

IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers (short version)

Approved by the IFLA Governing Board, August 2012

Preamble

This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is offered as a series of ethical propositions for the guidance of individual librarians as well as other information workers, and for the consideration of Library and Information Associations when creating or revising their own codes.

The function of codes of ethics can be described as

- encouraging reflection on principles on which librarians and other information workers can form policies and handle dilemmas
- improving professional self-awareness
- providing transparency to users and society in general.

This code is not intended to replace existing codes or to remove the obligation on professional associations to develop their own codes through a process of re-search, consultation and cooperative drafting. Full compliance with this code is not expected.

The clauses of this code of ethics build on the core principles outlined in this pre-amble to provide a set of suggestions on the conduct of professionals. IFLA recognises that whilst these core principles should remain at the heart of any such code, the specifics of codes will necessarily vary according to the particular society, community of practice or virtual community. Code making is an essential function of a professional association, just as ethical reflection is a necessity for all professionals. IFLA recommends the Code of Ethics for IFLA to all its member associations and institutions and to individual librarians and information workers for these purposes.

IFLA undertakes to revise this code whenever appropriate.

1. Access to information

The core mission of librarians and other information workers is to ensure access to information for all for personal development, education, cultural enrichment, leisure, economic activity and informed participation in and enhancement of democracy.

To this end, librarians and other information workers reject censorship in all its forms, support provision of services free of cost to the user, promote collections and services to potential users, and seek the highest standards of accessibility to both physical and virtual services.

2. Responsibilities towards individuals and society

In order to promote inclusion and eradicate discrimination, librarians and other information workers ensure that the right of accessing information is not denied and that equitable services are provided for everyone whatever their age, citizenship, political belief, physical or mental ability, gender identity, heritage, education, in-come, immigration and asylum-seeking status, marital status, origin, race, religion or sexual orientation.

To enhance access for all, librarians and other information workers support people in their information searching, assist them to develop their reading skills and information literacy, and encourage them in the ethical use of information (with particular attention to the welfare of young people).

3. Privacy, secrecy and transparency

Librarians and other information workers respect personal privacy, and the protection of personal data, necessarily shared between individuals and institutions. At the same time they support the fullest possible transparency for information relating to public bodies, private sector companies and all other institutions whose activities effect the lives of individuals and society as a whole.

4. Open access and intellectual property

Librarians and other information workers' interest is to provide the best possible access for library users to information and ideas in any media or format, whilst recognising that they are partners of authors, publishers and other creators of copy-right protected works. Librarians and other information workers seek to ensure that both users' rights and creators' rights are respected. They promote the principles of open access, open source, and open licenses. They seek appropriate and necessary limitations and exceptions for libraries and, in particular, seek to limit the expansion of copyright terms.

5. Neutrality, personal integrity and professional skills

Librarians and other information workers are strictly committed to neutrality and an unbiased stance regarding collection, access and service. They seek to acquire balanced collections, apply fair service policies, avoid allowing personal convictions to hinder the carrying out of their professional duties, combat corruption and seek the highest standards of professional excellence.

6. Colleague and employer/employee relationship

Librarians and other information workers treat each other with fairness and respect. To this end they oppose discrimination in any aspect of employment because of age, citizenship, political belief, physical or mental ability, gender, marital status, origin, race, religion or sexual orientation. They support equal payment for equal work between men and women, share their professional experience, and contribute towards the work of their professional associations.

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