

Library Values & Privacy in our National Digital Strategies: Field guides, Convenings, and Conversations

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANT FOR LIBRARIES AWARD REPORT

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Michael Zimmer

Center for Information Policy Research
School of Information Studies
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Bonnie Tijerina

Data & Society Research Institute



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Michael Zimmer and Bonnie Tijerina

INTRODUCTION

The UW-Milwaukee Center for Information Policy Research, in partnership with Data & Society, along with the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom and the New York Public Library, was awarded a National Leadership Grants for Libraries award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for the project "Library Values & Privacy in our National Digital Strategies: Field guides, Convenings, and Conversations." A series of gatherings were held throughout 2017-2018 that brought together library practitioners, privacy advocates, and technology experts to discuss and debate a national roadmap for a digital privacy strategy for libraries. The culminating event -- the Library Values and Privacy Summit -- was held in New York City bringing together privacy experts from within and outside libraries and sparked discussions on key privacy-related issues and possible paths forward.

This report summarizes these activities and the road forward.

THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT: LIBRARY VALUES & PRIVACY

In recent years, the general public have become increasingly concerned with their privacy rights online. Due to consumer demand and international pressure, more technology companies and digital services are taking steps to protect privacy, both through policy and design decisions. The desire for more privacy and security played out recently with Apple's decision to protect consumer's privacy by resisting government requests to unlock a suspect's iPhone¹, Google's push to provide end-to-end encryption on its chat and email services², and Microsoft's fight to keep customer data stored outside the U.S. protected³. Not immune to concerns over privacy and protecting sensitive information, librarians and allied information professionals have been equally engaged with policy and technology decisions centered on protecting patron privacy. With a renewed focus on building a national digital platform and critically engage with digital tools, librarians are increasingly confronted with questions on how to consider users' concerns and library values in regards to in-house tools, open source products, search and discovery platforms, and licensed resources. Similarly, libraries are debating how to leverage patron data to provide enhanced and personalized services, without sacrificing patron privacy. Most importantly, in the face of uncertainty about how a new U.S. administration will approach privacy rights online, librarians and their allies are fighting to protect key principles that ensure the protection of online rights.⁴

Now, more than ever, privacy-related projects in librarianship are burgeoning, library conferences increasingly include a focus on privacy within their themes, and many within the library community are engaged in privacy outreach and advocacy. Funded projects like the Library Freedom Project⁵ and the Data Privacy Project⁶ focus on staff training and technical support for libraries. The NISO Consensus Framework for Patron Privacy⁷ brought together librarians, publishers, and library service providers to begin discussions around patron privacy in licensed products. ALA and its members celebrate Choose Privacy Week⁸ each year, engaging in policy and practical questions, bringing in speakers and creating guidelines for digital content and initiatives. Researchers have studied licensing language for third party use of patron data and the potential behavior change of patrons and library staff after online privacy and security training.

At the same time, we have teams of people in libraries and in partnership with libraries who are part of building the national digital platform or who are licensing e-content and tools on behalf of libraries. Within these digital areas, we have the capability to consider our changing society and patrons' choices around their online privacy.

While the recent surge in privacy-related activities within the library community is welcome, we see a gap in the conversations we are having about privacy and our digital presence - a knowledge gap, a lack of shared vocabulary, disparate skill sets, and varied understanding. This gap prevents inclusion across the profession and lacks clarity for those responsible for building tools and licensing products. Further, it prevents a complete conversation about how current society's technological and social changes impact our values, our work, our national projects and presence and therefore many of our interactions with those outside of libraries. We need a place and shared resources to help us scope the conversations we need to have about what privacy means to libraries in the digital world. And, the profession needs a roadmap for a shared vision of a digital future that ensures library values.

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/technology/apple-timothy-cook-fbi-san-bernardino.html>

2 <https://www.wired.com/2016/05/allo-duo-google-finally-encrypts-conversations-end-end/>

3 <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-07-14/microsoft-wins-appeal-in-case-over-customers-e-mail-security>

4 <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/72207-wary-of-trump-ala-joins-coalition-advocating-key-tech-principles.html>

5 <https://libraryfreedomproject.org/>

6 <http://www.dataprivacyproject.org/>

7 http://www.niso.org/topics/tl/patron_privacy/

8 <https://chooseprivacyweek.org/>

PROJECT GOAL

The goal of this project was to create ways for the library profession broadly to discuss what the value of privacy means in the digital world and to create a roadmap for how to build our national digital platform, keeping in mind consumer and patron needs and privacy preferences and the historical values of librarianship. We sought to engage with library practitioners, administrators, advocates, and technologists to create a shared understanding of emerging technologies and to map out a pathway for incorporating the values of librarianship such as privacy into the development of the profession's growing digital infrastructure.

To accomplish this, the project organized three different modes of engagement with stakeholders:

- an informal gathering at ALA Annual 2017 to brainstorm and share ideas that need focused attention;
- a panel presentation and community discussion at ALA Midwinter 2018 focusing on pragmatic solutions and resources for library practitioners;
- a 2-day "Library Values & Privacy Summit" in New York City that focused on "bigger picture" issues facing libraries struggling with privacy issues related to digital platforms

These engagements are summarized below.

"PRIVACY & PIZZA" ALA ANNUAL 2017

DATE: Sunday, June 25, 2017

LOCATION: Chicago, IL

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 30

At ALA Annual 2017 in Chicago, a group of 30 library privacy advocates attended a "Privacy and Pizza" happy hour. The event provided an informal environment to talk about privacy and provide guidance on the direction the project should take to best support libraries and information professionals in the pursuit of protecting privacy.

Attendees were asked to share reflections on a set of probing questions on what the library and information professional community has had success doing, and what remains as the biggest challenges, regarding patron privacy. From these informal chats, we learned that while like-minded advocates within the library community participate in privacy-related outreach and training, more work needs to be done to provide staff training, talking

points for discussing privacy with administrators and other decision-makers, tactics for dealing with vendors on privacy issues

What have you done to address privacy issues in libraries?

- Staff training
- Participated in NISO privacy principles
- Attended webinars to learn more
- Delivered talks to publishers & libraries
- Conducted a privacy audit of our library using the guidelines & checklists
- Worked on the ALA privacy checklists

What is one thing your library, or the library profession, is missing to better address privacy issues?

- Language to use when talking to other municipal directors (eg, police chief, city manager)
- Pithy talking points for explaining privacy issues to different stakeholder groups
- Tools for working with specific age groups
- Actually practicing what we preach in our internal operations, as well as in our work with vendors

What questions do you have about privacy in libraries?

How should libraries audit all the data being collected at their institution — from their wifi networks to their vendor systems?

- How do we motivate ALA to push harder on privacy-related legislation?
- How can we better mobilize to influence the practices of vendors?
- How do platform-level collection practices by the vendors benefit them? How can libraries responsibly benefit from them as well?
- Do governments subpoena library vendors?
- Are we willing to “degrade” service to preserve privacy?

What is the biggest challenge for addressing privacy issues in libraries?

- Getting average patrons to care
- Reader analytics and privacy with content vendors and delivery platforms
- Making it simple
- ALA is not united in its position on privacy issues
- Educating library staff
- Separation between the library and the IT department
- Making library administrations prioritize patron privacy

If you could have or invent one tool to address privacy, what would it be?

- A foolproof, 100% effective response to “I don’t have anything to hide” or similar attitudes toward privacy
- Money to make privacy-oriented tools work as well as the Google suite of products
- Clear tools for auditing internal privacy practices and infrastructure



“LIBRARY VALUES & PRIVACY: CREATING FRAMEWORKS FOR PRACTICE”

ALA Midwinter 2018

DATE: Sunday, February 11, 2018

LOCATION: Denver, CO

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:34

At ALA Midwinter 2018 meeting in Denver, over 30 conference attendees joined us for a formal program on “Library Values & Privacy: Creating Frameworks for Practice,” where participants explore the meaning of the library value of privacy in the digital world and provided feedback on potential field guides for librarians that clearly lay out important privacy and security issues.

The interactive session included a panel of privacy experts sharing their experiences implementing privacy “on the ground” in their local libraries. Panelists were Erin Berman, Innovations Manager at San José Public Library and William Marden, Director of Privacy and Compliance at New York Public Library. The moderated discussion between panelists and the attendees covered how library leadership and colleagues respond to their privacy initiatives, the results of library-wide data audits and inventories, how they work with vendors, and how their library uses data analytics products and cloud-based services. A discussion grew around how small institutions and places without experts like our panelists can use the successes of NYPL and SJPL to help with their vendor negotiations and engaging local colleagues on these issues.

Two draft field guides -- focusing on privacy issues related to data analytics and cloud-based library systems -- were shared with participants for feedback. Attendees agreed on the need for creating materials to help affirm the library professions’ commitment to patron privacy in the face of an ever-growing reliance on both in-house and third-party technologies. They also stressed the need to target field guides to decision-makers beyond the library staff,

including city managers and library trustees, in the case of public libraries, and senior institutional leadership, in the case of academic libraries. Participants also noted there have been numerous activities by various ALA groups and similar projects to create guidelines on patron privacy, and there is a growing need to coordinate and standardize such efforts.

What should be in a field guide?

- Library principles and their importance
- Need to speak to all library decisionmakers - directors, trustees, IT managers
- Infographic approach is desirable
- Help with negotiating vendor agreements consistent with library principles / boilerplate language
- Concrete examples
- Explain concept of Personally identifiable information (PII)
- Issues raised about retention and collection of data.

Who would use the guide, how would they use the guide?

- Initial stage of pursuing a new service
- Guiding contract negotiations with vendors
- As training document
- Periodic internal audits
- Creating standard practice in larger library ecosystem

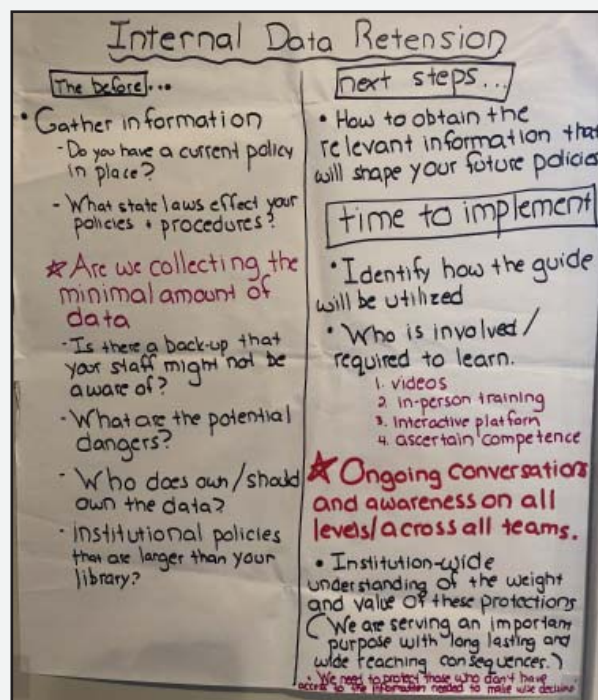
Additional ideas for field guides:

- Social media strategies
- Library social media accounts
- Concrete examples
- Specific platforms
- Guides for working with integration apps - i.e. hootsuite
- Library marketing emails in mailchimp, constant contact, etc.
- Biometrics
- Other information security issues (encrypted email, Tor, etc)
- Tracking of laptops, tablets, other devices loaned to patrons
- Talking to patrons about good privacy practices

A Note on Field Guides

An initial objective for the project was to develop a series of field guides that clearly lay out important privacy and security issues relevant to libraries developing digital tools and strategies. Such guides would provide an overview of digital tools and environments, outline key implications for the library value of privacy, and provide an environmental scan of what is currently happening across various communities to address these concerns.

After receiving feedback on drafts of two field guides shared at ALA Midwinter 2018, and considering recent updates to the ALA's Privacy Toolkit as well as privacy-focused recommendations issues by LITA, we decided development of suitable field guides should be done in partnership with these other privacy-related activities. We will follow up on the opportunity to collaborate on the field guides in the future.



"LIBRARY VALUES AND PRIVACY SUMMIT"

DATE: MAY 3-4, 2018

LOCATION: New York, NY

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 30

(See Appendix A for list of attendees)



As a culminating event for the project, we held the first ever "Library Values & Privacy Summit" at the Data & Society Research Institute in New York City on

May 3-4, 2018. This invitation-only gathering of 30 experts from various parts of the library community focused on addressing numerous key issues and questions derived from the previous events, including: what is the role of privacy in the library value system today, alongside new and emerging issues? What can be done on the ground as we build out our digital platform to ensure library values are included in the tools we build and the material we license? And, how do we use our digital platform to inform our communities about their online privacy?

Building on issues raised at the 2018 Midwinter session, the summit featured a series of "snapshot sessions", where thought leaders in attendance shared 5-minute reflections on key issues regarding library values & privacy, including challenges staff training, conducting internal privacy audits, data analytics, vendor relations, and building in-house privacy protecting tools.

Participants were divided into four groups focusing on major areas of engagement regarding privacy within libraries: Staff Training and Patron Support; Learning & Web Analytics; Vendor Relations; and Building In-House Tools. Each group was asked to grapple with a set of reflective questions. Highlights for each group are provided below.

1) WHAT ISSUES DO WE SOMETIMES NEGLECT WHEN WE DISCUSS PATRON PRIVACY & LIBRARY VALUES?

Staff Training and Patron Support

- Broader discussion of our ethical obligations as library professionals
- How to best serve privacy issues that impact marginalized communities
- Need to make our values more visible and relatable for patrons

Learning & Web Analytics

- Concerns over representation and bias in data collection and processing
- Ensuring transparency and consent when collecting and using data
- Issues of data life-cycle, including data retention, use, and destruction
- Need for greater technical literacy, agency, and training

Vendor Relations

- Understanding the varied roles of trustees, policy-makers, professional organizations, and funding bodies in matters of patron privacy
- How to balance pursuit of privacy and ensuring access to core services
- What can we learn from other industries that have leveraged concessions from vendors?

Building In-House Tools

- Need for training and support for in-house developers
- Challenges of keeping up with evolving technological environment
- Distributed responsibility across complex IT systems

2) WHAT ARE THE NECESSARY NEXT STEPS FOR ADDRESSING PATRON PRIVACY?

Staff Training and Patron Support

- Gather community input and develop strategies for sustaining public trust

- Need to develop enhanced tools for conducting privacy audits
- Need to leverage libraries as physical spaces to protect (and learn about) privacy

Learning & Web Analytics

- Make current data collection practices visible, and highlight any privacy-protecting activities already in place
- Design user/student-centered tools
- Partner with open science/open source communities for library-built systems

Vendor Relations

- Foster greater clarity and transparency in understanding current vendor practices
- Build repository of model contract language
- Train and empower librarians to negotiate better agreements
- Develop market power collectively

Building In-House Tools

- Develop better coordination and outreach strategies
- Create broad strategy to work with larger technology and advocacy communities
- Consider certification process for privacy-protecting tools (similar to LEED)

3) WHAT ARE THE CURRENT BARRIERS OR RESOURCE LIMITATIONS THAT NEED TO BE OVERCOME?

Staff Training and Patron Support:

- Lack of sufficient technical literacy & training for library staff
- Feeling of being overwhelmed/disempowered with how much data is already being shared, collected, etc
- Competing goals (and values) between librarians, administrators, public officials
- Need more funding, time, talking points, community-led technology projects, shared resources that are accessible

Learning & Web Analytics

- Lack of sufficient technical training and data literacy
- Need additional focus on data privacy in LIS education programs
- Need to overcome the disconnect between the presumptions of how a system works, and the observed reality of how it works
- Need more community coordination & best practices on data privacy

Vendor Relations

- Lack of technical knowledge at all levels of the library organization
- Lack of cohesive leadership within library community, combined with fear of confronting vendors
- Need to develop greater expertise in how data can be used responsibly
- Need for more legal and regulatory support

Building In-House Tools

- Lack of technical expertise
- No incentives; lack of a “disaster” what might drive change
- Privacy is valued inconsistently across the library community
- Need funding, tools, training, partnerships, time -- resolve

“IDEAL WINS”

When asked what would be an “ideal win” for privacy & library values in the next few years, Summit attendees pointed to the need for additional funding for privacy-related advocacy and technology development, the need for better coordination across libraries and advocates, and a greater focus on privacy in the education and ongoing training of library professionals.

COMMON THEMES

Through the “Library Values & Privacy in our National Digital Strategies” grant, we had the opportunity to bring together a diverse group of library practitioners, advocates, and scholars to discuss what the library value of privacy means in the digital world. Through these different forms of engagement, we identified a set of common themes that summarized the growing need -- and challenges -- for developing a roadmap for a shared vision to ensure patron privacy remains a core library value.

Centralization & Coordination

Throughout the gatherings, the need was recognized to better centralize knowledge and coordinate activities and tactics in support of patron privacy. Examples included the need for a repository of privacy-protecting language and model contracts that have been agreed to by vendors to allow all libraries to leverage what only some have been able to negotiate, the need for libraries to better share in-house developed technical solutions to privacy-threats, and the need for additional repositories. Calls for collective action among libraries were frequent.

Communication & Advocacy

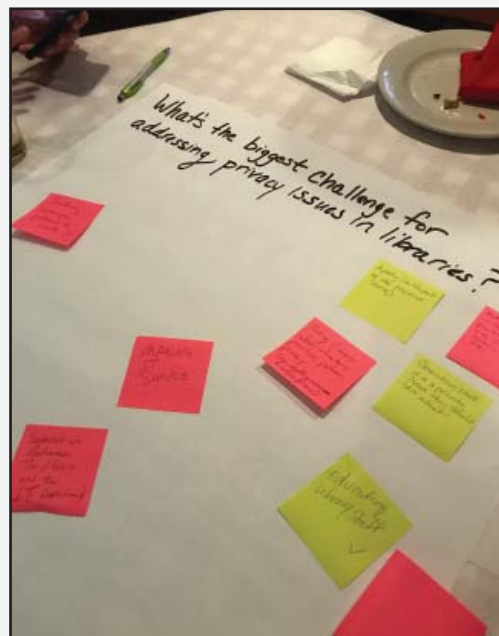
The need for more and better means of communicating the importance of patron privacy was made clear throughout the sessions. This includes communicating to patrons themselves on why they should care about privacy, communicating the importance of privacy-protecting practices to library staff, and communicating the relevance of preserving privacy in today’s environment to library administrators and related decision-makers. Gaps were identified in ensuring privacy is understood as a core value, and advocated for as strongly as intellectual freedom and access to information. Suggestions ranged from distributing pithy talking points for library staff and creating refined executive summaries targeted to library administrators and trustees.

Training & Education

Participants repeatedly expressed concern that library staff, professionals, and administrators all fell short in terms of receiving proper training and education around issues of patron privacy. Literacy gaps persist on issues of privacy law, new technological threats, possible technical solutions, and standard privacy best practices all threaten to limit the ability to sufficiently protect patron privacy. Suggestions pointed to increased focus on privacy in LIS professional degree programs, creation of easy-to-use guides to train library staff, and a means to credential library professionals who have received suitable privacy training.

Other Considerations

At the Summit, we surfaced considerations that should go into work done around privacy and libraries. These include being more inclusive to the unique issues of school librarians and rural libraries as their community’s needs may be different. In addition, questions were asked about how marginalized patrons and staff are impacted in unique ways. It is important to consider threat models of unique populations and to balance user agency with empowering users with knowledge and their rights. Some noted that very little of our discussions are unique to libraries so we could learn from other industries.



NEXT STEPS

One of the original goals of the “Library Values & Privacy in our National Digital Strategies” project was to produce a set of field guides to provide an overview of digital tools and environments, outline key implications for the library value of privacy, and provide an environmental scan of what is currently happening across various communities to address these concerns. Upon talking with privacy advocates across the library community, we quickly realized there are no quick and easy ways to generate such guides. As noted above, there are multiple audiences, complex issues, and varying barriers to be overcome in order to properly ensure privacy maintains its status as a core value in librarianship.

A first next step is to refocus efforts to assess all the variables that must be considered with the creation of privacy field guides. Each of the major themes discussed above can potentially be addressed via a set of carefully constructed field guides, and this should be a priority.

Additional next steps must include creating a means for better coordination across the library community to advocate and educate for privacy. The ALA’s “Choose Privacy Week” has been a good starting point, but further collaboration must take place.

For those interested in next steps, below are some tangible ideas the profession can commit to work on.

CENTRALIZATION & COORDINATION

- Create a repository of privacy-protecting language and model contracts from successful negotiations.
- Host a space for libraries to better share in-house developed technical solutions to privacy-threats.
- Coordinate a central clearinghouse for auditing vendors, reviewing privacy policies, and creating a “Consumer Reports” type of resource that evaluates library vendor products.

⁹ <https://theglassroom.org/en/>

COMMUNICATION & ADVOCACY

- Creating resource guides and/or talking points for:
 - communicating the importance of privacy-protecting practices to library staff.
 - communicating to patrons on why they should care about privacy.
 - communicating the relevance of preserving privacy in today’s environment to library administrators and related decision-makers.
- Ensuring privacy is understood as a core value, and advocated for as strongly as intellectual freedom and access to information
- Using physical space of libraries and leverage trust in libraries to bring eye-opening exhibits, such as The Glass Room,⁹ to libraries across the country.
- Considering language and how we talk about privacy. Move the conversation from negative to positive and showing privacy as a competitive advantage. Also, make visible the values that motivate committee to privacy.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

- Work with LIS educators to incorporate privacy concerns into curriculum
- Create guides or resources to educate and empower specific groups within the library field, including frontline library staff, library technologists, librarians, administrators, and other decision-makers.
- Centralize and link together curriculum, guides and resources already available for the library community
- Consider a means to credential library professionals who have received suitable privacy training



APPENDIX A

LIBRARY PRIVACY & VALUES SUMMIT ATTENDEES

Davis Erin Anderson

METRO/599

Matt Beckstrom

Lewis and Clark library

Howard Besser

New York University's Moving Image Archiving & Preservation Program (MIAP)

Brett Bonfield

Princeton Public Library

Kristin Briney

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Deborah Caldwell-Stone

American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom and the Freedom to Read Foundation

Greg Cram

The New York Public Library

Josh Greenberg

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Jason Griffey

Free Ebook Foundation

Nate Hill

METRO/599

Lisa Hinchliffe

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Kyle Jones

Indiana University

Bohyun Kim

University of Rhode Island Libraries

T.J. Lamanna

Cherry Hill Public Library

Jeffrey Lambert

Queens Library

Brenda Leong

Future of Privacy Forum

Clifford Lynch

Coalition for Networked Information

Mary Madden

Data & Society

Sara Mannheimer

Montana State University

William Marden

The New York Public Library

Meghan McDermott

Mozilla

Melissa Morrone

Brooklyn Public Library

James Neal

Institute of Museum and Library Services

Eileen Palmer

Libraries of Middlesex Automation Consortium

Bonnie Tijerina

Data & Society

Andromeda Yelton

MIT Libraries

Becky Yoose

The Seattle Public Library

Scott Young

Montana State University

Michael Zimmer

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee