

Policy Monitoring Committee: Report to ALA Council,  
Midwinter, 2008

**ACTION ITEMS**

1. **Placement of Principles for Digital Content.** At the Annual Conference, 2007, Council adopted the "Resolution on Principles for Digital Content", ALA CD# 20.9. The Principles may currently be found in the Task Force Report at <http://www.ala.org/ala/washoff/oitp/digtask.cfm#prin>, and they are also reproduced at the end of this report.

**ACTION ITEM #1:** PMC moves that the Principles for Digital Content be added to the ALA Policy Manual immediately following "Principles for the Networked World" in the following manner. Create a new header "Electronic Environment" at 50.15. Renumber "Principles for the Networked World" as 50.15.1, and insert "Principles for Digital Content" as 50.15.2

2. **Revised wording for ALA Policy 7.4.10 (Membership Meetings).** At the Annual Conference, 2007, Council amended Policy 7.4.10 to delete the second sentence of the first paragraph and replace it with the following: "Agendas of membership meetings shall provide priority to discussion of membership resolutions during the second part of the meeting."

**ACTION ITEM#2:** PMC moves deletion of the second sentence of policy 7.4.10, and replacement with "Agendas of membership meetings shall provide priority to discussion of membership resolutions during the second part of the meeting."

3. **Consistency of language denoting the profession.** It was brought to the attention of PMC that the ALA Policy Manual utilizes a number of different terms and phrases to describe the profession. The question was raised whether it is necessary or desirable always to use the same term or terms. A question put to the ALA Council revealed a distinct lack of interest in the issue, although some useful suggestions were made.

PMC notes that use of different terminology may be thought by some readers to have actual significance, and thus give rise to mistaken assumptions and interpretations even if it derives from nothing more significant than usage differing over time. PMC therefore recommends that usage in the policy manual be regularized to the extent possible, and

that the preferred term be the term that appears in the ALA Accreditation Standards (Library and Information Studies). This term should be used except where its use would result in text that is stilted, syntactically problematic, or stylistically undesirable.

If Council agrees, PMC would bring specific recommended changes to Council at Annual Conference

**ACTION ITEM #3:**

Moved that terminology denoting the profession in the ALA Policy Manual be regularized, to the extent possible, to "Library and Information Studies."

4. **Dispersal of Information regarding Obligations and Privileges of Membership.** In connection with reviewing actions of Council from 2006/07, PMC noted that the revised description of the Chapter Relations Committee includes the following statement: "To be eligible to be a member of the Chapter Relations Committee (CRC), an individual must be an ALA member who is also a member of an ALA Chapter or Divisional Affiliate."

Most committee descriptions do not contain explicit mention that committee members must be ALA members, because of over-arching ALA policy. Yet, a search of the ALA Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies failed to uncover any such simple statement of policy.

In addition to the new charge/description of Chapter Relations Committee, personal membership is mentioned in the following places:

**ALA Constitution:**

Article VI, Council, Section 4 (c) [*a mail vote to set aside an action of Council requires a petition of one percent of personal members*]

Article VIII, Officers and Committees, Section 1 [*only personal members shall have the right to hold office*]

Article VIII, Officers and Committees, Section 4 [*The Executive Board shall appoint all other officers and all committees of the Association not otherwise provided for ... Only personal members of the Association shall be appointed to committees except by authorization of the Executive Board.*] Because of context -- appointment by EB; and in section on "not otherwise provided for", this wording applies only to association-level committees, and is not even generalizable to all of them]

**ALA Bylaws:**

Article I., Membership, Section 2. [*Only personal members of the Association shall have the right to vote and hold office .... All personal members shall be eligible for membership*]

*in any division upon payment of annual dues as established by the division." Note that there is no mention of Round Table membership]*

*Article III, Nominations and Elections, Section 1 (e) ["No person may be nominated for or serve on the Council unless that person is a personal member of the American Library Association."]*

*Article IV, Council, Section 1(a) ["No person ... may serve on the Council unless a personal member of the American Library Association."]*

*Article IV, Council, Section 2(a) ["All personal members of the ALA shall be eligible for nomination to Council from their respective constituencies ..."]*

*Article VI, Divisions, Section 5(a) ["A division shall accept as members all members of the Association who elect membership in that division according to the provisions of Article I of the Bylaws. Only members of this association may be members of a division.]*

*Article VI, Divisions, Section 5(b) ["Only personal members of a division shall have the right to vote and hold office"]*

*Article VII, Round Tables, Section 5 [Any member of the Association may become a member of any round table by complying with the requirements for membership. ... Only personal members shall have the right to vote and hold office."]*

**ALA Policies:**

*6.2.1, Number 5, Petition for Establishment of New Unit of ALA 9.4.1 ["Petitioners shall be personal members of ALA."]*

*9.4.1, Formal Relationships, para 3 ["An official representative from an outside organization must be a personal member of the ALA"]*

Personal member benefits are also noted under Library Champions, ALA Membership Application, and in the Round Table sections under their "Membership" categories.

Dispersal of information regarding the circumstances and positions that require personal membership creates confusion and makes informed compliance difficult. PMC recommends creation of a single general statement along the lines of: "Personal membership in the association is required of those who: hold membership (including virtual membership) in committees, task forces, subcommittees, working groups, etc. of the Association or any of its units; serve as interns or liaisons to such groups; hold elected office in the Association or any of its units; serve as representatives from outside organizations to ALA or to any

of its units, committees, etc.; serve as representatives from ALA to outside organizations; nominate persons for voting ALA office; petition the Association for formation of units. Exceptions to this policy require explicit authorization of the Executive Board." The inclusion of this last sentence would take care of committees such as the Committee on Accreditation, which explicitly require that one member be a non-ALA member.

PMC believes that such a statement would be best positioned in the Bylaws, rather than in the Policy Manual. Nevertheless, because PMC believes strongly that such a statement is needed, it is bringing a formal action item of referral.

**ACTION ITEM 4:** Moved that a recommendation that a single, comprehensive statement regarding the circumstances and positions that require personal membership be created and added to the Bylaws be referred to Constitution and Bylaws.

#### **NON-ACTION ITEMS**

**5. Membership of Policy Monitoring Committee.** In 2006/07, a member of the ALA Executive Board was appointed to the Policy Monitoring Committee. A question was raised as to whether EB members were eligible to serve on PMC. A historical search revealed the following: Although PMC was originally created as a Committee of the Executive Board, in 1982, Council voted to make PMC a Committee of Council. The Charge, adopted at the 1983 Midwinter meeting specified that PMC would "consist of three members of Council." Since members of the Executive Board are also members of Council, there is no prohibition against their serving on PMC.

**6. Personal Membership Categories.** In connection with other work, PMC had occasion to consult the Bylaws, Article I, Section 1.A.1. Regular members. Current wording, "includes librarians as well as others employed in library and information services or related activities in positions that either (a) require a master's degree or (b) require state level certification or (c) are managerial," is ambiguous.

If read as "[all] librarians, plus any others who serve in positions that conform to a,b, and c", it excludes those persons who serve in professional-level, non-managerial positions for which an MLS is not required. People thus not covered include such people as some subject bibliographers, systems librarians, fund-raisers/grant writers, and consultants, as well as persons with or without library degrees who are nevertheless hired to perform professional responsibilities in libraries that do not happen to require the professional degree. All such individuals would be covered by the words of Section 1.A.2. Library Support Staff Members, "others employed in library and information services or related activities," but it seems unlikely that this designation is intended.

If read as "[librarians and others] who serve in positions that conform to a,b, and c, it means that in addition to excluding non-MLS holders in non-managerial positions that do not require the masters degree or certification, it also excludes librarians. This also seems unlikely to be what was intended.

Because the membership definitions determine dues categories, PMC has referred this matter to Constitution and Bylaws, BARC, and the Graduated Dues Structure Task Force for their determination of whether revision is necessary or desirable.

**7. Charge of Policy Monitoring Committee.** During the year, PMC received an inquiry from an ALA division, asking whether its plan to cooperate with another division to develop a set of standards was in conformance with ALA policy. PMC reviewed its own charge, as well as Policy 5.6, and, assisted by Lois Ann Gregory Wood, who searched other documentation, determined that interpretation of policy is not within the Committee purview. If this be true, the question of whose responsibility it might be remains. In this case, since the query received was time-sensitive PMC suggested that the units seek a ruling from the ALA Executive Director.

In the process of investigating the original question, the PMC noted that its charge includes the following: "to review and advise on all unit organization policies to ensure that they are in compliance with Council approved Association-Wide policies." PMC's staff liaison, Lois Ann Gregory-Wood recalled only one instance in which a systematic review of policies was initiated in PMC (by former Chair Norman Horrocks). PMC is thus unable to determine whether the intent of the statement is to provide for an appropriate body for review, should such review become necessary, or whether it was to mandate a periodic or occasional review. The issue might be clarified by the addition of "as requested" (by whom? Council? EB? Either? The unit in question?), "as needed", or "periodically" to the committee charge. PMC will refer this issue to COO for verification of its interpretation of its charge, and for possible modification to the charge for clarification purposes.

**8. Guidelines, Established Practice, and Policy.** At Council I, Midwinter, 2008, the issue of "Guidelines for Campaigning by Candidates for ALA Offices arose. These Guidelines, approved by Executive Board, as a revision of an existing document, include provisions that are often referred to as "policy", but which have not been enacted by Council, and do not appear in the Policy Manual. The Executive Director explained that the Guidelines were thought by the Executive Board to represent interpretation/clarification of existing policy, but some members of Council believed them to represent changes to existing policy. PMC notes that the establishment of Association Policies lies within the purview of Council and further notes the risk of confusing "established practice" and "guidelines" with "policy." PMC recommends that when policy is interpreted by the Executive Board, and especially when it results in promulgation of written "Guidelines," or when the

interpretation would not be immediately obvious to "a reasonable reader" as a mere interpretation, that (1) care should be taken to verify that the interpretation or guideline does not actually represent a modification of policy, and (2) that the resulting guidelines be presented to Council for discussion and information.

The Committee wishes to thank its staff liaison, Lois Ann Gregory Wood, for her knowledgeable, cheerful, and interested assistance.

Respectfully Submitted, for the Policy Monitoring Committee  
Janet Swan Hill, Chair  
Diane Dates Casey  
Susan Roman

## **Principles for Digitized Content**

The accelerating mass digitization of collections in libraries and cultural heritage institutions demands a framework of principles and a body of policy to guide decision making and to enable values-driven choices. The principles for the digitization of content will provoke a review of American Library Association policies that address the creation, access, use and preservation of digital materials and that require revision, enhancement and creation. This is critical to the advancement of ALA's leadership role in the information society and to the support provided to members. This will also sustain the relevance and impact of libraries and librarians in their communities.

### **1. Values**

1. Digital collections are as important to libraries as all other types of collections. The policies of the Association apply fully to digital collections, including values such as intellectual freedom, commitment to access, respect for confidentiality and privacy, freedom of information, service for the public good, and professionalism.
2. Digital content must be given the same consideration as other library materials when conducting collection development, organization and cataloging of works, reference services, and preservation.
3. Digital content must be provided in various and alternative ways to meet the unique needs and circumstances of all people.
4. Equitable access to digital library materials is ensured through maximum accessibility, ubiquity, sustainability, and barrier-free access

### **2. Intellectual Property Rights**

1. Access to and use of digital content that is protected by copyright should be provided in a fair and equitable manner, balancing the rights and privileges of users, creators, and owners.
2. Rights management policies and procedures must promote the advancement and sharing of knowledge, innovation, and creativity.

### **3. Sustainable Collections**

1. A library's digital collections and associated activities must be sustainable.
2. Sustainability requires secure and ongoing funding, technology solutions that are appropriate to the longevity of the cultural record, and long-term management capabilities.

### **4. Collaboration**

1. Collaboration enables the building of collections that support research, scholarship and information needs of diverse communities.
2. Collaboration will require strong organizational support and promotion by library and cultural heritage practitioners, their institutions, and their associations.

## **5. Advocacy**

1. A library's digital programs and associated activities require ongoing communication for its success.
2. The library and cultural heritage communities must reach out to the public, to government, and to funding institutions with a clear and compelling message regarding the role of digital libraries and collections.

## **6. International Scope**

1. Digital collections increasingly serve an international audience and are part of a global information infrastructure that is not limited by geography.
2. The library and cultural heritage communities must understand the origination of materials in digital collections, respect the ownership of these materials, and be attentive to issues surrounding cultural asset exploitation and repatriation.
3. Digital collections and services must be developed with goals of technical and social interoperability in the international information sphere.

## **7. Continuous learning**

1. Digital collections are developed and sustained by an educated workforce.
2. Members of the library and cultural heritage professions must engage in ongoing learning. They must explore new technology, work with new partners, and reach new audiences

## **8. Preservation**

1. Digital resources must receive appropriate preservation
2. Preservation activities require the development of standards, best practices, and sustainable funding models to support long-term commitment to digital resources.

## **9. Importance of Standards**

1. Digital collections must be built upon standards and best practices that maximize their usefulness.



2. Such standards and best practices must serve the broadest community of users, including those with disabilities, support sustainable access and use over time, and provide user functionality that promotes the core library values.
3. Preference should be given to open standards and non-proprietary technologies that support long-term sustainability.