



Resolution on U.S. Enterprises' Abridgement of Free Speech

Whereas in recent years there have been multiple high profile incidents¹ of United States enterprises abridging the free speech rights of people of the United States, apparently to maintain profitable relationships with repressive governments;

Whereas "[The Universal Right to Free Expression: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights](#)" states "the American Library Association opposes any use of governmental prerogative that leads to intimidation of individuals that prevents them from exercising their rights to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas";

Whereas Article 12 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) states "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks";

Whereas Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers";

Whereas there is a distinction between a private platform's deliberate suppression of an individual's opinions and that platform's decision to engage in content moderation to remove hate speech and incitement to violence from an online venue;

Whereas the [United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech](#) defines "hate speech" as "any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor"; and

Whereas the American Library Association is on record as opposing the use of disinformation through its "[Resolution on Access to Accurate Information](#)"; now, therefore, be it:



Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA), on behalf of its members:

1. reaffirms its commitment to free speech and free expression as previously stated in "The Universal Right to Free Expression: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*";
2. strongly urges U.S. enterprises² that allow for social interaction and comments on online platforms to resist efforts from governments to suppress or restrict the "right to freedom of opinion and expression" as enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
3. urges those same U.S. enterprises² to address disinformation, as well as targeted harassment or hate speech, in order to protect the honor, dignity, and humanity of users of their online platforms; and
4. recommends library workers and governing bodies share this resolution with library users and local media.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, June 29, 2021, ALA Virtual Annual Conference Council Meeting

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracie Hall", written in a cursive style.

Tracie D. Hall, Executive Director and
Secretary of the ALA Council



¹ Allen-Ebrahimian, B. (2020, June 11). Zoom closed account of U.S.-based Chinese activist "to comply with local law". Axios.com. Retrieved from

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<https://www.npr.org/2019/10/11/769362193/blizzard-entertainment-faces-public-backlash-following-esports-player-ban>

² US Enterprises" is intended to refer to corporations, businesses, and other commercial organizations based in the US. It is not directed at non-profit organizations such as libraries.