

**ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee**

**Report to Council**

**2012 Annual Conference**

**Anaheim, CA**

**Tuesday, June 26, 2012**

The ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC) is pleased to present this update of its activities.

**INFORMATION**

Internet Filtering and Libraries

The IFC and the Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) are instigating a broad initiative to dispel misinformation and misunderstandings about CIPA, e-rate, and Internet filtering in libraries. The initiative is, in part, a response to the decision in *Bradburn v. NCRL*, but also due to the numerous inquiries and requests for assistance received by OIF.

Our plans, which are still in development, involve collaboration with the OITP Taskforce and other groups and individuals such as Bob Bocher, a CIPA expert recently retired from the Wisconsin Department of Instruction. We hope to develop librarians' and trustees' understanding about filtering and the First Amendment through articles, workshops, and webinars, including "train the trainers" programs that will ensure that one or two persons are available in each state to provide accurate information and training about filtering in the library. We are also contemplating toolkits that will help libraries evaluate filtering software; adjust their filters to avoid liability by ensuring that the minimum amount of constitutionally protected information is blocked; and offer effective, user-friendly unblocking and disabling policies that conform with the guidance offered by the Supreme Court.

In addition, OIF will continue to provide direct assistance to libraries who are developing or altering their Internet use policies and practices, or who are addressing public concerns about filtering.

Intellectual Freedom Manual Ninth Edition

Planning is underway to update the *Intellectual Freedom Manual*. The ninth edition is scheduled to be published in 2015. In preparation of the new edition, OIF and IFC will undertake a thorough review of all the Interpretations of the *Library Bill of Rights* so that they reflect current library practices and affirm equal and equitable access for all library users.

## Online Learning

OIF has undertaken a number of online learning efforts thus far in 2012. In April, OIF partnered with ALA JobLIST and the Merritt Fund to offer the webinar, “Moving Difficult Conversations Toward Positive Outcomes: Coping with Challenges in the Library Workplace.” 343 people registered for the event, over 150 attended, and 89% of survey respondents found the session either useful or extremely useful. This session was recorded and is freely available online as a webcast via JobLIST site.

For the 2012 celebration of Choose Privacy Week, OIF offered three separate recorded webcasts, which are also freely available online. Amie Stepanovich of the Electronic Privacy Information Center spoke on “The Future of Biometrics and Government Surveillance;” Michael German of the ACLU spoke on “Data Mining, Government Surveillance, and Civil Liberties;” and George Christian of the Library Connection in Connecticut spoke on “Government Surveillance in the Library.” These recordings can all be accessed through the Choose Privacy Week website at [www.privacyrevolution.org](http://www.privacyrevolution.org).

OIF also offered two webinars in May on privacy and access issues around self-service holds practices. These webinars grew out of a resolution passed at the 2011 ALA Annual Conference, urging libraries implementing self-service holds to protect patron identity by adopting practices and procedures that conceal the library user’s personally identifiable information in connection with the materials being borrowed. These two small, interactive sessions were recorded and are freely available as webcasts.

Plans for OIF’s online learning efforts for the remainder of 2012 and into 2013 include a strong focus on filtering; offerings for state chapters; development of a web-based Lawyers for Libraries curriculum; and continued participation in ALA’s Online Learning group to pursue ALA-wide online learning solutions.

### Challenge Database Upgrade Project

Using 2015 funds from ALA, the Office for Intellectual Freedom is working with a team of researchers at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to upgrade its challenge database. The new database will feature improvements and automation in data input and reporting functions, including streamlining the extraction of data for use in publications and other reports. OIF has always been committed to protecting the privacy of contributors and the new database continues that policy with a segmented structure for fire walling of private information. The new database with decades of collected data is expected to be in place by the end of summer 2012.

In addition, OIF is working with researchers at MIT’s Center for Civic Media on advanced applications and visualization of public challenge data – those censorship efforts that have received media attention and are therefore not considered confidential. The goal of this project is to deploy historical records about challenges in conjunction with other public data sets in order to help visualize and understand trends, patterns, and insights which may be gleaned from the data. For example, users will be able to locate incidents geographically and chronologically; to track the propagation of censorship directed at certain authors, titles, or for certain reasons across time and space; and to relate these trends to the type of institution and to the result of the challenge. Work is now underway and OIF expects to announce initial results by the end of the summer.

## PROJECTS

### Choose Privacy Week

Choose Privacy Week (CPW) took place May 1- 7, 2012, and featured the theme “Freedom from Surveillance.” The keystone of this year’s campaign is the new film, “Vanishing Liberties: The Rise of State Surveillance in the Digital Age,” which examines the government’s growing use of surveillance tools to track and spy on immigrant communities and the proposals to adopt these same tools to monitor and track the activities of all Americans. Featured speakers include Michael German, American Civil Liberties Union senior policy counsel for national security and privacy, and a former FBI agent; Margaret Huang, executive director of the Rights Working Group; Paromita Shah, associate director of the National Immigration Project; Julia Shearson, Executive Director at Council on American Islamic Relations - Cleveland; and Vincent Warren, executive director of the Center for Constitutional Rights.

In addition to the film, Choose Privacy Week featured a number of well-received blog posts and online webinars highlighting the theme. Most notable among these was Michael German’s webinar on data mining and government surveillance, which was picked up by Maine public radio stations; and Washington University law professor Neil Richards’ timely essay on the perils of social reading. All of these resources, including “Vanishing Liberties,” can be found on the CPW website at [www.privacyrevolution.org](http://www.privacyrevolution.org).

We are pleased to announce that OIF will receive the 2012 Consumer Excellence Award in October 2012 from Consumer Action, a 41-year-old consumer advocacy group. The award will honor OIF’s outstanding efforts to educate consumers on their privacy rights via their participation in privacy coalitions and their public outreach through CPW and [www.privacyrevolution.org](http://www.privacyrevolution.org).

### Banned Books Week

Banned Books Week 2012, September 30 through October 6, marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this celebration of the freedom to read and features the tagline: “30 Years of Liberating Literature.” In celebration of this landmark anniversary, OIF will partner with state IFCs and state chapters to create videos that will form a virtual 50 State Salute to Banned Books Week. More information on how to become part of this event will be posted on [www.ala.org/bbooks](http://www.ala.org/bbooks) in the coming months.

For the second year in the row, the ALA along with its cosponsors will host a virtual Banned Books Week Read-Out. The Read-Out will feature YouTube videos of authors reading from their favorite banned/challenged books or talking about the importance of the freedom to read. We also will feature audio PSAs of members of Rock Bottom Remainers. Amy Tan, Matt Groening, James McBride, Dave Berry, Scott Turow, and Mary Karr are among the members of the band who participated.

BBW merchandise, including posters, bookmarks, t-shirts, and tote bags, are sold and marketed through the ALA Store ([www.alastore.ala.org/](http://www.alastore.ala.org/)). More information on Banned Books Week can be found at [www.ala.org/bbooks](http://www.ala.org/bbooks).

News Know-How

Under the leadership of Barbara Jones, OIF’s latest initiative is the News Know-How program, supported by a grant from the Open Society Institutes. This grant brings together journalists, librarians, and high school students to discuss how to check facts and discern fact from opinion in the news—from newspapers to radio to social media. News Know-how draws from librarians’ expertise in information literacy in general. This summer and autumn there will be programs in Iowa, Chicago Public Library, Oak Park Public Library and Pratt Free Library (Baltimore). For more information, contact the Office for Intellectual Freedom ([oif@ala.org](mailto:oif@ala.org)).

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In closing, the Intellectual Freedom Committee thanks the division and chapter intellectual freedom committees, the Intellectual Freedom Round Table, the unit liaisons, and the OIF staff for their commitment, assistance, and hard work.

Respectfully Submitted,

ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee

Pat Scales (Chair)

Robin G. Shader

Gladys Smiley Bell

Barbara Stripling

Teresa Doherty

Ma’lis Elizabeth Wendt

Barbara Fiehn

Kathleen Condon-Boettcher (intern)

Julius Jefferson

Cynthia Mari Orozco (intern)

Jim Kuhn