



Equity

One of the fundamental principles of librarianship is the notion of equity: that all people should have equal and equitable access to knowledge and information regardless of age, gender, language, race, religion, political belief, or sexual orientation.

Equity is much broader than libraries promoting and ensuring freedom of access to knowledge and information. Equity is not only about maintaining free core library services; developing inclusive policies; and providing equitable access to activities and events, collections, services, equipment, and resources for all individuals. Equity is about social inclusion.

By embracing cultural and community development principles into library service provision, libraries are transforming from being collections and transactional-based institutions to contemporary spaces that provide access to information and resources, as well as enabling social inclusion and connections, community-driven initiatives and lifelong learning opportunities.

People are using libraries for more than borrowing books. As libraries introduce new service offerings, traditional library mindsets and existing library policies are being questioned as to whether these are fair and equitable practices. Showing compassion and meeting community expectation to modify or rescind policies requires a balanced and pragmatic approach as library professionals are still required to work within corporate policy and manage assets and budgets.

There is a wide variety of literature and resources available to assist libraries in understanding and becoming more equitable and socially inclusive, as well as participating in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. I've provided a brief list in my full TIK blog, which you can find at (bit.ly/2ZfuZeS) which I hope you find useful. 🌐

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Privacy

Libraries care passionately about protecting the confidentiality of library users. At the heart of this sentiment are the principles adopted by many libraries across the nation – the 2018 ALIA *Free access to information statement* (bit.ly/2APWlck). As the principle of this statement says, 'Freedom can be protected in a democratic society only if individuals have unrestricted access to information and ideas.' I would like to explore this theme, look at the history of privacy in relation to the individual liberty in democracy and how this can be applied in this modern, online world.

The freedom to read and receive ideas anonymously, is at the heart of individual liberty. If individuals in society fear that their privacy or confidentiality is compromised, true freedom of thought, inquiry and research no longer exists. The basis of this concern for privacy can be traced back to the public libraries of last century, when their mission was to help those wishing to become better read or educated, by providing materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. In turn, early library professionals wished to protect the privacy of their readers in order to promote free expression in a democratic society.

On the ALIA website, there is an excellent guideline document that can be used by your library to help develop your own privacy policy (bit.ly/2LB6Gop). I appreciate that libraries cherish this long-established practice of protecting my rights to privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual freedom. You can read my full blog post on this topic on the ALIA FAIR website at (bit.ly/2KfqASQ). 🌐

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