Information Ethics – a global code and the role of libraries
This presentation will introduce information ethics in the library and information science environment, and then take a closer look at codes of ethics.
Professional codes of ethics

Information ethics is incorporated into professional codes, through statements on:
- freedom of information / intellectual freedom;
- protection of privacy; and
- intellectual property rights.

Professional codes of ethics
- Code of Information Ethics – principles established as a framework to guide information professionals when dealing with situations involving ethical dilemmas or conflicts
- Various LIS groups are currently working with human rights issues to formulate codes of ethics, including IFLA, the American Library Association (ALA) and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) in the UK (Mathiesen, 2015, p. 1311)
- The LIS organisations most familiar to us all incorporate information ethics into their professional codes, explicitly or implicitly, through statements on
  - freedom of information / intellectual freedom;
  - protection of privacy; and
  - intellectual property rights.
LIS codes of ethics – IFLA / FAIFE
- The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is considered the global voice of the library and information profession (IFLA, 2015).
- IFLA has also taken a leading role in the formulation of a global code of ethics for the LIS profession, by setting up the Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE), with the specific aim to:
  - Defend and promote the basic human rights defined in Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The Committee’s mission is (FAIFE, 2015):
  - To further freedom of access to information and freedom of expression in all aspects, directly or indirectly, related to libraries and librarianship.
- Between 2010 and 2012, the Committee conducted extensive consultation and drafting of an international code of ethics for librarians and other information workers, which was endorsed in August 2012.
- The result was the
  - IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers -
    http://www.ifla.org/faife/professional-codes-of-ethics-for-librarians
- It has since been used as a foundation document by library associations worldwide to formulate their own codes of ethics
LIS codes of ethics – ALIA

- The Australian Libraries and Information Association is the national professional organisation for the Australian library and information services sector.
- In addition, ALIA has issued:

which specifically call on members of the LIS profession to support intellectual freedom and promote the free flow of information and ideas, as well as protecting clients' rights to privacy.
LIS codes of ethics – CILIP
- The UK’s Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals is its leading body representing the information professions
- CILIP developed a set of Ethical principles, which includes (http://www.cilip.org.uk/about/ethics/ethical-principles)
  - 12 principles on which members should base their professional conduct
  - It expressly mentions human rights under Principle 1:
    - “Concern for the public good in all professional matters, including respect for diversity within society, and the promoting of equal opportunities and human rights.” (“Ethical principles,” 2013).
- CILIP Code of professional practice – based on ethical principles
- CILIP also as an Ethics Committee where members can seek confidential advice on ethical issues at work
LIS codes of ethics – ALA
- The American Library Association has its own *Code of Ethics* intended to embody the ethical responsibilities of the profession. It contains 8 principles to guide ethical decision making ([http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics/codeofethics/codeethics)), similar to CILIP.
- Under Professional Ethics on the ALA website, there are various Q&A guides to applying the Code of Ethics in practice – an approach advocated by Fallis (2007).
  - [http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/proethics)
- In addition, there is the *Library Bill of Rights* with its focus on freedom of access.
- And the ALA has various interpretations of the *Bill of Rights* on its website, addressing current ethical issues, such as:
  - The Universal Right to Free Expression ([http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/universalright](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/universalright))
  - Privacy ([http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/privacy](http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/privacy))
Information Ethics considerations
- In our roles as LIS professionals:
  - We have a responsibility to uphold the code of ethics of our professional body
  - To demonstrate a commitment to the principles of librarianship, being:
    - intellectual freedom, equitable access to information, user privacy, intellectual property rights
  - To advocate for a global code of information ethics to defend the principles of librarianship and human rights
  - And to develop a sound knowledge of information ethics theories & their application in practice to resolve ethical dilemmas.
Thank you...
References


References


