



Annual Meeting 2007
Washington, DC
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American Association of School Librarians
Board of Directors
Agenda Item # 22

Topic: Principles for Digital Content

Background: Board members were previously asked to send comments on these principles. The current version will be brought to ALA Council during the Committee on Legislation report scheduled for Wednesday. The Task Force on Digitization is asking the Board for their endorsement of these Principles.

Action Required: Discussion and direction to the AASL Councilor

Principles for Digital Content

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 (<http://www.ala.org/ala/oif/statementspols/corevaluesstatement/corevalues.htm>).
3. Preference should be given to open standards and non-proprietary technologies that support long-term sustainability.