

Utah State Library Collection Development Policy

Introduction

USL Mission

The Utah State Library develops, leads, and delivers exceptional library services, while optimizing Utah's investment in libraries.

USL Vision

The Utah State Library is the primary leadership resource for librarians, while providing equal access to information and enduring services for citizens.

Collection Development Policy

The Utah State Library's (USL) Collection Development Policy serves as a tool for managing the print and online resources of the Utah State Library. It defines the fundamental nature and purpose of the collection and provides guidance for the selection and acquisition of our information materials. Further, it provides the parameters for the future growth and development of the collection.

The Collection Development Policy reflects and supports the Mission of the Library. One of USL's primary goals is to "Provide access to quality library materials through Utah's public libraries and directly to Utah residents" (Goal 1, FY2016-17 Strategic Plan).

Collection Development Goals

1. The collections of the Utah State Library are built and maintained in a focused, intentional manner to meet the information needs of state government, the library community, and the residents of Utah.
2. The Utah State Library seeks to provide a balanced treatment of subjects and issues in its collections.
3. The Utah State Library strives to collect and retain a comprehensive body of Utah materials.

Policy Review

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years.

Adopted: 3/24/2017

Amended: 12/4/2020

The General USL Collection

Audience Served

The USL collection supplements the materials found in public libraries that serve people throughout Utah. Material requests that are made by these libraries that are beyond the scope of this collection are processed through Interlibrary Loan (ILL). By providing materials that smaller Utah libraries do not have or cannot easily acquire, the collection helps bridge the gap between the demands of smaller public library patrons and the collection budgets of those libraries.

Character of the Collection

The general collection of materials at the Utah State Library consists of the following areas:

Core Collection

USL strives to maintain a balanced, diversified core collection, consisting of both fiction and non-fiction books and audiobooks. Additionally, attention is given requests by Utah's smaller public libraries to fulfill the needs of their patrons for materials beyond that which can be provided by their own collections. A portion of this core collection focuses on materials related to Utah, its history, geology, and culture, including works residents of Utah produce as authors or publishers.

Special Collection

A number of legacy items acquired over the years are maintained in the collection because of their classic or enduring nature. Materials in this collection may be viewed in-house and may be checked out in special circumstances.

Book Buzz Collection

The materials in this collection consist of sets of books that are geared towards book groups of various ages, interests, and backgrounds.

Selection Criteria for Fiction/Nonfiction, Special, and Book Buzz Collections.

Materials are selected based upon the following criteria:

1. Authority and reliability.
 1. Author's qualifications and other published works.
 2. Reliability and reputation of the publisher.
 3. Anticipated usage or requests by the public.
 4. Literary awards or evaluations in reviews/media.
 5. Accuracy and timeliness of content.
 6. Contribution of a work to the diversity or breadth of the collection and its relation to other materials on the subject.
 7. Representation of unique or controversial points of view with consideration of above criteria.
 8. Non-fiction and fiction material created by a Utahn or about Utah.
 9. Materials about the Native American tribes of Utah defined as Ute, Goshute, Paiute, Shoshone, or Navajo.
 10. Affordability.

Library Professional Development Collection

These materials are a resource for all Utah library staff and contain a wide-ranging selection of materials about the library profession.

Selection Criteria. The general criteria to be used in the selection of professional development materials are as follows:

1. Current and anticipated needs of Utah library staff.
2. Accuracy and timeliness of content.
3. Requests by Utah library staff.
4. Affordability.

Deselection Policy

In order to provide a current, accurate and useful collection in those topics that are time-sensitive (health, social sciences, technology), the Utah State Library will perform regular deselection of materials based on the following criteria:

1. Misleading—factually inaccurate.
2. Outdated—age of document.
3. Condition—worn beyond mending and rebinding.
4. Superseded—by a new edition or a much better book on the subject.
5. Trivial—of no discernible literary or scientific merit.
6. Irrelevant to the needs or interests of the library's community.
7. Elsewhere—the material is easily obtainable from another library.
8. Low Usage—Usage drops below acceptable.

Gifts

USL reserves the right to decide what should be added to its collection without restrictions on current or future use, and reserves the right to dispose of unsuitable materials in accordance with state law. USL does not appraise the value of gifts.

The USL State Documents Collection

Audience Served

Access to the collection is free to the general public.

Character of the Collection

Print Collection

This collection contains items consisting of state publications issued by state agencies ranging between Utah territorial era to present day. Agencies are required to submit two copies of each print, microform, CD, or DVD publication in compliance with Utah Code Ann. § 9-7-207, but the collection is incomplete.

Utah Government Digital Library (digitallibrary.utah.gov)

Born-digital state and digitized government publications have been collected since 2006 covering publication dates from approximately 1851 to present. The entire collection is indexed and accessible using Google and other search engines. The cataloged metadata is regularly harvested by the Mountain West Digital Library (MWDL) making all content publicly accessible through the MWDL and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA).

Selection Criteria Summary. The Utah State Library is mandated by statute to collect state government publications; provide permanent public access to state publications in digital formats in an online digital library (Utah Code Ann. [§ 9-7-208](#)); and to manage a network of state depository libraries for the preservation, distribution, and exchange of state publications (Utah Code Ann. [§ 9-7-207, 209](#)). State publications are defined in statute (Utah Code Ann. [§ 9-7-101](#)) to include a broad range of documents, including audiovisual, micrographic, and electronic publications regardless of the format or method of reproduction.

USL has authority to collect publications from all state agencies, including all departments, offices, boards, commissions, public universities and colleges, and political subdivisions (see Utah Code Ann. [§ 9-7-101](#)). Political subdivisions include all Utah counties, cities, school districts, public transit districts, redevelopment agencies, and special districts (see Utah Code Ann. [§ 9-7-101](#)). To supplement agency-submitted publications, the Utah State Library also harvests publications directly from state agency websites. Select relevant federal agency publications containing information, data, and statistics referring to Utah are also included in the *Utah Government Digital Library*.

Digital Resources Available through Utah's Online Public Library

Audience Served

With the exception of the OverDrive content, which is accessible to only the member libraries of the Beehive Library Consortium, Utah's Online Public Library resources are provided for all Utah residents through their local public library.

Character of the Collection

USL provides audiobooks and eBooks, newspapers, magazines, and other resources through Utah's Online Public Library (onlinelibrary.utah.gov). The collection is designed:

1. To provide online resources to patrons of Utah's public libraries that will extend the quality and scope of their local library collection, and
2. To provide online resources for Utah's residents that focus on life-long learning, including resources for leisure and recreational education.

Resources are chosen to reflect a broad spectrum of viewpoints and interests. Resources are chosen in cooperation with representatives of local public libraries, as well as representatives of K-12 schools and the Utah Academic Library Consortium, who make up the Utah's Online Library Central Committee, to avoid duplication and provide the widest selection of resources.

Beehive Library Consortium

This is a unique consortium comprised of representatives from member libraries, led by an administrative committee created in 2020. This consortium is specific to the OverDrive platform. Content is purchased for this electronic collection by all member libraries, including the USL. USL administrates the consortium.

Selection Criteria Summary. Materials are selected according to one of more of the following criteria. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be added to the collection.

- Current and anticipated needs and interests of the public.
- Evaluations in review media – this may include popular reviews from a variety of sources.
- Accuracy and timeliness of content.
- Author's or publisher's qualifications and/or reputation.
- Contribution of a work to the diversity of breadth of the collection and its relation to other materials on the subject.
- Representation of unique or controversial points of view.
- Receipt of, or nomination for, major awards or prizes.
- Requests by the public.
- Affordability.
- Lending model.

Reconsideration of Materials for Inclusion or Removal

The collection contains a wide variety of materials to meet the diverse needs of a diverse population. The Utah State Library neither approves nor disapproves of views expressed in materials included in the collection. Anyone who wishes to have materials reconsidered for inclusion or removal from the USL collection shall complete the Reconsideration of Materials Form and send it to:

Assistant Director
Utah State Library Division
250 N 1950 W, Suite A
Salt Lake City, UT 84116-7901

Reconsideration forms will be reviewed by a panel of three professional librarians appointed by the Utah State Library Director. The panel will submit its recommendations to the Director, who will make the final decision and provide written responses to requests. Once the form is submitted, the Director will respond to the complainant within 60 days. The complainant has 30 days to appeal the decision. Further appeals go to the Utah State Library Board of Trustees. The Board will form a panel of three, including one professional librarian and two Board Members, to review the challenged material and the reconsideration form. A written response to the individual outlining the Board's findings will be provided within 60 days. The Board's decision is final.

Library for the Blind and Disabled

Audience Served

The primary objective of the Utah State Library for the Blind and Disabled (USLBD) is to provide recreational and informational materials in special formats to those who are unable to read regular print due to blindness, visual, print, or physical disabilities.

The USLBD partners with bookmobiles and small public libraries to provide deposit collections of large print books for circulation to patrons with visual disabilities.

Character of the Collection

Materials acquired and/or produced in braille, large print or recorded media.

Selection Criteria Summary

Audio and braille books will be added to the collection if the National Library Service (NLS) or other regional libraries/agencies have not produced the titles. Emphasis will be placed on adding materials of local and/or regional interest and books written by local authors or published by local publishers.

The selection of materials produced by the library should not be interpreted as an endorsement of the views expressed therein. Items selected will be produced in their entirety and will remain in the collection regardless of whether some or all of the content is considered to be offensive or unacceptable to some readers. USLBD subscribes to the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement.

Final responsibility for all acquisition and/or reproduction of library materials rests with the Library for the Blind Program Manager.

Books will be considered for selection if the title is not currently included in the USLBD collection. Selected titles must meet the criteria of local interest and local histories, including material written by local authors or published by local publishers. Books for the collection will be considered in relationship to the existing items in the subject area and format of the materials

Books unavailable from other sources will be recorded if titles meet selection criteria for inclusion in the collection. A digital file of the book will be produced and posted to a download site.

State documents, forms, and explanatory information necessary to the well-being of Utah citizens will be recorded and/or brailled.

Periodicals of local and/or regional interest may be considered if sufficient patron interest is shown. Recorded periodicals available from another source will not be produced locally.

Large Print Titles: Commercially produced large print books that meet the guidelines for printed materials as established by the USLBD collection development policy will be purchased from a variety of publishers. Textbooks generally are not purchased, but may be added to the collections if they provide the best or only source of information on a subject or if they complement an existing area with another perspective.

Recording Materials for Library Patrons

1. Active patrons of the USLBD may submit materials to be recorded. Materials provided by the patron may be added to the library collection if the content meets policy requirements. Patrons must provide a flash drive or empty cartridge to the library for the audio file.
2. It is the responsibility of the patron to provide books or other print materials they wish to have recorded.
3. Only one item at a time will be recorded for patrons if multiple items are received. Particularly if the library is experiencing a high volume of requests, and/or the availability of volunteer readers is insufficient to meet current needs.
4. Books require three to six months recording time per title. New books purchased by the library for recording will take priority over patron requests due to the demand in local interest material.
5. Books or materials from government institutions or service organizations will take first priority, i.e., State of Utah agencies, UTA, Social Security Administration, etc., as well as work-related materials for individual patrons.
6. Any other materials designated as high priority status will require justification and approval from the Program Manager.
7. The library does not record personal materials including journals, family history, or other items.
8. The library does not record textbooks.
9. If the library is unable to find a narrator willing to read submitted materials due to content, the item will not be recorded and will be returned to the patron.

Braille Materials for Library Patrons

1. Local and regional books selected to be brailled for the collection will be considered in relationship to the existing items in the subject area. Hard copies may be embossed as demand requires, to preserve resources.
2. The library does not braille personal materials or textbooks. All materials brailled by the library will be added to the circulating collection.
3. The library will braille materials from government institutions or service organizations, i.e. State of Utah agencies, UTA, Social Security Administration, etc., as well as work-related materials for individual patrons.

Collection Maintenance

1. Locally recorded audio book titles will be weeded on an as needed basis.
2. The large print collection will be weeded on an as-needed basis. Damaged or lost books will be replaced according to demand or popularity.
3. Libraries participating in the large print deposit collection will contact USLBD within 30 days of receiving damaged books from patrons.
4. Books produced by NLS vendors will be weeded as needed or as required by NLS. NLS policies will be followed for discarding weeded books.

Providing Access to Locally Produced Materials

Objectives

1. To download copies of locally produced audio titles from other network libraries to fill reader requests or add to the Utah collection.
2. To provide access to Utah's locally produced audio files to other network libraries.

Materials in Special Formats

Recorded Format

A complete collection of locally produced audio book files will be maintained and available on the local book download site

Braille

1. Additional copies of braille books produced by NLS will be obtained through the NLS XESS process. If the title is available on the BARD site, the transcriber may download the file and produce a hard copy braille book.

2. A complete electronic file for all locally produced braille books will be submitted to the NLS BARD site. Hard copy braille books may be created on demand.

Large Print:

1. Large print books will be ordered from commercial producers to replace popular or in demand titles that have been damaged or lost.
2. The library does not produce large print textbooks. This is the responsibility of the school districts.

Reconsideration of Materials for Inclusion or Removal

The collection contains a wide variety of materials to meet the diverse needs of a diverse population. The Utah State Library neither approves nor disapproves of views expressed in materials included in the collection. Anyone who wishes to have materials reconsidered for inclusion or removal from the USL collection shall complete the Reconsideration of Materials Form and send it to:

Assistant Director
Utah State Library Division
250 N 1950 W, Suite A
Salt Lake City, UT 84116-7901

Reconsideration forms will be reviewed by a panel of three professional librarians appointed by the Utah State Library Director. The panel will submit its recommendations to the Director, who will make the final decision and provide written responses to requests. Once the form is submitted, the Director will respond to the complainant within 60 days. The complainant has 30 days to appeal the decision. Further appeals go to the Utah State Library Board of Trustees. The Board will form a panel of three, including one professional librarian and two Board Members, to review the challenged material and the reconsideration form. A written response to the individual outlining the Board's findings will be provided within 60 days. The Board's decision is final.

Bookmobile Libraries and Repositories

Character of the Collection

Bookmobile collections offer materials in choices of format, treatment, language, and level of difficulty. The word materials has the widest possible meaning and includes, but is not limited to, print, audiovisual, and electronic formats. Collection is defined as materials that are selected for the Bookmobile Program; those selected may be physically owned by the individual bookmobile program, or may be accessed through the Bookmobile's catalog, or the Utah State Library website. Selection refers to the decision that must be made to add a given item to a bookmobile collection, which then makes the item accessible on the bookmobile, in the headquarters library, electronically or delivered by some other means.

Bookmobile collections are developed and managed to make available materials that are of significance and interest to library patrons in the local communities that are served by the bookmobile and the headquarters library. Collections are reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis to meet current and future needs. Collections are broad, current and popular; not archival nor comprehensive. However, materials of unique historical value to local communities are collected and retained when possible. Materials are withdrawn from the collection to maintain the collection's usefulness, currency, and relevance.

Collections provide general coverage of subjects and reflect the characteristics of the community. Materials in the collections serve two purposes:

1. To provide materials for library patrons of all ages based on specific criteria.
2. To provide materials for children that will encourage a love of reading, support learning, and supplement educational activities at local schools.

Selection Criteria Summary

To build a collection of merit, materials are evaluated according to one or more of the following criteria. An item need not meet all of these criteria in order to be added to the collection.

- Current and anticipated needs and interests of the public
- Suitability of format for library use
- Suitability of subject and style for the intended audience
- Evaluations in review media – this may include popular reviews from a variety of sources
- Accuracy and timeliness of content
- Author's, artist's, or publisher's qualifications and/or reputation
- Contribution of a work to the diversity of breadth of the collection and its relation to other materials on the subject
- Representation of unique or controversial points of view
- Receipt of, or nomination for, major awards or prizes
- Quality of construction
- Requests by the public
- Affordability

Additional criteria will apply to specific collection areas as detailed below.

Adult materials are selected according to a variety of criteria in addition to demand or need. The bookmobile library does not typically add abridged versions of books to their collections. Generally, the bookmobile library will acquire only works of interest to the layperson. Price, accuracy, and timeliness are other factors influencing selection. The bookmobile library does not commonly purchase out-of-print materials for the collection. No attempt is made to purchase all the works by a certain author.

Audio recordings are selected to meet a wide range of audio needs, including foreign language instruction and literature. Unabridged editions are preferred; however, the bookmobile selectively adds abridged versions to meet popular demand. As technology changes, the bookmobile will acquire audio recordings in prevailing formats. Bookmobiles have access to downloadable eBooks and audiobooks to supplement their collections through Utah's Online Library.

Children's books and other materials expressly purchased for children are selected to meet the informational and recreational needs of children from infancy through age twelve in order to encourage a love of reading, support learning, and supplement educational activities at local schools. The criteria of patron demand and need are also considered in acquiring children's materials.

Young Adult materials are selected and added to bookmobile collections, for youth ages 13 – 19. These materials consist primarily of age-appropriate fiction and a small collection of non-fiction.

Large Print Books are provided through both selection and a deposit collection on loan from the USL Program for the Blind and Disabled (USLBD). The large print books from USLBD that are selected to circulate on the bookmobile(s) are comprised of a variety of popular reading genres, including best sellers, westerns, mysteries, romances, and other subjects of interest to the population served.

Electronic databases are provided through Utah's Online Public Library.

Not all materials and information found using library computers or the Utah State Library's website are part of the collections of the bookmobile libraries. This policy applies to materials available through the internet that are specifically selected using the criteria outlined in this policy including subscription databases, and eBooks. Determining the accuracy, authenticity, and appropriateness of electronic information is left to each library patron.

Government documents are available to patrons of bookmobile and headquarters libraries through Utah Government Digital Library at <https://digitallibrary.utah.gov>.

Reference Materials are selected and purchased to have age-appropriate and up-to-date materials needed to answer the informational questions of library users. Online resources are available through Utah's Online Public Library at <https://onlinelibrary.utah.gov>.

Textbooks are not generally purchased by bookmobiles. Bookmobiles do not support educational curricula through the purchase of textbooks. Textbooks may be added to the

collections if they provide the best or only source of information on a subject or if they complement an existing area with another perspective.

Visual Media are added to the bookmobile's collection in a manner consistent with patron demand and budget constraints. These items include popular feature films, documentaries, instructional materials and other visual media. As technology changes, the bookmobiles will acquire visual media in the prevailing formats, as patron demand and cost allow.

Filtering

Utah Code Ann. § 9-7-215 and 9-7-216 prohibit a public library from receiving state funds unless the library filters internet access to certain types of images and information. In order to comply with this law, internet access on bookmobiles and in headquarters libraries is filtered.

Multiple Copies

Multiple copies of titles with high patron demand may be purchased as budget allows.

Interlibrary Loan

Interlibrary Loan (ILL) is not a substitute for collection development and management, but it is meant to expand the range and variety of materials available to library users.

Patron Privacy

USL protects each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received, and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.

Reconsideration of Materials for Inclusion or Removal

The collection contains a wide variety of materials to meet the diverse needs of a diverse population. The Utah State Library neither approves nor disapproves of views expressed in materials included in the collection. Anyone who wishes to have materials reconsidered for inclusion or removal from the USL collection shall complete the Reconsideration of Materials Form and send it to:

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Reconsideration forms will be reviewed by a panel of three professional librarians appointed by the Utah State Library Director. The panel will submit its recommendations to the Director, who will make the final decision and provide written responses to requests. Once the form is submitted, the Director will respond to the complainant within 60 days. The complainant has 30 days to appeal the decision. Further appeals go to the Utah State Library Board of Trustees. The Board will form a panel of three, including one professional librarian and two Board Members, to review the challenged material and the reconsideration form. A written response to the individual outlining the Board's findings will be provided within 60 days. The Board's decision is final.

Utah State Library Reconsideration of Materials Form

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Do you represent self? _____ If no, who do you represent? _____

Organization? _____ If so, what organization? _____

1. Resource on which you are commenting:

_____ Book _____ Textbook _____ Video _____ Display _____ Magazine _____ Library Program

_____ Audio Recording _____ Newspaper _____ Electronic information/network (please specify)

_____ Other _____

Title _____

Author/Producer _____

2. What brought this resource to your attention?

3. Have you examined the entire resource?

4. What concerns you about the resource? (use other side or additional pages if necessary)

5. Are there resource(s) you suggest to provide additional information and/or other viewpoints on this topic?

ALA Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

- I. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
- II. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
- III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
- IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
- V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
- VI. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 19, 1939, by the ALA Council; amended October 14, 1944; June 18, 1948; February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980; inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

A history of the Library Bill of Rights is found in the latest edition of the [Intellectual Freedom Manual](#).

ALA Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that

freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint,

but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

A Joint Statement by:

[American Library Association](#)
[Association of American Publishers](#)

Subsequently endorsed by:

[American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression](#)
[Association of University Presses](#)
[The Children's Book Council](#)
[Freedom to Read Foundation](#)
[National Association of College Stores](#)
[National Coalition Against Censorship](#)
[National Council of Teachers of English](#)
[The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression](#)