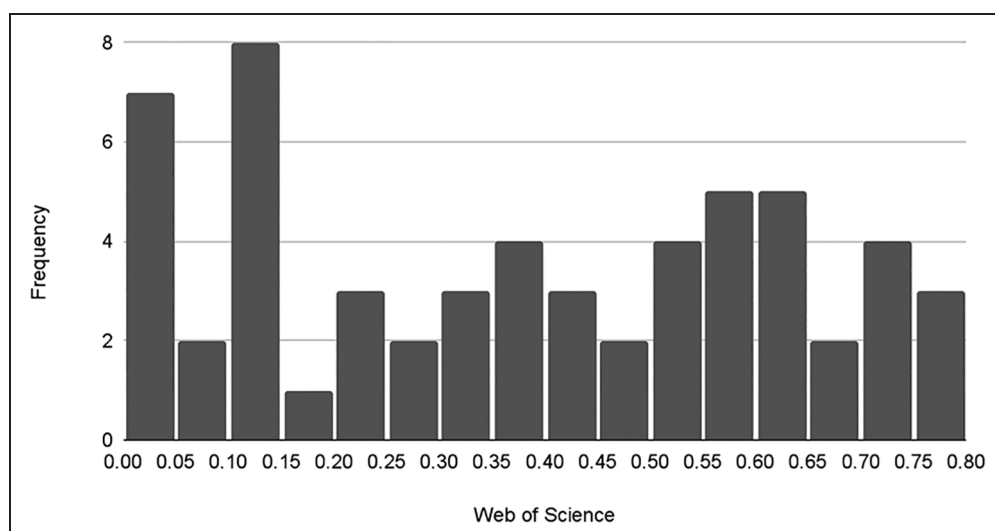


Figure 10. Alternative priority term r^2 values from WoS.

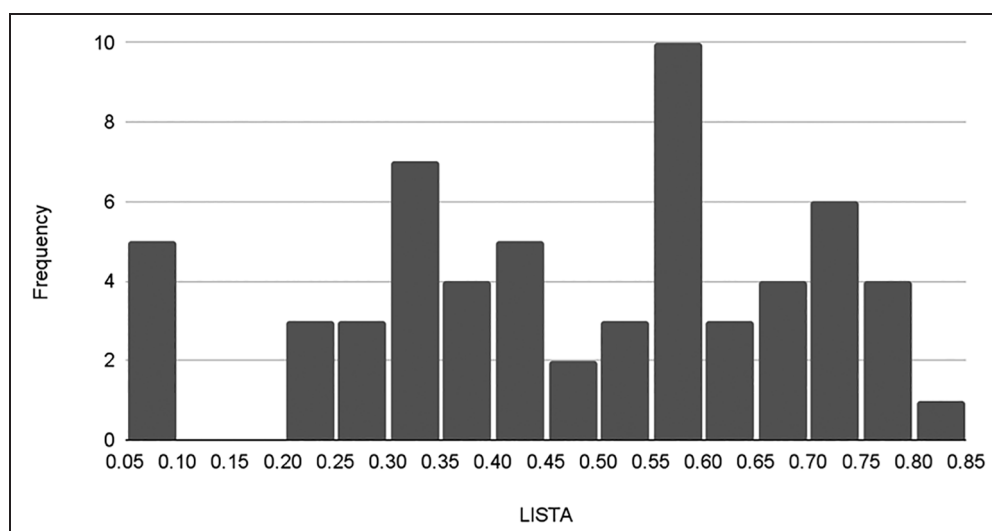


Figure 11. Alternative priority term r^2 values from LISTA.

alternative priority terms being statistically significant and only 1 insignificant.

Figures 10 and 11 present the r^2 values of the coefficients of determination for all the alternative priority terms; Figure 10 shows the results from WoS and Figure 11 shows the results from LISTA. As with the slope values above, the r^2 values of the alternative priority terms can be compared to the r^2 values of intellectual freedom and neutrality for the respective index; r^2 represents the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable (annual result counts) which is predictable from the independent variable (years—i.e. time). Importantly, r^2 is agnostic regarding causality; r^2 values cannot indicate whether the time is the cause of changes in the result counts (obviously impossible), nor do they rule out the possibility of omitted variables biasing the annual result counts. The results from WoS show that 16 of the alternative priority term r^2 values were less than the r^2 value for intellectual freedom. The majority (42) of the alternative priority term r^2 values were greater than the intellectual freedom r^2 . Despite intellectual freedom's boom and bust (see Figure 2), the results were broadly similar in LISTA, where 22 of the alternative priority term r^2 values were less than that for intellectual freedom and 38 were greater.

Neutrality, having much higher initial r^2 values for both the WoS and LISTA data, fared differently in comparison. Neutrality was the less-mentioned topic in both literature indices and had smaller standard errors of the estimate compared with intellectual freedom. It was therefore often more predictable than the alternative priority keywords, the majority of which had r^2 values less than that of neutrality. The terms

with the top r^2 values from each index are the same terms as those with the highest bivariate linear correlation coefficients: from WoS, hierarchies, bias(es), inclusion, vulnerable, and diversity, and, from LISTA, diversity, stereotypes, inclusion, feminism, and underrepresented.

Omitted variable bias crucially comes into play in this investigation, with straightforward causality between time and any number of articles being published being impossible. Time should be regarded as a proxy variable, partially reflecting the omitted variable(s) which are the proximate cause(s) of the change in emphasis and rhetoric as captured by the alternative priority keyword indicators. The standard error of the estimate figures are included in Table 1 out of an abundance of caution and transparency. While the results are what they are and are replicable, the result counts as captured in WoS and LISTA only provide a partial view of the entire corpus of LIS research. All of the statistics reported here, while valid for their respective "universes" (i.e. WoS or LISTA), are only approximations of the entire (partially unindexed) literature. The specific limitations of this study are noted below.

Discussion

The results present a seeming paradox. As visible in Figures 1 and 2, the terms on an average of index measure for Goldberg's Index and Rozado's Index have passed intellectual freedom and neutrality in coverage in both WoS and LISTA. Yet comparison of each individual term on each index for the descriptive statistics of their regression line (slope, r , r^2) shows that many are below the values for intellectual

freedom and neutrality. How is it possible that the index average can rise over intellectual freedom and neutrality when so many individual terms are below the statistics (e.g. slope) for those core concepts? The answer is that particular terms in particular indices are driving the increase. In other words, the Goldberg's and Rozado's indices, when used against the LIS literature, only partly capture the phenomenon that they purport to capture in their original studies, which used national newspapers in the USA. To put it differently, some of the terminology deployed in the news media has not (yet) been as widely adopted in the LIS literature. Nevertheless, the bivariate correlation coefficient results in Figures 6 and 7 are clear: the majority of the alternative priority terms are moderately ($\geq .45$) or strongly correlated with time, and those correlations are statistically significant. Most terms in both indices are increasing in usage with the passage of time.

The results of this study comport with the recent empirical finding of a slow and steady increase in social-justice-themed LIS research through 2013, followed by a non-trivial increase in the number of such publications post-2015 (Winberry and Bishop, 2021). While Winberry and Bishop (2021) treated the future of social justice as a subdiscipline within LIS research as an open question, the present study conclusively demonstrates that social justice is thus far an increasing part of a larger societal phenomenon that is affecting trends in LIS research. Rather, the open question appears to be whether the growth in social justice scholarship and various alternative priorities may come at the expense of an emphasis on intellectual freedom and a depoliticized or neutral notion of librarianship. The lack of any consistent decline in either topic shows that the LIS literature has thus far accommodated the growth in alternative priorities. At present, there is no crowding-out effect of the alternative priorities coinciding with a decrease in the two core priorities. Rather, we see a tepid increase in intellectual freedom and neutrality usage, while the alternative priority terms experienced a boom in usage of late. This shift is indicative of substantial growth of the movements and ideas associated with that type of language.

Ideas have consequences. In this case, the increasing usage of alternative priority terms, coupled with the relative stagnation of intellectual freedom and neutrality, coincided with a number of public events. As stated above, Goldberg (2020) and Rozado (2020) noted sharp increases in their term indices beginning around 2013. This study found sharp increases in result counts for both indices beginning in 2015 in WoS and a milder but sustained increase beginning in 2015 in LISTA. The study by Schroeder and

Hollister (2014) demonstrates that, as early as 2014, reference, instruction, subject selector, and liaison librarians had some familiarity with critical theory. Given the longer publishing timeline for academic literature, it is a reasonable assumption that the effect observed in 2015 preceded the announcement of Donald J Trump that he was campaigning for the presidency of the USA. Basic logic dictates that Trumpism and associated right-wing political and social developments cannot be the cause of the shift in rhetoric as expressed in word usage. Rather, leftist evolution of thought preceded Trumpism and the various events detailed below.

One of the more curious aspects of life in, or tangential to, the education system in the USA is the growth in diversity rhetoric during what is without a doubt the least diverse time to be alive in recorded human history. Jacoby (2020) has ably noted how the variety of life—different ways of speaking, thinking, believing, eating, dressing, and so on—is crumbling under the weight of the homogenizing force of globalized consumer-focused capitalism. Diversity is, of course, multifaceted, and this study does not supply any data from which we can learn how the professional literature is treating the broad concept. It is worth noting that “diversity” was one of the terms with the highest slope values in both LISTA and WoS. That, taken in conjunction with the other high slope values such as “inclusion”, “discrimination”, and “underrepresented”, give some indication that the literature has tended to focus not on viewpoint diversity or preserving disappearing cultural dress traditions but rather on demographic characteristics. The professional emphasis on alternative priorities has played out in a number of events and manifested itself in actions and statements by the ALA, three of which are discussed below.

October 2020 saw an act of misinterpretation or misrepresentation by the ALA in response to President Trump's Executive Order 13950 on combating race and sex stereotyping. The organization issued a public statement opposing the order, stating that it was based on a false claim that “diversity training . . . reflects a ‘Marxist doctrine’ that is itself racist and sexist” (American Library Association, 2020). Yet the words “Marx,” “Marxist,” or even “doctrine” did not appear in the text of the Executive Order or in the accompanying memorandum of the Office of Management and Budget (Executive Office of the President, 2020; Vought, 2020). The statement then compared Executive Order 13950 to the McCarthy era, implying that active governmental persecution of Marxists was on a par with a mere prohibition of funding, not for all diversity and inclusion

training, but specifically for training that engaged in race or sex stereotyping. Finally, the statement closed by noting the ALA's recognition of social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as core values, and explaining that its opposition to the order was because it resulted in "the curtailment of free expression and social justice" (American Library Association, 2020). The phrase "social justice" did not appear in Executive Order 13950 or in the accompanying memorandum of the Office of Management and Budget (Executive Office of the President, 2020; Vought, 2020). As for "free expression," the order targeted such ideas as: "one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex"; "an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race or sex"; and "an individual's moral character is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex" (Executive Office of the President, 2020). Surely, such ideas, if directed toward the groups explicitly mentioned in the ALA's statement—"Black people, Indigenous people, and people of color . . . and women" (American Library Association, 2020)—would conflict with the aforementioned core values of diversity and inclusion. This returns us to the familiar territory of an internal tension in the value pluralism of libraries and librarianship. Yet the drafters of the statement for the ALA ultimately issued the statement worded as it was, from which we must conclude that: (1) the drafters of the statement did not read Executive Order 13950 or, if they did read it, assumed a definition of social justice that included the ideas targeted by the order, such as "that the United States is an inherently racist or evil country or that any race or ethnicity is inherently racist or evil" (Vought, 2020); (2) the drafters engaged in deliberate misreading or obfuscation, and worded their statement such that readers of it who did not consult the primary source documents would arrive at erroneous conclusions about Executive Order 13950; or (3) the drafters were using the rhetorical cover of "free expression" to voice their support for governmental funding of equity, diversity, and inclusion training that *relies on* race or sex stereotyping. The three prior conclusions are not mutually exclusive; none of them portend well for the future of intellectual freedom in the ALA.

Neutrality is a somewhat amorphous concept both in libraries and in the legal literature. As noted above, there is actually a widely accepted definition of neutrality amongst librarians, having to do with objectivity in information provision and supply (Scott and Saunders, 2021). Yet beyond that interpretation of what neutrality means in librarianship, there is another layer of neutrality that applies to public

servants in the USA. Libraries that receive governmental funding in this context are theoretically bound to abide by the First Amendment to the US Constitution as interpreted by the courts governing the jurisdictions in which they are located and the US Supreme Court. Jurisprudence on the issue of neutrality, dealing inherently with practical matters, has devised a variety of ways in which governmental actions can be scrutinized. These include the following ideas: content-neutral regulation (Vile et al., 2009b) and content-based regulation, which deals with the subconcepts of subject-matter discrimination and viewpoint discrimination (Vile et al., 2009a). Detailed discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this article; suffice to say that the current state of jurisprudence regarding these issues is complicated, but there are a few conclusions that are clear. First, in their own speech, governmental agencies are under no obligation to be neutral among viewpoints (Bloom, 2019). Second, when restrictions are placed on speech, the forum (in the legal sense) matters in determining what types of restrictions are allowed. Third, the type of restriction—that is, whether the restrictions are content-neutral or content-based—is crucial. Content-neutral restrictions receive intermediate scrutiny if applied to public forums or reasonable balancing review if applied in non-public forums owned by the government. However, if the restrictions are content-based (such as being antifascist—see below), that is considered viewpoint discrimination by the courts and is subject to strict scrutiny, regardless of whether the forum is public or not (Kelso, 2019).

A naive observer of leftism's long march through the institutions might think that multiple Supreme Court cases clarifying the nature of, and generally siding against, viewpoint discrimination would settle the issue, at least in the USA. Yet agitation against the concept of neutrality in libraries has grown. As late as 2013, *American Libraries*, the magazine of the ALA, ran a piece stressing the importance of library neutrality surrounding the Affordable Care Act. Then ALA president, Barbara Stripling, was quoted there, saying: "As always, libraries do not promote specific programs or points of view, but provide the public with balanced, unbiased access to information" (Goldberg, 2013:13). By 2017, the intellectual winds at the magazine had shifted with a column by Meredith Farkas (2017) entitled "Never neutral," which critiqued neutrality and noted that social justice can be used as an ethical commitment that justifies equal access; intellectual freedom received no mention. This was followed by a 2018 article by Julie Jones, which noted that the University of Washington decided to shut down much of its campus, including

the libraries, on 10 February 2018 when a right-wing group invited by University of Washington College Republicans held a rally on campus. The crux of the argument was “that freedom of expression is not coming from a neutral playing field; some expressions actively and effectively silence others” (Jones, 2018: 21). Importantly, 2018 also saw vibrant professional public debate on a panel about neutrality in librarianship at the 2018 Midwinter Meeting and Exhibits of the ALA, wherein the plurality of opinion was that neutrality was impossible (*American Libraries*, 2018). Two of the eight panel participants argued in favor of maintaining some notion of library neutrality; only two panelists mentioned intellectual freedom and its conceptual relations to neutrality. As noted above, opponents of neutrality typically critique the concept as insufficiently political, not capable of addressing perceived power imbalances or conflicts, and being impossible to achieve. But these critiques, often framed as what librarians (most of whom are governmental employees) or subsets of library patrons *want*, miss the mark. What is at issue, and has not been addressed by the recent articles in *American Libraries* or at the 2018 Midwinter panel, is what librarians are *required* to do and how they are *required* to act as recipients and stewards of taxpayer funding.

Most recently, at the 2021 ALA Midwinter Meeting, the Resolution to Condemn White Supremacy and Fascism as Antithetical to Library Work was adopted. The resolution’s whereas clauses note that historically discriminatory practices against non-whites have caused harm and conflict with the ALA Code of Ethics and its Library Bill of Rights. The eight items formally resolved make a necessary apology for past practices and condemn the supposed role that neutrality played in them, and then go on to detail a process whereby the ALA will reform its communications, advocacy, and events. The mere fact that libraries existed in apartheid South Africa and Falangist Spain, as well as the obversely totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union, is sufficient proof to refute the claim implicit in the resolution’s title; but there are more substantive questions to address. Specifically, “white supremacy” and “fascism” are nowhere defined in the resolution, nor is “antiracism.” This leaves the meaning and implications of these terms open to interpretation. Recommendations regarding the integration of antifascism and antiracism into the organization are forthcoming; if the terms are left undefined in those documents, the question of their meaning will be decided by individual librarians. A nod toward a formal definition of at least fascism was made by including Umberto Eco’s essay

on Ur-Fascism in the resolution’s notes; that document lists 14 common properties that Eco thought were generally applicable to fascism. What is unclear is precisely how many of the 14 properties must be possessed in order for something to be ruled fascist.

Although neutrality as a library priority is critiqued in the resolution, the seeds of critique of intellectual freedom are present as well. Notably, the fourth “whereas” statement in the preamble states that “we must reject practices, movements, and groups that oppose equity, diversity, and inclusion,” and Resolved Item 5 contains the phrase “commits to explicitly incorporating existing and developing anti-racist and antifascist frameworks” (American Library Association Council, 2021). When an organization commits to rejecting movements and groups, clarity is required as to the precise identification of those movements and groups. Fortunately, at least for equity, diversity, and inclusion, the ALA has formal definitions (American Library Association Council, 2017). These allow for some clarity on the movements and groups—and, by implication, their ideas—that are now the target of the association’s ire. Yet clarification is still required on the two affirmatively “anti” principles that will eventually inform the ALA’s “external communications, advocacy, events, and organizational design” (American Library Association Council, 2021). It is quite proper, in a liberal democratic republic (and on the grounds of shared common humanity), to be against racism and fascism. Yet, as proven by Rozado (2020), concept creep of terms associated with racism (among other topics) has expanded the boundaries of what that concept previously meant and how it is applied. A similar phenomenon has happened with the term “fascism,” as demonstrated by much commentary from the fourth estate during the presidency of Donald J Trump. Threat inflation around fascism and lack of conceptual care as to its definition is a long-standing problem (Griffin, 2013). The implications of what this means for intellectual freedom are obvious. Simply stated, there are no “excluding fascist or racist ideas, as interpreted by librarians” exceptions in either the Library Bill of Rights or the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. Perhaps the lack of such exceptions has been an oversight that the Midwinter resolution has begun to rectify. Absent clear definitions of terms, intellectual freedom as historically understood and practiced could be threatened by an explicitly antifascist and antiracist ALA. Value pluralism shows that there is the possibility of conflict between the various alternative priorities and intellectual freedom. A comparison of the relative benefits that intellectual freedom and (say, for example) equity bring to our

library services is a fundamentally flawed project. The alternative is a ranking, and professional deliberation would be required to determine their position and which values are subordinate under what circumstances.

This study has shown that, relative to the long-standing core value of intellectual freedom and practice of neutrality, alternative priorities associated with social justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are ascendant in the LIS literature. The events discussed above show that this shift in the literature corresponds to behavior in the real world and comes a few years prior to the ALA's tendentious statement regarding Executive Order 13950, condemnation of neutrality rhetoric, and explicit adoption of antiracist and antifascist frameworks. This does not imply that there is unanimity among librarians on these issues, however. At least one librarian saw fit to argue in print that systemic racism is best combated by avoiding the use of critical race theory and the assumption that racism is the primary cause of disparities between racial groups (Erb, 2021). Another has argued that diversity should be broadly defined so as to include viewpoint diversity, while noting the reductive nature of placing too much emphasis on race (McClung, 2019). Similarly, there is recent empirical support showing that there is no bias against *soi-disant* "free market" donations to university libraries in the USA (Rhoads, 2019). Although the current study shows that alternative priorities are rapidly growing in the LIS literature, viewpoint diversity within the profession persists.

Limitations

Linear regression analysis is an activity fraught with explanatory peril. The descriptive statistics presented in this article should not be regarded as establishing any theoretical principle, nor should they be used to predict future publication trends in the LIS literature. Rather, they are index-dependent historico-mathematical facts that simply describe the data for each queried term noted above. As noted above, time modeled as the single independent variable with no covariates is impossibly unrealistic; the omitted variables, which are assumed to have positive covariance with time, are the explanatory factors behind the increases observed in the alternative priority terms. Furthermore, it must be said that what Figures 1 and 2 reveal is that the alternative priorities departed from a rectilinear pattern in 2015 and then curve upward. This departure from historical performance is precisely the topic of this article, but the descriptive statistical work above implies straight lines, which again

should result in a cautious interpretation of those figures.

Simply counting occurrences of words only indicates discussion, not whether treatment was positive or negative. Future research might use sentiment analysis or other textual analytic methods, including close reading, in order to trace the treatment of intellectual freedom and library neutrality in the literature. Relatedly, the word meaning of some of the terms in the indices can vary depending on the context—for example, while Rozado (2020) included "triggering" in his index as an indicator of increasing victimization themes, this word is typically used for other reasons in LIS research.

The above bibliometric analysis, using only descriptive statistics and graphical analysis, is insufficient to demonstrate any causal relationship between mentions of intellectual freedom, neutrality, and any of the alternative priorities or time. It is intended, however, that discussion of and quotations from various ALA publications provide justification for a claim about omitted variables that have increased with the passage of time. Whether the burden of proof to demonstrate that such a relationship has been met is left up to the reader. As to the question of what the specific omitted variables are, much future research would be required to answer it.

Conclusion

This study has documented a sharp increase since 2015 in the usage of terms broadly grouped under a rubric of social justice or diversity, equity, and inclusion in the LIS literature as captured in the WoS and LISTA databases. Such concepts have already received affirmation from professional organizations such as the ALA. Rhetoric and publication on these priorities has historically been subordinate to the priority of intellectual freedom. Neutrality, as an unenumerated professional value, has not received nearly as much treatment in the literature compared with intellectual freedom or, for that matter, the alternative priorities as represented by the indices devised by Goldberg (2020) and Rozado (2020). Furthermore, neutrality has recently been subject to high-profile criticism in *American Libraries* and in a 2021 resolution from the ALA. It may have already fallen decisively out of favor amongst the elite influencing the ALA—although, if the sample in Scott and Saunders (2021) is representative, a majority of librarians and directors consider neutrality "Often" or "All the time" when performing their duties. This change at the ALA coincides with the increase in alternative priority keywords.

Value pluralism provides an analytical framework which parsimoniously explains the fact that librarianship rests on multiple ethical commitments and allows for the possibility of conflict between our priorities. Publications such as the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (IFLA, 1999) elevate intellectual freedom while still professing respect for society's plurality. Perhaps the pendulum has swung too long in favor of intellectual freedom and neutrality, and the rise in social justice and equity, diversity, and inclusion is a necessary correction. Or, perhaps, when these priorities conflict and contend for heightened professional attention, we are bearing witness to a question of "which is to be master—that's all". In the perennial balancing act between our priorities, which will rank higher?

Numerous recent events attest to the fact that the increase in alternative priority term usage in the literature coincides with activity in the real world. A broader cultural shift, not captured by the variables used in this study, is affecting the LIS literature, our professional priorities, and the activities of the ALA. Whether this change is merely one of relative emphasis among the many ethical commitments required for modern librarianship, or whether we are living through a rhetorical and procedural downgrading of intellectual freedom and a removal of neutrality, remains to be seen.

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Supplemental material

Supplemental material for this article is available online at: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14502057>

Notes

1. The ALA Code of Ethics acknowledges this explicitly in the preamble: "Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict" (American Library Association, 2008).

2. In WoS, subject metadata categorization is applied at the journal level; there is no article-level topical metadata apart from author-supplied keywords.
3. Interested readers may consult the raw data and aforementioned calculations at: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14502057>

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Navigating complex authorities: Intellectual freedom, information literacy and truth in pandemic STEM information

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Abstract

Traversing scientific information has become increasingly fraught, as the new information landscape allows anyone to access endless information with a few keystrokes. However, those trying to find information, understand authorities and navigate experts need a deeper understanding not only of the information itself, but also of how and why information is shared. Increasingly, questions of expertise, locale and bias are driving the scientific information ecosystem and creating or expanding disinformation, misinformation and propaganda efforts. Librarians are in the centre of this maelstrom of information and are obligated to help people learn to be critical of information. This article presents an illustrative case study, using the example of scientific information around the safety and efficacy of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine to demonstrate how modern scientific information sharing is shaped by the ways in which misinformation and fake news spread.

Keywords

STEM, misinformation, critical evaluation of information, information literacy, fake news

Introduction

Librarians are working in a new information landscape in which Google offers up endless information with a few keystrokes. Navigating the ready availability of scientific information, and assessing what is accurate and what is misleading, has become increasingly difficult for everyone. Trying to find information, understanding authorities and experts, and contextualizing the information found accurately necessitates a deeper understanding not only of the information itself, but also of how and why information is shared (Baptista and Gradim, 2020). During times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, science is moving fast, information rapidly changes, more is discovered and decisions must be made quickly (Ball, 2021; Goldenberg, 2021; Heaton,

2020). Without an understanding of the scientific process, it may seem that decisions are made without knowledge or are rushed, when in fact science is leaning on decades of prior research and knowledge (Ellyatt, 2021). Moreover, what we know about information and sharing changing information in times of upheaval remains the same in this crisis as in other recent cultural worries: it is easy to spread wrong information, especially when people are scared (Bangan, 2021; Kari and Savolainen, 2007).

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Libraries have traditionally espoused neutrality, as the IFLA states: ‘Librarians and other information workers are strictly committed to neutrality and an unbiased stance regarding collection, access, and service’ (IFLA Freedom of Access, 1999). Increasingly, the library profession must confront the inherent tension between intellectual freedom and proven scientific knowledge. This article emerged from professional reflections around neutrality with relation to information quality and accuracy during a pandemic. Discussions on how to navigate professional responsibilities around intellectual freedom specifically related to scientific misinformation have been prevalent in many library settings and a focus in many conversations with STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) faculty colleagues in institutions across North America. These discussions impact almost every aspect of library professional practice: How do we communicate accurate information to patrons? How do we remain safe? How can we support local communities? What are our ethical responsibilities around sharing information, and how does these compete with formal library stances on information neutrality and intellectual freedom? What do we do with misinformation? While librarians do have professional associations such as the IFLA and Association of College and Research Libraries that provide guidance, they are not bound by a governing body which licenses and formally guides their practice (Association of College and Research Librarians, 2015; IFLA Board of Directors, 2016). While the Association of College and Research Libraries is situated in a largely North American context, the concepts and practices articulated in its framework are widely reflected across English and non-English-speaking library and information science contexts worldwide (Bush and Mason, 2016; Raju et al., 2017). Any guidelines about neutrality, professional practice or core values are largely driven by personal or institutional morals, and separating the personal from the professional can become fraught.

There has long been a known relationship between information seeking and social context, which has not been fully explored (Kari and Savolainen, 2007). Learning is fundamentally about finding information, then understanding, discussing, contextualizing and, ultimately, influencing and communicating it. Librarians place a great deal of emphasis on evaluating information, teaching people how to navigate complex information environments, which is largely grounded in the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (2015) Framework for Information Literacy. The ability to do so is generally referred to as ‘information literacy’, with critical literacy focused

on developing critical consumers and users of information (Briggs and Skidmore, 2008; DeVogd and McLaughlin, 2004; Linlin Huang et al., 2015). Progressively, questions of expertise, locale and bias are driving the scientific information ecosystem and creating or expanding disinformation, misinformation and propaganda efforts across actors (Bennett and Livingston, 2018; Mendoza et al., 2010; Starbird, 2019; University of Iowa Libraries, 2021). Increasingly, these issues are coming into conflict with the hallowed principles of intellectual freedom, creating tensions across stakeholder groups (Bennett and Livingston, 2018; Krafft and Donovan, 2020; Starbird, 2019). Librarians have long realized that they are in the centre of this maelstrom of information, and are obligated to help people learn to be critical of the information they use to make decisions (Schrader, 2002).

Science, while a powerful way to understand the world, is not truth. Science involves facts based on observable phenomena in the world – the shifting of light; observable mutations of DNA; how chemicals combine, react and interact (Popper, 2002). However, science is more than facts about the natural world. The arguably more interesting aspect of science is what we do with those facts – how we interpret, understand and build them into a picture, and then how we use that to make predictions or create hypotheses about the natural world (Popper, 2002). All scientific models and theories are an explanation of reality as we observe it, not a penultimate truth. Scientific theories change with time as we gather and analyse new data. As we get more information, we update our beliefs – beliefs are not truth if they can change. Science is, however, reality, and scientists always strive to be as accurate and clear as possible, even as science learns through moving and building deeper fundamental understandings. One common criticism of science by non-scientists is fundamentally something that most scientists love about sciences: science does not like to tell someone what the ultimate truth is. Science speaks about the universe through observation, and through the knowledge that observations are subject to bias, interpretation and experimental uncertainty – some observations can be wrong and some are updated as we learn more. Science scrutinizes scientific methods and models, engaging with conceptual nuances; there are fundamental realities of science, and we can trust in the process of science, even when knowledge changes (Popper, 2002).

This article presents an illustrative case study (i.e. a descriptive study that uses an instance of an event to show a specific situation), using the example of

scientific information around the safety and efficacy of the Oxford-AstraZeneca (AZ) COVID-19 vaccine to demonstrate how, when information changes rapidly, it can easily be twisted into misinformation (Corry et al., 1997; Jain et al., 2016; Linlin Huang et al., 2015; Mendoza et al., 2010; Zannettou et al., 2017). It further considers approaches and recommendations for librarians to teach critical evaluation of information and integrate a scientific mindset towards information more cohesively in their practice. Finally, the article provides recommendations for forming collaborations with clinicians and public health practitioners as an approach to constructively and ethically counter scientific misinformation.

STEM information needs

Communicating scientific information to non-scientists is difficult, and the inability to do so has contributed to widespread mistrust and misunderstanding of scientific concepts and information (Bangani, 2021; Cornell University Library, 2021; Kari and Savolainen, 2007; Lenstra et al., 2018). There is emerging research, albeit limited, on the role of North American public libraries, how and where academic libraries work with communities around public health information, and the types of information typically shared in public library settings (Lenstra et al., 2018). This scholarship focuses on the preparedness of library staff to support health information seeking, how the types of sources are typically more general-knowledge-based, how library programmes and services contribute to health and wellness outcomes, and how libraries impact the socio-economic and socio-cultural determinants of health (Lenstra et al., 2018). Outside of this research on the health information work of public libraries, there is little written on how to engage with the broader scientific community. Academic libraries teach information and literacy skills – how to think critically about evaluating sources, and how to effectively connect resources with the public (Fabos, 2008; Purzer et al., 2014; Schrader, 2002; Walton and Archer, 2004). However, while we think about critically evaluating sources from our own context, what is largely missing from the research is where professional responsibilities lie around sharing health-focused or scientific information with non-experts in every library setting (Hang Tat Leong, 2013). Currently, the primary modes for broadly sharing knowledge and providing education about health or scientific information and misinformation are through the growing presence of published LibGuides and websites that are intended to combat

information overload and fight fake news (Bangani, 2021).

The changing world

Culture and a brief history of fake news

Information reflects people and culture (Gleick, 2011; Gorn, 1963; Schramm, 1974). In what has now become a global information society, online information shared via the World Wide Web – the Internet – has become its own distinct culture, which includes everything from memes, cat videos and pornography to fully peer-reviewed credible scientific information (Fletcher, 2018; Gleick, 2011; Schramm, 1974). Historically, information had some sort of filter – whether by the physical form in which it was presented or by access limitations, such as who could be in a speaker's audience or in the locale where it was housed (Gleick, 2011; Gorn, 1963; Schramm, 1974; Waisbord, 2018). Today, it is increasingly difficult for anyone to distinguish a credible book from a journal, or a blog post from a newspaper article (Fletcher, 2018). This melding of form and function into a monolithic force of information creation and dissemination, functioning at an ever-aggressive pace, has dramatically increased information that is misinterpreted, misrepresented or intentionally sensationalized, while making it significantly more difficult to separate the credible from the fantastical (Brindha et al., 2020; Molina et al., 2021; Montané et al., 2005; Mourão and Robertson, 2019; Waisbord, 2018).

Sensationalism in information is not a new phenomenon. In the mid 1700s, the Catholic Church's false explanation of the Lisbon earthquake spurred Voltaire to speak out about religious dominance, catalysing the Enlightenment (Bressan, 2011). Modern newspapers, when they came on the scene in the early 19th century, used what today we call 'fake news stories' to enhance circulation – such as the Great Moon Hoax to sell newspapers (Vida, 2012). Competition between the publishers Pulitzer and Hearst ultimately led to what was then called 'yellow journalism', which played a role in leading the USA into the Spanish–American War (Campbell, 2003). With the rise of the Internet, fake news has again come to the fore – both as a system and as its own cultural reference. Even the first Men in Black movie referred to tabloids being secretly reality:

Kay: Best investigative reporting on the planet. Read the *New York Times* if you want. They get lucky sometimes.

Jay: I cannot believe you're looking for tips in the supermarket tabloids.

Kay: [front-page article about farmer's stolen skin] Not looking for. Found. (Sonnenfeld, 1997)

Fake news gets views and clicks (Molina et al., 2021; Vosoughi et al., 2018; Waisbord, 2018). Fake news and misinformation on the Internet have moved beyond clear entertainment into intentionally exaggerated or falsified reporting (Bangani, 2021; Copenhagen, 2018; Martel et al., 2020; Sullivan, 2019). The intention is to manipulate individual people and, ultimately, a culture. The way information is shared has also largely changed – fake news thrives on creating suspicion of 'mainstream media' and science (Bangani, 2021; Sullivan, 2019). It is transmitted largely from links posted online that are shared through friends and peers. Seeing that 25,000 people have liked an article gives a sense of confirmation bias that the information is acceptable, comfortable and believable, regardless of its actual quality or reliability (Baptista and Gradim, 2020).

Fake news preys on the feelings and worries that people have. The emotional aspect of its content encourages people to believe things that are not true (Martel et al., 2020). Part of what makes fake news powerful is that even if it is not true, it feels like it could be. It echoes a worry and gives an easy answer when answers are not easy. Reading it helps a person feel powerful when they feel powerless (Martel et al., 2020). This is important because the emotional aspect of fake news is echoed by emotional responses to intellectual freedom (Duby, 2018; Sullivan, 2019). Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the pandemic progressed and vaccines were developed, people either reacted by doubling down on science or ignoring the realities of how severe COVID-19 could be, relying on fake news to validate their assumptions (Van der Linden et al., 2020). Until it became real and individuals or others close to them got sick, for many, it was possible to act as if the pandemic was not occurring.

Misinformation, mental models and 'truth' in science

Mental models of information lean heavily on the concept of sense-making, where an individual takes in information and tries to make meaning of it (Westbrook, 2006). The information shapes the individual and, in turn, is influenced by the development of individual understanding (Dervin et al., 1982). When presented with new information, research indicates that people react in one of two ways: by using the new information to confirm an existing mental model or by using the new information to build new models that challenge existing perspectives (Vandenbosch

and Higgins, 1996). Media information has subsequently been shown to heavily influence how people perceive their social environment (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2004). Thus, information shared over the Internet must confirm existing knowledge and align with an individual's social group, or it must create a new mental model that is not adversarial to that social group. Information online is also troublesome as it frequently uses bits of reliable content that is taken out of its original context and remixed for maximum effect online (Baran and Davis, 2014). This lack of context, coupled with the need to further a mental model that aligns with a dominant social group, creates an ideal breeding ground for misinformation to spread, as any dissenting viewpoints developed by an individual can be quickly quashed by social groups.

Critical reflections: an illustrative case study of the AZ vaccine and information rollout

'One should always consult with a trusted medical professional about vaccines, dosing and any medical decision.' This is not intended as medical advice. This example is being used to demonstrate a situation which many librarians have faced. Having to navigate the accuracy of online information, especially where the evidence base is rapidly emerging, is challenging. Librarians in many settings often have to navigate supporting findings and understand health information, working with users with varying levels of education, trust and comfort with health information. This case helps demonstrate the inherent ethical and intellectual-freedom-based tensions within the present culture of scientific misinformation, which can impact interactions between users and librarians.

We have chosen to use an illustrative case study approach, with news stories and social media conversations as context-specific real-time artefacts of the ongoing conversation, information and misinformation in relation to the AZ COVID-19 vaccine (Corry et al., 1997; Mercer and Weaver, 2021). Illustrative case studies are used to be primarily descriptive. They use one to two instances of an event to demonstrate a situation, specifically with the goal of making the unfamiliar familiar, and to give the reader a common language and context about a topic.

Background

Prior to the development of the new COVID-19 vaccines, the process of developing vaccines took several years, with prior new vaccine developments having brief and limited media attention (HPV, shingles;

Heaton, 2020). Further, no existing vaccine was indicated to prevent/reduce the severity of currently known coronaviruses. As the pandemic emerged, vaccine development was expedited in unprecedented ways (Ball, 2021; World Health Organization, 2021). The new vaccines were evaluated for safety, efficacy, delivery, dose regimen, stability, emergency use, manufacturing and dissemination, albeit in a much more rapid timeline than has been historically common (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021; World Health Organization, 2021). The speed in developing a COVID-19 vaccine caused some concerns over safety from the public, which resulted in vaccine hesitancy, citing lack of confidence around the speed of production, intentions behind the vaccine production, development, efficacy and even the severity of COVID-19 itself (Rutjens et al., 2021). To date, two main types of vaccines for COVID-19 protection have been approved for use in Canada and the USA: messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines, which cause cells to build a foreign protein (spike protein) that stimulates an immune response (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna), and adenovirus vector vaccines, which produce an antigen to elicit an immune response (AZ, Johnson & Johnson). This study will use the AZ vaccine rollout as a case study around issues of communication and intellectual freedom.

Information communication missteps

The AZ vaccine was approved for use in Canada on 26 February 2021. According to regulators around the world, AZ is an efficacious and safe vaccine. Despite this, as the months rolled on, public confidence in AZ crumbled (Ellyatt, 2021). AZ did not start strong, even though it was one of the most anticipated vaccines in history. During the clinical trial, doses were administered improperly to some study participants. Additionally, after one participant in the trial died, the trial was halted, with no plain-language explanation that this is a normal process. AZ's efficacy being 62%, rather than the 95% seen in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, further brought into question why anyone would want to get it (Coupland, 2021; Ellyatt, 2021). AZ's impressive 100% rate of preventing severe cases and hospitalizations was largely lost in translation. Further, when a press release was published disclosing a trial from the USA finding that the vaccine was 79% effective, the company was called out by the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for publishing outdated and misleading data (Kemp, 2021). Adding to the confusion, Canada stated that the vaccine should not be given to those older than 65 because of insufficient data, which

further diminished public confidence (Ellyatt, 2021; Stone, 2021). Soon after, concerns over blood clots, largely in young women, led to use of the vaccine being put on hold. After further evaluation, AZ was approved again for use, first in those over 55 and then in those over 40. Subsequently, AZ was put on hold once more due to increased concerns about an exceedingly rare side effect known as vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT; Ellyatt, 2021). At the time of writing this article, AZ is approved as a second dose in Canada in certain cases, but no longer as a first dose.

The AZ rollout in Europe provided more confusion (Dyer, 2021; Mahase, 2021; Wise, 2021). After AZ gave Britain priority access to the vaccine, the European Union objected by halting shipments to Britain. In parallel with confusing messaging around safety, efficacy and VITT, the AZ vaccine was not approved for use in the USA – not because it was denied but because the company had not submitted a request for approval. The ongoing confusion soon prompted claims, largely on social media, that the AZ vaccine was ‘second class’ (McKenzie-Sutter and Paglinawan, 2021). Canadians asked, if it was not good enough for use in the USA, why should they use it (McKenzie-Sutter and Paglinawan, 2021)? *The Economist* (2021) said: ‘The public is spooked’. The author Douglas Coupland (2021) stated: ‘The AstraZeneca fiasco is the latest example of the Gen X curse’. This culminated in concern about what would come next for those who had received one dose of the AZ vaccine (Potter, 2021). The resounding messaging by many who have received a dose is summed up nicely by Coupland:

will mixing an mRNA vaccine with AZ backfire in some hideous way? Maybe. Maybe not. Will I go with Pfizer? As any Gen Xer knows, there's not much other choice. Ugh. Will an AZ plus an mRNA work on a vaccine passport? No one has said. On we go. (Coupland, 2021)

The mixed messaging of this rollout has caused untold anxiety, apathy and malaise, and ultimately created an environment that is ripe for both the creation and spread of misinformation. The AZ vaccine rollout compounded already frayed nerves around COVID-19 vaccines and made people more susceptible to believing that they should wait before getting vaccinated, with some even believing that vaccines in general are not safe, despite robust and long-standing scientific evidence of their life-saving value (Adhikari and Cheah, 2021; *The Economist*, 2021; Flanagan, 2021; Goldenberg, 2021).

Given the ineffective communication, inconsistent messaging, rapidly changing information and general lack of public trust, how can librarians, who ‘have a responsibility both to guarantee and to facilitate access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity’ (IFLA Freedom of Access, 1999), meet the requirements of the plurality of information while taking up the mantle to fight against fake news and misinformation?

Discussion

A library’s duty to users is to give them the information they want (IFLA Freedom of Access, 1999). Yet when some of that information is patently false, how can libraries provide access to all materials and information? If a user comes to a library asking for support in ‘proving’ that vaccines are dangerous, what does one do when that information is counter to public health safety guidelines? Equally, what would one hypothetically do if one’s own morals, or political or religious views, regarded vaccines as dangerous? When intellectual freedom comes into play, we must ask ourselves if it is our responsibility as librarians to provide access to all information, or whether we need to reframe the question as ‘How do we provide access to all information with context and critique?’

The American Library Association states:

Intellectual freedom 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 all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored. (American Library Association, 2007, para. 2)

Important and necessary as this statement is, the ‘without restriction’ qualifier is concerning. Our professional responsibilities can perhaps start to echo those of other professionals who are grappling with similar problems (Weese, 2021). For example, pharmacists and physicians in Canada do not need to prescribe birth control, or the morning-after pill, if it goes counter to their beliefs. What they must do is respectfully and non-judgmentally direct patients to clinics that provide these services. As librarians, we must be allowed to maintain our own personal ethical boundaries while still allowing access to information from all points of view. That said, the librarian’s job should be to contextualize that information appropriately (Becker, 2017; Taala et al., 2002). Placing misinformation within its proper context does not stop people from accessing it, in the same way as putting labels on medication to effectively inform about risks does not stop people from taking it.

Libraries have placed a heavy emphasis over the last five years on creating sources and educating people on identifying fake news information (Cornell University Library, 2021; Fordham University Libraries, 2020; MIT Libraries, 2021). While this skill is crucial, it misses the point that what we need is an educated population that is capable of critically evaluating all forms and types of information (Lamont et al., 2020; Mercer et al., 2020; Mercer and Weaver, 2021). This is notoriously difficult when the Internet provides an overwhelming amount of false information that masquerades as legitimate. As a field, while not universal, there is an existing clear commitment to enlightening users about fake news, demonstrating reconciling access to information with making false information clear (Auberry, 2018; Bangani, 2021; Copenhaver, 2018). By deepening this to include the depth and breadth of the entire information landscape, there can be support around providing access to information, encouraging lifelong learning and supporting independent decision-making. Ultimately, facilitating access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activities, and making available the widest swath of materials that reflect the diversity and plurality of society, can be done while including context.

Critical evaluation of information as a catalyst for change

The important takeaway from the above case study is that even as health information rapidly changed, vaccine approvals did go through the proper regulatory bodies. If approved, the vaccines are safe, even with the risks of known side effects. So, what do we as librarians do with scientific misinformation? Do we provide and protect universal access? Do we try to change it? Do we tell people when we think they are wrong?

Scientists are trained to use rigorous and logical processes, make value judgements, weigh statistics and decide on the right path forward (Popper, 2002). These methods also inform training for physicians and other clinicians. Librarian training teaches similar methodologies: we learn to be critical of information, evaluate information, and contextualize and facilitate access to information (Crook et al., 2016; Fabos, 2008; Schrader, 2002). How can we use our training and positions of trust within our communities to positively affect the ability of all our users – educational, academic and the general public – to learn how to critically assess information?

One way of providing users with context is to educate ourselves more deeply about, and then to use established techniques around, information literacy

and critical evaluation of information (Mercer et al., forthcoming). Critical evaluation of information makes use of evaluative frameworks like RADAR (rationale, authority, date, accuracy, relevance) and CRAAP (currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, purpose) as initial structures and processes for individuals to make surface-level determinations about the authority, relevance, accuracy and credibility of *any* information source (Blakeslee, 2004; Mandalios, 2013; Mercer and Weaver, 2021; Mercer et al., forthcoming). In critical evaluation of information, this approach is supplemented by discussion that brings context, including scientific and information professional knowledge, to the conversation with students and lay individuals.

Critical evaluation of information can be an informal interaction as much as it can be a classroom-based lesson. Conversations with community members and partnerships with health authorities about scientific misinformation under this practice can include reference questions such as: Where did you first hear this? Have you found out why people are telling you this? Have you looked at where the sources are? Do you find the information overwhelming? Would you like me to help walk you through it (Crook et al., 2016; Kickbusch, 2001; Nutbeam, 2000; Sørensen et al., 2012)? The librarian asking these questions does not need to be an expert in science, nor do they have an inherent judgement on the type of information the patron is asking for (Goldenberg, 2021). What the librarian does have is a responsibility to use the evaluative framework tools such as critical evaluation of information to explicitly teach individuals how we, as professionals, evaluate and critique information so that they can learn to mirror and, ultimately, internalize such a practice in their own mental models of scientific information.

Librarian and expert collaboration

While librarians are experts at finding and using information, we may not be experts in the information itself (Goldenberg, 2021). Part of our ethical responsibility is to recognize and honour the boundaries of our own knowledge while using the tools of our profession to educate our users. The IFLA adopts a definition of information literacy that states: ‘Information literacy is the adoption of appropriate information behavior to identify, through whatever channel or medium, information well fitted to information needs, leading to wise and ethical use of information in society’ (IFLA Freedom of Access, 1999). Librarians have an obligation to this ethical use of information, which inherently means working against

misinformation – especially misinformation that harms the individual or societies at large. This places a boundary on unfettered intellectual freedom but should not be viewed as censorship. Continued adherence to neutrality or providing information without context violates information ethics, and incorporating tools and methods into our practice that combat misinformation is an appropriate approach to navigating these concerns (Becker, 2017).

Beyond supporting the discovery and evaluation of credible information, librarians need to emphasize collaborations that are embedded in their practice. Fake news is an attack on thinking. The evidence on how emotion plays into fake news is not clear, though emerging evidence suggests that heightened emotionality is predictive of greater belief in fake news (Martel et al., 2020). Further, how people emotionally process fake news may play into how susceptible they are to believing false information. Evidence demonstrates that emotion may be a reason why people fall for fake news, and while a person with high emotional intelligence may be less likely to fall for fake news, the question remains of how and when people fall into believing false information, especially when it plays into their pre-existing belief systems (Martel et al., 2020; Preston et al., 2021). While the evidence and information around this may be emerging, one cannot ignore the colloquial awareness of emotional aspects, particularly those around engaging in trust in scientific and health-focused information (Hesse et al., 2005; Kim, 2016). In other words, ignoring the complex emotional aspects is not the path forward. By partnering and working with clinicians and public health initiatives as a matter of course when it comes to assisting patrons in finding health information, librarians can help support finding, using and accessing information by modelling trust in expertise. There is a place for librarians to take a similar stance, as J Scott Weese (2021) stated in a public letter against misinformation being spread by a colleague at the University of Guelph: ‘With freedom comes responsibility. That applies to academic freedom too. It should not be used to provide cover for misrepresentation and misinformation’. It is not that people should not be supported in finding information, but we must equip people with the ability to evaluate diverse information and not use intellectual freedom as a similar cover for facilitating access to misinformation. Librarians can do this by providing a bridge between experts and users, using their knowledge of information and ability to assess and critique it. This can ultimately help to build the ability to critique information within lay users. Within the boundaries of intellectual freedom, librarians have the embedded

skills already in their practice of evaluating information – by giving people context around evaluation, librarians can support finding authorities and experts who can help then translate information into known contexts and world views that already align with their own.

Conclusions

Within the way that intellectual freedom has been traditionally discussed in the library and information science field, we have an obligation to provide our users with the information that they are seeking and have requested, without interference. In the current climate of misinformation – in this case, contextualized with scientific misinformation – a strict adherence to the ideals of intellectual freedom needs to be questioned and weighed against other areas of responsibility and expertise. Librarians and other information professionals generally agree and have taken a strong stance about not supporting misinformation, have categorized it as feeling similar to being in an information war, and that the problem of misinformation is a symptom of a deeper problem, though tensions can remain, especially in cultural-specific contexts (Becker, 2017; Kendrick and Damasco, 2015; Neely-Sardon and Tignor, 2018). There is an opportunity to build a deeper understanding of how information literacy training transitions beyond a single instruction session and helps people navigate information in their everyday lives. What we have seen is that there is a clear gap in information literacy training that works for people when they are met with completely unboundaried information without any context.

Moving forward, there is a significant opportunity for librarians to align themselves more formally with other field-specific experts and navigate how public trust in libraries can be used to combat misinformation. There has been an articulated need for library and information science professionals to actively identify rumours and misinformation, and begin to reframe their practice to acknowledge the tension between providing unrestricted access and providing epistemological protection. It is possible that access does not need to be provided without context. As Jain et al. (2016, p 15) say: 'People have a right to know whether the information they are seeing is trustworthy or not'.

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Transcribing public libraries as revitalized ethical spaces

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Abstract

Referencing human rights and library literature, this article seeks to contribute to an understanding of how the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom is articulated by library associations and libraries, whose policies are structured by institutional mandates that determine library function. The article re-envisages intellectual freedom premised on a collective identity of fairness, justice and equality. Drawing on the IFLA Statement, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, this article uses a rhetorical analysis methodology to discuss the re-envisioning of library functionality in contemporary society. Public libraries are unique public institutions that carry people's stories in the literatures and knowledges they hold. They open the way for everyone to engage actively with ethical statements that reflect a collective of voices, where intellectual freedoms extend the narrative of collective memories.

Keywords

Philosophy, values, ethics, principles, library and information science, public libraries, information providers, North America

Introduction

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 1999) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom was approved by the IFLA Executive Board 22 years ago. The Statement is at once a support, defence and promotion of libraries and intellectual freedom, drawing inspiration from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This article discusses the impact of a changing political environment on the Statement's relevance with regard to United Nations declarations and cognate rights by deconstructing the Statement's persuasive narrative. The Statement is analysed through a historical and contemporary contextual discussion on libraries, intellectual freedom and rights. An outcome is that, without recognizing how rights and freedoms, the context of laws and advocacy for these rights affect the lives of people who use and manage libraries, it is difficult to include them in influential statements on libraries and intellectual freedom. In drawing on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in this article, I respectfully acknowledge and include this

Declaration to understand more fully how rights affect people's lives when they access libraries, a social institution. I consider the library as an ethical space because library associations and institutions' ethical statements recognize national and international human rights, each drawing on the other.

Research on equality, justice, fairness and human dignity in relation to libraries in the library and information science literature is ongoing (Buschman, 2018; Callison et al., 2016; Edwards and Edwards, 2010; Frayne, 2018; Jaeger et al., 2015; Mathiesen, 2013; Phenix and De la Peña McCook, 2005; Roy and Hogan, 2010; Samek, 2014). Social, cultural, political and economic privileging and disenfranchising in libraries is presented as freedoms and unfreedoms of expressions, thoughts and opinions, creating tensions in the opportunities and well-being of individuals, groups, communities and the library collective. In the

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definition of the library as a public and social institution, the library is justice-enhancing because it is embedded in human rights and constitutional rights with non-discriminatory clauses. The recognition of injustices, racism, inequality and discrimination challenges this understanding of libraries as institutions for the public good, and calls on the library community to work together to make better libraries and a more critical profession (Buschman, 2021; Jaeger et al., 2014; Mehra, 2021; Merklen, 2016; Wiegand, 2015).

The article begins with a discussion on the context of the origins of the IFLA Statement in the League of Nations and later UNESCO, rights and justice. This leads into a textual rhetorical analysis methodology where the principles and assertions of the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom are analysed in the context of the UDHR, the UNDRIP, conventional rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Canada, 1982; United Nations, 2009, 2011; United Nations General Assembly, 1948, 1976a, 1976b, 2007). This analysis provides an understanding of the immanence of rights and freedoms in ethical statements when library associations, institutions and libraries draw on the words and terminology of the Statement in their own value, ethical and policy statements. The article is concluded by drawing together possible future avenues for the exploration of rights and freedoms through libraries as a collective social transcript.

Context

The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom can be understood through several key moments that influenced the establishment of the IFLA and its later ethos regarding libraries and intellectual freedom. In 1925, following the establishment of the League of Nations to foster intergovernmental cooperation and internationality for peace, the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (IIIC) was developed. This Institute was mandated with promoting international intellectual cooperation, which was, like labour, health and transit, a precondition for peace (International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, 1930: 5). The beginnings of intellectual freedom can be traced to this IIIC mandate – international intellectual cooperation (Boel, 2020).

By 1927, library associations and libraries needed a permanent organization to further their international activities and be part of cultural policymaking, resulting in the establishment of the IFLA in the same year. The IFLA signed a cooperation agreement with UNESCO, which reflected remnants of the IIIC

mandate and was established at the dissolution of the League of Nations in 1945, after the Second World War. Since libraries were relevant to UNESCO's ideals of building peace, eradicating poverty, sustainable development and intellectual dialogue through education, science, culture, communication and information, this relationship has been beneficial and reciprocal (Lor, 2012). For example, in 1947, the UNESCO, 1994 Public Library Manifesto was published in cooperation with the IFLA.

The relationship between UNESCO and the IFLA evolved as they worked through agreements and disagreements over rights and freedoms and a more general shift to reposition libraries in an information society (Lor, 2012; Saltman et al., 2013). Influenced by broader world events and rights-based frameworks for understanding social, political, economic and societal changes, the IFLA established the Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) Committee – a core IFLA activity – in 1997 (Byrne, 2007; Kagan, 2008; Lor, 2012; Saltman et al., 2013). FAIFE correlates the concept of libraries and information centres to users and staff in the distribution of knowledge on a global scale, the ethics of the library profession and the international promotion of intellectual freedom through the fundamental principles of democracy and human rights, while being cognizant of political, economic, social and cultural diversity (Byrne, 1999; Ristarp and Frederiksen, 2000). Ten years later, convention rights – the United Nations conventions on political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights – would be adopted. The history and origins of the IFLA establish a clear link between libraries, rights and freedoms, politics and culture.

Libraries are a concept of process, integral to the human condition and fundamental to humanity. Osburn (2009: 176) notes in his statement: 'the spirit of intellectual freedom does not simply enable the mental activity essential to living as a human being in a human society but also encourages and stimulates the thought processes and related communication'. Osburn (2009) coins the term 'the social transcript' as the handing-down process of culture, where generations pass on to subsequent generations their knowledge, skills, experiences, beliefs, customs and values, which are built on the past, to construct the present and contemplate the future. The principles related to how libraries support this function of the library in society are shown as providing access to information, ideas and works of the imagination, and that they are gateways to knowledge, thought and culture for both individuals and groups, drawing on a wide range of rights. Similarly, Ristarp and

Frederiksen (2000: 253) use the concept of libraries being instruments to assure and promote equal access to information and dissemination, and that they are keepers of the intellectual, cultural and historical memory of their community.

Where libraries are discussed as a social transcript or memory instruments, it is important to be cognizant of the many ways in which libraries operate as a social transcript, including perpetuating particular knowledge systems. The use of knowledge is human-oriented, and people facilitate the transfer of knowledge through experiences from past to present and future through literature, orality, learning, invention and discovery (Osburn, 2014). One way of transferring knowledge has been through libraries, which are built on stories and facts that are discoverable in book collections in physical and digital format, which evokes its intellectual ethos.

The historical origins of intellectual freedom show it as a shared value and a negotiated concept held in balance with social responsibility (Ratcliffe, 2020: 11). Within this context, the key concepts of intellectual freedom reflect an essence that is fundamental to the human condition: cooperation, sharing, knowledge, ideas, integration, communication, opportunity and innovation (Osburn, 2009: 176). Yet the value of intellectual freedom to libraries was to oppose censorship, maintain well-rounded and diverse collections, combat physical and economic barriers to access, and promote intellectual freedom as neutral (Ratcliffe, 2020). Linking libraries with fundamental human conditions through intellectual freedom gives weight to libraries' prominent role in society and the IFLA Statement that guides them providing a space for an ethical discussion of this role (Buschman, 2007; Byrne, 2018; Edwards, 2010; Frayne, 2018; Wiegand, 2015).

The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom is a dual concept and works together, suggesting that libraries are enablers of intellectual freedom through their mandate to provide access to information and knowledge, while also enacting this freedom of expression and right to know as an individual and collective right – both a human and a legal right.

The IFLA, as a federation, has a responsibility to library associations and institutions, which, in turn, have a reciprocal relationship with libraries and library users. In addition, libraries are embedded in the complexity of a typology of rights – human and legal – and their definition as entitlements and support for human freedoms (Sen, 2009). These freedoms are a human condition that is directly affected by the context in which people find themselves. The social,

economic, political, civil and cultural lives of people are also structured by the rule of law and distributive justice, which is concerned with the way in which primary goods are allocated in society. Distributive justice provides a useful perspective on the institutions that organize society, including libraries.

Individuals live and operate in a world of institutions, where opportunities and prospects depend on what institutions exist and how they function, contributing to freedoms and enhancing justice (Sen, 2009). Their role can be evaluated with reference to these criteria for how they affect individual or collective substantive freedoms, and how the individual is able to use those goods such as rights (Sen, 2009). In contrast to Sen's, 2009 capability approach, Rawls (1971: 54) focuses on formal institutions that embed rights and theories of justice in their mandates and policies, and the provision and availability of primary goods to society through social institutions in a way that is fair to all. The library, as a social institution, is governed by laws that distribute justice equally and fairly for all, yet also calls on international and domestic rights in ethical statements to ensure that rights and freedoms are enhanced through freedom of expression and the right to take part in cultural life with dignity. Yet libraries find themselves in a tension as a justice-enhancing social institution when the political climate tells a story of systemic racism and discrimination (Buschman, 2021; Mehra, 2021).

In discussing the impact of the IFLA Statement and how and if United Nations rights can be adopted, we can better understand how libraries might address this tension. Adopting United Nations rights, such as the UNDRIP, into an IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom depends on the historical and contemporary state of human and legal rights, and interpretations of the words and terminology used to articulate rights. In Canada, international and domestic law comes to bear on discussions of how the UNDRIP will be implemented (Borrows et al., 2019; Wilson-Raybould, 2019). For example, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/ Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA/FCAB) Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries calls on the Constitution of Canada and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in support of its values, principles and policies (CFLA, 2018a, 2018b, 2019). The Canadian Charter has been transformative for fundamental freedoms, including expression, equality and Indigenous rights, amongst others, when compared to earlier rights documents (Wilson-Raybould, 2019). However, this has not been without challenges for Indigenous human rights (United Nations General Assembly, 2009,

2011, 2014). The context and history of Indigenous human rights provides an important understanding, within the Canadian context, for considering if and how United Nations rights reflect library ideals. Libraries as social institutions are protected by the Constitution of Canada with regard to freedom of expression. Indigenous libraries are also protected by article 35 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Aboriginal and Treaty rights regarding free, prior and informed consent in consultation with non-Indigenous partners on a wide range of issues through interpretation to include Languages, Literacy and business (Canada, 1982). In addition, libraries uphold the freedom of expression and the right to take part in cultural life through the UDHR (United Nations General Assembly, 2009, 2011). Finally, the UNDRIP calls on Articles 3, 5, 38 to cooperate with Indigenous Peoples (United Nations General Assembly, 2007).

Library and information science studies clearly show that the UDHR plays a role in realizing access to information at the public library, and that ‘the human right to information is only satisfied if people have access to the full range of information necessary for them to live minimally good lives and to exercise their human rights’ (Mathiesen, 2013: 74). Rights related to access to information and the public library take their primary focus from the fundamental human rights described in Article 19 of the UDHR: ‘freedom of opinion and expression’ (Edwards, 2010; United Nations General Assembly, 1948). Indeed Byrne (2007) demonstrates the right to information as a basic human right referenced in Article 19 of the UDHR (Byrne, 2007).

Library and information science scholars agree that the UDHR terms ‘freedom of expression’ and ‘everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits’ (United Nations General Assembly, 1948) are cultural in nature but represent the individual rather than collective rights. In addition, through the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, access to information is grounded in cultural, political, civil and social rights (Albarillo, 2010; Edwards, 2010; Eliadis, 2014; Mathiesen, 2013; Phoenix and De la Peña McCook, 2005; Samek, 2014; Winberry and Bishop, 2021).

Edwards (2010) and Roy and Hogan (2010) emphasize and challenge the wording of the descriptions of cultural rights as expressed in Article 27 of the UDHR, which reads ‘the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community’, suggesting one community and one cultural life. In contrast, a

cultural interpretation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights describes many cultures. An additional tension is noted by Roy and Hogan (2010: 124): insistent individual rights exclude group rights and suppress cultures, where there is no recognition of ethnic and cultural groups that, for historical reasons, live within the defined borders of an internationally recognized state. This is echoed by Raseroka (2006, in Poppeliers, 2010: 74), who makes the point that ‘Western libraries must find more productive approaches to working with cultural issues such as orality, Indigenous languages, and the existing cultures of information exchange’. Knowledge organization systems and collection development policies that currently reflect Indigenous literatures, knowledges and ways of knowing are poorly articulated in western systems (Duarte and Belarde-Lewis, 2015; Moulaison and Bossaller, 2017).

The UNDRIP acknowledges the UDHR in its preamble (United Nations General Assembly, 2007). Discussions on reconciliation, recognition and Indigenous difference, through the Indigenous diplomacy movement, led to the adoption of the UNDRIP in Canada in 2016 and played an important part in advancing this right (Easterling, 2021; Henderson, 2008; Macklem and Sanderson, 2016; Wilson-Raybould, 2019; Macklem, 2007). In Canada, the UNDRIP specifically states that the right is to be implemented. The way it will be implemented in Canada is through legislation, policy and action of Indigenous nations themselves, as well as their inherent rights derived from their own political, economic and social structures (Borrows et al., 2019; United Nations General Assembly, 2007; Wilson-Raybould, 2019). When invoking a UDHR for libraries, an important consideration is how the concept of dignity is articulated when it is supported, defended and promoted to underpin principles and affirmations on libraries’ ethos. Indigenous knowledge systems, languages and literatures are distinct and draw on the collective Indigenous concept of inherent dignity, which is ‘viewed as inviolable and sacred in all life forms’ (Borrows et al., 2019: 223) and reflected in Indigenous literature (Justice, 2018). In adopting the UNDRIP, a United Nations right incorporated into any IFLA statement would require consent from Indigenous peoples in member countries. In Canada, the Constitution is also called on to invigorate the UNDRIP’s implementation.

The constitutional and legal-rights-based context supports, or fails to support, the just and clear distribution of justice through interpretations of the 1982 Constitution Act and Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

For example, Section 35 or Part II of the Charter – Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada – lays out the recognition of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights, but these rights have not been recognized as originally discussed at patriation and ‘the promise of section 35 can only be fulfilled through proper and respectful nation-to-nation relationships’ (Wilson-Raybould, 2019: 96). In considering the UNDRIP as part of the IFLA’s international statement, this national political context makes the point that the Constitution plays a role in the adoption of the IFLA Statement. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s (TRC) *Calls to Action* is an effort to address systemic structural inequalities in institutional arrangements, within which libraries and library associations are embedded (TRC, 2015).

The construction of a specific persuasive speech, such as that in the declarations noted above and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, affects peoples’ differently. Rhetoric as a persuasive speech is about ways of thinking, reflecting, judging, interpreting, making meaning, constructing identity and taking action (Bonet, 2014: 805). Yet without analysing the words and terminology that convey ideals, appeals to emotions and feelings, or the construction of the IFLA Statement – the rhetoric – it is not possible to understand the persuasive strategy that was used to establish this Statement in 1999.

Rhetorical analysis methodology

I have used a rhetorical analysis methodology to analyse the IFLA Statement based on the work of Bazerman and Prior (2004), Bonet (2014), Fursich (2009) and Shteynberg et al. (2016). Their work reflects conceptions of the narrative and how to analyse text using classical rhetoric. In this article, both the context and the text have been analysed to understand how libraries and intellectual freedom work together. The context (discussed previously) provides opportunities for exploring the text as a document that reflects the history and contemporary situatedness of the Statement. I analyse a defence of a truth statement embedded in library philosophy (Osburn, 2009), ethics (Ermine, 2007; Sen, 2009), human rights (Mathiesen, 2013; Roy and Hogan, 2010) and rhetoric studies (Bazerman and Prior, 2004; Fursich, 2009; Nelson and Garst, 2005).

A metanarrative of the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

Reading and reflecting on the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom, a story unfolds: strategic IFLA decisions and world events led to the

development of the Statement. The audience is national library associations, library workers and library users. This is the Statement’s story, or ‘what happened’ to give structure to this story. Yet there is much more that is revealed on rereading the Statement. A narrative begins to emerge, leading me to question how ‘what happened’ became a Statement of narrative – a recounting of the story with a meta-narrative that would rival and become as influential as the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto of 1947 (Byrne, 1999).

The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom is an important narrative because it is at once cultural, social, individual and cognitive in how it reflects freedom of thought and opinion. Indeed, the ‘state of intellectual freedom in libraries is an indication of the progress of democracy within a nation’ (Ristarp and Frederiksen, 2000: 253).

As I reflected on the structure and language used in the Statement, I began to question the prevalence of ‘intellectual freedom’ as a term and how it pervades library purpose, function and ethos (Osburn, 2009; Saltman et al., 2013; Symons and Reed, 1999). According to Bazerman and Prior (2004: 35), a post-modern reflection on narratives is that ‘the very prevalence of some narratives makes them largely invisible, and, at the same time, inescapably intermingled with institutions, practices, and texts’. Guiding my analysis is an attempt to discern the hidden narratives within the IFLA Statement, and thus within libraries as an institution.

Documenting and analysing the narrative

I begin by defining the audience. I then describe the Statement as a persuasive text and the strategy employed using ethos, pathos and logos. The arrangement introduces the forecasting, proof and a conclusion, which describes the Statement. The delivery describes the voice and tenor of the text. Finally, the words and terminology describe the style of the Statement.

Audience. The audience is an important starting point. The audience not only allows us to understand who is reading, writing and actively included in the Statement, but also defines the type of discourse that is used to persuade the audience. In this case, the discourse of the Statement will persuade the audience to reconsider their beliefs and values. Epideictic rhetoric was used to develop the Statement because it reinforces a suite of library values, democratic ideals, human rights and freedom of expression, and the right to know community. These values are reinforced at the moment when the Statement is read.

The audience for the Statement is the library and information science community, librarians, library users and other interested parties; IFLA and FAIFE Committee writers and contributors; and library workers who have a core responsibility to fulfil the mandate of the Statement. Examples of words describing the audience include 'IFLA', 'libraries and library staff', 'library user', 'members', 'librarians and other employees', 'librarians and other professional libraries staff' and 'employer'. The Statement uses a constructed narrative to persuade a broad range of people of the function and purpose of libraries in society and the merits of intellectual freedom.

Invention: persuasive text and strategy. The Statement applies a number of rhetorical devices as a persuasive strategy in this methodology. In this section, I review the Statement for how it has established trustworthiness (ethos) with the audience from its initial conception to become as influential as the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994. I then analyse how the Statement references deeply held ethical and library values, which appeal to the audience's emotions (pathos). Finally, I develop an argument for the rationale or intellectual reasoning (logos), which persuades the audience of the value of the Statement.

Ethos. The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom uses its two most obvious key concepts – libraries (it is a federation of library associations and institutions representing libraries) and intellectual freedom – to establish trustworthiness with the audience. Both concepts will elicit responses from a library-oriented audience, such as democracy; the public good; democratic values; freedom of thought, opinion and expression; access to information; cultural rights; and the public library ideal. However, these concepts and their invocations are today questioned within the library profession as actions and values that are entangled with the ongoing critiques of injustices and systemic racism in society (Buschman, 2018; DeYoung, 2014; Jaeger and Sarin, 2016; Kagan, 2008; Mehra, 2021; Schrader and Brundin, 2012; Wiegand, 2015). Indeed, the political climate of this era is being defined as a 'watershed that affects the future of libraries' (Buschman, 2021).

Neo-liberalism has had a profound effect on institutions, which is seen through systemic social and political inequalities and the reality of public opinion of libraries (Buschman, 2021). Addressing this, Mehra (2021) problematizes the perception of libraries - they are not transparent because they seek affirmation from anti-racist movements, while simultaneously failing to acknowledge their determining

role in systemic racism. It seems that simply using the terms 'libraries' and 'intellectual freedom' may no longer automatically establish trustworthiness in the face of contemporary critique.

A further strategy to develop trustworthiness is the Statement's first principle, which situates it in the UDHR adopted in 1948 – a universal declaration of human rights. However, the words 'as defined' when referring to intellectual freedom in this principle are misleading (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). The UDHR does not define intellectual freedom and instead references 'freedom of expression'; Article 19 is used to establish this freedom.

While there is no clear articulation of intellectual freedom, the 1947 UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, the IFLA and the 1999 IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom show parallels. For example, for the IFLA and librarians, the principle 'that every individual and all the peoples of the world have the right to access the information needed to live and prosper and the inseparable right to express their ideas and opinions' is their definition of intellectual freedom (Byrne, 2000: 257). Such a freedom encompasses the essential principles of freedom of thought, freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression. This was originally expressed in the 1947 UNESCO Public Library Manifesto.

The IFLA's specific 1999 Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom draws on UNESCO's aspirational Manifesto by using its wording in its principles and affirmation without being explicit about the definition. Ratcliffe (2020: 11) undertook a review of the historical origins of intellectual freedom because this concept is not clearly articulated in the literature, concluding that 'intellectual freedom is an ongoing and continually negotiated concept that must be held in balance with social responsibility'.

Referencing the historical overview of the institutions that have influenced the development of the Statement suggests that the original framework for intellectual freedom can be found in the mandate of the IIIC. The uniqueness of the IIIC, as part of the League of Nations and the organization that would become UNESCO, was its focus on culture and humanism to further peace, cultural diversity and a universality of cultural ideals through the intellectual exchange of knowledge and ideas for scientific, intellectual rights, literary and artistic progress (Boel, 2020; International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation, 1930). Within this context, the IFLA was established as a permanent organization to influence cultural policymaking (Saltman et al., 2013). The IFLA has embedded its Statement in the universality of human rights and culture.

However, for Indigenous peoples, the concept of universality is embedded in cultural relativism and cultural imperialism arguments (Stamatopoulou, 2012). Talbott (2005: 39) defines cultural relativism as ‘the position that moral norms apply only to those whose cultures endorse them’. In the description of cultural imperialism, other cultures are not recognized for having their own norms and values; members of one culture cannot be judged by the same criteria as members of another culture; and members of a culture should be free to act on the norms of their own culture. In addressing the notion of universality for Indigenous peoples, Ermine notes that it will continue as an issue, unchecked, ‘enfolded as it is, in the subconscious of the masses and recreated from the archives of knowledge and systems, rules and values of colonialism that in turn wills into being the intellectual, political, economic, cultural, and social systems and institutions of this country’ (Ermine, 2007: 198) referencing Canada Grounding the Statement in universality does not elicit the same ethos for all peoples.

Pathos. The IFLA Statement also references deeply held values (pathos), such as the ‘fundamental right to access expressions of knowledge, creative thought and intellectual activity and to express their views publicly’ and ‘to recognize the privacy of the library user’ (IFLA, 2021). These are democratic values and represent the public library ideal, aspirations, and also individual rights. This terminology appeals to emotions.

Words and their meanings are important, and they evoke emotions. They reference languages, memories, justices and injustices. Indigenous scholars and other researchers have discussed the words and meanings of the UDHR and UNDRIP, and conventions, individual, collective, cultural, and Aboriginal and treaty rights (Edwards, 2010; Frayne, 2018; Henderson, 2008; Roy and Hogan, 2010), and, because of its reference to the language of these declarations, the Statement faces the same criticisms. While the appeal to emotions is a powerful rhetorical device, it can, as the critiques against the UDHR suggest, provoke negative and even painful emotions. It is necessary to be cognizant of this possibility when invoking memories and (in)justices.

Logos. The IFLA Statement is intellectually reasoned (logos) over 6 principles and 11 affirmations, persuasively arguing for the UDHR, the right to know, and freedom of expression in an open, transparent and rational way. The Statement is structured through the indivisible principles and affirmations while also invoking the human condition and the social transcript. I analyse the logos of the Statement through its arrangement, delivery and style.

The Statement is organized into three main parts. The first and second parts are the principles of the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. In the first part, the introductory clause ‘supports, defends [and] promotes intellectual freedom as defined in the UDHR’ (IFLA, 2021). The second part includes the IFLA’s declaration, belief, assertion and call. The third part urges members to promote the principles mentioned in the two previous parts. The third part also encompasses a set of 11 affirmations, urging IFLA members to promote the acceptance and realization of the principles.

While all 11 points are relevant to this discussion, only those relevant to rights will be discussed. In this methodology, I traced each of the principles to the affirmation statements. Each of the five principles, which are written as statements in short paragraphs, can be traced intertextually to IFLA’s affirmations which is stated in the sixth point (IFLA, 2021). Many of the concepts defining the principles are described more fully by the affirmation statements. I investigated the nine specific library affirmations, recognizing that each affirmation is relevant to the interrelationship of the principles contributing to the metanarrative.

The UDHR is supported by IFLA because it is a fundamental right - to knowledge, thought and intellectual activity, and public expression. It also embodies the right to know, freedom of expression, and the freedom of thought and conscience. These rights are provided as evidence for the role and weight of rights used by IFLA to support the role of libraries in society. The affirmation statement that publicly funded institutions – libraries – contribute to the development, maintenance and promotion of intellectual freedom is specific. A publicly funded library is one that is governed by the institutions of the state through law and policies. In addition to this, the affirmation that libraries help to safeguard basic democratic values and universal civil rights is specific – democratic values and universal civil rights – suggesting that political, cultural, economic and social rights are not included. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights includes the fundamental right of the ‘freedom of expression and opinion’ for individual freedom of information (Article 19), similar to the UDHR article 19 but this convention right articulates this as a civil and political right, which obligates state intervention (United Nations, 2011). The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – an economic, social and cultural convention right – is often described as a reflection of political and civil rights that oblige states ‘to create an environment which enables civil society to make

participative decisions [and] provide basic public services and infrastructure to support development' (Weber, 2013: 29). Therefore, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights supports Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations, 2009) the 'right of everyone to take part in cultural life' - as a cultural right and in addition to this as both an individual and collective right for access to information at a public library (Canada, 2014; Johnson, 2016; Tunnicliffe, 2013). This right is also confirmed by the general comments of the United Nations declarations, which establish the human right to information and to the library for implementing these rights (Edwards, 2010; Mathiesen, 2013; United Nations, 2009, 2011; United Nations General Assembly, 1948). Sen (2004) notes that freedom is privileged in a right. In this sense, freedom of expression is a fundamental 'right', which is protected as a political and civil right. Thus, the right to take part in cultural life, while collective in meaning, can be implemented through the public library as a social, economic and cultural right, providing the possibility for the IFLA to draw on these convention rights in addition to the UDHR. By including these rights, library associations, institutions and libraries will be bound by law to address systemic inequalities and discriminatory practices.

The IFLA Statement uses expressions and concepts that are commanding - for example, the 'IFLA declares', 'IFLA believes', 'IFLA asserts' and 'IFLA calls' (IFLA, 2021). Repeating the word 'IFLA' draws attention to the power of the Statement and IFLA. This pattern is repeated in the last part of the Statement. Like the 'IFLA', the word 'libraries' is used repetitively to hold the readers' attention. In this way, the first and second parts stand separate from the third, suggesting that the audience read the Statement by reflecting on the principles.

Stylistic analysis, according to Bazerman and Prior (2004), is contextual rather than textual. Words and sentences change as the occasion changes. The Statement has a different style to the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto of 1947, and the time in history and occasion were different. The Statement reads like a declaration and evokes the resonating cadence of the UDHR. The Statement is also commanding in style, whereas the UNESCO Manifesto is a public intention and call to commit to public libraries as an ideal.

Conclusion

With its reference to the UDHR and its rational structure, the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual

Freedom powerfully positions libraries as justice-enhancing institutions. However, in the current political climate, the links between libraries and justice are unclear. The library community is situated as active participants in this contemporary movement to understand how libraries have, or have not, perpetuated injustices, discrimination and racism.

By providing uninhibited access to information and knowledge through the right to free expression at libraries, library and information science professionals are committing to a core responsibility - to provide the opportunities, through equal access to resources, for people's intellectual freedom. Through the affirmation statements, this uninhibited access includes how resources are acquired, collections are developed and preserved, and materials and programming are made available within the bounds of rights - human and legal rights within the context of specific cultural descriptions. Collection management, to reflect plurality and diversity, is a responsibility that guarantees and facilitates access to varied expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity. While the selection and availability of materials and services at libraries is governed by professional considerations within the ambit of ethical statements on librarianship, the very libraries themselves are situated in a political and moral space that is institutionally governed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (in Canada) and international rights, both aspirational and prescriptive, reflecting that libraries are justice-enhancing institutions in law but not necessarily in practice. Libraries promote equality when they make their materials, facilities and services available to all. However, challenges to such articulations of equal rights, freedom from discrimination and anti-racism in how the library has functioned over time, and its purpose, describe this era as a watershed (Buschman, 2021; Jaeger and Sarin, 2016). Addressing these challenges requires a revitalization of the relationship between libraries and justice.

The value of intellectual freedom to libraries was to oppose censorship, maintain well-rounded and diverse collections, combat physical and economic barriers to access, and promote intellectual freedom as neutral (Ratcliffe, 2020). Yet essentializing library neutrality, as a core strength, has drawn attention away from critical discourse on the history of libraries in a structured and positivist paradigm and its ideal of knowledge universality thus uncritically privileging western norms of library management (Adler and Harper, 2018; Duarte and Belarde-Lewis, 2015; Moulaillon and Bossaller, 2017; Olson, 2002; Roy and Hogan, 2010; Jaeger et al. 2013). The information infrastructure - the publishers, distributors and

booksellers that support the library ecosystem, the knowledge organization systems prevalent in libraries, and the policies related to library management – has relied on a normative, neo-liberal definition of library values (Buschman, 2021). Libraries have acknowledged this and responded with anti-racist performative statements which fall short of overcoming systemic discriminations (Mehra, 2021). An inclusive social transcript would rely on a wider set of democratic principles – ones that reflect a true participatory governance of resilience, hope and truth, and where individual and collective rights are recognized through their cultural contexts (Sen, 2009).

Libraries are an anomaly in the world of institutions. They are a place where culture evolves to meet a human need to access information and develop knowledge, creativity, rights and freedoms. Libraries promote justice through ethical statements such as the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. Yet libraries are also manifestations of distributive, structural and social (in)justice. They reflect an institutional fundamentalism – seldom critiqued – defined by intellectual freedom. They have always been there and, as such, exhibit an idealism to democratic values sustained through national constitutions – invisible in their visibility, as my contextual and textual rhetorical analysis shows. Critiquing our libraries because of the consequences for library users – actual realizations and outcomes for people's lives – reflects our individual and collective rights and freedoms.

Public libraries are our unique public institutions, which carry stories in the literatures and knowledges they hold. They open the way for everyone to engage actively with ethical statements that reflect a collective of voices, where intellectual freedoms extend the narrative in the social transcription of our collective memories. The structuration of libraries through time is in the transcription of society – both literally and figuratively – through cultural freedoms in relation to the function of the library based on social justice, recognition of rights, trust, dignity, integrity and collective reconciliation.

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Automating intellectual freedom: Artificial intelligence, bias, and the information landscape

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Abstract

Anxieties over automation and personal freedom are challenging libraries' role as havens of intellectual freedom. The introduction of artificial intelligence into the resource description process creates an opportunity to reshape the digital information landscape—and loss of trust by library users. Resource description necessarily manipulates a library's presentation of information, which influences the ways users perceive and interact with that information. Human catalogers inevitably introduce personal and cultural biases into their work, but artificial intelligence may perpetrate biases on a previously unseen scale. The automation of this process may be perceived as a greater threat than the manipulation produced by human operators. Librarians must understand the risks of artificial intelligence and consider what oversight and countermeasures are necessary to mitigate the harm to libraries and their users before ceding resource description to artificial intelligence in place of the “professional considerations” the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom calls for in providing access to library materials.

Keywords

Intellectual freedom, censorship, principles of library and information science, classification, subject analysis, organization of information, artificial intelligence, automation, bias

Introduction

The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom identifies libraries as “gateways to knowledge, thought and culture,” and states that they “provide essential support for . . . independent decision-making . . . for both individuals and groups” (IFLA, 1999). Since the Statement's release over two decades ago, advances in technology and the widespread adoption of the Internet have significantly altered society's views on individuality and freedom of thought. Concerns over the spread of misinformation, data collection and privacy, and the powerful influence of Big Tech on daily life are topics of debate at the highest levels of government and weigh heavily on even passive users. From the Patriot Act to the Cambridge Analytica scandal, anxieties over technology's effect on personal and intellectual freedom continue to grow as the public becomes more informed about the many ways in which their data is collected, packaged, and sold for targeted advertising without their knowledge.

At the same time, library patrons' reliance on and expectation of access to electronic resources has increased exponentially, and libraries are now managing significantly more resources and information than at any other point in history. Patrons have an expectation that libraries will remain competitive with the for-profit information and content providers they are accustomed to interacting with as part of their daily lives. Patrons expect libraries to employ enhanced discovery systems that offer similar features to popular search engines and other information retrieval tools, with nuanced and intuitive natural language processing, related search suggestions, spell checking, and full-text searching—features that far outstrip the capabilities of traditional library and online public access catalogs.

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This mix of anxiety and expectation poses serious challenges for modern libraries. Libraries are at an automatic disadvantage in this market due to budgetary, staffing, and ethical constraints, by which the titans of the technology industry are not hampered. In order to meet patron demands for convenience and accessibility, libraries are turning to many of the same technologies that revolutionized the Internet and modern society, often provided by third-party vendors via proprietary software. While the very practice of resource description necessarily manipulates a library's presentation of information, which influences the ways users perceive and interact with that information, this has always been undertaken as part of the "professional considerations" that the IFLA's (1999) Statement calls for in providing access to library materials. The introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) into the resource description and retrieval process creates an opportunity to reshape the digital information landscape in unexpected ways. Human catalogers inevitably introduce personal and cultural biases into their work, though professional and international cataloging standards are intended to moderate this effect, but the automation of this process may be perceived as a greater threat to intellectual freedom than the manipulation produced by human operators as AI has the potential to perpetrate biases on a previously unseen scale.

Independently of whether libraries as a whole have fully integrated AI technologies into their resource description and discovery workflows, either through direct experimentation for local projects or via contracted third-party services, there is a societal expectation that libraries have a responsibility to monitor developments in information technology—an expectation that echoes many of the sentiments expressed in the IFLA's (1999) Statement. In a short introduction to emerging trends in information technology, Smith (2021: 157) notes that "[l]ibraries are . . . positioned to keep an eye on how artificial intelligence is used at large, and to advocate for user privacy and other ethical concerns." In recent years, many influential library organizations have released statements and guidance specifically about AI, in the context of both libraries and society at large (IFLA, 2020). Many of these statements urge librarians to take responsibility for educating themselves and their patrons, and encourage libraries to play an active role in guiding the development of these technologies.

There is an unmistakable sense of urgency in these calls to action that is directly linked to the essential role of the librarian as advocate. While AI holds the potential to offer significant advantages to both libraries and their users, there are many documented

examples of the, often unintentional, biases and abuses that AI can perpetrate when introduced into real-world applications. In order to uphold the values expressed in the IFLA's (1999) Statement, it is critical that librarians take on the roles of educators and advocates, and defend against the challenges that automation might pose to intellectual freedom. To that end, this article explores possible methodologies of employing AI in resource description and retrieval activities, evaluates the ethical challenges inherent to the technology in replacing human labor and judgment in these processes, and offers suggestions for providing oversight and deploying appropriate countermeasures to mitigate the harm that might be inflicted on patrons. This work is vital in preserving libraries' role as havens of intellectual freedom and maintaining the trust of an increasingly AI-literate public, and should be seen as a natural extension of the values expressed in the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom.

AI for resource description and discovery

Systems of AI play an increasingly common role in our everyday lives, from personal assistants on phones and smart devices to the systems that analyze and approve applications for loans and housing. Automation and AI have evolved from buzzwords in attention-grabbing headlines to topics of serious discussion with real-world applications and numerous examples of their increasingly widespread use. Griffey (2019: 6) loosely defines AI as software that is capable of "making decisions and judgments that appear to be something that humans would be required for, such as recognizing objects, animals, or even individuals in photographs," or "understanding and summarizing a long text passage." The most significant development in the field of AI research is arguably the advancement of machine learning—a method of "teaching" or "training" a computer program to achieve a particular goal (a concept that will be explored in more detail in this section). Additionally, modern AIs are constructed with the ability to continuously learn and improve their processes with little or no human intervention; Alpaydin (2016: 17) states: "A system that is in a changing environment should have the ability to learn; otherwise, we would hardly call it intelligent." These are the systems that will be discussed under the general term of "AI" in this article: a piece of software which is able to "learn" to perform a complex task that would typically be assigned to a human operator, and which can improve its performance based on trial and error. Specifically for this article, many of the AI applications that are discussed are methodologies related to textual

analysis—most importantly, various aspects of data mining and natural language processing, or the ways in which AI is trained to analyze and identify the semantic meaning of human-generated text.

For decades, future-minded librarians have discussed the potential for AI to revolutionize the field, but only recently has the technology achieved a level of sophistication that supports those optimistic predictions. As a result, the adoption of AI in libraries has been slower and somewhat less impressive than some have predicted. A literature review published in 1989 of scholarship on the use of AI in libraries highlights 52 articles published between 1976 and 1987, of which 8 are directly related to the use of AI in cataloging and 12 deal specifically with online searching. The reviewers admit that, at the time of writing, AI had made little impact in libraries, but eagerly anticipate that “remarkable” advances would be possible “in the near future” (Hsieh and Hall, 1989). Thirty years later, in the EDUCAUSE (2019) *Horizon Report*, AI is praised for its “ability to personalize experiences, reduce workloads, and assist with analysis of large and complex data sets [which] recommends it to educational applications,” and is listed as being two to three years away from general adoption in higher education. Those benefits would seem well suited to the kind of work performed in many different types of libraries. However, at the time of writing, AI is largely viewed as a forthcoming technological advancement that is still out of reach. An environmental scan of AI in academic libraries from the same year as the EDUCAUSE report notes that “research connecting artificial intelligence . . . to librarianship remains quite low” (Wheatley and Hervieux, 2019: 348). There is significant asymmetry in the adoption of AI in various industries, and it seems that the widespread use of AI in the library workflow is likely still some time off.

This is not to say that AI has no presence in modern libraries. Massis (2018: 457) states that “librarians have an opportunity to discover the many areas of services it provides to offer further enhancements, and therefore, remain as a progressive hub of technology.” As a visible example of this attempt to keep libraries at the center of technological advancement, the University of Rhode Island built a large AI laboratory inside its library building for the purpose of “offer[ing] beginner- to advanced-level tutorials in areas such as robotics, natural language processing, smart cities, smart homes, the internet of things, and big data” (McKenzie, 2018). As a more direct use of AI for patron services, Radford (2020: 51) considers the possibility of voice-enabled smart devices like Siri and Alexa to serve as “intelligent personal

assistants” in a library reference setting. While Schreur (2020: 479) argues that the full adoption of AI into the technical services workflow will likely depend on a significant advance in linked data, he asserts that many “routine and repetitive” tasks could be automated. At the administrative level, there is interest in using AI as a predictive tool for assessing usage, which could inform the more efficient use of budgets and outreach efforts (Litsey and Mauldin, 2018; Renaud et al., 2015; Walker and Jiang, 2019). However, the reality of AI in libraries does not seem to have lived up to its initial promise at this point, and the previous examples seem to be exceptions to a general state of adoption rather than evidence of widespread adoption.

One potential target for the introduction of AI and other automated systems into library operations is technical services, particularly for the cataloging, classification, and digital processing of resources for retrieval. Considering the costs for libraries in terms of both personnel and time spent on resource description, if a software could be developed to support, supplement, or even replace human labor for some aspects of this process, libraries might regain valuable resources that could be deployed elsewhere. Recent scholarly literature has featured reports of several such attempts by librarians and information professionals, using AI to improve or entirely produce descriptive metadata for various collections and materials (some of which will be discussed below).

For the purposes of this article, AI is considered as a potential tool in two specific and highly related cases of use: resource description and retrieval. Resource description, or descriptive cataloging, is a complex field of librarianship that is governed by various philosophies of knowledge organization and many rules and standards to ensure uniformity and interoperability between records. Importantly for this discussion, descriptive cataloging includes subject analysis, which is the process of determining the “aboutness” of a given source, and is vital for the search and discovery process. Aboutness is also seen in writing on resource description and is alternately referred to as the theme, subject, or topic of a given resource. This process assigns categories and subject terms that will situate the resource alongside similar resources and allow for search and retrieval by searching for descriptive terms, rather than merely the title or author. The ultimate goal of resource description is realized during the discovery and retrieval process, in which resources can be identified by patrons using search interfaces that index the records created during the resource description.

While human-driven cataloging often involves the description of non-digital materials, this article focuses more specifically on digitized full-text resources, such as theses, dissertations, journal articles, and books, as textual analysis is a key component of true AI resource description. While it would not be practicable or reasonable for a human cataloger to carry out a full textual analysis of a monograph in order to determine its aboutness, AI can. A great deal of research has been done on the use of AI for analyzing and processing texts to determine semantic meaning.

For this discussion, it is critical, first, to disambiguate between two different meanings of the word “classification.” Librarians will likely be most familiar with the type of classification that Joudrey and Taylor (2018: 547) refer to as “bibliographic classification,” which is used “for the purpose of arranging and retrieving information resources and . . . for arranging metadata records in library catalogs and other information retrieval tools.” In the study of AI, classification is defined not as a philosophy of information organization but as a category of problems that an AI can be designed to solve. Classification is “the ability to classify something into a distinct set of classes or categories,” making it a learned skill that can be both tested for accuracy and improved on with additional training (Rebala et al., 2019: 20).

An example of a classification problem that an AI would be programmed to solve might be sorting incoming emails into classes of “spam” and “not spam,” or identifying images that show cancerous versus non-cancerous skin cells. Classification problems can be simple tasks or more complicated tasks involving multiple possible classifications, as in assigning subject terms to a library resource. AI that have been trained via supervised machine learning are particularly well-suited to solving classification problems. The inclusion of a labeled data set with the correct answers is what differentiates supervised machine learning from unsupervised machine learning. The data sets that are used to train AIs must be extremely large in order to provide enough material for the program to analyze and the algorithm to alter its original model accurately to solve classification problems outside of the training data. In order to prepare an AI for the task of applying subject headings to text documents, a data set containing thousands, if not millions, of documents with examples of human-applied subject headings would be required.

The resulting model produced by this style of machine learning serves as the decision-making tool for the AI when it is given new data to analyze and

classify. The model used by an AI to solve a classification problem allows it to formulate predictions for the correct outcome when presented with new unlabeled data to analyze. Alpaydin (2016: 27) states that “[t]he main theory underlying machine learning comes from statistics, where going from particular observations to general descriptions is called inference and learning is called estimation.” In this sense, machine learning does not learn to replicate the process by which the original data was classified, but rather identifies patterns that are present in all or many of the labeled examples in the training data, which it will use to predict appropriate subject headings when applying its model to new documents. This means that whatever mistakes or biases might be present in the training data will be integrated into the AI’s model for performing analyses.

Paynter (2005) identifies two different approaches to using AI in what he calls “metadata assignment,” or what might be thought of as subject analysis as a classification problem. The first is extraction, in which an AI will “assign values drawn from the text of the document” by analyzing and identifying what it recognizes as key phrases and terms related to the subject of the resource (292). These terms are selected directly from the resource without any consideration for an external vocabulary of subject terms, and complex algorithms are relied on to identify the words and phrases that best represent the work as a whole. The second method is classification, in which an AI will “assign metadata values from a controlled vocabulary” by identifying the subject or subjects of a resource and then selecting the most appropriate subject terms from that controlled vocabulary (292). Both the extraction and classification methods rely heavily on models that allow the program to parse the text of the resource and perform some level of semantic analysis to determine the importance of and relationship between various words, but classification adds the step of translating the identified keywords into related words selected from an external controlled vocabulary.

Extraction is typically thought of as being a simpler exercise for an AI because the software is limited to selecting keywords and phrases directly from the text, which it identifies as being representative of the resource’s overall subject matter. The AI does not need to extrapolate beyond the semantic meaning behind the text being analyzed; instead, the AI’s algorithm analyzes quantitative elements of a resource, such as the frequency of a word’s appearance in the text, for example, or where words appear in the text and in relation to one another. A real-world example of this type of semantic analysis is HAMLET (the

Hierarchical Agent-based Machine Learning platform), a project that uses a trained AI to create new methods for exploring a collection of theses using three specialized tools: a “recommendation engine,” which displays similar theses when a user searches for a title or author; an “uploaded file oracle,” which analyzes the file uploaded by a user and surfaces similar theses; and a “literature review buddy,” which works with the uploaded file oracle to provide a list of sources cited by those similar theses (Yelton, 2019). Additionally, Zeng et al. (2014) have experimented with using OpenCalais, a semantic analysis tool, to automatically extract and create access points for archival records as a response to the inability of traditional resource description methods to catch up with the growing body of information resources. Other experiments with AI-generated metadata have gone beyond either extraction or the assignment of keywords, and have used AI to craft entire descriptive summaries for digitized items (Flannery, 2020).

AI and the information landscape

Traditional cataloging as carried out by library professionals is closely associated with many of the ethical questions that documents like the IFLA’s (1999) Statement are intended to address. In recent years, there has been a much closer focus on the ethics of resource description, including an effort to establish a general code of ethics for catalogers (Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee, 2021). Critical to ethically and professionally responsible resource description is the accurate representation of the library’s holdings to ensure easy discovery and access for patrons. The use of controlled vocabularies in assigning subject terms to resources is largely preferred and shows significant advantages during retrieval over uncontrolled keyword assignment (Gross et al., 2015). In libraries where catalogers are limited to a single or small number of controlled vocabularies from which they may select descriptors, this can cause problems for describing resources whose themes are not well represented. This may be due to a knowledge gap in the vocabulary, which may be unintentional or could be the result of a systemic preference for language that does not accurately represent a concept, place, or group of marginalized persons.

An AI that is trained to assign descriptors from a controlled vocabulary to analyzed texts would be most easily trained on vocabularies that are widely used and therefore have many examples to analyze for training. Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) is probably the most heavily used controlled

vocabulary in libraries around the world, and is therefore a good case study to consider for training an AI in subject assignment. The number of bibliographic records that represent digitized texts with assigned Library of Congress subject headings is likely vast and could be used to supply an AI with sufficient training data for resource description. However, while the ideal system of information organization would be a system that prioritizes accuracy and neutrality, there is no question that LCSH includes many examples of inaccurate, problematic, and even offensive language, particularly in reference to minority groups.

For years, LCSH has drawn criticism over its perceived colonialist and Eurocentric linguistic tendencies. Berman’s (1971) well-known work, *Prejudices and Antipathies*, highlights many explicit examples of such inclusions, with particular emphasis on terms related to issues of gender, sexuality, religious affiliation, nationality, race, and marginalized members of society. In bringing attention to the problems he identified and offering proposed remediations, he hoped he might “remedy long-standing mistakes and . . . gain for the profession a genuine, earned respect among people who read and think” (Berman, 1971: 17). While there have been changes to the language in LCSH since that time, many of the subject headings for which Berman proposed revisions or replacements are still in use (Knowlton, 2005). A significant body of work has been generated by scholars that continues Berman’s work and proposes additional changes to LCSH, and even creates entirely new, alternate vocabularies for libraries to employ (Biswas, 2018; Bone and Loughheed, 2018; Moulaison Sandy and Bossaller, 2017).

The problem of inaccurate, prejudicial, or entirely missing descriptors has widespread negative impacts for patrons. By misrepresenting a resource or positioning it in the collection in such a way that it cannot be retrieved via a search, librarians can create an unfortunate alteration or distortion of the information presented in a library’s catalog. At best, using outdated or incorrect descriptors can cause serious problems for patrons during retrieval; at worst, it can deepen feelings of marginalization and reinforce negative stereotypes and societal biases. This can be combatted at an institutional level by allowing catalogers to use multiple controlled vocabularies or by altering local practice to include alternate headings for improved discoverability within the collection. This process is still reliant on a cataloger’s knowledge and judgement to produce the best results for their patrons, but does allow institutions the flexibility to make informed, independent decisions about the description of the resources held in their collections.

However, this presents a significant technical challenge for creating an AI that is capable of resource description. Many alternate controlled vocabularies are relatively new and not as widely used, making it more difficult to supply sufficiently representative training data. An AI can only produce results as good as the training data it is presented with (a problem that will be discussed further later in this section), but by broadening the scope of the controlled vocabularies utilized in resource description, the initial training requirements for the AI increase dramatically. This is not necessarily an insurmountable challenge, but it is an important consideration for wide-scale adoption.

In the example of training an AI to use assignment techniques of classification, prejudicial or biased language could be introduced through the use of common controlled vocabularies. However, this is not the most significant ethical challenge in replacing human catalogers with automated processes. Issues of ethical resource description do not begin at the point of subject-term assignment, but during the actual process of textual analysis in identifying the subject matter—or “aboutness”—of a resource. This process relies on a semantic understanding of the language present in the resource. In traditional cataloging, this is carried out by a human cataloger, who does not necessarily need a full mastery of the subject matter represented in a resource in order to be able to describe it accurately. Paynter (2005: 292) describes the process of “automatic evaluation by computer programs” as *quantitative* and “human evaluation by subject domain experts” as *qualitative*. Finding the solution to a classification problem is an inherently mathematical process.

Word embedding is a popular and prolific method of mathematically deriving semantic meaning from texts by expressing texts as three-dimensional graphs and calculating vectors to represent words. Thus, words with similar semantic meanings “have been shown to represent relationships between words” (Bolukbasi et al., 2016: 4356). An AI is only able to interpret new input through its model derived from training data, and operates as a system of prediction rather than true semantic interpretation. There are many such models available to data and information scientists who are interested in experimenting with natural language processing techniques, some of which are open source and freely available for use. Word2Vec is one of the most widely used embedding models for semantic analysis using AI. Data sets for training AI using this model are often scraped from easily available text sources on the Internet, such as databases of news articles.

The potential for AIs using these methods to perpetuate and even magnify harmful stereotypes has been well documented and the subject of many recent studies. While there is the general perception that machines are inherently more neutral than humans, only producing work that is representative of some objective truth rather than conscious or unconscious bias, the reality is that, by their very nature, AIs and other algorithmic processes will amplify whatever biases are observed in the data that has been used to train them. Bolukbasi et al. (2016) describe the implicit biases that an AI trained on texts selected from Google News developed in identifying semantic relationships based on gender between various words, such as the relationship between “hairdresser” and “she,” and “architect” and “he.” In a replication study, researchers were able to replicate all reported instances of positive and negative biases associated with gender, race, and age identified by a wide range of research on semantic analysis of text (Caliskan et al., 2021). The processes identified in these studies are nearly identical to what would be required for automated resource description of full-text resources, which should present serious concerns for librarians who are seeking to defend intellectual freedom and equitable access to their resources.

AI and intellectual freedom

As early as 2011, Pariser was raising the alarm over the potential for the increasing personalization of the Internet to create a false information landscape, in which the user is essentially trapped in an echo chamber of what a content provider believes the user wants to see—a digital trap that Pariser calls “the filter bubble.” Pariser (2011: 218) states that the ultimate result of increased personalization is that “while the Internet offers access to a dazzling array of sources and options, in the filter bubble we’ll miss many of them.” In an increasingly digital society, he argues, the impacts of this effect could be significant.

Pariser’s (2011) work has faced criticism in the years since its publication, as studies on topics like increasing political polarization (Boxell et al., 2017) and online radicalism (O’Hara and Stevens, 2015) have failed to detect the kind of isolated ideologies that Pariser predicted would become the norm of the Internet age. In the context of the broader Internet, there is less evidence than some expected of the negative influence of filter bubbles and echo chambers on both individuals and society. The library catalog is often referred to as a “silo” of information, as it is cut off from interacting with much of the Internet because of the formatting of library bibliographic records and

the often archaic systems that store them. The “filter bubbles” that Pariser (2011) described seem similar in architecture to the silos of a library’s catalog in terms of isolation from outside sources. The introduction of automated processes in the resource description process, particularly using the methods described in the previous sections, brings with it the homogenization of description and a semantic understanding drawn from a general, and potentially flawed or problematic, corpus of language. Given the importance of careful and nuanced description, this is particularly troubling in the areas of search and retrieval; information that cannot be found effectively does not exist, and intellectual freedom depends on having knowledge of all the available options.

The potentially negative effects of AI on resource description and discovery should be of significant concern to librarians; the manipulation of the organization and presentation of information is not an issue that is limited to those working in technical services. The IFLA’s (1999) Statement explicitly states that, in the presentation of library resources, “[t]here shall be no discrimination due to race, creed, gender, age or for any other reason.” As has been explored in the previous section, bias in AI frequently targets marginalized peoples as a result of prejudices present in historical training data. The success of AI in improving search and discovery in the private sector, and the expectations of patrons for libraries to remain competitive with familiar services, all but guarantees that AI will eventually be more widely utilized and adopted by libraries, perhaps especially through third-party vendors.

Library vendors, and AI in general, are not held to the same ethical standards as librarians, but librarians must take steps to ensure that the technologies which directly impact patron access to information meet the minimum requirements of guaranteeing intellectual freedom as expressed in the IFLA’s (1999) Statement. In an increasingly digital world, the library’s discovery system is the most visible extension of library services, and may even be seen as a kind of surrogate for the library itself. If a patron only accesses the discovery system as their main point of contact with the library, the strengths and weaknesses of the discovery system may become indistinguishable from those of the library and its librarians.

This was certainly the concern in an incident described by Reidsma (2019: 3–5), in which a colleague reported that a search for “stress in the workplace” in their library discovery system returned a link to “women in the workforce,” and the “juxtaposition between [the] search terms and the result they provided made it seem like [the

discovery system] (and by extension, the . . . library) was saying that stress in the workplace was really about women in the workforce.” These kinds of unexpected, and unfortunate, correlations between topics are usually the result of a flawed assumption based on the textual analysis and word-embedding models that power a discovery system, but, as Reidsma notes, present the patron with the impression that it is the library itself that has made such a correlation. There are many examples of these unintended juxtapositions and automated processes having more serious implications for individuals. Importantly, there is increasing awareness, and growing anxiety, among the general public of the risks and dangers of biases expressed on a large scale through automation. The Artificial Intelligence Incident Database (2021) collects and archives the “unforeseen and often dangerous failures” that occur when AI is used in real-world systems.

One area where libraries are quickly advancing in the use of AI is through third-party services for discovery. Whereas using AI for resource description may be a new concept for some, it is difficult to imagine search engines without the enhancements afforded by AI. Rather than through direct contact with AI technologies in teaching laboratories or for institutional assessment projects, libraries that contract with private companies for certain services indirectly introduce AI into their patron-facing services. For example, enhanced discovery layers, like EBSCO Discovery Service and Summon from Ex Libris, use proprietary algorithms and AI when returning search results to select the most useful resources, adjust relevance rankings, and suggest related topics that may be of use to the patron (Ex Libris, 2019; Expert.ai, 2021). The use of third-party services, though undoubtedly offering attractive and beneficial features for patrons, introduces an entirely new area of concern for librarians who are seeking to uphold the tenets of the IFLA’s (1999) Statement: systems of record retrieval often collect data, sometimes personally identifiable, on users. This is often seen as a necessary part of continually improving a system, by providing an algorithm with feedback about its efficacy via data about the user’s behavior when browsing in order to further improve the system. The full breadth of this topic is beyond the scope of this article, but serious consideration of the dangers to patron privacy should be seen as a crucial element of upholding the IFLA’s (1999) Statement with regard to adopting AI technologies in patron-facing services.

The methods and techniques used by companies and systems that employ AI are often unknown to the broader public and are protected as proprietary or even trade secrets. Even when explanations for how

an AI or algorithm works are offered, they are frequently obscured as being too complicated or too alien for even their engineers to understand completely. Campolo and Crawford (2020: 3) describe this way of thinking as “enchanted determinism,” where the exact processes by which AI carries out its work are described as being effectively “magical” and even “outside the scope of present scientific knowledge,” while at the same time being given the power to make decisions which may have “consequences that even their designers may not fully understand or control.” O’Neil (2016) terms systems that rely on hidden mathematical models and are treated as being beyond challenge as “weapons of math destruction.” However, there are developments in AI that may soon provide at least a technical path to better understanding the systems that are playing increasingly important roles in our everyday lives. For example, explainable AI, or XAI, is a growing field that seeks to allow individuals who are affected by decisions made by AI (such as a person denied a loan or the opportunity to post bail based on an algorithm’s recommendation) have access to a clear explanation of the reasoning behind the decision. This would allow individuals the opportunity to evaluate these decisions in order to “understand and compare the [system’s] reasoning with his or her own reasoning ... [and] in order to analyze its validity and reliability” or to “evaluate the fairness of a given AI-based decision” (Meske et al., 2020). This would be a major step toward creating a system of automation which would allow the careful monitoring that would be necessary for the wide-scale implementation of systems with such a high impact on patrons and intellectual freedom.

It is in this imperfect world of both traditional and technologically advanced methods of resource description that the tenets espoused by the IFLA’s (1999) Statement become more important than ever before. If libraries are to support independent thought and decision-making, provide equitable access to a diverse collection of materials, and defend patrons from discrimination of any kind, it is vital that librarians educate themselves and their patrons about the kinds of technology at work in libraries and society at large. It would be an equal mistake, however, to ignore the many benefits, both for librarians and patrons, that these technologies may bring to libraries. Careful deliberation and weighing of the potential risks and benefits, rather than either an outright rejection or a careless adoption, should be the ultimate goal of any librarian who is considering adopting such technologies, as they

must be prepared to grapple with questions of their duty to intellectual freedom.

Conclusion

While the adoption of AI for general use in libraries has been slower than some have anticipated, given the success of its integration into everyday technology, it is likely to begin gaining ground in the areas of information description and retrieval. The technology promises significant advantages for both librarians and patrons in terms of efficiency and improved services, much in the same way as AI has rapidly improved the user experience in modern search engines. However, before libraries can endorse the use of AI for resource description, it must be carefully investigated and understood.

Just as the introduction of AI into popular web services has had unintentional negative consequences for some users—predominantly users from socially marginalized backgrounds—the same biases and prejudices could be introduced into the library’s information ecosystem and threaten the guarantee of intellectual freedom for all patrons. While resource description as a practice inherently imposes certain values and judgements on the resource itself, this has always been carried out under the watchful eye of professionals who are held to a high degree of ethical and professional considerations. In adopting new technologies that might introduce significant changes to the general presentation of library data, including harmful biases reproduced from the general corpus of the language used to train AIs or from constructed vocabularies used in traditional subject analysis and cataloging, librarians must take particular care to ensure that they continue to uphold their commitment to safeguarding the interests of their patrons.

The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom does not differentiate between the actions of individual librarians and the actions taken by the technologies employed by libraries in order to meet patron needs and expectations. In an increasingly digital world, patrons’ primary interactions may be with a library’s discovery layer, where their experience navigating the library’s holdings will be entirely reliant on the quality of the resource description that powers its discovery layer. In this new information economy, libraries have the opportunity to expand on the “professional considerations” that the IFLA’s (1999) Statement calls for in providing access to library materials beyond traditional models of acquisitions, cataloging, and the delivery of resources to better benefit patrons while still protecting their intellectual freedom.

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Analysis of professional secrecy in Ibero-America: Ethical and legal perspectives

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Abstract

Eight Ibero-American political constitutions that include professional secrecy (confidentiality) as a constitutional guarantee are analysed, and their influence as a fundamental right in the professional practice of librarians is examined. The impact of professional secrecy is established in professional codes of ethics, and it is shown that they do not clearly express this principle; its application in trade unions has limited effectiveness. The various difficulties involved in preserving professional secrecy in library practice, which work centres try to violate, are shown.

Keywords

Professional secrecy, confidentiality, librarian

Introduction

The principles and values of occupations linked to librarians as professional workers are constantly evolving and must embrace the ongoing changes of information and communications technology (ICT), especially with regard to professional secrecy.

It is accurate to point out that, in Spanish, the term ‘confidentiality’ is translated as *secreto* (‘secrecy’), while in Portuguese it is *sigilo* (‘secrecy’); it is not defined as secret information but to keep secret the information used by the user (privacy) and to keep secret personally identifiable information (confidentiality). Ibero-American political constitutions give it, specifically, the name of ‘professional secrecy’, not ‘confidentiality’, while the ethics codes equally use the terms ‘secret’, ‘reserve’ or ‘confidentiality’. We will use the term ‘professional secrecy’ because it is commonly used in Ibero-America.

ICT, in fact, highlights the constant use of data (private, public and administrative) and it is paramount for several professions to maintain professional secrecy; this applies not only to priests, attorneys, doctors and journalists, but also to other occupations, as ICT has expanded to different human

areas. Based on this, professional secrecy must be seen from two perspectives – legal doctrine and information ethics – and as a right and a duty at the same time. Carrillo states:

Professional secrecy is not a legal institution defined in one sense. Theoretically, it can be defined as a duty (in a deontological dimension) or as a right (in a legal perspective). However, the professional secrecy nature rests as a right–duty pair. (Carrillo, 2000: 420)

Regarding the legal perspective, professional secrecy must be regulated in accordance with the right to information since it is considered as a subcategory of freedom of expression. This is because it is a condition to receive information, which is mandatory for promoting public opinion to balance the exercise of government control and allow the exercise of a democratic government (Cáceres Nieto, 2000). In

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summary, secrecy aims to keep the identity of a source under wraps in order to ensure that, simultaneously, it provides the legal guarantee to protect anonymity and avoids potential retaliation from disclosing information.

There are reasons for keeping professional secrecy under the umbrella of ethics. First, it is important to establish a common relationship between the source (person or organization) and the professional by providing the appropriate guarantee of remaining safe from retaliation or damage in a direct or indirect way. Second, the privacy of people must be protected and kept safe from access or disclosure of information.

Relevant background on professional secrecy

In its section on 'Privacy, secrecy and transparency', the IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and Other Information Workers states: 'Librarians and other information workers respect personal privacy, and the protection of personal data, necessarily shared between individuals and institutions'. It adds: 'The relationship between the library and the user is one of confidentiality and librarians and other information workers will take appropriate measures to ensure that user data is not shared beyond the original transaction' (IFLA, 2012). This recommendation is essential for librarians. We will consider specific cases, such as librarians' privacy and confidentiality.

It is common to apply pressure on librarians to obtain users' private information. The USA PATRIOT (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act was enacted immediately after the Twin Towers attack on 11 September 2001. Under Section 215, 'Library records provision', librarians can be instructed to provide information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation about users' private records, and they are forbidden from making such requests public. On 15 March 2020, Section 215 of the PATRIOT Act expired (American Library Association, 2020). The stance of librarians has been truly praiseworthy, such as in the case of Joan Airolti (2006), director of the Whatcom County Library System, who refused to provide information on the names of users who had requested to read the biography *Bin Laden: The Man Who Declared War on America*, by Yossef Bodansky. The book was confiscated by the FBI.

The librarians called the 'Connecticut Four', who were questioned by the FBI, formed the group John Doe Connecticut to protest against such harassment by the National Security Agency to obtain records,

history enquiries or Internet Protocol addresses, among other things. To exacerbate matters, the librarians were instructed to remain silent about the questioning they were subjected to (Cowan, 2006; C-SPAN, 2007).

Professional secrecy is a duty, right and obligation, as well as a condition that is exercised in the practice of professions; it is a privilege granted by society (Estrada-Cuzcano and Alfaro-Mendives, 2017).

Librarians' professional secrecy

In the case of librarians and professional workers, intellectual freedom is a key principle and the starting point for guaranteeing other values, freedoms and rights.

Intellectual freedom comprises access to information, confidentiality and privacy (Estrada-Cuzcano and Saavedra-Vasquez, 2018). Access to information is directly linked to intellectual freedom and is an essential principle associated with the performance of information services that are adapted to new users' needs; it is opposed to control, manipulation or censorship.

Librarians and professional workers have accurately defined both privacy and confidentiality. Privacy has to do with the use of information without any intervention. Confidentiality, on the other hand, is linked with users' personal data (personally identifiable information), which is protected by professionals (American Library Association, 2007). In both cases, professional secrecy prevails. For this reason, '[l]ibraries should not share personally identifiable user information with law enforcement except with the permission of the user or in response to some form of judicial process (subpoena, search warrant, or other court order)' (American Library Association, 2017). Kostrewski and Oppenheim (1980: 280) stated several decades ago that 'as a general rule all requests for information must be regarded as confidential'.

Privacy includes typical users' data, such as first name and surname, address (work and home), email, telephone number and other information (social security number, driving license, etc.). Libraries sometimes hold unusual information such as demographics (age, gender and race), educational background, preferences and interests, religion, political preference or health. 'Thus there is a strong moral and legal basis for protecting the confidentiality of a patron's library records' (Garooogan, 1991: 223).

It is common that professionals are demanded to provide details of the information used by users, with such requests coming from parents, teachers, researchers and even government agencies, to

determine children's consumption of information or colleagues' research work. For these reasons, professional secrecy is highly relevant because it prioritizes the protection of topics or situations considered of interest and grants the possibility of reading and looking at the information free from any kind of judgment, surveillance, punishment or ostracism (Kostrewski and Oppenheim, 1980) – 'even if it registers only as a disapproving frown and a shake of the head at the checkout desk' (Campbell and Cowan, 2016: 501).

Sturges et al. (2003) recommend some categories in a more general and extended context to be taken into account at the time of setting up a policy of data and privacy protection: the institutional context of a privacy policy, a balance between access and protection of privacy, the basic requirements of legislation, data protection policy, user authentication, policy about acceptable usage (resources), and policy on emails and file records about staff and usage. Consequently, '[w]hile the ethical concerns for protecting patron privacy are in themselves important reasons to protect library patron data, there are other reasons as well. Some of them are legal' (Corrado, 2020: 46).

There are two foundational statements regarding intellectual freedom. The first is the Library Bill of Rights (adopted in 1939 with amendments in 1944, 1948, 1961, 1967, 1980 and 2019), which states: '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' (American Library Association, 2006). The second document is the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom of 1999, which reaffirms the principles of intellectual freedom and states: 'Library users shall have the right to personal privacy and anonymity. Librarians and other library staff shall not disclose the identity of users or the materials they use to a third party' (IFLA, 1999).

Objectives and methodology

Objectives

It is important to keep in mind the particularities of professional secrecy. Professionals practising in different disciplines have different characteristics. For this reason, it has been appropriate to establish the characteristics of librarians, professionals linked to information and communication. Recommended are the following investigation goals:

- To analyse the constitutional regulations regarding professional secrecy in Ibero-American countries.
- To establish the characteristics of secrecy in the librarian profession.

Methodology

The current research was based on a qualitative approach of a basic type on a descriptive level and a non-experimental design. The technique used was documentary revision and the instrument used was a record sheet, which was useful to make a comparative chart of items from eight Ibero-America countries' political constitutions regarding professional secrecy as a basic right, although there were several characteristics among them.

The different sources of information about professional secrecy in the theoretical framework have also been thoroughly reviewed regarding the Ibero-America countries' political constitutions and professional secrecy, this has been found in eight countries.

The countries that are surveyed in this study were chosen because their political constitutions include professional secrecy, which is the highest standard in the Ibero-American legal system, and laws are drawn up from it. The inclusion of professional secrecy in a political constitution gives it the character of a fundamental right.

The Ibero-American political constitutions do not strictly refer to professional secrecy with regard to recognized professions such as lawyers, doctors or journalists; some are open to the practice of any profession while others are very restrictive. From this analysis we want to show whether this constitutional protection reaches librarians.

Analysis and discussion: the exercise of professional secrecy

Professional secrecy in political constitutions

Professional secrecy is a duty, right and obligation, as well as a condition exercised in many careers, especially those linked to information and communication. In short, it is a benefit granted by society to professionals.

We should follow these premises. Professional secrecy must be taken into account as an implied way in national regulations to set up, accurately, the competencies required for freedom of speech and information, since 'all immunity or exception to the compliance of a general obligation is demanded to be defined clearly in its content' (De Asís Roig,

Table 1. Professional secrecy in the political constitutions of Ibero-American countries.

Country	About professional secrecy	Article
Argentina (1853)	The secret nature of the sources of journalistic information shall not be undermined. The Action for Protection of Privacy shall not proceed to uncover confidential material of the press.	43 130, II
Bolivia (2009)	The obligations of the public administration are to maintain the confidentiality of classified information, which may not be divulged even after they have left their posts. The procedure for characterizing classified information shall be set forth in law.	237, I, 2
Brazil (1988)	Access to information is ensured for everyone and the confidentiality of the source shall be safeguarded, whenever necessary, by professionals.	5, XIV
Colombia (1991)	Every person has the right of access to public documents, except in cases established by law. Professional secrets are inviolable.	74
Ecuador (2008)	The state shall guarantee the conscience clause for all persons, professional secrecy and the confidentiality of the sources of those who inform, issue their opinions through the media or other forms of communication, or work in any communication activity.	20
Peru (1993)	Every person has the right to keep their political, philosophical, religious or any other type of conviction private, as well as to keep professional secrets.	2, 18
Spain (1978)	People have the right to communicate freely or receive accurate information by any means of dissemination whatsoever. The law shall regulate the right to invoke personal conscience and professional secrecy in the exercise of these freedoms.	20, I, d
	People have the right to communicate freely or receive accurate information by any means of dissemination whatsoever. The law shall determine the cases in which, for reasons of family relationship or professional secrecy, it shall not be compulsory to make statements regarding alleged criminal offences.	24, 2
Venezuela (1999)	He or she may, as well, access documents of any nature containing information of interest to communities or group of persons. The foregoing is without prejudice to the confidentiality of sources from which information is received by journalist, or secrecy in other professions as may be determined by law.	28

1993: 158). Consequently, we go through the policies in the political constitutions of Ibero-American countries because they are the supreme legal norms of the legal body of laws of the country, where fundamental rights and duties are established for all society.

Some Ibero-American countries' political constitutions include articles on professional secrecy as a basic right, although they were approved in different years: Argentina in 1853, Bolivia in 2009, Brazil in 1988, Colombia in 1991, Ecuador in 2008, Peru in 1993, Spain in 1978 and Venezuela in 1999 (see Table 1).

The political constitutions of many Ibero-America countries consider professional secrecy as part of the confidentiality of information, journalistic sources, the press or means of communication, as ruled in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela. Spain is also mentioned separately since Article (20, 1, d) is about journalistic activity because it is a 'conscience clause'.

Peru and Colombia are two countries that have established open professional secrecy for several professions in their constitutions. The Peruvian political constitution states that everyone has the right to professional secrecy and it incorporates many

professions under this umbrella. The Colombian political constitution establishes professional secrecy as 'sacred' and grants professionals the right to protect themselves against, among other things, the means of communication, the public administration and the legal system. In the case of Venezuela, professional secrecy has been extended to other careers, but it is subject to being 'determined by law'.

In the case of Bolivia, an article has been included that addresses public servants and highlights the need to 'maintain the confidentiality of classified information, which should not be revealed even after they resign' (Article 237, I, 2), although this is not addressed to any particular professional.

Discussion: analysis of the exercise of professional secrecy

In Ibero-America, the professional practice of the librarian is supervised by associations of free affiliation or established by law (professional associations or councils). Professional secrecy is often not reflected in the codes of ethics of professional associations or councils. The Association of Graduate Librarians of the Argentine Republic (ABGRA) does

not have a code of ethics or even a professional statute approved by law. It is the same situation in Bolivia: although it has the Association of Librarians of Bolivia (ABB) and College of Professionals in Information Sciences of Bolivia (CPCIB) – the latter incorporating librarians, documentary-makers, archivists and museum experts – neither association has a code of ethics. Similarly, the National Association of Librarians of Ecuador (ANABE) does not have an approved code of ethics.

In Brazil, the Federal Council of Librarianship (CBF, 2018: Article 5, g), in its ‘Code of ethics and deontology of the Brazilian librarian’, states: ‘Keep secrecy in the performance of their activities, when the matter so requires’. In Colombia, the National Council of Librarianship (CNB, 2016: Article 11, h), in its ‘Code of ethics of the profession of librarian’, declares: ‘Keep professional secrecy on that information of a reserved or confidential nature that is entrusted to them’. The characteristics of exercising professional secrecy are not detailed and decisions in this regard are discretionary.

In Peru, the College of Librarians of Peru (CBP, 1997: Article 19) states in its code of ethics: ‘Keep confidentiality on information that compromises confidentiality, whether of the institution, its staff or its users’. It does not use the term ‘secrecy’ but ‘confidentiality’. The Spanish Federation of Archival, Library, Documentation and Museum Societies (FES-ABID, 2013: ch. 5, 2) has a code of ethics for librarians and information professionals which clearly describes the elements of intellectual freedom:

Ensure professional secrecy in the exercise of their activities in order to protect the confidentiality of users’ personal data, with the only limitations being those determined by the legal framework.

Ensure privacy and respect personal and family intimacy, including the right to one’s own image.

This is the most correct inclusion of the patron of privacy and confidentiality.

The code of ethics of the College of Librarians and Archivists of Venezuela (CBAV, 2001: Article 8, 18) establishes that ‘Librarians or Archivists must offer attentive, considerate and professional treatment to all users who, within the corresponding institutional framework, request their services; without bias or discrimination and considering confidential all information that occurs during the provision of professional service’. This delimits confidentiality in the field of professional work.

It is evident that the professional codes of ethics in Ibero-America are not periodically reviewed or updated.

Although some are recent, they do not reflect changes that have occurred in professional practice, and it is even the case that many codes do not include (i.e. ignore) intellectual freedom as a fundamental principle. Francis (2021: 318), for example, in a study of 70 professional codes of ethics (five in Latin America), highlights differences in relation to the codes of other countries, and points out that ‘[p]rivacy is an almost universally acknowledged right within English-language library associations’ codes of ethics’.

A probable reason for the ineffectiveness of professional codes of ethics is that they are not binding (mandatory) and consequently have limited application in the face of ethical dilemmas that arise in library work.

The exercise of professional secrecy may involve the following: confidentiality of personal data, confidentiality of sensitive data, and privacy in the use of information (inquiries, loan history, online searches and profiles). The protection to the exercise of professional secrecy of the librarians gives full authority in order not to disclose any confidential information.

Some problems need to be solved; for example, many pressures are applied on librarians to violate the confidentiality of users in organizations public or private, work centres (e.g. ministries, the police, city councils, congress or parliament) and even invoke national security. A typical way in which the professional secrecy of the librarian is broken is to guarantee job security but, and in the face of threats, only an appeal to ethical principles remains.

Conclusions and recommendations

The research describes the legal development of professional secrecy (confidentiality) in Ibero-American, which is summarized below:

- Professional secrecy (confidentiality) is granted to librarians, and it is a key condition for them to exercise their professional freedom. In Ibero-America, however, many librarian associations do not take advantage of constitutional protection to include professional secrecy in their codes of ethics as a principle of intellectual freedom.
- The political constitutions of eight Ibero-American countries include articles on professional secrecy, some of which have a wider vision than others. In some cases, professional secrecy is granted even to public officials (Bolivia), without distinction between professional levels. In other cases, it is a broad spectrum (Colombia and Peru).

- The individuals granted the professional secrecy, as librarians, under the essential condition to exercise it actively; as proven casuistically. There are individuals granted the professional secrecy, as to librarians, under the essential condition to exercise it actively and not infringe it. Persisting with professional secrecy, despite pressures, must be regarded as ethical and principled.
- It is a top priority for librarians to maintain the confidentiality of private and sensitive data. The librarian has a duty to uphold ethical values and the principles of intellectual freedom.
- Professional associations are responsible for applying the principles of intellectual freedom (especially professional secrecy) among their members. At the same time, the teaching of library ethics is important and necessary to acquire valuable criteria to resolve ethical dilemmas that arise in library work and resist permanent pressures to disclose information about users.
- There are ongoing pressures from legal areas, administration, the workplace, and especially in regard to national security, and in many cases there is no legal protection for librarians.
- There is an international organization for librarians (the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions - IFLA), should reinforce your work on intellectual freedom in Ibero-America.

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Intellectual freedom: Waving and wavering across three national contexts

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Abstract

The 1999 IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom makes no explicit distinction between personal and professional ethics, though there are implicit indications that there may be divergence between professional and personal considerations. Across three national contexts (the USA, Canada, and the UK), we explore the gaps between professional and personal ethics, as well as how these gaps have been potentially exploited, addressed, or resolved. There have been waves of debate about intellectual freedom and social responsibility across these three national contexts. In the contemporary age, we see clashes around conceptions of neoliberalism, neutrality, expressive freedom, justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. The divergence of opinion comes from both the left and the right. The gap between library rhetoric and how it is practiced on the ground in different contexts is visibly shifting and under increased scrutiny, certainly in the USA, Canada, and the UK.

Keywords

Intellectual freedom, social responsibility, liberal, conservative, justice

Introduction

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (hereafter, IFLA Statement), adopted in 1999, includes an implicit declaration that librarians' personal and professional core values should mostly align.¹ For example, it states that the "IFLA asserts that a commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession" (IFLA, 1999). No distinction is made between personal and professional views in this assertion.

However, two subsequent claims in the IFLA Statement hint at possible divergence between personal and professional views. The fifth bullet point notes: "Libraries shall ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by

political, moral, and religious views" (IFLA, 1999). This implies that one's political, moral, and/or religious persuasions may deviate from "professional considerations." Finally, the last bullet point notes: "Librarians and other professional libraries staff shall fulfil their responsibilities both to their employer and to their users. In cases of conflict between those responsibilities, the duty toward the user shall take precedence" (IFLA, 1999). This statement suggests that there may be conflict between different professional obligations (or between employers' perspectives and users' needs).

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We note these subtle differences in the IFLA Statement because we believe that there is a great deal left unsaid, and that silence is being filled by vociferous assertions about what librarians *should* do and how they *should* act. These assertions, however, are not based on foundational library ethics but on (often well-intentioned) personal values.

The IFLA Statement and national codes of ethics

Our essay draws on our professional backgrounds in teaching and learning, research and scholarship, and professional and academic service in intellectual freedom and related library and information concerns across three national contexts: the USA, Canada, and the UK. Each nation's umbrella library association or organization has adopted a code of ethics and/or core values distinct from, but congruent with, the IFLA Statement (and other IFLA stances, generally speaking). The IFLA notes four core values:

- the endorsement of the principles of freedom of access to information, ideas and works of imagination and freedom of expression embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- the belief that people, communities and organizations need universal and equitable access to information, ideas and works of imagination for their social, educational, cultural, democratic and economic well-being;
- the conviction that delivery of high quality library and information services helps guarantee that access;
- the commitment to enable all Members of the Federation to engage in, and benefit from, its activities without regard to citizenship, disability, ethnic origin, gender, geographical location, language, political philosophy, race or religion. (IFLA, 2019)

As demonstrated below, the IFLA's core values are closely aligned with the core values of the American Library Association (ALA), the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB), and the UK's Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP).

For example, in the USA, the ALA has developed and adopted a Library Bill of Rights, a code of ethics, a statement of core values, and more than 20 interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights, with the latter providing guidance on how to enact intellectual freedom across a variety of situations and policy arenas.

According to the ALA, the core values of librarianship include access, confidentiality/privacy, democracy, diversity, education and lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, the public good, preservation, professionalism, service, social responsibility, and sustainability (American Library Association, 2006). The organization defines intellectual freedom as

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. (American Library Association, 2007)

Similarly, the IFLA Statement "calls upon libraries and library staff to adhere to the principles of intellectual freedom, uninhibited access to information and freedom of expression and to recognize the privacy of the user" (IFLA, 1999).

The CFLA-FCAB, incorporated on 16 May 2016 under the Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and successor to the dissolved Canadian Library Association, adopted a Statement on Intellectual Freedom and Libraries (Canadian Federation, 2019a), importantly carrying language over from the former Canadian Library Association.² And, in 2018, the federation adopted the CFLA-FCAB Code of Ethics, which affirms the IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and Other Information Workers (IFLA, 2012 adopted in 2012 and last updated in 2016) as a "comprehensive statement on the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of libraries and library workers in the 21st Century" (Canadian Federation, 2018). In so doing, the CFLA-FCAB reinforces both long-held IFLA rhetoric, such as the IFLA Statement, and more recent IFLA rhetoric, such as the IFLA Statement on the Right to Be Forgotten (IFLA, 2016b) and the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Artificial Intelligence (IFLA, 2020). Accordingly, the implications of a pro stance on intellectual freedom are understood to be wide-reaching and not closed off.

In the UK, CILIP revised its Ethical Framework in 2018 to better reflect contemporary debates and dilemmas facing librarians and other information professionals. The new framework enshrines seven core principles to which information professionals should make a commitment. The fourth of these principles invokes a commitment to "uphold, promote and defend...[i]ntellectual freedom, including freedom from censorship" (Chartered Institute, n.d. b). The accompanying Code of Professional Conduct (Chartered Institute, 2012) also places a responsibility on CILIP as a professional body to advocate for

intellectual freedom, including freedom from censorship. In alignment with the IFLA's four core values (noted above), CILIP's Ethical Framework also identifies a commitment to "[h]uman rights, equalities and diversity, and the equitable treatment of users and colleagues"; the "[p]reservation and continuity of access to knowledge"; and "[i]mpartiality and the avoidance of *inappropriate bias*" (Chartered Institute, n.d. b; our emphasis). In addition, other principles concern the advancement of the information profession, privacy and confidentiality, and the development of information skills and information literacy.

It is noticeable, however, that despite this relatively recent revision to its Ethical Framework, CILIP appears to accord a much lower priority to issues related to intellectual freedom than is apparent, for example, with the ALA. There is no direct link from its home pages (<https://www.cilip.org.uk/>) to the Framework; rather, this is hidden behind a link entitled "Knowledge Hub." Furthermore, the link headed "Campaigns and Advocacy" does not include any sections related to intellectual freedom (although one entitled "Facts Matter" does highlight the importance of taking a stand to champion the value of quality evidence and information in an era dominated by misinformation and fake news). This reduced emphasis on issues related to intellectual freedom comes as no surprise; indeed, the ALA, as the world's oldest and largest library association, has long been more vocal and active with regard to the promotion and defense of intellectual freedom than has its partner UK body (Oppenheim and Smith, 2004). It is also perhaps a reflection of the embattled nature of the library sector in the UK, and particularly the threats to the survival of public libraries as community institutions, as well as the threats of deprofessionalization, which have tended necessarily to dominate the advocacy arena in the UK.

Some of the commentary that follows focuses on librarians' belief in and adherence to their national codes of ethics, but these should be seen in the larger context of the IFLA Statement (CILIP was a founding member of the IFLA, and the ALA and CFLA-FCAB are both members as well). In other words, divergence from one's national core values or code of ethics is equivalent to divergence from the IFLA Statement. At the end of the essay, we will discuss the implications of these differences.

The US context

In the USA (and extending across the geographical border into Canada), the ALA holds significant figurative and literal power in the library realm. The ALA accredits the relevant Master's degrees at

degree-granting institutions in North America, and the majority of professional librarian jobs in the USA and Canada require an ALA-accredited degree; thus, institutions that educate professional librarians normally strive to adhere to the ALA's standards and expectations, and ALA guidance permeates most formal librarian education. In addition, many libraries contain documents from the ALA (such as the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, or the Core Values of Librarianship) within their policy and guidance documents. The ALA holds two annual national conferences, and the larger of these can attract upwards of 25,000 librarians and allies. Librarians are encouraged to report challenges to library materials and services to the Office for Intellectual Freedom of the ALA, which helps libraries respond to challenges, documents such attempts, and compiles lists of "banned books" each year. These examples illustrate the comprehensive scope and influence of the ALA in the USA and, to some extent, beyond.

Nonetheless, there are detractors, and the ALA's power is not absolute. For example, Oltmann (2016) surveyed public librarians in one state about intellectual freedom and collection development. This survey found that nearly 40% of librarians reported conflict between personal and professional values. In an expanded survey covering nine states, this finding was repeated (Oltmann, 2018). Subsequent research to uncover what these conflicts are, and how they are resolved, is ongoing.

We can identify a strong and long-standing presence of politically left-of-center librarians, as seen in the external Progressive Librarians Guild (an organization that is a much smaller socially and politically liberal alternative to the ALA) and the internal Social Responsibilities Round Table, which operates within the ALA structure and as a sister group to the Intellectual Freedom Round Table. These bodies frequently challenge the ALA to take action or make statements that are perceived to be more liberal (understood within the US context) than the ALA council and executive. For example, the Social Responsibilities Round Table encouraged the ALA to denounce the USA PATRIOT Act in 2003 (ahead of much of the subsequent criticism of this law). Left-leaning socially conscious librarians have also promoted the expansion and implementation of drag-queen story times—events where persons in drag read to children, sing songs, create crafts, and engage in other typical story-time activities; these events are believed to promote diversity and acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other (LGBTQ+) communities. Recently, these organizations and other groups have challenged

exclusionary, racist, and/ or derogatory headings in the Library of Congress Subject Heading classification system. For example, several groups have advocated to change “illegal alien” to “undocumented immigrant” (Ford, 2020).

An even more heated controversy erupted in 2018 when the document “Meeting rooms: An interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights” was planned to be updated. Just before the revision was voted on by the ALA leadership council, the wording was changed to explicitly include “hate speech” in the explanation:

A publicly funded library is not obligated to provide meeting room space to the public, but if it chooses to do so, it cannot discriminate or deny access based upon the viewpoint of speakers or the content of their speech. This encompasses religious, political, and *hate speech*. (Peet and Yorio, 2018; our emphasis)

As the Office for Intellectual Freedom explained, this was not actually a change in how meeting rooms should be utilized, but rather just made explicit the fact that “hate speech” could not be excluded simply because it was deemed “hate speech.” However, some in the ALA community took the view that the “hate speech” wording had been inserted either secretly or unnecessarily, and that the wording might cause hate groups to explicitly seek out public library meeting spaces; hence, the language was rolled back in 2019 and the “hate speech” clause was removed.

This sequence of events helps to illuminate the conflict that many librarians in the USA see between the core values of “intellectual freedom” and “social responsibility” (American Library Association, 2006). Shockey (2015: 103) noted that “the tension between ALA’s conceptions of intellectual freedom and the social responsibility of librarianship is a serious and divisive issue that lies at the heart of librarianship’s professional ethics, action, and justification.” A stance in favor of broad protections for freedom of speech (intellectual freedom), as is enshrined in the US Constitution and subsequent Supreme Court judicial cases, allows for the usage of speech that is often deemed “hate speech.” The 1992 case *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul* (505 US 377) upheld hate speech as a protected class of speech under the US Constitution (in this case, the burning of a cross on a Black family’s front lawn).

In contrast, a stance that emphasizes social responsibility and justice would create and enforce penalties for hateful, oppressive speech. These tensions have become especially fraught in the past decade in the US context, as movements like #MeToo, We Need Diverse Books, and Black Lives Matter have sought

to challenge systems of patriarchy, racism, and oppression. Anecdotally, library science graduate students increasingly grapple with these issues in their coursework, en route to becoming librarians. For example, when Dr. Seuss Enterprises decided to no longer publish six “racist” books written by Dr. Seuss (e.g. see Pratt, 2021), some library students applauded the attempt to reduce racism in children’s literature, while others saw this as a form of censorship. These differences of opinion were writ large across US librarianship and hotly debated in library forums; some public libraries withdrew the six books in question while others committed to keeping them on the shelves.

Right-leaning or conservative (again, in the US context) librarians, in particular, decried what they saw as censorship by the left. Indeed, conservative librarians (a long-standing minority) have expressed dismay at the ALA for several years, being concerned about its increasingly left-of-center positions on many issues. As mentioned above, drag-queen story times have become increasingly popular in the USA, but the ALA’s support of these events is seen by conservatives as a prime example of the liberal bias of the organization (and, indeed, perhaps of the profession as a whole). Likewise, the ALA has long opposed Internet filtering in public libraries (even taking a lawsuit to the Supreme Court in 2003, which it lost). The ALA and other critics of Internet filtering allege that it infringes on legally protected freedom of speech in the USA, as well as both under-blocking and over-blocking content. Yet, to conservative librarians (as well as many parents, guardians, friends of libraries, and lobby groups), any tool that can help reduce minors’ exposure to inappropriate content online, and reduce incidents of “pornographic” surfing in libraries, should be embraced.

The Canadian context

Like the IFLA, the ALA, and CILIP (see below), the CFLA-FCAB is an elite organization. It does not represent the views of all librarians and other information workers currently employed, underemployed, or unemployed in publicly funded libraries in Canada. Today, librarians and other information workers in Canada are highly engaged with the question of how to maintain and sustain a commitment to intellectual freedom in balance with grassroots organizing, the decolonization of institutions, justice, diversity, equity, respect, anti-racism, and literacy in all its forms (e.g. print, information, data, and digital). Much discourse is at play in library and information studies education, professional and paraprofessional

conferences and other professional development venues, scholarly and professional literature, Canadian media coverage, social media, and more. In a professional report entitled “The shifting landscape for intellectual freedom: Recent challenges in Canadian libraries,” in summarizing the results of the 2020 CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Challenges Survey, Thomas observes:

It is clear that, along with the familiar concerns about LGBTQ2AI [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, two-spirit, asexual, intersex] content, the occult and age appropriateness, the human rights issues that have risen to prominence over the last few years—sexual harassment, transgender rights, Indigenous rights, systemic racism, privacy—are not going away. Nor is the discussion of how some controversial speech and ideas can harm others. Libraries will need to engage fully with this shifting landscape to find the appropriate balance between allowing platforms for controversial ideas, whether as library events or room rentals, and allowing the harm that could result from them. It is a good reminder to us all that decisions about intellectual freedom should never be comfortable or easy. (Thomas, 2020)

Huang’s (2020) lead contribution to the *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*’s special issue on “Critical library and information studies: Educational opportunities” presents an unprecedented snapshot of some of the concerns in the Canadian library and information context today and in what she perceives to be its radical expression. She finds that it is attending to

increased cuts to library and archives, neoliberal discourse in library associations and policies, unionization at academic libraries, decolonization of library education and practice, the absence of Indigenous and people of colour librarians, librarianship as a feminist profession, the effects of postmodernism on archives, archiving of marginalized histories, social exclusion perpetuated by the profession, intellectual freedom for the library profession, advocacy for diversity in hiring and collections, and community-led librarianship. Two major events that have shaped contemporary radical librarianship in Canada are the cuts to Library and Archives Canada and the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report. Other shaping factors include the broader structures of neoliberalism, racism, and homo/transphobia, in addition to the debates on homelessness, Internet censorship, and technological innovation that has preoccupied the entire field of librarianship. (Huang, 2020: 11)

Huang also finds gaps that need filling—for example, on fronts such as

geographic contexts outside major English-speaking cities; theoretical perspectives using critical theory; perspectives from Indigenous and racialized librarians and archivists; critical LIAS [library, information, and archival studies] education and information literacy; social exclusion based on gender identity; critical work on homelessness and poverty; considerations of disability; and ties between librarianship, grassroots organizing and social movements in Canada. These silences are indicative of the persisting power relations that affect the library, archival and information setting. (Huang, 2020: 14)

Canadian librarianship is under growing scrutiny from across the political spectrum—for example, in numerous reactions to public libraries and public librarians renting rooms to third parties with speakers who have been labeled as hateful. This particular issue prompted the CFLA-FCAB’s March 2019 adoption of its position on “Third party use of publicly funded library meeting rooms and facilities” (Canadian Federation, 2019b). But issuing rhetoric does not end disagreement. And debate persists, as it should. Library rhetoric on intellectual freedom is persuasion and consensus-building, but is not intended to stifle the exchange of ideas, views, opinions, and beliefs. And importantly, like the established IFLA Statement, this new Canadian policy offering is a form of persuasion and consensus-building with no enforcement authority over any library administration. And this makes for a complicated terrain.

Ultimately, professional-association-based ethics statements do not trump employer rights, collective agreements, employee and customer codes of conduct, institutional policies with consequences if violated, human resources policies, an employer’s accountability to human rights codes, and labor law. At play within this dynamic matrix is the exploration of the limits of intellectual freedom within library culture for librarians and other information workers. This particular concern has endured through generations. It is alive and well in contemporary Canadian library discourse, where current calls for defining, redefining, and even confining intellectual freedom in the context of harm appear widely, and where library and information workers are front and center in the mix of opinion, perspective, and experience, and at times divided or even polarized.

The year 2019 proved to be action-packed for intellectual freedom and Canadian libraries. Much discord occurred over the appearances of the controversial speaker Megan Murphy, a gender-critical feminist, through third-party access to several public libraries. The fact that Murphy was linked to using library space for her agenda caused the ire of some trans

people and their allies. Arguments and debate captured broad public and media attention when both the Vancouver Public Library and the Toronto Public Library upheld their policies and the Canadian Charter of Rights in renting their rooms to organizations that had scheduled Murphy to speak.

As the chief executive officers and boards of these libraries defended their positions, one might wonder: Where is the support for those who go out on a limb in the defense of intellectual freedom? The mandate of the CFLA-FCAB Intellectual Freedom Committee is to advocate for the values of intellectual freedom as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Canada on behalf of the CFLA-FCAB Board of Directors. Alongside the Intellectual Freedom Committee, the Centre for Free Expression, based at Ryerson University, promotes public discussion of the importance of intellectual freedom. In cases where intellectual freedom is being challenged, the Centre provides advice and assistance through a Working Group on Intellectual Freedom, so that the issue can be resolved and the concerns leading to the challenge can be addressed meaningfully without compromising intellectual freedom. Both groups took the view that the libraries did the right thing, in part because of their interpretation that Murphy's speech itself did not constitute "hate speech" as defined by law. Librarians, of course, work within the law (although this does not prohibit them from engaging in law reform). There is no doubt that some members of the Canadian library community and beyond disagreed with that interpretation.

Intellectual freedom can be understood as a strategic human right that supports other rights such as freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and free development of personality. To date, intellectual freedom endures in Canadian librarianship as a thread binding past to present to future and as a condition of human rights, whistleblowing, witnessing, and justice, as well as being contested in explorations of injustice and harm.

Perhaps a Canadian shift to the development of language on workplace speech could help to advance wavering confidence in the value of intellectual freedom. To what extent, for example, could it help bring forward voices from within the library sector who self-censor, including those who are committed to intellectual freedom? To what extent might it offer those who disagree with intellectual freedom a way to experience and better value it? It should be noted, however, that the landmark Resolution on Workplace Speech adopted by the ALA in 2005 has no enforcement authority over library administration. And some of the enduring discussions around a possible sister

workplace-speech statement for the CFLA-FCAB reveal that it is a loaded topic, given the varied workplaces of CFLA-FCAB members and the weight of employment law. Ultimately, while the IFLA's (2012) Code of Ethics affirms that "[l]ibrarians and other information workers have the right to free speech in the workplace provided it does not infringe the principle of neutrality towards users," the reality of employment law and related human resource policies trump the rhetoric.

Interestingly, one Canadian public library has for some time sustained an intellectual freedom clause in its collective agreement. The Saskatoon Public Library's collective agreement states:

The Employer and the Union agree to be governed by the Intellectual Freedom statement of the Canadian Federation of Library Associations in their provision of library services to the community. Internally, matters of professional discussion should be governed by the same principles.

Employees have the right to express their views whether or not they differ from those of management or fellow employees provided they are not presented as the views of the Saskatoon Public Library. (Canadian Union, 2020: 9)

The UK context

The role of CILIP within the landscape of the UK library and information profession is, in essence, similar to that of the ALA in terms of accreditation of professional qualifications and enrolment to the Chartered Register of members. Its part in accrediting higher education qualifications and developing apprenticeship pathways to qualification has led to the CILIP Professional Knowledge and Skills Base becoming the underpinning core to much of the library and information science education curricula provided in UK universities. In its own words, CILIP places ethics and values at the heart of the Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (Chartered Institute, n.d. a). However, this centrality precludes any focus or content on the subject of intellectual freedom as a specific topic per se. Nor does it hold specific intellectual freedom campaigns, such as the ALA's Banned Books Week or the Canadian library community's established and broad participation in and contribution to the Freedom to Read Week (hosted by the Book and Periodical Council).

Indeed, in recent history, and at the same time as the demise of the Canadian Library Association and formation of the CFLA-FCAB, CILIP faced a "crisis of legitimacy," with the disillusionment of its members and falling membership numbers, a lack of

credibility, and “limited visibility as an advocate for the profession” (Morton et al., 2020: 4). The latter criticism was a widely held viewpoint amongst UK librarians, as subsequently demonstrated in the results of a survey of CILIP members. It therefore embarked on a process of online and offline engagement with its membership to reconsider and redetermine its strategic direction and “transform the organization into one that served and engaged its community” (Morton et al., 2020: 4). The resulting “conversational” campaign, using the hashtag #CILIP2020, led to the cocreation of its strategy for 2015–2020.

[CILIP’s] decision to launch a national advocacy campaign against the closure of public libraries in early 2016, and their response to calls for more affordable membership by launching a new membership model in 2018 demonstrate the achievement of some of the headline priorities (which were advocacy; workforce development; member services; standards and innovation; operations and governance) in the strategy so far. (Morton et al., 2020:12)

Despite this call for a stronger focus on advocacy, attitudes amongst librarians in the UK toward the defense of intellectual freedom, and the opposition to censorship in all circumstances, appear to be highly ambiguous. In particular, the disparities between the espoused principles and day-to-day practice have been commented on by a number of UK researchers. For example, McNicol (2016), in her work on school librarians’ intellectual freedom attitudes and practices, noted that “[t]here is frequently a noticeable divide between principles and practice” (330). Empirical work carried out in 2004 by the same author demonstrated that, in the UK, “librarians were more likely to subscribe to principles of intellectual freedom than to carry out practical actions to combat censorship” (332). This was manifested in acts of self-censorship—for example, not purchasing controversial publications in order to avoid challenges. In addition, the usually well-intentioned desire to avoid offence to sectors of the community, and to redeem historical injustices, has on occasion led to a tension between the specific principles of intellectual freedom and the broader strokes of social justice. Together with the impact of personal values, this has sometimes led to situations where, to quote Oppenheim and Smith (2004: 159), “librarians have been as irrational and discriminatory as other censors and at times for the same uncomfortable reason: personal taste.”

The advent of information and communications technologies, and particularly public Internet access, has further added to this ambivalence and a “watering

down” of the high-level principles of defending intellectual freedom. While this is likely to be the case in other jurisdictions as well as the UK, there is robust empirical evidence of this gap in practice in the UK through the findings of the Managing Access to the Internet in Public Libraries (MAIPLE) project, which explored the attitudes and practices of UK librarians toward the implementation of filtering software in their libraries. Indeed, the motivation for undertaking the MAIPLE study (funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council) was an observation on the part of the study’s principal investigator that, in the UK, “filtering software in public libraries seems, in practice, to have ‘crept in through the back door’ with little more than a murmur on the part of librarians” (Cooke, 2006). The study found that 100% of the Public Library Authorities responding to a questionnaire survey ($n = 80$) implemented filtering of Internet access (Spacey et al., 2014). Exploring this issue in further qualitative research, the reasons given for overriding the principle of intellectual freedom included duty of care toward minors and the prevention of potential harm:

Obviously there is material on the Internet it is illegal to possess or download and also there is material that would be unsuitable for children or younger people to access and so I think we have a duty of care to ensure that, for instance, children’s requirements for a safe environment are catered for. (Spacey et al., 2014: 45)

Further probing of this respondent as to how such a decision accorded with her professional commitments to intellectual freedom led to the following justification:

So I suppose, pragmatically, I’ve realized that although I may have had ethical concerns as a librarian, the reality is, I suspect, that for the half a million users we have every year, I’m not under the impression that it’s caused any particular problems. (Spacey et al., 2014: 45)

During the fieldwork for the study, many other such pragmatic justifications were offered to validate the decision to use filtering, including issues of service reputation: “So unfortunately, yes, we do have to operate filtering systems . . . because it will give parents confidence, parents and carers confidence, teachers as well, for the offer that we have” (Spacey et al., 2014: 51).

Indeed, in the UK, as in the USA and Canada, librarians have tended toward a left-of-center political alignment. Recent political movements such as the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo campaigns have tended to focus on what might best be called “the right not to be offended” over the right to

freedom of speech, even though there is in fact no statutory right not to be offended. Of course, there is legislation in place in the UK that criminalizes certain speech, such as racial hatred, extremism, and obscene content. However, the nub of the problem remains, as ever, in who determines the legality or otherwise of speech and, in particular, expressions of political belief. This has left UK librarians in an uncertain and difficult terrain when it comes to balancing personal beliefs, legal obligations, and professional commitments.

Discussion

Generally, there have been waves of debate about intellectual freedom and social responsibility across these nations. Certainly, this can be seen in the North American context, where approximately every 30 years from the 1930s and extending into the late 1960s and early 1970s librarians debated the social responsibility library movement, in a tightly bound matrix with the exploration of intellectual freedom and a rejection of library neutrality. And these debates expanded with the rise of the Internet in the 1990s, as seen in the USA, Canada, and the UK. They were characterized by controversies around access to (digital) information and concomitant attacks on school and public library Internet access policies, opposition to the commodification of information, the promotion of cultural diversity, the prioritization of people over capital, and the defense of democratic values. In the contemporary age, we see clashes around conceptions of neo-liberalism, neutrality, expressive freedom, justice, diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. The divergence of opinion comes from both the left and the right.

At the same time, librarianship as a profession struggles with advocacy and justifying itself to the broader community, particularly politicians and administrative institutions. Across all three nations, librarians have had to defend the need for their organizations and the core values that animate them. Core values like intellectual freedom, as found in the foundational documents of the ALA, the CFLA-FCAB, and CILIP, as well as the IFLA Statement, have been, and continue to be, of central importance to librarianship in the USA, Canada, and the UK. Yet it is fair to say that intellectual freedom is under siege from across the political spectrum, as librarians' professional and personal ethics diverge. There is a certain proportion of librarians who do not adhere to the promises of the IFLA Statement, thereby creating an ethical void and, arguably, although with positive intentions, committing a disservice to their patrons.

The exact proportion, however, is currently unknown. Is it a plurality? Are there more librarians who contradict the IFLA Statement from the left or from the right? Where are the most significant threats to intellectual freedom, and what should be done about them and by whom? To what extent is intellectual freedom sacrificed for expediency, for self-advocacy, or for mere survival of the library itself? Academic, practical, political, philosophical, and policy-based questions in this domain abound within, across, and transcending national contexts. It is important, moreover, to note that this essay has focused on three western democracies with strong histories of freedom of speech. Other nations, particularly those lacking a long (or any) history of democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and librarian education not controlled directly by the state, and so on, will have different perspectives on the significance and role of intellectual freedom in libraries and in society more broadly. These, also, need to be widely and deeply explored further through unfettered and intercultural research.

Conclusion

The IFLA Statement persists as iconic international-umbrella library rhetoric. However, the gap between library rhetoric and how it is practiced on the ground in different contexts is visibly shifting and under increased scrutiny, certainly in the USA, Canada, and the UK. This tension is not without historical precedent. What is different at present is the rate at which the tension is building and the scale on which it is capturing attention both within and outside library echelons. As the tension continues between professional ethical responsibilities and personal moral persuasions, the future of the IFLA Statement is as yet unwritten. We share a responsibility to continue to test its mettle.

Pursuing the open task of exchange of research and scholarship, and policy and practice, on intellectual freedom and the library workplace will help to identify both challenges and opportunities that are reflective of broader societal explorations in global information ethics, philosophy, ideology, law, human rights, social justice, and labor. As uncomfortable as it may be for libraries and the people who work in them to be under such close scrutiny, the upside is that people outside and inside library cultures care deeply about the role of the library in society. And that should go a long way to finding our way forward with compassion and conviction.

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Notes

1. Throughout this essay, we will use “librarians” but generally mean “librarians and library staff.” We believe that most library staff are (and should be) trained to and held to similar intellectual freedom standards and expectations—for example, as professional-status librarians.
2. The statement’s approval history is: Canadian Library Association: Adopted 27 June 1974; amended 17 November 1983, 18 November 1985, and 27 September 2015. CFLA-FCAB: adopted 26 August 2016; reviewed 12 April 2019.

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Long tail metaphysics: The epistemic crisis and intellectual freedom

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Abstract

In reaction to the epistemic crisis, efforts to restrict free expression and access to information have not only failed to preserve the truth, but sometimes also suppressed it. Libraries' commitment to intellectual freedom creates unique opportunities to deliver alternative solutions. By renewing the emphasis on intellectual freedom in core library functions like collections, education, and programming, libraries can provide the epistemic resources that patrons need amidst a broader context of distrust, manipulation, and censorship. This essay examines the epistemic crisis in the USA in light of intellectual freedom and the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom. Organized into three parts, this piece explores plurality as normative in the human condition, considers the impact of information and communications technology on free expression and the legitimacy of information institutions, and reconciles the emerging tensions by applying concepts from virtue epistemology to intellectual freedom. The essay concludes with considerations for library practice.

Keywords

Intellectual freedom, epistemic crisis, legitimacy crisis, epistemic virtues, communication ethics, epistemic pluralism, truth pluralism, epistemic agency, epistemic community, collective epistemology, library collections, library programming, information literacy, media literacy, long tail, metaphysics

Introduction

This essay examines the epistemic crisis in the USA in light of intellectual freedom and the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (IFLA/FAIFE, 1999). Organized into three parts, this piece explores plurality as normative in the human condition, considers the impact of information and communications technology (ICT) on free expression and the legitimacy of information institutions, and reconciles the emerging tensions by applying concepts from virtue epistemology to the practice of intellectual freedom. The first section, “Long tail metaphysics,” reviews the web-culture phenomenon of the long tail as a metaphor for broader epistemic and truth pluralism, citing power law distributions from various natural and social phenomena. Contextualized by the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom, long tail metaphysics is presented as a metaphor for pluralism in the Information Age. The second section, “Networked ontologies and the epistemic crisis,” considers pathologies of long tail metaphysics that characterize the current information environment.

These include the role of ICT in information disorder, the legitimacy crisis, and surveillance and speech suppression. This section critically interrogates the concept of the epistemic crisis and prevailing responses, which have exhibited significant failures in truth promotion while restricting freedom of expression and access to information. The third section, “Intellectual freedom and epistemic virtues,” concludes with virtue epistemology considerations for library practice, including strategies for promoting epistemic agency and collective epistemology in our patron communities, and emphasizing intellectual freedom as relevant to contemporary challenges in the information environment. The metaphor of long tail metaphysics reconciles libraries' commitment to intellectual freedom with their role as information institutions amidst a broad-spectrum epistemic crisis characterized by

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information disorder. Consideration of long tail metaphysics reveals new opportunities for libraries in promoting epistemic virtues and cultivating individual epistemic agency, shared epistemic community, and collective epistemic well-being.

Long tail metaphysics

Anderson (2004) was probably not thinking of Ranganathan's *Five Laws of Library Science* when he first described the long tail, but his depiction of the emerging relevance of niche markets in e-commerce is reminiscent of Law Three: every book its user [revert to original] (Ranganathan, 1931: 299). The long tail refers to a graph of a power law distribution, emphasizing the trailing length of data points representing idiosyncrasies and edge cases rather than the leading "short trunk" of common occurrences (Mossman, 2006; Sonderegger, 2005). What Anderson's long tail analysis reveals is that "there's latent demand for each piece of information you create" (Sonderegger, 2005: S6).

Similar power law distributions describe a variety of natural and social phenomena. Examples range from genetic properties, power system failures, and epidemics to languages spoken and word use within languages, population distribution and social networks, publications and citations, web server log activity and the structure of the World Wide Web (Andriani and McKelvey, 2007; Clingingsmith, 2017; Cohen and Small, 1998; Sonderegger, 2005; Wichmann, 2005). Such power laws describe not only human behaviors, but also the real-world conditions that shape them. This diversity of lived experience has implications for individuals' sense of reality, or ontology, as well as their search for truth, or epistemology. For example, the long tail of population distribution at altitude means that, for a small minority of the world's population living a kilometer or more above sea level, water does *not* boil at 100 °C, but at a slightly lower temperature due to decreased atmospheric pressure, with implications for food safety, cuisine, and cooking methods and equipment (Cohen and Small, 1998; Food Safety and Inspection Service, 2015). Even seemingly objective truths are subject to reconsideration from a long tail view. It does not always stand to reason that one or another party is "wrong" in a dispute over truth (Reed, 2001: 511). Truth pluralism is the recognition that truth is not uniformly singular—that "truth is a long tail phenomenon" (Hartman-Caverly, 2019: 207; Pederson and Wright, 2018).

In the context of information behaviors, long tail distributions result from "freedom of choice combined

with a large number of options" (Sonderegger, 2005: S6). The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom asserts that both the right to know and freedom of expression are "necessary conditions for freedom of access to information," and that "human beings have a fundamental right to access to expressions of knowledge, creative thought and intellectual activity, and to express their views publicly" (IFLA/FAIFE, 1999). Grounded in a commitment to intellectual freedom, "libraries were, in fact, among the first entities to ever serve niche markets" of the long tail (Mossman, 2006: 38).

Truth pluralism also suggests that objective facts alone are insufficient to negotiate agreed-upon truth (Hartman-Caverly, 2019: 207). Epistemic uncertainty about the nature of truth, objectivity, and reason emerged as a mid-20th-century epistemic crisis in the academy, which has since spread to the general population (Fountain, 2002; Gasparatou, 2018). The "hermeneutical turn" toward interpretation, subjectivity, and relativism generated a "plurality of perspectives that is deeply fragmented" (Fountain, 2002: 20–21), and rendered truth assertions open to contestation. The consequences of such intellectual experimentation manifest as competing truth claims in the public sphere—or worse, truth nihilism, or the sense that truth does not exist or no longer matters. In response, scholars across the humanities and social sciences are rallying to defend notions of truth anew, leading Grossberg (2018: 150) to observe wryly that, "in recent decades, ironically, the very idea of an objective Truth has been deconstructed by many of the same intellectuals who now want to come to its rescue."

Obscure academic trends are not the only forces impacting truth-making. New ICTs, including the Internet, social media, and near ubiquitous mobile connectivity, pose unprecedented affordances for the speed, scale, and scope of information-sharing. In an optimistic keynote lecture delivered at a policy forum hosted by the Europaeum in 2001, Internet pioneer Tim Berners-Lee anticipated the impact of ICT on diversifying culture, ways of knowing, and truth:

As we have this exchange, we, in fact, build up new concepts. We are not just trying to transmit the old one . . . This is always a trade-off, a tension, all about "culture" and "sub-culture" . . . A homogeneous system is clearly very dangerous. We need people with diverse ways of looking at the world, with different sub-cultures in the world. At the same time, the other fear expressed to me is that now we have the Internet, surely we will get the formation of cults? . . . I think society should be fractal; the one optimistic thought I have is that when I look

at people I think that most people do actually put their marbles fairly evenly into all kinds of different pots. There must be something that drives them not to always spend time at one particular scale. There must be something that evolution has given us so that we're naturally disposed to behave such that society becomes fractal and everything will be alright. (Berners-Lee, 2001: 17–21)

Berners-Lee here predicts the long tail of the Web, describing a diverse and decentralized epistemic plurality of fractal subcultures. Twenty years on, we know that “self-referentiality” in the long tail means that people can find websites, communities, and spaces which affirm their identities and world-views (Ramos, 2020: 6). This is certainly a positive development for people belonging to minoritized groups, political dissidents, or those sharing obscure interests—but the same affordances also exploit cognitive biases such as in-group preferences and motivated reasoning. Power struggles in the long tail of truth present new fronts in the culture wars and find people entrenching into their preferred episteme, or absenting themselves from civic and discursive participation (Fountain, 2002). Whether library workers choose to frame these conditions as primarily an epistemic crisis or epistemic opportunity has significant implications for the core value of intellectual freedom, and for library contributions to the epistemic well-being of society.

Networked ontologies and the epistemic crisis

The early optimism of cyber libertarianism has given way to concerns about the Internet's capacity to exacerbate social divisions and facilitate harms in the two decades since Berners-Lee's address at the European policy forum. The decentralized, non-hierarchical, and networked “attention backbone” structure of the Web democratizes expression and access to information, while also reducing costs and barriers for bad-faith actors to degrade the public information sphere (Benkler, 2006: 12–13; Benkler et al., 2018: 33). Claire Wardle, an influential commentator on information disorder, laments:

The promise of the digital age encouraged us to believe that only positive changes would come when we lived in hyper-connected communities able to access any information we needed with a click or a swipe. But this idealised vision has been swiftly replaced by a recognition that our information ecosystem is now dangerously polluted and is dividing rather than connecting us. (Wardle, 2019: 6)

Similarly, Lewandowsky et al. (2017) characterize contemporary discourse as a “post-truth era” featuring “alternative epistemologies that lead to alternative realities” (Habgood-Coote, 2019: 1043), seemingly disregarding the inverse possibility that differential realities may lead to divergent epistemologies.

The characteristics of the epistemic crisis include structural aspects, content considerations, and shifting epistemic norms. Structural aspects refer to interconnected information flows, information asymmetries, the instrumentalization of broadcast media, and the capacity of the Web's attention backbone to act as propaganda pipelines. Content considerations include “bullshit” (in the Frankfurtian sense),¹ conspiracy theories, disinformation, distraction through attention engineering, “fake news,” information overload, malinformation, manipulation, misinformation, polarization, propaganda, and surveillance (Benkler et al., 2018: 29–38; Frau-Meigs, 2019; Levak, 2020; Ramos, 2020; Rowell and Call-Cummings, 2020). Wardle (2019) succinctly describes information disorder as comprising misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation.

These structural and content characteristics emerged in a context of shifting epistemic norms, as postmodernist subjectivity and relativism rose to challenge modernist objectivity and rationalism. Grossberg (2018) observes that the epistemic crisis entails the lack of a shared basis for critically evaluating information, in which individuals and communities exhibit diverse value hierarchies with respect to information, evidence, and claims to authority. This epistemic diversity, in combination with the ability to entrench into one's epistemic in-group in the long tail, renders people more vulnerable to the exploitation of innate cognitive biases. Motivated reasoning and confirmation bias make “it easy to cleave to the familiar and to disregard or disparage the plurality of perspectives that inevitably accompany complex political issues” (Lenker, 2016: 524; see also Sullivan, 2019). Information disorder further interferes with belief regulation, which is defined as the process of forming, updating, and changing or abandoning beliefs as “rational persuasion is being undermined by social-epistemic forces” (Gunn, 2020: 562). The networked ontologies of the long tail have delivered more than the fractal subcultures that Berners-Lee presaged; they have also engendered the epistemic pathologies of information disorder, information overload, attention capture, and surveillance.

Sullivan (2019) observes the voluminous response of the library and information science community in the USA to information disorder, specifically in the wake of the 2016 presidential election. As Sullivan

(2019) shows, the library and information science response focused primarily on “fake news,” prioritizing the content and structural characteristics of the epistemic crisis. In some respects, “fake news” may be the least remarkable aspect of the contemporary epistemic crisis, as Waisbord (2018: 1866-67) observes that “deceitful information wrapped in news packages has a longer history than news consciously produced to represent real events.” Scholars have traced the history of political disinformation to at least the 6th century BC (Levak, 2020). What is perhaps a defining characteristic of 21st-century information disorder is declining trust in elite information institutions, paired with the layperson’s unprecedented capability for real-time mass communication (Benkler et al., 2018; Levak, 2020; Peters, 2000; Rowell and Call-Cummings, 2020). Consequently, solutions to information disorder must transcend structural and content considerations to also address its epistemic dimensions. Just as the legitimacy crisis presents an opportunity for individual prosumers (producers/consumers) to exert considerable influence in the information sphere, the epistemic crisis presents an opportunity for the library and information science community to explore intellectual freedom and its relationship to epistemic agency—and responsibility.

Legitimacy crisis: declining trust in information institutions

Concern about declining trust in institutions peaked in the US library and information science community following the 2016 presidential election (Sullivan, 2019), but much of the library response to the legitimacy crisis belies a presumption that broadcast media and other information institutions are *trustworthy*. Little consideration has been given to the evolution of broadcast media ethics over the last century, or to how the competitive pressures of new ICTs have shaped them. Truthfulness and objectivity in reporting were codified as mass media ethics by the American Society of News Editors in the early 20th century (Aznar, 2020). The scientific method served as a model to frame the “informative function” of journalism, guiding norms of truthfulness, accuracy, and objectivity; standardizing information-gathering, verification, and attribution techniques; and separating facts from opinions and reporting from advertising or state-sponsored propaganda (Aznar, 2020).

Paralleling the developments in mass media, disciplinary and professional organizations were formed to act as institutional gatekeepers for academic inquiry, information institutions, and related professions (Benkler et al., 2018). These trends accelerated

after World War II until the late 20th century, when communication ethics evolved in consideration of beneficence and a recognized need for the broader participation of those impacted by social and political developments—what might today be referred to as “social justice” (Aznar, 2020). This evolution in media ethics dovetailed with the postmodernist critique of objectivity and rationality in the academy. Nevertheless, a prevailing “hierarchical division of knowledge with elites and scientific experts atop” (Waisbord, 2018: 1870) maintained a controlling stake in the one-to-many broadcast structure of mass media that sustained, at the very least, a pretense of shared reality and truth, while simultaneously enabling the social elite to “manufacture consent” of the public when such need arose (Benkler et al., 2018).

The turn of the 21st century witnessed a fundamental disruption to this centralized hierarchical structure with the introduction of the Web. The network structure of the Internet and its affordances for direct many-to-many communications undermined the hierarchical, mediated broadcast structures on which the top-down information regime relied (Levak, 2020; Waisbord, 2018). “[New] ICTs, it was felt, could provide channels of social communication to complement those of traditional journalism, which had become too close to social, political, and economic power” (Aznar, 2020: 278). The technologies of the participatory Web meant that users could not only read the long tail—they would also write it, as described in the neologism “prosumer” (Levak, 2020). As a result, the participatory Web not only manifested significant gains for freedom of expression and access to information, but also provided an outlet for the pathologies of information disorder (Aznar, 2020; Di Pietro et al., 2021). The specific affordances of ICTs—including automation; disintermediation; discoverability, persistence, and ubiquity; unclear or obscured information provenance; anonymity and the potential for deception in authorship; the manipulation of content; and the coordination and manipulation of communication (Bimber and Gil de Zúñiga, 2020; Frau-Meigs, 2019)—demand renewed consideration of epistemic ethics, as it is no longer primarily professional journalists who influence the public sphere of opinion, but potentially anyone with a social media account.

Rather than seeking to differentiate itself from social media, scholars observe that broadcast media has come to reflect its conventions, including leveraging the structural capabilities of ICT, co-opting audience-generated content, and commodifying the “micro-macro politics of audience action” (Cabañes,

2020: 444; see also Lenker, 2016). At the same time as people are relying increasingly on social media and search engines for news discovery, these platforms are using algorithms and human moderators to select, rank, and display content, often in partnership with broadcast media companies and related professional organizations (Levak, 2020; Ramos, 2020). Recommender systems and other algorithms that leverage users' behavioral surplus to inform content display and manipulate social signals for the purposes of sentiment-shaping result in platforms that can artificially truncate the long tail of public opinion on behalf of establishment information institutions and the social and political elite (Bimber and Gil de Zúñiga, 2020; Levak, 2020; Ramos, 2020; Zuboff, 2019). Many scholars reference the Cambridge Analytica influence campaign as an example (Levak, 2020; Ramos, 2020), while Frau-Meigs (2019) stands apart by pinpointing the spring 2012 Obama re-election campaign's use of voter microtargeting, coinciding with Facebook's initial public offering (IPO), as a contemporary origin of "fake news" (see also History.com, 2020; Pilkington and Michel, 2012).

In addition to its epistemic effects, the "information overload" precipitated by ICT has rendered media users' attention a scarce commodity (Dahlgren, 2018; Grossberg, 2018). Members of the public have an unprecedented degree of choice in information outlets, and can at times navigate upstream to hear directly from first-hand witnesses and other primary sources where institutional intermediaries were once necessary to transmit information. In some regards, this has a flattening effect on information asymmetries, and individuals are able to supplement the "vertical trust" placed in institutions and affiliated experts with the "horizontal trust" they invest in fellow citizens and independent agents (Dahlgren, 2018; Frau-Meigs, 2019). This competition with producers in the attention economy is one of the driving factors that have led broadcast media to adapt its practices to the norms of social media and digital clickbait.

Epistemic policing: censorship, surveillance, and suppression of the right to know

Solutions to the epistemic crisis center on public education and the information supply chain. Public education approaches include digital literacy, information literacy, and media literacy programming, and further research on the interrelated epistemic and legitimacy crises (Aznar, 2020; Levak, 2020; Mayorga et al., 2020). Redress in the information supply chain includes both human-mediated endeavors and

automated interventions. People-driven interventions—including revitalizing the traditional journalistic ethics of objectivity and truth in reporting, reducing reliance on aggregate journalism and investing in original and investigative reporting, fact-checking, buttressing information gatekeepers, media self-regulation, state regulation, and accountability measures for sources of misinformation—have been proposed (Aznar, 2020; Levak, 2020; Mayorga, et al., 2020). Bimber and Gil de Zúñiga (2020: 710) call for the press to resume its role of "epistemic editing" by filtering truth from falsehood and managing information provenance.

Steensen (2019) claims that professional journalists are largely epistemically unprepared for the challenges and demands of the new information environment, which impairs their legitimacy. Emergent disinformation techniques, such as deepfakes, increasing reliance on data analysis, and the automated processes underpinning aggregate journalism, require new techniques and criteria for evaluating the credibility of sources, strain the statistical literacy of many media contributors, and exceed journalists' ability to critically analyze (often proprietary) code, imbuing journalistic claims with "more or less invisible layers of uncertainty" (Steensen, 2019: 186). In the USA and UK, recent political polling data, election predictions, and overly alarmist pandemic modeling provide ready examples of data that led journalists—and therefore policymakers and the public—astray (Arrieta-Kenna, 2016; McDonald, 2020; Silver, 2017a). Steensen (2019: 188) advocates that journalists practice the epistemic technique of source criticism—that is, "critical and systematic investigation by the journalist into all sources used in different phases of the journalistic production process."

A wide range of automated solutions are also operational, particularly on social media platforms, implicating an often unwitting public in what amounts to massive epistemic field experiments. Many of these solutions pose challenges for freedom of access to information as described in the IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom (IFLA/FAIFE, 1999), including both freedom of expression and the right to know. Some automated solutions are designed to amplify the distribution of what is perceived to be high-quality information, while many others restrict the flow of what is perceived to be information disorder (Di Pietro et al., 2021). Social media platforms became more proactive in curating, or manipulating, user feeds following the 2016 US presidential election, including automatically censoring or deranking certain content based on models of "fake news" (Glisson, 2019; Mayorga et al., 2020). Artificial

intelligence and machine learning applications are actively used to assist human moderation, and to automatically curate information and detect, label, suppress, or censor misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (Di Pietro et al., 2021; Levak, 2020; Mayorga et al., 2020). Some of these automated solutions are trained by crowdsourced evaluations of information veracity (Chambers, 2021), while others rely on linguistic, visual, user, post, and network-based features rather than an actual evaluation of information credibility (Di Pietro et al., 2021). Habgood-Coote (2019: 1041) dubs these techniques “epistemic policing,” noting that arbitrary standards for declaring content “fake news” are exploitable by bad-faith state and non-state actors as propaganda to justify censorship, and broadcast media personalities are themselves directly involved in speech suppression and censorship campaigns (Greenwald, 2021a, 2021b). It should also be noted that any solution that affects an individual’s ability to access or express information necessarily relies on the active or automated monitoring of that individual’s expressive activities—in other words, surveillance of their speech.

Reactionary responses to the epistemic crisis are not without their critics, who admonish that the cure should not be worse than the disease. In Glisson’s (2019: 474) words, “big tech companies have the tendency to solve dysfunction with tech-driven solutions that compound the problem.” Surveillance- and censorship-based responses to information disorder infringe freedom of speech and the right to know, “with inhibiting damages on democratic processes” (Frau-Meigs, 2019: 18). Content-moderation practices may also constitute epistemic and hermeneutical injustice, resulting in incomplete information, inhibited ways of knowing, and weakened interpretive heuristics that are “structurally prejudiced” against members of oppressed and marginalized communities (Fricker, 2008: 69). According to Fricker (2008), censorship also commits an ethical harm in that the testifier is wronged in their capacity as a knower. Interventions that restrict freedom of expression and access to information are often politicized, and characterized as a crackdown on dissenting views (Staub, 2021)—the consideration of which is necessary to critical thinking (Hare, 2002).

Fact-checking, the curation of social media feeds to surface opposing viewpoints, media literacy campaigns, and other ideological “exposure therapy” efforts can also trigger an unintended “backfire effect” (Bimber and Gil de Zúñiga, 2020: 710; see also Stasavage, 2007). Empirical studies have found that exposing media users to opposing political views

or even editorial corrections can be counterproductive, strengthening their preexisting beliefs or trust in the original faulty reporting (Bail et al., 2018; Lenker, 2016). As it is also known that “fake news” travels faster, further, and deeper through social networks, the very possibility that correcting a news story can inspire ideologically predisposed readers to trust the original reporting poses doubly perverse incentives for systematically reporting errors that align with existing media biases (Attkisson, 2021; Greenwald, 2019; Vosoughi et al., 2018).

While reforms that emphasize fact-checking and public education do not pose such direct challenges to the right to know, they are based in a deficit model that does not account for the full spectrum of media consumers’ epistemic activities (Waisbord, 2018). Cabañes (2020: 436) characterizes reactions to “fake news” following the 2016 US presidential election as a moral panic, asserting that they “tend to overinflate the manipulative power of technologies and assume that dumbed-down social media users are unable to recognize truth and lies” while ignoring the performative “cultural, emotional, and narrational roots” of expressive activities. Fact-checking is found to be ineffective in mitigating the spread of presumed “fake news,” and Frau-Meigs (2019: 20) criticizes the approach as creating “an echo chamber for journalists” (see also Cabañes, 2020). Further, errors made by fact-checkers make them vulnerable to criticism from so-called “conspiracy communities” (Frau-Meigs, 2019: 20), such as when PolitiFact walked back its claim that severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-2) could not have resulted from laboratory manipulation (Funke, 2021). Moreover, media and information literacy has been co-opted by commercial actors with conflicts of interest, including major advertising technology companies like Facebook and Google (Frau-Meigs, 2019). The co-dependency of broadcast media, social media, and society’s elite raises significant implications for fact-checking collaborations and content-moderation practices (Steensen, 2019), and the legitimacy crisis undermines the efficacy of education efforts led by establishment information institutions.

Epistemic crisis—for whom?

To date, interventions in the epistemic crisis have sought to buttress established information institutions against declines in trust and competition for users’ attention from new entrants into the information marketplace. Many of these interventions, ranging from proposed media regulations and accountability measures to coordinated and automated fact-checking

efforts that manipulate, suppress, or censor information, pose clear and present dangers for the freedoms of expression and right to know. Furthermore, these interventions are oriented to a deficit model which presumes that the lay public is incapable of seeking, interpreting, applying, and crafting information to advance individual and collective interests. This analysis begs the question: To whom, exactly, does the epistemic crisis pose its threat?

Before attributing the declining trust in information institutions that characterizes the legitimacy crisis to a deficiency in the lay public, it is worth considering the extent to which information institutions serve the public's interest in a manner deserving of trust. Gallup's (2020) nearly 50-year tracking of confidence in various social and political institutions shows consistent declines over that period. Other measures show declining trends in trust in media, experts, and government worldwide, with differences observed across political, educational, and socioeconomic demographics (Bimber and Gil de Zúñiga, 2020; Brennan, 2020; Edelman, 2021; Jaschik, 2018; Rainie et al., 2019). Bimber and Gil de Zúñiga (2020: 702) observe that "decaying trust in media and institutions" is a global phenomenon. Summarizing 20 years of public-trust tracking, Edelman (2020) writes: "Trust suffers too when hard truths have been exposed."

The past five years in the USA have witnessed a crescendo of concern about the epistemic crisis, generating such truth exposés as the broadcast media's role in laundering the equal parts salacious and fallacious Steele dossier (Bovard, 2019; Meier, 2021; Taibbi, 2019a); reliance on said dossier to pursue secret Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) surveillance on a political candidate and his network of communications, implicating state and intelligence agency actors in the creation of disinformation (Bovard, 2019; Waisbord, 2018); the implosion of the Trump–Russia collusion allegations (Greenwald, 2019, 2021c; Taibbi, 2019b, 2019c); media *mea culpa*s on cultural flashpoints like the Nick Sandmann and Jussie Smollett incidents (Soave, 2020; Varma, 2019); censorship of the Hunter Biden laptop disclosures as "fake news" and "foreign disinformation," but which turned out to be authentic (Greenwald, 2020a, 2020b, 2021d; Nelson, 2021; Post Editorial Board, 2020; Taibbi, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c; Turley, 2020); and flip-flopping on pandemic public health measures and suppression of the coronavirus laboratory origin hypothesis as a xenophobic conspiracy theory (Funke, 2021; Jingnan, 2020; Miller, 2021; Taibbi, 2020d)—to name a few. In August 2016, Jim Rutenberg, a writer at large for the *New York Times*, famously advocated to "throw out the textbook that

American journalism has been using for the past half-century" in the media's coverage of Trump's candidacy (Rutenberg, 2016a), only to wonder how the media's 2016 presidential election predictions proved so profoundly wrong three months later (Rutenberg, 2016b; see also Gurri, 2021; Taibbi, 2020e, 2020f, 2020g). Other media analysts came to recognize the potential existence of politicized groupthink in the media (Patterson, 2017; Shafer and Doherty, 2017; Silver, 2017b; Weiss, 2020), and two-thirds of US adults polled observed bias in their own preferred news sources (Shearer, 2020). Such errors are not incidental, but systemic; not inconsequential, but concerning major issues of the time. It is no wonder, then, that many speak of declining trust in institutions (Mounck, 2020; Schudson, 2019; Taibbi, 2021a, 2021b).

When broadcast media has demonstrably botched such pivotal public interest stories as Trump–Russia collusion, Biden corruption, and the coronavirus pandemic in the USA by abandoning long-held epistemic norms of accuracy, sourcing, and objectivity—and done so in a consistent ideological trajectory—it is no longer convincing to lay the epistemic crisis at the public's feet as a "trend toward increased occurrence of widely held false beliefs by citizens about public matters" (Bimber and Gil de Zúñiga, 2020: 704). Analyses of the epistemic crisis frequently pit the lay masses against the elite information establishment, characterizing the many-to-many communication capabilities of ICT as enabling a usurpation of the authority of gatekeeping information institutions (Mayorga et al., 2020). Peters (2000: 4) confesses that when authority is ignored, "*we, the long-empowered, do not know what to do*" (my emphasis). Benkler et al. (2018: 3) blame "technological processes *beyond the control* of any one person or county" for the current epistemic crisis (my emphasis). Waisbord (2018: 1867) observes that ICT has made "information *unvetted by conventional news organizations*" accessible and influential (my emphasis). Levak (2020: 43–44, 48) comments that prosumers have bypassed the gatekeeping role of "*persons who decide what and which kind of information will be placed in the public*," such as editors and journalists, and that decentralized communication means that "*the source of information is now usually incontrollable [sic] and unverifiable*" (my emphasis). Di Pietro et al. (2021: 10) warn that "the producers of information themselves, *publicly deprived of the role of information gatekeepers, are forced to compete against every individual* to obtain public attention" (my emphasis). Bimber and Gil de Zúñiga (2020: 709) mark the end of the mass media era, "when news businesses exerted

much stronger gatekeeping and validation functions over the content of information reaching publics” (my emphasis).

While experts mourn the legacy of the broadcast model as moribund (Dotto et al., 2020), they nevertheless find a world in which the truth is agreed upon through open access to information and public discourse rather than imposed through a hierarchy of expertise to be intolerable (Lewandowsky et al., 2017; Mayorga et al., 2020). The reactionary deployment of “post-truth” rhetoric and the interventions it justifies serve to insulate established information institutions from legitimate critiques (Habgood-Coote, 2019: 1056). The epistemic crisis is declared on behalf of the “elite consensus” (Waisbord, 2018: 1869) and its loss of control over what constitutes public knowledge and shared truth. Habgood-Coote provides this biting analysis:

I would suggest that historically speaking, the most salient feature of contemporary epistemic problems is their target. The only novelty is that it is white middle class liberals rather than members of oppressed groups who are struggling to get purchase in public discourse. (Habgood-Coote, 2019: 1056–1057)

Writing in 2000, Peters (2000: 18) predicted that “the information wars that will shape our time are not about what information is electronically vulnerable, but about what information is culturally permissible.” This prescient observation is reflected in attempts by established information institutions to resecure their position in the epistemic hierarchy. Some warn that democratic institutions cannot survive “differences in perceived reality” (Miller and Kirwan, 2019), forgetting that democratic institutions evolved specifically to reconcile and synthesize such differences into a common, shared reality. These anxieties are reflected in Berners-Lee’s Contract for the Web, which was released nearly 20 years after his cheery address to the Europaeum policy forum in 2001. In an op-ed announcing the Contract for the Web, Berners-Lee asserts:

The web needs radical intervention from all those who have power over its future: governments that can legislate and regulate; companies that design products; civil society groups and activists who hold the powerful to account; and every single web user who interacts with others online. (Berners-Lee, 2019)

The Contract for the Web proposes a more centralized and top-down Internet governance structure, marking a stark departure from the semi-independent fractal subcultures that Berners-Lee extolled in 2001. While many

of the commitments in the contract are laudable, it also calls for government regulation on content moderation, “including with the aim of limiting the impacts of misinformation and disinformation,” and for companies to report regularly on accountability measures implemented to mitigate information disorder (World Wide Web Foundation, 2021: 4, 8). Despite numerous references to protection for human rights, it is unclear how such top-down measures could be implemented without hindering the right to know.

The challenge of the epistemic crisis is not so much a selective straying from the objective truth as it is a predictable disruption in the reigning “hegemony of the ‘regime of truth’” precipitated by the sudden transition from information scarcity to information abundance, and from hierarchical one-to-many broadcasts to networked many-to-many communications (Waisbord, 2018: 1869). With new forms of ICT come expanded freedoms of expression and access to information. The resulting social networks both reveal and enable the creation of “identity communities with different epistemologies in their engagement with news and information” (Waisbord, 2018: 1869), through which “citizens could establish new foundations of epistemic as well as social trust” (Dahlgren, 2018: 24). Interestingly, empirical studies find that ICT has not meaningfully increased the number of people with whom users routinely interact, and provides little support for social epistemology at scale (Gonçalves et al., 2011). Countering concerns for the stability of democracies, some refer to this collective epistemic shift as a move toward a knowledge democracy, in which citizens “disrupt and delegitimize dominant and hegemonic epistemologies and work toward a privileging of community-centered ones” (Rowell and Call-Cummings, 2020: 73). The epistemic crisis is a reassertion of long tail metaphysics.

Libraries are among the information institutions that are exhibiting an existential crisis amidst the diminishment of their gatekeeping role. Sullivan (2019: 93) observes that, in some library and information science literature, “fake news comes to stand in for anything that contrasts with libraries.” This has led to a damaging tendency to dichotomize the information landscape in library and information science research and practice, categorizing sources, methods, and claims into oversimplified true/false or good/bad groupings, and over-relying on critiques of filter-bubble and echo-chamber phenomena (Sullivan, 2019). For example, a popular trade article published early in the pandemic characterized the virus laboratory origin hypothesis and potential for state-mandated lockdowns as misinformation, recommending that librarians refer patrons to trusted information

authorities like the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and fact-checking organizations like PolitiFact (Ostman, 2020). In hindsight, the laboratory origin hypothesis is now under serious consideration for understanding the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 (Farhi and Barr, 2021); numerous states in the USA and localities and countries abroad restricted the activities of citizens under a public health policy referred to as “lockdown” (Ladha, 2020); and the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and PolitiFact (not to mention academic journals) have all been forced to retract prior claims about the pandemic (Funke, 2021; Jingnan, 2020; Miller, 2021; Retraction Watch, 2020). Sullivan (2019: 97) warns that such overconfidence in the face of library workers’ own epistemic fallibility risks positioning the problem of information disorder as “somehow outside of themselves.”

Though libraries are exceptional among information institutions in sustaining a high level of public trust, it is imprudent to assume that libraries are insulated from the same legitimacy crisis (Frau-Meigs, 2019; Geiger, 2017). More importantly, dichotomizing the information landscape, and failure to “oppose any form of censorship,” implicates libraries in epistemic injustices and contradicts the general duty to uphold principles of the right to know, freedom of expression, and freedom of access to information (IFLA/FAIFE, 1999). It is time for libraries to contend with a more complex reality: that “when expression blooms, truth inevitably becomes contested” (Waisbord, 2018: 1871). This does not mean that libraries, and the patrons they serve, should settle for untruths or truth nihilism, but rather that they should recognize the inevitability of epistemic risk (Reed, 2013), and invest in practices that facilitate epistemic risk management.

Intellectual freedom and epistemic virtues

Libraries serve patrons whose epistemic realities are increasingly shaped by long tail experiences rather than mainstay information sources (Dahlgren, 2018). On serving patrons in the long tail, Mossman (2006: 40) advises that libraries “embrace the paradox that the internet is both our competitor and not our competitor” in advancing the right to know. Instead of focusing on fact-checking and literacy efforts that rely on true/false information evaluation and good/bad source credibility—approaches which have demonstrably short shelf lives and may alienate patrons with diverse ways of knowing—libraries can distinguish themselves by resisting

information disorder through engagement with evergreen epistemic virtues, including the motivation to seek out “counter-belief information” and the analytical skills to evaluate it, which contribute to the ability to update beliefs in light of new evidence (Grossberg, 2018; Mayorga et al., 2020: 203). This suggests that libraries should shift the trust paradigm beyond information authorities onto patrons and their communities, recognizing that “the average citizen makes highly effective economic, moral, and cultural calculations on a daily basis” (Peters, 2000: 8).

An epistemic-virtue orientation also aligns better with libraries’ commitment to intellectual freedom and the freedoms of expression and access to information. Because virtues are properties of agents (Riggs, 2010), the primary focus of epistemic-virtue work is centered on the individual patron and their community, born of respect for their “inner world” and the intellectual autonomy that springs from it, and defined as “the right or idea of self-direction in the acquisition and maintenance of beliefs” (Zagzebski, 2013: 259). Moreover, if the average person can play a more active role in the epistemic lives of others through their use of ICTs, it is reasonable to expect them to exercise this power ethically (Aznar, 2020; Waisbord, 2018). Epistemic virtues answer this need. These approaches are directly in line with the IFLA/FAIFE’s (Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression Advisory Committee’s) (1999) call for libraries to act in support of “lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development for both individuals and groups.”

Virtues are the combined capacity and motivation to do well (Elgin, 2013). Epistemic virtues are those techniques and motivations involved in the formation of accurate and reliable beliefs about the world (Olson, 2015; Reed, 2001). Such virtues are “truth conducive” in that exercising them is more likely to lead to true belief, knowledge, or understanding than doing otherwise (Elgin, 2013: 137). Responsibilist virtue epistemology, which concerns techniques and motivations that justify commitment to a belief, provides opportunities for libraries to work with patrons on their strategies for seeking and integrating information into their worldviews and decision-making frameworks. Responsibilist epistemic virtues include practices like appropriate skepticism, attentiveness to evidence, awareness of fallibility, conscientiousness, curiosity, disinterestedness, fair-mindedness, impartiality, knowledgeable-ness, objectivity, open-mindedness, patience, and rigor, which manifest in behaviors like

conscious reflection, deliberation, and justified belief endorsement within a community (Elgin, 2013; Eriksson and Lindberg, 2016; Fairweather and Montemayor, 2018; Fountain, 2002; Hare, 2009; Olson, 2015; Riggs, 2010; Taylor, 2016; Zagzebski, 2013). These practices are considered virtuous because they require effort or come at a cost to the knower—including the risk of having to abandon or update one's preexisting beliefs (Chambers, 2021; Hare, 2002).

Reorienting the library focus from information and source evaluation to epistemic virtues also creates space for epistemic diversity—the recognition that “there are a group of people who reason and form beliefs in ways that are significantly different from the way we do” (Brown, 2013: 326). Patrons and the communities to which they belong are neither homogeneous nor irrational (Cabañes, 2020). The fundamental diversity of personal values as described by the Schwartz theory of basic human values and moral foundations theory influence and manifest in information-seeking behaviors (Dogtuyol et al., 2019; Graham et al., 2013; Kalimeri et al., 2019; Schwartz, 2012). Riggs espouses the value of exposure to diverse ideas and worldviews for epistemic development, saying:

Closed-mindedness can be the result of taking one's own assumptions to be obvious and universal, hence incontrovertible. To discover that those assumptions are not shared by people across time, place, and culture can help one see that one's assumptions are controvertible after all. (Riggs, 2010: 183–184)

Rather than framing questions and topics to achieve “ideological closure,” libraries should provide spaces for “groups of people who can bring to bear diverse and even divergent understandings of the same world” (Cabañes, 2020: 437). The core library value of intellectual freedom has long acknowledged the realities of epistemic and truth pluralism. The IFLA/FAIFE (1999) statement calls on libraries to provide equal access to “materials, facilities and services” for all users, free from exclusion, including on the basis of “creed.” It is critical that libraries recognize the long tail of epistemic experience while also providing opportunities for those with divergent worldviews to engage with each other and recognize their epistemic interdependencies, and enabling the possibility of achieving shared truths through dialogic listening (Cabañes, 2020; Chambers, 2021; Ramos, 2020; Rowell and Call-Cummings, 2020; Waisbord, 2018). Core library functions like collections, education, and programming can support such

epistemic agency at both the individual patron and patron community levels.

Epistemic agency

Epistemic agency refers to the conscious control one can exert over one's habits of belief formation, and allows knowers to take responsibility, and be held accountable, for their beliefs (Fernandez, 2013; Gunn, 2020; Heikkilä et al., 2020; Olson, 2015). While the concept of epistemic agency is not without its critics (e.g. Kornblith, 2012), many recognize that people are capable of higher-order thinking and reasoning, attentiveness, self-monitoring, and self-reflection, and applying some criteria to knowledge acquisition, understanding, and belief justification (Heikkilä et al., 2020; Olson, 2015; Reed, 2001; Riggs, 2010; Sosa, 2014, 2015; Tollefsen, 2006; Zagzebski, 2013). Epistemic agency involves “epistemic deliberation” or the consideration of evidence, methods, and interpretive heuristics, which themselves rely on information behaviors (Fernandez, 2013; Heikkilä et al., 2020; Sullivan, 2019). The selection of and participation in information-seeking and epistemic-deliberation activities confers attributability and responsibility on the epistemic agent (Fernandez, 2013). Rather than pursuing a specific belief as a goal, epistemically responsible knowers “form, sustain, and revise their beliefs, methods, and standards” under the direction of evidence and reasoning, and maintain awareness of factors influencing their epistemic deliberation (Elgin, 2013: 139; see also Olson, 2015; Tollefsen, 2006).

Despite their ability to take responsibility for their beliefs, epistemic agents are not fully independent, but are subject to epistemic dependencies: in other words, one cannot know everything there is to be known (Markauskaite and Goodyear, 2016; Sullivan et al., 2020). One of the functions of an epistemic agent is to decide when to recognize and revoke the epistemic authority of those perceived as experts (Elgin, 2013; Fricker, 2008; Zagzebski, 2013). Likewise, epistemic agents recognize the influence they have on others who are epistemically dependent on them, and are prepared to offer reasoned justifications for what they think—especially when their beliefs contradict mainstream views (Elgin, 2013; Gunn, 2020). The practice of epistemic virtues can enable epistemic agents to mitigate cognitive biases, making them “more likely to contribute to epistemic life in productive ways” (Gunn, 2020: 574; see also Sosa, 2011).

Epistemic community

Beyond the notion of epistemic dependence, it is recognized that “groups, themselves, can be epistemic agents” (Tollefsen, 2006: 310; see also Sosa, 2014). Attending to epistemic community is critical to the pursuit of consensus truths and shared reality (Ramos, 2020; Waisbord, 2018). Epistemic norms, including both virtues and duties to others, are “norm[s] of social cooperation” that arise from “collective efforts to explain and predict the world around us” (Brown, 2013: 337; see also Elgin, 2013; Eriksson and Lindberg, 2016; Gunn, 2020; Olson, 2015; Tollefsen, 2006: 312). As communities are more or less vulnerable to the cost of false beliefs, they exhibit different degrees of epistemic risk and risk aversion, which influence the duties of participating epistemic agents and what they ought and ought not to believe (Brown, 2013; Olson, 2015). Thus, when an objective and consensus truth is not attainable, either generally or with the time and resources available, the collective epistemic imperative might shift to “trying to reduce the chance of error to a level we can live with” (Reed, 2013: 63; see also Elgin, 2013; Sosa, 2014; Zagzebski, 2013).

Epistemic communities are constituted through the reciprocity of the participating epistemic agents, which have a mutual duty either to satisfy the community’s norms and standards for knowledge or to offer justification for altering or defying them (Elgin, 2013; Eriksson and Lindberg, 2016; Gunn, 2020). Open dialogue and attentive listening are necessary to sustain deliberative epistemic communities (Chambers, 2021; Elgin, 2013; Tollefsen, 2006). Deliberations within, and between, epistemic communities can surface errors, new information, and alternative possibilities that refine and enrich members’ worldviews (Brown, 2013; Tollefsen, 2006). Healthy epistemic communities manifest the core features of democratic “mini-publics”—“open and free debate, equal status of citizens, the circulation of information, and pluralism”—which are necessary for collective sense-making and achieving shared truths (Chambers, 2021: 153–154; see also Waisbord, 2018). These conditions promote epistemic trust, “the glue that holds epistemic life together” (Gunn, 2020: 569).

Libraries as epistemic community members

Sullivan (2019) suggests leveraging persistent public trust in libraries to intervene in the legitimacy crisis on behalf of other information institutions and experts. Rather than buttress the authority of these institutions for their own sake—often in alignment with epistemic interventions that run counter to

intellectual freedom values, including surveillance-backed content moderation and speech suppression—libraries should reciprocate the public’s trust as a partner in the epistemic community (Eriksson and Lindberg, 2016; Gunn, 2020). Through the core library functions of collection curation, education, and community programming, libraries can provide resources for patrons to critically evaluate their epistemic (in)security, challenge their own thinking, seek out more diverse information, and meaningfully enhance their epistemic resources and networks (Eriksson and Lindberg, 2016; Markauskaite and Goodyear, 2016; Sullivan et al., 2020). With collections, libraries can distinguish themselves from information institutions suffering the legitimacy crisis by fulfilling IFLA/FAIFE’s (1999) call to “acquire, preserve and make available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society . . . governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views.” Epistemic security is enhanced to a large degree simply through access to a wide range of information sources and perspectives, and robust, diverse collections provide materials for patrons to repair the epistemic damages of censorship, suppression, and curiosity-shaming (Fernandez, 2013).

Library education and programming featuring opportunities to activate epistemological frames, such as curiosity, inquiry, wonderment, discussion, and evidence and argumentation, are optimized to “not only avoid indoctrination in every form but also help [patrons] to learn how to recognize and resist indoctrination and to develop their own independent judgment” (Hare, 2009: 39; see also Gunn, 2020; Lenker, 2016; Markauskaite and Goodyear, 2016). Information and media literacy efforts should evolve from the linear information timeline of broadcast media production to include a “cyberist view of the participatory web” with its complex, networked, long tail ontologies (Frau-Meigs, 2019: 11). Patrons should also learn how the design, algorithms, business models, and regulatory contexts of the platforms where they seek out news and information can impact their thinking (Frau-Meigs, 2019; Head et al., 2020; Zagzebski, 2013). Passive programming, including resource displays, can be designed to feature a spectrum of viewpoints on a topic and to place media claims of breakthrough findings into a broader context, with takeaway (or digital) guides that explain the designer’s selection criteria and provide metacognitive reflection questions to expand patrons’ knowledge, prompt self-awareness, and situate them within a broader epistemic community (Grossberg, 2018; Lenker, 2016; Reed, 2013; Vydiswaran et al.,

2015). Notably, Habgood-Coote (2019: 1054) cautions against use of terms like “fake news,” “post-truth,” and other “epistemic slurs” used for “epistemic policing” that have been politicized and weaponized by bad-faith actors, calling the phrases a “pretty clear example of interfering with others’ beliefs by manipulating their emotions and dispositions to trust.”

Library responses to the epistemic crisis will fall short if they focus solely on individual patrons as epistemic agents without investing in the collective epistemic community (Gunn, 2020). Acting as a third space, libraries can promote healthy epistemic communities by hosting structured community forums that optimize participation, attentive listening, nuance, and respect for viewpoint diversity, such as those facilitated by Braver Angels (Braver Angels, 2020; Fountain, 2002; Glisson, 2019; Gunn, 2020; Habgood-Coote, 2019; Hare, 2009; Lenker, 2020; Rowell and Call-Cummings, 2020). Where real-time events are impractical, or to preserve the privacy and anonymity of participants, digital and physical engagement boards can be made available, where patrons respond to prompts and engage with each other’s contributions, cooperatively generating a topical community mind map. Cultivating individual and collective epistemic virtues is fundamental to civic functioning and well-being in a complex information society, offering a kind of preventive or complementary therapy for the epistemic crisis (Eriksson and Lindberg, 2016; Hare, 2006; Heikkilä et al., 2020; Riggs, 2010).

Intellectual freedom and epistemic opportunity

In reaction to the epistemic crisis, coordinated efforts among established information institutions to restrict the freedoms of expression and access to information have not only failed to preserve the truth, but, in many cases, evidently also distorted or suppressed it. Given their exceptional commitment to intellectual freedom and continued legitimacy in the public eye, libraries have a unique opportunity to deliver alternative solutions to the epistemic crisis. By renewing the emphasis on intellectual freedom in core library functions like collections, education, and programming, libraries can provide the epistemic resources that patrons and communities need amidst a broader epistemic context of doubt, distrust, manipulation, suppression, and censorship. Creating opportunities for the activation of epistemic frames that nurture epistemic virtues (such as considering alternative viewpoints, attending to new information, and critically examining and updating assumptions) is a way that

libraries can contribute to the best of all possible worlds—one in which Berners-Lee’s (2001) fractal subcultures recognize, respect, and take responsibility for their epistemic dependence on each other (see also Hare, 2006). Through the practice of intellectual freedom, libraries have long acknowledged, and served, the long tail metaphysics of their patrons and patron communities. The epistemic crisis is an opportunity to redouble these efforts.

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Note

1. “Since bullshit need not be false, it differs from lies in its misrepresentational intent. The bullshitter may not deceive us, or even intend to do so, either about the facts or about what he takes the facts to be. What he does necessarily attempt to deceive us about is his enterprise” (Frankfurt, 2009: 54)..

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Author biography

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Abstracts

A declaration for all seasons: The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

إعلان لكل العصور: بيان الإفلا بشأن المكتبات والحرية الفكرية
اليكس بيرن
مجلة الإفلا، 48-3

الخلاصة

الملخص: عقب مُضي ربع قرن على التأسيس التاريخي للجنة الإفلا المعنية بحرية الوصول إلى المعلومات وحرية التعبير (FAIFE)، حان الوقت للتأمل في بيان الإفلا الذي بات معلماً بارزاً في مسيرة المكتبات والحرية الفكرية.

لقد عمد البيان إلى توسعة نطاق مجال اختصاص الإفلا، وجعل الحرية الفكرية حقاً أساسياً من حقوق الإنسان، ومسؤولية أساسية لمهنة المكتبات التي تعمل في إطار التزاماتها بالتنوع والتعددية. وكما يتضح من الأمثلة التي ساقها المقال، ما زال البيان مهماً وصالحاً لكل العصور. وتشمل المسائل التي يجب معالجتها طائفة واسعة من الشواغل تتعلق بالعدالة الاجتماعية، وشواغل عالمية تكتسي أهمية لدى جميع الأطراف في قطاع المكتبات والمعلومات. ولمعالجة هذه الشواغل وتعزيز الحرية الفكرية يجب علينا كوكلاء معلومات موثوقين التدخل لمساعدة مجتمعاتنا على استخدام الإنترنت بحكمة وتحقيق أقصى فائدة ممكنة. إن مجتمعاتنا تطالب مهنتنا بالعمل المتضافر، وتقديم تقارير منتظمة ومناقشات في مؤلفات نظم المكتبات والمعلومات. وعلى الرغم من أن الدور الذي تؤديه مهنتنا مليء بالتحديات، فإنه ضروري للحفاظ على واحدة من أئمن حقوق الإنسانية، ألا وهي الحرية الفكرية.

Intellectual freedom and alternative priorities in library and information science research: A longitudinal study

الحرية الفكرية والأولويات البديلة في بحوث علوم المكتبات والمعلومات: دراسة طولية
غابرييل ج. جاردنر
مجلة الإفلا، 48-3

الخلاصة

الملخص: يقدم هذا المقال تحليلاً بليومترياً للمؤلفات المنشورة في مجال المكتبات وعلوم المعلومات، بغرض تتبع مدى تركيزها على موضوعات الحرية الفكرية والحيادية بالمقارنة مع قائمة موضوعات

بديلة وربما منافسة. وتبرهن الدراسات الطولية من خلال تسجيل عدد من نتائج مصطلحات البحث المختلفة ذات الصلة بالحرية الفكرية والحيادية والتنوع والإنصاف والشمولية المنشورة في كل من Web of Science في الفترة من 1993 حتى 2020، وفي خلاصات المكتبات وعلوم وتكنولوجيا المعلومات Library Information Science and Technology Abstracts في الفترة من 1970 حتى 2020،

على حدوث زيادة طفيفة في عدد الأعمال التي تتناول الحرية الفكرية والحيادية خلال فترة الدراسة فقط، وذلك على النقيض تماماً مع العديد من المداخل بشأن مؤشر التنوع والإنصاف والشمول. لكن لأن الاهتمامات البحثية تتم بصورة جزئية عن المعتقدات الشخصية وعن النشاط المهني، فإن هذا المقال يناقش تأثير هذا التغيير النسبي على الممارسة المهنية، كما يلخص المسائل الخلافية العامة المتعلقة بحيادية المكتبات، والحرية الفكرية، وحرية التعبير في المكتبات.

Navigating complex authorities: Intellectual freedom and truth in STEM information

الإبحار في السلطات المعقدة: الحرية الفكرية وحقيقة المعلومات المتعلقة بالعلوم والتكنولوجيا والهندسة والرياضيات
كيت ميرسر، وكاري دي ويفر، وكريستين واكد
مجلة الإفلا، 48-3

الخلاصة

الملخص: تتزايد المخاطر المتعلقة بنقل المعلومات، إذ يتيح المشهد المعلوماتي الجديد لأي شخص الوصول إلى كم لا نهائي من معلومات بنقرات قليلة على لوحة المفاتيح. لكن أولئك الذين يحاولون العثور على المعلومات وفهم المصادر والتنقل بين الخبراء بحاجة إلى فهم أعمق ليس فقط للمعلومات نفسها، وإنما أيضاً لكيفية مشاركتها والسبب وراء ذلك. ونظراً لتزايد تأثير كل من الخبرة والمكان والتحيز بوصفها دوافع محركة للنظام البيئي للمعلومات العلمية فقد تُنتج أو تُوسع نطاق المعلومات المضللة أو المغلوطة وكذلك الجهود المتعلقة بالدعاية. ويقع أمناء المكتبات في قلب هذه الدوامة الهائلة من المعلومات، وهم ملزمون بمساعدة الناس على تعلم كيفية انتقاد المعلومات. ويعرض المقال دراسة حالة توضيحية، ويستعين بمعلومات علمية عن سلامة لقاح أكسفورد، أسترازينيكا Oxford-AstraZeneca ومدى فعاليته كمثال لتوضيح الكيفية التي تؤثر بها طرق انتشار المعلومات المغلوطة والأخبار المزيفة على مشاركة المعلومات العلمية الحديثة.

Transcribing public libraries as revitalized ethical spaces

إعادة تصور دور المكتبات العامة بوصفها ساحات أخلاقية متجددة

أليسون فراين

مجلة الإفلا، 48-3

الخلاصة

الملخص: يستند هذا المقال إلى حقوق الإنسان والمؤلفات في مجال المكتبات كمراجع، ويسهم في توضيح كيفية تحديد بيان الإفلا بشأن المكتبات والحرية الفكرية، الذي صاغته جمعيات المكتبات والمكتبات، التي تُنظم سياساتها من خلال تفويضات مؤسسية، ووظيفة المكتبات. يعيد المقال تصور الحرية الفكرية القائمة على الهوية الجماعية للإنصاف والعدالة والمساواة. استناداً إلى بيان الإفلا والإعلان العالمي لحقوق الإنسان وإعلان الأمم المتحدة بشأن حقوق الشعوب الأصلية، يتبنى هذا المقال منهجية التحليل البلاغي لمناقشة لإعادة تصور وظيفة المكتبات في المجتمع المعاصر. المكتبات العامة هي مؤسسات عامة فريدة من نوعها تنقل قصص الناس من خلال الأدب والمعارف التي تتوفر لديهم. إنها تُفسح الطريق للجميع للانخراط بنشاط في البيانات الأخلاقية التي تعكس الأصوات الجماعية، حيث تؤدي الحريات الفكرية إلى توسعة نطاق سرد الذكريات الجماعية.

Automating intellectual freedom: Artificial intelligence, bias, and the information landscape

أتمتة الحرية الفكرية: الذكاء الاصطناعي والتحيز والمشهد

المعلوماتي

كاثرين سميث

مجلة الإفلا، 48-3

الخلاصة

الملخص: تُشكل المخاوف بشأن الأتمتة والحرية الشخصية تحدياً أمام دور المكتبات بوصفها ملاذاً للحرية الفكرية. ومن شأن إدخال الذكاء الاصطناعي في عملية وصف الموارد أن يتيح الفرصة لإعادة رسم مشهد المعلومات الرقمية - وفقدان ثقة مستخدمي المكتبة. لا شك أن وصف الموارد يؤثر على كيفية تقديم المكتبة للمعلومات، ومن ثم يؤثر على الطرق التي يدرك بها المستخدمون هذه المعلومات ويتفاعلون معها. حتماً يحمل المفهرسون تحيزات شخصية وثقافية في عملهم، لكن التحيزات الناجمة عن الذكاء الاصطناعي قد تكون على نطاق غير مسبوق. وقد يُنظر إلى أتمتة هذه العملية على أنها تهديداً يفوق التهديد الذي قد ينتج عن العاملين البشريين. ويجب أن يكون أمناء المكتبات على دراية بمخاطر الذكاء الاصطناعي، وأن يأخذوا بعين الاعتبار نوع الرقابة والإجراءات المضادة للآثار الضارة الذي يلحق بالمكتبات ومستخدميها قبل التنازل وإسناد مهمة وصف الموارد للذكاء الاصطناعي عوضاً عن 'الاعتبارات المهنية' التي يدعو إليها بيان الإفلا بشأن المكتبات والحرية الفكرية فيما يتعلق بإتاحة الوصول إلى مواد المكتبة.

Analysis of professional secrecy in Ibero-America: Ethical and legal Perspectives

تحليل السرية المهنية في أمريكا الأيبيرية:

وجهات النظر الأخلاقية والقانونية

ألونسو إسترادا كوزكانو، وكارين ليزيث ألفارو مينديفس

مجلة الإفلا، 48-3

الخلاصة

الملخص: يحلل المقال ثمانية دساتير سياسية إيبيرية أمريكية تتناول السرية المهنية (السرية) كضمان دستوري، والتحقق من تأثيرها كحق أساسي في الممارسة المهنية لأمناء المكتبات. وعلى الرغم من أن تأثير السرية المهنية راسخ في قواعد الأخلاق المهنية، لكن تبين أن هذه القواعد لا تعبر بوضوح عن هذا المبدأ؛ إذ إن فعالية تطبيقه في النقابات العمالية محدود. كما يعرض المقال الصعوبات المختلفة التي تكتنف الحفاظ على السرية المهنية في ممارسة المكتبات، التي تحاول مراكز العمل انتهاكها.

Intellectual freedom: Waving and wavering across three national contexts

الحرية الفكرية: التلويح والتردد في ثلاثة سياقات وطنية

شانون أولتمان، وتوني ساميك، ولويس كوك

مجلة الإفلا، 48-3

الخلاصة

الملخص: لا يميز بيان الإفلا لعام 1999 بشأن المكتبات والحرية الفكرية تمييزاً واضحاً بين الأخلاق الشخصية والمهنية، على الرغم من وجود مؤشرات ضمنية تدل على اختلاف بين الاعتبارات المهنية والشخصية. ويستكشف هذا المقال من خلال ثلاثة سياقات وطنية (الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية، وكندا، والمملكة المتحدة)، الفجوات بين الأخلاق المهنية والشخصية، إضافة إلى كيفية استغلال هذه الفجوات، أو معالجتها، أو التغلب عليها. وقد كانت الحرية الفكرية والمسؤولية الاجتماعية محل جولات من النقاش في هذه السياقات الوطنية الثلاثة. وفي الوقت الراهن، نشهد صراعات حول مفاهيم النيوليبرالية، والحيادية، وحرية التعبير، والعدالة، والتنوع، والإنصاف، والاندماج، ومناهضة العنصرية. وينبع الاختلاف في الرأي من جهتي اليسار واليمين. وقد شهدت الفجوة بين خطاب المكتبات وكيفية ممارسته على أرض الواقع تحولاً واضحاً في سياقات مختلفة، ولا شك أن هذه الفجوة تخضع لبحث معمق في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وكندا والمملكة المتحدة.

Long tail metaphysics: The epistemic crisis and intellectual freedom

المتافيزيقيا طويلة الذيل: الأزمة المعرفية والحرية الفكرية

سارة هارتمان كافرلي

مجلة الإفلا، 48-3

الخلاصة

الخلاصة: كرد فعل للأزمة المعرفية، لم تفشل الجهود المبذولة لتقييد حرية التعبير وتقييد الوصول إلى المعلومات في الحفاظ على الحقيقة

فحسب، وإنما قمعتها أيضًا في بعض الأحيان. ومن شأن التزام المكتبات بالحرية الفكرية أن يهيئ فرصًا فريدة لتقديم حلول بديلة. ومن خلال تسليط الضوء مجددًا على الحرية الفكرية في وظائف المكتبة الأساسية، مثل الوظائف المتعلقة بالمجموعات والتعليم والبرمجة، تبين أن المكتبات يمكن أن توفر الموارد المعرفية التي يحتاجها المستفيدون في خضم سياق أوسع من عدم الثقة والتلاعب والرقابة. ويتناول هذا المقال الأزمة المعرفية في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية في ضوء الحرية الفكرية، وبيان الإفلا بشأن المكتبات والحرية الفكرية. وينقسم المقال إلى ثلاثة أجزاء، ويستكشف التعددية بوصفها الحالة المعيارية في الأوضاع الإنسانية، كما يدرس تأثير تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات على حرية التعبير، وشرعية مؤسسات المعلومات، ويوفق بين الأوضاع المتناقضة من خلال تطبيق مفاهيم من نظرية المعرفة الفضيلة إلى الحرية الفكرية. ويختتم المقال بوضع اعتبارات تتعلق بممارسة المكتبات.

A declaration for all seasons: The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

国际图联关于图书馆和知识自由的声明

Alex Byrne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 373–382

摘要

国际图联信息自由获取和言论自由委员会已成立25年。如今，我们有必要重新审视具有里程碑意义的国际图联关于图书馆和知识自由的声明。该声明将知识自由定义为一项基本人权和图书馆的核心责任，符合图书馆对多样性和多元化的承诺。从本文中的案例可以看出，该声明仍具有意义，适用于多种情境。当前需要解决的问题包含广泛的社会正义问题，这些问题是全球性的，涉及图情领域的所有要素。解决这些问题和促进知识自由需要我们作为可靠的信息提供者的参与，从而帮助社群明智地使用互联网。这要求我们的专业人员采取一致行动，在图情文献中定期进行介绍，组织讨论。图书馆界在维护人类最宝贵的一项权利——知识自由方面发挥着具有挑战性但至关重要的作用。

Intellectual freedom and alternative priorities in library and information science research: A longitudinal study

图情研究领域中的知识自由和其他重点研究内容 纵向研究

Gabriel J Gardner

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 383–398

摘要

本文对图情学文献进行了文献计量学分析，探索知识自由和中立性相对于其他问题所受到的重视程度。本文通过记录1993年至2020年“科学网”和

1970年至2020年图书馆、信息科学和技术摘要中与知识自由、中立性、多样性、公平性和包容性有关的各种检索词的结果数量，对相关重点进行纵向捕捉。结果显示，在上述期限内，提及知识自由和中立性的作品数量仅略有增加，与有关多样性、公平性和包容性的大量索引条目形成鲜明对比。研究兴趣在一定程度上反映了个人信仰及其专业活动。本文探讨了这种相对变化对专业实践的影响。最后，本文对有关图书馆中立性、知识自由和言论自由等有争议的公共问题进行了总结。

Navigating complex authorities: Intellectual freedom and truth in STEM information

在复杂的环境中探索权威信息 科技理工信息中的知识自由和事实

Kate Mercer; Kari D Weaver; Khrystine Waked

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 399–409

摘要

在新的信息环境下，任何人只需轻击几下键盘就可以获得无穷无尽的信息，科学信息的泛滥逐渐成为令人担忧的问题。然而，那些试图寻找信息、了解权威和获得专业知识的人不仅需要更深入地了解信息本身，还需要了解信息共享的方式和原因。专业程度、地区性思维和偏见等问题对科学信息生态系统产生了影响，也会有助于虚假和错误的信息的产生和扩散。图书馆员处于这场信息漩涡的中心，有义务帮助人们学会甄别信息。本文以关于牛津阿斯利康疫苗的安全性和有效性的科学信息为例，阐述了现代科学信息传播如何受到错误信息和虚假新闻的影响。

Transcribing public libraries as revitalized ethical spaces

将公共图书馆视为复兴的伦理空间

Alison Frayne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 410–421

摘要

本文以人权和图书馆文献为切入点，旨在展现不同的图书馆和图书馆协会如何解读国际图联关于图书馆和知识自由的声明。本文重新设想了一个公平、正义和平等的集体身份为前提的知识自由。本文以国际图联声明、世界人权宣言和联合国土著人民权利宣言为研究对象，运用修辞分析方法，探讨了对当代社会图书馆职能的重新构想。公共图书馆是一种独特的公共机构，它将人们的故事记录在馆藏文献和知识中，为每个人积极参与发表反映集体心声的道德声明开辟了道路。知识自由进一步扩展了集体记忆。

Automating intellectual freedom: Artificial intelligence, bias, and the information landscape

知识自由自动化 人工智能、偏见和信息格局

Catherine Smith

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 422–431

摘要

人们对于自动化和个人自由的担忧正在动摇图书馆作为知识自由避风港的地位。将人工智能引入资源描述过程为重塑数字信息格局创造了机会，同时也容易失去图书馆用户的信任。资源描述必然会影响图书馆信息的呈现方式，从而影响用户对信息的感知和交互。人类编目员会不可避免地在工作带入个人和文化偏见，但人工智能可能会在前所未有的更大范围中造成偏见。编目流程的自动化或许会比人工操作产生更大的威胁。图书馆员必须了解人工智能的风险，并思考采取何种监督方法和对策来减轻其对图书馆及其用户的危害。

Analysis of professional secrecy in Ibero-America: Ethical and legal Perspectives

伊比利亚美洲地区职业保密分析 伦理和法律视角

Alonso Estrada-Cuzcano; Karen Lizeth Alfaro-Mendives

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 432–438

摘要

本文分析了伊比利亚美洲地区涵盖了“职业保密”条款的八部政治宪法，并探究了它作为图书馆员专业实践中的一项基本权利所产生的影响。图书馆职业道德规范中规定了职业保密的影响，但事实表明，在这些规范中并未明确表述这一原则，其应用效果也很有限。本文阐述了在图书馆实践中维护职业保密这一原则所涉及的各种困难。

Intellectual freedom: Waving and wavering across three national contexts

知识自由 三个国家背景对比研究

Shannon M Oltmann; Toni Samek; Louise Cooke

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 439–448

摘要

国际图联关于图书馆和知识自由的声明。没有明确区分个人道德和职业道德，尽管有迹象表明，两者之间可能存在分歧。本文以三个国家（美国、加拿大和英国）为背景，探讨了职业道德和个人道德之间的差距，以及这些差距可能得到哪些利用、应对或解决。在这三个国家，关于知识自由和社会责任的辩论已经掀起了浪潮。我们看到

围绕新自由主义、中立性、表达自由、正义、多样性、公平、包容性和反种族主义等概念产生了一些冲突。意见分歧来自左翼和右翼。在这三个国家，图书馆理论与不同背景下的实践之间的差距发生了明显改变。

Long tail metaphysics: The epistemic crisis and intellectual freedom

长尾形而上学 认知危机与知识自由

Sarah Hartman-Caverly

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 449–465

摘要

为了应对认知危机，限制自由表达和信息获取的做法不仅未能保护真理，有时甚至是一种压制。图书馆对知识自由的承诺提供了独特的替代方案。通过在馆藏、教育和活动等核心职能中重新强调知识自由，图书馆可以为用户提供所需的认知资源。本文从知识自由和国际图联关于图书馆与知识自由的声明角度探讨了美国的认知危机。文章主体包含三个部分，探讨了多元性作为人类环境中的规范，思考了信息和通信技术对言论自由和信息机构合法性的影响，并通过美德认知和知识自由等概念来调和不断出现的紧张关系。最后，本文提出了关于图书馆实践的思考。

A declaration for all seasons: The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

Une déclaration à caractère intemporel : la déclaration de l'IFLA sur les bibliothèques et la liberté intellectuelle

Alex Byrne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 373–382

Résumé:

Un quart de siècle après la création mémorable du Comité d'accès à l'information et liberté d'expression (CAIFE) de l'IFLA, le moment se prête à une réflexion sur la déclaration historique de l'IFLA concernant les bibliothèques et la liberté intellectuelle. Cette déclaration a délibérément élargi le mandat de l'IFLA, en définissant la liberté intellectuelle comme un droit humain fondamental et une responsabilité essentielle incombant aux bibliothécaires, qui doivent tenir compte des engagements des bibliothèques à l'égard de la diversité et de la pluralité dans l'exercice de leur profession. Comme l'illustrent les exemples abordés dans cet article, cette déclaration a toujours raison d'être aujourd'hui et a véritablement un caractère intemporel. Parmi les préoccupations dont il faut tenir

compte, de nombreuses ont trait à la justice sociale, ont une dimension mondiale et portent sur tous les aspects du secteur des bibliothèques et de l'information. En tant que détenteurs fiables d'informations, nous devons intervenir pour nous attaquer à ces problèmes et promouvoir la liberté intellectuelle, afin d'aider nos communautés à utiliser Internet à bon escient et de la façon la plus profitable possible. Notre profession doit donc agir de façon concertée, et il faut faire des comptes rendus réguliers et organiser des discussions dans la littérature bibliothéconomique. Notre profession a un rôle difficile mais vital à jouer pour préserver l'un des biens les plus précieux de l'humanité, la liberté intellectuelle.

Intellectual freedom and alternative priorities in library and information science research: A longitudinal study

Liberté intellectuelle et priorités alternatives dans la recherche en bibliothéconomie et science de l'information : une étude longitudinale

Gabriel J Gardner

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 383–398

Résumé:

Cet article présente une analyse bibliométrique de documents de bibliothéconomie et de science de l'information, afin de déterminer l'importance accordée à la liberté et à la neutralité intellectuelles par rapport à un ensemble de notions alternatives et éventuellement concurrentielles. L'importance est déterminée de façon longitudinale, en enregistrant le nombre de résultats pour divers termes de recherche associés à la liberté intellectuelle, la neutralité, la diversité, l'équité, et l'inclusion dans la plateforme Web of Science de 1993 à 2020 et dans la base de données Lista (Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts) de 1970 à 2020. Les résultats montrent que le nombre de travaux mentionnant la liberté et la neutralité intellectuelle n'a que légèrement augmenté dans le courant de la période étudiée, ce qui contraste fortement avec les nombreuses mentions de la diversité, de l'équité et de l'inclusion. Comme les domaines d'intérêts des recherches sont en partie révélateurs des croyances personnelles et de l'activité professionnelle, l'article discute de l'impact sur la pratique professionnelle de ce changement relatif de l'importance accordée. Les controverses publiques à propos de la neutralité bibliothécaire, la liberté intellectuelle et la liberté d'expression dans les bibliothèques font l'objet d'une description sommaire.

Navigating complex authorities: Intellectual freedom and truth in STEM information

S'orienter au sein de pouvoirs complexes : liberté intellectuelle et vérité dans les informations scientifiques et technologiques

Kate Mercer; Kari D Weaver; Khrystine Waked

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 399–409

Résumé:

Parcourir des informations scientifiques devient de plus en plus problématique, dans la mesure où le nouveau paysage de l'information permet à chacun d'accéder à une infinité d'informations en tapant juste sur un clavier. Cependant, ceux qui tentent de trouver des informations, de comprendre les pouvoirs et de s'orienter parmi les experts ont besoin de mieux connaître non seulement les informations elles-mêmes, mais aussi comment et pourquoi ces informations sont partagées. Progressivement, les questions d'expertise, de spécificités locales et de partis pris influencent l'écosystème des informations scientifiques, suscitant ou augmentant la désinformation, la diffusion de fausses informations et les tentatives de propagande. Les bibliothécaires sont au centre de ce tourbillon d'informations et ont le devoir d'aider le public à développer un esprit critique à l'égard des informations. Cet article présente une étude de cas révélatrice, utilisant l'exemple des informations scientifiques concernant la sécurité et l'efficacité du vaccin Oxford-AstraZeneca pour démontrer comment le partage moderne d'informations scientifiques est déterminé par les modes de diffusion de la désinformation et de fausses informations.

Transcribing public libraries as revitalized ethical spaces

Interpréter les bibliothèques publiques comme des espaces éthiques revitalisés

Alison Frayne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 410–421

Résumé:

En se référant aux droits de l'homme et à la documentation bibliothécaire, cet article vise à faire comprendre comment la Déclaration de l'IFLA sur les bibliothèques et la liberté individuelle est formulée par les associations bibliothécaires et les bibliothèques, dont les politiques sont conçues en fonction de mandats institutionnels qui déterminent leur fonction. L'article reconsidère la liberté intellectuelle selon des principes d'identité collective, d'équité, de justice et d'égalité. En

s'inspirant de la Déclaration de l'IFLA, de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme et de la Déclaration des nations unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones, cet article utilise une méthodologie d'analyse rhétorique pour envisager une nouvelle vision des fonctions des bibliothèques au sein de la société contemporaine. Les bibliothèques publiques sont des institutions publiques uniques, qui conservent les histoires des individus dans les documents et le savoir qu'elles détiennent. Elles ouvrent la voie afin d'inciter chacun à s'engager activement en vertu de déclarations éthiques qui reflètent l'opinion collective, où les libertés intellectuelles prolongent le récit des mémoires collectives.

**Automating intellectual freedom:
Artificial intelligence, bias, and the
information landscape**

**Automatiser la liberté intellectuelle :
intelligence artificielle, partis pris et
paysage de l'information**

Catherine Smith

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 422–431

Résumé:

Les craintes au sujet de l'automatisation et des libertés personnelles remettent en question le rôle des bibliothèques en tant que refuges pour la liberté intellectuelle. L'introduction de l'intelligence artificielle dans le processus de description des ressources est l'occasion de remodeler le paysage des informations numériques— et de remédier à la défiance de la part des utilisateurs des bibliothèques. La description des ressources manipule nécessairement les informations présentées par une bibliothèque, ce qui influence la façon dont les utilisateurs perçoivent ces informations et interagissent avec elles. Des catalogueurs humains introduisent inévitablement certains partis pris personnels et culturels dans leurs travaux, mais l'intelligence artificielle peut entraîner une partialité sans précédent. L'automatisation de ce processus peut être perçue comme une plus grande menace que la manipulation effectuée par des opérateurs humains. Les bibliothécaires doivent comprendre les risques de l'intelligence artificielle et déterminer le mode de surveillance et les contre-mesures nécessaires pour atténuer les dommages pour les bibliothèques et leurs utilisateurs, avant de céder la description des ressources à l'intelligence artificielle pour remplacer les « considérations professionnelles » auxquelles se réfère la Déclaration de l'IFLA sur les bibliothèques et la liberté intellectuelle pour permettre l'accès aux documents et services bibliothécaires.

Analysis of professional secrecy in Ibero-America: Ethical and legal Perspectives

**Analyse du secret professionnel en
Amérique latine : perspectives éthiques et
juridiques**

Alonso Estrada-Cuzcano; Karen Lizeth Alfaro-Mendives

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 432–438

Résumé:

Cet article analyse huit constitutions politiques d'Amérique latine dans lesquelles le secret professionnel (la confidentialité) fait l'objet d'une garantie constitutionnelle, et il examine leur influence en tant que droit fondamental dans la pratique professionnelle des bibliothécaires. L'impact du secret professionnel est reconnu dans des codes professionnels d'éthique, dont il est démontré qu'ils n'expriment pas clairement ce principe ; son application au sein des organisations syndicales a une efficacité limitée. L'article montre également les difficultés rencontrées pour préserver le secret professionnel dans les pratiques bibliothécaires, que les centres pour l'emploi tentent de transgresser.

**Intellectual freedom: Waving and
wavering across three national contexts**

**Liberté intellectuelle : louvoyer au sein de
trois contextes nationaux**

Shannon M Oltmann; Toni Samek; Louise Cooke

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 439–448

Résumé:

La Déclaration de l'IFLA sur les bibliothèques et la liberté intellectuelle de 1999 ne fait pas de distinction explicite entre éthique professionnelle et éthique personnelle, bien qu'il y ait des indications implicites de divergences possibles entre considérations professionnelles et personnelles. Dans le cadre de trois contextes nationaux (USA, Canada et Royaume-Uni), nous explorons les fossés qui séparent éthique professionnelle et éthique personnelle, ainsi que la façon dont ces fossés ont pu être exploités, pris en compte ou comblés. Les débats à propos de la liberté intellectuelle et de la responsabilité sociale ont été nombreux au sein de ces trois contextes nationaux. De nos jours, on constate des heurts entre les conceptions du néolibéralisme, de la neutralité, de la liberté d'expression, de la justice, de la diversité, de l'équité, de l'inclusion et de la lutte contre le racisme. La divergence d'opinion vient aussi bien de droite que de gauche. Le fossé qui sépare la rhétorique bibliothécaire et la façon dont

elle est pratiquée sur le terrain dans différents contextes change visiblement et est de plus en plus sous surveillance, certainement aux USA, au Canada et au Royaume-Uni.

Long tail metaphysics: The epistemic crisis and intellectual freedom

Métaphysique de la longue traîne : crise épistémique et liberté intellectuelle

Sarah Hartman-Caverly

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 449–465

Résumé:

En réaction à la crise épistémique, des efforts visant à restreindre la liberté d'expression et l'accès aux informations ont non seulement échoué à préserver la vérité, mais l'ont aussi parfois supprimée. L'engagement des bibliothèques à l'égard de la liberté intellectuelle est une occasion unique d'offrir des solutions alternatives. En réaffirmant l'importance de la liberté intellectuelle dans les fonctions fondamentales des bibliothèques telles que le maintien des collections, l'enseignement et la programmation, les bibliothèques peuvent fournir les ressources épistémiques nécessaires aux utilisateurs dans le cadre d'un contexte plus large de défiance, de manipulation et de censure. Cet essai examine la crise épistémique aux USA à la lumière de la liberté intellectuelle et de la déclaration de l'IFLA sur les bibliothèques et la liberté intellectuelle. Organisé en trois parties, cet article examine la pluralité en tant que donnée normative pour la condition humaine, étudie l'impact des technologies de l'information et de la communication sur la liberté d'expression et la légitimité des institutions d'information, et résout les tensions émergentes à l'aide de notions qui vont de l'épistémologie des vertus à la liberté intellectuelle. L'essai se conclut par des considérations sur la pratique bibliothécaire.

A declaration for all seasons: The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

Eine Erklärung für alle Zeiten: die IFLA-Erklärung zu Bibliotheken und geistiger Freiheit

Alex Byrne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 373–382

Zusammenfassung:

Ein Vierteljahrhundert nach der bedeutsamen Gründung des IFLA-Ausschusses „Committee on

Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression“ (FAIFE) für freien Zugang zu Informationen und freie Meinungsäußerung ist es an der Zeit, über die bahnbrechende IFLA-Erklärung zu Bibliotheken und geistiger Freiheit nachzudenken. Die Erklärung erweiterte bewusst den Aufgabenbereich der IFLA, indem sie die geistige Freiheit als ein grundlegendes Menschenrecht und eine Kernverantwortung des Bibliothekswesens verortete, die mit der Verpflichtung der Bibliotheken zu Vielfalt und Pluralität einhergeht. Wie die in diesem Artikel besprochenen Beispiele zeigen, ist die Erklärung nach wie vor aktuell und wirklich eine Erklärung für alle Zeiten. Die zu behandelnden Anliegen umfassen ein breites Spektrum von Fragen der sozialen Gerechtigkeit, die global gelten und alle Bereiche des Bibliotheks- und Informationssektors betreffen. Um diese Probleme zu lösen und die geistige Freiheit zu fördern, müssen wir uns als vertrauenswürdige Informationsvermittler einschalten und unsere Gemeinschaften dabei unterstützen, das Internet sinnvoll und zum größtmöglichen Nutzen einzusetzen. Sie erfordern eine konzertierte Aktion unseres Berufsstandes in Verbindung mit einer regelmäßigen Berichterstattung und Diskussion in der LIS-Literatur. Unser Berufsstand hat eine schwierige, aber entscheidende Rolle bei der Bewahrung eines der wertvollsten Rechte der Menschheit, der geistigen Freiheit.

Intellectual freedom and alternative priorities in library and information science research: A longitudinal study

Intellektuelle Freiheit und alternative Prioritäten in der bibliothekarischen und informationswissenschaftlichen Forschung: Eine Längsschnittstudie

Gabriel J Gardner

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 383–398

Zusammenfassung:

In diesem Artikel wird eine bibliometrische Analyse der bibliotheks- und informationswissenschaftlichen Literatur vorgestellt, um zu ermitteln, welchen Stellenwert geistige Freiheit und Neutralität im Vergleich zu einem Index alternativer und möglicherweise konkurrierender Themen erhalten haben. Dieser Stellenwert wird im Längsschnitt erfasst, indem die Anzahl der Ergebnisse für verschiedene Suchbegriffe im Zusammenhang mit geistiger Freiheit, Neutralität, Vielfalt, Gleichberechtigung und Inklusion im Web of Science von 1993 bis 2020 und

in den Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts von 1970 bis 2020 erfasst wird. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die Zahl der Arbeiten, in denen geistige Freiheit und Neutralität erwähnt werden, im Untersuchungszeitraum nur geringfügig zugenommen hat, ganz im Gegensatz zu vielen Einträgen im Index für Vielfalt, Gerechtigkeit und Integration. Da Forschungsinteressen zum Teil auf persönliche Überzeugungen und berufliche Aktivitäten hinweisen, werden die Auswirkungen dieser relativen Veränderung der Schwerpunkte auf die berufliche Praxis diskutiert. Öffentliche Kontroversen über die Neutralität von Bibliotheken, geistige Freiheit und freie Meinungsäußerung in Bibliotheken werden zusammenfassend dargestellt.

**Navigating complex authorities:
Intellectual freedom and truth
in STEM information**

**Komplexes Navigieren nach
zuverlässigen Quellen: Intellektuelle
Freiheit und Wahrheit
in MINT-Informationen**

Kate Mercer, Kari D Weaver, Khrystine Waked
IFLA Journal, 48–3, 399–409

Zusammenfassung:

Die Suche nach wissenschaftlichen Informationen ist immer schwieriger geworden, da die neue Informationslandschaft es jedem ermöglicht, mit wenigen Tastendruck auf unzählige Informationen zuzugreifen. Wer jedoch Informationen finden, Autoritäten verstehen und sich in der Welt der Experten zurechtfinden will, braucht ein tieferes Verständnis nicht nur für die Informationen selbst, sondern auch dafür, wie und warum Informationen weitergegeben werden. Fragen des Fachwissens, des Standorts und der Voreingenommenheit bestimmen zunehmend das Ökosystem der wissenschaftlichen Informationen und schaffen oder erweitern den Raum für Desinformation, Fehlinformation und Propaganda. Bibliothekare stehen im Zentrum dieses Informationsstrudels und sind verpflichtet, den Menschen zu helfen, kritisch mit Informationen umzugehen. In diesem Artikel wird eine anschauliche Fallstudie vorgestellt, die am Beispiel wissenschaftlicher Informationen über die Sicherheit und Wirksamkeit des Impfstoffs von Oxford-AstraZeneca zeigt, wie der moderne wissenschaftliche Informationsaustausch durch die Art und

Weise, wie Fehlinformationen und Fake News verbreitet werden, beeinflusst wird.

Transcribing public libraries as revitalized ethical spaces

Umschreibung öffentlicher Bibliotheken als wiederbelebte ethische Räume

Alison Frayne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 410–421

Zusammenfassung:

Unter Bezugnahme auf Menschenrechts- und Bibliotheksliteratur soll dieser Artikel zu einem Verständnis dafür beitragen, wie die IFLA-Erklärung zu Bibliotheken und geistiger Freiheit von Bibliotheksverbänden und Bibliotheken artikuliert wird, deren Politik durch institutionelle Mandate strukturiert ist, die die Funktion von Bibliotheken bestimmen. In dem Artikel wird die geistige Freiheit auf der Grundlage einer kollektiven Identität der Fairness, Gerechtigkeit und Gleichheit neu überdacht. Im Rückgriff auf die IFLA-Erklärung, die Allgemeine Erklärung der Menschenrechte und die Erklärung der Vereinten Nationen über die Rechte indigener Völker wird in diesem Artikel eine rhetorische Analyse angewandt, um die Neupositionierung der Bibliotheksfunktionalität in der heutigen Gesellschaft zu erörtern. Öffentliche Bibliotheken sind einzigartige öffentliche Einrichtungen, die die Geschichten der Menschen in der Literatur und im Wissen, das sie besitzen, transportieren. Sie eröffnen jedem die Möglichkeit, sich aktiv mit ethischen Aussagen zu befassen, die ein Kollektiv von Stimmen widerspiegeln, in dem die geistigen Freiheiten die Erzählung der kollektiven Erinnerungen erweitern.

**Automating intellectual freedom:
Artificial intelligence, bias, and the
information landscape**

**Automatisierung der geistigen Freiheit:
Künstliche Intelligenz,
Voreingenommenheit und die
Informationslandschaft**

Catherine Smith

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 422–431

Zusammenfassung:

Die Ängste vor Automatisierung und persönlicher Freiheit stellen die Rolle der Bibliotheken als Hort

der geistigen Freiheit in Frage. Die Einführung künstlicher Intelligenz in den Prozess der Ressourcenbeschreibung bietet die Möglichkeit, die digitale Informationslandschaft neu zu gestalten - und bewirkt möglicherweise den Vertrauensverlust der Bibliotheksnutzer. Die Beschreibung von Ressourcen verändert notwendigerweise die Präsentation von Informationen in einer Bibliothek, was die Art und Weise beeinflusst, wie Benutzer diese Informationen wahrnehmen und mit ihnen interagieren. Menschliche Katalogisierer bringen unweigerlich persönliche und kulturelle Aspekte in ihre Arbeit ein, aber künstliche Intelligenz kann Vorurteile in einem bisher nicht gekannten Ausmaß hervorrufen. Die Automatisierung dieses

Prozesses kann als eine größere Bedrohung empfunden werden als die Manipulation durch menschliche Bediener. Bibliothekare müssen die Risiken der künstlichen Intelligenz verstehen und überlegen, welche Aufsichts- und Gegenmaßnahmen notwendig sind, um den Schaden für Bibliotheken und ihre Nutzer zu mindern, bevor sie die Beschreibung von Ressourcen an künstliche Intelligenz abtreten, anstelle der „professionellen Überlegungen“, die die IFLA-Erklärung zu Bibliotheken und geistiger Freiheit für den Zugang zu Bibliotheksmaterialien fordert.

Analysis of professional secrecy in Ibero-America: Ethical and legal Perspectives

Analyse des Berufsgeheimnisses in Ibero-Amerika: Ethische und rechtliche Perspektiven

Alonso Estrada-Cuzcano; Karen Lizeth Alfaro-Mendives

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 432–438

Zusammenfassung:

Acht iberoamerikanische politische Verfassungen, die das Berufsgeheimnis (Vertraulichkeit) als verfassungsrechtliche Garantie enthalten, werden analysiert und ihr Einfluss als Grundrecht auf die berufliche Praxis von Bibliothekaren untersucht. Die Auswirkungen des Berufsgeheimnisses sind in den berufsethischen Kodizes festgelegt, und es zeigt sich, dass sie diesen Grundsatz nicht klar zum Ausdruck bringen; seine Anwendung in den Gewerkschaften ist nur begrenzt wirksam. Es werden die verschiedenen Schwierigkeiten aufgezeigt, die mit der Wahrung des Berufsgeheimnisses in der bibliothekarischen Praxis verbunden sind, das die Arbeitszentren zu verletzen versuchen.

Intellectual freedom: Waving and wavering across three national contexts

Intellektuelle Freiheit: Unsicherheit und Schlingerkurs in drei nationalen Kontexten

Shannon M Oltmann; Toni Samek; Louise Cooke

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 439–448

Zusammenfassung:

In der IFLA-Erklärung von 1999 über Bibliotheken und geistige Freiheit wird nicht ausdrücklich zwischen persönlicher und beruflicher Ethik unterschieden, obwohl es implizite Hinweise darauf gibt, dass berufliche und persönliche Erwägungen auseinanderklaffen können. In drei nationalen Kontexten (USA, Kanada und Vereinigtes Königreich) untersuchen wir die Lücken zwischen Berufs- und Privatethik sowie die Art und Weise, wie diese Lücken potenziell ausgenutzt, angegangen oder gelöst wurden. In diesen drei nationalen Kontexten gab es eine Reihe von Debatten über geistige Freiheit und soziale Verantwortung. In der heutigen Zeit gibt es Auseinandersetzungen um die Begriffe Neoliberalismus, Neutralität, Ausdrucksfreiheit, Gerechtigkeit, Vielfalt, Gleichheit, Integration und Antirassismus. Die Meinungsverschiedenheiten kommen sowohl von der linken als auch von der rechten Seite. Die Diskrepanz zwischen der Rhetorik der Bibliotheken und ihrer praktischen Umsetzung in den verschiedenen Kontexten verschiebt sich zusehends und wird immer stärker hinterfragt, vor allem in den USA, Kanada und dem Vereinigten Königreich.

Long tail metaphysics: The epistemic crisis and intellectual freedom

Metaphysik des langen Endes: Die epistemische Krise und die geistige Freiheit

Sarah Hartman-Caverly

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 449–465

Zusammenfassung:

Als Reaktion auf die epistemische Krise haben die Bemühungen, die freie Meinungsäußerung und den Zugang zu Informationen einzuschränken, nicht nur nicht zur Wahrheitsfindung beigetragen, sondern sie manchmal sogar unterdrückt. Das Bekenntnis der Bibliotheken zur geistigen Freiheit schafft einzigartige Möglichkeiten, alternative Lösungen anzubieten. Indem sie den Schwerpunkt auf die geistige Freiheit in zentralen Bibliotheksfunktionen wie Sammlungen, Bildung und Programmgestaltung legen, können Bibliotheken die epistemischen Ressourcen bereitstellen,

die ihre Besucher in einem breiteren Kontext von Misstrauen, Manipulation und Zensur benötigen. Dieser Aufsatz untersucht die epistemische Krise in den USA im Lichte der geistigen Freiheit und der IFLA-Erklärung zu Bibliotheken und geistiger Freiheit. Der in drei Teile gegliederte Beitrag untersucht die Pluralität als normative Eigenschaft des Menschen, betrachtet die Auswirkungen der Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologie auf die freie Meinungsäußerung und die Legitimität von Informationsinstitutionen und versöhnt die entstehenden Spannungen durch die Anwendung von Konzepten aus der Tugend-Epistemologie auf die geistige Freiheit. Der Aufsatz schließt mit Überlegungen für die bibliothekarische Praxis.

A declaration for all seasons: The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

Декларация на все времена: Заявление ИФЛА о библиотеках и интеллектуальной свободе

Alex Byrne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 373–382

Аннотация:

Четверть века спустя после знаменательного учреждения Комитета ИФЛА по свободному доступу к информации и свободе выражения мнений (FAIFE) – подходящее время для размышлений о знаменательном Заявлении ИФЛА относительно библиотек и интеллектуальной свободы. В данном заявлении сфера деятельности ИФЛА была сознательно расширена, при этом интеллектуальная свобода была обозначена как фундаментальное право человека и основная ответственность в библиотечной профессии, действующая в рамках обязательств библиотек по разнообразию и плюрализму. Согласно примерам, рассмотренным в этом эссе, данное Заявление продолжает оставаться актуальным и действительно является декларацией на все времена. Вопросы, подлежащие решению, охватывают широкий спектр проблем социальной справедливости, проблемы, носящие глобальный характер и касающиеся всех элементов библиотечного и информационного секторов. Решение этих задач и поощрение интеллектуальной свободы требуют нашего содействия в качестве доверенных информационных агентов с целью оказания помощи сообществам в разумном использовании Интернета с извлечением максимально возможной пользы. От лиц нашей профессии требуются согласованные действия в сочетании с регулярными отчетами и обсуждениями в литературе LIS. Наша профессия играет сложную, но жизненно

важную роль в сохранении одного из самых ценных прав человечества: интеллектуальной свободы.

Intellectual freedom and alternative priorities in library and information science research: A longitudinal study

Интеллектуальная свобода и альтернативные приоритеты в библиотечных и информационных изысканиях: лонгитюдное исследование

Gabriel J Gardner

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 383–398

Аннотация:

В этой статье представлен библиометрический анализ литературы по библиотечному делу и информатике с целью проследить, достаточно ли внимания уделяется интеллектуальной свободе и нейтралитету по сравнению с индексом альтернативных и, возможно, конкурирующих тем. Данное лонгитюдное исследование проводилось путем учета количества результатов для различных поисковых запросов, связанных с интеллектуальной свободой, нейтральностью, разнообразием, равенством и инклюзивностью в Web of Science с 1993 по 2020 год, а также анализировались рефераты по библиотечным, информационным наукам и технологиям с 1970 по 2020 год. Результаты показывают, что за исследуемый период количество работ, где упоминаются интеллектуальная свобода и нейтралитет, увеличилось лишь незначительно, что резко контрастирует со многими работами в области индекса разнообразия, справедливости и инклюзивности. Поскольку исследовательские интересы частично отражают личные убеждения и профессиональную деятельность автора, обсуждается влияние этого относительного изменения акцента на профессиональную практику. В статье обобщаются общественные споры относительно библиотечного нейтралитета, интеллектуальной свободы и свободы выражения мнений в библиотеках.

Navigating complex authorities: Intellectual freedom and truth in STEM information

Навигация по сложным авторитетам: интеллектуальная свобода и правда в информации STEM

Kate Mercer, Kari D Weaver, Khrystine Waked

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 399–409

Аннотация:

Поиск научной информации становится все более сложным, поскольку новый информационный ландшафт позволяет любому пользователю получить

доступ к бесконечной информации несколькими нажатиями клавиш. Однако те, кто пытается найти информацию, понять действия правительства и ориентироваться в мнениях экспертов, нуждаются в более глубоком понимании не только самой информации, но и того, как и почему происходит передача информации. Все чаще вопросы компетентности, локализации и предвзятости управляют экосистемой научной информации и создают или расширяют усилия по дезинформации, ложной информации и пропаганде. Библиотекари находятся в центре этого информационного водоворота и обязаны помогать людям научиться критически относиться к информации. В этой статье представлено иллюстративное тематическое исследование на примере научной информации о безопасности и эффективности вакцины Oxford-AstraZeneca с целью продемонстрировать, как формируется современный обмен научной информацией путем распространения дезинформации и фальшивых новостей.

Transcribing public libraries as revitalized ethical spaces

Транскрипция публичных библиотек как возрожденных этических пространств

Alison Frayne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 410–421

Аннотация:

Ссылаясь на литературу по правам человека и библиотечную литературу, автор данной статьи стремится внести вклад в понимание того, как Заявление ИФЛА о библиотеках и интеллектуальной свободе формулируется библиотечными ассоциациями и библиотеками, политика которых структурирована институциональными мандатами, определяющими функции библиотек. В статье переосмысливается интеллектуальная свобода, основанная на коллективной идентичности справедливости, правомерности и равенства. Опираясь на Заявление ИФЛА, Всеобщую декларацию прав человека и Декларацию Организации Объединенных Наций о правах коренных народов, автор в этой статье использует методологию риторического анализа для обсуждения переосмысления функциональности библиотеки в современном обществе. Публичные библиотеки являются уникальными общественными учреждениями, которые хранят истории людей в своей литературе и знаниях. Они открывают путь для каждого, чтобы принимать активное участие в формировании заявлений этического характера, отражающих коллективное мнение, при котором

интеллектуальные свободы расширяют повествование о коллективных воспоминаниях.

Automating intellectual freedom: Artificial intelligence, bias, and the information landscape

Автоматизация интеллектуальной свободы: искусственный интеллект, предвзятость и информационный ландшафт

Catherine Smith

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 422–431

Аннотация:

Опасения по поводу автоматизации в связи с личной свободой бросают вызов роли библиотек как месту интеллектуальной свободы. Внедрение искусственного интеллекта в процесс описания ресурсов создает возможность изменить цифровой информационный ландшафт, потеряв при этом доверие со стороны пользователей библиотек. Описание ресурса обязательно манипулирует представлением информации в библиотеке, что влияет на то, как пользователи воспринимают эту информацию и взаимодействуют с ней. Специалисты-каталогизаторы неизбежно привносят в свою работу личные и культурные убеждения, но искусственный интеллект способен создавать убеждения в невиданных ранее масштабах. Автоматизация процесса может быть воспринята как более серьезная угроза, чем манипуляции, производимые людьми-операторами. Библиотекари обязаны отдавать себе отчет в сути рисков, связанных с искусственным интеллектом, и рассмотреть, какой контроль и контрмеры необходимы для смягчения нанесения вреда библиотекам и их пользователям, прежде чем передавать описание ресурсов искусственному интеллекту вместо подхода “профессиональных соображений”, к которым призывает Заявление ИФЛА о библиотеках и интеллектуальной свободе при предоставлении доступа к библиотечным материалам.

Analysis of professional secrecy in Ibero-America: Ethical and legal Perspectives

Анализ профессиональной тайны в Иbero-Америке: этические и правовые перспективы

Alonso Estrada-Cuzcano; Karen Lizeth Alfaro-Mendives

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 432–438

Аннотация:

В статье подвергаются анализу восемь иbero-американских политических конституций,

включающих (конфиденциальность) в качестве конституционной гарантии профессиональную тайну, а также рассматривается их влияние как основополагающего права на профессиональную практику библиотекарей. Влияние профессиональной тайны установлено в профессиональных этических кодексах, при этом показано, что в них этот принцип четко не выражен; его применение в профсоюзах имеет ограниченную эффективность. Рассматриваются различные проблемы, связанные с сохранением профессиональной тайны в библиотечной практике, которую рабочие центры пытаются нарушить.

Intellectual freedom: Waving and wavering across three national contexts

Интеллектуальная свобода: пошатывания и колебания в трех национальных контекстах

Shannon M Oltmann; Toni Samek; Louise Cooke
IFLA Journal, 48–3, 439–448

Аннотация:

В Заявлении ИФЛА 1999 года о библиотеках и интеллектуальной свободе не проводится четкого различия между личной и профессиональной этикой, хотя есть косвенные указания на то, что могут быть расхождения между профессиональными и личными соображениями. В трех национальных контекстах (США, Канада и Великобритания) мы исследуем пробелы между профессиональной и личной этикой, а также то, как эти пробелы потенциально использовались, устранялись или разрешались. В этих трех национальных контекстах прошли многочисленные дебаты относительно интеллектуальной свободы и социальной ответственности. В современную эпоху мы видим столкновения вокруг концепций неолиберализма, нейтралитета, свободы выражения мнений, справедливости, разнообразия, равенства, инклюзивности и антирасизма. Расхождения во мнениях исходят как от левых, так и от правых. Разрыв между библиотечной риторикой и тем, как она практикуется на местах в различных контекстах, заметно меняется и подвергается все более пристальному вниманию, особенно в США, Канаде и Великобритании.

Long tail metaphysics: The epistemic crisis and intellectual freedom

Метафизика длинного хвоста: эпистемологический кризис и интеллектуальная свобода

Sarah Hartman-Caverly
IFLA Journal, 48–3, 449–465

Аннотация:

В ответ на эпистемологический кризис попытки ограничить свободу выражения мнений и доступ к информации не только не способствовали сохранению правды, но иногда и подавляли ее. Приверженность библиотек к интеллектуальной свободе создает уникальные возможности для возникновения альтернативных решений. Возобновляя акцент на интеллектуальной свободе в основных библиотечных функциях, таких как коллекции, образование и программирование, библиотеки могут предоставлять эпистемологические ресурсы, в которых нуждаются посетители в более широком контексте недоверия, манипуляций и цензуры. В этом эссе рассматривается эпистемологический кризис в США в свете интеллектуальной свободы и Заявления ИФЛА о библиотеках и интеллектуальной свободе. Разделенная на три части, эта статья исследует плюрализм как нормативное явление в жизни человека, рассматривает влияние информационно-коммуникационных технологий на свободу выражения мнений и легитимность информационных институтов, а также примиряет возникающие противоречия, используя концепции эпистемологии добродетели к интеллектуальной свободе. Эссе завершается соображениями, касающимися библиотечной практики.

A declaration for all seasons: The IFLA Statement on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom

Una declaración para todas las épocas: la Declaración de la IFLA sobre las bibliotecas y la libertad intelectual

Alex Byrne
IFLA Journal, 48–3, 373–382

Resumen:

Un cuarto de siglo después del memorable establecimiento del Comité de Libre Acceso a la Información y la Libertad de Expresión (FAIFE, por sus siglas en inglés) de la IFLA, llega el momento de reflexionar sobre la Declaración de la IFLA sobre las bibliotecas y la libertad intelectual. La Declaración amplió conscientemente el mandato de la IFLA, estableciendo la libertad intelectual como un derecho humano fundamental y una responsabilidad esencial del personal bibliotecario enmarcada en los compromisos de las bibliotecas con la diversidad y la pluralidad. Tal y como ilustran los ejemplos comentados en este artículo, la Declaración sigue siendo pertinente y

es realmente aplicable a todas las épocas. Las inquietudes que deben abordarse engloban un amplio abanico de asuntos relacionados con la justicia social, son globales y conciernen a todos los elementos del sector de biblioteconomía y documentación. El abordaje de estas inquietudes y la promoción de la libertad intelectual exigen nuestra intervención como agentes de confianza que ayudan a las comunidades a utilizar internet de forma sabia y con los máximos beneficios posibles. Exigen una acción concertada de nuestra profesión, acompañada de informes periódicos y debates sobre la bibliografía relacionada con la biblioteconomía y documentación. Nuestra profesión desempeña un papel difícil pero esencial en la preservación de uno de los derechos más preciados de la humanidad: la libertad intelectual.

Intellectual freedom and alternative priorities in library and information science research: A longitudinal study
Libertad intelectual y prioridades alternativas en los estudios de biblioteconomía y documentación: un estudio longitudinal

Gabriel J Gardner

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 383–398

Resumen:

En este artículo se presenta un análisis bibliométrico de la bibliografía sobre biblioteconomía y documentación para comprobar el hincapié que se ha hecho en la libertad intelectual y la neutralidad haciendo referencia a un índice de temas alternativos y posiblemente contradictorios. El énfasis se recoge de forma longitudinal registrando el número de resultados para varios términos de búsqueda relacionados con la libertad intelectual, la neutralidad, la diversidad, la equidad y la inclusión en Web of Science desde 1993 hasta 2020 y en Library, Information Science and Technology Abstracts desde 1970 hasta 2020. Los resultados revelan que el número de trabajos que mencionan la libertad intelectual y la neutralidad ha aumentado solo ligeramente durante el período del estudio, en claro contraste con muchas entradas en el índice de diversidad, equidad e inclusión. Teniendo en cuenta que los intereses investigadores son parcialmente indicativos de las creencias personales y la actividad profesional, se debate el impacto de este cambio relativo en el énfasis en la práctica profesional. Asimismo, se resumen las controversias públicas relativas a la neutralidad, la libertad intelectual y la libertad de expresión en las bibliotecas.

Navigating complex authorities: Intellectual freedom and truth in STEM information

Navegando en la complejidad: libertad intelectual y verdad en la información CTIM

Kate Mercer; Kari D Weaver; Khrystine Waked

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 399–409

Resumen:

La búsqueda de buena información científica se ha convertido en una tarea cada vez más ardua, puesto que el nuevo panorama informacional permite a todos acceso a información inagotable tocando unas pocas teclas. Sin embargo, los que tratan de encontrar información, entienden que las autoridades y los expertos necesitan una comprensión más profunda no solo de la propia información, sino también de la forma en que esta se comparte. Cuestiones como la especialización, la localización y el sesgo impulsan el ecosistema de la información científica y amplían las iniciativas de desinformación, información errónea y propaganda. Los bibliotecarios se hallan en el centro de esta vorágine de información y están obligados a ayudar a los usuarios a aprender a ser críticos. En este artículo se presenta un caso de estudio en el que se utiliza el ejemplo de la información científica sobre la seguridad y la eficacia de la vacuna de Oxford-AstraZeneca para demostrar que la forma en que se comparte la información científica moderna está configurada por las formas en que se difunden las noticias falsas y la información errónea.

Transcribing public libraries as revitalized ethical spaces

Conversión de las bibliotecas públicas en espacios éticos revitalizados

Alison Frayne

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 410–421

Resumen:

Sobre la base de los derechos humanos y la bibliografía sobre las bibliotecas, este artículo pretende explicar la forma en que las asociaciones de bibliotecas y las bibliotecas, cuyas políticas están estructuradas por mandatos institucionales que determinan su función, articulan la Declaración de la IFLA sobre las bibliotecas y la libertad intelectual. El artículo replantea la libertad intelectual sobre la base de una identidad colectiva de equidad, justicia e igualdad. Inspirándose en la Declaración de la IFLA, la

Declaración Universal de Derechos Humanos y la Declaración de las Naciones Unidas sobre los Derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas, este artículo aplica una metodología de análisis retórico para debatir el replanteamiento de la funcionalidad de las bibliotecas en la sociedad actual. Las bibliotecas públicas son instituciones públicas únicas que trasladan a sus colecciones y conocimientos las historias de las personas. Abren el camino para comprometerse activamente con las declaraciones éticas que reflejan un colectivo de voces, donde las libertades intelectuales amplían la narrativa de la memoria colectiva.

**Automating intellectual freedom:
Artificial intelligence, bias, and the
information landscape**

**Automatización de la libertad intelectual:
inteligencia artificial, sesgo y panorama
informativo**

Catherine Smith

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 422–431

Resumen:

Las inquietudes sobre la automatización y la libertad personal están cuestionando la función de las bibliotecas como refugios de la libertad intelectual. La introducción de la inteligencia artificial en el proceso de descripción de recursos crea una oportunidad para reconfigurar el panorama de la información digital y genera la pérdida de confianza por parte de los usuarios de las bibliotecas. La descripción de recursos manipula necesariamente la presentación de información de una biblioteca, que influye en las formas en que los usuarios perciben esa información e interactúan con ella. Los catalogadores humanos introducen inevitablemente sesgos personales y culturales en su trabajo, pero la inteligencia artificial puede perpetrar esos sesgos a una escala nunca vista. La automatización de

este proceso puede percibirse como una amenaza mayor que la manipulación llevada a cabo por los operadores humanos. Las bibliotecas deben entender los riesgos que entraña la inteligencia artificial y considerar la supervisión y las contramedidas que se necesitan para mitigar los daños a las bibliotecas y sus usuarios antes de ceder la descripción de recursos a la inteligencia artificial sin tener en cuenta las «consideraciones profesionales» por las que la Declaración de la IFLA sobre las bibliotecas y la libertad intelectual aboga al proporcionar acceso a los materiales de la biblioteca.

Analysis of professional secrecy in Ibero-America: Ethical and legal Perspectives
Análisis del secreto profesional en Iberoamérica: perspectivas éticas y jurídicas

Alonso Estrada-Cuzcano; Karen Lizeth Alfaro-Mendives

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 432–438

Resumen:

Se analizan ocho constituciones políticas iberoamericanas que incluyen el secreto profesional (confidencialidad) como garantía constitucional, y se examina su influencia como derecho fundamental en la práctica profesional de los bibliotecarios. El impacto del secreto profesional está establecido en los códigos de ética profesional, pero estos no expresan claramente este principio; su aplicación en los sindicatos tiene una eficacia limitada. Se exponen las diversas dificultades que implica la preservación del secreto profesional en la práctica bibliotecaria, que los centros de trabajo tratan de vulnerar.

**Intellectual freedom: Waving and
wavering across three national contexts**
**Libertad intelectual: análisis de tres
contextos nacionales**

Shannon M Oltmann; Toni Samek; Louise Cooke

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 439–448

Resumen:

La Declaración de la IFLA sobre las bibliotecas y la libertad intelectual de 1999 no hace una distinción expresa entre ética personal y profesional, si bien existen indicaciones implícitas de que pueden existir divergencias entre las consideraciones profesionales y las personales. Exploramos las brechas entre la ética profesional y la personal, así como el modo en que estas brechas podrían aprovecharse, abordarse o resolverse en tres contextos nacionales (EE. UU., Canadá y el Reino Unido). Ha existido mucho debate sobre la libertad intelectual y la responsabilidad social en estos tres contextos nacionales. En la actualidad, observamos conflictos entre los conceptos de neoliberalismo, neutralidad, libertad de expresión, justicia, diversidad, equidad, inclusión y antirracismo. La divergencia de opiniones procede tanto de la izquierda como de la derecha. La brecha entre la retórica de las bibliotecas y la práctica sobre el terreno en distintos contextos está cambiando

visiblemente y está sometida a una estrecha vigilancia en EE. UU., Canadá y Reino Unido.

Long tail metaphysics: The epistemic crisis and intellectual freedom

Metafísica «a largo plazo»: la crisis epistémica y la libertad intelectual

Sarah Hartman-Caverly

IFLA Journal, 48–3, 449–465

Resumen:

En respuesta a la crisis epistémica, las iniciativas para limitar la libertad de expresión y el acceso a la información no solo han fracasado a la hora de preservar la verdad, sino que a veces también la han suprimido. El compromiso de las bibliotecas con la libertad intelectual genera oportunidades únicas para ofrecer soluciones alternativas. Mediante la renovación

del énfasis en la libertad intelectual en las funciones básicas de la biblioteca, como las colecciones, la educación y la programación, las bibliotecas pueden proporcionar los recursos epistémicos que los mecenas necesitan en un contexto más amplio de desconfianza, manipulación y censura. En este ensayo se examina la crisis epistémica en EE. UU. a la luz de la libertad intelectual y la Declaración de la IFLA sobre las bibliotecas y la libertad intelectual. Este artículo, dividido en tres partes, analiza la pluralidad como norma de la condición humana, considera el impacto de la tecnología de la información y de las comunicaciones sobre la libertad de expresión y la legitimidad de las instituciones de información, y concilia las tensiones emergentes mediante la aplicación de conceptos que van desde la epistemología de la virtud hasta la libertad intelectual. El ensayo concluye con algunas consideraciones relacionadas con la práctica bibliotecaria