

Annotated Bibliography

Main Topic: Intellectual Freedom

Secondary Topic: Censorship

Focus Topic: The focus topics includes defining intellectual freedom and the problems that librarians may face with trying to uphold intellectual freedom, including self-censorship.

Censorship is the main threat to intellectual freedom and patrons may challenge material that they deem inappropriate. The focus topic also explains how librarians can combat these issues.

Style Guide: This assignment is formatted in accordance with the APA guide.

I began by researching intellectual freedom and trying to educate myself on the main points. I read about different problems and policies regarding intellectual freedom. I read chapter 9 from *Foundations of Library and Information Science* and then began searching for articles and websites from there. After stumbling upon and reading more and more content on censorship, I researched studies involving censorship and material challenges in libraries. I tried to limit my research to public libraries, but found strong sources involving situations in school libraries as well. I ultimately aimed to research how librarians can combat challenges and situations against intellectual freedom.

Access. (2011). Library technicians: censoring certain genres. *Access*, 25(2), 41.

“Library Technicians: Censoring Certain Genres” is an article in the FAQ section of a journal. The article begins with a current problem a library technician is facing and is answered by current librarians. The problem introduced in the article states that a

librarian technician has been asked by a teacher to stop letting students check out a popular vampire series because he believed the books were having a negative effect on the students. The teacher requested the technician keep a list of students at the desk to refer to when someone wanted to check a book of that genre out. The article provides a real view of the threats on intellectual freedom through censoring and ways that librarians suggest to deal with the issue. The main conclusion is that it is not the library technician's decision to stop the students from checking out the books, but can inform the teacher of other options. This FAQ section provides a glimpse into a real-life situation and how librarians responded.

American Library Association. (2007). *Intellectual freedom and censorship Q&A*. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/censorship/faq>

This webpage of the ALA website discusses common questions about intellectual freedom and censorship. It begins by defining intellectual freedom and censorship. It summarizes how censorship occurs and who attempts it. The website includes how the rights of those trying to censor material and those being censored both matter and must be taken into consideration. It also touches on the aspect of children and censoring material, which tends to be a popular topic. The end of the website states that staying informed is the best way to fight censorship. This website offers a good starting point for understanding intellectual freedom and censorship. It also shows an extremely credible source for librarians when dealing with these issues.

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American Library Association. (2008). *Professional ethics*. Retrieved from
<http://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>

This is a webpage by the American Library Association that lists the Code of Ethics for librarians. The ALA recognizes the importance of having ethical principles for all librarians and other professionals working within the library to follow. The code is comprised of 8 principles. The 2 principle states that librarians will uphold intellectual freedom and resist efforts to censor library materials. Other principles deal with privacy, personal convictions, and striving for excellence. This webpage is a useful source for discussing the professional ethics of librarians and where intellectual freedom and censorship connect to librarians' duties.

Antell, K., Strothmann, M., Downey, J. (2013). Self-censorship in selection of LGBT-themed materials. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 53(2), 104-107.

This column is about self-censorship and how librarians practice it unknowingly, and unknowingly. The purpose of the column is to discuss how librarians can catch themselves when they begin to self-censor and how to prevent self-censoring in general, mainly with LGBTQ themed materials. The author discusses many "traps", or myths about why LGBTQ selection is low. She mentions that saying it's hard to find these books is untrue because the ALA releases lists of LGBT materials. She also delves into the issue of librarians wondering what it will say about them if their library contains these materials. The answer is that they take their job seriously and are willing to handle

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professional obligations. She concludes by saying that librarians have an obligation to put prejudices aside and work with open minds. This column is a good addition when looking for a specific example of censorship and when discussing how self-censorship occurs.

Freeman, J.M. (2018). Intellectual freedom and libraries: Building community. *Georgia Library Quarterly*, 55(3), 1-3.

This article focuses specifically on intellectual freedom, specifically the problems that arise and how the intellectual freedom community must work together to create change. The author, John Freeman, is the chair of the ALA's Intellectual Freedom Round Table and has much experience with intellectual freedom. The article discusses different groups that can stand behind libraries when fighting cases of censoring or a violation of intellectual freedom. These groups include the Intellectual Freedom Committee, the Freedom to Read Foundation, the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, etc. The article's main purpose is to let librarians know that it is okay if they are unsure of how to solve a solution and how they can receive help. This article is a credible source for showing the intellectual freedom community and proving that while we are unsure of many intellectual freedom situations, the answers are available.

Garnar, M., Magi, T.J., & American Library Association. (2015). *Intellectual freedom manual: 9th edition*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

The *Intellectual Freedom Manual* is broken into 3 parts: “Intellectual Freedom and Libraries,” “Intellectual Freedom Issues and Best Practices,” and “Advocacy and Assistance”. This is the 9th edition of a manual that has served as a reference book for libraries seeking guidance about intellectual freedom. Part 1 describes what intellectual freedom is and its connection with academic, school, and public libraries. Part 2 discusses the role of libraries and their purpose of providing free, unrestricted access to library resources. Part 3 dives into communicating about intellectual freedom and how to protect intellectual freedom. This manual serves as a source for understanding more in-depth about the many issues with intellectual freedom and can serve as reference material for librarians.

Hill, R. (2010). The problem of self-censorship. *School Library Monthly*, 27(2), 9-12.

This article discusses self-censorship and the fact that we are unable to count how many times material has been self-censored. Self-censorship is different from censorship because it is the librarian’s fear that something might happen with the material. The author researches challenges on books, the long-term cost of self-censoring, variations of self-censoring, and how to decrease the risks of silent censorship. The article concludes by discussing the fact that challenges are exhausting to librarians and while it may seem easier to just “lose” a book, but by being prepared and utilizing policies they will be able to set self-censorship aside and face challenges. This article is a credible source for discussing more in-depth problems with self-censorship and how to combat these issues.

Knox, E.J.M. (2017). Opposing censorship in difficult times. *Public Library Quarterly*, 87(3), 268-276.

This article by Emily Knox focuses on what it means to support intellectual freedom and why people attempt to censor information. "Opposing Censorship in Difficult Times" does not have a main argument, but is rather a compilation of Knox's work on censorship. The piece begins by Knox explaining how she receives her research and what her previous research is based upon. Knox breaks down how censorship is practiced, actively and passively. Knox also discusses how challengers of material usually challenge the material due to parenting and boundary-setting. Challengers feel that public institutions must uphold the beliefs and values of the community. The article then discusses how librarians can help combat challengers and it is the responsibility of librarians to uphold the "freedom to read". This article is an added information source when discussing book challenges and how it is up to librarians to be unbiased in making decisions. This article delves further into the relationship librarians have with intellectual freedom.

Monks, M.K., Gaines, A.M., Marineau, C.A. (2014). A statewide survey of censorship and intellectual freedom. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1-36.

This article contains results from a survey that was sent to librarians regarding censorship within Idaho. It begins with a history of censorship in general and censorship specifically in Idaho. The authors discuss libraries protection from restriction of the government

under the first amendment. The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of censorship practices. The authors sent a survey of 17 questions and gained 61 responses. In conclusion, the states recorded could not draw on concise conclusion due to limited responses, but the study did show that Idaho libraries are prepared to handle challenges. This article is a good source to compare to *Analyzing Challenges to Library Materials: An Incomplete Picture*, which deals with challenges in Alabama. It also provides a general history to censorship and discusses the creation of the Intellectual Freedom Committee.

Oltmann, S.M. (2016). Intellectual freedom and freedom of speech: three theoretical perspectives. *Public Library Quarterly*, 86(2), 153-171.

This article delves into three theories of freedom of speech: the marketplace of ideas, democratic ideals, and individual autonomy and how librarians can support freedom of speech using these ideals legally. The argument is that studying arguments used to support freedom of speech are relevant to intellectual freedom and information access. Oltmann discusses freedom of speech court cases to provide a background for the theories discussed. The theory of the marketplace of ideas says that ideas compete with one another and eventually the most truthful will be adopted. Democratic ideals state that free speech keeps the government accountable and is essential to promoting democracy. The individual autonomy theory states that freedom of speech is essential to self-fulfillment. In conclusion, the article states that while each theory has strong characteristics, that neither of them should be fully adopted. This article provides a

connection between intellectual freedom and freedom of speech and is a good source when discussing ways librarians can back intellectual freedom.

Oltmann, S.M., Peterson, C., Knox, E.J.M. (2017). Analyzing challenges to library materials: An incomplete picture. *Public Library Quarterly*, 36(4), 274-292. <https://doi-org.proxy.mul.missouri.edu/10.1080/01616846.2017.1324233>

This article posted in the *Public Library Quarterly* focuses mainly on challenges, or objections, that have been made to content in public schools and libraries. The article tries to breakdown why certain material is challenged and what outside factors impact the objection. The argument is that while most challenged material is retained, it is possible that librarians may be self-censoring the material. The researched obtained information about challenges from over 350 institutions in Alabama. The data concludes that out of these institutions, only 14 total had reported a challenge, but a total of 38 occurred. The researchers then used this data to determine the outcome and nature of the challenges. 4 of the challenged materials were removed from collections. The article discusses that the researchers do not have all the data needed to make a clear conclusion, but state that most 2/3rds of challenged material was retained. As for making the connection between challenged material and institutional and demographic factors, the data is inconclusive. Although the argument was unable to be backed, this article is a good source for discussing why material is challenged, or censored, and how libraries maintain intellectual freedom while addressing these issues.

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Oppenheim, C., Smith, V. (2004). Censorship in libraries. *Information Services & Use*, 24(4), 159-170.

“Censorship in Libraries” deals with what the title states: censorship in libraries. It breaks down what censorship is, how it occurs in public libraries, legal aspects, ethical issues, and publisher censorings. The article wishes to examine if intellectual freedom is upheld in public libraries. The authors interview (via email) individuals and representatives from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, the American Library Association, and the Derby Library. The research concludes that the role of the librarian is to be a guide to information and not to hinder this access. It also concludes that CILIP is not working as hard to uphold intellectual freedom within libraries as the ALA. This source is a good starting point in learning about censorship as a whole and how intellectual freedom is impacted by censorship.

Pekoll, K. (2015). ALA office for intellectual freedom: who we are and how we help librarians. *Knowledge Quest*, 44(1), 26-29.

The ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom is an office that many of us do not realize exists. This article sheds light on who works in the office and the goals the office works toward. The office states that anyone can call with questions or to report a challenge. The staff also works to educate the public, and librarians, on intellectual freedom. They state that they will never reveal who calls the office and why they have contacted the office.

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This article is a credible source for showing the support available to librarians and how important intellectual freedom is to the library community.

Rubin, R.E. (2016). Intellectual Freedom. In *Foundations of library and information science*. Chicago, IL: Neal-Schuman: An Imprint of the American Library Association.

Rubin dedicates chapter 9 of *Foundations of Library and Information Science* to introducing intellectual freedom and discussing each characteristic of it as a whole. Rubin breaks down factors that influence intellectual freedom, such as personal and community values, the desire to protect children, and the need to ensure the survival of the library. He also discusses the major concerns of those who wish to censor material such as sexual content, violence, offensive language, concerns for formats of material, and concerns for children. The Library Bill of Rights are also broken down and interpreted. This chapter breaks down everything you need to know to begin researching intellectual freedom.

Sloan, S. (2012). Regional differences in collecting freethought books in american public libraries: A case of self-censorship? *Public Library Quarterly*, 82(2), 183-205.

This study by Stephen Sloan was conducted in order to determine if libraries in one part of the country collect atheist (freethought) books at a lower rate than those in another part of the country. The hypothesis is that there will be little evidence of self-censorship of freethought books no matter the region of the country. Atheism was chosen because it is

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in the minority of belief systems. The study lists some cases where the freethought community felt discriminated against in libraries. It also discusses how librarians can misclassify books in an attempt to hide them. The methodology used was to find books on the *New York Times* Best Seller list for atheism and religious texts and compare their time on the list. They then searched library catalogs to find the copies of the books. The study concludes that the region does have an impact with what books are excluded from the catalogue and what books are not. This study is valuable for learning more about how frequently self-censorship happens, especially with a topic that tends to be taboo in areas of the country. It also brings about different ways librarians can self-censor material.