ALA POLICY STATEMENTS

Note: All these policies and guidelines are available from the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom's Web site www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/

Policy Statements

Library Bill of Rights

Adopted June 18, 1948, Amended by the ALA Council, Feb. 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; and Jan. 23, 1980; reaffirmed Jan. 23, 1996.

ALA's foundational document that "affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas…" The "basic policies" that should guide library services to fulfill this mission are spelled out.

www.ala.org/work/freedom/lbr.html

Access to Electronic Information, Services and Networks

Adopted by the ALA Council, Jan. 24, 1996.

This policy addresses how to guarantee freedom of expression within the "still-developing technology" of electronic information. Sections include "The Rights of Users," "Equity of Access," and "Information Resources and Access."

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/electacc.html

Access to Resources and Services in the School Library Media Program

Adopted July 2, 1986; amended Jan. 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.

"The school library media program plays a unique role in promoting intellectual freedom" begins this policy. How best to do this is detailed in this document.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/accmedia.html

Challenged Materials

Adopted June 25, 1971; amended July 1, 1981; amended Jan. 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.

"Challenged materials which meet the criteria for selection in the materials selection policy…should not be removed under any legal or extra-legal pressure," claims this document. Reference to this policy may be helpful in defense of full online access.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/chal_mat.html

Expurgation of Library Materials

Adopted Feb. 2,1973; amended July 1, 1981; amended Jan. 10, 1990, by the ALA Council.

According to this policy, expurgation of library materials "is in effect denying access" to works and ideas. Because electronic transmission facilitates the ability to "alter, edit or obliterate" works, this policy statement may be useful within the filtering debate.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/exp_lib.html

Free Access to Libraries for Minors

Adopted June 30, 1972; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, by the ALA Council.

This policy interprets Article V of the Library Bill of Rights: "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, *age* (emphasis added), background, or views."

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/free_min.html

Policy Concerning Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information about Library Users

Adopted July 2,1991, by the ALA Council.

This policy details the "ethical responsibilities of librarians" concerning the confidentiality of library user's "personally identifiable information," which could become key issues in the next wave of patron authentication systems.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/pol_user.html

Policy on Confidentiality of Library Records

Adopted Jan. 20, 1971; revised July 4, 1975, and July 2, 1986, by the ALA Council.

Sister policy to the one above.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/pol_conf.html

Restricted Access to Library Materials

Adopted Feb. 2, 1973; amended July 1, 1981; July 3, 1991, by the ALA Council.

This policy addresses "attempts … to limit access by relegating materials into segregated collections." Policies concerning the location of computer terminals or limits on electronic information access may be covered by this policy.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/rest_mat.html

Statement on Labeling

Adopted July 13, 1951; amended June 25, 1971; July 1, 1981; June 26, 1990, by the ALA Council.

This policy, which addresses "the practice of describing or designating materials by affixing a prejudicial label and/or segregating them by a prejudicial system" is central to the proposed Web rating system debate.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/labeling.html

Universal Right to Free Expression

Adopted by the ALA Council, Jan. 16, 1991.

The global and international aspect of Internet access is covered by this policy, which reiterates the United Nation's "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" within a library context.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/univ_exp.html

Guidelines

Conducting a Challenge Hearing

no date.

Provides the do's and don't's to be observed when conducting a hearing on challenged materials. This is an important document for, as the guideline states, "a number of battles have been lost because the challenge hearing has been poorly organized."

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/challengehearing.html

Dealing with Concerns about Library Resources

Revised Jan. 12, 1983, by the Intellectual Freedom Committee.

One of the keys to handling complaints about library materials is "to be sure the library staff and the governing authorities are all knowledgeable about the complaint procedures." This guideline details how to ensure this gets done.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/
dealingwithconcerns.html

Guidelines and Considerations for Developing a Public Library Internet Use Policy

Adopted by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee June 1998.

This guideline is one of the first places library officials should turn to before constructing their Internet use policy. The key issues of obscenity, child pornography, "harmful to minors," and filtering are addressed, followed by sections on specific policy provisions and advice on answering objections.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/
internet.html

Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities

Adopted June 28, 1994, by the ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee.

This guideline provides advice on developing "policies, procedures or regulations" to guarantee access to "the library's public forum." A checklist of items to consider before restricting access is provided.

www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/
pol_reg.html