Zero Censorship! Who Are We Kidding?
An exploratory analysis of the opinions and experiences of Queensland-based public librarians with regard to the censorship of materials in public library collections

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ABSTRACT

Public librarians have long upheld the social justice philosophy of free access to information for all people. The issue of censorship is related to both the professional principles of the Australian Library and Information Association and to the role public librarians have to play in nurturing social capital in our communities. Until now there has been little Australian data on this topic. This paper considers the philosophy of free access to information in the context of contemporary item selection and classification processes within public libraries. The findings of a survey of Queensland public librarians are used to identify current industry attitudes towards the public right to information, and to determine the degree to which censorship mechanisms are currently practiced or prevented in public libraries. The findings support those of overseas researchers that stated anti-censorship attitudes are not always indicative of censorship behaviours, and that some librarians employ self-censorship with regard to controversial materials in order to avoid censorship challenges.

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of free access to information for all people has long been included in library association policies around the world. In September 1964, the Library Association of Australia first published as policy the *Statement of Principles on Freedom to Read*. The catalyst for the development and endorsement of such a policy was the presidential address to the Association by W.G.K. Duncan in 1961, who stated

> "a librarian is not only entitled, but is duty bound, to disagree both from the government of the day and from a majority in the community whenever this disagreement flows from his vocation…to promote and foster the free flow of information and ideas throughout his [sic] community" (as cited in Whyte, 1970, p.127).

In 2001, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) declared their *Statement on Freedom to Read* one of the three seminal statements of the Association (ALIA, 2001a). The most recent incarnation of this philosophy, the *Statement on Free Access to Information,* was adopted later in 2001. The pursuit of this philosophy within public libraries requires an inclusive and dedicated approach on behalf of all library professionals, particularly with regard to controversial or non-mainstream materials. Little research has been conducted however, on the attitudes and practices of Australian public librarians towards the inclusion of such materials in their collections. The present project aims to address this lack of research by conducting a survey into the attitudes and behaviours of Queensland-based public librarians with regard to censorship of library collections, and presenting the key findings. Internet censorship in libraries will not be discussed, due to the unique issues surrounding this phenomenon. This paper will firstly contextualise the current research with an overview of the existing literature. The current research project will then be described and the key findings presented and discussed.

Definition of terms

Free access to information
The issue of free access to information has been known under a variety of terms throughout the history of libraries. The terms 'intellectual freedom' and 'freedom to read' occur frequently in the literature, and are in this paper used interchangeably with the more recent term 'free access to information'. The following ALIA quotes indicate the definition of this phrase as used in the current paper:

The ALIA *Statement on Free Access to Information* is based on the principle:
> "Freedom can be protected in a democratic society only if its citizens have unrestricted access to information and ideas." (ALIA, 2001b).

The statement goes on to explicitly outline seven responsibilities of libraries:

> "1. Asserting the equal and equitable rights of citizens to information regardless of age, race, gender, religion, disability, cultural identity, language, socioeconomic status, lifestyle choice, political allegiance or social viewpoint;
>
> 2. Adopting an inclusive approach in developing and implementing policies regarding access to information and ideas that are relevant to the library and information service concerned, irrespective of the controversial nature of the information or ideas;
>
> 3. Ensuring that their clients have access to information from a variety of sources and agencies to meet their needs and that a citizen's information needs are met independently of location and an ability to pay;
>
> 4. Catering for interest in contemporary issues without promoting or suppressing particular beliefs and ideas;
>
> 5. Protecting the confidential relationships that exist between the library and information service and its clients;
>
> 6. Resisting attempts by individuals or groups within their communities to restrict access to information and ideas while at the same time recognising that powers of censorship are legally vested in state and federal governments;
>
> 7. Observing laws and regulations governing access to information and ideas but working towards the amendment of those laws and regulations which inhibit library and information services in meeting the obligations and responsibilities outlined in this Statement."
> (ALIA, 2001b)

It must be noted that the current research focuses specifically on those abovementioned aspects which deal with the provision of information on a variety of topics from diverse information sources and perspectives, regardless of the controversial nature of such information; and with resisting censorship attempts from any individuals or agencies, including government, to restrict intellectual freedom. Thus, the aspects of free access to information which deal specifically with the nature of the library/patron relationship (points 1 and 5 above) will not be covered in the current paper.

Information suppression/ censorship
Discussions of the principle of free access to information necessarily involve a discussion of the inverse phenomenon, information suppression, also described in the literature as censorship. While definitions of these terms are many and varied within the library literature, throughout the current paper these terms will be used interchangeably, to indicate any act which intentionally reduces free access to information.

Controversial topics are defined for the purposes of this research as: subject matter which is likely to initiate impassioned debate within the broad Australian community. Examples could include homosexuality, fundamentalist religion, extreme political views, pornography and racism.

Non-mainstream topics are defined for the purposes of this research as: subject matter which differs from the opinions presented to the broad Australian community by the popularly accessed mass media.

Opinion is defined as: a thought or belief about something or someone (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Affect (verb) is defined as: to cause a behavioural change.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While the library literature contains a wide variety of contexts and approaches to the issue of free access to information in public libraries, this literature review, in supporting the research project, will specifically address threats to the free accessibility of controversial materials. Two specific potential threats will be discussed: the impact of the opinions of public librarians, and the impact of specific library processes with regard to controversial materials.

The impact of the opinions of librarians
The distinction between selection and censorship was famously described by Asheim as follows: the selector primarily seeks reasons to include an item, whilst the censor primarily seeks reasons *not* to include an item (1954, p.96). A key finding of Marjorie Fiske's seminal work, *Book Selection and Censorship*, was that the Californian librarians interviewed were in fact the individuals most likely to censor their collections (1959). Much of this censorship pertained to controversial materials, with two thirds of her respondents admitting to censoring materials due to controversy, and one fifth habitually avoiding the purchase of items they believed to be potentially controversial (1959, p.64).

It is likely that some librarians suppress controversial materials without considering their actions to be censorship. Subjective measures such as 'literary quality' can easily be employed to justify exclusion of materials, as can claims such as 'lack of funds' or 'no demand'. Evans notes that these may be true, or they may be ways of rationalising the exclusion of materials which may prove troublesome (2000, p.559). Fiske's research found that of the librarians who expressed strong freedom to read convictions, 40 per cent took controversiality into account during book selection, but sought other reasons, such as a lack of literary quality, to justify their decision to avoid controversial items (1959, p.65).

From the literature it is clear that there are three key reasons for librarians to view materials as controversial: the content of the material may conflict with the librarian's personal values, it may violate perceived "community standards" or it may be controversial as a result of the socio-political environment of the time.

Conflicts with personal values
Malley notes that the conflict between personal convictions and professional practice is the most important factor in the issue of censorship by librarians (1990, p.17). It is clear from the ALIA *Statement on Free Access to Information* (ALIA, 2001b) that the role of the library professional is to take an inclusive, anti-censorship approach to their professional tasks. This is likely to create situations where a librarian's professional role is in conflict with their personal values. However, Schweinsburg notes that individuals must be conscious of their own personal values and prejudices in order to minimise their influence on professional roles (1995, p.36). Curry's research into the experiences of public library directors in the UK and Canada revealed that just over 50 per cent of respondents had taken professional action which was contrary to their personal moral beliefs (1997, p.237). However, not all library professionals are this committed to intellectual freedom, or this conscious of their personal prejudices. Research in the USA by Robotham & Shields revealed situations in which personal beliefs were allowed to influence professional behaviours, for example one professional library staff member refused a patron's request for material on homosexuality on the grounds that she did not wish to be responsible for the person becoming homosexual (1982, p.72).

Community standards
Research by Fiske (1959) and Busha (1972) identified that librarians frequently censored materials in order to avoid complaints from external parties, such as community pressure groups. Evans notes that even librarians who are consciously committed to the principles of intellectual freedom may in fact censor subconsciously or even consciously when potential personal threats are perceived, such as conflict in the workplace or community (Evans, 2000). The community standards argument is one commonly advocated by conservative pressure groups. Lee suggests that the aim of community standards appears to be to reduce the library collection exclusively to items which could not possibly offend anyone (1998, p.70). [1]

Curry's 1990/91 research revealed that 67 per cent of British and 37 per cent of Canadian library directors agreed that community standards should be upheld by librarians (1997, p.64). Interestingly, 1974 research conducted in Ontario by Claire England indicated only 13 per cent of respondents then agreed with that statement (as cited in Curry, 1997, p.63). This could indicate that, as with other aspects of the censorship debate, the influence of community standards will be different at different points in history. However, Robotham & Shields note that "in any community, there are many publics", and stress that public library collections must aim to satisfy the needs and wants of the various 'minorities' (1992, pp.19, 29). This highlights the problem with the community standards approach, which is that it rarely incorporates the 'standards' of *all* the communities within our society. This has led Parkinson to describe the community standards justification for censorship as "dangerous" (1987, p.93).

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[1] While readers may be familiar with high profile cases of such pressure on public libraries in the United States, it is important to recognise that this issue is also relevant in Australia. Groups such as the Christian Democratic Party have publicly stated their desire to censor library collections (2003).

Socio-political environment
The social and political environments in which libraries operate create another set of pressures which threaten free access to information. Wiegand's study of library acquisitions records in five small US communities during the period of World War One revealed that once the US entered the war, in April 1917, a pronounced bias entered the acquisitions process, eliminating all materials expressing pacifist or pro-German perspectives on the war (1998, p.129). The Cold War had a similar influence. Mediavilla (1997) describes the extreme fear levels generated within the US public library community of the 1940s and 1950s by first the Tenney and then the McCarthy Committee into un-American activities. Although conducted in 1959, five years after Senator McCarthy had been generally discredited, interviews for Marjorie Fiske's research into book selection and censorship were permeated by "an atmosphere of caution" (1959, p.57), and participants stated they were still fearful of including materials on communism in their collections (1959, p.61). More recently, West reported in 1983 that the incidence of censorship in the US increased by 400 per cent during the first term of very conservative Republican, President Reagan's, period in the White House (p.1651).

We may well be on the brink of another period of such cautiousness. It has become a truism that for people of the West, the world is a very different place after the World Trade Centre attacks of September 11, 2001. Pike (2002, p.19) considers the resulting change in US government and public attitudes towards national security and civil liberties to mimic similar changes during the two World Wars and the Cold War. Dawson has raised concerns that this change in the socio-political environment may have negative effects on many aspects of library work, including the support of intellectual freedom and the unbiased acquisition and cataloguing of library materials (2003, p.99). Doyle notes that the post-September 11 "war on terrorism" has already led to calls in the US for tighter controls on intellectual expression and information exchange (2002, p.16), and cites specific examples, such as the US government ordering the destruction of all copies of the US Geological Survey, held by 335 academic libraries (Kellogg, as cited in Doyle, 2002, p.16).

In addition to this, the White House is occupied again by a very conservative Republican administration which passed the *USA-PATRIOT Act 2001* (an acronym for "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism") within weeks of September 11, 2001. Many writers have raised concerns about the impact of this Act on library processes (Pike, 2002; Berry, 2003; Kaser, 2003). For example, the Act allows the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to obtain previously confidential library patron records for surveillance purposes. The results of an anonymous survey of librarians by Sanders led him to state that "[m]any libraries and booksellers now fear that patrons have begun to self-censor their library use … due to fears of government surveillance" (as cited in Kaser, 2003, p.16). Closer to home, at the time of writing, the Australian Parliament is considering the Anti-terrorism Bill 2004, which includes a provision to make it unlawful for people to profit financially from books or memoirs written about their experiences of training with terrorist organisations (Commonwealth of Australia, 2004). Concerns have already been raised by civil libertarians, legal experts and the families of terrorism victims that such legislation may well be the thin edge of the wedge with regard to threatening intellectual freedoms in Australia (Leys, 2004).

The impact of library processes
Fiske identified two stages within library processing at which free access to controversial materials for public library patrons may be threatened: selection and circulation (1959, p66).

Selection processes: review journals
Lee (1998) notes that in the USA, many, if not most, librarians rely on industry review journals to identify new books for acquisition, a trend which is likely to be true in Australia also. It is important therefore to consider the degree of inclusiveness and independence of these publications. Lee (1998) has raised concerns that review journals may well be biased towards those publishers that contribute most significantly to the advertising income of the journal. If this is so, works of a 'radical' or alternative' nature, such as publications of the radical left, or 'zines, published by individuals or small companies without large scale promotion budgets, are likely to be overlooked by such review journals (Selth, 1993; Atton, 1996).

Selection processes: acquisitions outsourcing
Another relatively recent acquisitions trend amongst the larger Australian public libraries is outsourcing to vendors. While varying degrees of acquisitions outsourcing are possible, the most extreme employ vendors to undertake material selection activities. In such an arrangement, a vendor retains preference lists or profiles (for example, of preferred subjects, genres or authors) for each of their client libraries. Based on the

preferences indicated by the library, the vendor selects specific library materials. Outsourcing is generally justified as a means of cost-cutting in the very fiscally constrained public library environment, however a number of writers have raised concerns about the impact outsourcing may have on library collections. Litwin believes "we've outsourced materials selection and other functions to corporations who don't know our patrons" (2003, p.88), which is supported by Hadley's belief that vendor selection of materials has changed the collection in her library (2003, p.72). Wallace notes that outsourcing is seen in a positive light by those for whom circulation is a measure of library success, but points out that there is more to a public library than circulation statistics (1997, p.161). This can be seen clearly in the ALIA *Statement on Free Access to Information*, which charges public libraries with "ensuring that their clients have access to information from a variety of sources and agencies to meet their needs…" (ALIA, 2001b).

Selection processes: alternative literature
Robotham & Shields stress the value of small press materials in providing a variety of viewpoints, topics and literary styles within the public library collection (1982, pp.29-30). Cassell, quoted in Wallace (1997, p.162), questions whether outsourcing can ensure such a broad range of information sources, or whether library collections will be diminished by a lack of small press materials, which are not as easily acquired as those produced by large publishers. Willett (1998) notes that at best, vendors are slow to pick up small press titles, while alternative press titles are unlikely to be selected at all. Duncan Turner of James Askew & Son, a major British library supplier, is quoted as saying the exclusion of alternative literature from their catalogue represents only "a few titles by obscure experimental publishers" (Atton 1996, p.100). If this comment is at all representative of vendor opinions, the implication is that libraries are unlikely to receive alternative literature from their standard acquisitions vendor. Lee makes the important point that "for a vendor, owned and controlled by a larger corporation, the ideals of librarianship are irrelevant" (1998, p.32). Vendors are not librarians, and are not required to uphold the professional standards that a librarian is expected to observe.

Selection processes: inter library loan
Respondents to Woods & Perry-Holmes' 1982 survey of US public libraries frequently cited that the availability of items on interlibrary loan (ILL) was a valid reason not to order a controversial item (p.1714). There are several problems with this approach. Firstly, the very nature of controversial items may be such that individuals may experience discomfort or embarrassment in approaching the librarian to request such an item. To combat this, anonymous alternatives to identifying and ordering ILL materials would be essential, such as an internet based system. A related issue is that the ILL approach precludes library patrons from identifying materials simply via browsing of the library shelves. This is of particular concern in the case of alternative materials, where the subject matter may be so new or unusual that only by browsing the shelves would patrons become aware of it at all. If the item is not available in-house, such browsing is not possible.

Circulation processes: physical access
Preventing physical access to controversial items has been identified by a number of researchers as a common method of censoring library materials (Fiske, 1959; Busha, 1972; Robotham & Shields, 1982; Curry, 1997). Examples of such activities include placing potentially controversial materials on closed reserve or in the library manager's office, or, in cases where a complaint has been made against the item, reclassifying it to a different area of the library, relocating it to another library branch, or removing the item permanently.

Circulation processes: labelling
Labelling refers to the practice of attaching a warning or rating label to an item. Labelling is considered to create bias as the librarian is effectively trying to make up the reader's mind about the work before they even open it (Robotham & Shields, 1982, p.75; Evans, 2000, p.546). 90 per cent of Canadian and 70 per cent of British library directors in Curry's research disagreed with labelling of library materials (1997, p.58), figures which replicate earlier findings by Busha (1972) and England (as cited in Curry 1997, p.58). While in Australia some labelling is required by law on certain items, under the Federal *Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act 1995*, other forms of labelling are also carried out in Australian libraries. Such labelling may include spine labels to indicate what genre a fiction item belongs to, or a warning label indicating that some of the contents may offend.

Research Context
Research into censorship in public library collections in Australia is almost non-existent, although such research has been conducted at various levels and with varying foci in other Western countries. While many small-scale research projects have been conducted in Canada, Britain and the US, there are three major projects which could be said to dominate the literature. A brief introduction to each of these is outlined below, by way of providing a research context for the current project.

The first major research into censorship in public library collections in the West was conducted by Marjorie Fiske between 1956 and 1958, with the cooperation of the California Library Association and the (US) School Library Association. Fiske coordinated 204 face-to-face interviews with school librarians and public library administrators throughout California, focussing on three key areas: book selection policies and procedures, handling of objections to library materials and attitudes of librarians.

In 1970, Charles Busha distributed a written questionnaire entitled "Opinion Survey of Midwestern Public Librarians" to 900 public librarians in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin, as part of his PhD studies. The response rate of the questionnaire was very impressive: 76 per cent of questionnaires were returned and 69 per cent were usable. Busha's questionnaire focussed on librarian attitudes towards authoritarianism, censorship and intellectual freedom, however few questions related to actual practices.

During 1990 and 1991, Ann Curry conducted face-to-face interviews with 60 public library directors, 30 from Canada and 30 from the United Kingdom (excluding Northern Ireland), as part of her PhD studies. All were from public library systems serving populations of 150,000 or more. The interviews focussed primarily on attitudes and experiences of library directors with regard to selection processes, attitudes towards the inclusion of specific types of controversial materials, their experiences of external challenges to selection processes, and on conflicts between their personal beliefs and their professional responsibilities.

The present survey was developed with reference to all of the above studies, and is included in an appendix to this paper. However, while the large sample sizes of the three major studies outlined above enabled a number of demographic trends to be identified, a similar demographic analysis is not possible in the present study, due to the low response rate of the survey. However two key issues which arose from the previous studies will be assessed by the current data:
1. Stated anti-censorship attitudes are not always indicative of censorship behaviours (Fiske, 1959, p.4, 65; also Bundy & Stakem, 1982, p.589)
2. Censorship challenges are avoided by some librarians by employing self-censorship of controversial materials during the acquisitions and circulations processes (Fiske, 1959; Busha, 1972; also Robotham & Shields, 1982)

Methodology
A written questionnaire was selected as the data collection instrument. A frequently cited weakness of the survey method of data collection is the typically low response rate (Williamson, 2002, p.239). However, the relatively high response rates achieved by prior researchers into this topic, 56 per cent to 69 per cent by American and Canadian researchers, suggested that the topic may be of particular interest to the profession, and that this interest may improve the response rate. To further enhance the response rate, reminder letters were sent to participants, and a deadline for responses was set, as suggested by Williamson (2002, p.241).

Another issue associated with surveys is that their voluntary nature may lead to response bias, as non-respondents may differ in characteristics from respondents (Williamson, 2002, p.239). For example, it is possible that only individuals with strong views on the subject will respond. A further weakness of the survey technique is that it lacks the depth of data which can be collected by interviews or focus groups (Williamson, 2002, p.239). However, the time and financial constraints of the current project favoured the use of the survey method over these other, more resource intensive methods.

Questionnaire Design
The questionnaire was designed over a period of three months, and was based on the findings of the literature review and prior censorship research outlined previously in this report. A key factor in the design of the questionnaire was the desire to not only identify stated attitudes towards the topic, but also to attempt to determine actual professional behaviours, as the two do not always relate strongly. This was achieved by the inclusion of questions regarding actual professional experiences of the respondents, and also through the

use of hypothetical questions regarding material selection. Demographic data was also collected to enable an analysis of individual propensities toward censorship behaviours.

The timing of this research, conducted less than two and a half years after the attack on the World Trade Centres and the Tampa refugee crisis, and in the long shadow of the second Iraq War, significantly influenced the question content of the survey. The tense socio-political climate created in Australia by these events brought the issues of asylum seekers, racial intolerance, terrorism and religious fundamentalism to the fore of the media. For this reason, the two hypothetical questions in the survey included several references to materials of a religious, violent and racist nature. Due to concerns about the length of the questionnaire, these items were included at the expense of any references to materials of a pornographic or sexist nature, as it was the opinion of the researcher that the former materials would be more contentious in the current political climate.

Discomfort amongst librarians with the words 'censor' and 'censorship' were identified in Fiske's research (1959, p.62), and also more recently in Australian research conducted by Giese (1994). The most common responses received by this researcher when discussing the current project with other library students and even non-library associates was disbelief that true responses would be given if the word 'censorship' was used in the collection instrument. All such words were therefore omitted from the questionnaire, cover letters and all subsequent correspondence with participants. Similarly, value-laden words were eliminated from the instrument to avoid bias. For example, one question described a book as "a novel which depicts Indigenous Australians in a stereotypical way". The word 'stereotypical' was used rather than 'negative' or 'racist' to avoid implying a value judgement in the question.

A common recommendation when surveying on sensitive topics is to present the most personal questions towards the end of the questionnaire (Williamson, 2002, p.240). For this reason, questions relating to the personal circumstances of the respondent were placed at the end of the questionnaire, and were prefaced with an explanation of why they were being asked, and a reassurance of the anonymous nature of the survey. Finally, attention was paid to the layout of the questionnaire, in both its web and printed forms, to ensure a professional appearance.

The questionnaire was piloted amongst a selection of LIS students from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in December 2003. No changes were deemed necessary as a result of the pilot. The questionnaire was then reviewed and approved by the QUT Ethics Committee. The resulting questionnaire is included in an appendix to this paper.

Distribution of the Questionnaire
The questionnaire was converted to a web form using Test Pilot software. A web form was selected as the initial survey distribution method, for several reasons. Firstly, the web form would allow respondents to complete and submit the survey from their computer desktop with no additional resources required (pens, envelopes, postal service, etc), as well as ensuring complete confidentiality and anonymity. The use of a web form also enabled direct, digital transfer of the data from the collection instrument to the statistical software, minimising data entry time. Finally, distribution of the web form URL was by email, minimising both the cost and time expenses accumulated by other distribution methods.

To accommodate the resource and time constraints of the research project, the participant pool was limited to Queensland public librarians. 151 participants were selected at random from the published list of Queensland Public Libraries, available at http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/pub/directory/. Factors such as job title, library size and level or type of professional training were not considered in the sample selection process. It is not considered that the reliance on email as an initial contact mechanism introduced any significant bias in the sample selection process, as the number of individuals on the Queensland Public Libraries list without direct email contact was very minimal.

Initial contact was made by email to all participants on 20th January 2004. 151 emails were sent, and 7 addresses bounced, making a total of 144 potential respondents. Participants were asked to submit their completed survey by 1st February 2004.

Following feedback from a number of respondents that they were unable to access the web form, it was discovered that participants whose computers were situated behind firewalls were unable to reach the URL. To overcome this problem, a written form of the questionnaire was distributed as an email attachment to the original respondent list on 29th January 2004, and respondents were given the option of submitting the questionnaire in hard copy, to a reply paid address. The deadline for responses was extended to 16th February 2004. A final reminder email was distributed on 11th February 2004.

Data Analysis
The collected quantitative data was analysed using a combination of SPSS statistical software and Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Given the low response rate to the survey, and therefore the small sample size, the statistical methods used consist primarily of frequency counts and cross tabulations.

The response rate was a low 17.4%, compared with rates of 56% to 76% achieved in similar surveys conducted in the US and Canada by Busha (1972) and Schrader (1986, 1992). The discrepancy between the current response rate and those achieved by similar surveys conducted overseas may reflect cultural differences, although it is difficult to determine the true reasons for survey non-response (Williamson, 2002, p.239). A number of possible reasons have been identified by the researcher, but it must be emphasized that what follows is merely conjecture.

It is possible that the email method of distribution may have been an obstacle to attaining a better response rate. Given the high volume of SPAM and other unsolicited email received by the average email user each day, it is possible that the introductory and follow up emails were simply disregarded by some potential participants. Some participants may also have been irretrievably deterred by the technical problems associated with the web form. Possible reasons not relating to the collection instrument itself include:

- The subject matter was one about which individuals in the sample pool did not have strong opinions, had not really thought about, or considered a non-issue.
- Industry research was not considered a high priority by individuals in the sample pool, and thus time was not found for participation in the current research.
- The subject matter of the survey was considered unimportant or uninteresting by individuals in the sample pool.
- The subject matter of the survey was considered too controversial or challenging by individuals in the sample pool.

The main outcome of the low response rate is that it is not possible to draw statistically reliable findings from an extrapolation of the data, and thus demographic censorship trends identified by previous researchers cannot be tested by the current research.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Characteristics of the sample
16 responses were received via the web form, and nine via the reply paid postal system. The overall response rate was 17.4%, with all of the responses usable.

Most participants were aged between 25 and 54 years of age, with two (8%) aged over 54. The bulk of the responses were distributed fairly evenly across the 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 age groups. There was a significant female bias, with only three (12%) male participants. Only four (16%) participants had no formal library training, with the majority (64%) of respondents possessing either a bachelor or post graduate degree in library science. The recency of completion of this training was fairly evenly distributed, ranging from one year prior to the survey to more than twenty years. Most participants had a high level of library experience, with all but one participant possessing more than five years of work experience in the library sector. The level of participation in continuing professional development activities was quite good, with 44% of people spending one to five days per year and 32% spending six to ten days per year on this pursuit. 20 per cent reported spending more than ten days per year on continuing professional development. 52% of all respondents were members of ALIA. The most common population size served by respondents in their current positions was 100,000 to 500,000 (44% of participants). The remainder were spread fairly evenly across the <5,000, 5,000-10,000, 10,000-30,000 and >500,000 population groupings.

The impact of the opinions of librarians
Awareness of the ALIA *Statement on Free Access to Information* was fairly common, with 40 per cent of respondents claiming to be familiar with it, and a further 36 per cent stating they were 'somewhat' familiar with it. These figures are particularly good considering only 52 per cent of the total respondents are ALIA members. When asked to relate what the principle of free access to information means, 48 per cent of respondents identified content balance and diversity of viewpoints and information sources issues specifically, in addition to other aspects such as equitable physical access. However 26 per cent of people had a very narrow view of the principle, stating solely that it relates to providing services at little or no financial cost, and failing to mention the other aspects of the principle, such as those relating to diversity of

information sources and content. A greater sample size would be required to determine if these figures are indicative of general awareness of the principle within the public library sector as a whole. If the current figures are supported by further research, such a finding should be of concern to the industry, and awareness training amongst the profession would be worthwhile to ensure public librarians fully comprehend this core librarianship principle.

Prior research has revealed that librarians commonly prevent censorship challenges by avoiding the inclusion of controversial materials in their collections (Fiske, 1959; Busha, 1972; Robotham & Shields, 1982). That is, they employ self-censorship of items they consider likely to generate controversy. Encouraging findings therefore were that all respondents agreed with the following statements:

- "public libraries should cater for public interest in contemporary issues without promoting or suppressing particular beliefs and ideas"
- "public libraries should provide their clients with access to information from a variety of sources and agencies"

However, given the finding by Fiske that stated anti-censorship attitudes are not always indicative of censorship behaviours (1959, p.65), this issue was explored to a greater extent by asking participants to contemplate a hypothetical situation. Respondents to the current survey were presented with a list of materials, including a brief description of the content of each, and asked how they would treat each of the items if they were in charge of acquisitions for a new public library situated within the community in which they currently work, but experiencing no financial or spatial restrictions. The results are presented in Table 1. These responses were also used to determine a rating of censorship tendencies for each participant, to enable comparisons between individuals. Points were awarded as follows: 'Purchase (no censorship)': 1 point; 'Purchase and label': 2 points; 'Purchase and place on closed access': 4 points; 'Not purchase': 8 points. An average score was then calculated for each participant. The higher an individual's average score, the more likely they are to employ censorship behaviours. The results were that only 32 per cent of participants achieved a rating of 'low censorship tendencies' (an average score of less than 2). Only 3 items from the list escaped the ultimate form of censorship – refusal to purchase. The stated reasons for these decisions were as varied as the items in the list, and are discussed below.

The issue of 'accuracy'
The least selected items, both rejected by 68 per cent of respondents, contained instructions for conducting illegal activities (bomb and drug making). Respondent comments indicated that the illegality of the subject matter was the reason for rejection of these items, with several stating that they believed providing these items would violate government regulations. Individuals who said they *would* purchase the items explained that their decision was based on the proviso that the items had passed Australian censorship laws.

The creationist text, known to contain deliberate inaccuracies, was rejected by 44 per cent of respondents, with several comments expressing the belief that it was irresponsible to knowingly present incorrect information. However the application of this criterion was inconsistent, with the definition of "accuracy" appearing to be somewhat more subjective than it at first seems. The text expressing Holocaust revisionist theories, viewed by most historians as grossly inaccurate, was rejected by only 24 per cent of respondents, as was the text offering methods to 'cure' homosexuality, although the concept is now widely rejected by the psychology and psychiatric professions. Possibly the overriding principle here was the avoidance of 'political correctness', or the rejection of what could be viewed as pandering to Jewish and gay/lesbian community pressures. Further research would be required to ascertain the truth in this matter, and certainly further exploration into the issue of 'accuracy' as it relates to selection processes would be of interest.

The issue of 'balance'
Many comments were offered about collection development in general. A quarter of respondents discussed the need to provide a "balance of views", many commenting that they would try to include items covering all perspectives of controversial topics. One respondent noted "every library should have something that offends someone! AND have the alternate point of view as well". However for some respondents espousing the need for "balance", the definition and application of the word was inconsistent. For example, one respondent felt that to ensure collections are "balanced and fair" libraries should avoid "highly political" items altogether, although the same person had previously agreed that public libraries should cater for interest in contemporary issues. Surely highly political items are by their very nature of such interest to the public, and so to fulfil this requirement whilst achieving balance, *both* sides of the political debate should be offered, as opposed to *neither* of them.

Table 1: Intended treatment of materials by respondents (presented as percentages)*

Item	Purchase (no censorship)	Purchase and label	Purchase and place on closed access	Not purchase	No response
A book which provides assistance to homosexual people in 'coming out'	92	4	0	0	4
A guide to gay parenting	88	8	0	0	4
The autobiography of a member of the al-Qaeda militant Islamic fundamentalist group	88	4	4	0	4
A book aimed at the non-academic market, by a respected Australian academic, which questions the official justification for the Iraq War	88	4	0	8	4
A non-fiction book which is critical of Islamic fundamentalism	84	8		4	4
A non-fiction book which is critical of the Catholic Church	80	12	0	4	4
An independently published 'zine which is strongly critical of current government policies	80	8	0	8	4
A 'how-to' book on political resistance	80	4	0	12	4
A magazine, aimed at teenagers, about the practice of witchcraft (Wicca)	68	16	0	12	4
A novel which depicts Indigenous Australians in a stereotypical way	64	12	0	16	4
A book which provides advice on how to cure people of homosexual tendencies	64	8	0	24	4
A book by David Irving which is critical of the generally accepted information about the Jewish Holocaust	64	8	0	24	4
A creationist text which is known to contain inaccurate scientific quotes to support its argument	52	0	0	44	4
A novel which contains graphic descriptions of violence against specific ethnic groups	48	12	4	28	8
A video on the history of the Ku Klux Klan, produced and sold by the Ku Klux Klan	44	16	0	32	8
A video that provides instruction on the production and use of narcotics	24	0	4	68	4
A book which provides instruction on the production and use of bombs	20	0	4	68	4

*One participant elected not to answer this question.

Another respondent noted that they may reverse their decision not to include the magazine on witchcraft if the magazine presented a "balance of views on the topic". For this person, presumably balance must be sought not across the collection, but within each item. However, they did decide to purchase the autobiography of an al-Qaeda member, which, being an autobiography, and therefore written from a lone individual's perspective, could reasonably be assumed not to present a "balance of views" on the topic of al-Qaeda or Islamic militancy. Yet another comment referred to the importance of providing a wide selection of resources to the public, but went onto say that they would be "discrete" about purchasing controversial items, explaining that this meant only purchasing one or two copies of each and "if they go missing/lost early on in the piece I would not replace [them]". It could be argued that failing to replace controversial items lost shortly after their purchase amounts to the same outcome as not buying them in the first place.

Conflicts with personal values
Only 28 per cent of participants stated when asked that they had, at some point in their career, found their personal beliefs to be at odds with their professional role with regard to the handling of controversial materials, while 24 per cent were conscious of having rejected a particular item to avoid generating controversy within their community. However, the data in Table 1 shows that of the selection list provided, 83 per cent of respondents rejected at least one item. Even when the rejection of items on the apparently objective grounds of illegality or inaccuracy are removed from the calculation, we are still left with a significant 62.5 per cent of respondents rejecting at least one, and more frequently several, of the remaining items on offer.

The criteria of literary quality and relevance to the local community were offered by 20 per cent of respondents, but these criteria are very subjective, and could easily be used to justify the exercise of personal prejudices. No respondents to the current survey admitted their rejection of items was due to personal prejudice. However, the comments reported in the preceding paragraphs highlight the unconsciousness with which it is possible to censor information. It is this researcher's belief that the respondents quoted genuinely do not believe they are censoring their collections, however by the responsibilities outlined in the ALIA *Statement on Free Access to Information* (2001b), they are. Catering to public interest while avoiding highly political items, requiring some items to have internal content 'balance' but not others, claiming to provide a wide range of resources while failing to replace when lost the only items on a particular topic - these all represent forms of censorship, although those responsible may couch them in terms such as 'literary quality' and 'relevance' which they deem acceptable to the wider library community.

Community standards
With regard to the issue of 'community standards', identified in the literature as a potential vehicle for censorship of library collections, 56 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement that "local community values should be taken into account when selecting materials for public libraries". However, it is possible that the wording of this statement was not clear enough to provide a reliable indication of the community standards debate amongst librarians. It is possible that the statement was interpreted as referring to the situation where additional special resources should be *included* in a collection to cater for local community needs, for example, including Italian language materials in an area with a high Italian population, as opposed the *exclusion* of controversial materials to cater to the prejudices of a portion of local community members. However, data gathered from other questions in the survey did shed some light on the issue of "community standards".

Encouraging was the finding that 96 per cent of participants agreed with the statement: "public libraries should resist attempts by individuals or groups to restrict access to information and ideas, whilst observing the legal requirements of government", and this was reflected in the responses to questions relating to participants' experiences of external censorship attempts. Approximately half (52 per cent) of respondents felt they had been pressured in the last five years to include specific items, with the main pressure coming from religious, particularly Christian, groups. Some pressure was reported also from self-published authors. Several respondents made reference to specific purchase requests received frequently from individual members of the public, although it was clear from the comments made that these were not considered to be a form of 'pressure', but were instead welcomed as a valid contribution to collection development. Respondent comments indicated that the requests for inclusion of specific items in the collection are considered within the context of the library's Collection Development Policy, with such requests accommodated where they are relevant to the collection development aims of the library.

When asked specifically, 96 per cent of respondents agreed that public libraries should resist attempts by individuals or groups to restrict access to information and ideas. This common belief was reflected in the handling of public requests for censorship of collection items. Over half (56%) of respondents felt they had been pressured in the past five years to withdraw or label specific items, with a wide variety of reasons offered, such as complaints about erotic content, non-Christian religious texts or racially offensive materials. The comments offered by respondents indicated that the majority of such requests are rejected, and this is explained to complainants with reference to the collection development policy. Where complaints were acted on (reported by four respondents), labelling or relocation of the item was a more common response than complete withdrawal.

The importance of a formal collection development policy was apparent from these responses. Participants clearly recognise this, with 88 per cent agreeing with the statement "all public libraries should have a formal collection development policy", and 80 per cent agreeing that professional associations should provide guidance to libraries in collection development. Such a policy provides a framework for collection

development activities, and if followed, provides an effective way of explaining and justifying the collection in the face of challenges.

Socio-political environment
As stated previously, questions in the survey emphasized socio-political factors which were topical within the Australian community at the time. For example, at least eight of the seventeen items listed in the hypothetical questions could be seen to relate directly to issues of racial violence, religious intolerance, political resistance and the Iraq War. These items were on average selected for purchase without restriction by 82 per cent of respondents, indicating little negative influence of these socio-political issues at this point in time on library practices. Also encouraging was the finding that 92 per cent of respondents agree that public librarians should be active in challenging attempts by government to pass laws which restrict access to information and ideas. The small nature of the sample size assessed here precludes extrapolation of this finding to the wider public librarian population. However, should further research replicate this finding, it would seem the public library sector in Australia is in a good position to combat any attempts by the government to further restrict information access, as has occurred in the US in recent times, and as is suggested by the Australian government's Anti-terrorism Bill 2004.

The impact of library processes: selection

Selection tools & alternative literature
80 per cent of respondents have performed acquisitions functions at some point in their career. These respondents were asked to identify the main selection tools they utilised (Table 2, over page). Not surprisingly, library vendor catalogues were used by 92 per cent of respondents, indicating the influence of vendor catalogues on acquisitions processes.

As outlined previously in this report, the LIS literature raises some concerns about the visibility of alternative and small press materials in vendor selection processes and industry review journals. It is perhaps a positive sign then that only 9.5 per cent of survey respondents admitted to using vendor resources (catalogues and samples) and industry journals alone, with most respondents utilising a wider variety of selection tools. This largely reflects the universally held belief amongst respondents (100% agreement rate) that public libraries should provide information from a variety of sources.

The least utilised selection resource was 'zine publishers and authors, although these were still used by 40 per cent of respondents. The unique characteristics of 'zines, such as their irregular production, small print runs and lack of promotion, make them difficult for librarians to identify. However, these characteristics also make them extremely unlikely candidates for inclusion in any traditional selection tool. It is therefore likely that 'zines are still under-represented in Queensland public library collections.

Table 2: How do/did you select your materials?

(Respondents were asked to select all that were relevant)

Selection Tool	Percentage of respondents using the tool
Library vendor catalogues (eg. James Bennett, Peter Pal)	92%
Industry review journals (eg. *Books In Print*)	75%
Internet reviews	65%
Direct contact with independent publishers	60%
Review journals for independent publications (eg. *Alternative Press Review*)	55%
Direct contact with independent bookstores	55%
Direct contact with 'zine publishers or authors	40%
Other (specified)	40%

Acquisitions outsourcing

The issue of outsourcing library acquisitions processes generated a great deal of comment, with 52 per cent of respondents being concerned that it would alter the content balance of library collections. The main concerns stated were:

- Collections would cease to reflect local needs
- Collection development would be directed toward the 'lowest common denominator", limiting the depth and range of the collection, and emphasizing mainstream publishers
- Loss of acquisitions skills by librarians, which were seen as a core skill

One respondent explained "outsourcing is a philosophy and procedure that emphasizes financial considerations (over ethical and other niceties)", echoing concerns by Wallace (1997), identified in the literature review.

On the other side of the debate, 20 per cent of respondents commented that they believed vendors could be trusted to select appropriately, provided they were given clear guidelines. Only four respondents indicated that their library services currently outsource acquisitions processes, with one of these retaining the material selection itself in-house, relying on vendors only for processing of items and for selected standing orders. Three of these services conduct regular collection reviews to monitor the effectiveness of selection procedures. These findings reveal what this researcher believes to be overall a healthy concern with regard to the impact of acquisitions outsourcing on public library collections.

The impact of library processes: circulation

In contrast to the other attitudinal questions relating to censorship activities, in which respondents overwhelmingly indicated their disapproval of censorship, only 64 per cent of participants stated their disapproval of labelling of items. The results of the hypothetical question (Table 1) indicate that the preferred method of post-selection censorship of items is labelling, with 40 per cent of respondents deciding to label at least one of the items offered. Restriction of physical access was very rare, with only 4 items being treated in this manner by the respondents. This matches the feedback obtained regarding the handling of public complaints, where withdrawal of the item was very rare, relocation occasional, and labelling conducted slightly more often. It seems that labelling is considered something of a necessary evil, allowing a contentious item to remain within the collection, whilst placating community tensions.

CONCLUSION

Further research needs to be conducted, on a larger scale, to validate the findings of this study. However, the present data does support the findings of previous research that stated anti-censorship attitudes are not always indicative of censorship behaviours (Fiske, 1959, p.4, 65; also Bundy & Stakem, 1982, p.589), and that some librarians employ self-censorship of controversial materials to avoid censorship challenges (Fiske, 1959; Busha, 1972; also Robotham & Shields, 1982). The responses to the present study reflect clear contradictions between stated beliefs and professional behaviours with regard to the issue of censorship.

It would also appear from the present data that a greater understanding within the public library sector of the practical implications of the principle of free access to information may be required. Library staff need to be better informed of the responsibilities associated with the principle, and of the ways in which every day librarian behaviours and decisions impact on its expression. What is beyond doubt is that as human beings, all librarians possess biases to some degree on some topics. The importance for the profession is in educating its members to understand that these biases have no place in the library, and to assist librarians to conduct impartial collection development in practice.

As librarians, we must ask ourselves:

- What are my own biases? Do they impact on my work?
- What is my reasoning for including and excluding items in the collection?
- Do I understand the complexities of the community in which my library functions?
- Am I ensuring a balance of views on contentious issues within the collection?
- Am I selecting from a variety of sources, including alternative and independent publishers?
- Do I know the independent and alternative publishers within my community?
- Is my cataloguing accurate, with a level of specificity relevant to my library?
- Do I have a collection development and acquisitions policy, which provides sound governance for my practices?

In order to prevent the influence of personal prejudices within the library, we must as librarians understand three things. Firstly, that free access to information is the cornerstone not only of the public library, but of a democratic society. Secondly we must be familiar with our own biases. Thirdly we must understand the mechanisms of censorship and be trained in their avoidance. It is this researcher's belief that professional associations, such as ALIA, have a role to play in assisting librarians to obtain skills in this area, for example by facilitating reflection on personal attitudes towards controversial issues and providing instruction in objective decision making processes with regard to collection development.

In the present global climate of political tension and terrorism, civil liberties are currently being eroded in some countries of the West. Where these liberties involve uncensored access to information, they impact directly in the role of the public librarian. Encouragingly, issues of self-censorship aside, the librarians surveyed here present a robust picture with regard to resisting external attempts to suppress information. It is to be hoped that this small sample is indicative of the broader picture, and that, should our own government follow the lead of others, librarians will take a stand to uphold the principles of their profession.

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APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: This section asks you about your experiences as a library professional.

Please note that it is possible that not all of the questions in this section will apply to your experiences. The form will indicate which ones you should leave blank.

1. Have you ever found your personal beliefs to be at odds with your professional role with regard to the handling of controversial materials? Yes/No
If yes, how did you deal with the situation?

2. Other than classification ratings which are required by government legislation, have you ever labelled materials within your collection? Yes/No
If yes, can you please list some of the items which you have labelled, and the reason for the label:

3. Are you currently or have you ever been in the position to make acquisitions decisions within a public library? Yes/No
If you answered 'No', please move on to question 6.

4. How do/did you select your materials? [Please circle all that are relevant]

   a. Library vendor catalogues (eg. James Bennett, Peter Pal, etc)
   b. Industry review journals (eg. Books In Print)
   c. Internet reviews
   d. Review journals for independent publications (eg. Alternative Press Review)
   e. Direct contact with independent publishers
   f. Direct contact with 'zine publishers or authors
   g. Direct contact with independent bookstores
   h. Other (please specify):

5. Have you ever not purchased a particular item to avoid generating controversy within your community? Yes/No
If yes, please provide an example.

6. Outsourcing of acquisitions is the procedure of employing an organization external to the library to purchase collection materials on behalf of the library.
Are you concerned that outsourcing of acquisitions to private vendors may affect the content balance of public library collections? Yes/No
Do you have any comments regarding this?

7. Are acquisitions in your current library outsourced? Yes/No/Don't know
If you answered 'No' or 'Don't know', please move on to question 9.

8. Are there specific strategies in place in your library service to ensure your collection remains balanced during the outsourcing of acquisitions? Yes (Please describe these strategies below)/No

9. Have you been pressured in the past 5 years by any groups or individuals to acquire specific material for the library? Yes/No
If yes, please relate the nature and outcome of the most recent incidents.

10. Have you been pressured in the past 5 years by any groups or individuals to withdraw or label specific material in the library? Yes/No
If yes, please relate the nature and outcome of the most recent incidents.

Section B: This section of the survey asks your opinions on a range of matters

1. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements by selecting one of the responses available:
   a. Library funding bodies (eg. local council, government) should have a say in public library acquisitions.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

   b. Local community values should be taken into account when selecting materials for public libraries.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

   c. Library materials which may offend should be labelled with a warning.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

   d. It is appropriate for professional associations (eg. ALIA) to provide guidance in collection development.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

   e. All public libraries should have a formal collection development policy.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

   f. Public libraries should provide their clients with access to information from a variety of sources and agencies.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

   g. Public libraries should cater for public interest in contemporary issues without promoting or suppressing particular beliefs and ideas.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

   h. Public libraries should resist attempts by individuals or groups to restrict access to information and ideas, whilst observing the legal requirements of government.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

   i. Public librarians should be active in challenging attempts by government to pass laws which restrict access to information and ideas.
   Strongly Disagree/ Disagree/ Agree/ Strongly Agree/ Don't know

2. Are you familiar with the content of the 2001 Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) *Statement on Free Access to Information*? Yes/Somewhat/No

3. What does the principle of free access to information mean to you as it relates to public libraries?

Section C: This section of the survey poses two hypothetical situations for you to consider

1. Please consider the following hypothetical situation, and provide responses for each item:

You are in charge of acquisitions in a new public library in the community in which you currently work. You have no budgetary or space limitations at all. Please indicate how you would handle each of the following items by circling the number which relates to one of the following responses:

> *1 = I would purchase the item*
> *2 = I would purchase the item, and would label the item so customers were forewarned of the content*
> *3 = I would purchase the item, and would place it on closed access*
> *4 = I would not purchase the item*

A novel which depicts Indigenous Australians in a stereotypical way.	1	2	3	4
A novel which contains graphic descriptions of violence against specific ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4
A video on the history of the Ku Klux Klan, produced and sold by the Ku Klux Klan.	1	2	3	4
A book by David Irving which is critical of the generally accepted information about the Jewish Holocaust.	1	2	3	4
A creationist text which is known to contain inaccurate scientific quotes to support its argument.	1	2	3	4
The autobiography of a member of the al-Qaeda militant Islamic fundamentalist group.	1	2	3	4
A non-fiction book which is critical of Islamic fundamentalism.	1	2	3	4
A non-fiction book which is critical of the Catholic Church.	1	2	3	4
A magazine, aimed at teenagers, about the practice of witchcraft (Wicca).	1	2	3	4
A book which provides assistance to homosexual people in 'coming out'.	1	2	3	4
A guide to gay parenting.	1	2	3	4
A book which provides advice on how to cure people of homosexual tendencies.	1	2	3	4
An independently published 'zine which is strongly critical of current government policies.	1	2	3	4
A book aimed at the non-academic market, by a respected Australian academic, which questions the official justification for the Iraq War.	1	2	3	4
A video that provides instruction on the production and use of narcotics.	1	2	3	4
A book which provides instruction on the production and use of bombs.	1	2	3	4
A 'how-to' book on political resistance.	1	2	3	4

2. Would you like to provide any additional comments regarding the answers you have given to the question above?

3. Please consider the following hypothetical situation, and answer the associated question:

You are in charge of acquisitions in a new public library in the community in which you currently work. You are required to purchase exactly ten (10) items from those listed below. Please indicate which ten (10) items you would purchase by circling the letter (a, b, etc) corresponding to the item.

- a. A novel which depicts Indigenous Australians in a negative way.
- b. A novel which contains graphic descriptions of violence against specific ethnic groups.
- c. A video on the history of the Ku Klux Klan, produced and sold by the Ku Klux Klan.
- d. A book by David Irving which is critical of the generally accepted information about the Jewish Holocaust.
- e. A creationist text which is known to contain inaccurate scientific quotes to support its argument.
- f. The autobiography of a member of the al-Qaeda militant Islamic fundamentalist group.
- g. A non-fiction book which is critical of Islamic fundamentalism.
- h. A non-fiction book which is critical of the Catholic Church.
- i. A magazine, aimed at teenagers, about the practice of witchcraft (Wicca).
- j. A book which provides assistance to homosexual people in 'coming out'.
- k. A guide to gay parenting.
- l. A book which provides advice on how to cure people of homosexual tendencies.
- m. An independently published 'zine which is strongly critical of current government policies.
- n. A book aimed at the non-academic market, by a respected Australian academic, which questions the official justification for the Iraq War.
- o. A video that provides instruction on the production and use of narcotics.
- p. A book which provides instruction on the production and use of bombs.
- q. A 'how-to' book on political resistance.

4. Would you like to provide any additional comments regarding the answers you have given to the question above?

5. Do you have any other comments regarding the topics covered in the survey?

Section D: Demographics

Please note the questions in this section are vital for analysis purposes, but cannot be used in any way to identify specific individuals or services.

1. Please indicate your age: <25   25-34   35-44   45-54   >54

2. Gender: Male/Female

3. Please indicate the highest level of formal library training you have attained:

   a.   No formal training
   b.   TAFE Diploma
   c.   Bachelor degree
   d.   Masters
   e.   PhD
   f.   Other (please specify)

4. Please indicate the year in which this training was completed:

5. Please indicate approximately how long you have worked in the library sector:

   a.   less than 2 years
   b.   2-5 years
   c.   6-10 years
   d.   11-15 years
   e.   16-20 years
   f.   more than 20 years

6. In total, how much time do you usually spend in a year on Continuing Professional Development (CPD)? [ie. short courses, formal education, workplace training, research attending or organising conferences,, etc]

   a.   I don't do any CPD
   b.   <1 day per year
   c.   1-5 days per year
   d.   6-10 days per year
   e.   >10 days per year

7. Are you a member of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)? Yes/No

8. Please indicate which of the following most closely describes the population size [not membership size] that your library collection serves. [Please note, if the entire collection is a shared or 'floating' collection across several library branches, please consider the population of the entire group of libraries involved].

   a.   >500,000 people
   b.   100,000 – 500,000 people
   c.   30,000 – 100,000 people
   d.   10,000 – 30,000 people
   e.   5,000- 10,000 people
   f.   <5,000 people