

Statement of Professional Ethics  
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As a future information professional, I have chosen to follow the [Code of Ethics of the American Library Association](#). I cherish the ideas articulated in this code, which is based on two key commitments: “intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information” (ALA, 2008). The idea of intellectual freedom is a key principle of the historical period known as the Enlightenment, and one of the underlying principles of the founding of the United States. To me, intellectual freedom is the right of every person to think, seek out, and express ideas that they value, without fear of coercion or intimidation by others. I see freedom of access to information cut out of similar philosophical cloth. It expresses an egalitarian ideal to which information professionals are committed to making information as readily available as possible to all persons who access library resources. I consider this idea necessary to promote the public good (Hirsh, p. 294). At the same time, I recognize that freedom of access to information is balanced by the rights of authors and other producers of information to earn profits from their work. Both intellectual freedom and freedom of access to information are consistent with ideas widely held by citizens of contemporary democracies. They are also consistent with my deeply-held beliefs about the nature of humanity and the worth of all persons. I will now share my adaptation of the eight “broad statements” listed in the Code of Ethics of the American Library Association (ALA, 2008).

- I. I will seek to “provide the highest level of service to all library users” (ALA, 2008). This is the simplest articulation of my professional mission statement. It carries the ideas of intellectual freedom and freedom of access stated above. It represents my first aspiration as an information professional and is the standard by which I define professional integrity.
- II. I will “uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resist all efforts to censor library resources” (ALA, 2008). I believe in a generally free market of ideas. I believe it is hurtful to human civilization when people seek to restrict what others want to learn.
- III. I will “protect each library user’s right to privacy and confidentiality” (ALA, 2008). This is based on my belief in the dignity of all human beings. For all persons involved in library research, I will adhere to the ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, as articulated in [The Belmont Report](#).
- IV. I will “respect intellectual property rights and advocate balance between the interests of information users and rights holders” (ALA, 2008). As stated above, I see the need to uphold the needs of the public and private citizens at the same time.
- V. I will “treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith” (ALA, 2008). This includes working to improve working conditions and “safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees (ALA, 2008). This affirms the worth of all people with whom I associate.
- VI. I will “not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues” or my place of employment (ALA, 2008). I believe librarians should promote the public good, endeavoring to make library resources available to as many people as possible, regardless of their ability to pay fees, or other costs.
- VII. I will distinguish between my “personal convictions and professional duties” so that I can perform unbiased service to all customers, encouraging the free-flow of all kinds of information resources, whether I agree with the ideas or not (ALA, 2008). This is essential, as no person—including me—should restrict what others want to learn.

- VIII. I will “strive for excellence” by engaging in all kinds of professional development, and by encouraging those who wish to enter the profession (ALA, 2008).

#### References

American Library Association (ALA) Code of Ethics. Adopted January 22, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>

Hirsch, S. (Ed.) (2015). *Information Services Today: An introduction*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.