MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

I. Purpose

This document is intended for all staff involved in the selection of library materials for the Ipswich Public Library. Its purpose is to serve the following functions:

- Guide the staff’s thinking and decision making
- Generate commitment to meeting the mission and goals of the Ipswich Public Library
- Set standards for selection to ensure consistency over time despite staff turnover
- Reduce influence of a single selector and personal biases
- Aid in deselection activities and periodic evaluation of the collection
- Direct staff and Trustees in handling complaints
- Inform library patrons as well as non-library users about the nature, priorities, and scope of the selection of materials for the Ipswich Public Library

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
II. Statement of Responsibility

While overall responsibility for the library’s collections rests with the Ipswich Board of Library Trustees, the Library Director is ultimately responsible for materials selection. The Director delegates some of this responsibility to selected members of the staff who possess these qualifications:

- professionally trained
- experienced in library materials selection
- understand the review process of information materials
- use existing selection tools intelligently
- recognize future trends as well as the impact of emerging technology in information retrieval

Library staff assigned to select materials for the library collection should exercise professional judgment to avoid personal bias, not only during the selection process but also in implementing the procedures in deselection activities.

In accordance with Section 33 and 34 of Chapter 78 of the Massachusetts General Laws Annotated, no library staff may be terminated or disciplined for acting in good faith with said policy.
III. Selection Process

The Mission Statement of the Ipswich Public Library plays a major role in the selection of library materials [See Appendix A]. The selection process reflects the Library’s objectives and responds to the Selected Service Responses set forth in the latest Plan of Service.

Ongoing materials selection activities are founded on staff familiarity with existing collections, awareness of the needs of library users, as well as their knowledge of retrospective, current and future trends in information materials suitable for public library use. Favorable reviews are the most important criteria for selection. Cost, physical quality of the items, and materials from reputable publishers and producers are always taken into consideration.

The library staff selects materials in varying formats, including but not limited to, books, serials, audio-visual media, reference materials, and Internet resources. Growth of the collections is controlled since stack space is limited. Old, worn-out and dated materials are removed to make room for recently acquired materials. Most of the selected materials are current imprints with retrospective buying generally limited to replacement for lost or damaged materials, and/or materials that may fill gaps in some areas of the collection. Serials, regardless of format, are evaluated by individual title and must meet selection criteria. Items recommended for purchase by patrons and staff may be placed on order if they meet selection criteria.

Careful consideration is given in the selection of new formats. Budget, community needs, existing information infrastructure, available space, and the probable impact on other library resources are all reviewed before a new format is added to the collection. The selection of material in any new format may result in the staff’s decision to retire specific material formats from the Library’s collections.

Some textbooks may be chosen for the following reasons:

- general introduction to a specialized subject
- the only source of information
- content is considered essential to the existing collection

Works of local authors, illustrators, and items about contemporary Ipswich, local history and genealogy will be selected either for circulating collections, reference, and/or the Ipswich Archives. [See separate document: Ipswich Room Collections Policy]

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
IV. Selection Tools

Library staff involved in materials selection spends considerable time reading and evaluating reviews in order to decide which materials are appropriate for the Ipswich Public Library collections.

The following shall be consulted in selecting materials:

A. Standard Library Reviewing Journals
   - Booklist
   - Hornbook
   - Kirkus Reviews
   - Kliatt
   - Library Journal
   - New York Times Book Review
   - School Library Journal

B. Supplementary Tools
   - Award winners, and core collection lists
   - Best seller lists from regional newspapers
   - Current reviews for print, audio-visual, and electronic materials from popular and trade magazines
   - Recommended lists from professional associations and non-profit organizations
   - Catalogs, flyers, announcements from publishers, producers, and vendors are used only to identify titles to watch for reviews

C. Electronic Listings
   - amazon.com
   - alibris.com
   - bookfinder.com

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V. Criteria in Selection

During the materials selection process the staff considers specific criteria in order to obtain the best of what is available in a cost-effective manner. The following criteria will be used as they apply:

A. Fiction

These materials are selected to support the recreational needs of the community. They provide wholesome entertainment, aesthetic and cultural experiences, or stimulate imagination. The criteria for selection are:

- Popular demand
- Suitability of subject, writing style, and reading level of intended audience
- Format
- Award winner or best seller
- Classic work
- Local authors
- Good reviews of first release materials by unknown authors and foreign writers

B. Non-Fiction

These materials are selected from a broad range of subject areas with varying points of view to provide factual, informational, and educational materials for the community. The criteria for selection are:

- Current interest
- Popular demand
- Format
- Expertise of the authors
- Accuracy and treatment of subject matter
- Scope and depth of coverage
- Style of presentation
- Relevance as a record of historical events

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
C. Reference

The Ipswich Public Library maintains a reference collection both in print and electronic formats.

1. Print Reference Collection

This collection comprises almanacs, bibliographies, biographical sources, catalogs, dictionaries, directories, encyclopedias, geographical resources, government publications, handbooks, and yearbooks. Selection of these materials is delegated to the Reference Librarian with some participation from the management staff.

Print reference materials are chosen using the following criteria:

- Expectation of public demand for information on a subject
- Currency and frequency of updates
- Author’s or editor’s expertise
- Scope and depth of coverage
- Ease of use
- Quality of illustrations
- Reputable publishers

2. Electronic Resources

Electronic resources complement the print collection. They include licensed electronic databases and selected web pages. Selection of electronic resources is delegated to the Reference Librarian in consultation with the management staff.

Electronic resources are chosen using the following criteria:

- Currency and frequency of updates
- Depth and style of presentation
- Quality of production
- Ease of use
- Existing electronic resources
- Relationship to reputable producers
- Licensing agreement
- Technical support
D. Young Adult Collection

This collection is primarily for young adults between the ages of 12 and 16. The selection of materials for this collection is the responsibility of the Reference & Young Adult Librarian. The collection is chosen with an emphasis on materials which help develop the intellect, as well as those which entertain and enable young people to deal with the world around them. The Young Adult collection is considered a bridge to the adult collection, and it is expected that most young adults will choose their own materials with limited parental input. Young adults are encouraged to use the entire collection at Ipswich Public Library to the extent that their interests and capabilities allow.

The YA collection is carefully chosen using the following criteria:

- Inclusion on ALA lists of best books for Young Adults
- Award winner
- Current interest
- Popular demand
- Author with recognized success in writing for young adults
- Inclusion on summer reading lists
- Support for school projects

E. Children’s Collection

The Children’s Collection is an integral part of the Ipswich Public Library collections and is intended for informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs for every age group from toddler through middle school. The selection of materials for the children’s collection is delegated to the Children’s Librarian who may solicit suggestions from other Children’s Room staff. Recommendations from parents or legal guardians are welcome.

The collection in the Children’s Room is comprised of a wide range of print and non-print materials in varied formats including picture and easy-to-read books, chapter books, reference sources, magazines, audio-visual media, games, puzzles, educational software, and Internet resources. Materials in this collection are selected using the same standards as in the adult collections. Emphasis is placed upon books that children will want to read for enjoyment as well as information. Selection is primarily based on favorable reviews from professional selection tools.

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
Children’s materials are selected with careful attention to:

- Accuracy
- Reputation of the authors, editors, illustrators & producers
- Suitability & appropriateness of vocabulary
- Quality of illustrations
- Award winner
- Format
- Ease of use
- Value of material relative to existing collection
- Titles on summer reading lists
- Appeal to potential users

Responsibilities for the use of library materials rests with the parents or legal guardians of the young patrons in their care who are encouraged to be actively involved in the reading, listening, and viewing choices their children make.

F. Archives Collection [See separate document: Ipswich Room Collections Policy]

VI. Recommendations

Patrons and members of the staff are welcome to offer recommendations of materials for additions to the library collection. Forms are provided to facilitate this process. Works recommended by patrons for library purchase are given special consideration. All recommendations are subject to review and are added to the collection if they meet the criteria used for selecting library materials.

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
VII. Deselection Activities

Deselection activities are carried out based on the criteria used for new materials. The following are descriptions of such activities:

A. Weeding

Systematic withdrawals are made with the goal of providing a collection that is current, reliable, in good condition, well-used, and which relates to the needs and interests of Ipswich residents. Materials are discarded when they are judged to be dated, in poor physical condition, seldom used or otherwise no longer appropriate.

B. Discards

Discarded material may be given to the Friends of Ipswich Library for their book sales or may be given to other libraries and non-profit organizations. Withdrawn reference materials are offered to the local school libraries, if appropriate. Dated and worn-out materials are discarded if they have no remaining value.

C. Replacements

When material has been lost or is in poor physical condition, attempts are made to replace it when necessary. Replacements are also made for some materials borrowed but never returned. The replacement is selected according to the prescribed process and criteria in materials selection.
VIII. Miscellaneous Issues

A. Evaluation

The staff of the Ipswich Public Library periodically reviews the collections relative to its current programs and services. Evaluation of the materials is based upon information from any or all of the following sources:

- objectives required in the latest Library Plan of Service
- compiled statistics on holdings
- patron surveys
- physical examination of the collection
- shelf space
- emerging/obsolete technologies

B. Resource Sharing

As a member of the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC) and the Northeast Regional Library System (NMRLS), the Library's materials selection includes resource sharing such as interlibrary loan. The interlibrary loan service will be used to supplement the specific educational needs and recreational desires of library patrons. Interlibrary loan requests are processed in accordance to the guidelines set by the Consortium.

C. Gifts

Ipswich Public Library reserves the right to accept or decline items offered for donation based upon the same criteria used for new purchases. Items not added to the collection will be given to the Friends of the Library for their book sales, unless the donor asks to have the items returned to them. The Library does not appraise gifts for tax purposes. A Deed of Gift form must be completed by any person or institution donating archival materials or collections to the Ipswich Room Archives.

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
IX. Reconsideration of Library Material

The Ipswich Board of Library Trustees endorses the principles of intellectual freedom which are inherent in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States and are expressed in the Library Bill of Rights, Freedom to Read Statements, and Freedom to View Statements adopted by the Council of the American Library Association. All four documents are incorporated as part of this Materials Selection Policy.

In the materials selection process, the Ipswich Public Library staff adheres to all the principles cited above and recognizes its obligation to provide as wide a spectrum of information resources as possible for the Town of Ipswich. Selection cannot be restricted by the possibility that certain materials might be considered objectionable by some patrons in the community based on moral, religious, social or political grounds.

Library patrons who object to a book or other material in the collection may request reconsideration of such. When a request for reconsideration is made, these procedures are followed:

1. The patron will be directed to a professional librarian or the Library Director, who will explain the materials selection policy. A copy of the policy may be given to the patron upon request. If the explanation is satisfactory, no further step is needed.

2. If the patron wishes to pursue the complaint, he or she should fill out and submit to a professional librarian the Request for Reconsideration of Library Material form. The librarian will forward it to the Library Director. The Library Director sends a written response to the patron within 14 days from the date the form was submitted.

3. If the patron finds the staff decision unacceptable, he or she may appeal in writing to the Library Director, who then convenes a Reconsideration Committee. This Committee will consist of one Library Trustee, two members of the library staff plus the Director, and three members of the community jointly appointed by the Trustees and the Library Director.

4. The library material in question shall not be removed from the collection during the review process. As the material is being reviewed, the Reconsideration Committee conducts a thorough evaluation based on the selection guidelines outlined in this document while taking into consideration the written comments from the patron. The Committee will recommend a course of action to the Library Director within 30 days. The Library Director will inform the patron of the Committee’s final decision in writing.

5. Copy of the Committee’s final decision will be retained on file at the Director’s Office.
Request for Reconsideration of Library Material

1. Material you wish the Library to reconsider:

   Title: __________________________________________________________
   Author: __________________________________________________________
   Publisher: __________________________________________________________
   Producer: __________________________________________________________
   Date: __________________________________________________________
   Format: ___ book     ___ magazine    ___ newspaper
              ___ audio-visual media ___ digital resource ___ other

2. Why do you object to this material?
   Please be specific as much as possible. You may use the space at the back of this form if necessary.

3. Have you read, viewed or listened to the entire work? If not, which parts did you read, view or listen to?

4. What is your opinion about the reviews of this material?
   Please write the source or date of the reviews.

____________________________________________________________________
Name: ______________________________________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________________________________
Town/State/Zip Code: _______________________________________________________
Phone: _____________________________________________________________________
E-mail: _____________________________________________________________________
Signature: __________________________________________________________________
Date Submitted: ____________________________________________________________

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
X. Revisions to the Policy

The Materials Selection Policy of the Ipswich Public Library will be reviewed and revised as necessary by the Materials Selection Policy Committee.

The Committee members are:

- Library Director De facto Member
- Assistant Library Director Committee Chair
- Reference & Young Adult Librarian Member
- Technical Services Librarian Member
- Children’s Librarian Member

XI. APPENDICES

- Mission Statement & Objectives of the Ipswich Public Library
- First Amendment to the United States Constitution
- Library Bill of Rights
- Freedom to Read Statements
- Freedom to View Statements
Library Mission Statement

The Ipswich Public Library is a vital resource for ideas, information and recreation for all members of the community. The library provides a common meeting place where citizens can interact in a neutral and comfortable environment. The mission of the Ipswich Public Library is to provide information on topics of interest to the community and guidance in how to evaluate and use information sources; to promote learning and personal growth throughout life; to support the enjoyment of reading for pleasure as well as work and school; to preserve and make available for study the historical record of the Town of Ipswich.

Approved by the Board of Trustees of the Ipswich Public Library on December 15, 2003

General Library Objectives

A. To assemble, preserve and administer, in organized collections, books and related educational and recreational materials in order to promote, through guidance and stimulation, the communication of ideas, an enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives.

B. To serve the community as a center of information, enrichment and pleasure.

C. To provide a place where inquiring minds may encounter the original, sometimes unorthodox and critical ideas so necessary as correctives and stimulants in a society that depends for its survival on free competition of ideas.

D. To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people and adults to continue to educate themselves.

E. To make full use of technology in the operations of the library, to give patrons ready access to appropriate materials available electronically, to instruct and guide patrons in accessing such information.

F. To collect, preserve, and provide access to community information, local history and genealogy to residents and visitors alike.

G. To support educational, civic and cultural activities of groups and organizations.

H. To seek continually to identify community needs and to provide programs of service to meet such needs, either independently as a library or in cooperation with other agencies and organizations.

Approved by the Board of Trustees May 21, 2001

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution

CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF; OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS; OR THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE PEACEABLY TO ASSEMBLE, AND TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.

The Bill of Rights to the U.S. Constitution was ratified on December 15, 1791

“Censorship reflects a society’s lack of confidence in itself. It is a hallmark of an authoritarian regime . . . .” — Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting Ginzberg v. United States, 383 U.S. 463 (1966)

“The very purpose of a Bill of Rights was to withdraw certain subjects from the vicissitudes of political controversy, to place them beyond the reach of majorities and officials and to establish them as legal principles to be applied by the courts. One’s right to life, liberty, and property, to free speech, a free press, freedom of worship and assembly, and other fundamental rights may not be submitted to vote; they depend on the outcome of no elections.” — Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette, 319 U.S. 624 (1943)

“First Amendment freedoms are most in danger when the government seeks to control thought or to justify its laws for that impermissible end. The right to think is the beginning of freedom, and speech must be protected from the government because speech is the beginning of thought.”—Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy, Ashcroft V. Free Speech Coalition (00-795) 198 F.3d 1083, affirmed.

“Almost all human beings have an infinite capacity for taking things for granted.” — Aldous Huxley, author of Brave New World

“Men feared witches and burnt women. It is the function of speech to free men from the bondage of irrational fears.” — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis (1856–1941), Whitney v. California, 274 U. S. 357 (1927)

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
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.

I. 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.

II. 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.

III. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

IV. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VI. 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.


Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
The Freedom to Read Statement

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.

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
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.

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
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.


Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
Freedom to View Statement

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

Approved by THE IPSWICH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES on 20 MARCH 2006
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