



CFLA-FCAB Code of Ethics

Preamble

The Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) considers the International Federation of Library Associations' (IFLA) statement IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers to be a comprehensive statement on the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of libraries and library workers in the 21st Century.

CFLA-FCAB encourages Canadian libraries and librarians to use this Code of Ethics as a guide and is not intended to replace existing codes or to remove the obligation on professionals to develop their own codes.

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.

Librarians and other information workers reject the denial and restriction of access to information and ideas most particularly through censorship whether by states, governments, or religious or civil society institutions.

Librarians and other information workers offering services to the public should make every endeavour to offer access to their collections and services free of cost to the user. If membership fees and administrative charges are inevitable, they should be kept as low as possible, and practical solutions found so that socially disadvantaged people are not excluded.

Librarians and other information workers promote and publicise their collection and services so that users and prospective users are aware of their existence and availability.

Librarians and other information workers use the most effective ways to make the material accessible to all. For this purpose they seek to ensure that the websites of libraries and other information institutions comply with international standards for accessibility and access to them is not subject to barriers.

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,



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heritage, education, income, immigration and asylum-seeking status, marital status, origin, race, religion or sexual orientation.

Librarians and other information workers respect language minorities of a country and their right to access information in their own language.

Librarians and other information workers organize and present content in a way that allows an autonomous user to find the information s/he needs. Librarians and other information workers help and support users in their information searching.

Librarians and other information workers offer services to increase reading skills. They promote information literacy including the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and create, use and communicate information. And they promote the ethical use of information thereby helping to eliminate plagiarism and other forms of misuse of information.

Librarians and other information workers respect the protection of minors while ensuring this does not impact on the information rights of adults.

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.

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.

Librarians and other information workers support and participate in transparency so that the workings of government, administration and business are opened to the scrutiny of the general public. They also recognise that it is in the public interest that misconduct, corruption and crime be exposed by what constitute breaches of confidentiality by so-called 'whistleblowers'.

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. This includes support for the principles of open access, open source, and open licenses.

Librarians and other information workers aim to provide fair, swift, economical and effective access to information for users.

Librarians and other information workers have a professional duty to advocate for exceptions and limitations to copyright restrictions for libraries.



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Librarians and other information workers are partners of authors, publishers and other creators of copyright protected works. Librarians and other information workers recognise the intellectual property right of authors and other creators and will seek to ensure that their rights are respected.

Librarians and other information workers negotiate the most favourable terms for access to works on behalf of their users and seek to ensure that access is not unnecessarily prevented or hindered by the mode of administration of intellectual property laws and that licenses do not override exceptions for libraries contained in national legislation. Librarians and other information workers encourage governments to establish an intellectual property regime that appropriately respects balance between the interests of rightsholders and individuals and the institutions such as libraries which serve them.

Librarians and other information workers also advocate that copyright terms should be limited and that information that has fallen in the public domain remains public and free.

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. Neutrality results in the most balanced collection and the most balanced access to information achievable.

Librarians and other information workers define and publish their policies for selection, organisation, preservation, provision, and dissemination of information.

Librarians and other information workers distinguish between their personal convictions and professional duties. They do not advance private interests or personal beliefs at the expense of neutrality.

Librarians and other information workers have the right to free speech in the workplace provided it does not infringe the principle of neutrality towards users.

Librarians and other information workers counter corruption directly affecting librarianship, as in the sourcing and supply of library materials, appointments to library posts and administration of library contracts and finances.

Librarians and other information workers strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing their knowledge and skills. They aim at the highest standards of service quality and thus promote the positive reputation of the profession.

6. Colleague and employer/employee relationship

Librarians and other information workers treat each other with fairness and respect.



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Librarians and other information workers 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.

Librarians and other information workers promote equal payment and benefits for men and women holding comparable jobs.

Librarians and other information workers share their professional experience with colleagues and they help and guide new professionals to enter the professional community and develop their skills. They contribute to the activities of their professional association and participate in research and publication on professional matters.

Librarians and other information workers strive to earn a reputation and status based on their professionalism and ethical behaviour. They do not compete with colleagues by the use of unfair methods.

Further study

- [The Ethics of Librarianship. An International Survey](#). Ed. by Robert W. Vaagan with an introduction by Alex Byrne. München: Saur 2002 VI, 344 p.
- Gebolys, Zdzislaw, Jacek Tomaszczyk: *Library Codes of Ethics Worldwide*. Anthology. Berlin: Simon 2012. 267 p.
- [Professional Codes of Ethics for Librarians](#). IFLA-Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Free Expression (FAIFE).
- Sturges, Paul: [Doing the Right Thing. Professional ethics for information workers in Britain](#). In: *New Library World*. 104, 2003, n. 1186, p. 94-102.

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