ACRL guidelines for the preparation of policies on library access: A draft

Prepared by the ACRL Library Access Task Force

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Hearings will be held on these guidelines Sunday, June 25, in Dallas.

Access is any proper means by which a person may read or use materials, records, and other information held by a library, agency of government, or other corporate body. Almost by definition, the contemporary library promotes access in keeping with the philosophy of the ALA Library Bill of Rights; however, there are competing needs for preservation and use and necessary distinctions between primary and other users. The tension between the library's responsibility to store and maintain the records of civilization and the library's responsibility to make available and share those records is always a dynamic one. With the recognized need to share material among several libraries, rapid developments in the technology of information, and changes in government information policy, the issues become increasingly complex.

The Interim Report from the ALA Special Committee on Freedom and Equality of Access to Information (June 1987) includes the following discussion of "access":

"In library parlance, the word 'access' has always been used as a noun. Its understood meaning reflected the standard dictionary definitions: 'a means of approach'; 'the act of approaching'; 'the right to enter and to use'—a library's holdings.

"At some unrecorded point in the late 1950s, the word 'access' began to be used and accepted as a verb, as in the phrase 'to access the information on the computer's data bank,' which at once combined the most commonly understood meaning of the word in library circles, 'the right to enter and use,' with one of the more seldom employed connotations of the word 'access'—'a short, intense outburst.' The verb 'to access' expresses the still amazing speed with which organized, stored information can be identified and retrieved (or 'accessed') by way of electronic devices. Today, whether librarians employ the word 'access' as either a noun or as a verb, the word 'access' carries with it policy concerns about library users' rights, which broadly and briefly stated, involve the right to enter and use a library's holdings without limitations in the forms of:
- architectural barriers;
- sociological/economic factors;
- ideologically biased selection practices;
- usages or circulation restrictions;
- hidden (or unpublicized) services;
- unqualified staff;
- fees for the use of any materials or services."

The present document is written to assist individual libraries in addressing practical questions relating to access. In developing policies on access, each library will want to review its mission, its history and its current practice so that policies are shaped to reflect individual circumstances. This

document is intended to serve as a guideline or checklist for the development of individual policies in a non-prescriptive way; it includes the range of issues to be considered. It is *not* an outline of suggestions or standards. (Readers may note items of interest in ALA's "National Information Services and Responsibilities," and in ACRL's "Access Policy Guidelines," dealing with audiovisual materials, and "Joint Statement on Access to Original Research Materials.")

The access policy issues that libraries should consider are introduced by descriptive statements summarizing section contents in four major categories:
- physical access;
- bibliographic access;
- collection management and development/preservation;
- public service.

Many issues apply to every area, so certain issues have been addressed in more than one section (e.g., fees for services, initial and continuing education of staff, and access to automated and other non-print materials), but in the majority of cases, for reasons of length, there are cross references to other sections of the text.

Note: Because these guidelines focus on individual libraries' policies on access, questions of access that involve broad societal issues, such as government information policy or cost of scholarly materials, are not addressed. And for the purposes of this document, intellectual freedom, an access issue of vital concern to every library, is considered a collection development issue. Readers may refer to David L. Perkins, ed., *Guidelines for Collection Development* (Chicago: ALA, 1979).

Physical access

Physical access can be divided into three major categories: 1) patron access to the library buildings and collection; 2) physical location and availability of collections and services within the library; and 3) staffing.

Some aspects of physical access have been described in other sections of these guidelines. For issues concerning format of catalog, i.e., card, microform, online, etc., see Bibliographic Access, I. For access to a library's online catalog see Bibliographic Access, II.C and III, and Public Services, V. The physical condition of collections and disaster recovery for collections are covered in Collection Management, II. Library hours are also included in Public Services, I. Circulation issues related to physical access are listed in Public Services, III. Instructional issues related to Physical Access are addressed in Public Services, V and VI.

I. Patron access

A. *Patron categories* (e.g., undergraduate student, graduate student, faculty, staff, fee pay borrower, consortium borrower, visitor). These categories not only can determine physical access to the building, but also may affect access to services and library privileges. This access may be consistent or varied at different library locations.

1. Services available for each patron category.
2. Requirements for identification.

B. *Passes or fees.*
1. By category of patron.
2. By category of service.
3. For entry to building.
4. For use and/or borrowing privileges.
5. For other services.

C. *Handicapped access.*
1. Adequate ramps to building entrance.
2. Availability of nearby handicapped parking.
3. Suitable entrance/exit for physically disabled patrons.
   a. Width of entrance.
   b. Absence of turnstiles or wider alternative exit/entrance for wheelchairs.
   c. Ease with which doors open, or electric door opening devices.
4. Uncluttered lobby and corridors.
5. Special services for handicapped users.
   a. Signers for the deaf.
   b. Self-help equipment (e.g., Kurzweil reading machine, page turner).
6. Training on specialized equipment for staff and users.
7. Assistance from public services staff.
   a. Using the catalog.
   b. Photocopying.
   c. Reading.
   d. Retrieving materials.
8. Furniture designed to accommodate handicapped users.
9. Written policies on serving handicapped users.
10. Staff training programs on serving the disabled.

D. *Patron security.*
1. Policies and procedures to protect safety of patrons.
2. Policies and procedures for emergency evacuation of all patrons.
3. Policies to deal with inappropriate or illegal patron behavior.

II. Physical location of collections and services

A. *Collections.*
1. Closed or open stacks or combination, and/or remote storage.
   a. Policies and procedures for library's selection of and patron's access to items in closed stacks.
   b. Policies and procedures for library's selection of and patron's access to items in remote storage.
2. One call-number sequence or several sequences, i.e., oversized, periodicals, documents, microforms and other non-print materials usually arranged by format.
3. Special locations, e.g., reference.

4. Centralized or decentralized library system.

  a. Clear information about other libraries in the institution.

    1. Posted hours.

    2. Consistent policies.

    3. Maps locating other libraries.

    4. Catalog access at each location.

  b. Paging or document delivery service between campus libraries.

5. Security system and other measures to reduce theft and mutilation.

B. Location and identification of service points.

1. Placement of all service desks (e.g., reserves, reference, circulation) in locations convenient to users.

2. Clear and effective sign system.

3. Location of end-user access tools.

  a. Library and other computer information terminals.

  b. Catalogs and indexes in traditional formats.

4. Location of specialized use areas.

C. Equipment and furniture.

1. Availability of public copying machines (both paper and microform).

2. Availability of duplication services.

3. Availability of equipment.

  a. Online catalogs.

  b. Printers.

  c. Microform readers/printers.

  d. Computers for accessing databases.

  e. Typewriters and word processing equipment.

  f. Videocassette recorders, compact disk players, and other appropriate audiovisual equipment.

4. Convenient and logical locations for above machines and services.

5. Regular procedures and staffing to replenish supplies such as ink, toner, ribbons, and paper for equipment available to public during all hours library is open.

6. Maintenance of equipment with minimum down-time and a regular schedule for upgrades or replacement.

7. Charges for using equipment.

  a. Provision of change and bills.

  b. Provision of credit or debit cards.

8. Furniture in sufficient numbers and variety to accommodate diverse study styles.

  a. Individual carrels, reserved or open.

  b. Group study rooms.

  c. Faculty offices/carrels.

  d. Lounge/study chairs.

  e. Study tables.

III. Staffing issues

A. Identification of staff responsible for building management, for response in emergencies, and for maintenance of environmental conditions.

B. Degree to which there is ongoing communication between library administration and campus facilities management to ensure safety and security of people and collections.

Bibliographic access

Bibliographic access concerns the availability of information regarding the existence and/or location of published or unpublished works. Libraries have access to many different catalogs and databases of bibliographic records. In these guidelines, "catalog" refers to a set of records for items owned by the library or available through resource sharing agreements; "database" refers to a commercially produced set of bibliographic records for items that may or may not be owned by the library. Bibliographic access issues can be divided into four major categories: 1) issues regarding catalog or database records—their structure, the fields in the records, the items listed in the catalog or database, the access points provided for them, and the format of the catalog or database; 2) variations among these catalogs or databases; 3) additional capabilities of catalogs or databases; and 4) staffing issues.

The instructional aspects of catalog or database use are addressed in Public Services, V.H. For physical location of catalogs and databases see Physical Access, II.B.3.

I. Format, structure, and content of catalog or database records

A. Format of the catalog or database—card, online, microform, book, CD-ROM, etc.

1. Format of screen display and record display.

2. Availability of instructions and assistance in catalog or database.

B. Bibliographic information in the catalog or database.

1. Level of coverage of a library's collection in the catalog, or scope of a bibliographic database.

2. Level of detail in the descriptive portion of the record.

3. Options to display more than one format of a bibliographic record for a catalog or database in an electronic form.

4. Analysis of complex bibliographic items, e.g., monographic series, articles in serials, etc.

5. Subject analysis.

  a. Number of subject headings and depth of subject analysis.

  b. Currency of subject headings.

  c. Availability of information regarding local practice for catalogs.

6. Frequency of revision of the catalog or database.

7. Inclusion in catalog of material available through resource-sharing programs.

8. Relation of catalog to other bibliographic tools produced by the library such as local newspaper indexes, guides to special format collections, etc.

C. Access points in catalog or database records.

1. Authority control for names, titles and subject headings.

2. Number and types of access points.

3. Keyword searching and the number and type of fields in a record for which keyword searching is available.

4. Availability of Boolean operators and implementation of Boolean searching, i.e., implicit or explicit.

5. Qualifiers for searches such as language of publication, date of publication, physical format, etc.

6. Additional searching features such as proximity searching, wild card searching, left/right truncation, etc.

7. Ability to limit search to the contents of a particular collection.

8. Filing rules in the catalog or database.

9. Separation of files by type of access point; e.g., a dictionary catalog versus author/title and subject catalogs.

II. Use of multiple catalogs or databases

A. Transferability of information among subsystems of an integrated library system.

1. Availability of circulation status information in the catalog, including codes for items unavailable to the user (at bindery, missing, etc.).

2. Availability of acquisitions "on order" and "in process" information in the catalog.

3. Availability of specific holdings and status information for such items as individual issues or volumes of serials.

4. Availability to user of authority files and thesauri used in determining form of access points.

5. Availability of authorization levels for various patron categories.

B. Level of compatibility among multiple catalogs or databases.

1. Similarity of access points, search methods and filing rules.

2. Similarity of display and format of records.

3. Similarity of the scope of coverage of the library's collection and other bibliographic items for each catalog or database.

C. Availability of multiple catalogs or databases through one terminal.

D. Availability of backups for catalogs or databases in electronic format.

III. Additional capabilities of catalogs or databases

A. Functions the user can perform through the catalog, such as checking out items, reviewing the user's own circulation record, placing holds on circulating or "on order" items, or placing document delivery requests.

B. Ability for the user to print records from a catalog or database search.

C. Ability for the user to sort and format retrieved catalog or database records.

D. Ability for the user to download information from catalog or database searches to a microcomputer disk.

E. Availability of a system to translate the results of a search in a citation database into a search of the library's holdings for the retrieved items.

F. Availability of dial-in access or LAN-based access for users in remote locations.

G. Charges for access to online catalogs or databases, or for printing or downloading from catalogs or databases.

H. Additional future capabilities and limitations.

IV. Staffing issues

A. Number of staff responsible for creating and maintaining bibliographic records, for keeping any online systems functioning smoothly, and for assisting the public in the use of the records.

B. Initial and ongoing training and professional education programs for staff.

C. Degree to which there is ongoing communication among staff who create and maintain records, staff who manage online systems, and staff who assist the public in using these records.

Collection management and development/preservation

Access issues related to Collection Development/ Management and Preservation involve: 1) decisions and processes that make available desired materials and information (Collection Development/ Management), and 2) a balance between the use and the protection of an item through a methodology for making preservation decisions on a collection-wide basis (Preservation).

For issues related to Collection Management see the following. For closed and/or open stacks, remote storage, organization of collection(s), theft, mutilation, see Physical Access, II. For frequency of revision of the catalog or database, inclusion in catalog of material available through resource sharing, see Bibliographic Access, I.B. For replacement, see Public Services, III.I. For interlibrary loan statistics, see Public Services, IV.H. For software, see Public Services, V.G.

I. Collection development/management access issues

A. Preparation of collection development policies.

1. Statement of the purpose of the library's collection.

2. Policy on intellectual freedom.

3. Consultation with user groups.

4. Schedule for periodic review of policy statements.

B. Selection and review of materials.

1. Selection of vendors for automatic receipt of materials and firm orders.

2. Selection of tools to support acquisitions of materials.

3. Development and management of approval plans.

4. Librarian selector and faculty liaison and participation by faculty in the selection process.

5. Procedures for handling materials not acquired through purchase, e.g., exchange programs, gifts.

6. Impact of resource sharing agreements on collection development decisions and conservation treatment activities.

7. Review for possible purchase of materials requested through Interlibrary Services.

8. Procedures for users to request purchase of materials.

9. Negotiation of contracts with vendors of electronic databases in various formats, e.g., databases on CD-ROM or on magnetic tape.

10. Procedures for decisions on retention policy for serials, binding serials, purchasing microform copies, etc.

11. Procedures for handling materials which cannot be retained in their original formats (e.g., too brittle, etc.)

12. Procedures for inspecting retrospective materials, gifts, etc., for possible damage.

C. Financial resources.

1. Budget requests for adequate financial support.

2. Method for allocating acquisitions funds.

3. In-house schedule for expending the materials budget.

4. Timely, accurate accounting system for acquisitions funds.

D. Collection assessment.

1. Ongoing assessment of collections to determine strengths and weaknesses.

2. Regular assessment of the impact of electronic publications on a library collection.

E. Replacement policy and efficient replacement process.

II. Preservation access issues

A. Preservation Priorities.

1. Preservation policy statement.

2. Condition surveys.

3. Determination of priorities for preservation, based on both primary collecting responsibilities and local need.

B. Reformatting issues.

1. Procedures for replacing brittle books, including input from selectors regarding projected use, preferred format, etc.

2. Obligation to provide use copy of preservation master negative microfilm to other libraries or researchers.

3. Use of standardized levels of cataloging in preservation microfilming projects.

C. Physical conditions.

1. Storage and handling, i.e., flat shelving for folio-size items.

2. Education programs for staff and users.

3. Environmental controls.

4. Disaster preparedness and training of library staff in disaster recovery procedures.

D. General collections.

1. Existence and quality of a conservation repair unit.

2. Method of selection for conservation treatment.

3. Level and extent of staffing.

4. Evaluation of library binding processes.

5. Evaluation of shelf preparation processes: use of bar codes, security devices, bookplates, etc.

E. Special collections.

1. Processing procedures: arrangement, description, and housing.

2. Priorities for conservation treatment.
   a. Refurbishing projects.
   b. Conservator/curator consultation.

3. Limitations placed on use of special collections materials.
   a. Security issues.
   b. Restrictions on photocopying.
   c. Policy on interlibrary lending.

III. Staffing

A. Coordination among public services, technical services and collection management for the employment and training of personnel to plan, implement and evaluate collection development, management and preservation.

B. Initial and ongoing training and professional education programs for collection development and preservation staff.

Public services

Access issues related to public services can be divided into two major categories: 1) Those that deal with the number and skills of public services staff, and 2) Those that deal with the existence and quality of various services provided to users. Automated and audiovisual services, while subsumed under more traditional departments in some libraries, are treated as separate sections because each has additional sets of service issues distinct from those of traditional reference departments (for example the administration of and provision of instructional and consultational support for public-access microcomputer clusters).

A major issue related to public services and access lies in the existence of library-defined patron categories and the effect those categories have on patrons' access to services (see Physical Access, I.A). For consideration of access issues related to database design or database capabilities (as opposed to issues concerned with services supporting database use), see Bibliographic Access. For a consideration of issues related to the location and availability of automated equipment (as opposed to the services designed to support that equipment), see Physical Access, II.B and II.C. For a consideration of access issues involving collections

(as opposed to use of the collection), see Collection Management, I.

I. Reference services

A. *Hours of service.*

B. *Levels of staffing* (i.e., professional, non-professional, or a combination of both).

C. *Whether reference service is provided in person, by telephone, electronically, or by appointment.*

D. *Reference staff's knowledge of reference and information sources* both within and beyond the library.

E. *Reference staff's ability to work with patrons* and to conduct reference interviews.

F. *Reference staff's familiarity with available technology* and varied formats of information and their ability to assist patrons in their use.

G. *Written policies* on reference service.

H. *Effectiveness of reference service* as measured by evaluation instruments.

II. Bibliographic instruction services

A. *Number of classes* and number of students receiving bibliographic instruction.

B. *Content* of bibliographic instruction courses.

C. *Variety of types of bibliographic instruction offered*, such as course-related or course-integrated sessions, workshops and seminars, credit courses, or computer-assisted instruction.

D. *Relationship* between bibliographic instruction staff and teaching faculty.

E. *Bibliographic instruction staff's knowledge of information sources*, information structure, and information technology.

F. *Bibliographic instruction staff's teaching ability.*

G. *Number and quality of handouts*, guides, workbooks, and other instructional materials in a variety of formats.

H. *Effectiveness of instructional program* as measured by evaluation instruments.

III. Circulation services

A. *Circulation and use policies* for various categories and formats of material.

B. *Circulation and use policies* for various categories of patrons.

C. *Length of time* that materials circulate.

D. *Timeliness* with which materials are reshelved.

E. *Ability of the circulation system to provide the patron with information* regarding the circulation status of an item.

F. *Ability of the circulation system to issue recalls* to retrieve materials which are checked out.

G. *Confidentiality* of patron circulation or use records.

H. *Existence of reserve services.*

1. Policies for selection of items to be placed on reserve.

2. Policies and procedures for copyright compliance.

3. Procedures for efficient processing of items requested for reserves.

4. Procedures to return items to stacks when no longer needed on reserve.

I. *Procedures for identifying and acting on lost, missing or damaged items* or materials needing preservation attention.

IV. Interlibrary and other delivery services

A. *Availability of telefacsimile, document delivery, interlibrary loan and other such services.*

B. *Categories and formats of materials* that can be loaned or borrowed.

C. *Patron categories* and borrowing privileges for each service.

D. *Special services* available through resource-sharing agreements.

E. *Borrowing period* and turnaround time for these services.

F. *Existence of charges* for use of interlibrary loan and document delivery services.

G. *Impact of interlibrary services on local access* to the collection.

H. *Collection of data for collection management staff* on items requested and departmental use of service.

I. *Policies and procedures for copyright compliance.*

V. Automated services

A. *Availability of various online services.*

B. *Availability of various end-user services.*

C. *Availability of access to national, regional, and local networks.*

D. *Patron categories* and privileges for each service.

E. *Expertise* of the online searching staff.

F. *Limitations on information* that will be retrieved by use of the online systems available.

G. *Management of facilities for patron use of microcomputers* and other computerized technology.

1. Selection of available hardware and software.

2. Number of available workstations.

H. *Availability of training* and instructional support for users of these services.

I. *Existence of charges* for automated services.

VI. Media services

A. *Availability of support* and instructional services related to audiovisual and other media.

B. *Patron categories* and privileges for media services.

C. *Expertise* of the media services staff.

D. *Formats* of materials supported.

E. *Existence of policies and procedures for copyright compliance.*

VII. Staffing issues

A. *Number of staff* involved in providing public services.

B. *Initial and ongoing training* and professional education programs for public services staff.

C. *Degree to which there is ongoing communi-* *cation* between public services staff and those staff in other units whose work affects the public. ■■

Guidelines for branch libraries in colleges and universities: A draft

Prepared by the ULS Committee on Guidelines for Branch Libraries

Stella Bentley, Chair

Hearings will be held in Dallas on Saturday, June 24.

These Guidelines have been developed to provide a framework for academic librarians and administrators to assess the need for branch libraries and to develop policies for administering effective branch services. The ACRL "Standards for the Evaluation of University Library Performance" should also be consulted when evaluating existing branch services and performance.

In this document, the term "branch" has been used generally to define a library service unit under the administration of the main library, with collections and staff, which is usually physically removed from the main library or which functions as an integral component of a system of library service units, none of which is designated as the main library. "Branch" can include different types of libraries: libraries with collections and services organized to serve the needs of one or two academic disciplines; divisional libraries with collections and services organized to serve the needs of several related subject fields; undergraduate libraries with collections and services organized to meet particular instruction needs.

The guidelines

Branch libraries under a variety of designations have been established to extend the services of the main university library at many academic institutions. Factors governing their development include the mission of the institution, historical appendages, campus geography, enrollment patterns, financial conditions, space requirements, instructional techniques, user expectations and demands, and external pressures. These guidelines identify the primary factors influencing the development and maintenance of branch library collections and services. A review of these factors as they relate to local circumstances should assist librarians and their institutions in evaluating the need for branch libraries and enable them to assess whether branch libraries should be established or continued. The reviewing process is described in the following sections: programs, resources, external relations and communication, and evaluation.

Programs

The needs of modern scholarship must be served by access to a broad spectrum of resources including the literature of a special field and all subjects of related interest. The primary mission of the branch library is to provide information and access to information to meet the instructional and research needs of its user group. A branch library's programs should provide for the requirements of its