

COUNCIL OF CHIEF LIBRARIANS, CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

POSITION STATEMENT ON LIBRARY USER PRIVACY

Approved March 6, 2020

The Council of Chief Librarians (CCL) of the California Community Colleges asserts that library users have the right to privacy and confidentiality, which is “necessary for intellectual freedom and fundamental to the ethics and practice of librarianship” [ALA Policy Manual B.2.1.17 Privacy](#). Whether searching online resources, checking out materials, or using library spaces, all users are entitled to equitable and equal access without being subjected to individual tracking or unnecessary data collection/analysis.

All library users have the right to:

- Privacy in the use of library facilities, technology, and resources and the right to be free from undue surveillance.
- Access to and protection of their own personally identifiable information.
- Notification of their privacy and confidentiality rights.
- Choice and consent options for the collection and use of personal information.

Librarians take these rights into account when deciding which resources to select, which vendors to work with, how to develop and administer library programs and services, and how to measure the efficacy of the institution. Therefore, libraries will protect the privacy of users within their own organizations and from 3rd party entities. Careful consideration becomes more important as society experiences the ramifications of data breaches, deanonymization of personally identifiable information, as well as changes in information-seeking behavior due to the prevalence of personally invasive tracking technologies.

Privacy is integral to the ethical framework of libraries, as affirmed by the [ALA Code of Ethics](#) (ALA, 2018) and the [ACRL Standards for Libraries in Higher Education](#) (ACRL, 2018), and solidified through both state and federal regulation ([§ 6267. Registration and circulation records of libraries supported by public funds, § 6254 California Public Records Act, Records exempt from disclosure requirements - Paragraph J, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g. Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)).

With the imperative to protect privacy, uphold professional ethics, and adhere to state and federal laws --- CCL recommends that all CA community college libraries limit the collection, retention, and/or sharing of personally identifiable information.