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Ethics

If you want to have a safe, welcoming and successful library for both the patron and for the librarian, what better way to do it than by using ethics. Ethics are the standardized rules for what is right and for what is wrong for not only in life choices but also for businesses such as a library. The ethics that are considerable to think about in a library are “the uses and abuses of information, information technology, and information systems for personal, professional, and public decision making.”¹ When doing these ethics, it will provide the library with an upstanding recognition that will make everyone strive to come and enjoy its pleasures in reading and research. There are many ethical situations that the library experiences but through these situations worth mentioning below, the library still stands as the provider of information and knowledge that everyone needs to have.

The first type of ethics that a library needs to consider are the ways to find information and the usage of technology. Information is found everywhere from the people you meet to the places surrounding you. The ethical way to make sure that your information is received is seeing if the librarian is following the ALA Code of Ethics. The ALA Code of Ethics states that it is the responsibility of the librarian to “ensure the free flow of information and ideas to present and future generations.”² By free flow, it means giving the patron(s) free access to the information that the person wants. [...\Working with a Client.docx](#) Now, if the patron needs information that is in regards to a personal matter, then free flow is out of the question. In these types of situations, privacy needs to be considered as an importance to not only the patron but to the library in general. The library does not need to be confiscated by a violation of privacy. The ethics of privacy are defined in the Constitution in Amendments “I, IV, V, and XIV” but it needs to be handled carefully so that the library would not be in trouble.³

For information technology, ethics are used in a careful state of mind. Technology has become broader than ever and there are so many websites that are used that some people do not realize that some of these websites are not meant to be used for research. For instance, if a patron wants to look at a web page that is based on suicidal attempts, then the ethical way to take care of this would be to tell that person to give them a minute for the librarian to look up the information but in actuality, go and tell another librarian and maybe call the police without the patron knowing. For technological resources such as eBooks, online databases, and Nooks, they

¹ Hirsh, Sandra. (2018). *Information Services Today: An Introduction* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield. 366.

² Ibid. 371.

³ Ibid. 421.

are sometimes violating the privacy issue. For instance, when a patron brings his or her electronic device in the library and reads their eBook, they may not know that their privacy may be confiscated either by other readers or the company who puts the book on their website. These companies such as Amazon and others are hacking into peoples' technology, especially in public libraries.⁴ Part 3 of the ALA Code of Ethics states "We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired, or transmitted."⁵ Librarians need to know that whenever patrons bring in their electronic devices, they need to make sure that privacy is fully noted and that their privacy is protected. According to the IRB, if human research is being conducted, then their privacy also needs to be protected no matter what type of research the person is in for. [IRB Certification Reflection.docx](#) If the patron wants to look up online sources about historical figures, then the librarian's ethical approach would be to ask them what information they need by doing a reference interview and showing them how to find them on the computers.

For the information systems, librarians need to understand that their opinions and decisions for the library are meant to be for the business but they also need to share their decisions with the communities. Before the decisions are heard and being taken into consideration to also presenting it to the community, Parts 5 and 8 of the ALA Code of Ethics needs to be obtained: "We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions" and "We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession."⁶

In conclusion, ethics are important for the library to succeed as a place to use information in projects or other types of research. Everything a patron and a librarian does needs to be taken into consideration and it needs to follow the ALA Code of Ethics. Having ethics in the library makes everyone feel safe and welcomed. Without ethics, we would not know what was right and what was wrong in a situation and the librarian would have directed the patron to something that would make the library's reputation go down under. Having ethics is what makes things better even though it may involve some difficulty but it is for a good reason: to protect everyone and the business where it is being handled at.

⁴ Alter, Alexandra. (July 19, 2012). "Your E-Book Is Reading You." *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved October 21, 2018, from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304870304577490950051438304>.

⁵ Smith, Linda. C., & Wong, Melissa. A. (2017). *Reference and Information Services: An Introduction* (5th ed.). Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited. 43.

⁶ Ibid.

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