

## **ESRL Collection Development Policy**

*Approved by the Eastern Shore Regional Library board of directors, October 9, 2008.*

### **Library Mission**

ESRL provides resources and services to support its member libraries' ability to serve their customers.<sup>1</sup>

### **Purpose of the collection within the context of the library mission**

The library acts to fulfill its mission by selecting, acquiring, organizing, maintaining, and providing access to a collection of materials (both print and nonprint) and electronic resources that address the interests and needs of a diverse group of member libraries.

### **Endorsement of American Library Association policy statements**

The Eastern Shore Regional Library hereby adopts and declares that it will adhere to and support the American Library Association's statements listed in the Appendices, and that the principles there espoused will guide the development of the Library's collections.

### **Purpose of the collection development policy**

This formal policy serves two vital purposes.

- Guides staff in making decisions about the selection and management of library materials, and in allocating library budgets.
- Informs the public and other stakeholders of the principles that govern collection development at ESRL.

### **Responsibility for collection development/selection**

Collection development is a process guided through all its stages by the expertise and judgment of librarians. Ultimate responsibility for the direction, purpose, and scope of collection development rests with the Eastern Shore Regional Library Board. The ESRL Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the policy, and delegates this professional responsibility to the Information Services Manager, who makes collection development decisions in cooperation with the Training Coordinator.

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Shore Regional Library Strategic Plan: FY2009 to FY2011:  
<http://www.esrl.org/about/ESRLStrategicPlantoFY11.pdf>

Selection decisions also take into consideration the recommendations of interest groups comprised of member libraries' staff.

## **Context and scope of collection**

ESRL maintains two collections: the professional collection, located in ESRL's offices, and the digital collection, available through ESRL's website and the websites of its member libraries. ESRL's professional collection and digital collection both contribute to the rich mixture of resources and information available to our member libraries.

The professional collection supports ESRL and member libraries' staff development by providing access to continuing education. To this end, we collect materials in a variety of formats (including books, VHS, DVD, and computer software), in order to supplement the training and staff development programs offered by ESRL. The professional collection also includes materials intended to enrich member libraries' programs for children, teens, and adults. These materials include, but are not limited to puppets, puppet kits, character costumes, program kits for senior citizens (Bi-Folkals), and video gaming systems.

The digital collection enhances member libraries' abilities to serve their customers twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, by providing content that can be accessed at any time, from anywhere. The digital collection includes databases, digital content such as audiobooks, and online services such as homework help.

Eastern Shore Regional Library considers the holdings of other libraries locally and regionally in making selection and retention decisions. The existence of Eastern Shore Regional Library's collection enables other area libraries to develop their collections in different ways. The library also participates in reciprocal agreements and resource sharing with other libraries, including the State Library Resource Center, to further expand the range of materials provided.

## **Criteria for selection**

### **Selection Sources**

Sources for selection decisions include, among others: user requests or recommendations; publisher or vendor catalogs; advertisements; published reviews.

### **Selection Criteria**

Librarians use their subject knowledge and expertise in combination with the standards listed below to select and evaluate collection items. An item need not meet all criteria to be selected.

### **General Criteria**

- Suitability of format or physical form for library use
- Cost relative to the value the item contributes to the collection
- Space required relative to the value the item contributes to the collection
- The extent to which the item supplements, expands on, or supports the existing collection, rather than duplicates it
- Relevance to observed and anticipated member library needs and desires
- Reputation and qualifications of the author, creator, or publisher of the work
- Local significance of the author or creator of the work

### **Content Criteria**

- Comprehensiveness of treatment, including breadth and depth
- Skill and purpose of author or creator
- Evaluation of the currency and accuracy of the information contained, to the extent that is possible
- Relevance of the information to immediate local requirements

### **Electronic Format Criteria**

Additional criteria are considered when selecting materials available in electronic formats.

- Ease of use of the product
- Accessibility to multiple users
- Enhancement of the print equivalent (if any) in terms of speed, flexibility, combinations of search terms, or general utility
- Continued access to retrospective information when necessary or desirable
- Responsiveness of vendor customer support and technical support

### **Retention criteria**

Deselection, the systematic removal of materials from the collection, is an important component of total collection development. Ongoing reevaluation of materials is necessary in order to maintain a current and accurate collection.

Discarded materials become surplus property and may be sold for fund raising purposes or discarded at the Library's discretion.

The process and decision to deselect an item takes into account the same criteria used when the item was first selected for inclusion in the collection. Additionally, the following criteria should apply when evaluating the collection:

### **Criteria For Materials Deselection:**

Usage/Age:

- Frequency of circulation and/or potential use
- In-house use
- Outdated or inaccurate information

Value/Quality:

- Subject matter no longer of current interest or historical significance
- Availability of other materials in the field
- Physical appearance/condition relative to other factors of importance

Deterioration:

- Worn, damaged
- Aged

### **Electronic Materials**

Additional criteria are considered when selecting materials available in electronic formats.

- Level of usage, relative to cost
- Availability of information through other online sources
- Budgetary constraints

### **Evaluation criteria**

Evaluation techniques are used to measure collection usefulness in terms of scope and depth, as well as strengths and weaknesses. Among the measures and evaluation techniques used by library staff are:

- Age and condition of items in the collection
- Frequency of requests placed through the online catalog and interlibrary loan
- Circulation
- In-house use of materials
- User surveys
- Relevance to observed and anticipated community needs and desires

## **Appendices**

### **I. Library Bill of Rights**

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948; Amended February 2, 1961; June 27, 1967; January 23, 1980 by the ALA Council.

## **II. Freedom to Read**

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle

every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

7. *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

### **III. Freedom to View**

The FREEDOM TO VIEW, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore these principles are affirmed:

1. To provide the broadest access to film, video, and other audiovisual materials because they are a means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.
2. To protect the confidentiality of all individuals and institutions using film, video, and other audiovisual materials.
3. To provide film, video, and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.
4. To provide a diversity of viewpoints without the constraint of labeling or prejudging film, video, or other audiovisual materials on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.
5. To contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

This statement was originally drafted by the Freedom to View Committee of the American Film and Video Association (formerly the Educational Film Library Association) and was adopted by the AFVA Board of Directors in February 1979. This statement was updated and approved by the AFVA Board of Directors in 1989.

Endorsed January 10, 1990, by the ALA Council