

**Social Responsibility vs. the
Library of Bill of Rights
AND
Berninghausen Debate**

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Agenda:

- 1) Berninghausen's point
- 2) Social Responsibility vs. Library Bill of Rights (LBR)
- 3) Why is this article still being reprinted?
- 4) The Debate
- 5) Where do you stand?

Berninghausen's Article

- “Library Bill of Rights” vs. “Social Responsibility”
- It is not the purpose of ALA to take positions on how men resolve issues in society.
- Libraries as neutral organizations
- “Non-library issues” versus intellectual freedom

Social Responsibility

- Definition: “the obligation of an organization towards the welfare and interests of the society in which it operates”
- Libraries: taking into account social issues and inequities etc. while working with patrons/ coworkers

Library Bill of Rights

- Amendments outline library responsibilities:
 - Intellectual freedom
 - Balanced collections
 - Challenging censorship
 - Opposing discrimination against patrons

Why is it still reprinted?

- Still an issue when it comes to deciding on collection material
- Written during the Vietnam War
 - Social issues of the time
 - Issues today/ in the future

Wedgworth

“An alternative point of view would hold that the first priority should be to serve the information needs and interests of identifiable users, thus emphasizing the service function of libraries.”



- Dervin: Information/ User relationships
 - Brick/ Empty bucket vs. Clay/ Autonomous individual

Summers



“There is not and there never has been any such animal as a balanced collection... Libraries do not and cannot express all sides of controversial questions. Some sides of every argument are stupid, unscholarly, anti-intellectual, and incoherently expressed. Very few, if any, libraries represent these views...”

Schuman



“Racism, poverty, and war— all of these affect librarians as individuals and as workers. They cannot help but affect our institutions. They are manifestations of the sickness which interferes with the free flow of ideas in our society... which tramples on all freedoms.”



Robbins

“The professionals who control American’s information institutions... cannot retreat into those

institutions and ignore the larger society. The result of this sort of myopic professionalism is to support intellectual freedom for those who have power while denying it to those who are powerless.”

Jones

“Social responsibility and the Library Bill of Rights are in no way contradictory or mutually exclusive and that the concept is no longer seriously contested. I hold that the LBR evolved from the profession’s developing commitment to the concept of social responsibility.”



Gaines



“Berninghausen has stated with admirable force the case for intellectual freedom not as a supererogatory qualification for librarianship but as the essential condition for its being. A biased library is a crippled library.”

Curley

“It has been the contention of most librarians who want ALA to take positions on social issues that a broader, more socially responsible view of the function of libraries in our society would recognize that these are library issues.”



Armitage

“Social responsibility will someday become once again a burning issue for libraries. Others will come together with new hope, new congresses for change, new challenges to make the tired and sterile professional minds whirl about in confusion and anger.”



Where do you stand?

Where we stand:

- Social issues and library issues overlap
- Important for libraries to present multiple viewpoints
- Catering to user needs/ understanding patrons

Interested in Knowing More?

- ALA Library Bill of Rights
 - <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>
- Intellectual Freedom Manual (Eighth Edition)
 - <http://www.ifmanual.org>

Additional Works Cited

American Library Association. “Library Bill of Rights.” <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>

Business Dictionary. “Definition of social responsibility.” <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/social-responsibility.html>