

## B.2.1.25

### **B.2.1.25 User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems (NEW)**

Libraries offer a variety of discovery systems to provide access to the resources in their collections. When discovery systems incorporate social media components, intelligent objects and knowledge-sharing tools, they create opportunities for users to contribute to discussions about library resources within the discovery system. Libraries that open their discovery systems to user-generated content should develop and publish viewpoint-neutral policies that describe how users may contribute, how user-generated content will be displayed, and how the personal information of contributors will be protected. Adopted, January 2016.

(See “Policy Reference File”: User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*, 2015-2016 ALA CD#19.2. Adopted January 12, 2016)

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### **NOTE TO THE READER:**

At the 2016 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston, MA, upon recommendation by the Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC), the ALA Council adopted ALA CD#19.2, User Generated Content in Library Discovery System: An Interpretation of the ALA *Library Bill of Rights*.

At the 2016 ALA Annual Conference in Orlando, FL, upon recommendation by the Council Policy Monitoring Committee, the ALA Council approved the insertion of the following abstract of ALA CD#19.2, User Generated Content in Library Discovery System: An Interpretation of the ALA *Library Bill of Rights*, into the ALA *Policy Manual* as B.1.25:

#### **User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems**

Libraries offer a variety of discovery systems to provide access to the resources in their collections. When discovery systems incorporate social media components, intelligent objects and knowledge-sharing tools, they create opportunities for users to contribute to discussions about library resources within the discovery system. Libraries that open their discovery systems to user-generated content should develop and publish viewpoint-neutral policies that describe how users may contribute, how user-generated content will be displayed, and how the personal information of contributors will be protected. Adopted, January 2016.

(See “Policy Reference File”: User-Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights, 2015-2016 ALA CD#19.2)

## **User Generated Content in Library Discovery Systems**

### **An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights**

Libraries offer a variety of discovery systems to provide access to the resources in their collections. Such systems can include online public access catalogs (OPAC), library discovery products, institutional repositories, and archival systems. With the widespread use of library technology that incorporates social media components, intelligent objects, and knowledge-sharing tools comes the ability of libraries to provide greater opportunities for patron engagement in those discovery systems through user-generated content. These features may include the ability of users to contribute commentary such as reviews, simple point-and-click rating systems (e.g. one star to five stars), or to engage in extensive discussions or other social interactions. This kind of content could transform authoritative files, alter information architecture, and change the flow of information within the library discovery system.

The library is not obligated to open its discovery system to user-generated content. A publicly funded library can choose by policy or practice to do so, and limit the contributions of user-generated content to a defined class of users or limit the subject matter of user-generated content, as long as the distinctions drawn are viewpoint neutral and reasonable in light of the mission and purpose of the library. For example, the library could require that users contributing content to the library's discovery system possess a valid library card or an online account with the library or limit the subject of their reviews to resources they have used.

If a publicly funded library by policy or practice chooses to invite everyone to contribute user-generated content to the library's discovery system, the library then may not limit or exclude a particular user's content based upon the content's subject or viewpoint. Publicly funded libraries may define the time, place, or manner in which the user contributes the content to the library's discovery system. Such restrictions must be reasonable and cannot be based upon the beliefs or affiliations of the user or the views expressed in the user-generated content.

In any instance, libraries should develop and publish written policies addressing users' contributions to the discovery system. These policies should be made available in commonly used languages within the community served.

The library must clearly identify what is user-generated content and what is library-generated content in the library discovery system. Such a distinction serves to affirm both the users' First Amendment right to free expression and their responsibility for that expression.

Finally, the library must be scrupulous in protecting the confidentiality of personally identifiable information of users who contribute content to the library discovery system.<sup>1</sup>

Adopted January 12, 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> See Privacy: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*