

Code of Ethics in Librarianship

Ganapathi Batthini
Librarian, EDI

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Libraries are institutions that collect, store and disseminate information to members of society. It ensures a right to choice and expression for every citizen.

Librarianship is, in its very essence, a value-rich activity to professional work with information. The need to share ideas and information has grown manifold in today's increasingly knowledge driven society. This recent phenomenon increases the importance for libraries and the practice of ethical librarianship. Information is becoming a critical resource for institutions and professionals. Forms of information generation, storage and consumption have evolved. This is putting tremendous pressure on the practice of ethical librarianship. Libraries in modern society have to find innovative ways to record and storage of information. They also have to provide access to it depending on changing consumption patterns.

Information service in the interest of social, cultural and economic well-being is at the heart of librarianship and therefore librarians have a social responsibility too.

Further, this belief in the human necessity to share information and ideas implies the recognition of information rights. The idea of human rights, as expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), requires us all to recognize and acknowledge the humanity of others and to respect their rights. Article 19 sets out the rights of freedom of opinion, expression and access to information for all human beings. As information becomes more in quantity and its access ubiquitous, the ethical dilemmas of Librarians will increase.

The Code of Ethics suggests the standards and duties reasonable to expect from a professional Librarian.

The function of the Code of Ethics can be described as:

1. Encouraging reflection on the principles on which librarians and other information workers can form policies and handle dilemmas.
2. Improving professional self-awareness.
3. Providing transparency to users and society in general.

Librarians' code of ethics includes:

1. Librarian's duty is to serve knowledge and universal human right to education, science and culture.

2. To protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.
3. To recognize, respect and educate users on intellectual property rights.
4. Guarantees the confidentiality and privacy of information services to the user (except for those regulated by law).
5. Respect his/her colleagues, by being ready to support and cooperate with them.
6. Devotes his/her professional abilities, strength and energy to his/her library, and strives to resolve its problems.
7. Fights against matters concerning the restriction of freedom and censorship of information.
8. Provide services to users irrespective of their nationality, race, religion, gender and social status.
9. To enhance and develop knowledge, skills and follow the best traditions of the library profession. Each librarian and information specialist is responsible for the future of their profession through continuous education and development.
10. Librarians should do their best to provide free and fair access to information. They must assist in the usage of information sources and tools. To their highest capacity they must strive to supply authentic, reliable, full and adequate information, tailored to personal needs.
11. Librarians must provide the highest level of service to library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources, equitable service policies and accurate, unbiased and courteous response to all requests. They must strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing their knowledge and skills, and keeping abreast of developments in librarianship.
12. Librarians must distinguish between personal philosophy or attitudes and professional duties by not allowing personal beliefs to interfere with the aims of the institution or professional body.
13. In the service of clients or in the selection of materials, librarians should not discriminate on the grounds of socio-economic status, politics, race, color, creed, gender or sexual orientation.
14. A librarian defends freedom of reading, opposes censorship, and provides possibilities of free access to information and knowledge for the users.
15. A librarian is loyal to the goals and aims of a library. He/she consciously forms a positive image of a library and advocates the prestige of the profession in society.
16. A librarian bases his action and decisions on professional motives and does not use his position for personal interests.
17. Supports in word and deed, those colleagues who have found themselves in difficulties due to their observance of principles of code of ethics.