

Social Responsibilities Round Table

Statement of Concern on the Use of Flags in Libraries' Public Areas

SRRT recognizes that the US flag ordinarily is appropriately, proudly and respectfully displayed according to custom and law in libraries and public institutions. The display of the colors is a formal matter which is meant to represent the sovereignty and unity of the nation.

However the aggressive display of flags in unusual places, in unusual numbers, and in an unusual manner might be taken to imply, among other things, institutional endorsement of current US governmental policies.

Privileging symbolic speech in possible support of current US governmental policies tends to undermine the library as a place of free thought and compromises the neutrality of the library space. Such unusual displays may create an intimidating atmosphere for some library users who may be deterred in their requests for materials and assistance. SRRT urges libraries to be sensitive to these concerns.

Endorsed by SRRT Action Council 1/19/02