

Foundation of the Information Profession

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Today's information professional has multiple options regarding their focus or specialty. They could be public librarians, database administrators for fortune 500 companies, or even perform data analytics for marketing firms. The options are endless; however, no matter the path, the foundations of the profession are the same as they are built upon the same core values and beliefs. Intellectual freedom, information access and dissemination are integral to the information profession. As the American Library Association (ALA) states on their website, "Intellectual freedom is a core value of the library profession, and a basic right in our democratic society. A publicly supported library provides free, equitable, and confidential access to information for all people of its community" (Intellectual, 2018). Every person has a protected right to information, and it is the information professional's obligation to support them as needed. The scope of this paper will discuss learning outcome 5, and how it has impacted me as an information professional.

Prior to this semester, I was unaware of the ethical struggles and demands placed upon information professionals to uphold these beliefs. During the Ethical Scenarios group project, I really began to comprehend the ethical dilemmas that information professionals find themselves in. For the project, we chose to focus on censorship in school libraries and created a false scenario that depicted a book being removed from the shelf at a parent's request. As I was researching various codes of ethics, I was struck by the inclusion of one ethical dilemma that I thought was an issue of the past. Censorship is still an issue that many librarians still deal with in this modern age. The scope of the assignment required focusing on one ethical issue from multiple angles to fully understand the personal and professional struggles that a librarian could find themselves in. I discovered that even though intellectual freedom is protected by the first amendment, it is still in constant danger of being violated. Especially if the general public are

ignorant of their actions. A parent may want to shield their child from certain controversial topics like sexual orientation or abortion, but in doing so by calling for censorship in libraries equates to violating everyone's intellectual freedom. I learned through this assignment that adhering to a professional code of ethics is paramount to support the basic values of the profession. As Martin Garnar explains, "by understanding the ethical principles at the core of the information science profession and by referring to those principles when making decisions or facing dilemmas, information professionals can strive to ensure that their everyday actions are consistent with the field's professional values" (2018, p.366). The delicate nature of situations that information professionals can find themselves in, benefits from having a universal code that can guide them to a moral solution. It sets a standard for all information professionals as well as defines the profession.

Without the belief in the access of information, intellectual freedom cannot be sustained. To not be in violation of the first amendment, information needs to be readily available for every citizen. The ALA's code of ethics places equal emphasis on these two beliefs as they cannot exist without the other. "In a political system grounded in an informed citizenry, we are members of a profession explicitly committed to intellectual freedom and the freedom of access to information (American Library Association, Code, 2018, para. 3). Crafting a scenario involving censorship in a school library also helped me understand that access to information does not discriminate against age. Children, maybe more so than adults, rely on information to formulate their own ideas and opinions. As an information professional, it is my duty to ensure that no person, regardless of age, sex, race, or socioeconomic status is denied access to information that some people might view as controversial.

It is not the responsibility of information professionals to be gatekeepers of information. We are not to hold the information hostage or select whom can have access. The rights to access and intellectual freedom are protected by the United States Constitution. “Congress shall make no law...prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech...” (U.S. Const. amend. I). This amendment protects speech in any form that it takes. While information professionals more often find themselves supporting the public with documented speech, information is not limited to this format. Saracevic defines information science as “...the science and practice dealing with the effective collection, storage, retrieval, and use of information” (2010, p. 2570). While this definition provides a scope of the job description of information professionals, it does not encompass the main role of the profession. The information is collected and protected only to be disseminated back to the general public. The information professional exists to ensure that information of the past remains available for those seeking it in the future.

References

American Library Association. (2008). Code of ethics of the American Library Association.

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American Library Association. (2018). Intellectual freedom: Issues and resources. American Library Association. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom>.

Garnar, M.L. (2018). Information ethics. In Hirsh, S. (ed.), *Information Services Today: An Introduction* (2nd ed.) (pp. 366-377). New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield.

Saracevic, T. (2010). Information Science. In Bates, M. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (3rd ed.) (pp. 2570-2584). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

U.S. Const. amend. I.

Appendix A

Evaluative Statements for E-Portfolio

Name: Melanie Carroll Graduating semester/year: Fall 2019

Degree/Certificate: MLIS

Artifact 1: Course: 6010 Assignment: Ethics Scenario Learning outcome # it supports: 5

Please add your evaluative statement below:

The assignment was an exercise in understanding the importance of a code of ethics, and how it can be applied to a real-world situation. The benefit in discussing the chosen learning outcome is that it shows the importance of intellectual freedom as well as gave me a deeper understanding of the connection it has to the information profession.

Appendix B
Melanie V. Carroll
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Education

Master of Library and Information Science

Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

Expected December 2019

Bachelor of Arts

Columbia College, Columbia, Missouri

2017

Major: English Literature and History

Associates in Science

Montgomery County Community College, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania

2010

Major: Liberal Studies

Professional Experience

E-5/Gunner's Mate, Supervisor

United States Navy

2011-2015

- Performed clerical duties such as filing, entering data into spreadsheets, answering phones, creating PowerPoints, and recording personnel attendance.
- Implemented changes to technical publications and documents as required as well as submitted reports to correct errors present in existing technical documents.
- Coordinated with different departments on multiple occasions to locate and understand different systems as well as perform safe maintenance on equipment.
- Managed four programs in 2013 and 2014 for explosive safety program reviews which evaluated the department's ability to conduct operations safely and successfully
- Managed two programs, the Material and Ordnance Handling equipment program and Licensing program which involved working with different departments to ensure that equipment was being properly maintained and safety standards were met
- Supervised 10 personnel in daily responsibilities, ammunition storage, safe-handling, and classification, and troubleshooting and repair of weapons systems
- Utilized technical publications and technical documents to perform maintenance, upkeep, and repair of equipment for 4 years.

Key Holder

Barnes & Noble College Booksellers, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania

2006-2011

- Provided customer support in finding materials, answering questions, or special ordering any additional materials.
- Developed and implemented an efficient system for the fulfillment of online orders.
- Contacted and worked with publishers, instructors, and vendors to order and return materials.
- Performed general duties including:
 - online orders/returns, sales/returns, refunds/exchanges, book/material ordering/returns, stocking shelves, bank deposits, opening/closing of the store, inventory, trained new employees, processed incoming/outgoing shipments, filing, answering phones, working cash registers, and participated in interviews.

Teaching Experience**United States Navy**

- Instructed 10 personnel in the proper maintenance, repair, and procedures for various weapons systems and equipment.
- Performed refresher departmental training in equipment systems, weapons, and ammunition
- Instructed and qualified over 300 personnel in the safe handling and discharge of handguns, rifles, and shotguns as a range instructor
- Performed quarterly refresher training to over 300 personnel in the safe handling and discharge of weapons

Honors & Awards

- Dean's List, Columbia College: July 2015, March 2016, July 2016, December 2016, April 2017
- Alpha Sigma Lambda, Honor Society
- Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, United States Navy: January 2013, November 2013, December 2014

Special Skills

Operating Systems: Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, Windows 10

Software: Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office Suite, Dreamweaver, Microsoft Dynamics CRM

Languages: HTML, XML, CSS