

Statement on Intellectual Freedom

Approved by Executive Council ~ June 27, 1974; Amended November 17, 1983; and November 18, 1985

All persons in Canada have the fundamental right, as embodied in the nation's Bill of Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to have access to all expressions of knowledge, creativity and intellectual activity, and to express their thoughts publicly. This right to intellectual freedom, under the law, is essential to the health and development of Canadian society.

Libraries have a basic responsibility for the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee and facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity, including those which some elements of society may consider to be unconventional, unpopular or unacceptable. To this end, libraries shall acquire and make available the widest variety of materials.

It is the responsibility of libraries to guarantee the right of free expression by making available all the library's public facilities and services to all individuals and groups who need them.

Libraries should resist all efforts to limit the exercise of these responsibilities while recognizing the right of criticism by individuals and groups.

Both employees and employers in libraries have a duty, in addition to their institutional responsibilities, to uphold these principles.

Statement on Internet Access

Approved by Executive Council ~ November 8, 1997; Revised February 2000

This statement is intended to be considered in tandem with both the [CLA Statement on Intellectual Freedom \(1985\)](#) and the [CLA Statement on Information and Telecommunication Access Principles \(1994\)](#). The principles enunciated in those statements apply to issues of intellectual freedom and public access to the Internet in libraries and provide guidance in this area.

In addition, CLA encourages libraries:

- To offer Internet access with the fewest possible restrictions,
- To familiarize themselves, their governing bodies and their communities with the legal issues surrounding the provision of Internet access and to integrate such legal reference points into their access policies,
- To incorporate Internet use principles into overall policies on access to library resources, including time, place, and manner restrictions on Internet use, and user behaviour policies and to publicize these policies widely and post them prominently in library facilities and on electronic media,
- To safeguard the long-standing relationship of trust between libraries and children,

- their parents and guardians, in developing Internet use policies and practices, acknowledging the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians,
- To create library web pages consistent with resource priorities that point to appropriately reviewed sites both for general use and for use by children,
 - To educate their publics about intellectual freedom principles and the shared responsibility of public and school libraries, parents, and guardians in facilitating access to resources in various forms of media, including the Internet, and
 - To assume active leadership in community awareness of, and dialogue on, the issues inherent in the informed use of this essential, yet non-selective and unregulated medium in libraries.

Information and Telecommunication Access Principles

Approved by Executive Council ~ June 18, 1994

Preamble

The convergence of computers and high-speed telecommunication networks provides increased opportunity for public access to information and participation in the democratic processes of society. Conversely, access and participation could be reduced through the imposition of user fees and centralized control.

Librarians, libraries, and library organizations will work to assure the 'public good' is represented in all government and corporate initiatives for information dissemination and telecommunications policy. Co-operation with other organizations and public interest groups to protect social interests will strengthen the efforts of the library community.

All people have the right to:

1. Literacy

- The opportunity to learn to read and write is fundamental for all people. Basic literacy includes numeracy and information literacy. Literacy is an important requirement for participating in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of the country.
- Everyone should have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to find and use information.

2. Universal, Equitable, and Affordable Access

- Access to information and telecommunication network services should be available and affordable to all regardless of factors such as age, religion, ability, gender, sexual orientation, social and political views, national origin, economic status, location, and information literacy.
- Diverse sources of information should be developed through encouraging non-profit organizations and community groups to provide information and opinions and by preventing information monopolies.
- Opportunities should be created for broad public participation in the determination of information and telecommunication policy.

3. Communicate

- Individuals have the right to create, exchange, access, and receive the widest range of

ideas, information, and images.

- Individuals should have the right to choose what information to receive and what not to receive and what information to give and not give including that which others may find objectionable.

4. Public Space on the Telecommunications Networks

- Government information is fundamental to participation in the democratic process and should therefore be accessible in a current, timely, accurate, and comprehensive manner.
- Access to government information should be guaranteed through active programs of dissemination.
- Opportunities to communicate electronically with elected and appointed government representatives is a vital extension of democracy.
- Government policy should encourage and support archiving of information in support of the collective human memory.
- Government policies should encourage and support the development of community information networks, such as Freenets.
- Government should provide resources for libraries and other community organizations to make electronic access to information available and to provide training to the public in the use of such technology.
- Individuals have the right to know the positive and negative personal and social consequences of the introduction of information technology.
- Individuals have the right to a safe ergonomically-sound environment and appropriate training or re-training when new technologies are introduced.
- Social policies accompanying the introduction of new and more efficient information technologies must emphasize benefits to the whole population, such as greater leisure time and shorter work weeks rather than narrow economic interests.

5. Privacy

- Privacy of personal information should be carefully protected and extended.
- Personal data collected should be limited to the minimum necessary and only after the prior written approval of the individual affected.
- Personal information collected for one purpose cannot be traded or sold without the express written permission of the individual affected.
- Individuals should have the right to examine personal information collected by government and corporations and have mistakes corrected at no charge.