



Protecting Patron Privacy

Recently, I was teaching a privacy class for librarians, and the topic turned to the privacy versus convenience trade-off — the occasional annoyances of using privacy-enhancing technologies online. An audience member laid out what she felt I was asking of the group. “You’re telling us to start selling granola when everyone else is running a candy store.”

I thought about her comment for a moment. “Yes, but don’t you see? There’s about to be a huge demand for granola, and no one else will have it.”

It’s true that the candy stores abound. We rely on dozens of free digital services for everything from email to document storage — “free” at the expense of signing over our personal data. Advertising covers the costs of our favorite blogs and news outlets — but ad trackers follow us all over the web, often without our knowledge or consent. The huge amount of data collected and stored in plain text makes it easy for intelligence agencies and law enforcement to Hoover up all that information using one of their many overbroad surveillance authorizations — whether or not we’ve been accused of a crime.

Just like the sweet stuff, all of these free services are gratifying in the moment but come with long-term costs. In fact, digital privacy is analogous to health in a number of ways — regularly seeing a doctor, paying attention to nutritional content and making

time for exercise can be inconvenient, but the costs of neglecting your health can be grave and irreversible. Maybe you’ll never have a heart attack, or maybe you’ll never get hacked, but if you do, you’ll probably be wishing you had taken some precautions to protect yourself.

I hear often from people who think that privacy can’t be salvaged, that the toothpaste is already out of the tube, and we should just give in to our Google overlords. While it’s true that the situation is dire, I’m personally not ready to give up such an essential civil liberty. Privacy matters; without privacy, we don’t actually have free speech: you can’t read, write, research or talk freely if your every move is being monitored. There’s a reason why libraries have championed privacy alongside intellectual freedom since as far back as the 1939 American Library Association (ALA) Code of Ethics.

Furthermore, violations of privacy, much like other injustices, disproportionately affect people who are already vulnerable or marginalized. Police surveillance targets black and brown communities. Queer students are often in danger when their schools or parents monitor their digital communications. Politically dissident views are chilled. And, of course, paid alternatives to free but invasive services may be out of reach for poor or working class users

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Small Town Library Leads Freedom of Internet Browsing Charge

A small town library in New Hampshire is having a big impact on discussions of privacy and freedom of information. The Kilton Public Library in the town of Lebanon, New Hampshire, population 13,000, withstood requests from Homeland Security to shut down their Tor internet browser-equipped PCs, and continues to allow identity-masked internet searches and traffic despite the concerns of local law enforcement, according to ABC News.

The library is running a pilot project for Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Library Freedom Project. The project chose the Kilton Public Library for the pilot partly because library staff had a history of protecting information freedom rights and personal privacy and also because the project personnel believed the library had the technical know-how to install and maintain the systems used in the pilot. U.S. libraries have a long and storied tradition of defending freedom of speech and personal privacy.

The concern about the library’s system stems from four computers in the

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Libraries Promise to Destroy User Data to Avoid Threat of Government Surveillance

Public and private libraries are reacting swiftly to the election of Donald Trump, promising to destroy user information before it can be used against readers and backing up data abroad.

The New York Public Library (NYPL) changed its privacy policy on Wednesday to emphasize its data-collection policies. Last week, the NYPL website stated that “any library record or other information

collected by the library as described herein is subject to disclosure pursuant to subpoena, court order or as otherwise authorized by applicable law.”

Now, the page reads: “Sometimes the law requires us to share your information, such as if we receive a valid subpoena, warrant or court order. We may share your information if our careful review leads us to believe that the law, including state privacy

law applicable to Library Records, requires us to do so.”

The NYPL also assures users that it will not retain data any longer than is necessary. “We are committed to keeping such information, outlined in all the examples above, only as long as needed in order to provide library services,” the librarians wrote.

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— unless they come through the library. Privacy is vital to intellectual freedom, and although it might seem like a lost cause, the sooner we take steps to safeguard our digital privacy, the better we'll be in the long run.

So where do we begin? Here are some fairly simple steps to get you started on bringing digital privacy into your library:

1. Teach strong password strategies.
2. Teach secure texting and calling.
3. Update software and remove Flash.
4. Offer online anonymity with Tor Browser.
5. Use HTTPS for all library digital services.

Retrieved from lj.libraryjournal.com/2016/07/digital-resources/protecting-patron-privacy/#_

Small Town Library Leads Freedom of Internet Browsing Charge

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center of the library. The four systems are equipped with the Tor browser, which passes internet searches through a random series of other Tor-equipped computers all over the world, masking both the location and the IP address of the computer that sent the original search. If you watch NCIS or other criminal investigation or intelligence shows or films you've likely seen people trying to trace a computer with a screen full of lines crisscrossing the globe.

Kilton takes it a step further, however. Most computers with Tor are referred to as Tor relays, of which there are approximately 7,200 in the world, the type that you'd see bouncing signals on NCIS. Kilton's system, however, is an exit relay, one of only about 1,000. Exit relays

dump all reference to the search path and all the destination computer sees is the last computer — in this case, one of four sitting on a table in New Hampshire. No other U.S. library is set up as an exit relay.

Because of the levels of identity masking in the Kilton exit-relay system, people with good or ill intent may be using the library computers, from anywhere in the world, and no one will know. Homeland Security and local police aren't concerned about someone searching for cars who doesn't want to be inundated with targeted remarketing; they're more concerned about criminal syndicates and terrorists who have their own reasons and uses for browsing anonymity.

Retrieved from www.digitaltrends.com/web/kilton-public-library-tor-browsers-exit-relay

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Meanwhile, the digital library Archive.org, which keeps a searchable database of public websites, announced on Tuesday that it would create a new Canada-based backup of its huge information repository in order to respond to the increased threat of invisible government scrutiny. The group's services include the internet archive and a search engine cataloging it, called the Wayback Machine.

"We have statements by President Trump saying he's against net neutrality and he

wants to expand libel laws," Archive.org founder Brewster Kahle told *The Guardian*. Librarians are wary of storing hoards of precious information "along faultlines," whether those faultlines were literal or ideological. Trump has called for surveillance of Muslims and nominated Jeff Sessions as his attorney general; the Alabama senator called plans to stop the NSA's warrantless domestic wiretapping "idiotic."

Archive's director of partnerships, Wendy Hanamura, said the decision had been a sober one. "We didn't pick Canada out of a hat," she said. "Law in Canada has shifted

recently, making it a really great place for libraries to experiment."

"Even before the election we had made the decision to host at least Canadian materials in Canada," Kahle said. "They have rigorous privacy rules because they don't particularly like patients' privacy information going to the United States." The response to the fundraising campaign had been overwhelming, he said.

Retrieved from www.theguardian.com/books/2016/nov/30/library-user-data-government-surveillance-donald-trump

When Librarians Are Silenced

Search the internet for news stories about public libraries in America and chances are that, sooner or later, the phrase "on the front lines" will come up. The war that is being referred to, and that libraries have been quietly waging since the September 11 attacks, is in defense of free speech and privacy — two concepts so fundamental to our democracy, our society and our Constitution that one can't help noting how rarely their importance has been mentioned during the current election cycle. In fact, quite the opposite has been true: Donald Trump has encouraged the muzzling of reporters and the suppression of political protest, while arguing that government agencies aren't doing enough spying on private citizens, especially Muslims. Hillary

Clinton has failed to be specific about what she would do to limit surveillance, while her running mate, Tim Kaine, has promised to expand "intelligence gathering." Meanwhile, public libraries continue to be threatened by government surveillance — and even police interference.

In the most recent such incident, a librarian in Kansas City, Missouri, was arrested simply for standing up for a library patron's free speech rights at a public event featuring a former U.S. diplomat. Both the librarian and the patron face criminal charges. The incident took place last May, but went largely unnoticed until several advocacy groups called attention to the situation at the end of September. In cooperation with the Truman Presidential Library and the

Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City, the Kansas City Public Library had invited Dennis Ross — a former advisor on the Middle East to Presidents George H. W. Bush and Barack Obama, and to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and currently a distinguished fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy — to speak about Truman and Israel at its Plaza Branch. The library hosts between 12 and 20 speakers each month, and though some of the topics and speakers have been controversial, the events have always been peaceful.

As a matter of policy, the library declines to hire outside security guards. But because of a recent, traumatic event in Kansas City

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— in April 2014 a lone gunman attacked the Jewish Community Center and a Jewish retirement home, killing three people — the library administration agreed that three local off-duty policemen and Blair Hawkins, a former Seattle police officer now serving as Head of Security for the Jewish Community Foundation, could be present. According to the library, as part of the agreement nobody was to be prevented from asking a controversial question and the security team would consult with library officials before ejecting any nonviolent patrons. At the Dennis Ross event, audience members had their bags searched as they entered the library.

During the question-and-answer session after Ross' address, a local writer and activist named Jeremy Rothe-Kushel asked about U.S. support for what he called Israel's "state-sponsored terrorism." Ross answered, and when Rothe-Kushel followed up with a more aggressive question, Hawkins and one of the other guards approached him and immediately tried to eject him from the building — despite the fact that Rothe-Kushel posed no danger to the speaker or audience members. One of the guards, Brent Parsons, shouted — incorrectly — that Rothe-Kushel was at a private event. Later, Parsons added, "This is private property." It is revealing that a policeman should have imagined, even in a heated moment, that a public library was private property.

As the guards grabbed Rothe-Kushel, Steve Woolfolk, the library's director of programming, who had been watching from off-stage, interceded on Rothe-Kushel's behalf and defended his right to remain in a public building and ask questions at a public forum; in a cell phone video, Rothe-Kushel can be heard saying, "Ask me to leave [and] I will leave." The guards led Woolfolk and Rothe-Kushel through the green room toward the lobby. As Woolfolk rounded a pillar, several of the guards grabbed Woolfolk from behind. Woolfolk was kicked in the leg (resulting in a torn knee ligament), slammed against the pillar and thrown into a chair. When he bounced out of the chair onto the floor, the guards forced him back into the chair and handcuffed him. Both men were arrested by a uniformed police officer who had been summoned by Hawkins. Rothe-Kushel was charged with trespassing and resisting arrest, and Woolfolk with interfering with an arrest. Meanwhile, in the auditorium, the program continued; Ross answered a few more questions.

Since May, the cases against both men have been pending. Cell phone and security videos corroborate Rothe-Kushel's and Woolfolk's version of events. Whether or not one agrees with the implications of Rothe-Kushel's question, he posed no physical threat to either Ross or the audience, and was simply trying to speak. Woolfolk remained reasonable and polite. The guards' rapid recourse to shouting and to physical violence to detain Rothe-Kushel and Woolfolk did not seem to have a basis other than that the guards were nervous in the presence of a former top U.S. official and that Rothe-Kushel was a local activist who was well-known for asking confrontational questions at public events. On entering the library, Rothe-Kushel had been identified by Hawkins and subjected to a more thorough search than had the other patrons. The off-duty police acting as guards seem to have been confused about the exact nature of their duties — and about where they were.

The arrests went unmentioned in the national press, in part because of the library officials' hope that the incident — which Library Director Crosby Kemper III has described as an "overreaction" — would simply blow over and the charges against Woolfolk and Rothe-Kushel dropped. The case gained new attention, however, in late September, when the library drew support from the American Library Association and the Bill of Rights Defense Committee. (Over the years the American Library Association's position has been that freedom of speech — and our right to information — is absolute and indivisible, regardless of the nature of that speech and the content of that information. In 2003, the ALA went to the Supreme Court in an unsuccessful attempt to reverse the Children's Internet Protection Act, which requires that publically funded libraries install filters to screen out material that might be considered obscene or unsuitable for children.) On October 5, the *Forward* published an article criticizing the security guards' behavior, and this week, a local newspaper, *The Pitch*, has raised questions about the off-duty police officers involved in the case.

For a while, library officials hoped that an accord might be reached between the library and the prosecutor's office; if the defendants agree to refrain from filing a civil suit, the charges against them will most likely be dropped. But the prosecutor's office has announced that it (in co-operation with Hawkins's employer, the Jewish Community Foundation) will go forward with the cases against the both the librarian and the

patron.

Whatever the outcome, the case adds to a growing history of attacks on libraries — simply for upholding the bedrock values that have historically made them so important. Originally passed in 2001 and since reauthorized and amended, the USA PATRIOT Act — in particular its section 215 — has given the FBI the power to request library borrowing records, patron lists, computer hard drives and Internet logs. In a speech in 2003, then Attorney General John Ashcroft claimed that the understandably concerned librarians were suffering from a "baseless hysteria," repeating the word "hysteria" several times.

Two years later, a group of Connecticut librarians (who came to be known as "the Connecticut Four") resisted a government request to turn over the names and online activity of everyone who had used a certain library computer; the librarians were served with a gag order forbidding them to discuss the case. After their situation attracted the attention of the ACLU, the gag order was rescinded by the FBI in 2006; the following year, the Connecticut Four received the Paul Howard Award for Courage.

In 2005, Joan Airoidi, a librarian in rural Washington State, received the PEN/ Newman's Own First Amendment Award for defying an FBI demand for a list of patrons who had borrowed a biography of Osama bin Laden. And just two weeks ago, four off-duty policemen from the Grandview Police Department (working part-time as security guards at another Kansas City library, the Mid-Continent Library) objected to that library's decision to put up a display case entitled "Black Lives Matter – Books About African American Experiences" and featuring novels by Toni Morrison and others. Even after the library agreed to adjust the exhibit sign's language to read "Books About Black Lives – The African American Experience," two of the four officers resigned in protest.

Part of what's disturbing about both Kansas City incidents is the extent to which they illustrate the gap that has opened between police and the communities in which they work — a divide that, with horrifying regularity, produces far more disastrous and violent results in our inner cities. In fact, public libraries are among the very few remaining places where all Americans can meet to exchange ideas and listen to opposing viewpoints for free.

According to the Libraries for Real Life Project, an organization founded within

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Wisconsin's South Central Library System, 68 percent of Americans have library cards. Americans borrow more than two billion items from libraries every year. Anyone can go to a public library (again, for free) to learn computer skills and apply for jobs. Immigrants can receive help in obtaining green cards and passing citizenship tests, and can learn and practice English. Senior citizens can find out how to take advantage of their Social Security benefits and children can attend story hours and early reading classes. And at least partly because of their own experience with government surveillance, libraries all over the country have begun to conduct workshops designed to teach patrons how to protect their privacy online.

The right to read, to think, to discuss and listen to ideas in a public forum is essential to an open society, as is our individual privacy. One hopes that the Kansas City case — only the most recent of many — will be resolved without further cost, trouble and damage, and that librarians there and everywhere will be able to do their jobs without taking on the added burden of battling for our freedom.

Retrieved from www.nybooks.com/daily/2016/10/14/kansas-city-librarian-arrest-for-defending-free-speech/

Choose Civility

As we prepare for the season of giving, please consider performing a Random Act of Civility. This year's Choose Civility theme, Kindness Creates Community, encourages us to pay it forward through acts such as helping a neighbor shovel snow, holding the door for someone, sending a care package to a service member or donating hats and mittens for children in need. Use #choose2Bkind on social media to share your experiences. choosecivility.org/

Letter from the President, source, Howard County Public Library [MD] newsletter

Nearly nine out of 10 adults have difficulty using health information, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This isn't surprising — thanks to the open access movement, there are a plethora of reliable medical sources out there, but many are not written for a lay audience. Meanwhile, drug companies on the one hand and anti-traditional medicine

Building Equity from the Ground Up

The County of Los Angeles Public Library believes diverse programming begins with assembling a team of people from various backgrounds and cultures who can offer different perspectives, ideas and out-of-the-box solutions that appeal to a wider swath of the population. Diverse teams are helping to guide the organization toward its goal of reducing barriers and increasing access to the 10 million residents (3.5 million in its designated service area) of the County of Los Angeles, itself a diverse group: 26.6 percent white, 9.1 percent African American, 48.4 percent Latinx and 15 percent Asian.

One key ingredient of achieving diversity in the library's organization is the recruiting and hiring process. The goal is to identify and attract talent from a diverse pool and ensure that every candidate is treated fairly.

We make a clear distinction between diversity and favoritism. We achieve diversity by posting job vacancies to various channels, including industry associations, social media, professional referrals, community job posts and more, and guarantee every portion of a job application and interview process is accessible to all. Selection is based on skill sets, merits and best fits in our organization. We take a realistic approach to considering our demographics from the top down, looking inward, and asking, "Does our management and staff team truly reflect the diversity of our communities?"

While our staff reflect the demographic composition of the local community, we also take into consideration that having a diverse staff can help educate the community on issues of acceptance and tolerance. We take into account the sensitivities of changing neighborhoods to build trust, acceptance and tolerance. For example, it is typical to see library managers and staff members from diverse cultures in historically homogenous neighborhoods that are undergoing

transformations.

The library recently introduced the concept of iCount, an all-inclusive initiative that embodies the goal of equity of service to library customers. Equity extends beyond equality — fairness and universal access — to deliberate and intentional efforts to create service delivery models that will make sure that community members have the resources they need. Often these needs are different not only as the result of race and ethnicity but also owing to religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identification, socioeconomic status or physical ability.

Through iCount, the library makes a conscious effort to design services and programs that address the needs of the diverse community it serves. To align its staff with the iCount initiative, the library started by inviting Simran Noor, the VP of policy and programs, the Center for Social Inclusion, to deliver the opening keynote about racial equity as social innovation for the library's annual full-time staff training day this past August. The one-time event, at which the library introduced the concept of iCount, also featured Emily Weaks, Eureka Scholar from the Oakland Public Library, who addressed the perspective of "white librarianship" and the staggering statistics of the profession.

As part of the iCount initiative, the library is also planning to introduce a series of internal trainings to continue the discussion on equity in spring 2017. The training will initially target the library's 200 managers/supervisors and then phase in training for other employees. Group trainings will provide an overview of equity and what it means as well as discussions of particular issues around gender, race and sexuality.

We recognize that perception cannot be changed overnight; it must be achieved through continual education. We need to make a lasting impression that equality has an enormous impact

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advocates on the other flood the internet with authoritative-sounding contradictory material. People who are scared about a possible serious medical condition are not in an ideal mind-set to winnow and retain a lot of new data, especially if the process itself is new to them. Rushed doctors don't always have time to explain context fully to their patients, and patients are often too

intimidated to ask. That's assuming the patron even has a doctor — even after the Affordable Healthcare Act (ACA), many patrons can't afford treatment, or need the library to help figure out whether they need medical help and how to get it.

In fact, the Pew Charitable Trusts' Philadelphia Research Initiative determined

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Building Equity

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on our customers' quality of life, and we must design our programs to be inclusive and adaptable. To that end, we are also looking to create toolkits to help our librarians design better programs. This would include tools to help them identify the needs of various community groups and design innovative ways to address them, as well as tips on how to reach out. Toolkits for managers to use on a monthly basis will help them create a commitment plan.

Having a diverse management team plays an essential part in building an organizational culture that values diversity. It is also instrumental in placing an emphasis on equality and equity in all of our programming. The library takes a holistic view of the various communities we serve and identifies groups that are underrepresented and face significant barriers to access. Through the iCount initiative, staff strategically target these groups with new or existing programs to serve their specific needs and connect them with the resources required to improve their quality of life.

In addition to systemwide programs, our staff is encouraged to adapt the iCount project locally. Homeless Services Think Tank is a staff-initiated group that invites speakers from homeless service provider agencies and nonprofits with the goal of connecting homeless library customers to medical, legal and housing resources. WeHope is an LGBTQ resource fair that showcases the Archives of Sexuality and Gender databases and allows customers to share their coming out stories. Life Ladders @ the Library: Helping Foster Youth Become Successful Adults is a local program founded by our Lancaster Library that provides foster youth who have "aged out" of the system with personal effectiveness training (PET) and real-world, paid work experiences in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Community & Senior Services

Retrieved from lj.libraryjournal.com/2016/12/managing-libraries/building-equity-from-the-ground-up-diversity-2016/

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that "more than a third (34 percent) of all people who came to the library were looking for health information," according to Free Library of Philadelphia (FLP) strategy coordinator Autumn McClintock. Although the first rush of education around how to sign up for AHA coverage is past, changing life circumstances will still mean new patrons looking for assistance over the long haul. Health literacy is therefore a core public library service — and some inventive libraries are going beyond literacy to help patrons improve their well-being directly.

In 2012, Arizona's Pima County Public Library (PCPL), Tucson, added a new employee to its payroll: a registered nurse. Today, one nurse is employed by the library and stationed at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library; 10 others, who work for the Pima County Health Department, visit 11 of the 27 branches in the system at least once a month. PCPL serves a population of 996,554 and had 5.6 million visitors in FY14/15.

"Care is open to patrons of all ages who are open to receiving care but specifically targets the homeless, unsupervised adults with substance abuse and poor health, children and elders who've been abandoned, or those with behavioral problems or mental illness," explains Holly Schaffer, the library's community relations manager. Nurses offer everything from case management to blood pressure screenings.

Library nurses can have a tremendous impact, as Schaffer illustrates with this story about former PCPL nurse Daniel Lopez, RN: Lopez "was referred to a patient who was suffering from urethral pain. The man — homeless, unemployed and lacking health insurance — had received an indwelling catheter and leg bag at a local hospital. After consulting with the man, Daniel learned that the hospital had been aware of the patient's diagnosis of metastatic prostate

cancer but chose to turn him away."

Lopez "addressed the patient's basic needs, including helping him to find shelter in a transitional housing program. Shortly thereafter, the man was approved for housing, sold his vehicle and moved into his new residence. Daniel also assisted him [in] navigat[ing] the complex health system, getting him an oncology appointment, which was covered once the man turned 65."

In 2014, nurses made more than 400 visits to libraries, gave 190 presentations on health topics, had individual contact with close to 6,900 individuals and performed 1,883 interventions such as Lopez's — helping patrons find resources such as dentists, food banks and therapists. "Great strides have been made to ensure that public health services are readily available for our most vulnerable customers, making sure that the library — and the community at large — care about their needs," says Schaffer.

At FLP, for the past three years, nursing students from the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing have regularly offered presentations, blood pressure screenings, and community health fairs at two branches as part of their coursework. In 2015, 550 people attended 40 such programs. Now former student Melanie Mariano, BSN, will provide hands-on nursing care at the Parkway Central Branch for a year. Programming should start in October. (Mariano's not the only health professional at the library; she joins two behavioral health specialists, contracted through the City of Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual disAbility Services, who work at the library on a part-time basis.)

Retrieved from lj.libraryjournal.com/2016/10/public-services/the-library-is-in/

The New Librarian of Congress on the Value of 'Free Information'

GWEN IFILL: Finally tonight: The 14th Librarian of Congress was sworn in last week to lead one of the nation's oldest institutions into its next chapter. Jeffrey Brown visited Carla Hayden as she began her new position.

JEFFREY BROWN: It is the largest library in the world. Founded in 1800, with some 162 million items, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., is a repository of

books, yes, but also a storehouse of history and culture, filled with recordings, photographs, maps and manuscripts, charged with preserving national treasures of all kinds. The new Librarian of Congress is Carla Hayden. Why did you want to take on this job?

CARLA HAYDEN, Librarian of Congress: It's a librarian's dream. And in the field, it's

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The New Librarian of Congress on the Value of 'Free Information'

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seen as a job that really epitomizes what libraries can mean and symbolize. So, this library can really help libraries throughout the country show the worth of a library and a community.

JB: While most of the past 13 heads of this historic institution have come from scholarly backgrounds, Carla Hayden is a librarian through and through, and a strong advocate for their continuing relevance. She headed the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore since 1993, and before that worked for the Chicago Public Library, a career coinciding with enormous changes in information technology.

CH: Technology has such an impact on libraries in the last 20 years, and the last 10 years in particular. The opportunity to make those items available online for everyone is daunting, but also exciting. And it's a pivotal time to think about what could be done with technology.

JB: This is where the library has been hit with criticism, though, in several independent assessments, that it has fallen behind, has not modernized its technology, has not digitized much of its collection. Is that a fair assessment?

CH: It's an assessment that I believe

reflects the fact that, with the largest library in the world, 162 million items, that's a pretty substantial amount of material to digitize. And there's a lot involved with these rare and unique materials.

JB: In your life, in your career, you have had to defend libraries, right?

CH: Yes. Yes. I have had...

JB: Why should we give you money, right?

CH: Why should you invest in a library, especially a library building, in the time of the digital age? What we found is a library's place is even more important. There is a hunger in this digital age to hear authors together, to participate in programs, to just be in a place, a community space.

JB: You have also been known as a privacy advocate, right? As the president of the American Library Association in 2003, you argued against some aspects of the PATRIOT Act. Are you worried still about government surveillance of information, even what's available at libraries, government watching what people read?

CH: Librarians were called during that time feisty fighters for freedom, and we were very proud of that label. We were just concerned that, at that time, when people were rightfully concerned about national security, that there was a balance with a

person's right to know. Just because you're interested in what jihad is doesn't mean you intend to join.

JB: You don't think Americans need to be worried that, whether they're checking out a book, whether they're going online to search something?

CH: The safeguards are there. There are measures in place that ensure that at least the proper cause for examining records is in place. And that was what we were concerned about, wide sweeps of records with no indication of intent.

JB: You look at the country today, and much discussion about the divisions, politically, culturally, economically. What can you do about it in your new position?

CH: Make information free for all. Health information is just about the number one thing that people go into public libraries and connect to public libraries for. They're also looking for information about things that can make their lives better. It's a great equalizer. So, there's an opportunity for the Library of Congress to supplement what is happening and not happening in many public and school libraries.

Retrieved from www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/new-librarian-congress-value-free-information/

FROM THE EDITOR

December Guest Editor:
Paula Miller

Civil Rights, Civic Engagement and Civility: Libraries as an Instrument of Democracy

Well, here we are in December. You know, I really don't much like winter. I get cold easily. It's dark all the time. I hate shoveling heavy snow and cleaning off the car every morning. Driving on slick roads is nerve-wracking. Gritty road salt or dirty slush gets on everything. Getting up at 4:30 a.m. to monitor weather conditions and closings surrounding us when snow is predicted is even more nerve-wracking because there's rarely a set of circumstances that point to one right answer about whether or when

to close. Enough said. You get my drift (pun intended).

Yet...even before the release of Disney's *Frozen*, I was fascinated by the imagery of snowflakes and the work of Kenneth Libbrecht in photographing individual snowflakes. Snowflakes are fascinating. They're an amazing combination of the principles of physics, chemistry and mathematics. And they are among the most beautiful of nature's artworks.

The symmetry in snowflakes is known



Paula Miller,
director for Baltimore County Public Library

as a fractal. Fractals are natural repeating patterns at every scale, whether large or small, and they represent complex patterns within chaos. Scientifically, they are geometric shapes that can be subdivided into parts that reveal even greater complexity as they are enlarged.

NOVA produced a film called *Fractals: Hunting the Hidden Dimension* that describes them this way: "You may not know it, but fractals, like the air you breathe,

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are all around you. Their irregular, repeating shapes are found in cloud formations and tree limbs, in stalks of broccoli and craggy mountain ranges, even in the rhythm of the human heart."

If we apply the general concept of fractals (in a more poetic than scientific way, of course) to our nation's libraries, we can see that each of them, like a single snowflake, is different from the others, yet each still shares most of the same characteristics as the whole.

So, how does this foray into fractals relate to "Libraries as an Instrument of Democracy"? Because the repeating pattern, the fractal-like components that library systems across the country have in common, are our mission and our values.

This December brings closure to a lengthy election year. If you, like many, were tired of the all-consuming election coverage, political ads and political pundits, you may have felt relieved...for a moment. But, here's the thing: The democratic process is still in action. And whether it is an election season or not, that is evident every single day in our nation's libraries.

As Lady Bird Johnson once said, "Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest." We serve everyone — all ages, all ethnicities, all income levels. We uphold civil and constitutional rights through our principles of equal access for all and through our fierce protection of intellectual freedom.

We create an informed citizenry through the informational resources we provide and through our commitment to transliteracy of all kinds — reading literacy, digital literacy, visual literacy, cultural literacy and more. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "An informed citizenry is at the heart of a dynamic democracy."

The public library is a great American tradition, and public library service in the United States is deeply rooted in community. From the days of our founding fathers, our libraries have always served to level the playing field by providing free and equal access to materials. While some of the materials may have changed over the ensuing centuries — print, media, electronic — the core principles have not. For example, today, libraries bridge the digital divide by providing computers and highspeed access to those who cannot otherwise afford it. By showcasing these library values and by assisting our users in finding a variety of information and opportunities — information about FAFSA, online access to the health care exchange, resources

to develop skills and apply for jobs — we bring the principles of democracy and the American dream to life...for everyone.

Our libraries uphold values and rights through policies and actions in support of intellectual freedom, free speech, and privacy. In her article "Protecting Patron Privacy," Alison Macrina, founder and director of the Library Freedom Project, notes five strategic ways to reinforce privacy tenets in our libraries. She states, "Privacy matters; without privacy, we don't actually have free speech: you can't read, write, research, or talk freely if your every move is being monitored. There's a reason why libraries have championed privacy alongside intellectual freedom since as far back as the 1939 American Library Association (ALA) Code of Ethics."

One of the strategies mentioned by Macrina was put into action in a small library ("Small Town Library Leads Freedom of Internet Browsing Charge"). At the Kilton Public Library in Lebanon, New Hampshire, residents have access to a Tor exit relay PC. "Exit relays dump all reference to the search path and all the destination computer sees is the last computer — in this case, one of four sitting on a table in New Hampshire. No other U.S. library is set up as an exit relay."

With the recent election and the looming threat of possible increased surveillance and loss of net neutrality, libraries are poised to react to protect privacy in other ways... and some are already reacting. As seen in "Libraries Promise to Destroy User Data..." the New York Public Library has already changed its data collection policy. And the digital library Archive.org has gone even further by creating a Canadian database backup to avoid government overreach.

Equal and unfettered access to these resources is important, but let's not forget that our buildings themselves also reflect the principles of democracy, since they provide a space for public forums — gracious spaces where community groups can meet, where community issues can be discussed and where community voices can connect and be heard in a civil and equitable environment.

"When Librarians are Silenced" highlights an incident last fall at the Kansas City Public Library, at which a staff librarian was arrested for intervening on behalf of an attendee at a public forum. It is also an indicator of just how fearful our nation has become, yet how easy it is to endanger those individual rights. The author notes, "The right to read, to think, to discuss and listen to ideas in a public forum is essential to an open society, as is our individual privacy. One hopes that the Kansas City case — only the most

recent of many — will be resolved without further cost, trouble and damage, and that librarians there and everywhere will be able to do their jobs without taking on the added burden of battling for our freedom."

Our libraries have never been *just* about the books, nor about just the buildings, but rather about the connections made within their walls. Yes, we have books, and yes, we connect people with them, but we also connect people with each other, with ideas and with their communities. Our libraries provide one of the few remaining spaces where community groups can meet and where community conversations can occur.

We're about people. We can also apply the concept of repeating patterns in fractals to people. Like snowflakes, each person we serve is unique in his or her own way. Some have a job; some do not. Some have been lucky enough to have had opportunities for education; some seek those opportunities in our libraries. Our staff and customers vary in age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, economic situations, abilities or disabilities, political affiliation, eye color, hair, birth orders and family backgrounds, among many other characteristics...including multiple and varying life experiences along the way. Like snowflakes that grow and develop in slightly different ways depending on the environment, so do each of us.

Yet we have more in common than differences. Like fractals, we share so many common characteristics of being human; only a few set us apart from each other. Each individual's needs are important to us because each customer is a unique and valued part of the community. The civil, nonjudgmental service that we provide is at the core of what we do in public libraries... and has made libraries one of the most trusted entities — and library workers among the most trusted people — in the country.

Choose Civility is a community-wide initiative, led by Howard County Library System, to enhance respect, empathy, consideration and tolerance in Howard County, Maryland, and to make the county a model of civility. Programs include 'Random Acts of Civility,' '#Choose2Bkind,' and a 'Human Library.' In Howard County's community newsletter, *source*, Director Valerie Gross notes that this year's Choose Civility theme is Kindness Creates Community. The initiative invites other communities and libraries around the nation to participate. Wouldn't it be cool if a plethora of libraries joined the effort this year?

As more incidents have sparked civil unrest

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and divisive dialog this past year, a number of libraries have also begun to establish programs, staff training, public forums and reading clubs around the issue of equity. This month's issue of *Library Journal* features "Aspiration to ACTION: Building Equity from the Ground Up," which summarizes efforts at both public and academic libraries around inclusion and diversity. There are great ideas and lessons learned in this article, addressing organizational culture, collaborations with police departments and educational institutions, workforce development and diversity initiatives. We've seen a more serious interest over the last two years in libraries having a nurse or social worker on staff or on site. An article in the October issue of *Library Journal*, "The Library is IN," focused on libraries providing health and wellness information and assisting library customers in connecting for assistance.

The public library is one of the most diverse resources, and one of the most inclusive environments, in any community. Libraries are there for everyone — rich and poor, young and not-so-young, from this culture or from that culture, espousing this

belief or that belief. To us, it doesn't matter. If you need a library resource, you are welcome here.

The benefits of diversity and inclusion are better communication and understanding, increased creativity and success in our workplaces and our neighborhoods, and a richer quality of life for all. The importance and impact of diversity and inclusion in our libraries is evident in so many ways — a diverse collection that provides multiple choices for reading, listening and viewing; diverse facilities that represent the numerous and diverse neighborhoods we serve; diverse clientele with diverse information needs; staff who are diverse in their multiple talents and experiences and backgrounds.

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "Libraries are directly and immediately involved in the conflict which divides the world, and for two reasons; first, because they are essential to the functioning of a democratic society; second, because the contemporary conflict touches the integrity of scholarship, the freedom of the mind and even the survival of culture, and libraries are the great symbols of the freedom of the mind."

You can see this idea echoed in the article "The New Librarian of Congress..." where

the new Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden calls libraries "a great equalizer."

The ability to read and to access information, accompanied by intellectual freedom, is one of the most important ingredients to a free country. So, while the election will come and go, each of our libraries showcases our democratic process in action, every day of the year. Each branch is a critical and well-used instrument of democracy.

This month, as this election year ends, let's celebrate the impact that all of our libraries have on our citizenry, on our communities and on the democratic process. Let's continue to open up opportunities in our libraries, not shut them down. Let's provide a forum for free speech and listening, not shut up. Let's include everyone in the conversation, not shut people out. Let's continue to provide our spaces as trusted spaces for inquiry, not shut them off.

This December, as always, take pride in making our facilities a comfortable haven in any winter wonderland, in adding sparkle to our customers' library visits, in providing service that glistens for everyone coming through our doors and in making our libraries shine...for everyone.

Library Administrator's Digest [ISSN 0746-6129] is published 10 times a year by the Foundation for Baltimore County Public Library, Josh McCready, editor, at 320 York Road, Towson, MD 21204-5179. Phone: 410-887-6196. Fax: 410-887-6103. Email: jmccready@bcpl.net. Subscription price: \$50 per year. Address all correspondence to 320 York Road, Towson, MD 21204. Periodical postage is paid at Lutherville, MD, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Library Administrator's Digest*, 320 York Road, Towson, MD 21204.